



The NUUS

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

(207) 667-4393

www.uuellsworth.org

Volume 41

No. 2

February 2009

A Month of Sundays

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

Feb. 1 *Acorns and Garlic*

Imbolc is the pagan celebration of the quiet changes, of the pregnancy of ewes and the creeping back of the light. What hidden changes await the softening of the ground, and why might first tendrils prefer to creep out in the moist dark?

Rev. Leela Sinha

Pot Luck Lunch

Feb. 8 *Share Everything and Stick Together*

Fulghum says we learned it in kindergarten. No question that it's a good idea, but harder than it sounds. How DO we go out in the world?

Feb. 15 *200 Years*

Lincoln changed us. He was not a saint, but he made us who we are, held us fiercely together, drove us toward an unquestioning reliance on principles rather than pragmatism. And yet we are tempted as individuals and as a people, by the immediate and the easy. Where is the deeper pleasure?

Feb. 22, *Touching the Earth with Love: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Sustainability*

Judith Toland will lead the service. Judith attends UUCE regularly. She has studied Buddhism since 1992, and recently spent the holidays at Thich Nhat Hahn's Blue Cliff Monastery in New York.

Valentine's Dinner and Variety Show

Saturday, Feb. 14th

Dinner: 5:30 p.m. Entertainment: 7:00 p.m.

It is time for a mid-winter break: Plan to come to UUCE for a fund raising event to benefit Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry as well as our congregation. Proceeds will be divided equally between the Food Pantry and UUCE.

Have you made your dinner reservation? If not, contact Peggie Geiger at 288-2335 or

peggiegeiger@hotmail.com. The suggested donation for the dinner is \$20.00 per adult, but all donations are welcome.

The UUCE Winter Choir will sing. If you missed the choir's rendition of "Hot Chocolate" at the Dec. 21st service, this is your chance to hear it. Shawn Mercer will play acoustic guitar, and other folks are preparing to perform at this family-friendly community event.

Check the church's web site for updates.

Contact Jean Martin

if you would like to be on the program.

Matt Slater will be the Master of Ceremonies.



Unexpected Grace

I've been reading a novel about a third-string NFL player who goes to Italy for another chance at football. The pay is slim, even by nonathletic standards; the Americans are the only ones who get paid at all and everyone else just plays for love. This is probably the third time in the last two months that Italy has turned up in my reading, Italy as a place to love, to indulge, to savor--a whole country built around passion and pleasure, reconstructed on the ashes of a Third Reich affiliation that nearly destroyed them.

I have to say, it does make me curious. On the one hand, Italy is the seat of so much dominance: Renaissance painting and sculpture, architecture and language, opera, Catholicism, patriarchy as an art form. On the other hand, it is the little brother, the third son out of five, the one who gets to get away with popping up occasionally and then diving back into relative obscurity as France and Germany and England take the European headlines. Not serious enough, perhaps. But tantalizing. Enticing.

This fictional Italy offers us an alternative view of what one can do with brilliance. One can take it too seriously, driving it into the ground, making the perfection where the process stops.

Or one can enjoy it.

They are good—very good—at food and wine and cheese. They are good at parks and beautiful weather. They take them seriously for their own sake, because it would dishonor an art to do it badly, but then they revel in the perfection—even of the salami. They keep going past becoming fabulous and land smack in the middle of a paradise of their own making. They taste it, smell it, drink it, love it. They tolerate nothing but the best. They admire it. They are proud of it. And why not?

Of course they tell the world, of course it lights a fire in their hearts, of course.

I don't know if this Italy exists, but I'm going.
Create paradise and then dance in it? I'm there.

Let's make it happen together.

blessings,
Leela



New UU Class is coming!

Have you been thinking about membership? Curious about UUism? Looking for a place to have some conversation and discussion about who we are and how your spiritual path might fit here? Look no farther. Our New UU class is taught by Rev. Leela Sinha. Originally a six-session class, the intensive format has been so successful that we're trying it again. For three nights we gather and talk about personal spirituality, UU history, theology, worship, opportunities in the congregation, and how to get connected. 6-9 PM March 16, 17, and 18. This course fulfills the board recommendation for an introductory class prior to membership, and the next Membership Sunday (for joining the church) will be March 22. Please help us plan! Preregister by contacting our Director of Lifespan Religious Education and Exploration, Sonia Turanski at the church or by email (Sonia@uuellsworth.org). Registration deadline is March 9.

Religious Exploration and Education

SUNDAY RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION PROGRAM:

Nursery

Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22:

Care provided by Helen Conway for our tiny tots

Early Youth

Feb. 1, 8, *15, *22:

Spirit play under the loving guidance of Anne Ossana

Sr. Youth

Feb. 1, 8, *15, *22:

On-going creativity based classes led by Carol Rosinski

*possible sledding days at the Black House

Upcoming at the Bangor UU church

SpiritUUality Conference for Youth Grades 7-12

Feb 27-March 1 2009

COST: \$10 (Make checks payable to Northern New England District)

Adult Con coordinator: Wendy Erickson Deans: Dee and Orion

UU Society of Bangor

120 Park St. Bangor, Maine

Must register by February 13

Contact Benette Sherman at 603-228-8704

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

February Classes:

- Advanced UU class, “*Articulating the Spirit*,” Feb. 3,4,5 with Rev. Leela, 6 p.m.
- *Book discussion on Daniel Quinn's’, “*Ishmael*,” with Sonia Turanski as facilitator, 2 weeks, Weds. nights 6-8 p.m., Feb 18 & 25. Two classes are scheduled, but may go longer if desired.

Ishmael is a fictional story that raises very important questions about how our

civilization developed. It is a very reader friendly, fast paced book with a message that will spur a much deeper conversation about the state of our world.

Spring offerings are shaping up to include:

- *Book discussion on Karen Armstrong's, “*The History of Myth*” with Diana Cate as facilitator, 2 weeks, Sundays 12-2 p.m., March 22 & 29. Two classes are scheduled, but may go longer if desired.
- Mindful Living course in the Buddhist tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh with Judith Toland, 6 weeks, Thursday nights, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m., April 2 – May 7

*All books have been ordered through Bookstacks book store in Bucksport at a %10 discount and will be available for pick up 2 weeks prior to class dates. Just tell them you are from the UUCE:

Bookstacks, 71 Main Street, Bucksport, 469-8992

Water System Update

Wonderful news! UUCE has received a gift of \$10,000 from the Irving Forbes Estate in support of the plan to connect to the Ellsworth public water system. The generosity of Margery and Irving in supporting UUCE's continuing growth and development is remarkable indeed. Combined with an anonymous pledge of \$1,000, funding for the water project is just \$4,475 short of the total estimated cost. If we can raise the balance from additional donations, there will be no need to take a loan from the church's endowment. If you wish to make a contribution (of any amount) to this project, please contact Treasurer Don Martin (664-0309 or jzmartin2@verizon.net). For questions on the water project itself, contact David Towle (460-8881 or dtowle@mdibl.org).

From The Board

Since the Board was unable to meet in December we had a lot on the agenda in January. We gathered at 6 to munch over both brown bag suppers and the Growth Team's six month goals. The GT got some great feedback. If anyone would like a copy of the goals, please email Ruth Eveland at president@uuellsworth.org and I'll send it along.

Dusty Bailey, the guy who gets the NUUS in the mail every month, came to talk about the bulk mail permit, which expires this month. We agreed to renew it this year, but will work during the year to move the NUUS to an email delivery *for those who would be okay receiving it that way*. We'll be checking with everyone about their preferences, and there will be plenty of advance notice. It's not that we don't enjoy gathering to assemble, fold, tape and label - that is actually fun, but it will save paper and allow us to be even more timely.

Minister Leela Sinha raised some good questions, as always. We will be exploring further why attendance at the Christmas Eve service was so slight. We discussed her sense of an energy shift within the congregation, and its implications for how we are in community together and how we get our work done.

Treasurer Don Martin brought us up to date on our income and expenditures. He'll be going over it at the parish meeting on January 25th, but generally we are in okay although nervous shape. Don was very pleased to be able to report that an extremely generous donation from Margery Forbes will cover a big chunk (although not all) of the costs of our project to connect to city water and remove the storage tanks from the Community Room. He briefly reviewed the draft of the long range financial plan, and we will be discussing it in more detail at the February meeting.

David Towle was still waiting to get final bid information for the water project, but we'll be moving forward as soon as we can. This, too, will be reviewed at the parish meeting (which I do

recognize will be a moot point by the time most people receive this.)

The Board decided to delay proposing any changes to the bylaws, since we are scheduled for a complete review in 2010.

We agreed to host a Community Supported Agriculture/Community Supported Fisheries Fair at the church on Sunday, February 8th from 1 – 4. I hope there will be more publicity, since it sounds like a really great event. The organizing group is handling most of the work, but we will be pitching in with space arrangements and general hospitality. If you might like to help with this, contact Board member Becka Gagne, strivin@wildmail.com or 565-3679.

There was a request from Elliot Ossanna and Helen Conway to sell hot chocolate on Sundays to raise money to send them to a great leadership training project. Our new policy doesn't allow for this, but they will have information posted on the bulletin board section in the Community Room if you might like to help sponsor them.

And, finally, we agreed that the Peace and Social Action Committee will go on hiatus for a while. Martha Dickinson, long-serving chair, will continue to serve as our liaison with the UU Service Committee and to work with children and youth monthly on various projects.

As always, if you have more questions please ask a Board member. These notes have been provided by Ruth Eveland, since our Secretary, Mary Ann Solet, continues to be under the weather. (Take care!)



Message from the President

Trust

Who Do You Trust was a TV game show back in the 1950's and 60's. I had to look it up on Wikipedia to remember anything more about it than the title, but actually the title is all I am interested in at the moment. (For any more information, you'll have to look it up yourself.)

I'm pondering if this concept of *trust* is creating a stumbling block for some of us. Our society as a whole has grown cynical and snarky, as Kathleen Parker points out, and I'm seeing evidence of that in some people's tenuous connection with us. I think we, as a whole, have been increasingly less trusting in any kind of authority, and it is beginning to show up in lack of commitment. Please tell me this isn't a result of too many boomers in charge. I was indeed present in the 60's, and remember enough of it, and I never understood the sentiment of pitching out people with experience.

Do we believe, really, that the decisions made on behalf of the whole congregation by some subset (e.g., the Board, any committee) are in fact being made for the good of the entire group? I suspect that this lack of willingness to put ourselves into the hands of others, trustingly, may be at the core of the on-going frustrations about Joys & Sorrows. It's terribly hard to give up fighting strongly against a perceived injustice, but sometimes you have to lay something down for a while to support the entire entity.

"How will we make this decision?"

I read this question years ago and I've written it on the edge of my Board of Trustees notebook. The point is that it isn't always so much about the actual decision that is made as it is about *how* the decision was made. People have to feel that their voice was heard, even if their view didn't prevail, in order to be able to live with the community decision. Have we who have been a part of making decisions for the whole been careless in how we have made the decisions? Or, are people just not willing to trust us, collectively or individually? Have we done something to cause people to withdraw trust or confidence in how we work? Or, are people generalizing their lack of trust in/unease with national authority to include us?

We are a large enough group that it is not possible to make all our decisions with the whole group. We

delegate to the Board or a committee to get many things done. This is part of the transition to a larger church. However, if we can't accept those decisions made that way, then we can't be any bigger.

There is one more element of this question that I'm trying to figure out. One element of trust has to be related to hope for a better future. I believe that, for example, part of the reason people voted for Barack Obama, even when they weren't sure enough of specific ideas he had, was that they believed he would make things better - they had hope and placed it in him. Perhaps people don't have enough hope that we can work our way through things and come out even better in the future?

I don't have any answers, but I continue to puzzle over this question. If you have some ideas, write me (president@uellsworth.org) or speak to me at church.

A Tree Grows in Ellsworth...

You may have noticed a barren tree in the hallway. It needs leaves. The leaves will be the Personal Ministry statements you have written after going through the workshop described in the November NUUS. I'll keep running this until everyone who wants to do it has had a chance.

Sunday, February 1stth (during or after potluck)

Sunday, February 8th - noon-ish

Sunday, February 15th - noon-ish

Sunday, February 22nd - noon-ish

And, if you get a couple of people who are willing to give it a try, let me know and we'll find a time. (Have papers, will travel...)

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



The Giving Corner

Treasurer's Corner

Stewardship Report

*In the dark of the moon, in the flying snow, in the
dead of winter, war raging, people dying, the world
in danger, I walk the rocky hillside planting clover.*

-Wendell Berry

Although the winds and snow are blowing and our new pledge year doesn't begin until July 1st, the stewardship committee has been meeting since Thanksgiving to plan for our all church Canvass.

The goal of the canvass is to offer every friend and member of the congregation an opportunity to participate in a stewardship discussion about the coming year with lay members and friends and to make a financial pledge for the 2009-10 fiscal years. There will be 'cottage meetings' in homes throughout our parish. These groups will be facilitated by people from the canvass team. There will also be the choice to have a canvass member visit you in your home as we have in the past or attend a small group at the church. You will receive more information about this later.

This plan allows participants to enjoy the company of others and discuss our shared ministry.

We are having a successful year financially and most pledges are coming in better than usual in spite of the economy. People are being very generous to the needs of others and the church.

Dates To Remember

- March 22 Stewardship Sunday--Kickoff
- March 23-April 3 Cottage Group Gatherings
and individual visits
- April 12 Service of Celebration for our
Commitments

Evelyn Foster--Stewardship Chair.

Once again, a member of our congregation has stepped forward. Margery Forbes has informed me that her husband Irving wanted to leave a financial contribution to the church. She will be contributing \$10,000 in memory of Irving to the cost of financing the water project. This is very generous and, with additional donations, we may be able to fund this project without borrowing from our endowment. If you would like to make a special contribution for the water project, please contact me.

We will not be mailing a 2008 yearly pledge statement. If you need this information to compute your income taxes, please contact me and we will generate a statement for you. Your next statement will be mailed to you at the end of the third quarter.

The financial challenges for this and next church year are real. It is important that each of us complete our financial commitment for this year if at all possible. We all need to give serious thought to our pledge for next year as well. As of now, we have 91 members. With the present level of giving, without numerical growth, it will be difficult to continue to support the professional staff that we have in place. Although we cannot ignore the challenges confronting us, we should be looking forward to the opportunities that are ahead of us.

Don Martin
Treasurer



Membership Committee

Matt Slater

Surfing the radio waves, I heard of the UUCE.
That Sunday following I passed through those heavy doors
Stepping forward in my search for wholeness.
It was much more than expected
Those Principles and Sources with their free and responsible search for Truth.

I sang Hallelujah for a week on my morning walks
With birds and grasses, trees and tears
Lonely had the search for truth been
Lonely it would be no more
Discovering a place to share together.

Wayne's cheery presence on the piano
Balanced the Curmudgeons perfectly.
Evelyn smiling, Jon observing, Leela Leelaing.
Easy like-
Just like a Sunday morning song

A year and a half later with no wane of novelty.
Honor bestows me as a member of a church rich in history
Excitement propels me to the RE program to enrich my growth.
While humbled by the spiritual riches our fellowship has to offer.
I truly feel accepted as I am.

Moving happily inward outward.

A chosen faith to guide me
Back through those familiar doors
Into a sanctuary, where I affirm to say

I like life. I love a circle.
I like a small cigar from time to time.
And in the end when all is said and done
I shall hope that life will have liked me.

Food Pantry

In December there was a 51% increase in individuals and families using the Food Pantry over last December. Besides the once a month delivery of food from the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Brewer, our Loaves and Fishes manager is making 2 trips to Brewer a month the past couple of months to buy extra food. The community has been generous in donating to the "Ending Hunger" campaign, but the need keeps increasing. Our Fund Raiser on February 14 which will be shared 50/50 with Loaves and Fishes couldn't be happening at a better time. We will be supporting our church and helping with a growing need in our larger community. If you have any questions or suggestions please call or email Judy Rothrock at 244-3520 – judyhill39@myfairpoint.net (formerly verizon.net)

The Care Committee

February Birthdays

Feb. 1 Tom Stipe
Feb. 2 Richard Thurston
Feb. 7 Stefanie Alley, Elliot Ossanna, Jane Thomas
Feb. 13 MaryAnn Solet, Peter Howell-Bushman

The birthday list is taken from records that you filled out during the yearly canvass. Please help the caring committee by calling or emailing other birthdays or upcoming birthdays we might have missed to Dartha Reid 667-5434 (darthacr@yahoo.com.) or Evelyn Foster 667-1800 (ewfoster@verizon.net)

UUCE Down East Discussion Group Winter – Spring Schedule 2009

The Down East Discussion Group is open to all and welcomes new members. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at noon. Bring a sandwich for yourself. Beverages and dessert will be provided by the host of the month. For directions or questions, please call the host of the month.

Wednesday, February 11, 2009

Hosts: Bryce and Janet Smith (843-9017) Meeting at the church

Topic: “Celebrating 200th Anniversary of Darwin’s Birth”

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

Host: Grace Schimpf (422-6240) Hancock

Topic: “What are we willing to let go of as we age?”

Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Host: Judith Toland (546-4244) Milbridge

Topic: “Our Gifts” Evelyn Foster will lead discussion.

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

Host: Peggy Drake (546-8970) Steuben

Topic: TBA

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

Host: Richard Thurston (546-2235) Steuben

Picnic and Planning Meeting

News About Our NUUS

If you receive newsletters from other organizations, you may have been told that if you want to continue receiving their newsletter, then you must go to the organization's website and get the newsletter online, and that your organization is no longer mailing the newsletters. Our church board has decided to be more kind to people in our congregation, knowing that some of us need more time to allow a change to take place, even though our rates have increased, just as those of other organizations. Our annual permit fee, which allows us to use the bulk mailing rate for a year has gone very quickly from \$100 a year to \$180 per year. Also, printing costs have increased. Our church must now pay about \$70 each month to print copies of the newsletter, and the mailing cost each month is over \$30 even with the bulk rate. So, our church must now pay about \$100 each month to mail the newsletters and also pay \$180 for the annual fee to use bulk mailing. All these rates are sure to go up again, and soon. There is a need for us to save money. The board would like for all who are able, to go to our church website, www.uuellsworth.org and click on "newsletter" and read it on your computer. If you prefer to read a printed copy, you could just press "print" and presto, there is your printed copy. If you decide you can help save the church money, you can tell both Peggie Geiger and Dusty Bailey that there is no need to keep your name on the mailing list, that you will use the church's website to receive your copy of the NUUS. Please be sure to let both of us know. Dusty's address is P. O. Box 123, Hancock, ME 04640 email margodusty123@yahoo.com. Peggie's address is 44 Young's Mt. Rd. # 4, Bar Harbor, ME 04609, email peggiegeiger@hotmail.com. Thanks for your cooperation.

Personnel

Minister

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

Church Office

Caitlin Tunney: 667-4393
caitlin@uuellsworth.org

President of the Board

Ruth Eveland: 288-5727
president@uuellsworth.org

Director of Religious Education and Exploration

Sonia Turanski: 667-4393 (H); 266-9530 (cell)
Sonia@uuellsworth.org

Music Director

Wayne Smith: 667-9482

Newsletter Editor

Lance Funderburk: 276-3301
lfunderburk@roadrunner.com

Winter Choir

"If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing." The UUCE Winter Choir invites new participants who love to sing to join in preparing songs for the February Fun(d)raiser. We will rehearse at UUCE Sunday mornings, 9-10 am, on January 11th and 25th and February 1st and 8th, presenting our music the evening of February 14th (snow date February 21st). Three songs are on the schedule so far--a reprise of "Hot Chocolate", "I Can't Help Falling in Love", and "Fare Thee Well" arranged for 3-part choir. You should plan to attend at least three of the rehearsals if you wish to sing with the group on the 14th. If you are interested in participating, please sign up in the community room at UUCE or contact David Towle (288-4121 or dtowle@mdibl.org).

UU Sacred Singing Circle

Our UU Sacred Singing Circle has recently changed to singing on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month, starting on January 28. We gather from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM in the sanctuary of the UUCE church. We sing for about an hour and then share our thoughts and ideas. We are currently singing songs from our hymnals and other songbooks, particularly songs from Women With Wings. We are not a performance group, rather our aim is the spiritual nourishment of those gathered in song. Everyone is welcome to join us. You don't even have to sing! If you are coming for the first time, please try to arrive a few minutes early to get oriented, or just enter quietly.

Martha Dickinson, 667-5863 or marthad@gwi.net

Testify! The class: Articulating the Spirit

Feb 3-5, 2009

What is the burning core of your spiritual life? Do you have a particular experience or set of beliefs that lift you up or changed you profoundly or move you to greater religious depth? In this class we will take three days to create brief statements of belief or experience that are meant to be aural, to move people, and to tell our own stories of faith. Members who take this class will be invited to continue refining their statements for inclusion in a worship service.

This is an advanced UU identity course. Prerequisite: membership at UUCE OR New UU class and 6 months attendance at this congregation OR at least 6 months' attendance in UU RE AND 6 months' involvement at UUCE (may be concurrent) OR two years' regular involvement in a UU congregation (this or another).

If you're not sure whether this class is a good fit for you, please call or email Leela Sinha and we'll talk.

If you wish to attend, please preregister with our DLREE Sonia Turanski by January 29th, 2009 by calling or emailing her (Sonia@uuellsworth.org). If the class does not have at least 5 registrants, it will be cancelled.

Holy Leisure

Forced by the energy shortage, the best recreation may still turn out to be staying home and fine-tuning our senses. Not being able to go away so often won't spoil our lives, for happiness is seldom a place. Thoreau said, "I wish ever to live as to derive my satisfactions and inspirations from the commonest events, everyday phenomena, so that what my senses hourly perceive – my daily walk, the conversation of my neighbors – may inspire me."

In a more modern piece, Richard J. Foster writes: "The church Fathers often spoke of *Otium Sanctum*: "holy leisure." It refers to a sense of balance in the life, an ability to be at peace through the activities of the day, an ability to rest and take time to enjoy beauty, an ability to pace ourselves. With our tendency to define people in terms of what they produce, we would do well to cultivate "holy leisure." And if we expect to succeed in the contemplative arts, we must pursue "holy leisure" with a determination that is ruthless to our datebooks."

This isn't suggesting that we cut out all travel, meetings on important issues, vacation, or trips to visit relatives. It does suggest living by rhythms and priorities. Claim the freedom to say "no" both to good causes and to frantic, counterproductive efforts to have fun.

Happily, persons who choose to conserve energy supplies, save money, and nurture their spirits and relationships normally don't have problems finding recreation. Rarely in a discussion on simple living have I heard the question, "But what can we do for fun?" The more critical danger is that those who allow themselves everything they want become unable to enjoy it. Less with more flies home to roost.

1. Beware of living in a way which allows no free time. Do not feel guilty for taking regular periods to muse, meditate, be silent, and unoccupied.

2. Blur the distinction between work and recreation. Invent ways to make dull work enjoyable. Redeem menial tasks by working together and by sharing them across lines of age, sex, race, and profession. Leisure activities might teach a skill, improve your home, augment your food supply, or serve others' needs. Rhythm and change are more important than whether you "work" or "have fun."
3. Choose activities carefully. For any form of recreation, ask a positive question: "Does this strengthen my own spirit and my relationships with others?" and a negative one: "Is it expensive in terms of money, energy supplies, or the natural environment?"
4. Live *now* the way you honestly would like to live. "We'll take more time together when we've made enough to retire or when I get off all these church boards" can trail into "But then he had that heart attack." "I'll spend evenings with the children after these night classes are over" might end, "But the children aren't home evenings anymore."
5. Use some recreation time for physical exercise. Exercise is great preventive medicine and a more-with-less remedy for depression and overweight.
6. A frequent desire to "get away from it all" signals other needs. Look for the real problem. Make home a place in which you and your family enjoy staying.

Excerpted from "Living More With Less," by Doris Janzen Longacre, which can be borrowed from Colleen Prentiss.