



THE OPEN DOOR

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
(UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST) AUBURN, MAINE
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WEBSITE: WWW.AUBURNUU.ORG
SUNDAY WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION AT 10 AM

***AN OFFICIAL UUA WELCOMING CONGREGATION:
ALL ARE WORTHY, ALL ARE WELCOME!***

We need not think alike to love alike - Francis David

JANUARY, 2012

Jodi's Corner - Words from our Minister

*My work is loving the world.
Here the sunflowers, there the hummingbird ...
Are my boots old? Is my coat torn?
Am I no longer young, and still not half-perfect? Let me
keep my mind on what matters,
which is my work,
which is mostly standing still and learning to be
astonished...
which is gratitude, to be given a mind and a heart
and these body-clothes,
a mouth with which to give shouts of joy...
~ Mary Oliver ~*

As the new year begins, many of us have our eyes fixed on the challenges of the present and the future. There is so much need, so much good work, holy work, to be done. The call to engage, to throw ourselves into the tasks at hand, can be powerful-as it should be.

But if we are to do this hard work, *especially* if we are to do this hard work, it serves us well to remember that it is also our work, as Mary Oliver writes, to love the world, to stand still and learn to be astonished, to rest in gratitude and shout with joy. Acknowledging brokenness does not require us to deny beauty and wonder. Accepting the presence of suffering does not demand that we turn our gaze from the call to rejoice!

May we, in this new year, find a nourishing and compelling balance between working to heal the world and simply allowing ourselves to celebrate it!

And may your days and nights be blessed,
Jodi

Sermon Excerpt

From "The Transformative Power of Love," preached by Jodi Dec. 4th, 2011.

"...What would it look like if we held the transformative power of love as our "bottom line?" It would mean being committed to radical inclusiveness: welcoming in those who seem different from ourselves, those we fear, those we frankly dislike, extending to them the love that arises from an awareness of shared holiness. It would mean not sniping behind each other's backs, but rather stepping into the discomfort of rubbing up against differences and holding gratitude for the opportunity to learn our own buttons, strengthen our own ability to speak our minds, and listen as others do. It would mean considering our resources not something to hoard, fear, or be ashamed of, but rather tools to further our message of love about, above, beneath and within all things. It would mean seeking out the broken places, the filthy places, the uncomfortable places, the dark, mysterious holy places, the places where we might not be received with gratitude and joy but rather met with doubt, suspicion, exhaustion, and despair and shining our light nevertheless, assuming that no bit of good is ever wasted, is ever for nothing. It means allowing our own grief at not being able to transform ourselves or the world as we want or as quickly as we want to crack open our hearts. And it ultimately means peering into the depths of our shattered hearts to see burning there a core of strength and power we never would have discovered if we had chosen to play it safe....."



Office Hours Change: to increase availability to folks who have difficulty making office hours in the morning, I'm shifting my office hours. Instead of being in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wed. mornings, I will now be in the office Monday from 9:30- 3:30 (except 12-12:30) and Wednesday from 9:30-12:30. I hope this will make it a bit easier on some of you who have found the morning hours challenging!

Jodi

News From Religious Exploration

The Religious Education Program continues to experience growth in all ways. Our younger classes have seen such an increase in enrollment that we are actively looking for other space accommodations for the fall. We will work with Buildings and Grounds as well as the Council of Committees in general to find solutions to this wonderful "problem."

Our oldest group, the Chalice Lighters, has been learning about various religious traditions, and had a great trip to Temple Beth Shalom in Auburn as well as Vajra Vidya Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Center in Portland. The youth (and the adults!) learned a lot about both of these traditions, and have asked many excellent and challenging questions. We will continue this curriculum through the spring.

We will do the Pen Pal program in January, and later this winter, the Contra Dance event.

Blessings To You as the Light Returns,
Jeremiah Bartlett, Chair, RE Committee

Director of Religious Exploration Clara Bolduc can be reached at DREuuAuburn@myfairpoint.net . Her office hours are Wednesdays, 11:30 to 1:30, by chance and by appointment.

Make a note: the All-Church Birthday Party will be held On Sunday, February 5th.

A congregation's mission is its unique answer to the question, "Whose lives do we intend to change and in what way?"

It is in this spirit that the church board has created a committee tasked with helping draft a new mission statement, one that clearly describes – for ourselves and others – our overarching purpose. It is crucial to our character that as many of us as possible lend our voices to this dynamic process, and so the committee will be hosting some discussion groups after church and at times which might be more convenient for others. Beyond the first question, we'd also like to ask how you connect to the transformative vision for the church, now and in the future. What if there were no restrictions to what we might become? We want to get to the heart of what this church means to people, and how we can live out our core principles.

Meetings will be held on January 15, and 29, from 11:30 -1; and on January 18, 6-7:30 PM. We'll reserve an additional date in case of inclement weather, or if more people want to participate directly. Snacks and daycare will be provided. If you can't attend any of these sessions, we'd love to talk to you directly: by phone, in person; we can come to you. Call any member of the committee. We really want to hear from you! And thank you!

PJ Mears - Karen Lane - Rich Livingston- Mary Kay Weisenberger - Jodi Hayashida

Building and Grounds Committee

Theater Lighting Pipe:

Recognizing the increased use of the vestry stage by our own UU Theater and the upcoming production by the Out of the Box Theater, the Building and Grounds Committee consulted with lighting people from our UU Theater, Out of the Box Theater and Community Little Theater. Thanks to our own Robin Smutney and Ron Spofford, we have installed 30 feet of 1 ½" steam pipe in front of the stage for flexibility in supporting spotlight fixtures.

Appreciation:

Thank you to the Charpentiers for responding to our call and delivering to the church their donation of a snow blower. We now have a Toro snow blower to assist in removing snow from our walkways.

---Bob Thorpe

Membership Committee Notes:

The multi-generational annual Fall Harvest Communion held this year on November 20th not only celebrated the bounty of the earth, but truly exalted the harvest we share with each other every day as Unitarian Universalists. With reverence for the wisdom of those in our midst who have faithfully lived the life of the spirit for years and hope for the future gifts yet to come forth from the newest among us, Rev. Jodi magnified the beauty of living each day.

Our hearts are grateful that Rev. Jodi found a place for HONORING OUR SAGES within the context of the Fall Harvest Communion tradition. We thank everyone for their willingness to share their stories. This year's honorees were those who had been UU's for at least 50 years.

In the future please look for NEW MEMBER PROFILES as well as HONORING OUR SAGES INTERVIEWS in the OPEN DOOR newsletter. Stay tuned for when and where the HONORING OUR SAGES display that premiered in the Vestry after the Harvest Communion worship service will be re-installed.

-- *Beth Ayotte, Chair*

Christmas Is Where You Find It

Christmas comes too early, at least
in my opinion, the way it sneaks out from hiding
beneath the jack o lanterns, scudding under
the Thanksgiving turkey's wishbone,
hours later to lay siege to the nation,
reducing us all to well-orchestrated madness.
In a heartbeat whole neighborhoods are flood-lighted
in red, green, blue, penetrating December's gloom
and gladdening the hearts of the power company
while the little drummer incessantly drums and
simulated sleighbells emanate from Salvation Army kettles
and ho-ho-ho echoes off the cavernous walls of Wal-Mart.
The Christmas you dreamed of gets whiter as you dash
about the mall and Rudolph's nose gets redder from the
wassail as he tries to deck the hall.
"Bah!" I say. "Humbug" I say as Scroogely I reject this
lemming rush to Toys R Us. Where is the peace on earth
in this unholy stampede? Does the sharp elbow in my
ribs, my tromped-on feet denote good-will-to-folks and
love they neighbor? The Christmas spirit, like love, is not
coerced but arrives unheralded in unexpected ways---
a phrase from a beloved song, a phone call from a friend,
a reminiscent aroma, who can predict when the magic
might emerge. And magic there is, I grudgingly admit.
For suddenly through my window, a flash of cardinal plumage,
red like a santa suit, crosses the white of a snowy hedge
and the spirit of Christmas rises up within me like
the yeast in my Christmas bread.

---*Pearl Tibbets Sawyer*

COUNCIL of COMMITTEES (CofC)

CofC offers a unique opportunity for dialogue and coordination between the many groups in church. Chairs (or designated committee members) attend these monthly forums. If you are curious, you are welcome to join us! Our next meeting is **January 22 at 11:30** in the Outright room.

Social Justice Corner

Join us **Wednesday, January 4 at 6:30**. The Social Justice Committee meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 in the RE classroom.

Second Collection taken on the first Sunday of January will benefit OUTRIGHT/LA, closing out the current cycle. Throughout December, we took your nominations for the next 2nd Collection cycle, and you will be asked to vote for the new groups on January 15. You must be present to vote.

"THINK INTERFAITH"- In keeping with this theme from the UUA's Standing on the Side of Love campaign, Auburn UU is cooperating with humanitarian efforts led by other denominations in our area.

- Trinity Jubilee Center is looking for a group of people to run a weekday meal- let us know if you can help.

-High Street Food Pantry- Did you know there is a food pantry open every Thursday at High Street Congregational Church (106 Pleasant)? This important program serves 50 households/month through the cooperative effort of several local churches. Needy persons can apply to receive 1 package/month, if they meet federal guidelines. Also, you can directly designate this pantry on you United Way donation. Needs:

Pickup-truck Thurs 8am-10 to deliver food from GSFb (no loading necessary)

Volunteers for Thursdays 10:30-noon- esp. for 5th Thursdays -contact Eric Howes at howes@roadrunner.com

Food items or money- they pay only \$.16/lb for food at GSFb, also can specify them in your United Way donation

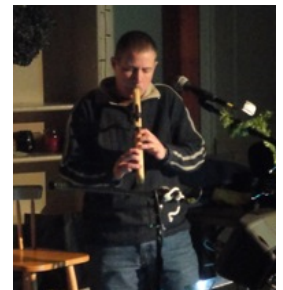
-Clothing Donations will be brought to the "Clothes Closet" at the Court Street Baptist Church for distribution. The Center for Wisdom's Women is not able to accept clothing at this time.

--- **Social Justice Committee**



OPEN MIC

The next Open Mic/Poetry Slam will be **Friday, January 13 at 7:15**. For almost 6 years, people have made their way to our unique space, on the second Friday of the month. Our vestry offers excellent sound quality and a warm, friendly audience that shares a passion for the spirituality of music and spoken word. Join us at this **free** monthly celebration. Refreshments and children's room available.



Wachain Welch at a recent Open Mic

UU Theater

UU Theatre presents "Chosen: Adoption Stories"

UU Theater is proud to present Out of the Box Theater Company's "Chosen: Adoption Stories," by Linda Britt, which chronicles the joys and the heartbreaks of the adoption process. Actors portraying adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents, wannabe adoptive parents, all take the stage to tell their stories, woven into a narrative

that explores the difficulties and rewards of adoption. From "About Us," the first monologue from a couple making their pitch to birth mothers everywhere to choose them as parents for their babies, to "Adoption Day," the final monologue telling a happily-ever-after story, "Chosen" highlights the choices made all along the way.

Credit goes to Pat Phillips, who wanted UUT to get involved with Britt's show. In supporting all kinds of families, she reasoned, "Chosen" speaks to our first UU principle. Playwright Britt draws from her own experience as an adoptive mom, and from other adoption stories, to present the many faces of adoption portrayed in the show.

"Chosen: Adoption Stories" will be performed the weekends of January 21/22 and 28/29 in our own church vestry (Sat., Jan. 21/28 at 7:30 p.m., Sun., Jan. 22/29 at 2 p.m.). Tickets are \$10 and may be reserved through L/A Arts at 782-7228, or laarts.org.

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UUT Mounts Drag Show

Auditions for UUT's first drag show will be held January 8, starting at 6pm. Russ Perham and Giselle Sherle (who recently appeared in "WhUU Done It?") are putting together a roster of performers for a Valentine-themed show on Friday, February 17. This brand-new show will serve as a benefit for our church. Please spread the word, if you know any local drag performers! For more information, contact:

Russell Perham <rexstallyon@yahoo.com> or Giselle Scherle <g_scherle@hotmail.com>

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The **Editorial guidelines for the Open Door newsletter** have been revised. Contributors have been made aware that brevity is the most important aspect of a newsletter story viewed online. Open Door strives to be more concise, to serve the reader's busy schedule. We hope you notice the difference!

Publicity Guidelines- please submit your church event news to Toby (baywest@roadrunner.com) and to Karen (uuauburn@myfairpoint.net). Your info may then be used in many outlets: OOS, email, webpage, & Facebook. Karen is only responsible for the OOS. Please help us make our system work, to serve the congregation better.

The Auburn UU leaders board has been revamped to include not only the Board and staff, but committee chairs, as well. Thanks to the design talents of Hope Tracey, this attractive display in the vestry allows you to see 'who's who' at Auburn UU.

*If you change your email address, please share it with the office or Toby at baywest@roadrunner.com.

* Visit the church Facebook page (at 'First Universalist Church of Auburn') for events and updates about church doings! Also, church news is on the homepage of our website at www.auburnuu.org.

Come to our Ferry Beach Retreat – April 20-22, 2012

What?

Members and friends of the First Universalist Church of Auburn, and the Allen Avenue and First Parish UU Churches join together at our ocean-front Ferry Beach Unitarian Universalist Conference Center in Saco for a weekend. The Friday evening through Sunday morning retreat comes at the *end* of the April school vacation week this year.

Why?

In the company of other UU's, we fill the entire campus, eat delicious and healthy food (provided by Ferry Beach Pangea Food Service) in our beautiful *new* dining hall, sleep in rooms that accommodate two to six people, and enjoy the beautiful Ferry Beach environment, from the sandy shore of Saco Bay to the outdoor chapel and memorial garden in the pine woods. You may choose to really retreat by walking on the beach or in the woods, rocking in a porch chair while reading a book, or making conversation (or a jigsaw puzzle) with new and old friends. Or you are welcome to engage in any of a number of optional activities and discussions.



Activities?

Yes, each year we offer a Friday night ice cream social and a special intergenerational family gathering, a Saturday evening variety show and Sunday morning worship. Also on Saturday there will be many activities for you to choose from if you wish. They vary each year but include children's and intergenerational fun games and crafts, music making, and a great variety of mini-workshops provided by volunteer participants.

Financial Assistance & Contributions

The cost of the retreat is based on what we believe most families can afford in conjunction with the Ferry Beach fee structure. Financial assistance is available for those who need it and contributions to the "scholarship fund" are welcome.

Contact information

Registration forms and cost information will be available in March. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, feel free to contact our coordinators . . .

Anne Kinney at uma@megalink.net (782-7497) or Ron Spofford (740-4084)

Scenes from the Christmas Pageant:



UU AUBURN - JANUARY, 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																	
<p><i>1</i></p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am followed by coffee hour in the Vestry. Second Collection: Outright L/A</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i></p>	<p><i>4</i></p> <p>Social Justice 6:30pm</p>	<p><i>5</i></p>	<p><i>6</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p>																																																	
<p><i>8</i></p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am - followed by coffee hour in the vestry - Auditions for UU Drag Show - 8pm</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>	<p><i>10</i></p>	<p><i>11</i></p>	<p><i>12</i></p>	<p><i>13</i></p> <p>OPEN MIC 7:15</p>	<p><i>14</i></p>																																																	
<p><i>15</i></p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am - followed by coffee hour in the vestry - vote for second collection - Mission discussion 11:30-1</p>	<p><i>16</i></p> <p>Martin Luther King Day Board Meeting 6:30pm</p>	<p><i>17</i></p>	<p><i>18</i></p> <p>Mission Discussion 6-7:30pm</p>	<p><i>19</i></p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p> <p>"The Chosen" Out of the Box Theater 7:30 Social Committee - Women in Harmony trip</p>																																																	
<p><i>22</i></p> <p>Worship and RE at 10am followed by coffee hour in the vestry - Council of Committees 11:30 - "The Chosen" 2pm</p>	<p><i>23</i></p> <p>Board Meeting 6:30pm</p>	<p><i>24</i></p>	<p><i>25</i></p>	<p><i>26</i></p> <p>Newsletter Deadline</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p> <p>"The Chosen" Out of the Box Theater 7:30</p>																																																	
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For an up-to-date calendar, visit auburnuu.org and click on "Calendar." - (R) is a rental event.