

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford

December 2008

Visit us at: <http://www.uuoxford.com>

e-mail: uuoxford@uuoxford.com

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-----HOW TO FIND US-----

1. Travel on College Hill Road towards Clear Creek.
2. At the intersection with Old Sardis Road, go past the stop sign and continue straight on CR 314 for 3.5 miles.
3. Turn right onto CR 198 (you should see a white sign saying "Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford").
4. Go .2 miles. UU Hall, a light-colored building with a trailer next to it, is on your left immediately past CR 145.

TUPELO GROUP: The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tupelo welcomes visitors. They meet the first, second, third and fourth Sundays of each month at 11 a.m. in Temple B'Nai Israel, 1301 Marshall Street. Website: www.UUTupelo.org.

----SUNDAY SERVICES FOR DECEMBER----

Our services start at 11:00 a.m. and childcare is provided.

December 7 - A UU perspective on the Advent season

Led by Beth Boerger, this service will provide a brief description of the meaning of Advent (the four weeks prior to Christmas) in the Roman Catholic

and Protestant Christian religious traditions, an introduction to some of the symbols and practices of the season, and a discussion on how these might be adapted to a Unitarian-Universalist spiritual practice.

December 14 - Membership Sunday and potluck
Membership Sunday is when we "lift up" membership at UUCO. We welcome new members and will ask longtime members to reflect on what membership has meant to them. In addition, we will make an opportunity (through cards and notes) to touch base with members who have moved on from here. The service will be followed by our traditional potluck, this time at the home of Julia Rholes.

December 21 - Winter Solstice

The service will be led by Paula Shanks and Susanna Furr.

December 28 - Burning Bowl

Briggs Massey will lead this service as we reflect on the year past and the year to come.

-----ASSOCIATION SUNDAY UPDATE-----

Together, we're growing our spirit and our faith! Deepest gratitude to all who participated in our annual Association Sunday service! Your contributions will help to increase the vibrancy of our movement and make our increasingly relevant message of peace, justice, and religious inclusiveness more readily accessible to the world, at a time when it is sorely needed.

Fifty percent of the money raised will be used as grants to congregations, districts, and seminaries to create new programs for lay theological education and spiritual deepening. The other fifty percent of the money will be divided equally between 1) our

ministers' association's new CENTER programs for continuing education to promote excellence in ministry, 2) scholarships for promising students preparing for our ministry, and 3) the Diversity in Ministry Team's initiative to support our ministers of color.

Thank you again for your support. And even if you missed Association Sunday, you haven't missed your opportunity to be a part of it. Now is the Time to contribute! Visit uua.org/giving or call toll free (888) 792-5885, because we are better together.

-----UU HALL EVENTS IN DECEMBER ----

Chris Aloia will be in town and is happy to do some free Tai Chi and Qi Gong classes at UU Hall. Please call Gail Stratton (281-0868) to confirm times.

Monday, December 15, Tai Chi, 4:30-6:00

Tuesday, December 16, Tai Chi, 4:30-6:00

Wednesday, December 17, Qi Gong, 12:00-1:00

Thursday, December 18, Tai Chi, 4:30-6:00

Monday evening book discussions continue. Please contact Briggs Massey for more information.

NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT- GROWING BELOVED COMMUNITY

"Growing Beloved Community," Mid-South's theme for the year, takes its inspiration from the book of this name by Tom Owen-Towle, a much-respected UU minister, now retired.

In the season of the winter solstice, of Christmas and Hanukah and Kwanza, we humans affirm what is beloved in our lives. We pause to celebrate what we value most, we give gifts to those we love and to those to whom we would extend love, we sing of what brings us joy. It is a beloved time. It is a holy time.

In the first chapter of *Growing the Beloved Community*, Rev. Owen-Towle writes about what

"holy" means, and he suggests that "being holy invites us to be still and know that our lives have come into being through and are sustained by a loving Spirit beyond our control, beyond even our comprehension, [and] to gather in song and enjoy music as a spiritual expression rather than solely as performance..."

In this season, especially, we come to our UU congregations hoping to find again that which we call holy – to touch and be touched by it. "Holiness," Owen-Towle asserts, "is most nearly approximated through experiencing the fullness of the Beloved Community in all its multifarious forms – from local parish to global whole."

Yet holiness, Owen-Towle reminds us, "doesn't imply that we major in piety or esoteric ritual." We Unitarian Universalists know that the holy can be found in the ordinary, the everyday.

(Rev. Owen-Towle will be with us at the MSD Annual Assembly in Nashville May 1-2, 2009.)

'Tis the Season... a time to pause, to reflect, to invite the holy into our lives. In so doing we connect with what is beloved in our lives. In so doing we grow beloved community.

Mid-South District - UUA

On the web at www.msduua.org

---UU'S SUPPORT MARRIAGE EQUALITY--

In light of the defeat of Proposition 8 in California and similar blows experienced on election day which restrict the rights of bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, and transgender people, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has produced a video which makes clear the support of people of faith for marriage equality.

The video uses images, gathered from Unitarian Universalists across North America, who have advocated for marriage equality or been joined in equal marriage; the video also celebrates the role of Unitarian Universalist clergy in officiating at

these services. You can see the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz8omkCTvQA>

-----**30 YEARS OF THE MOUNTAIN**-----

The Mountain, a UU-founded retreat center in Highlands, North Carolina, is celebrating its thirtieth anniversary during the holidays. Their programming offers music and other forms of celebration. For more information, including about what promises to be a very exciting New Year's music event, go to <http://www.mountaincenters.org>.

-----**UUCO FRIENDS EAST AND WEST**-----

Charlene Dye, now of New Paltz, New York, writes:

Dear UU folks,
I just wanted to say hello from New Paltz, NY, to all of you in the congregation. I miss Oxford and the Sunday UU meetings, but I am slowly starting to get settled into the community here.

I stood vigil with the Women in Black last Saturday on Main Street. They have been standing there in protest of war for the past seven years--every Saturday. As you may know, there are Women in Black groups all over the world who stand for an hour as if in mourning to protest war. I think it began in Israel. This might be something some of you would be interested in doing in Oxford. You can find out more about WiB at <http://www.womeninblack.org/history.html>.

To keep in shape, I have been stacking wood and raking leaves. The fall leaves here were so beautiful--until they began falling. Then, I saw them differently--at the business end of a rake. I also take long, long walks with my dog Buster.

New Paltz is a university town, so, in that way, it feels like Oxford here. Otherwise, Oxford and New Paltz don't have much in common. It's cold now, but I understand that it will get colder. To get ready to go out is a chore: coat, scarf, gloves, hat. Honestly, by the time I get dressed, I'm too tired to

go out. Then when I get wherever it is I'm going, I have to take it all off.

My email address is cdye3@verizon.net. I have been in contact with some of you and appreciate so much your messages and phone calls. Please know that I think of you with great fondness.

Keep in touch.
Charlene Dye
8 Cicero Avenue
New Paltz, NY 12561

We also hear from Dinah Swan, who with husband Terry now calls Colorado her home:

Dear UU's of Oxford,
Terry and Dinah Swan send Thanksgiving greetings to all our dearly missed friends in Oxford. We think of you often. I (Dinah) am in touch by e-mail with Charlene Dye in NY. She's editing my fourth novel, and we enjoy our friendship, which started at UU, so much.
All the best, Dinah Swan

-----**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**-----

Please let Luanne know of corrections and additions. You can reach her by phone at 234-3833, and at lbuchana@olemiss.edu.

We hope to send out our January newsletter by Monday, December 22 so all will have it before the holidays. Please consider submitting an article!