

The NEWS



The Unitarian Universalist Church of Ellsworth

121 Bucksport Road, Ellsworth, Maine 04605

Phone: (207) 667-4393 Web: <http://uuellsworth.org>

Vol. 40, No. 3

March, 2008

A Month of Sundays

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

March 2. *A Church That Says Yes*

-Rev. Leela Sinha

March 9. TBA

March 16. *Walking the Borders; Living in Balance*

-Rev. Leela Sinha

March 23. *Another Sunrise*

-Rev. Leela Sinha

March 30. (TBA)

Universalist Convocation

May 2-4
Barton Center
Oxford, MASS.

Complete information will be available by March 1
at www.nmuc.org/Convo

UUCE Directory

The 2008 UUCE Directory will be published after our new Board members are voted in at our May Parish meeting. If you are not currently in our directory and wish to be included, or if you have corrections or updates to the information that was published in 2007, please contact Peggge Geiger or Sue Aubrey.

Podcasts from Leela's recent sermons

are now online, thanks to Leela, Matt, and David. Listen at your leisure. Look for the link on the menu at the left of the main page at

<http://uuellsworth.org>.

Let me know if you have any trouble with the links.

--- Martha Dickinson, webtender

New Church Mailing Address

People are still using the church's old (P.O. Box) mailing address! Please use the 121 Bucksport Rd. address for your correspondence to the church!



Unexpected Grace

*Let us try what it is to be true to gravity,
to grace, to the given, faithful to our own voices,*

*...The pebbles we hold in our mouths help us to
practice song,
and we sing to the sea.*

--Jeanne Lohmann

Practicing has never come easy to me. I start a routine and then stop it, dismayed at the trouble of finding the same amount of time daily or weekly or monthly; dismayed at the chaos in my life as it shows up, thrown in sharp relief against the order of perfect, regular action, or the ideal of it. When I was eleven I took up flute lessons that lasted until I was nearly sixteen and in all those years I never once settled into practice like the familiar friend it could reportedly become. Always, always I fought with it, struggled with it, pulled and pushed and tugged at my schedule and at all of the things I wanted desperately to fit into the mere 24 hours each day begrudged me. Only 24 hours! Whatever could I possibly do with that, when school took eight and theater another two; when homework swallowed whole anything that was left behind and food was only an interruption in the day's long list?

And so I fought. I fought everything that made no sense, everything that lacked gratification, everything that didn't feed my soul. Youth group won my heart because it fought for something that mattered and gradually, slowly, it became the thing that I did when I didn't do anything else. I did youth group when I was tired, when I was sick, when I was angry or depressed; I did youth group when I was joyous and when the whole world was exploding with spring; I did youth group when we lay on the floor, panting in the humid summer to plan the next year's work.

I had found a practice. I did not know it, did not call it that, did not think of what I was doing as rote or

routine or as anything but deeply fulfilling church, but I know, I know now it was practice.

Long before people had the leisure for music, long before art was for art's sake, long before people had the ability to move beyond survival they had religion, religion to understand the world and keep the wolves at bay; religion to keep living things living and dead things dead and to embrace the earth and the sky with which they lived. They practiced planting and watering and growing; they practiced dancing and watching the stars. They practiced because they needed to; they practiced because they knew no other way; they practiced because they believed their lives depended on it.

Our lives still depend on it. We come to church although it makes no sense, although in theory all of the functions of church can be had elsewhere, because we need something more than the sum of the parts—we need the greater whole. We need integrated lives of faith with ethics and practice and exploration and education and relationship and interconnection and give and take all in one place, all together. We need not just the parts but the interlacing of the components into an integrated whole which has the possibility of being not just a part of our lives, but the frame and background of our lives. And for this to happen, we need practice.

It isn't easy. There are three times as many things as hours in the day, and every thing seems critical, seems central, seems inescapably important. But if we have no ground, if we have no base, we are on precarious footing indeed. As the equinox comes, and the seeds wait deep in the earth for longer days, let us relinquish the part-time attendance to our souls, let us prepare for the regular work of growing things; let us settle in, root deep, and make of our life together a practice.

Blessings,

Leela

Food Pantry

There is a serious problem stocking the shelves of our food pantry, Loaves and Fishes. Cut backs in funding at USDA, many fewer items available from our Good Shepherd sources, and Hannaford and Shaws meager contributions of fresh fruits, vegetables, and bread are alarming. So our contributions in money and goods are truly needed at this time.

One bright spot is that Shaws is contributing one dollar for every one hundred dollars spent, if we save and turn in our receipts. There will be a box for the receipts, look for it and bring in your receipts. Other churches and individuals have already collected \$12,000. That is \$120 for the pantry to spend on needed items. It is amazing how quickly the receipts add up.

Of particular need are protein (canned fish and chicken, peanut butter, beans), cereal, canned fruits, and pasta.

If you have any questions or ideas please talk with Judy Rothrock or Ellen Hughes.

Personnel

Minister

Reverend Leela Sinha: 667-4393
minister@uuellsworth.org

President of the Board

Kay Wilkins: 667-2901
president@uuellsworth.org

Religious Education Chair

Fran Stehman: 244-4122

Music Director

Wayne Smith: 667-9482

Choir Director

Wayne Smith: 667-9482

Newsletter Editor

Lance Funderburk: 276-3301
lfunderburk@roadrunner.com

Care Corner

The Diaz family, Sara, Francisco, Jonah and baby Elena, arrived safely at their destination in State College, Pennsylvania and are busy putting their new home in order and getting settled in. They send their regards to all their UUCE friends and wanted to share their new address & contact information:

2114 Country Glenn Lane
State College, PA 16801
home phone: 814-231-0113
office phone (Francisco): 814-404-8211
Francisco's office email address: fjd10@psu.edu

Spring 2008 – Women & Religion Retreat - “Wings Set Me Free”

Ladies – Mark your calendars! May 30th-June 1st,
Rockcraft Retreat Center, Sebago Lake, Maine.

Registration forms will be in the churches late March and the deadline is April 25th. For a sneak peak of what is planned please visit our blog at www.uuwomenandreligion.blogspot.com!

Thank you,
Leslie Lentz
fbleslie@maine.rr.com
207-284-4401



Elections Committee Seeks Board Members

The Elections Committee is seeking candidates to run for the UUCE Board of Trustees. Presently, the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are open as well as two trustees (general board members). If you are interested in serving, please contact: Tom Martin (667-8128, thosedmartin@verizon.net), Tom Stipe (667-8628, Thomas.stipe@verizon.net); or Sue Clark (244-3051, snbclark@gwi.net).

Their duties are described below in the bylaws. For more information, feel free to contact the elections committee.

Selected excerpts from the UUCE bylaws pertaining to the Board of Trustees:

A. Functions. The Board is responsible for long range planning, overall direction of the church and its policies and programs administration, and business affairs as directed by the membership in parish meetings.

B. Terms of Office. All officers and trustees are elected at the annual meeting in April or May. Terms begin on June 1 and end May 31. Officers (president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer) are elected to two year terms, all two year terms beginning at the same election. Trustees are elected for three years - two trustees to be elected each year. No officer or trustee may serve for more than six consecutive years. After one year of not serving as officer or trustee, a former officer or trustee may be elected to any position. Church employees and non-members are not eligible for election or appointment as officers or trustees.

C. Meetings. The Board meets monthly at a regular time and place. (*comment: the*

board meets on the second Thursday @ 7:00 PM at the church)

D. Removal from Office. Any member of the Board who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without having presented to the Board an acceptable excuse may be removed from the Board by a majority vote of the members present. For other just cause, the Board may remove an officer or trustee by a two-thirds vote of members present.

Items for sale

As many of you know, **Janet Quirk** will be moving to Colorado in the spring. She has generously donated many linens and kitchen items to the church. Thank you, Janet! She wants to sell the following two items:

2003 Toyota Highlander, fully equipped and has only 19,300 miles: \$17,500.

Makasa service for eight with all serving pieces, Queen Ann pattern all white: \$1,000 value selling for \$300.

Should you be interested in these items, please call Janet at 963-7712. Janet, warm wishes to you in this transition in your life. Let us know your new address.

Futon for Sale

(LL Bean mission style)

All Proceeds to UUCE

Best Offer to Martha Dickinson (667-5863) asap



Bumper Stickers

Did you ever wonder what UUCE member **Charles Bassett** does in his spare time? Well, for starters, he prowls our parking lot, taking notes from the bumper stickers he sees on our cars [Editor's note: might this be a breach of homeland security?...].

Here is a small sample of what Charles has found. Others will be published in later editions. Thanks Charles!

Support Peace

Live simply that others may simply live

Who is your farmer?

No on 1

It takes a village to raise a child

Pagan and Proud

Out of Iraq, Now

Hospice makes the road less lonely

W/wrong

I hold the power of peace

It's your hell, you burn in it!

The uncommon denomination: Unitarian

Universalists

Passover Seder

A Passover seder service and meal will be led by the Melody and Dick Kane along with Sandy Pheonix and Suzanna Elkin on Sunday, April 20th. This has always been a popular service.

Sandy and Melody will provide soup and the traditional Seder plate foods. There will be a sign up sheet for attendance and to bring traditional passover food and drink. Foods made with grains or leavening are not allowed. Recipes for possible dishes will be posted.

We will need help with setup on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning and, of course, cleanup. If you can help, call Melody at 359-2320

WINE COUNTRY EXCURSION TO THE NAPA VALLEY

An hour north of San Francisco are the lush vineyards, world class wineries and picturesque small towns of the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. We invite all UUs and friends to share the beauty of our "home" through the UU Fellowship of North Bay's "Wine Country Excursions."

We offer small customized two day tours of our valleys which can include wine tastings, art galleries, museums, scenic trails and much more. We provide private rooms with bath in the homes of our members and experienced guides to conduct tours in their cars.

Napa itself is alive and vibrant with galleries, boutique shops, world-class restaurants, wine tasting rooms and entertainment. Sites of special interest include COPIA (The American Center for Food, Wine and the Arts); Jack London's home (now a state park); the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone; the diRosa Art and Nature Preserve.

Tours are offered from May through October. Plan for two days of touring and a two or three night stay with all local transportation provided. Home hospitality without tours is also available. Our fees are much below market rates for similar services. All proceeds to help our Fellowship grow and purchase property in this expensive real estate market. We have limited openings, so contact us now for details. Tom Wilson 707.254-7443 or 2wilsons1dog@comcast.net

"Napa was as delightful as I had expected. What was equally important and somewhat unexpected was the profound connections I felt with my hosts and hostesses."

Carol Lim, Los Angeles.

Join the UUCE and Community Supported Agriculture



The UUCE Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Ad Hoc Committee is launching year 2 of the UUCE-CSA. Please consider subscribing for a season of fresh, locally grown, organic vegetables. All you need to do is contact us, prepay for the season and pick up your share weekly during production season running the first week of July through mid-October. The whys and wherefores follow:

Why Is Community Supported Agriculture Important?

- ◆ You benefit from fresh, organic food at reasonable prices. Eat real Maine food.
- ◆ Our Church moves one step closer to being a green sanctuary.
- ◆ Direct marketing gives farmers and growers the fairest return on their products.
- ◆ Keeps food dollars in the local community and contributes to the maintenance and establishment of regional food production.
- ◆ Encourages communication and cooperation among farmers.
- ◆ Gives farmers a "guaranteed market" for their produce. Farmers can invest their time in doing the best job they can rather than looking for buyers.
- ◆ Supports the biodiversity and the diversity of agriculture through the preservation of small farms producing a wide variety of crops.
- ◆ Creates opportunity for dialogue between farmers and consumers.
- ◆ Creates a sense of social responsibility and stewardship of local land.
- ◆ Puts "the farmer's face on food" and increases understanding of how, where, and by whom our food is grown.
- ◆ Surplus food can benefit the Loaves and Fishes food pantry or perhaps we can purchase a share for the food pantry.

The Real Deal

Paul and Karen Volckhausen, owners of the Happytown Farm in North Orland are offering several choices for a UUCE CSA. Prices are the same as last year, but we have a new choice.

Package	Weeks (approx. dates)	Persons	Price	Weekly \$ / Person
Height of Season	10 7/13-9/07	4	\$240	\$6.00
Veggie Lovers	16 6/30-10/12	4	\$360	\$5.63
Mini Height	10 7/13-9/07	2	\$160	\$8.00
Mini Lover	16 6/30-10/12	2	\$240	\$7.50
Bouquet	10 7/13-9/07		\$60	\$6.00
Bouquet Lover	16 6/30-10/12		\$90	\$5.63

We'll have a sign-up table in the Community Room during coffee hour over the next few weeks. You can meet Paul and Karen, learn about Happytown Farm and discuss your favorite vegetables. At least ten of us need to make a commitment soon in order for Paul to select his seeds and prepare his land. We would like to have pre-payment ready for Happytown Farm by April 1st, but can arrange a plan for people who need to spread out their payments.

Where do I get my real, fresh, organic, delicious food?

Paul is a regular at the Ellsworth Farmers Market. He will be there Monday & Thursday, 2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sunday pick-up at church can also be arranged. Each participant chooses from among these times for their regular pick-up. If you live outside Ellsworth, consider taking turns picking-up your orders. This is a community affair, a covenant with carrots.

If you missed the sign up table, you can contact any of the committee members, anytime:

- ◆ Jim Fisher bassoon@gwi.net or 374-3678
- ◆ Becka Gagne strivin@wildmail.com
- ◆ Sara Hayman shayman@hospiceofhancock.org
- ◆ Kay Wilkins kwilkins@alumnet.simmons.edu



Message from the President

Whenever I encounter someone who hasn't visited UUCE but has moved here and was affiliated with a UU church in their former life, I make sure they know what a great church we are and how we'd love to have them come find out for themselves. In the course of a recent personal recruitment campaign I exchanged an interesting series of emails from which I have permission to quote: *"It scares me to think it, but I fear I may actually be a failed UU. I have no tolerance for people who are mean, who are bullies or who go out of their way to hurt people."*

To which I replied, "Why what you've described makes you a "failed UU" truly puzzled me. I don't believe being UU means that anything goes. I don't see us as value-neutral at all. Just because we have no fixed creeds doesn't give us the right to abuse others, and Unitarian Universalism doesn't ask us to respect destructive behavior. What you wrote reminded me of a powerful article in UU World which has stayed with me." Though I won't reprint it here, the article which I sent to my new friend was "What Torture Has Taught Me," written by Rev. William Schulz, reflecting on his twelve years at the helm of Amnesty international, from the Winter 2006, UU World issue and still available at their website.

Reading this detailed description of torture both ancient and modern is not easy. What I found as unsettling in his essay was his critique of our first principle. "...our doctrines about human nature, such as the Unitarian Universalist Association's affirmation of the 'inherent worth and dignity of every person,' rest uneasily in a world full of torturers. In what sense can we defend the notion that a torturer is a person of *inherent* worth and dignity? Is the worth and dignity of every person inherent? No, inherency is a construct, a useful myth perhaps, but a myth nonetheless, designed to cover up the fact that we are all sinners and that we are not always certain which sins, and hence which sinners, are worse than others." I won't lead you through all of his thinking in this essay though I hope you will take the time to read or re-read it, but there is a further point I want to include here. He says, "We Unitarian Universalists are champions of the individual as the source of authority for both truth and righteousness... When it comes to deciding right and wrong, when it comes to assigning

worth and dignity, the individual is *not* the final authority. Without a reference to the values of the larger community – of the world community...our individual judgments are fit only for a desert island on which we are the only occupant."

Here is William Schulz, a former President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, questioning one of the bedrock tenets of our faith. What I found unsettling was that *I* had never before thought to question the grand words about inherent worth and dignity. What is wonderful about being a UU is that our principles are not a statement of creed. Therefore, it is indeed my job as well as Bill Schultz's to be thoughtful and willing to change my mind based on new understanding. It is also my job not to do this in isolation, but to work this through in community

Recently, I sat hearing that wonderful ordination sermon by Rev. Mike Moran for our own Rev. Sara Hayman which he described as "practicing some heresy." He said, "...I take issue with our own Unitarian Universalist principles for their emphasis on individualism over community and relationship... The fourth principle of Unitarian Universalism is, 'A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.'... Here is the thing. These words fail to articulate that this act, this search for truth and meaning has no substance of value for isolated individuals. Those words occur in the context of a document whose first principle is explicitly individualistic, and nothing that follows ever recognizes this essential, existential, theological error. The truth is that the search for truth and meaning can *only* take place in the context of community and relationship."

Of course I was hearing a resounding echo of Bill Schulz! So what does this have to do with the nuts and bolts of Board of Trustees meetings? Well, nothing and everything. The reason I've been willing to serve as a leader here at UUCE is because I believe in our "Downeast Beacon of Liberal Religion," where I can grow my faith, stretch my understanding and do so in the context of the service of others which helps build this beloved community.

Kay Wilkins, President

Notes from the Giving Corner

By the time you receive your April NUUS the 2008-09 Stewardship conversations will have begun. Persons from the congregation who have consented to visit with other members and friends will have a breakfast on March 29th where they will review their personal involvement of the past year and consider the coming church year. These volunteers will make their own financial pledge to the church for the next year which begins in July 2008. One of the favorite parts of the meeting is when the visitors get to select the persons with whom they will visit during the Stewardship canvass. This is usually someone with whom they already feel comfortable or someone they would like to get to know. Contacts, phone calls or notes will be made before the April 6th kickoff Sunday to request a visit in your home or a mutually comfortable place. Visits will be made April 6th to 20th if possible.

Please be thinking about that visit! It is a good chance to give feedback about your own insights and to make requests. Comments will be referred to the appropriate persons and your anonymity will be respected. The leadership development committee leans heavily on the visits to fill committee vacancies and get people into tasks that they will enjoy.

Of major importance to the successful functioning of our church are the financial pledges that are made during these visits. You will be given a form with which you may make your pledge. This should be something that is comfortable for your circumstances and as much as possible reflects your dedication to the ongoing condition of the church. This is a congregation of generous people and their belief in this church has allowed us to lay groundwork for a strong future. Please consider your own pledge carefully when you have your stewardship conversation. Thank you for being part of our warm and generous congregation.

-Evelyn Foster, Stewardship Chairperson

Membership Committee

Lunches For Newer Folks

The Membership Committee will resume hosting Sunday gatherings this coming spring. A lunch of soup, bread, and dessert will be provided. This is a time for newer folks to become better acquainted with our minister and some of our members.

If you are interested in participating, please call the church and speak with Sue Aubrey or leave a message. We hope that all of our newer friends and guests will accept this invitation and plan to attend.

Steps To Membership

We are so pleased to see lots of new faces on Sunday mornings. We do hope you will begin to feel at home. If you want to know more about UUCE please sign up for Rev. Sinha's next introduction to Unitarian Universalism class, which will be this spring.

If you are considering joining UUCE, the steps to membership are:

- Meet with the Minister
- If you are new to Unitarian Universalism, attend a four to six session course taught by the minister on the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism and responsibilities of membership.
- If you are transferring from another Unitarian Universalist church, attend a one session course on the culture of UUCE and how it functions.
- Candidates will sign the Membership Book at a "Welcoming Ceremony" on a Sunday morning.
- A pledge card listing both financial and time support will be signed prior to the ceremony, or at that time.

"Welcoming Ceremonies" will be held two or three times a year.

Religious Exploration

Spring Greetings from the Religious Exploration Program. February found the children frolicking in the snow and a time for the RE committee to regroup. We welcome Fran back from her vacation and send a heartfelt THANK YOU to Jean Martin for her tremendous efforts over the past few months. We also thank Bob Dickens and Toby Manring for mentoring the Native American block for the Sr. Youth Group.

At some point during the dark winter days the earth shifted and so did the rhythm of the RE program. Beginning in March we ask that **all** children, with the exception of children in the nursery, (infant to age 4) begin the Sunday service in the sanctuary. After the chalice lighting the children will leave the sanctuary with their teachers. Children that do not wish to attend the RE program will remain in the sanctuary. No child will be allowed to be in the community room without parental supervision during the worship service. Children will need to refrain from card playing, electronic devices, etc. until coffee hour. If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact Fran Stehman or Anne Ossanna.

Nursery - Infants to age 4. While tempting for older siblings to play in this area with the little ones, we remind parents this is a space just for infants and toddlers. Volunteers are needed to help supervise this area during the months of April and May. If you can devote just one Sunday morning during the next few months, please see Fran or Anne and they will sign you up.

Spirit Play - Ages 4 - 8. Anne continues to teach our 7 UU promised through storytelling, art and play. This class LOVES to play in dirt, glitter, paint and outside. Please parents, make sure your children come in clothing OK to get dirty and appropriate for outside March weather.

Jr. Youth - Ages 8 - 14. AHHH tweens.....what an insightful, articulate, compassionate group of

children. Fran will be the lead teacher beginning in March and will begin a new curriculum on Spring Holy Days.....

Sr. Youth - Ages 15 - 18. This group will continue with their coming of age curriculum. Carol has many exciting and challenging topics lined up over the next few months.

WISH LIST:

Volunteers to assist in the nursery during April and May.

Volunteers to prepare snacks for the children.

Volunteers to be on the Religious Exploration Committee - YOU DO NOT NEED TO TEACH, JUST BELIEVE AND ADVOCATE THAT RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION FOR OUR CHILDREN IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF UUCE.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne N. Ossanna



From The Board

Treasurer George Marcus reports UUCE income is exceeding expectations while expenses appear to be as anticipated. Pledge collection is at 73% of the anticipated amount. The Kitchen Fund is at \$8,279.22; the Music Memorial Fund is at \$3,730.15 and Bank/Endowment accounts total \$264,000.00. The UUCE Minister's Discretionary fund is almost exhausted. At the recommendation of the Treasurer, The Board voted unanimously to increase the current year budget for the fund by \$500.00.

Rev. Sinha reports her installation will be held on May 4, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. A committee has not been formalized yet and interested parties are encouraged to contact her. A posting for a 1/2 time Life Span Director has been sent to COA and Bangor Theological Seminary; she also encourages our leadership to show that ministry to children is vital. Leela reports the Administrative Assistant, Sue Aubrey, has been very helpful. The UU Membership class was successful. Leela feels members of the congregation are struggling right now. She will extend pastoral care by making home and hospital visits. The First Wednesday Committee meetings were canceled due to inclement weather. Leela will be out of town from February 20 - 24th and March 5 - 8th on ministerial retreats and meetings. On February 27, she will be preaching a Lenten service in Hancock.

The BOT discussed at length the proposed Mission Statement by the Committee on Ministry which had previously been tabled. Bill Clark made reference to a quote from Helen Boucek, a long time member of UUCE. She stated "UUCE is the Downeast Beacon of Liberal Religion." This statement was enthusiastically adopted.

The BOT reviewed a proposed schedule of increased rental fees. The rental fees have not been altered for many years despite our increase in expenses (heat, cleaning, electricity). The proposal was tabled until the March meeting. Kay Wilkins

and Bill Clark will obtain more information about the rental fees local churches are charging.

Ruth Eveland reported on the feedback she has received on the Safe Congregation Policy since the January Parish Meeting. Most of the comments were regarding the background checks. Ruth will make minor revisions to the policy and submit it to the BOT prior to the March meeting to give Board members the opportunity to review the policy before consideration of adopting it.

Kay Wilkins and Judy Rothrock reported the Stewardship Kickoff will be on April 6th and end on the 18th. The committee is well organized at this point.

David Towle presented BOT members with several estimates to repair the roof which has presented problems with leaks and ice dams. David recommends we repair all roof surfaces except the RE wing and including the sanctuary. The cost of this is \$11,940.00. The Board voted to accept this bid and authorize the withdrawal of \$11,940.00 from the endowment fund.

The Spring Parish Meeting and election of officers will be held on May 18, 2008 directly after the worship service.

Detailed minutes of this meeting and the January Parish meeting are located in the black notebook on the hallway table. All members are invited and encouraged to attend the next BOT meeting which will be held at 7:00 p.m. on March 15, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne N. Ossanna
Secretary



Worship Committee

The Worship Committee (present were Cynthia Perkins, Mary Ann Solet and Leela Sinha) met with our excellent ushers, Jon Thomas and Steve Votey, at their request, on January 16. Our goal was to clarify present procedures re the role of our ushers and to determine whether new procedures are needed in order to create or maintain a place of holy worship in our sanctuary.

We believe that it is very important that the congregation be aware of and hopefully in agreement with these procedures. We welcome and encourage your comments.

The sanctuary doors are closed at 10:15 when the Gathering music begins our time of music and meditation. We ask that people become quiet when entering and remain silent during this period. We also hope that “going and coming” will be kept at a minimum. We will reintroduce a sign which points to the sanctuary for music and meditation and toward the community room for conversation. This should relieve some of the congestion in the foyer.

The ushers will ask that latecomers be seated *only* during announcements and welcome, the first hymn and when the young people leave to go to their classes. The ushers will go “off duty” at this time. We especially ask that no one enter during any “special” music.

Two chairs near the door and sound system will be reserved for the ushers so that they may meet needs which may arise.

We recommend that there be two greeters each Sunday. We also recommend that any visitors with children, after being welcomed, be told about our RE program, including the nursery, if appropriate, and the fact that speakers are in the library so that if the children become restless, the adults may leave with them and still listen to the service.

All speakers from the floor are expected to use the mike brought to them by an usher, and to give their names. This is so that those listening outside, as well as those inside, easily may hear what is said.

An usher will stand at the front of the congregation during music and meditation in an additional effort to be sure that all feel welcome.

The ushers will reserve 5 hymnals so that they may be given to latecomers, with the book open to the song being sung.

Greeters or ushers will suggest that everyone wear a name tag but will not insist.

We agreed that the ushers will speak to Leadership Development about the need for two more ushers. This will insure that all Sundays are covered, including having two more people trained to operate the sound system.

Our person in charge of rentals will add to the list of instructions that chairs must be left as they were found. Ushers will check to be sure that rows are arranged properly.

Both the ushers and the worship committee will become familiar with our disruptive person policy. Leadership Development or the Board will be asked to identify those who should respond during a disruption.

We encouraged Leela to introduce gradually any new formats, ideas, words or actions for worship which she has seen as successful in other churches. We will ask for members to respond and will discuss them from time to time.

We also encourage all members to contemplate their understanding of what a worship service must provide, including whether it be a place and time to gather together as a community or a time for individual journeys or perhaps both.

Peace and Social Action Committee

Maine Refugee Assistance Group

A small group of Mainers meets in Orland to coordinate assistance to refugees on their way to safety in Canada. Some members of this group have been doing this work for decades, back to the time when the great need was aid to refugees fleeing the wars in Central America. These days, refugees from Haiti arrive in the Bangor area, usually via Florida, needing housing and/or transportation across the border into Canada. Some of the refugees are families and some are single men. Some of them have gotten to know Maine as seasonal migrant workers. The United States government will not allow them to stay in the U. S. but does allow them to pass into Canada, where the Canadian government will accept them and organizations exist to help them. Individual Catholics, Episcopalians, Quakers, UUs, and freethinkers have formed the Maine Refugee Assistance Group to coordinate help in this area. (There is also a Vermont Refugee Assistance Group.) If you can help with driving, you would first accompany an experienced driver. If you can help in this effort, either with overnight hospitality or transportation, please let me know.

March 15 Marks 5th Year of US War in Iraq

Please join us in the parking area behind Ellsworth City Hall at 1 pm on Saturday, March 15, for a rally and chain of concern to call for the end to the tragic and destructive US occupation of Iraq and in support of the Winter Soldier project of Iraq Veterans Against the War in Washington, DC. Rob Shetterly, artist and author of *Americans Who Tell the Truth*, will speak to the gathering, and Gray Cox and friends will lead singing. This event is in sync with similar events in towns and villages around Maine, commemorating five years since the US military invasion of Iraq. People throughout Hancock County will gather in Ellsworth for this event. After a brief rally, we will walk along Main Street from the Bridge to Whiting Park and possibly along High St and form a chain of concern.

For more information about the events in Maine, see the Every Village Green website at <http://everyvillage-me.us/2008/>. In case of terrible weather, like last year, check the website for snow date.

- Martha Dickinson

Kitchen Update

This winter has been perfect.....perfect for clearly understanding what the problems are in our roof in the middle section of our church building between the sanctuary and the new RE wing. We really have two problems; one is the lack of insulation resulting in heat loss that allows the development of the beautiful icicles that have formed on that section of the building. The second problem is the lack of ice shield under the shingles so that under the right conditions (which we experienced this winter) ice builds up and some of it melts and creates leaks that become rivers into our kitchen walls and ceiling. The repair of these problems must come first before we do any renovations in our kitchen. We will also thoroughly investigate any damage to the wall board that might have resulted from these water leaks. The Board has approved the installation of ice shield and new shingles on the sanctuary and the mid-section of the building, solving the second problem. Once this has been accomplished then we can do the more exciting work of renovating the kitchen.

Thank you to all of you who continue to donate money towards this exciting project. As those of you who attended the annual meeting in January know, at that time we were about \$1500 short of having enough money to complete the renovation. As the roof is getting repaired we will have the additional time to hopefully raise the remaining money necessary for this project. We so appreciate the generosity of the people in our congregation. Your ideas are always welcome. Thank you. B. Massie