



The Downeast Beacon
of Liberal Religion

The NUUS

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Ellsworth
121 Bucksport Rd., Ellsworth, ME 04605

(207) 667-4393

www.uuellsworth.org

Volume 42

No. 2 February 2010

A Month of Sundays

(All morning services at 10:30 a.m.)

February 7. *The Richness of Compost*

Imbolc marks the stirrings of the earth after it has lain fallow. What grows from fallow times? What is the difference between aerobic and anaerobic decomposition? Worms, slime mold, does it make a difference? What have we made in these months of darkness?

Rev. Leela Sinha

February 7, 2:00-3:30 PM. A Celebration of the Life of Mary Ann Solet.

February 14. Rev. David Henry, former pastor of Lamoine Baptist Church

February 21. Rev. Sara Huisjen

February 21, 1:30 PM. Drumming Circle
[See notice on this page]

February 28. *Purity and Virtue*

In the Hindu tradition, fire purifies. What remains is clean, true, beyond reproach. March 1 is Holi, the Hindu festival of spring, and a celebration of the death of yet another theoretically-invincible demon. What does it mean to celebrate destruction, or to be purified through pain?

Rev. Leela Sinha

DRUMMING CIRCLE:

All are welcome to join a drumming circle on Sunday February 21st at 1:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. We intend to meet the 3rd Sunday of each month, all levels of experience are welcome. To be put on the email list please send an email to Hope Lewis at: woovle@earthlink.net with DRUMMING in the subject line.

Anne N. Ossanna

Church Directory Revisions

Our church directory is being updated in preparation for reprinting in the spring. If you have changes in your address, email, or phone numbers please leave a message by phone or email with Caitlin in the church office. (207-667-4393) office@uuellsworth.org

Down East Discussion Group

The Down East Discussion group will not be meeting in February and March.

Unexpected Grace

It's coming. We can't see it, we can't feel it, but it's coming. Spring is coming. Imbolc, the Celtic and neopagan festival of spring, of the returning warmth, of the rising light, of fire and possibility, is here. This is the time of the stirrings of life in the bellies of pregnant ewes, of planning in earnest for planting, of dreaming, of hoping, of nurturing that which is to come. For Catholics it is the feast of St. Brigid, or it is Candlemas. Candles for the year's use are blessed in church, and in a crossing-over of traditions, fireplaces are cleaned out and fires are started anew; perhaps this was the first day of the year when it was reasonable to let the fire go out.

If it seems like the pagan year with its eight festivals keeps us in a constant state of preparation or celebration, it's true. Every six and a half weeks around the year the change is significant enough to honor, to mark, to tend. We have lost the rhythm when we celebrate Christmas and Easter, winter and spring, and let the rest of the year fall away. It is good to mark time, to pause, to reflect, to turn over new leaves, to start anew. Every six and a half weeks--every 45 days--is about right. Enough time to begin something and finish it, enough time to learn something, but not enough time to get mired.

For, as Marge Piercy says:

things grow in the real world, slowly enough. If you tend them properly...

connections are made slowly; sometimes they grow underground. You cannot always tell by looking what is happening...

reach out, keep reaching out, keep bringing in. This is how we are going to live for a long time: not always, for every gardener knows that after the digging, after the planting, after the long season of tending and growth, the harvest comes.

In this season of planting, of seeding, of beginning, let us dream and plough and tend well.

blessings,
Leela

Religious Education and Exploration

I am very much enjoying getting to know the Religious Education and Exploration teachers/leaders, parents, children and youth. As I get to know you all I am envisioning an even stronger and more dynamic church-wide group committed to mutually sharing and growing together! If you have questions, concerns, or would just like to say "Hi!" I hope you will get in touch with me. I am in the office, unless I have a scheduled meeting, from 12:00PM to 2:30PM every Wednesday and until 3:30 Fridays. I am more than happy to meet at other times by appointment or by telephone. My home number is 990-2612. I will leave a note on the white board on the RE office door if I know that I will be out of the office for a planned meeting. If the weather is at all questionable please call me at my home to confirm that I'll be in or to meet with me by phone.

Youth Con Planned

February 5th – 7th Youth Con at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor! See Tom for a registration form.

February 2010 Adult Education Offerings

All will be held at UUCE on Sundays from Noon - 1:30 PM, except potluck Sundays Session will be cancelled if church is cancelled due to weather

February 14 "UUA Seven Principles", Initial statement "We covenant to affirm and promote". Session 4 of this 4 part series on our Seven Principles, come and discuss how each Principle works in your life. Facilitators: Pam Person & Evelyn Foster

February 21 "Understanding Atheism"

1st of this 2 part series - Facilitator: Nicole Leahy

February 28 "Understanding Atheism"

2nd of this 2 part series - Facilitator: Nicole Leahy

Mardi Gras Variety Show

Mark your calendar for our winter fundraiser, a Mardi Gras Dinner and Variety Show, Saturday, February 6th, beginning with a scrumptious Cajun-flavored dinner at 5:30. Taking the theme from "Fat Tuesday" and "Carnival" celebrations occurring this year over the weekend of February 13-16, the church will be decked out appropriately and a costume parade is scheduled for 6:45. A family-friendly variety show at 7:00 will include Brazilian jazz, the Tribal Spice dance troupe, the choir singing the famous Mardi Gras tune "Iko Iko", Cajun accordion music, and much more -- be prepared for an entertaining surprise or two. And come in costume!

The money raised will be shared 50/50 with Loaves and Fishes. Tickets may be purchased from Jenn Ryan or David Towle (adults \$10, youth 7-16 \$5, children 6 and under free). Additional donations of money and food for Loaves and Fishes are of course welcome.

"Laissez lez bon temps rouler!"

Ellsworth Touchstone Circle

will begin on February 23rd and continue each Tuesday through the end of March. Each session will run from 1:00-3:00pm. There are two seats still available for this experience. If you would are interested, please call Evelyn Foster-667-5998.



Caring Committee Notes

Celia Scott expressed concern for her sister Linda, who was hospitalized with blood clots.

Wayne Smith said that he'd just found out that his girl friend from high school was diagnosed with many cancers. He is thinking strongly of Kathy while she endures many treatments and tries to get well.

Karen Wiggleworth's mom, who has been in declining health for the past year, has developed a cancerous breast tumor. We will keep Karen and her family in our thoughts.

Toby Manring's husband has left. We will keep her in our thoughts.

Jon Thomas is turning 70. Happy Birthday, Jon!

Lisa's mom passed away Tuesday. We offer our sincere sympathy.

Wayne's brother's brother-in-law died. We offer our sincere sympathy.

Judy Rothrock's granddaughter is losing sight. We will keep her in our thoughts.

Becka Gagne's husband has had a nervous breakdown. We will hold them in our thoughts.

New attendee, Toby Betanchourt's brother left for Afghanistan last week. We wish him safety during his tour of duty there.

Dillan Phillips has his first grandchild. Congratulations!

Kathy Combs is relieved to have returned home after being away much of October, November and December caring for her mom. Her mom is back at home and the necessary visiting services are in place and changes to her home have been completed.

We would appreciate if people would share their names during Joys and Sorrows as sometimes the Caring Committee is not able to identify the voice.

We hope to see everyone at the Mardi Gras Celebration. Happy Valentine's Day to all.

UUCE takes a Stand on Social Witness Issues

1. The Peace and Social Action Committee, at their January 17 meeting, which was open to all congregants, voted 12 to 0, with 1 abstention, to approve the **Draft Statement of Conscience on Peacemaking for the UUA**. This Statement is the culmination of four years of study/action on the part of congregations across the country. It is a consensus statement that it is hoped all UUs will support. If enough congregations like ours approve, the final vote on it will be held at GA this coming June. You are encouraged to read the full text online at <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/peacemaking/>. Here are a few excerpts:

We repudiate aggressive and preemptive wars, the disproportionate use of force, and the targeting of civilians. We support international efforts to curtail the vast world trade in armaments and call for the ultimate disarmament of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

For those among us who make a formal commitment to military service, we will honor their commitment, welcome them home, and offer pastoral support. For those among us who make a formal commitment as conscientious objectors, we will offer documented certification, honor their commitment, and offer pastoral support.

We also voted on our most favored five of six issues that have been proposed for study and action in the 2010-2014 social witness cycle. It was hard to choose, but, after a good and lively discussion, we did it. We will send the following issues on to UUA: Ending Slavery; Energy, Peace, and Justice; Immigration as a Moral Issue; National Economic Reform; and Revitalizing American Democracy. We left out Nuclear Disarmament, which is, of course, also important.

2. The UUA is in the middle of a four-year study/action project on **Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice for 2008-2012**. As for other Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs), the UUA provides a study guide, a list of resources, and suggestions of action, and each congregation is free to study and take action in their own way. With the Ethical Eating issue, it is hoped that congregations can develop effective strategies to address two of the world's biggest problems: social inequality and environmental destruction. March 1, 2010 is the deadline for congregations and districts to submit comments regarding the Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice CSAI and the Resource Guide. We will discuss the Draft CSAI on "[Ethical Eating](#)" at the Peace and Social Action Committee meeting on February 21, 9 am, RE wing. Please read the draft text, available online at <http://www.uua.org/socialjustice>, plan to attend this meeting, and let us know if you have any comments to contribute.

- Martha Dickinson, for PASA

Everybody Eats

A free meal is available every Monday in Ellsworth, at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, from 3 pm to 6 pm. Everyone is welcome to eat and enjoy the good vibes. We also need volunteers to prepare, serve, and clean up. We have two shifts: 11 am to 3 pm for preparation and 3 to 7 pm for serving and cleanup. Shorter shifts are also welcome. Everyone, including UU'ers, is encouraged to stop by to enjoy the excellent food and company and to think about volunteering some of your time. Go to the website: <http://everybodyeats4free.blogspot.com/> or see Martha Dickinson for more information.

Personnel

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Treasurer's Corner

By the time you read this you should have received your pledge statement through December, 2009. For your information, I also included a copy of my January Treasurer's Report to the church Board. My major concern is the short fall of \$9,447.00 that I am presently aware of and the projection of short fall in income of \$7,759.00 in June 2010 with no cash reserve in the bank to cover it. If we are unable to cover our payroll and expenses, it will be necessary to raise more capital quickly. We have a staff of five individuals that are dependent on us for their income. I am monitoring our expenditures carefully and I am recommending only necessary expenditures at this time. If you are unable to complete your pledge for whatever reason, it would be helpful if you let me know so I can plan accordingly. The pledge statement you received covered from July 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009. If for tax purposes you need a yearly statement, please contact me and we will provide one for you.

Right now, because of prepaid pledges, our cash flow is good and I am hopeful it will continue through the third quarter. I could be pleasantly surprised if all of us are able to complete our pledges in full by the end of June 2010. We should be proud of the \$4,199.87 that we raised for charitable organizations so far this church year.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me or talk to me during coffee hour after church.

Don Martin
Treasurer

From The Board

Board Meeting on January 14, 2010

Present: Karen Volckhausen, Cynthia Perkins, Eileen Brennan, Ruth Eveland, John Fink, Judy Rothrock, Don Martin, Diana Cate, Rev. Leela Sinha, Tom Grogan, Kay Wilkins, Bob Dickens
Kay Wilkins spoke in behalf of the Political and Social Action Committee and talked about the importance of coming to the meeting on January 17 to discuss the action issues which will be on the agenda for GA.

She also discussed the changes that the UUA wants to make such as changing GA to biennial, reducing the number of delegates, and providing subsidies for delegates.

The board approved the contract for the Director of Lifespan Religious Education. They also set a date and plan for the next evaluation of the minister to be completed by February 15 if possible.

A new plan is in place for notification of cancellation of church services. It will be on the church answering machine, the e-mail, TV (TBA) and WERU. Folks who don't have access to regular media can call Diane Cate and be put on a call list.

Agenda for the parish meeting on January 31 will be: approval of the nomination committee, budget report, boiler report, booking space for meetings.

Treasurer's report

There are still 15 pledging units that have not paid anything in the last 6 months. With big expenses coming up, it will be important to get pledges in. See elsewhere for complete report

Minister's report

There are many pastoral care issues currently. We need to be gentle and caring of each other. The Ellsworth Ministers' Association gives week-day services during lent. Jerry Stone (who participated in Leela's instillation) will give one at UUCE on March 17. We are hoping for a great attendance. Money from the plate on January 17 will go to Haiti through the UUSC.

Report from Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Tom is enjoying getting to know congregation members and children. He is trying to get familiar with the structure in place and what is happening. There will be a breakfast on January 31 from 8:30 to 10:00 for teachers, children, committee members,

volunteers and anyone else. He is hoping for a good attendance.

According to UUA-LREDA policy, a religious educator should have no leadership role for two years in their previous congregation after leaving, including speaking engagements.

These policies are in place to ensure that the congregation is able to fully release the outgoing professional from their role and fully embrace and support the incoming professional. It also encourages the new staff person to develop their own unique strengths and relationship with the congregation. Even our best intentions are not enough to protect us from embedded habits and expectations. So Sonia will not be with us for the next year. This will help our RE programs to be as strong and healthy as possible.

The Board has struggled with this policy but has come to believe it is best for all concerned. If you have concerns about this, please discuss it with any of the members of the Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Volckhausen
Secretary



From the Church of the Larger Fellowship

Going for a walk?
Commuting to work?
Wouldn't you like to take along some UU friends?

For your UU listening pleasure --

Unitarian Universalist Podcasts from the Church of the Larger Fellowship:

Sermons, meditations, RE materials and more
Anytime and any place

Use your iPod, MP3 player, or computer.

Hear the voices of UU contributors to the CLF's worship publication via iTunes subscription, or listen à la carte.

The Church of the Larger Fellowship is the UU congregation through mail and the Web. Our monthly worship publication **Quest** (also available in print and online) gathers contributions from renowned UU ministers.

Have a listen —
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Visit the Church of the Larger Fellowship at
www.clfuu.org

Beth Murray
Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF)
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From the Hancock County Cultural Network

February 2 (+ next six Tuesdays): Discussion series on "Sustainability" w/Belfast Eco-Village and Maine Earth Institute, 6:30-8 PM, 45 Edgecomb Rd., Belfast. Coleen, 342-4778 or croraven@fairpoint.net.

February 4: Writer and activist Nikki Giovanni speaks on writing, black arts, and social change, 2-4 PM (Granite Room, MUB, UNH, Durham, NH) and 7-8:30 PM Johnson Theatre, UNH, and Durham). Call 603-862-3290 or office.diversity@unh.edu.

February 4-5: "Introduction to Organic Farming" workshop for farmers considering converting to organic, Island Institute, Main St., Rockland. MOFGA, 568-4142 or mofga@mofga.org or www.mofga.org.

February 6 (snow date: February 13): Workshop for war tax resisters and annual meeting to plan Tax Day activities, 10 AM-3 PM, U-U Church, 69 Silver St., Waterville. Maine War Tax Resistance Resource Center, 525-7776 or rosc@psouth.net.

February 15-19: "Mediation: Premises, Practices, and Policies" training, Hutchinson Center, Belfast. Call 338-8000 to register or for more information.

February 17: "Three Thousand Years and Life" film shown (prisoners run Walpole prison in 1970's) and discussion with former political prisoner Ray Luc Levasseur on proposed legislation to limit solitary confinement in Maine prisons, 6 PM, Free Library, Belfast. Peace and Justice Group of Waldo County, 525-7776 or rosc@psouth.net.

February 27: Sacred Heart/St. Dominic's Haiti Project Empty Bowl supper to benefit Haiti relief, 6 PM, Sacred Heart Church, corner Sherman and Mellen Sts., Portland. Wells Staley-Mays, 409-0778 or guide.freedomtrail1850@yahoo.com.

Message from the President

Talking With Each Other. Really Talking.

Several situations have arisen in the last couple of months that have created at a minimum a sense of irritation and at the maximum feelings of distrust. This is Not Good.

It could have been a careless statement that was misheard or over interpreted, way beyond the flip way it was offered. Sometimes it has been an email that went astray or a phone call that wasn't returned in a timely way. We have also had few disagreements that were not properly aired and worked through to allow the parties to get to acceptance if not genuine resolution. Promises were made and not fulfilled; expectations raised but no useful path offered. And ill feelings have been the result.

All of us have been on one side or another of these situations. Many of us have been on both. Have we learned from these experiences? Can we reduce the number of times this happens?

We know we are not perfect people. We are works-in-progress. Recognizing that fact does not, however, sanction our just shrugging off the miscommunication, nor excuse us from working to repair it and trying harder to get it right next time.

In a simple situation it's always a good idea to say, "Oops, that didn't come out right" or "What I really meant to say was..." But sometimes it needs more than that. Sometimes you have to sit down face to face and explain in more detail what your point was. *And then you have to listen to the other person do the same.* (I sometimes find myself slipping into explanation mode without leaving an obvious space for the other person to do the same. My husband is particularly good at reminding me that there may be another point of view that needs to be considered.)

What happens when the rationally offered explanation doesn't clear the air, when the misunderstanding has tipped from opposing points of view to injured feelings? You know you didn't mean to hurt anyone with what you said, but it was interpreted in a way that did injure someone. Well,

I think it is always good to offer an apology, as long as you are sincere. (That phrase used so often these days - "I'm sorry *if* I hurt your feelings" - is such a hollow sentence and drives me nuts. It doesn't even acknowledge that you did hurt someone's feelings, much less that you really care about what you did.) The apology will either be accepted, and you can step back and try again, or it won't be and a distance is created.

I am aware that there are distances between some members of our community. Not just the "I don't really know that person very well" sort of situation, but the "That person and I no longer have common ground" condition. This makes me sad. I know that not everyone in our congregation is going to be best buddies with everyone else. However, we should be able to get along together well enough that there aren't crevasses across the floor.

This takes work. Work by the individuals involved *and* work by those around the individuals. Let's help each other. Support an effort to clear up a problem rather than just commiserate when someone complains about someone else. Don't accept that it has to be this way. Speak up for trying to get a situation resolved instead of shoved aside.

We cannot be genuinely welcoming and accepting of newcomers if we are not as open with those already here. If we don't treat each other well, visitors will notice and back away.

It's still early in this new year (and possibly decade, depending on how you count it!). I'm not much for annual resolutions, but I do think it's a good idea to evaluate what you might do better in the future. Please consider this idea: find someone with whom you have had a misunderstanding and mutually commit to getting through it. You don't have to end up best friends, but if you are able to move forward then others will notice and you won't have to feel yucky when you see that person across the room.

I have a little list I'll be working on....

Yours in ministry,
Ruth A. Eveland,
President of the Board of Trustees