

# UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford

November 2008

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## -----CONTENTS-----

DIRECTIONS FOR HOW TO FIND US  
SUNDAY SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER  
UUCO RETREAT NOVEMBER 1-2  
SUMMARY OF OCTOBER BOARD MEETING  
UUCO GIVES AWAY THE PLATE  
ANTI-TORTURE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES  
UUCO PERFORMERS AROUND TOWN  
NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT  
UUSC HOLIDAY CARDS  
DAY OF THE DEAD RECIPE  
CLOSING THOUGHTS: WE TOO ARE  
AMERICA

## -----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](http://www.UUTupelo.org).

## ----SUNDAY SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER----

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

November 2 - "This I Believe"

Sharon Walls leads the service on one of our favorite topics.

Please note that November 2 also is the finale of our congregational retreat at Wall Doxey State Park for those who decide to spend Saturday night there. See the details below.

November 9 - "Prayer without Words"

LedaSwan, Inc. will present a preview of their upcoming concert, "Prayers without Words". This concert uses music and dance to bring together performers of diverse cultural, racial, and religious communities to work on a common positive theme: how people pray.

The UU preview will feature community dancers including congregation members and friends Elaine Gelbard, Jimmyle Listenbee, Vicki Reithel and Mary Riggs.

The performance itself will be at the Powerhouse Theater November 12-14 at 7:30 p.m. (The Wednesday, November 12 premier features a gala party after the show.) Tickets are \$12.50 for Thursday or Friday, \$25 for the Wednesday gala. Contact the dancers about tickets or purchase them through [jlistenb@earthlink.net](mailto:jlistenb@earthlink.net) or [yacoperations@gmail.com](mailto:yacoperations@gmail.com).

November 16 - Association Sunday with Gail Stratton

In Unitarian Universalist Congregations, we enjoy church polity. That means two things: we govern ourselves and we are in a covenant relationship with others in our broader association. This service will examine several aspects of our relationships with other Unitarian Universalists, from the annual General Assembly, to a new grouping of small congregations called the UP! program, to the great benefits of being in the Mid-South District of the UUA.

This will be a "Give Away the Plate Sunday" with

the donations going to pay for Lay Ministry Education programs and to support Excellence in Ministry programs.

November 23 - "A Traveler's Field Guide to Unitarians and Universalists"

The Reverend Barry Whittmore will join us for a sermon that explores the unresolved theological differences between Unitarians and Universalists, which still haunt our movement and pose questions to us about our future.

November 30 - "An Examination of the Spiritual Journey: A Quest for Truth in the Modern Age"  
UUCO member David Smith will lead this service.

**-----UUCO RETREAT AT WALL DOXEY-----**

November 1 and 2 are the dates for this year's retreat. Activities begin at 9:45 a.m on Saturday morning at Wall Doxey State Park. Here are some details:

If you haven't registered and paid yet, send form to [egelbard@bellsouth.net](mailto:egelbard@bellsouth.net), and bring money with you. And contact Elaine if you have time to help gather supplies before Saturday.

A full breakfast will be served at 9:00 a.m. For those who arrive late, there will be cereal and juice available.

Activities begin at 9:45 a.m. Please allow time to find the group camp area, park, and get settled by then. Tell the Wall Doxey entrance attendant that you are going to the group camp so that you will not have to pay an entry fee. Drive past the lodge parking on your right. At the next big parking area on the right, look for a sign directing you to turn left into the group camp area. Find us at the meeting hall/dining room.

Bring a water bottle, walking shoes if you'd like to join a hike around the lake, rain gear if the weather looks like you'll need it, a jacket for the falling evening temperatures (forecast low: 43 degrees), musical instruments, and games.

Even if you don't plan to stay overnight, bring a flashlight so you can walk easily to the fire ring for our evening campfire (thank you, Larry!).

For those of you staying overnight in the cabins: the cabins have heating and cooling. You will need to bring linens and toiletries, as the cabins provide just the basics of beds, showers, sinks and toilets.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be served cafeteria style and do not include a buffet of choices. If you are a careful eater, bring snacks to make yourself happy. You might also want to bring your own plates and cutlery in case Wall Doxey serves on plastic.

**-----UUCO OCTOBER BOARD MEETING---**

Thanks to secretary Susie Adams for the following summary.

In attendance were Gail Stratton, Beth Boerger, Paula Shanks, Susie Adams, Luanne Buchanan, Anne Quinney, Hans Sinha, Sharon Walls, and Terri Wright.

We welcomed Terri Wright as the new Membership Trustee and again thanked Shanna Flaschka for the outstanding service she rendered in that post. Paula presented the first quarter financial report, along with a summary of the Give-Away-The-Plate donations, and the report was unanimously approved. Gail announced that we received the Mid-South District advertising grant we applied for and that we were approved for a Chalice Lighter call to generate funds for the "greening" of our building and grounds. We unanimously approved a proposal by Beth to proceed immediately with insulating the attic and replacing the attic door and rain gutters. We discussed potential changes to the bylaws to add some positions and ways to do so without overpopulating the Board. Luanne discussed activities related to the Campaign Against Torture and also led discussion of the first two chapters of the book *Growing the Beloved Community*. We are looking for ways to get more feedback from members on how well we are

meeting our Mission Statement. The next meetings will be held November 10 and December 8.

Our current officers and trustees are:  
President: Gail Stratton  
Vice President: Beth Boerger  
Secretary: Susie Adams  
Financial Trustee: Paula Shanks  
Sunday Service Programming Co-Trustees:  
Sharon Walls and Anne Quinney  
Religious Education and Youth Co-Trustees:  
Hans Sinha and Susie Pedigo  
Communications Trustee: Luanne Buchanan  
Membership Trustee: Terri Wright

**-----UUCO GIVES AWAY THE PLATE (AND SOME CASH) TO CAUSES THAT REFLECT OUR VALUES -----**

Do you know what it means to “give away the plate”? Please read Eunice Benton’s message in the Mid-South news section to get the full story. For UUCO, it means a board decision, echoed by our members, to give away our Sunday offering once each month to a cause that allows us to put our values in action. This collection is not in our budget and does not rely on pledging; it is pure and simple generosity on the part of the givers. .

Since July, UUCO has donated funds to Habitat for Humanity, the Knoxville Relief Fund for those affected by the tragic killings at the UU church, the Gulf Coast UU Fellowship, and to purchase a tank of propane gas for a local family that is struggling to make ends meet. This first quarter of giving away the plate allowed us to distribute \$1719.18. Thank you, UUCO, for practicing what we preach!

**-----RELIGIOUS CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORTURE CONTINUES ITS WORK-----**

This past summer UUCO displayed a banner in support of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture’s work to ban these horrendous practices from use by any American anywhere. NRCAT’s campaign continues, and so will the participation of UUCO. Our banner will be

reinstalled in November and January, as we vote for new leaders and as new leaders take office.

Most immediately, November 12 has been chosen as the National Day of Witness for a Presidential Executive Order to Ban Torture. On that day, members of NRCAT will ask members of Congress to endorse the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order and to urge the President-elect to issue an Executive Order as one of his first official actions.

Members of Congress also will be asked to support a call for the appointment of a Select Committee of Congress to investigate the use of torture since September 11, 2001. As Reverend Richard Killmer, Executive Director of NRCAT, has said, “Both the new President and the new Congress need to take immediate steps to reverse the policies authorizing torture and to begin rebuilding our nation’s moral leadership.”

Locally, UUCO plans to collaborate with the Tupelo UU congregation in presenting a list of Mississippi endorsers of the Declaration of Principles to members of Congress. If you’re free on November 12 to join Luanne Buchanan and others for a visit to a member of Congress, please contact Luanne at 234-3833 or [lbuchana@olemiss.edu](mailto:lbuchana@olemiss.edu).

If you’re not free on November 12, please sign the Declaration of Principles so we can count you as an endorser! You can do this by going to NRCAT’s web site at <http://www.nrcat.org> and clicking on “Tell the President: Ban Torture!”.

We are proud of the Unitarian Universalist role in banning this cruel practice, and we are hopeful that these actions will motivate our newly-elected leaders to do the right thing.

**-- MEMBERS AND FRIENDS IN THE ARTS--**

Here are some November performances you won't want to miss:

"Prayers Without Words: Spiritual Expressions Through Dance and Music"

November 12, 13, 14 at the Powerhouse at 7:30 p.m.

Several UUCO friends will be performing: Elaine, Vicki, Mary Riggs, Jimmyle, Kevin. Contact Elaine for tickets: [egelbard@bellsouth.net](mailto:egelbard@bellsouth.net) or 236-2545.

The Oxford Civic Chorus Fall Concert

November 16 at 3:30, North Oxford Baptist Church.

Heavenly singing is provided by Elaine, Christine, and 70 others. Contact Elaine for tickets: [egelbard@bellsouth.net](mailto:egelbard@bellsouth.net) or 236-2545.

## **NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT- THE PRACTICE OF GENEROSITY**

More and more Mid-South congregations are "giving away the plate" periodically – and what these congregations are finding is that this custom is creating a culture of generosity in their congregations. Some do this as a once-a-month practice – but some are doing it almost every Sunday!

This bigheartedness is a gift to the recipients – who may be community organizations or individuals with special needs or Unitarian Universalist congregations with special needs.

But the real reward of this practice is felt by those who give. Realizing that we can share out of the abundance available to us, that we can truly afford to be generous even in tight times is a gift to the human spirit. Practicing generosity like this is spiritual practice for congregations.

One focus of this kind of giving could be the once-a-year-day practice of giving to our UUA family. "ASSOCIATION SUNDAY" is what we call the day, once a year, when we "give away the plate" as extra support for our family of UU congregations across the country.

November, the time of harvest and thanksgiving, calls us to both gratitude and generosity – a time to "count our blessings" and then to share them to bless the world beyond ourselves. It's a good season for generosity.

Generous living is also a balm for the kind of anxious times the roller-coaster financial world is thrusting upon us. Finding ways to live with abundance in times shot through with fears of scarcity is good spiritual practice for us all.

You can find stories about generosity at the Mid-South web site, [www.msduua.org](http://www.msduua.org), and information about "Association Sunday" at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org), the UUA web site.

## **HOLIDAY CARDS AVAILABLE FROM UUSC**

If you're in the habit of sending out holiday cards, visit <http://www.uusc.org/holidaycards> to see what you get in purchasing cards from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. In addition to greeting cards, you have the satisfaction of knowing you are supporting many of their worthwhile causes: workers' rights, civil liberties, the human right to water, and the rights of vulnerable groups in humanitarian crises.

## **-----DAY OF THE DEAD RECIPE-----**

Thanks to Beth Boerger for sharing this recipe enjoyed by attendees at our October 26 service.

### **Day of the Dead Bread (Pan de Muerto)**

This is a light sweet bread often placed on the altars honoring deceased loved ones during Mexican Day of the Dead festivities.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

1/2 cup butter  
1 1/4 cup water  
6 cups flour  
2 packets dry yeast (NOT Instant)  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 teaspoons whole anise seed

2 tablespoons orange zest  
1/2 tsp nutmeg  
3/4 cup sugar  
4 large eggs  
Glaze (see below)

**PREPARATION:**

Bring all ingredients to room temperature (except for the water which should be very warm) before beginning.

In a large bowl, mix together butter, sugar, anise, orange zest, nutmeg, salt and 1/2 cup of the flour. In a separate bowl combine the eggs and the water. Add the egg/water mixture to the first mixture and add in another 1/2 cup of the flour. Add in the yeast and another 1/2 cup of flour. Continue to add the flour 1 cup at a time until a dough forms.

Knead on a floured surface for about 1 minute. (Alternatively, kneading can be done in the mixing bowl. As the dough becomes too stiff to stir with a spoon, simply mix in the remaining flour with your hands and then knead the dough until it forms a smooth elastic ball. Then turn dough out onto a floured surface.) Cover with a slightly damp dishcloth and let rise in a warm area for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Uncover dough and punch it down. Remove about 1/4 of it and use it to make bone shapes to drape across the loaf. Place the larger portion of dough on a greased cookie sheet and shape it into an oval. Break the reserved dough into 5 pieces. Make bone shapes with four of them and place as crossed arms and legs on top of oval. Make a circle with remaining piece and place it as head above the crossed arms. Let the shaped dough rise for 1 more hour.

Bake in a 350 degree oven for about 45 minutes. If the top begins to brown excessively, you may cover it with aluminum foil about half-way through baking.

**GLAZE** (After glaze is applied you may decorate with additional colored sugar.)

Bring to a boil- 3/4 cup sugar and 1/2 cup fresh orange juice. Brush on bread and then sift some additional sugar over the top.

**-----CLOSING THOUGHTS-----**

UUCO was honored by the visit of Dr. Tony Stringer, Lead Lay Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, on September 21. He delivered a sermon that provides some valuable insights as we elect new leaders the first week of November. You can read his entire sermon by going to [www.oxford.com](http://www.oxford.com) and clicking on "We Too Are America."

**-----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](mailto:lbuchana@olemiss.edu).

We hope to send out our December newsletter by Tuesday, November 25 so all will have it before Thanksgiving. Please consider submitting an article!

Many thanks to Susie Adams, Beth Boerger, Paula Shanks and Gail Stratton for contributing to this month's newsletter.