

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford
February 2008

Visit us at: <http://www.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 FEBRUARY---

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

February 3 - UUCO Green Sanctuary

The service will be conducted by Green Team committee members Greg Johnson, Susie Pedigo and Charlene Dye. There will be a short

introduction of the Green Sanctuary Program to the congregation followed by the film "Kilowatt Ours." A discussion concerning our own personal awareness of environmental issues will follow the film.

February 10 - Valentine's Day

This will be a joyful intergenerational celebration of Valentine's Day featuring members of the congregation sharing poems and stories, followed by glorious creation of valentines for our older and younger members. Come join in the fun! Bring sparklies and heart cut-outs and stickers and lace and buttons and bits of pictures cut from those magazines you wanted to recycle to add to the creations!

February 17 - Evolution Sunday

Gail Stratton will be our service leader for this special presentation of the Clergy Letter Project whose intent is to demonstrate that religion and science can be compatible and to elevate the quality of the debate of this issue. This Web site gives further information on the Clergy Letter Project: http://www.butler.edu/clergyproject/rel_evol_sun.htm

February 24 - to be announced

As always, the UUCO Programming Committee is looking for people interested in serving on the programming committee!! Please contact Sharon Walls regarding this opportunity to contribute your ideas and talents. You can reach Sharon via e-mail at skwalls921@bellsouth.net.

-----SUNDAY SCHOOL AT UUCO -----

Sunday school is scheduled to meet on February 3 and February 17 at 11:00 a.m. Please note that

February 10 is an intergenerational service for Valentine's Day. Judging by last year's fun, this will be a great opportunity for children to have some fun with the adults.

---UU LEADERSHIP BEGINS WITH YOU!--

It's hard to believe, but it has been nearly a year since our 10th anniversary celebration. As we head into our second decade, the continued health and vibrancy of our congregation depend on the many contributions of each member. Although every member, including the children, contributes much, we are especially indebted to our trustees who make year-long commitments to planning and overseeing the functioning of the congregation. These individuals are leaders in the best sense of the word!

Fortunately, leadership is an opportunity that is open to all members of UUCO. Our Board of Trustees is made up of 8 members: a president, vice-president, secretary, financial trustee, Sunday service programming trustee, religious education and youth trustee and communications trustee. Trustees are elected at our annual business meeting. The term for each Trustee is one year, but Trustees may serve for three consecutive years. Nominations for open trustee positions are made by the Leadership Development Committee, which this year consists of Beth Boerger and Ann Phillippi . We are currently seeking individuals who are interested in two positions: vice-president and Sunday service programming trustee. The vice-president serves as the administrative and operating officer of the congregation and oversees the care of the congregations property and business interests. The Sunday service programming trustee serves as the chair of the Sunday services committee which plans and coordinates services led by many service leaders.

We strongly encourage all members to consider taking on one of these positions or becoming involved in one of the standing committees that enable the Trustees to put their plans into action. If you are interested in either position or would like information about other leadership opportunities

within the congregation, please contact Beth (bethboerger@earthlink.net; 232-8980) or Ann (ann@vista-express.com, 236-1456).

-----FROM THE STEWARDSHIP GROUP-----

There is a lot going on at UUCO!!! We have formed a Green Sanctuary Committee and as a congregation we are thinking about becoming a Green Sanctuary. The Leadership Development Committee has been formed and is talking with individuals about taking a leadership role this next year, and the Stewardship Group has started the process of planning for this next year. All of these things have to do with stewardship.

So what is stewardship? "Stewardship means taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. Stewardship calls us to take responsibility and to make a contribution of our time, talent and treasure." In the context of UUCO, it means taking care of our congregation, our building, our community and our world. It means bringing our heart and our hands and our mind together in what we do in the world.

The three committees mentioned above are all part of stewardship. Stewardship involves us all and is year round. And, in the life of a congregation, different things happen at different times of the year. In the next several months, we will be hearing from the Green Team, from the Leadership Development Committee and from the Stewardship Group. This time of year includes working on the budget for next year and doing a pledge drive so that we know what our finances will be this next year. Importantly, stewardship is not limited to finances and money, but money is an important part of stewardship.

The UUCO Board is at beginning of the process of working out our budget for this next fiscal year (July 2008- June 2009) and will be asking the congregation for ideas and feedback about what we want to budget for this next year. What would we like to do more of that we are already doing? Are there new initiatives we would like to start? Now is

the time to talk with the Stewardship Group or the UUCO Board.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of UUCO this year and to everyone who has given of their time and talent. And, thanks to everyone who has made a financial contribution to the congregation. We are deeply grateful for all the gifts of time, talent and money that are making UUCO all that it is. Those that have made financial contributions to UUCO this last year will soon be getting a letter summarizing their donations for the 2007 year. In addition, that letter will include what you pledged and where you are in fulfilling the pledge.

February 10 will be our kick-off Sunday for the pledge drive for 2008-2009. Throughout the next month we will take some time each week to reflect on the congregation. The pledge drive will conclude in March with a celebration Sunday. The Board meeting in March will be to prepare the budget for 2008-2009. That budget will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting on April 13.

A big thank you to everyone who is part of this congregation and a big thank you for looking forward to what we can do this next year!!

The Stewardship Group (Gail Stratton, Paula Shanks, Shanna Flaschka, Sharon Walls, Pat Miller and Linda Iorio).

-----UUCO PARTICIPATES IN STATE-WIDE PUBLIC RELATIONS INITIATIVE---

This last December, UUCO received a grant from the Mississippi UU Steering Committee to extend its PR in a new way. After a lively discussion, the UUCO board wrote a proposal to extend its newspaper advertising for one month into newspapers within a 30-mile radius of Oxford. This last week, those ads were placed and may reach as many as 30,000 people! UUCO will now be listed with the church listing for each newspaper. For Pontotoc and New Albany, both

the Oxford Congregation and the Tupelo Congregation were listed.

Each of the six UU Congregations in Mississippi wrote a grant and received funding for initiatives to increase local visibility. For example, Our Home Universalist Unitarian Church is hosting Mississippi author Carolyn Haines for a book signing and reception. In addition to writing mysteries, she has written about Emmett Till and Medgar Evers. Gulf Coast UU Fellowship is placing the UUA publication *UU World* in all Harrison County libraries. UU Church of Jackson is putting up directional signs on street corners to make their church easier to find. Hattiesburg UU Fellowship, UU Congregation of Tupelo and UUCO are all extending their newspaper advertising.

Thanks to all who made this happen. The Mississippi Steering Committee is working hard to meet the needs of the UU congregations of Mississippi. Comprised of Rev. Fred Hammond, Pat Miller and Nell Cobb, this committee has also recently sponsored a day-long workshop on stewardship. The UUCO board had great ideas on increasing our visibility. And, a small group from UUCO saw this project through to completion! Thanks to Gail Stratton, Paula Shanks, Dan Mattern, Luanne Buchanan and Pat Miller.

-----YOUTH ADULT CONFERENCE AT UUCO A BIG SUCCESS!-----

This thank-you note should give a clear idea of the contributions of our hard-working members to the success of the second YAC conference held at UU Hall:

To everyone at UUCO:

We would like to extend a great big “thank you” to everyone at UUCO who helped with hosting the UU Youth Adult Committee the weekend of January 11-13!!! Also known as YAC, the Youth Adult Committee plans conferences, or "CONS", for high school and middle school UU youth from across our district. They meet at a variety of

congregations, partly as a way to involve more youth and get to know other congregations.

The YAC met at UUCO January 11-13 and stayed (camped!) at UU Hall. There were 22 youth + adults and they had a very successful planning meeting (and had a lot of fun). They were very grateful for the comfortable and welcoming place to meet, the great potluck on Saturday evening, the participation of our high school youth and for the pizza that magically appeared Saturday evening!

A big thank you to all who helped make this happen, in particular **Hans Sinha** for coordinating the event, helping folks to find our building late Friday evening, and staying up part of Saturday night to provide the adult awake supervision necessary at such events. Thanks, too, to **Ross Haenfler** and **Eunice Benton** for providing the awake adults in the wee hours of the morning. Thanks to many for providing food and making the potluck so good. Many of the visiting youth are vegetarians and appreciated the wide variety of choices. And thanks to **Ann Phillippi** and **Mel Warren** for the pizza that appeared as a late-time snack on Saturday evening!

You can learn more about upcoming high school, middle school and advisor training dates at <http://www.msduua.org/public/msd/programs/youth/Youth.aspx>, and Gail and Hans can answer questions.

Warmly, Gail Stratton

-----**UUCO BOARD**-----
Your UUCO board met on December 18. The seven board members present approved the minutes of the October 24, 2007 meeting. In addition, we approved a summary of business conducted by e-mail since the previous meeting and discussed guidelines for conducting future business by e-mail. E-mail business since the previous meeting included approving a proposal for advertising dollars from MSUU Planning Team (\$300 was

awarded to UUCO and will be used to place ads in newspapers within a 30 mile radius of Oxford) and approving an October letter to the congregation. Gail extended thanks to many people who have been working on behalf of our congregation. Paula Shanks presented the financial report for November which the board approved unanimously. Gail provided information about the activities of the MS Planning Team, including the Advertising Initiative, the Stewardship Conference, and the Religious Education Conference (to be held in spring). Gail also provided a report from the Green Sanctuary committee, headed by Charlene Dye, and the Board unanimously and enthusiastically approved the committee's efforts. A leadership committee was being formed, with members at the time of the last meeting including Ann Phillippi and Beth Boerger.

-----NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT - WANTED: GOOD LEADERS!---

What does your congregation do to invite, support, and appreciate good leaders?

One congregation in Mid-South District once noted that its approach was to “bubble up” good leaders! That idea – that out of the involvement of lots of folks in the working of the congregation next leaders would emerge – is a great tactic. But great tactics need minds and hands to implement them, so what’s a congregation to do?

Shifting to a Leadership Development Committee (and way of thinking!) from a Nominating Committee is a good way to go. A Leadership Development Committee does more than just fill slots – it actively encourages folks to get involved in various ways, to share their gifts and talents, and to play leadership roles for the congregation from time to time. It meets year round and is a voice for encouraging training and education for leaders and financial support for that where it’s appropriate (so that there’s money in the budget for folks to attend conferences, for example.)

Our UU congregations need good leadership at every level, from programs and special projects to

staff and board. Folks who are willing to play leadership roles deserve the support and thanks of the congregation, however. So, as roles change and new leaders come in, don't forget to say "Thank You!" to those who have served!

The Mid-South web site has more info! Go to www.msduua.org and click on "Resources" to see "Leadership Development."

Eunice Milton Benton, District Executive
Mid-South District - UUA
On the web at www.msduua.org

-----**OUR FAITH IN THE NEWS**-----

We thank Eunice for bringing to our attention an interesting article about Unitarian Universalism that appeared in early January in the Chicago Tribune. It provides a summary of current efforts to bring in new UU's and the reasoning behind national (and local) campaigns to bring the good news of Unitarian Universalism to new people. A hard copy of this article will be available on our bulletin board..

-----**PASSAGES**-----

Dinah And Terry Swan's beloved dog, Pumpkin died on January 25, 2008. She was 16 years old and is sorely missed by her guardians.

-----**OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS**-----

An Edgar Cayce Inquiry Group formed on January 27. This a great opportunity to learn about America's 20th century "sleeping" prophet and medical diagnostician. There is no fee. Contact Rick Chandler at 662-832-0374 for meeting time and place.

Theatre Oxford's 10-Minute Play Contest deadline is February 15, 2008. Call contest director and UU member Dinah Swan if you have questions not answered by the theatre's web page, www.10minuteplays.com. The top prize is \$1,000 and a production of the winning script.

The fifth Oxford Film Festival, scheduled for February 7-10, has scheduled two films for the afternoon of Sunday, February 10 which could be of interest to religious organizations. Please visit <http://www.oxfordfilmfest.com> to find out more about these films and others.

Sarah Sheffield has kindly agreed to share her grandmother's cookie recipe with the congregation. They passed the taste test with flying colors at our holiday service right before Christmas.

Gram (graham) Cookies

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. You'll need:

4 cups graham cracker crumbs (equal to 1 box)

2 cans Eagle condensed milk

1 cup chopped walnuts

1 large bag of chocolate chips

Wax paper

Grease 9x13 pan and line the pan with wax paper. Grease the wax paper. Mix all ingredients together, (It works best to mix the dry then add the condensed milk last.) Place batter into pan and spread evenly over the whole pan.

Bake for about 30 minutes . It may take longer. AS SOON AS IT IS DONE, invert pan onto another sheet of wax paper and peel off the wax paper from the pan. IMPORTANT- cut into about 1" squares WHILE STILL WARM, or you will never be able to cut them!

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

Please let Luanne know of corrections, additions, and any news that you might have for our next newsletter, due out at the end of February. You can send submissions to uuoxford@uuoxford.com, putting "for the newsletter" in the subject line, or to Luanne at lbuchana@olemiss.edu. She'll also be glad to be called by you, at 234-3833. Special thanks to this month's contributors: Susie Adams, Beth Boerger, Paula Shanks and Gail Stratton. We hope that your article is next!