

AN OFFICIAL WELCOMING CONGREGATION
ALL ARE WORTHY, ALL ARE WELCOME.

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Website: www.auburnuu.org

*Rooted in the Sacred and strengthened by our diversity,
we equip ourselves to minister through the transformative power of Love.*



Scenes from the RE pageant, courtesy of Sean Galipeau-Eldridge and Casey Knight

FROM "FINDING PEACE"

An excerpt from the Christmas pageant, written by DRE Cynthia Grimm and performed by our children and youth on December 20, 2015

Mary: Friends, I am sorry that your road has been so hard and your struggles so great.

Joseph: We were once travelers, like yourselves, seeking shelter and finding none. Here, we believe that when you have more than enough for yourselves, you build a bigger table, not a bigger wall.

Mary: Come, sit at our table. Share our meal, our shelter, and our friendship. Let us celebrate together the quiet of winter and the light that is returning.

Tariq: I know you. I turned you away once when you needed shelter. Why would you welcome me now?

Mary: I hold no grudge against you, friend. You acted out of fear, and we have all known fear. How can I fault you for feelings I have had myself?

Warsan: Let this feast, shared by so many who are so different, be the beginning of peace on earth.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking ahead to 2016, the Northern New England District of the Unitarian Universalist Association has posed a number of searching questions for regional church boards to consider regarding the relative strengths and challenges of our respective congregations.

Discussing these questions this past month, we on the board of directors quickly identified several things we do best. The First Universalist Church of Auburn, we agreed, delivers engaging Sunday services. We have our excellent minister, Jodi, to lift up in this regard, of course, whose passion and professionalism we so appreciate. The music that Dave and Phil orchestrate each week deserves special note: they provide a beloved foundation for our Sundays together. The significance of our RE and Worship Associates programs was on profound display on December 20 when our children (and family volunteers) enlivened Cynthia's powerful and timely Christmas pageant. In Jodi's absence, Kitsie's stewardship epitomized our Worship Associates' valued contributions throughout the year.

Of no small importance, we are a warm and welcoming congregation, a distinction immediately recognized by our visitors and new members. This reflects our Unitarian Universalist principles, as well as our congregation's decision (more than a decade ago) to be officially certified through the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation to LGBTQ individuals and families. It's also due to our Membership Committee's purposeful efforts to create a welcoming atmosphere.

The First Universalist Church of Auburn does many things well, from paying our bills to ensuring our space is clean and comfortable. In discussing everything we do best, we on the board learned an apt phrase—appreciative inquiry—which regards fostering positive transformation based on identifiable strengths.

SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

SECOND COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Second Collection is taken on the first Sunday of each month.

JAN 2016 Tree Street Youth
FEB 2016 Souper Sunday for Trinity Soup Kitchen

Next Second Collection Cycle

We will still take nominations through January 17. Organizations for the next Second collection cycle must:

- be non-profit
- reflect our mission and UU values,
- and benefit the L/A area.

Fill out a blue nomination slip in the pews, and put it in the collection plate. On January 31, you may vote for your favorites.

* * * * *

Local Hero?

Auburn UU's Saturday morning Trinity Team still needs volunteers to do food pick-up on the first weekend of each month. This can be on a rotating schedule. FMI Contact Skip Gans at 786-8680 or office@auburnuu.org.

* * * * *

Harvest Thanks



Thank you Habiba (our NASAP farmer) for bringing fresh, local produce for us to buy this year. See you next summer!

— Toby Haber-Giasson and Jane Pentheny, OD,
Social Justice co-chairs

It is a deliberative process we will continue to contemplate together in the new year, beginning with the next board meeting, which will be held on Monday, January 11, at 6:30 in the church office.

— Eben Miller

UU THEATER

Thank you, Drag Santa

Christopher Dufour, illustrious director and emcee of Ho Ho Holiday Drag, has been very good to UUTheater! After expenses, he raised over \$1,100 for this church. Outrageous! See you for the Wings of Spring Drag show in March.

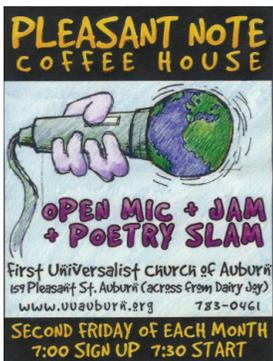
Be the Change

Co-directors Karen Lane and Toby Haber-Giasson could only wish more of you had seen this illuminating play. Thanks to a fabulous cast, our ticket crew, Jeanne Hamel and Sara Karam, and our playbill goddess, Nicole Rush.



Cast featured (from left) Bill Eldridge as Jesus, Ron Spofford (as Rumi), Judy Webber as Thich Nat Hahn, Maureen Perry as Marge Piercy, John Spuill as Rev. Howard Thurman, Kellie Pelletier as the everyman "You," Doug Ball as Buckminster Fuller, Prince T Dickson as Martin Luther King, Jr., and co-directors Karen Lane (Narrator) and Toby Haber-Giasson (playing Maya Angelou).

OPEN MIC CHALLENGE!



Next Open Mic is Friday, January 8. We CHALLENGE you to check it out before the 10th anniversary in March!

Join us on the second Friday of each month, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. in our vestry.

Sing/play/ recite or just LISTEN. Refreshments for sale to benefit the Organ Fund. Free!

THANK YOU, PLAYBILL ADVERTISERS

FULL PAGE

Central Maine Electrolysis (Ami Seamon)
Cubicles in Maine/ Affordable Office Solutions
Goin' Postal
Lewiston/ Auburn YMCA
Maine Family Credit Union
Mechanics Savings Bank
Jamie Pittman



HALF PAGE

84 Court
Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn
Dr. Stephen Kottler, HMC
Roy's All Steak Hamburgers



BIZ CARD

Brian's Barber Shop (Brian Bickford)
Community Credit Union
Country Auto Repair Service (Pete Vachon)
Bill Eldridge
Fireside Stove Shop
John Geismar
Great Falls Security
Marc's Auto Body
Nicole Rush, Certified Personal Trainer
Ouelette & Associates, P.A.
PJ Massage (Pam Price-Wharff)
Perfect Image (Christopher Dufour)
Roopers
Judy Webber



If you would like to advertise in the playbill, please contact Toby at news@auburnuu.org.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION NEWS

RE has been really busy so far this year! All the children worked really hard making crafts for the Gingerbread Fair. Becca Lynch assisted a great deal with craft ideas and construction. Andrew Pape made candles to sell at the event that brought in \$50! All together, the RE table raised \$75 and change at the fair.

As soon as the Gingerbread Fair was over, we jumped into pageant rehearsals. This year's pageant dealt with some pretty heavy issues, but our wonderful children were up to the challenge. The pageant, Finding Peace, focuses on famous refugees in history, including Mary, Joseph, the Wise Men, Anne Frank and her family, the Von Trapp family, and more. Each group or family came to the door of Tariq, a role played beautifully by Ian Lathrop. Over and over, Tariq turned our travelers away. In the end, Tariq (which in Arabic means He who knocks at the door) becomes a refugee himself and is warmly welcomed by the other refugees. This pageant is a reminder that when you have more than enough for yourself, you build a bigger table, not a bigger wall. Our children showed us the way to find peace in our world through radical hospitality.



In January, each class returns to its regular curriculum. Volunteers are always needed to lead or assist with classes, and for special projects. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Cynthia at DRE@AuburnUU.org.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS



Auburn UU just joined the Chamber of Commerce, to put a friendly face on our organization in the wider community. Would you like to be that face? Donate the \$20 registration fee and represent the congregation at a chamber breakfast on second Thursday of each month! Contact Toby at news@auburnuu.org.

Note: Please put news@auburnuu.org in your address book to contact Toby for church news and info.



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

The Membership Committee purchases and maintains a supply of informational pamphlets from the UUA Bookstore. These are available on the Membership Table and other locations around the church. Ron Spofford recently brought one of these, *Your Faith Home*, to our attention. I found one particular section especially meaningful, and would like to share it:

"Be welcoming. Do you remember the first person to make you feel welcome? Become that person for someone else. It can be as simple as holding the door open for someone, sharing a hymnal, or saying hello to a child and calling them by name. Once you are more comfortable, introduce yourself to more people, join others for lunch (Coffee Hour for us) or volunteer to be a greeter."

The responsibility for making visitors feel welcome and helping our congregation to grow rests with all of us!

– Blessings, Peggy Cox, Membership Chair

LINDLEY FAMILY DEDICATES SEASIDE MEMORIAL TO NINA

Two Lights State Park in Cape Elizabeth was one of Nina’s favorite places...so instead of a grave stone in a place visited by few, David Lindley and family created a memorial to be enjoyed by many. The inscription to the right – the first three lines from the music of John Denver and the last added by David – adorns a special bench dedicated to Nina just off a path at Two Lights. The family had a



choice of three locations and choose the one on a knoll facing south with a full vista of the Atlantic. This is a spot where visitors will sit awhile to absorb the rugged beauty and decompress from the rigors of a busy world. The gentle light that Nina brought to this world will thus continue to shine.



Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust she lives in thee, and there
I find her worthier to be loved.

Lord Alfred Tennyson – In Memoriam

FERRY BEACH PLANNING CONTINUES

The corrected date of the Ferry Beach Retreat is **April 29, 30 and May 1**. We neglected to mention last month that the retreat features a “bonfire,” sing-along, fireside visits, a variety show, a popular playground and ample opportunity for “quiet time.” Volunteers – that’s ALL of us – provide workshops, crafts, worship, music, and activities with children.

Your registration form will include a line enabling you to donate toward scholarships if you are able. We encourage participation in this retreat for all

who are eager to join in. The Ferry Beach retreat is a calling of the spirit within, and it’s in that very spirit that the planning team has been expanded to include both Barbara Larrabee and Harmoni Larrabee, eager retreat veterans and willing helpers. Welcome aboard, Barbara and Harmoni. Ask *them* about the retreat.



Now, all of US invite all of YOU to consider bringing YOUR spirit to Ferry Beach. Join in when the time comes and when the Spirit moves you.

– Team Auburn, Ferry Beach Retreat: Anne, Ron, Jan, Mike, Barbara, Harmoni

Year's End

I sip my wine,
swirling the crystalline spirits
around the glass. The year's last sun
has silently slipped into night's dark pocket.
In the fading light, the snow that fell this morning
gleams like alabaster, like purity, like Ivory Snow,
ninety-nine point ninety-nine per cent pure.
My rational mind wants to tabulate the year
now passing, week on week, month on month
in orderly rows of debits and credits.
I want to hold on a while, polish the gems
one more time, forgetting the dross, the bad
days.

But my disordered memories, the
updownupdown
fragments of events rain down about me like
stickum notes tossed into the careless air,
falling in untidy disarray. And time, the elusive
stuff of
my waking dream-walk, plummets into the
insatiable pit
of eternity. There is no recall of what is done
There is only this—the enormous challenge
of moving on.

Pearl Tibbetts Sawyer
From Hope is a Red Bird, 2008

Get out your secret chili recipes again! We're having our famous annual UU Chili Cook-Off!



CHILI COOK-OFF ALERT

March 20th at Auburn UU during Coffee Hour

In addition to being a fun and rousing gathering, this is the only fund-raiser for scholarships for our **All-Church Ferry Beach Retreat April 29th, 30th, and May 1st** at the oceanfront UU Camp and Conference Center in Saco.

What you need to do for the Chili Cook-off:

- Put your name and an enticing chili name on the advance sign-up sheet in the vestry;
- Cook up enough of your chili to provide plenty of samples for our hungry tasters;
- Bring your dish or crock-pot to the vestry before the church service March 20th and sign in at the Registration Table.

If you're not a chili cook, but can contribute corn bread (or other bread), lemonade, cole slaw, or a dessert, that would be appreciated. We also need volunteers for the registration table. This event is for everyone.

Note: Registration Packets and info about the All-Church Ferry Beach Retreat will be available Sunday March 6th in the vestry.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As I write this report, it appears that we should end the first half of our fiscal year with pledge underpayment of approximately 2%. We budgeted 3% for slippage this fiscal year, so holding the line at 2% is just fine! I hope your New Year's resolutions include keeping current on your Stewardship gifts for the remainder of FY 2016.

With incoming year-end funds, we should be just about at 50% of our expected income for FY 2016 at the end of December. On the expense side, every one of our line item categories is under budget, even Building and Grounds which stands at 49%. Expenditures for the year so far are 7% below budget at 43%. A big contributor to this unexpected result is our heating cost. For example, last year at this time we had spent \$1,169 for oil at 159 Pleasant Street. This year to date we have spent \$590. Last year by January, we had used up our surplus with Unitil and owed \$385. This year, we have a \$3,000 budget payment surplus entering the coldest two months of the year having paid \$4,500 so far toward a \$9,000 FY estimate. Stay tuned: we may be able to get through FY 2016 paying only \$6,000 for gas heat at the church.

As you know our operating financials are dynamic. For example, we may need to eliminate \$3,200 of income distributions from our building endowment fund at the Maine Community Foundation payable in March and June. We must act to avoid erosion of principal because of market underperformance at no fault of MCF. We are embarking on the second half of FY 2016 with a budget surplus of \$4,800 but as you can see, new challenges may arise.

Thanks to all for helping our Church achieve financial stability during the first half of our fiscal year. Please continue to do your part to complete this wonderful good news story!

– Al Sargent, Treasurer

GINGERBREAD FAIR BOOKS BENEFIT VETERANS

For the second year in a row the Book Room at our annual November fair has donated some of our unsold books to veterans at the VA Hospital in Augusta after the fair.



We first made the connection last year and were delighted to continue it this year as an ongoing contribution. The Department of Veterans Affairs has expressed its gratitude in a letter to all of us, saying:

"These books will be placed in our library and on our library book cart for distribution to veterans throughout the medical center. Your thoughtfulness reflects the concern that you feel for our veterans and for the service they provided to all of us while in service to our country."

"Without your support, we could not provide for the smaller niceties that make hospitalization more bearable. The commitment you have shown to our patients demonstrates your sense of patriotism toward our veterans."

Many thanks to all our members and friends who donated books this year!

– Anne Kinney for the 2015 Book Room volunteers including Leslie Williams, Nancy Daniels, Sylvia McLeod, Bob Bishop, Luke Lunt, and our helpers Ron Spofford and Robin Smutny

OPEN DOOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for the February newsletter is 1/25/2016

Submissions should be simple and reader-friendly (no longer than 275 words, please) and should pertain to church or denominational events, announcements, reports and activities. If photos or graphics are desired, please send them along with your submission or contact the editor for assistance. You will receive an acknowledgement from the editor when your submission is received. Please send submissions to Tracey Miller at newsletter@auburnuu.org.

JANUARY EVENTS

www.auburnuu.org/news-events/calendar/

Sun, Jan 3	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes <i>Second Collection: Tree Street Youth</i>
Tues, Jan 5	12:30 p.m.	Final roundtable discussion in "Conversations: A Multi-Faith Perspective" series at Auburn Public Library, featuring Rev. Jodi and others.
Fri, Jan 8	7:30 p.m.	Open Mic / Poetry Slam
Sun, Jan 10	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
Mon, Jan 11	6:30 p.m.	Board Meeting (in the office - open to all)
Sun, Jan 17	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes <i>Deadline to submit nominations for 2016 Second Collections</i>
	11:15 a.m.	Membership Committee Meeting
	11:15 a.m.	Council of Committees Meeting
Thurs, Jan 21	5:30 p.m.	Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
	6:30 p.m.	Drumming Circle
Sun, Jan 24	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
Mon, Jan 25		Newsletter submission deadline for February issue
Sun, Jan 31	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
	11:30 a.m.	ALL-CHURCH BIRTHDAY PARTY