

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

169 Pleasant Street, Auburn, ME 04210  
(207) 783-0461 - office@auburnuu.org  
Website: www.auburnuu.org

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

## JODI'S CORNER: WORDS FROM OUR MINISTER

As we move deeper into the political season, I join the ranks of those who are thoroughly exhausted and disgusted by the relentless appeals to our worst selves. There is real danger in allowing this culture of blame and dehumanization to sweep through our country. On a national level it tugs at the fabric of the country, attempting to pull apart what must remain woven together to survive. On a more human level, it places real people in real danger—immigrants, people of color, members of the GLBTQ community face real world consequences including violence, intimidation, and exclusion when they are used as political pawns to score points or scape goats to imply that our nations problems are theirs instead of all of ours.

What a blessing, then, that we each have a voice with which we can speak out against such brutality! What an incredible gift that, though the appeals to our worst selves are relentless, the opportunity to be our best selves are equally relentless!

What to a joy to witness so many of you moving through the world offering your love, your vision, your clarity, your hope, your rage, your commitment, your insistence that there s work to be done and you will do it...and what a necessity. To realize we aren't doing the work alone. Along these lines, here is my plea to you: share your stories with one another. Share with one another the times you speak up, the times

*Continued, next page*



you take a stand, the times you make a mistake and push through the grief and humiliation and learn how to do and be better. Share every moment of incremental change and miniscule success. Alone they may feel like next to nothing. Together, they are what will save the world. It doesn't need to be bragging. It can be the way we collectively keep our wells filled.

May we do this good work together, and may your days and nights be blessed.

– Jodi



Thanks to the more than thirty listeners who turned out for our Valentine's Day Potluck and Poetry Reading by Pearl Sawyer.

## OPEN MIC CELEBRATES 10 YEARS ON MARCH 11

The Pleasant Note Coffeehouse celebrates the 10th anniversary of its Open Mic & Poetry Slam. Since 2006, this free monthly show has drawn people of all ages who share the spirituality of music and spoken word. Join us at 7:30 p.m. in the vestry. Free; refreshments available.



---

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

When the First Universalist Church of Auburn board of directors meets again in March, after a weather-related postponement of our monthly meeting in February, we will be taking up our dual mission of oversight and policy-making.

At the heart of our “view from the balcony” discussion will be “leadership in a liminal season.” This phrase—borrowed from Alban Institute consultant Susan Beaumont—refers to the challenge of cultivating, and sustaining, church leadership in times of transition. Such periods of transition—“liminal seasons”—can refer to broad societal trends such as those that have weakened church membership and civic volunteerism, or more specific challenges facing individual congregations as they evolve.

Facing times of transition, we ought not succumb to our inner Garth. (“We fear change.” Remember *Wayne's World*?) It may be unsettling to squarely reckon with times of transition, but Beaumont reminds us to ground ourselves in our abundance. On this score, of course, there is much to extoll.

In the past several weeks our Council of Committees hosted the annual All Church Birthday Party. Our music associates organized another yearly favorite—the all-music service. Our poet-in-residence, Pearl Sawyer, warmed a bevy of friends with her words on a frigid Valentine's Day. Our community relations maven, Toby Haber-Giasson, conveyed our congregational mission on local radio station Z105.5. Our February worship associate, John Spruill, reflected on how black lives matter. Our SURJ activists stood up for racial justice on the Longley Bridge. Our UU Theater showcased its annual production of “The Vagina Monologues.”

These demonstrations of shared community and dedication to our collective mission, to name a handful, will offer our board a useful reminder of what makes the Auburn UU the beacon of fierce hope and radical love that it surely is when we reconvene on Monday, March 7, at 6:30 in the church office.

– Eben Miller

## SECOND COLLECTION SCHEDULE

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

March 2015	Minister's Discretionary Fund
April 2015	Greater Androscoggin Humane Soc.
May 2015	High Street Food Pantry
June 2015	Tree Street Youth

*Excerpted from "Loving our Enemies"  
preached by Jodi on February 14th 2016*

"...the call to love our enemies is far more complex and nuanced than a call to behave lovingly toward those who hurt us. As a minister it is my work to lift up this ethic as a spiritual practice and a pragmatic necessity. But it is also my work to lift up the dynamics of power and privilege, and those dynamics have implications for the way we understand and live out this call to love our enemies.

The reality is that we cannot expect one another to love our enemies at all times. Sometimes the wounds are too great, our hearts and spirits are too shattered. And, as importantly, those of us with great privilege have no right to demand it of those whose struggles are not our own.

These truths are part of what it means to be human, and yet it is also true that, as Martin Luther King said, "Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that." What does it mean for us as people and communities where both of these truths are present? I believe the call to love our enemies is a call for a community ethic- it is a call to create structures that will govern our society that allow for both our individual pain and our collective love..."

*– edited for length and clarity*

## SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

### Second Collection Update

Based on your votes, our 2016 Second Collection recipients are:

- Greater Androscoggin Humane Society
- United Somali Women of Maine
- New Beginnings

Thank you for your help, Anne Kinney!



\* \* \* \* \*

### Trinity Wish List

Trinity needs the following items, which you can bring in for collection any Sunday:

- Disposable plates, styrofoam cups, plastic silverware, tin foil, and napkins
- Diapers to be distributed at the food pantry. All sizes, especially 4, 5, and 6
- Drinks: juice, milk, coffee, creamer & sugar, and lemonade or iced tea mixes

\* \* \* \* \*

### 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. For more information, contact Skip Gans at 786-8680 or office@auburnuu.org.

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



WHAT .....7th Annual Auburn UU Chili Cook-Off

WHEN .....March 20th after worship at 11:15 a.m.

WHERE .....Auburn UU Church Vestry

HOW .....Chili Makers: Members and friends, sign up your chili contributions *in advance* with Anne Kinney or Ron Spofford during Coffee Hour by March 15th.

**Others:** We need your contributions of cole slaw, dessert, bread, lemonade, small cups for tasting, or sandwiches for kids. Please indicate which on the *advance* sign up sheets.

*Proceeds from the small amount charged at the Cook-Off will help provide scholarships to our spring All-Church Ferry Beach Retreat. Many, many thanks to all our contributors!*



On February 21, John Spruill gave a very moving sermon on the topic of Black Lives Matter. If you missed the sermon but would like to hear it, you can request it on CD (for a suggested \$1 donation) by contacting Karen in the office: office@auburnuu.org or 783-0461.

## CONGREGATIONAL RELEVANCE: THE TRENDS, THE REALITIES, THE CHOICE A UU webinar

You know the trends...churches are shrinking.

You are feeling the realities...leadership burnout, less resources, less depth.



Are you ready to take the story of the decline of the church and the irrelevance of its place in society and put it on the shelf for a bit? Come learn how our own congregation is well-suited to be a beacon of relevance today!

We'll watch a live UU regional webinar on **Tuesday, March 22 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** Motivated church members are encouraged to come! *Register in advance with Anne Kinney or Peter Floyd by March 15.* Our church will cover your cost if we have a core group of at least five people.

Step away from fear of the "end" to embrace possibilities for congregational relevance that are available to us right now. Discover how relevant congregations adapt to their contexts and trends and the deep yearnings of the human soul. Explore realities of congregational life, and how we can leverage our strengths for greater impact.

---

## FERRY BEACH RETREAT

### Registration Opens March 6th!

Registration packets for our All-Church Retreat will be available during Coffee Hour March 6 and through the first week in April.

Many of us have experienced the annual life enhancing “Treasured Times” there and have wonderful stories to share. Newer members of the



congregation won't want to miss it.

We hold our collaborative retreat with the Allen Avenue and Norway UU

churches at the UU Ferry Beach Conference Center on the beautiful oceanfront campus in Saco.

There are several pricing options to enable participation for a day or for the weekend. We begin Friday evening with orientation, ice cream social, beach stone art, and campfire sing-along, led by Michael Hayashida and friends.

On Saturday, besides generous and healthy meals, we offer crafts (Pixie), nature walks, drumming (Jan) and discussion groups (Bill F., Crystal), and will again feature Duct Tape Hat-Making. Activities are optional so you are free to walk the beach, visit the beautiful outdoor chapel and memorial garden, nap, or chat with other retreaters. Saturday evening features the incredible Variety Show—by us! Following breakfast on Sunday we have an intergenerational worship service.

Financial assistance is available thanks to your donations, including fund-raising at our Chili Cook-Off.

— Anne Kinney & Ron Spofford

---

## COUNCIL NOTES

Thanks to all the committee chairs and others who made the All Church Birthday possible!

### SET-UP

Peggy Cox, Anne Kinney, Peter Floyd, Robin Smutny, Ron Spoffard



### CAKES

*Buildings & Grounds:* Cathy Thorpe

*Ferry Beach Retreat:* Anne Kinney & Ron Spoffard

*Finance:* Al Sargent

*Membership:* Peggy Cox

*Pastoral Care Team:* Ginny Starbird

*Religious Exploration:* Carmen Brochu,  
Cynthia Grimm, Bonnie Soper

*Social Justice:* Jane Pentheny

*Worship:* Kitsie Claxton

+ Judy & Jae Allen, Judy Bishop, and the Papes

### BEVERAGES

Kay Hawkins & Dana Rickman

### PIÑATA

Toby Haber-Giasson (Community Relations)

### CLEAN-UP

Ned Claxton (Endowment)

### OPEN DOOR SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for the April newsletter is  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 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](mailto:newsletter@auburnuu.org).

---

## UU THEATER NEWS



*Our fabulous V-Day aUbUrn 2016 cast*

Thanks to you, **V-Day aUbUrn 2016** raised over \$1,000 for our community partners helping victims of domestic violence: Center for Wisdom's Women, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS), Safe Voices, United Somali Women of Maine, and Auburn UU. Thanks to those who attended and allowed us to put money where our values are.



*Our recipients: Fatuma Hussein of United Somali Women of Maine, Julia Teitel from Safe Voices, Marty McIntyre from SAPARS and Klara Tammany of Center for Wisdom's Women*

\* \* \* \* \*

### Mark your Calendar!

The **Wings of Spring Drag Show** is scheduled for April 2 at the Elks Lodge.

## UU THEATER THANKS...

**Co-Producers:** Toby Haber-Giasson & Karen Lane

**Director:** Pat Gardiner

**Publicity:** Toby Haber-Giasson

**Playbill:** Nicole Rush

**Poster:** Tracey Miller

**Ticket sales:** Jeanne Hamel & Angelo Giberti

---

## TREASURER'S REPORT

It is important to remind you that the numbers supporting this current report are complete through January 31 with 58.3% (7 months) of the FY 2016 elapsed. Slippage remains at the 3% that we budgeted. Thank you for being diligent about keeping current with your stewardship obligations! Total income stands at 57% of budget, while expenses are at 54% as compared with 58.3% actually budgeted.

While the \$1,112.25 investment in new choir lighting shows as an operating expense, it has been covered by a transfer from the Music Fund managed by John Davidson. Even our Building and Grounds budget is 1.3% below our projection for the fiscal year through January. Another bit of good news vests in the fact that we have a \$2,800 credit balance in our Church natural gas account. I have been on a self-imposed \$900 payment regime each month, which I think will be safe to suspend for the remainder of FY 2016 in order to use up this Unitil credit.

We budgeted FY 2016 on a break-even basis, but with 7 months of the year completed we have a \$4,280 budget surplus. This is a very good place to be financially with five months of the Fiscal year remaining. Pledge statements recently were sent out. Please do your best to keep your stewardship obligations current. With your help we can complete FY 2016 in positive financial condition.

– Al Sargent

## Drumming Circle



3rd Thursday every month

+bring or borrow +

*This month:*

**March 17 from 6:30-8:00**

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE NEWS

One responsibility of the Membership Committee is offering New Member classes each year. The classes planned for March will not be held now, but rescheduled to a later date. These classes are structured to give interested folks an opportunity to learn about Unitarian Universalism in general, and in our own specific congregation. Everyone has a chance to share the journey that brought them here and discover their own ministry. Some of us joined at a time when classes were not a requirement, and may not have ever defined our ministry. To minister is defined as "to give aid or service." Many of us have found myriad ways to do this without defining it as such. Those who teach RE, sing in the choir, promote our principles through service to Good Shepherd Food Bank, transport food to Trinity, are visible and active in Social Justice, serve as liaisons to NNED and Ferry Beach, clean the kitchen, shovel the walks and tend the flower beds are all ministering to our congregation as well as the community at large. Have you found your ministry? I'd love to hear from you and share your story. Blessings,

– Peggy Cox, Membership Chair

## LATHER/RINSE/REPEAT

Can you launder tablecloths after Sunday coffee hour?

Contact Skip Gans at 786-8680.



## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Toby Haber-Giasson was interviewed recently on Z105.5. She talked about our church's values, our worship services, and upcoming events. The talk has already generated new interest! Listen at <http://goo.gl/Isqxxe> and tune in on March 8, when she will talk church again, and promote the Open Mic anniversary.



\* \* \* \* \*

Auburn UU has joined the recently-rebranded **Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan 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 **March 10, April 14, or May 12**. Contact Toby at [news@auburnuu.org](mailto:news@auburnuu.org).



\* \* \* \* \*

Please share your events with Toby at [news@auburnuu.org](mailto:news@auburnuu.org) for an e-blast, Facebook post, newsletter piece, or press release!



## GOT SNAPSHOTS?

We need your great photos of church people & events for our upcoming website redesign. Share them at [newsletter@auburnuu.org](mailto:newsletter@auburnuu.org).

## AUBURN UU SUPPORTS UUA SOCIAL JUSTICE FOCUS

Our Auburn UU Social Justice and Denominational Affairs teams collaborated to vote in support of four proposed social justice topics for consideration at our UUA General Assembly (G.A.) in Columbus, OH this summer.

Following a nationwide poll of UU congregations last month, all four issues were accepted for the agenda for 2016 G.A. Delegates to the June convention will select one of these four issues as a congregational study and action issue (CSAI). They are:



- **Climate Change and Environmental Justice** <http://bit.ly/1QBtdbA>
- **A National Conversation on Race** <http://bit.ly/1oe9oA8>
- **Ending Gun Violence in America** <http://bit.ly/1QfOqxk>
- **The Corruption of Our Democracy** <http://bit.ly/1PLr5ym>

After G.A. delegates vote there will be four years of study and action at the denominational level – with the intent that congregations also engage in the same topic.

Decisions on social witness actions at G.A. are not binding on congregations. However, the power of being in fellowship is that concerted effort by many congregations is more likely to produce societal change in the long term than individual actions. However, a congregation may study any issues it wishes.

– Anne Kinney, Denominational Affairs Rep

## MARCH EVENTS

[www.auburnuu.org/news-events/calendar/](http://www.auburnuu.org/news-events/calendar/)

<b>Sun, Mar 6</b>	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes <i>Second Collection: Minister's Discretionary Fund</i>
	11:15 a.m.	Ferry Beach Retreat registration opens
<b>Mon, Mar 7</b>	6:30 p.m.	Board Meeting (in the office - open to all)
<b>Fri, Mar 11</b>	7:30 p.m.	Open Mic / Poetry Slam: 10th Anniversary
<b>Sun, Mar 13</b>	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
<b>Tues, Mar 15</b>	5:30 p.m.	Pagan Ritual: Ostara
<b>Thurs, Mar 17</b>	5:30 p.m.	Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
	6:30 p.m.	Drumming Circle
<b>Sun, Mar 20</b>	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
	11:15 a.m.	Membership Committee Meeting
	11:15 a.m.	Annual Chili Cook-Off & Contra Dance
<b>Mon, Mar 21</b>	5:45 p.m.	Game Night following SURJ Racial Justice Vigil
<b>Tues, Mar 22</b>	6:30 p.m.	UU regional webinar on Congregational Relevance
<b>Fri, Mar 25</b>		Newsletter submission deadline for April issue
<b>Sun, Mar 27</b>	10:00 a.m.	Multi-Generational Worship Service / Easter Sunday