



Unitarian Universalist Church of Augusta

Uncommon Sense

Volume 15 Number 9

October 2011

Inside this issue

In the Interim...	1
Notes from the President	2
On Stewardship	2
Gifts of Honor Received	3
Building Your Technology Toolbox	3
Samhain Vespers	3
Fall Equinox Vespers	3
Children & Youth R.E. News	4
Holistic-Meditative Yoga Classes	5
UU Connections	5
'It's Spooky to be Hungry'	5
Adult Faith Development	6
Our Church Library	6
More Fundraising in Your Pajamas	6
R. E. Assistant Needed	6

In the Interim: Sacred, Scared or Irrelevant?

The worship theme for the month of October is The Sacred. I was struck as I contemplated the word sacred when I realized that sacred and scared share the same letters. That got me to thinking about the ways in which the "Sacred" has been, and sometimes still is made scary. And that sent me searching back through my daily readings of the writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson in A Dream Too Wild: Emerson Meditations for Every Day of the Year edited by Barry M. Andrews for a reading that speaks directly to this issue.

Sure enough in the entry for September 3rd, Emerson in his reflection on "Spiritual Laws" observed that the young people of his day were challenged and disoriented by sacred theological assertions like original sin, origin of evil, and predestination. In those times many clergy prided themselves on painting truly terrifying visions of the hell that was waiting for most people and especially those who did not live up to the expectations of the church. Emerson likened the promotion of these theological theories to the mumps, measles, and whooping coughs of the soul.

He also questioned the relevance of these sacred and scary ideas writing, "These never presented a practical difficulty to any man, never darkened across any man's road, who did not go out of his way to seek them." And in one of his sermons (highlighted in the September 22nd reading) he talked about the "thunder of the laws and customs of mankind" and its power to drown out the individuals' ability to know him or herself and said that, "the secret of all true greatness is the development of the inward nature, . . . harkening to the voice" . . . within.

The Rev. Tom Owen-Towle in his new book, Theology Ablaze, writes, "The sacred is lodged in the corners of our own beings and must be fostered there, first and foremost." And he goes on to quote from the Mediations of Marcus Aurelius, "Very little is needed to make a happy life. It is all within yourselves, in your way of thinking."

Unitarian Religious Educator, Sophia Fahs wrote, "A deeply religious person is one who is sensitive and alert to the evidences of an invisible creativity. He/she is one who seeks to find the sacred everywhere.

Not everyone would agree with the suggestion that the sacred is everywhere. Most definitions of the word sacred make specific reference to a deity and religious purpose. Unitarian Universalists however are blessed with and challenged by our commitment to a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." It is the fourth of the seven principles of our UUA covenant.

Emerson was a pioneer of the spirit whose thinking changed the Unitarianism of his time, shaped American culture, rings true through many generations and continues to encourage Unitarian Universalists to seek the inward springs that enrich our lives and as Emerson would have put it, nurture our souls.

This is a lifelong adventure and it's good to have company. See you in church!-) Many Blessings

Rev. Dacia



Uncommon Sense

Notes from the President

One thing newcomers always say is how warm and friendly this congregation feels when they visit our church. We are welcoming, as we heard in this past Sunday's service, to all who enter our doors. It's easy, however, to feel a bit lonely since we are the only UU church in town. Yes, we have wonderful neighbors in Aiken and Columbia and other surrounding cities, but the opportunities for getting together are few. One of my favorite opportunities is coming up October 8- the Southern Cluster of the Southeast District meeting in Charleston, SC. Cluster meetings provide the time to reconnect, meet new people, hear ideas from other churches, learn new approaches to common problems, and have some fun! Added bonuses this year are the chance to see the Charleston church and to hear John Buehrens. Being in a large group of fellow Unitarian Universalist just feeds my soul. If there's any way you can get to Cluster, go.

Jan Parsons,
Board President

On Stewardship

by Katie Davis, Financial Affairs Committee chair

Our church is made up of a wonderful variety of passionate people who are committed to our shared values, each in a different way. What we must share to enable our congregation to thrive is a commitment to financial support of UUCA. The Financial Affairs Committee, currently made up of Treasurer Stacy Heath, Stephen Heyl, Jerry Goldman, Matt Alan, Ann Sutherland and myself, meets every 1-2 months to monitor our financial health, protect the donations so generously provided by members and friends, advise the Board about budget and other financial matters, and strive to meet UUA standards for fair employee compensation and support of our district and national denomination. These are open meetings announced to the congregation, and all members are welcome to attend.

The FAC is part of the Financial Affairs Ministry, which includes the Annual Budget Drive, Endowment, and Fundraising leaders. FAC assists with the Annual Budget Drive, and drafts an annual operating budget which is submitted to the Board and Congregation for approval. The budget, a plan for revenues and expenses in the fiscal year (July-June), is approved each June. The Board can authorize mid-year changes to the budget to support a newly formed group or important activity. Unfortunately we are in our 3rd year of deficit budgets, meaning that we have been spending our savings to keep operating. Any increase in expenses will further deplete our dwindling assets and may result in staff furloughs and impede recruiting a settled minister.

Fundraising has been an especially important source of revenue in the past few years as our expenses have outpaced our revenue, despite a very frugal budget. Fundraising events are also an important part of the fellowship of our congregation, allowing us to gather for such joyful events as performances by Joe and other

UUCA musicians, a Sound of Music Singalong, book and rummage sales, and auctions. Many groups within the church have asked the Board whether they could raise funds for themselves rather than for the UUCA as a whole. It is essential that we pull together and not separately, for no UUCA group could function without the minister, staff, climate controlled building, plumbing, etc.

The FAC encourages the use of internal controls for appropriate handling of funds to protect both the congregation and individuals from occurrences or accusations of theft or misuse of funds. Examples of this are having more than one person count the Sunday collection plate, requiring receipts for cash paid to babysitters or other recipients, and keeping accurate records of expenses and income from fundraisers, including inventory of materials for sale (e.g., chalice jewelry). These practices protect our members from suspicion and avoid provoking temptation.

Part of the reason our operating budget has struggled recently is that donations that used to support it, such as bequests by will, are now protected as part of our Endowment. The Endowment has successfully reached \$100,000 and thus able to contribute income (not principal) to UUCA expenses outside the operating budget, such as scholarships and projects like the Labyrinth. Our congregation will benefit from this fund for years to come, so our sacrifices will not be in vain. However, we must pull through these lean years when many in our congregation are financially strained. Fortunately, the Board has the option to authorize use of Endowment income for the operating budget in "extreme, temporary, and difficult circumstances." A loan of Endowment principal to be repaid in future years may also be an option.

September Attendance

September 4th
108

September 11th
106

September 18th
111

September 25th
105

Gifts of Honor Received

To celebrate the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Terry & Nancy Phillips

from Jerry & Paula Goldman

Congratulations!

and

To celebrate Joey Traina's Birthday

from Jan Parsons

Happy Birthday!

A Gift of Honor is a monetary contribution made to the UU Church of Augusta

- In honor or celebration of a special occasion: birth, birthday, anniversary, etc.
- In recognition of a special event: recital, graduation, publication, role in a play, etc.
- In appreciation of a particular person/s for an act of kindness, thoughtful gesture, an act of bravery, or when someone goes out of their way to help or sets an example of our UU Principles, etc.
- In memory of a loved one/s or other significant person/s now deceased.

Gifts of Honor are suitable for every occasion and can be made in any amount of \$10 or more.

This is a new program organized by the Financial Affairs Committee. All Gifts of Honor will support the General Fund. *Special Offerings* envelopes are available in the pew pockets for a check or cash. (checks should be clearly noted – *Gift of Honor* – in the memo line) and be sure to tell us who or what you are honoring. Gifts of Honor may be placed in the offering plate on Sunday mornings or sent to or dropped off in the church office. Gifts of Honor will be announced in E-announcements and the Newsletter.

Building Your Technology Toolbox: a Series of Introductory Workshops

Wednesdays in October 7:00-8:30

Facilitator: Gayla Keesee

Communication and collaboration are an essential part of congregational life. Social media such as Facebook, blogs, YouTube, Flickr, Podcasts, and wikis present many opportunities for our congregation to learn about events, communicate ideas, and stay connected.

The Building Your Technology Toolbox workshops offer a beginner-friendly approach covering basic definitions of major new media tools, explaining the advantages of each tool, and linking to specific examples of how each tool can be used to promote Unitarian Universalism and build community.

The workshops will be offered in the Common Room.

Laptops are optional.

October 5th - Web 2.0 Tools & UU: An Overview **October 5**

October 12th - Facebook & UU

October 19 - Google Apps & UU

October 26 - Wikis & UU

Blogs, Twitter & UU: TBA

Podcasting & UU: TBA

Samhain Vespers

Sunday, October
30th
7pm in the Sanc-
tuary

Samhain is the most solemn holiday of the Pagan year, a season of transitions, and the time to honor those who have passed. Our celebration will follow the Goddess Inanna on her Underworld journey and her encounter with her sister Ereshkigal, Queen of the Dead. For information, email Jezibell Anat: kyriapanagia@yahoo.com



Children & Youth Religious Education (C.Y.R.E.)

.....

by Ruth Garrison, Director of Religious Education

October Brain Storming and Planning Sessions for volunteers interested in **“Children and Youth Social Action Projects”** **“R.E. Special Events” and/or “Children & Youth Chapel”**

Please come and share your thoughts on one or all three topics.
Sessions will meet **12:20pm** & last about 1hr. Snacks and Childcare will be provided.

Sunday, October 2nd Children & Youth Social Justice Projects
Sunday, October 9th RE Special Events
Sunday, October 16th Children and Youth Chapel

The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center Youth Conference, Autumn 2011 **CREATIVE CONNECTIONS!** **Creative Expression & Art Atop the Continental Divide**

Elementary CON----- October 21-23 ----- register by October 7
Middle School CON----- November 11-13 ----- register by October 28
High School CON----- December 2-4 ----- register by November 18

Workshops

Cooking: Recipes of Old Appalachia
Dance Expression/Creative Movement
Batik: Designs in Fabric
Improv Acting & Quick Wittedness
Song Writing: Creating New Music
Sculpture from Found Objects
Drawing: Sketches in Nature

Contact Ruth Garrison, DRE; dre@uu Augusta.org for more details

New: Holistic-Meditative Yoga Classes

beginning Monday, October 17th at 5:30pm

Holistic Yoga is yoga for the body, mind and consciousness.

Also called Meditative Yoga, holistic Yoga enables anyone to approach life with an all round balance and self-development. From the healthy diet, to the innercises, concentration and meditation techniques, curative psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual movements, chants and a philosophy based on science and spirit, one is able to empower oneself and expand one's hidden potentials. These techniques are derived from the ancient intuitional sciences of the ancient Gondwana Land or popularly known as Asia.

Taught by: Ame Fernandez Johnson, a native of the Philippines, has been trained and educated in the Philippines and India in the Intuitional Sciences of the Vedas. Since 1974, she has practiced Meditative Yoga under the guidance of her spiritual Master; Shrii Anandamurti. A strict vegetarian and practitioner of meditation from the age of 18, Ame is passionate about sharing her knowledge to everyone. She has worked in the 80's and 90's in all countries of South America, the Caribbean and Asia imparting this knowledge and alongside has opened children's schools for the impoverished and the disadvantaged in Brazil, Venezuela, Caribbean, Haiti and the Philippines. She has engaged in various works of selfless service as mass feedings, clothing distribution, medical missions and emergency relief. Ame can speak Spanish, fluent Portuguese, English, Visayan and Tagalog. Singing and composing songs is one of her favorite hobbies.

UU Connections

UU informational websites below provided by Alice Reese, UU Connections chair (formerly: Denominational Affairs)

Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
www.uua.org

Southeast District of the UUA
www.seduuu.org

Southern Cluster of the Southeast District
www.southernclusteruua.org

Unitarian Universalist Church of Augusta
www.uuaugusta.org



'It's Spooky to be Hungry' Food Drive

Spooky's Mission: To strengthen community while working to fight hunger.

UUCA has been an annual collection site since the mid-1990's

Two ways to contribute are:

Barrels for the collection of cans and other food stuff will be located through-out the church. Barrels arrive the second week in October, just in time for our Kick-Off on Sunday October 16th

A table in the foyer will hold envelopes for monetary donations. Cash enables **Golden Harvest Food Bank** to make large bulk food orders, stretching the dollar as far as it can.

The food drive will run for two weeks with the Wrap-Up on Sunday, October 30th!

Introduction to Spooky:

'It's Spooky to be Hungry' is a unique grassroots event that depends entirely on the goodwill, altruism and enthusiasm of individuals like you. Through your generous contribution you are helping make a real difference in the spirit of our community by bringing it closer together all the while helping to feed the hungry.

* ALL monetary and food donations received through the 'Spooky' food drive go directly to helping feed the hungry of the CSRA. No operating costs are deducted.

* Spooky is an intentionally inclusive organization, without exclusive corporate, political or religious sponsorship.

A little History:

A former-member of our UUCA congregation, Evelyn Brown, brought her 'It's Spooky to be Hungry' idea and action plan, (that she had conceived of in Rochester, MN), with her to Augusta in the early '90's. Since 1995, when Spooky began in three neighborhoods in Columbia County, Georgia, this effort has grown enormously.

"By 2005, Spooky CSRA had grown to include over 190 neighborhoods and 115 schools, businesses, and faith communities in nine counties in GA and SC. Last year, 'It's Spooky To Be Hungry CSRA' involved more than 2600 volunteers (over half of them children), and included nearly 25,000 potential donor households. Spooky CSRA is the largest food drive in the history of our region! Our 2005 Spooky drive resulted in a collection of over 98,000 pounds of food and \$55,000. These proceeds provided nearly 250,000 meals to area needy, which Spooky CSRA distributed through our local food bank (Golden Harvest.) In all our work together, we strive to reflect the core values of 'It's Spooky to be Hungry'. We hope these values speak to your own ideals and inspire your work with us."

-Information gathered from the **It's Spooky to be Hungry**® website



Adult Faith Development: A Lifelong Adventure

1) **The Twelve Steps to Living a Compassionate Life** group will meet this Sunday, **October 2nd** at **9:30am** in the Common Room. We will be talking about our experience in trying to feel compassion for those with whom we disagree and particularly with those political leaders with whom we most strongly disagree. We will also be discussing chapter one of Armstrong's book in preparation for trying to put it into practice in our lives during the coming month.

2) On Sunday, **October 16th** at **5pm**, next session on **Exploring Spiritual Paths** will be considering how poetry can be an important part of our spiritual journey. Contact Anita Bell for more information. [The class on UU History and Beliefs has been cancelled due to lack of interest.]

3) There is still time to register for the **Southern Cluster** meeting in Charleston on **October 8th, 9:30 - 4:00**. Registration is \$30 for adults and \$25 for children through Sat. Oct. 1. Child care will be provided. Featured speakers are Jim Key, president of the Southeastern District, and John Buehrens, past president of the UUA. Both are dynamic speakers and have important insights into the past and future of our faith. There will be carpooling from the church for those who want to make it a day trip. It will be fun. It will be informative. And you can take time for a wonderful seafood dinner in one of Charleston's many excellent restaurants before you drive back.

Our Church Library

Do you know that UUCA has a small library? It is located in the Minister's Office. You are welcome to browse anytime the office is not otherwise in use. The library could use some organizational energy. If you'd like to help, please do contact Rev. Dacia

Thank You!

Our church library has received several new titles. We want to let you know about the new titles and thank the folks who made the donations.

The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementing Illnesses, and Memory Loss in Later Life, by Nancy L. Mace, M.A. and Peter V. Rabins, M.D., M.P.H. was donated by Ann and Greg Sutherland.

Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life by Karen Armstrong was donated by Ann and Greg Sutherland.

Small Loans, big Dreams: How Nobel Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus and Microfinance Are Changing the World by Alex Counts was donated by Anita Bell.

Sitting Inside: Buddhist Practice in America's Prisons by Kobai Scott Whitney was donated by Tammilee Lloyd and her daughter, Maryclaire Regan.

Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist, and Buddhist - One Woman's Spiritual Journey by Jan Willis was donated by Tammilee Lloyd and her daughter, Maryclaire Regan.

The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research, Practice by Kenneth I. Pargament was donated by Tammilee Lloyd and her daughter, Maryclaire Regan.

Meditations for the Humanist: Ethics for a Secular Age by A. C. Grayling was donated by Karl Wenger.

More Fundraising in Your Pajamas

by Jan Parsons

Every Christmas members of my family make donations to favorite charities in honor of each other. We let everyone know where we'd like our "gifts" to go. This year I'm going to request that my gifts go to this church as part of the "Gift of Honor" program sponsored by the Financial Affairs Committee. All during the year we can honor each other by making small gifts (minimum \$10) in honor of a birthday, graduation, other special event or just because... you fill in the blank. For example, I am giving a Gift of Honor for Ann Sutherland for the wonderful cushions on the pew outside the Common Room. Thank you, Ann. I will write the check, note *Gift of Honor*, place it in one of the Special Offerings envelopes located in the pew pockets and put it in the collection plate. Ok, so not all of that was done in my pajamas. Who would you like to honor? How else could this program be used?

R.E. Assistant Needed

The Children & Youth Religious Education Committee and the UUCA Board have approved hiring an R.E. Assistant. The position is for 3 hours per week and reports to our DRE, Ruth Garrison. Flexible weekday hours. If interested, call or e-mail church office for job description and application. Deadline for applications is October 15, 2011.

We welcome stories, news and pictures sent in for our monthly Newsletter. Guidelines can be found at: UUAugusta.org or e-mailed directly to the church office officeadmin@uuaugusta.org

**Unitarian Universalist
Church of Augusta**

**3501 Walton Way Ext
Augusta, GA 30909
Phone 706 .733 .7939**

www.UUAugusta.org