

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.5

May, 2008

A Month of Sundays

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

May 4. *In Praise of Laze*

On this closest Sunday to Beltane we will consider what wisdom we find in the paths of least resistance.

NO POTLUCK due to preparation for Rev. Sinha's installation this afternoon.

-Rev. Leela Sinha

May 11. Sara Hayman will preach this day.

May 18. *101 Gifts*. Flower Communion Sunday

On this day we celebrate the Flower Communion, created by minister Norbert Capek in the mid-20th century to be a uniquely Unitarian ritual. Please bring a flower to church with you; we will gather the flowers together and then take a different bloom with us when we go. This ceremony marks the beginning of our summer church season.

May 25. To Be Announced

June 1. We will hear from our youth and celebrate our graduating seniors. If you have a senior who should be honored or if you are one, please contact Carol Rosinski to be on the list.

Leela's sermons are archived on our website. From uuellsworth.org, click on the menu item -- "Sermons and Minister's Blog" -- for access to podcasts and printable text copy of the sermons of Leela and of some our guests as well..

We are celebrating an installation this month!

On Sunday May 4 at 4 PM, we will gather in the sanctuary to install the Rev. Leela Sinha as this congregation's thirty-third minister. As with an ordination, installation can only be done by a congregation; it marks the commitment between this congregation and the minister you have voted to call. There will be visiting ministers, including the Rev. Brian Kopke, minister emeritus at First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa who will deliver the sermon. Following the ceremony we will have a reception with delicious food and the good company of a strong and loving congregation. Please plan to be there—let's celebrate the choice we have made to be together!

Annual Meeting

Sunday, May 18, following the service

- Election of officers and members of the Board of Trustees
- Acceptance of '08-'09 budget
- Adoption of Same Congregation Policy
- Other business (to be announced)
- Questions?
 - Ask board members

Unexpected Grace

In the mid-Atlantic coast, crocuses come in January, maybe February. Lilacs are for April and dogwoods for May. Things follow an even curve as one season follows the next. Here in the North we don't do things like that. We can't afford to. If you've any doubts, just look at the trees. A month ago we were chilled and grey. Six weeks ago it snowed, just to keep us on our toes. And now we are marking Beltane—the old Celtic festival marking the beginning of summer and growth and fertility and green, green everywhere.

Finally, the season of abundance has arrived.

In warmer climes the summer arrives slowly, with a gentle, even grace. Here it's a different story. We cannot afford to take our time; we cannot wait one extra minute or exercise anything like restraint. Once the growing has begun we're off and running in a race against the first frost, dancing on the fall horizon. It's kind of fun, after all the careful, measured winter, to make a mad dash through spring and into summer, tripping on our own feet and laughing over untied shoelaces.

Sprint across the fields, plant the seeds, and live fiercely, intensely, for our seasons like our tides are fitting drama and vast motion into the same time that anyone has, that we all have.

Let us celebrate growth and beginnings and life; may the warmth of the season open us to greater possibilities and greater love.

blessings,

Leela

Safe Congregation Policy Final Review

At its April meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to make copies of the draft policy available to the congregation to solicit any further comments. Look for the “Safe Congregation Policy” on the UUCE website <http://uuellsworth.org/> and on the table in the lobby. Please forward any suggestions to the members of the task force: Ruth Eveland, Bob Dickens, Bill Clark. The deadline for comments is May 6.

The Board will select one of three suggested statements of purpose and consider any final revisions as provided by the task force at its May 8, meeting. The Policy will be submitted to the congregation at the May 18, Parish Meeting for an up-or-down vote. Although revisions to the policy may be made in the future, no changes will be accepted at that meeting.

Kay Wilkins, President

Universalist Convocation

May 2-4
Barton Center

Oxford, MASS.

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

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

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 by late
March and the deadline is April 25th. For a sneak
peek of what is planned please visit our blog at
www.uuwomenandreligion.blogspot.com!

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

More Bumper Stickers

Here is the last installment of Charles Bassett's list
of bumper stickers. If you want this column to
continue you will have to adorn your bumpers with
more stickers.

There is no excuse for partner abuse.
Kerry Edwards Ducks Unlimited
81 Unclog the artery/Thru trucks on trains
What is a weed? A plant whose virtue has yet to be
discovered
I love Star Island
Peace/ Let it begin with me
One day at a time
God bless the whole world/ no exceptions
You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for
war
Question reality
My church believes in civil rights for all
Impeach the liar
Avoid perfection
Save Democracy
Attack Iraq? NO!

Membership Committee

Name Tags: Is there anyone in the congregation
who is willing to make name tags for "newer
folks"? Someone is needed to take over that task
beginning in June.

Coffee Hour and Pot Luck Lunches: Helen Kazura
will be watching the sign-up sheets for the next six
months. Please help by signing up as you are able.
We all enjoy the social time after the service. There
are no Pot Luck lunches during the summer months:
July, August, and Sept.

Submitted by Peggie Geiger
For the Membership Committee

Message from the President

My parents and I disagreed on many things, most of them trivial, at least in retrospect. Yes, I know, total cliché, but bear with me a minute. One of the less trivial issues of disagreement was the role of religious practice. My parents were mainline Protestants, but they went to whatever church of that general description was in the neighborhood. For example, when they lived in East Sullivan, they attended the tiny Ashville Community Church. I haven't much of an idea what their theological beliefs were. What mattered to them was community and attending church with their neighbors.

On the other hand, I am a Unitarian Universalist first and a member of a particular UU church second. Community matters to me, but I want to build it in a UU context. Not all of you, or even most of you may feel that way. You may agree with my parents. That's certainly a reasonable way to do church, but not my way. Since that's how I feel, I make it a point to attend other UU churches when I travel, as well as district and national events when that's possible.

On April 11 and 12, along with four others from UUCE, I attended the Spring Conference of the new UUA Northern New England District, formed from the Northeast District (Maine) and the NH VT District of UU Societies. I finally understand why our two districts have merged. Formerly, our district included the Canadian Maritime Provinces, but they now belong to the Canadian UU Association, leaving Maine too small to justify the kind of resources that are now available to us as part of a joint endeavor with New Hampshire and Vermont. For example, Karen Brammer, Small Church Specialist, will be increased to $\frac{3}{4}$ time. We will have the benefit of some of that time as we embark on a three-year program, Planning for Growth. You will be hearing more about that in the next few months.

During the course of the two days, we celebrated our consolidation through great worship services with a dynamic three-state choir and sang a new hymn by Grace Lewis McLaren, "From the Mountains to the Sea", commissioned for the occasion.

Gini Courter, the UUA Moderator, was our keynote speaker. Gini challenged us to avoid being too comfortable, knowing most everybody around us in the service, but to open ourselves to the necessary discomfort of growth. She suggested we make a point of getting to know our neighboring UU churches too. According to Gini, each church board should pick a Sunday and go as a group to a nearby UU church. She did warn us to be sure the church knew we were coming so they wouldn't think their minister was in search!

Returning to my argument with my long-departed parents, for me, belonging to a local church is not enough. Knowing the UUs from across Northern New England and beyond gives me a greater perspective and a larger spiritual life than I can get by staying home in Ellsworth.

One more highlight of the weekend was that each church chose one person to stand up and announce our "Good News." We were each given 30 seconds and no longer. I gave UUCE's good news. You won't be surprised at all to learn that I announced that we had called Rev. Leela Sinha to be our settled, full-time minister. You may be surprised to know what else I shared. Leela is our first full-time minister in 52 years. That is indeed, GOOD NEWS!

Kay Wilkins, President

Religious Exploration

Spring greetings from the Religious Exploration program. Classes are beginning to wind down as we prepare for the end of the school year. The children continue to be happy and comfortable with their teachers, peers and class work. We extend a heartfelt thank you to RE Chair Fran Stehman who ends her post in May.

Committee members are needed for next year's program. Ideally committee members will not be teaching, but rather directing the RE curriculum. With gratitude we already have teachers lined up for the fall. Anne Ossanna will continue working with the Spirit Play Class and Carol Rosenski will again mentor the Sr. Youth Group. Volunteers are needed for the nursery and Jr. Youth children.

The Sr. Youth group will be leading the service on June 1st. Please plan on attending as the children reflect on their "Coming of Age" experience.

May Calendar:

May 4th: Children begin in the sanctuary and are dismissed after the lighting of the chalice.

May 11th: Children begin in the sanctuary and are dismissed after the lighting of the chalice.

May 18th: Flower Communion.
Children remain in the sanctuary.
Nursery provided for infants and toddlers.

May 25th: Children begin in the sanctuary and are dismissed after the lighting of the chalice.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne N. Ossanna

Peace and Social Action Committee

Help Needed for Haitian Refugees

A local group of citizens and church people, now organized as Maine Refugee Assistance, has been helping Haitians seeking refugee in Canada by providing rides from here to Canada and a few days of local hospitality. Your help is still welcome in these areas as the need is ongoing and expected to increase as conditions worsen in Haiti. Money is also needed to help pay for phone bills, gas, and lodging. To make a donation, send a check made out to the Narramissic Valley Friends Meeting; put "refugee assistance" on the Memo line, and send to Margaret de Rivera, 23 Fish Point Rd., Orland, ME 04472. To help with driving and hospitality needs and for more information, please phone Margaret at 469-8972 or Martha at 667-5863.

Opt Out – Is It Working?

Some parents in Maine are concerned that their children are receiving mailings from military recruiters even though they have filed Opt Out forms with their high schools and have clearly expressed their desire not to be contacted by recruiters. For an article on the Pentagon's recruitment databases, see **Mining for Kids: Children Can't "Opt Out" of Pentagon Recruitment Database** at www.commondreams.org/headlines06/0117-12.htm. For instructions and a form to remove your information from the Pentagon databases, see the truth project website at www.truthproject.info. If you are concerned about this or if your sons or daughters have had this experience, please contact Martha at 667-5863. The Peace and Social Action Committee has a small project on Truth In Recruiting. We welcome others who would like to work with us.

Martha Dickinson

For the Peace and Social Action Committee

From The Board

The April 10 Board of Trustees meeting was exciting - to say the least:

1. Thanks particularly to Betty Massey - and thanks to generous member donations, some insurance money, and a small addition to the 07-08 UUCE budget - we will soon see a brand new kitchen - installation is scheduled between May 5 and May 26 with a celebratory potluck on Sunday, June 1.
2. Members of the Board of Trustees bit the budget and agreed to a new standing seam metal roof and roof insulation over the entire UUCE structure - perhaps the deciding moment came when John Fink reminded us of the church's long history of deferred maintenance - we can worry about the roof again in 60 years or so. The cost is \$40,000 (or less) to be taken from our endowment.
3. UUCE will be joining a UUA Small Church Pilot Program to help us move above the "small" category. We will be paired with the Heartland Four Corners congregation in Vermont - we will learn from each other.
4. Board members extend their heartfelt thanks to Fran Stehman. Fran is "retiring" (her word) from her position as temporary Religious Education director. She stepped up when she was most needed and did a terrific job. Fran will still be active in many church activities. Thank you, Fran.
5. More excitement! Don't forget Leela's installation on May 4. Theme color - green. Serving dishes - glass. Visiting ministers - from Ontario and Quebec. How can you help? Ask a member of the installation committee - Betty Massey, Sara Hayman, and Lyana Votey.
6. Annual meeting on Sunday, May 18 - We will elect new officers and trustees, decide on our 2008-2009 budget, and vote on the UUCE Safe

Congregation Policy prepared by Ruth Eveland. Members will have a chance to review the policy and provide comment to be Board before the Annual Meeting.

Bill (secretary *pro tem*)

Kitchen Renovation Update

At last! It has been a long time coming but we are now ready to begin the renovation of the kitchen. The cabinets have been ordered and will arrive mid May.

On May 5, everything in the kitchen will be removed and placed temporarily in the community room. If you have any personal items in the kitchen please remove them before the work begins. The old cabinets and the old sheet rock will be removed. New fire retardant sheet rock will be installed; new plumbing and electrical work will be done. If you know of some worthy organization that might have a need for any of the following items please let me know.

Items available for reuse elsewhere:

- 12 running feet of wall cabinets
- 10 running feet of base cabinets (includes 2 stainless steel sinks 25"W x 71 1/4"D)
- 1 mobile stainless steel open storage unit, approximately 24"D x 60"H x 54" L
- 1 prep. table: 7'L x approx. 2'WW x 30"H

All of the other cabinets are probably not worth relocating. When you are in the building go by and look at the plans which are taped to the community room doors.

Coffee hour will be held as usual during the weeks of renovation. The kitchen in the RE wing will be used and paper cups provided.

This has been a true community effort, those who could, gave money and those who had wisdom and ideas offered that. This project would not have been possible without all these contributions. Let us celebrate this community event at our next pot luck which will be June 1, 2008. Thank you one and all, Betty Massie

Notes from the Giving Corner

By the time you receive your copy of the NUUS we should have completed our annual stewardship canvass and if you have been in church you will have heard the results from our financial canvass. With 25% of the visits reported it is difficult to estimate what our total income from pledges will be for 2008-09. The experience of the visitors that have reported is that many people have been affected by economic problems this past year. Because of this some have to cut back on their giving. Others are increasing their pledges hoping to help the church meet its growing expenses. Many are giving just as they did last year.

A preliminary budget estimate from the finance committee, treasurer and board of trustees reflected the basic budget and the full range of requests from leadership and committees. The total amount hoped to raise from pledging for 2008-09 is \$92,000. Another \$26,000 would come from rental income, fundraising, weekly plate collections and interest and investment income. Once the amount of 2008-09 pledges is known a budget will be developed and presented to the congregation for discussion, revision and approval at the May congregational meeting.

This year, members and friends at UUCE have been very generous giving to special causes and offerings. Those canvassed are being thoughtful as they consider how to approach giving their annual pledge. The leadership will also have to be creative and wise as they advise on the most appropriate use of our resources. Watch for a detailed budget proposal in mid May.

Of tremendous importance in the health of our UUCE community is the volunteer work of many of the members. Thousands and thousands of hours are given which sustain the life of this congregation. All this is given in addition to generous pledges. Thank you, thank you and again, thank you to all who love and care and contribute as they as best

able to keep our 'Beacon of Liberal Religion' glowing.

Evelyn Foster- Stewardship Chair.

Food Pantry

Thanks to everyone who has been bringing in needed donations for the food pantry. We delivered lots of Shaw's receipts this week in addition to the food. Remember to keep saving the Shaw receipts. There is a white box on the table near the nametag board to put them in. Since we haven't been collecting food during the Sunday service, you can bring food any Sunday morning and set it in the corner to the right of Leela's office door. We continue to need cereal, protein sources (peanut butter, canned chicken, tuna, or salmon, beans) and canned fruits. Thanks for all the support and generosity. If you have questions or thoughts, please call or talk with me on Sundays.

Judy Rothrock 244-3520

Tom Neilson Concert

On Saturday May 10 at 7:30 PM Singer-Songwriter & Political Activist Tom Neilson will be performing a benefit concert at UUCE for WERU FM

Folksinger, songwriter, activist, historian, and educator, Tom provides a voice for all who believe in the power of music to effect change. His award-winning songs of humor, compassion and political affairs have been performed in 19 countries on 5 continents. His lyrics are celebrated for their sophistication, political astuteness, and wit. At the Kerrville Folk Festival, he was referred to as the "Jon Stewart of folk music."

For more information visit:
<http://downeastmusic.org/>