

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford

March 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 MARCH-----

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

March 2 – Germanic heathenry
UUCO was fortunate to have Skadi Snook's presentation on Germanic heathenry in January, and Skadi will provide a second look at the topic at this week's service.

March 9 – Qi gong meditation

Chris Aloia will lead the service in a qi gong meditation. Chris is a t'ai chi and qi gong teacher who teaches t'ai chi at UU Hall.

March 16 – UU visiting minister

Erik David Carlson, intern minister at Community Church Unitarian Universalist, New Orleans, is scheduled to speak. The Reverend Carlson is an accomplished artist and musician and has spoken recently in New Orleans about UU history and covenants.

March 23 – Easter Sunday

Members of the Green Sanctuary Committee will conduct our green Easter service. Gail Stratton, Susie Pedigo, and Charlene Dye will introduce the ideas behind becoming a certified Green Sanctuary.

March 30 – UU visiting minister

The Reverend Bill Leggett from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham is the guest minister. He graduated with honors from Meadville Lombard Theological School with a Master of Divinity degree in 1998. In 2006, he accepted the call to become the minister of the UU Church of Birmingham.

Included in the Sunday service is a child dedication. You can read more about it below, and interested parents can contact Hans Sinha, RE trustee (hansps@mac.com), for more details.

March 30 also is Celebration Sunday! We will hold a meal after the service, provided and served by the UUCO Board of Trustees, to celebrate what we know will be the incredible success of the annual pledge drive.

Interested in programming? Our committee is always looking for new talents and energy! Please

contact Sharon Walls at skwalls921@bellsouth.net regarding this opportunity to serve.

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

March 16 is spring break, and we're hoping that UUCO children and parents will spend that Sunday relaxing in a sunny place! But do mark your calendars for Sunday school on March 2 and March 30 at 11:00 a.m.

----UUCO IS A GIVING CONGREGATION, AND THAT'S WHY I GIVE: A MEMBER TALKS ABOUT THE 2008 PLEDGE DRIVE---

Did you know that UUCO gives a percentage of our income every quarter to a community charity? The UUCO board just voted to give our most recent contribution to the Interfaith Compassion Ministry so they can continue their vital work with local tornado victims.

Did you know that UUCO participated last fall in the UU Association Sunday? We collected funds from many generous members to help spread our message nationally about the liberal religious home offered by Unitarian Universalism.

UUCO is a giving congregation, and when I see what we're able to do as a group locally or nationally, it overcomes my natural tendency (and just ask my children how natural it is!) to avoid spending money.

I can't give a lot, but what I give becomes so much more when I give it with you all. My gift from my heart and from my values, joined with your gift from your heart and values, grows exponentially. So I will pledge (by the March 23 deadline) and I hope you will too.

Luanne Buchanan

P. S. Did you see the part about the MARCH 23 DEADLINE? We'll appreciate receiving your forms by then. Contact us at uuoxford@uuoxford.com if you need another form

or didn't receive one, and we'll make sure you have it in time to make that MARCH 23 DEADLINE. Thanks!

-----GREEN TEAM NEWS-----

Green Team committee member Greg Johnson has great ideas for community outreach. In order to help fulfill the requirements for community outreach, involvement and education, he would be willing to help plan and present any number of events, such as film screenings, public talks and discussions about topics such as vegetarianism and energy consumption. Greg has proposed a partial-day workshop that introduces the public to basic environmental awareness issues, an Environmentalism 101 or something similar. Greg says: "So, you want to help the environment . . . We could get several speakers to present basic ideas and practices anyone can begin to incorporate into his/her life, etc...." With this kind of enthusiasm, how can we go wrong?

On March 23rd, Gail Stratton, Susie Pedigo and Charlene Dye will speak at the UUCO green Easter program. Then, in April, Gail, Susie and Charlene will go on campus to speak about becoming a Green Sanctuary to Mary Curruth's gender studies honors section of "Women and the Environment." And on April 28th they will speak at the Southern Studies Brown Bag: Green Series, again on campus.

The UUCO Green Sanctuary personal environmental assessment and survey form has been added to the UUCO web site. Go to www.uuoxford.com and click on "UUCO Documents" on the left. Then, click on "Green Survey and Audit Form." We are asking that each UUCO member/family make a copy of the form and fill it out. At a later date, we will devote a Sunday program to personal environmental awareness and action.

The Green Team welcomes suggestions and involvement. Charlene can be reached at chickenranch@peoplepc.com.

----CHILD DEDICATION ON MARCH 30----

During our worship service on March 30, we will welcome children into our church community through a dedication service. The Rev. Bill Leggett will officiate.

If you'd like your child or children to be dedicated, please contact our Trustee for Religious Education and youth, Hans Sinha. This service is not just for infants; children of all ages are welcome. Nor do you have to be a member of the church to have your child dedicated.

If you'd like to know more about the ritual, please contact Hans Sinha (hansps@mac.com or 513-4855) or Gail Stratton (byges@olemiss.edu or 281-0868).

---GETTING TO KNOW A NEW UU-----

The congregation was pleased to welcome a number of new members in the fall, and they have shared some details of their lives with us. This month we're happy to hear more about Julia Rhoads.

Julia moved to Oxford in June of 2003 from Lawrence, Kansas. She is currently the dean of libraries at the University of Mississippi. Julia was born and grew up in Houston, Texas. She has undergraduate and masters degrees in zoology and a masters degree in library science. Prior to coming to the University of Mississippi, she also worked in libraries at Texas A&M University and the University of Kansas. Julia has two sons: Ted, who is in graduate school at Texas A&M, and Eric, who recently graduated from the University of Kansas and who now lives and works in Lawrence. She currently shares her Oxford home with a dog and two cats. She loves reading, travel and movies. Raised as a Catholic, she is a newcomer to the Unitarian Universalist church.

Welcome, Julia!

--UUCO BOARD PRESIDENT EARNS MULTICULTURAL AWARD-----

On February 26, UUCO board president Gail Stratton received the University of Mississippi Residence Hall Association's Lucius L. Williams Award. This award is named after Dr. Williams, the first black administrator at the University, to recognize faculty who have made a significant contribution to the promotion of diversity and multiculturalism on campus. Much-deserved congratulations to Gail!

-NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT: LET'S INCLUDE CHILDREN IN WORSHIP!

From Connie Goodbread, Mid-South Program Consultant:

I have this radical idea. I think we should be worshiping with our children.

Worship is the time when we honor and celebrate the things we hold most worthy. We all come together to worship. Worship is the most important time for the whole congregational family to be together, to practice our faith and values together.

"Children will be restless and noisy during worship," some say. But it is not children we don't want in worship; it is disruptive behavior. Nobody sits still or pays constant attention to every part of every service. We must teach everyone worship manners.

Children are quite capable of being worshipful, and there are many ways to involve them – beginning with greeting them at the door and giving them special worship packets. The packets can contain items to intrigue children and help them participate quietly. The packet can then go home with the child, a reminder of the day and a catalyst for family discussion.

Including stories during worship can be enriching for all ages. Stories allow us to see the complexity in the simple. For example, on the surface a Dr. Seuss story may seem just funny and rhyming, but

a deeper reading can find profound meanings and teachings.

Worship should arouse our passions, make our minds wander, and move us. Worship should be food for our souls, souls of all ages.

Mid-South District - UUA
On the web at www.msduua.org

-----ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST TO UU-----

March 1 - The Sarah Isom Center on campus is sponsoring a workshop, "Women in Charge of the Money," from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m., in room 209 of Bryant Hall on Lyceum Circle. The facilitator is Bobbie Wrenn Banks of Women's Action for New Directions (WAND). WAND is a national women's nonprofit that empowers women to act politically to reduce militarism and violence, and redirect excessive military resources toward human and environmental needs. Lunch will be served. You can call the Sarah Isom Center at 915-5916, for more information.

March 19 - Greg Johnson has organized a classical music concert at the Oxford-University United Methodist Church at 8:30 p.m. Among the works to be played is Pergolesi's Stabat Mater, a Baroque era composition for two vocalists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome.

May 2-4 - Save these dates for the Mid-South District Annual Assembly! It will be hosted by the UU Fellowship of the Emerald Coast in Valparaiso, Florida. The theme is living Unitarian Universalism; come and talk about what it means to be a practicing UU! What could be better than the beach in late spring with a bunch of like-minded folks? More information will be in upcoming newsletters.

Sooner rather than later! - This call comes for Chalice Lighters from the Mid-South District office:

The Chalice Lighter Call for the Georgia Mountains UU Church of Dahlonega, Georgia is in the mail to Mid-South District Chalice Lighters! Your Chalice Lighter contribution of \$10 (or more!) will be a gift to support growth at the Georgia Mountains UU Church of Dahlonega as well as the overall growth of Unitarian Universalism in Mid-South District and across the country.

The Georgia Mountains UU Church is committed to growing its congregation, but repairs and modifications to the building are essential. Targeted especially are renovations to the lower level to accommodate a larger religious education program and a new front entry with landscaping. Other current projects to achieve their growth goals include a professional marketing workshop, a monthly Social Action Conversation Café with Peace Church emphasis, and improving the environmental conscience through "Greening GMUUC."

If you are not already a Chalice Lighter, you may join this effort by sending a contribution along with your address, email address, and congregation affiliation to the Mid-South District Office at 9 County Road 1058, Oxford, MS 38655.

-----CLOSING WITH A PRAYER: A FINAL GIFT FROM ELEANOR MATTERN-----

We were saddened by the loss of Eleanor Mattern, mother of Dan, mother-in-law of Elaine, grandmother of Sierra and Jillian, and warm and wonderful friend of many of us, in February. But Eleanor left a gift in the form of a favorite prayer, which many attendees at her memorial service requested. Here it is:

A 17th Century Nun's Prayer

Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself that
I am growing older and will some day
be old.
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say
something
on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out
everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody:
helpful but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not
to use it all,
but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends
at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless
details;

give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are
increasing
and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter
as the years go by.

I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of
others' pains,
but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory,
but for a growing humility and a lessing
cocksureness

when my memory seems to clash with the
memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally
I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet;

I do not want to be a Saint — some of them are so
hard to live with —

but a sour old person is one of the crowning works
of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in
unexpected places,
and talents in unexpected people.

And, give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.
Amen.

-----**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 March. 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: Pat Miller, Gail
Stratton, Charlene Dye, and Dan Mattern for the
wonderful prayer from Eleanor. We also are
grateful to John Schuster, who labored long to put
the UUCO Green Sanctuary personal environmental
assessment and survey form on our website, thus
saving us from a 12-page newsletter!