

THE OPEN DOOR

MAY, 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH (UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST), AUBURN, MAINE

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.*



Scenes from Stewardship Sunday: April 24, 2016

JODI'S CORNER: WORDS FROM OUR MINISTER

What a joyful Stewardship Service we had this past Sunday! We heard powerful testimony from our members—children and adults alike; listened to gorgeous music from a full choir and our gifted staff; and bore witness, with our Beacon Banner, to the ways our congregation works to create “heaven on earth.” And those who attended pledged financial and volunteer support generously. We are blessed indeed.

And, we need every bit of support that you are able to give from each one of you. As we remembered in the service, the strength and depth of our ministry to one another and the community is determined by the strength and depth of your support of our work. This church exists only if we choose to co-create it with one another.

We'll reach out to those of you who weren't able to attend on Sunday. But it will help us out if instead of waiting you make the first move and contact us!

I'm looking forward to planning our shared ministry for next year. Thank you for helping to make it possible.

May your days and nights be blessed.

— Jodi

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Meeting in April, members of the Auburn UU board of directors were presented a preview of this year's stewardship service.

As planned, a significant portion of the "Commitment Sunday" service held on April 24 reflected the influence of our church in our own lives, particularly as we "minister" (however we individually interpret that verb) "through the transformative power of love." Ian Lathrop, Carlos Fra-Nero, Baltasar Fra-Molinero, Charles Nero, and Karen Lane offered moving testimonials, attesting to the ways our church has impacted their lives and their personal missions.

When the board met in April, we were especially pleased with the idea of pledging volunteer hours to the church and our communities. The Beacon Banner prepared for "Commitment Sunday," and to which we added by hand during the service, illustrated the range of organizations we already support. This service, along with the Sundays that Lorelei Greenwood and John Spruill led in April, affirmed how we are all already contributing to transformations—in our lives, in our church, in our communities.

Looking ahead to the spring and summer, there will be a number of ways to continue to "be the change," to borrow from the theme of the UU Theater production last fall. Many of us may return from the Ferry Beach Retreat next week brimming with energy and passion to share, perhaps by availing ourselves of the volunteer opportunities that abound in greater Lewiston-Auburn.

Opportunities, of course, also abound within our church. We on the board began the church year with the theme of commitment. In the spirit of Lorelei's words from the pulpit on April 10, "I will hold on to hope" that we will witness and participate in an abundant array of such commitments to ourselves and to each other.

— Eben Miller

During our Stewardship Service, two of our RE program participants explained how our church equips them to minister to the world with love:

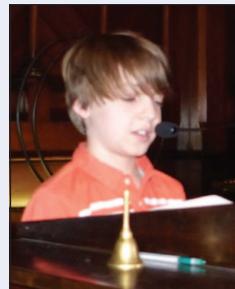
Carlos:



"Our church equips me to love because it helps me to be a good friend. Good friends listen to each other. I have a lot of people at our church who teach me how to listen. For example, Rev.

Jodi listens to me and answers my questions about God. In Sunday school my teachers listen to me talking about my week. These are examples from my church that equip me to be a good listener to my friends at school, at church, and at my summer camp."

Ian:



"I help contribute to the community in a few ways. One of the ways I do is by playing Christmas music to residents of nursing homes like Clover Manor, Montello Manor, Schooner

Estates, Odd Fellows Home, and Russell Park. In church we learn to love anyone. I show love when I play music and entertain them. Sometimes they sing along and that makes me feel good inside. I also gave thank-you bags to truckers who had to work on Thanksgiving this past fall. We were saying thank you to them for delivering supplies to shops and giving up their family time for that. Seeing their faces when we gave them the bags made my day. I encourage you to do things to help or make people happy in our community so you can feel good and show love like we learn in church."

SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

SECOND COLLECTION SCHEDULE

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

May 2016	United Somali Women of Maine
June 2016	Greater Androscoggin Humane Society
July 2016	New Beginnings

Ranked Choice Voting



Finn Melanson of FairVote Maine held up fairly well as about a dozen UUs peppered him with questions on ranked choice voting. If you missed it but would like to see presentation, please contact Toby at news@auburnuu.org.

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Microloan Update

Five years ago, we held aside \$5,000 from Arlene Siekowski's bequest to invest in our community. SJ found a program run by Coastal Enterprises, Inc. which administrated a loan to a Somali business owner with a shop on Lisbon Street, and paid us annual interest. That loan has now been repaid and we are considering where to re-invest the principal, since CEI no longer runs that loan program. Stay tuned for news about the new investment!

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mUUve toward justice

Attend the MUUSAN annual meeting entitled "Organizing for Strength and Action" on Saturday, May 14 from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at UU Augusta. Contact Jane Pentheny: janepentheny@verizon.net.

Reproductive Justice

Following the Hobby Lobby court decision, our own Pearl Sawyer and others were looking for Reproductive Justice action. We now have an opportunity to work with Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund on their Abortion Stigma Reduction campaign. Pearl has endorsed this effort!

- **Canvass training** with Lindsay Ware on Wednesday, May 18, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the vestry. This is for people who want to learn more about the campaign in general, and have additional discussion.
- **Full-day training + canvass** will be held **June 4 from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.** Participants will learn about the campaign, watch actual interview tapes, and then go out in the community.

Anyone interested in canvassing needs only to attend the day of the canvass to participate. For more information contact Lindsay Ware at Lindsay.Ware@ppnne.org or 272-2187.



Got PRIDE?

Walk the Portland PRIDE Parade with MUUSAN Saturday, June 18. More info: www.muusan.org

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

The deadline for the JUNE-JULY Open Door newsletter is
WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2016

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

YARD SALE UPDATE



What a successful yard sale we had! We made just a few dollars short of \$1,000!

Thank you so much to all who donated items. They were of good quality and we appreciated your meeting the deadline for getting them to the church by Thursday. We appreciated all the folks who helped sort and price and then staff the sale on Saturday. It was a great collaborative effort and an excellent financial reward. Thanks to everyone!

– Mary Lou Hofmann

TREASURER'S REPORT

While fiscal 2016 is winding down, we are entering a challenging time of year. We have managed to survive on \$127,141 of stewardship contributions this year and it is important to do at least as well in fiscal 2017. Whether the Finance Committee experiences stress this final quarter will depend on the results of Stewardship Sunday. For those who were unable to make this special service, be sure to fill out your stewardship card and turn it in or send it to the church office.

In fiscal 2017 we have a special stewardship line item for our UUA and NNED dues. We have defaulted on this obligation in the past. Funds were authorized from the General Fund managed by John Davison to pay the UUA dues this fiscal year, but this obligation should not be paid from our scarce endowment resources. I hope that you will treat your support of the UUA and NNED as a separate donation in addition to your stewardship obligation.

Seventy-five percent of the year has elapsed through March and we are still on target to achieve our stewardship goal. Currently we stand at 73% of budget, within the 3% slippage figure built into our operating projections. Total expenses stand at 68%, although we have some large building and grounds bills that were paid in April to cover the cost of the problems we had with boiler flameouts in December.

We just completed our Yard Sale which raised just under \$1,000. Next up is our Service Auction. I encourage you to bid early and often to make this a very successful event. Please do what you can to make "Stone Soup" for the Church to nourish us in fiscal 2017. Thanks to everyone for creating a financially successful year so far!

– Al Sargent

Auburn UU is proud to host
Empty Bowls 2016, a fundraiser for
Trinity Jubilee Center.

Sunday, May 15, 4:30-6:30 in our vestry

LOCAL FOOD
LOCAL POTTERY
LOCAL MUSIC

May 15
4:30-6:30

Empty Bowls Supper 2016

to benefit

Trinity Jubilee Center

with dinner from...





UU THEATER NEWS

Wings of Spring Drag benefit for UU Theater

Thanks to our angel Christopher Dufour, who presented Toby Haber with a donation check for over \$500 at the performance! And thanks to our UU delegation in the audience: Peter & Casey Floyd, Brian & Michael Bickford, Michael Herrmann & Christine, Grayling Cunningham, Toby Haber-Giasson, and Anne Kinney.

CELEBRATING OUR CHURCH & OUR VALUES AT FERRY BEACH!

As we read this many of us are celebrating our UU church community together at Ferry Beach, April 29, 30, and May 1.

Nearly 80 of us from Auburn UU registered for this extraordinary annual weekend gathering at the UU Camp and Conference Center on the shores of Saco Bay. Five of our families and three individuals were able to utilize scholarships thanks to the fundraising at our Chili Cook-Off. Much gratitude to *all* the willing hands that made this gratefully received financial aid possible!

Additional appreciation goes to our volunteer retreat workshop and activity contributors:

- Michael Hayashida for taking the lead for our Friday evening Sing-Along
- Bonnie Soper for guiding a morning birding group around campus
- Crystal Thorpe for facilitating the workshop, “Who Gets Grandma’s Yellow Pie Plate™?”
- Bill Frayer for leading the “Art of Stillness” TED Talk
- Jan Vachon for raising the campus energy with a drumming circle
- Diane Chasse for being a willing fill-in (for Pixie) to assist with the card-making workshop
- Ron Spofford for being the ever vigilant, super responsible Campus Retreat Sexton



and continuing to help me promote the retreat at church

- Mike Herrmann for his assistance with Retreat registrations during coffee hours
- And all 80 of you for your happy, supportive, celebratory participation

With this annual retreat we are building meaningful connections with our UU neighbors from the Allen Avenue UU Church in Portland and the Norway UU Church who share this tri-church gathering with us. Thank you all. Together we are blessed and are blessing one another as we feed our hearts, minds, souls and bodies, so we can better feed the world.

—Anne Kinney, Denominational Affairs Rep.

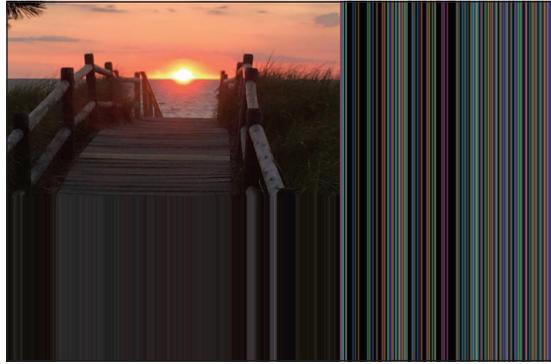
STRONG AUBURN UU PRESENCE AT NNED ANNUAL MEETING

Three Auburn UU'ers attended our Northern New England District's (NNED) well-received Annual Meeting and Gathering in Concord, NH the second weekend in April.

Programming was based on the NNED Board's recent "Listening Campaign" that asked every UU church board in Maine, NH, and Vt. to relate what their congregations do well and what challenges them. The NNED Board analyzed results and invited representatives from congregations who had "best practices" to share their successes.

Kitsie Claxton participated as an invited presenter to share highlights about Auburn UU's successful lay-led Worship Associates program. As a founding member of Auburn's worship associates in the late 1990's, Kitsie has chaired the group since then. She related program experiences and answered questions posed by delegates from other UU churches.

Jane Pentheny was available to assist with a Social Justice Panel that featured small, mid-sized,



and large UU congregations with stories of their varied approaches in engaging their churches with wider community issues.

Anne Kinney, as an NNED Board member, had helped plan the day's events.

A number of UUA and New England Region staffers attended and enthusiastically applauded the success of the gathering. Harlan Limpert, UUA Chief Operating Officer, was so impressed by the NNED "Listening Campaign" and summary of results presented that he asked for a template to share with other UU districts throughout the country.

Early feedback from attendees indicates they left inspired and motivated, with new incentives and ideas for action in their own congregations.

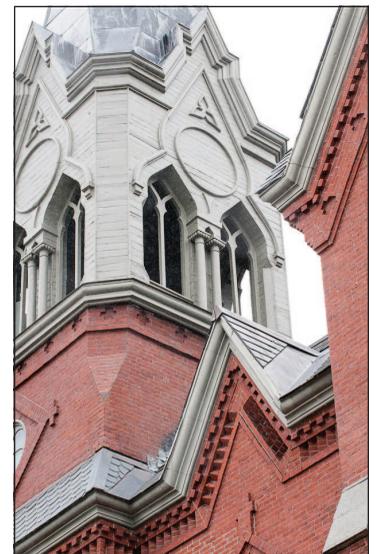
Ask Kitsie and Jane to share their experiences! And consider attending next year's NNED Annual Meeting in April: all are welcome – the inspiration is contagious.

– Anne Kinney, Denominational Affairs Rep.

An image of our church was featured in the "Mystery Photo" column of the *Sun Journal* on Sunday, April 17, with the winning response published on April 24. From the column:

"In a random drawing of the correct entries, Joel Haslett of Oxford was chosen as the winner. When contacted, Haslett explained that he had been to concerts at The First Universalist Church in Auburn, so he thought he recognized where the photo was taken. The church, at 169 Pleasant St., Auburn, was built in 1876 to a design by John Stevens of Boston, Mass., and has been a significant landmark in the city since its construction. Haslett said he checked Google maps to make sure it was where he thought it was. He stated, 'It appears that the photographer was standing next to utility pole #18 on Pleasant Street when he took the photo.'"

Dillingham, Russ. "Mystery Photo." *Sun Journal* April 17 and April 24, 2016: B7. Photo: Russ Dillingham/*Sun Journal*



COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Thanks to **Sara Goodrich**, who represented Auburn UU at the April chamber breakfast. Will you be our representative on May 12 or June 9? Contact Toby at news@auburnuu.org.



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Check In @ Church on your smartphone, to let your friends know where you are on Sunday morning (then turn it OFF, please).



Please send event news to Toby at news@auburnuu.org for an e-blast, Facebook post, newsletter piece, or press release!

OPEN MIC

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; all ages! This month's Open Mic is on **FRIDAY, MAY 13**.



At April's open mic, Bill Frayer marked his return to Maine with some colorful poetry about Mexico.

MAY EVENTS

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

Sun, May 1	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes <i>Second Collection: United Somali Women of Maine</i>
Wed, May 4	5:30 p.m.	Pagan Ritual: Beltane
Sun, May 8	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes
Mon, May 9	6:30 p.m.	Board Meeting (in the office - open to all)
Fri, May 13	7:30 p.m.	Open Mic / Poetry Slam
Sat, May 14	10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	MUUSAN Annual Meeting (UU Augusta)
Sun, May 15	10:00 a.m. 11:15 a.m. 4:30-6:30 p.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes Membership Committee Meeting Empty Bowls Supper (vestry)
Wed, May 18	6:30-8:00 p.m.	Canvass training with Lindsay Ware of Planned Parenthood Maine Action Fund (vestry)
Thurs, May 19	5:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.	Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Drumming Circle
Sat, May 21	1:30 p.m.	Celebration of Life for Madeline Jordan
Sun, May 22	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes Service Auction
Mon, May 23	4:30 p.m. 5:45 p.m.	SURJ Vigil for Racial Justice on Longley Bridge (near Gritty's) Game Night following SURJ Vigil
Wed, May 25		Newsletter submission deadline for June-July issue
Sun, May 29	10:00 a.m.	Worship Service / Religious Exploration classes