

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford
October 2007

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 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 OCTOBER-----

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

October 7 - Amnesty International in Mississippi

October 14 - Association Sunday: "Now is the Time"

UUCO President Gail Stratton will lead this service as we acknowledge and support, both in spirit and

through a special collection, the national work of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

October 21 - Presentation about our environment
We will be visited by Kristin Lamberson and ecologist Chad Pope from the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center at Holly Springs, home of the annual Hummingbird Festival each September. For more information please visit their Web site at <http://www.msaudubon.org/centers/strawberry.php>.

October 28 - Guest minister

The Reverend Bill Leggett, minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Birmingham will be our guest. Reverend Leggett filled a life-long dream of becoming a minister when he entered the Meadville-Lombard Theological School in the early 90's. He graduated with honors with a Master of Divinity degree in 1998. He was called as Lead Minister at The First Parish in Portland, Maine, in 1999. There he was on the board of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Program, served on Portland's World AIDS Day Committee, and initiated a prison ministry for immigrants at the Cumberland County Jail. In 2006, he accepted the call to become the minister of the UU Church of Birmingham.

The Sunday Services Programming Committee would like to invite anyone who feels moved to act as service leader for even one Sunday morning service to contact Sharon Walls, Programming Trustee, via e-mail at skwalls921@bellsouth.net. We are reaching out to involve more people in our worship service, and we know you will not regret giving this service to the congregation.

-----**THE MISSION STATEMENT AND WHO WE ARE - REFLECTIONS AND A REQUEST FOR ACTION FROM UUCO PRESIDENT GAIL STRATTON**-----

This is the Mission of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford:

“To provide a caring intergenerational community that fosters spiritual growth through free thought and respect for personal beliefs, seeks the wisdom of many religious traditions and of ourselves, and encourages the expression of personal ideals in service to people, other life, and our planet.”

Last year the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford celebrated its 10th year as a congregation affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association. There is much to celebrate in our 10 years, including having many new members and our own building. However, it is timely to take a look at our mission statement and ask if the statement fits who we are now that we are 10 years old. More than half of our members have joined within the last 4 to 5 years and thus were not part of crafting our mission statement.

We have started this process by asking people to think about what part of the statement "fits" best. What part resonates with you most significantly? We will continue this coming week by asking what else should or could be included. What part if any does not fit who we are or who we want to be? Does the statement provide direction for where we want to be headed?

We welcome the involvement of the whole congregation in this reflective process. And, there are several ways to be involved:

- *Have a conversation with someone about the mission statement.
- *The bulletin board in the coffee room is now a public place for posting ideas and suggestions. Read these and add to them!

*There is also an envelope in that room where comments can be placed if you don't want it on the bulletin board.

*Come to the congregational retreat (weekend of November 3-4), where further discussions will occur.

*Join a small committee who will take the comments and suggestions and put them together in a new or modified statement.

We are asking for comments by early October. If you think it is good as it is, please say so. If you want one part changed, please let us know that. By mid October we will have a "working draft" that we will circulate to everyone and again ask for comments. We hope that a near- final version will be in hand at the start of November, and we are planning on having the congregation affirm the new statement at the Sunday Service on November 11.

Please be part of this important process! Emails can be sent to UUoxford@oxford.com (with "Mission statement review" in the subject line), or ideas can be posted on the bulletin board at church. If you want to serve in the committee that will craft the modified statement, please let me know.

For the UUCO Board,

Gail Stratton, President

-----**YOUTH ACTIVITIES AT UUCO**-----

Sunday school provides opportunities for our children to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and their world. Here are the dates and some news about what each group is up to, from RE leader Susie Adams.

RE Sundays for the fall

September 9, 23

October 7, 21

November 18 (November 4 is the retreat so no Sunday school is scheduled)

December 2, 16

The pre-school gang

The pre-school group this year includes mostly 2-5 year olds: Sophie, Jaden, Audrey, Ross, and Elsie. They are a REALLY GREAT group of adorable kids. If you would enjoy the privilege of leading their Sunday school class some time, we have an open teaching slot on October 7 and may have another later in the fall. Susie A. will teach on October 21. Thanks to Vicki Reithel who led the group on short notice on September 9 (and she came out smiling!!). If you'd like to teach, please contact Susie at 234-3064, sbadams@olemiss.edu.

Budding film makers

The UUCO 4th-6th graders (Casey, Connor, and Alexa) have a fun (we hope) course plotted for part of their fall RE semester. They are laying plans for making a short documentary movie about a topic relevant to the Oxford community. This is a fine example of the clueless leading the eager, as Susie Adams, who has never touched a digital video camera or a movie editing program, is leading the effort. If anyone has expertise, or even an inkling of a clue, about movie making, Susie would be indebted to you if you came forward as a resource for the group to turn to in times of crisis. If you'd like to offer up advice on the front end, that would be even better (Susie: 234-3064, sbadams@olemiss.edu).

And for our young adults:

High school activities

The high school youth group - Charlotte, Chuck, Jillian, and Ruby - have been gathering with Ross Haenfler and Skadi Snook every week to enjoy good food and good fellowship. We've watched the film "Gandhi," gone bowling, and planned service projects. We're looking forward to a great year! If you'd like to get involved or know a high school student who would enjoy these activities, please contact Ross at ross@olemiss.edu.

-----FROM THE MEMBERSHIP TRUSTEE-----
Shanna tells you how you can SAVE THE WORLD IN JUST THREE STEPS!

1. Attend services at UUCO
2. Call or email Shanna Flaschka (513-0021 or sflaschka@bellsouth.net)
3. Tell her you'd like to sit on the subcommittee for Community Service!

Every quarter the UUCO gives 7% of its income to a local non-profit organization. If you have ideas about how we should spend that money, or if you have other/additional ways we could help our community, join us!

-----UUCO PARTICIPATES IN AMOS AUDIT OF LOCAL COMMUNITY NEEDS-----

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford held an Amos Network house meeting Sunday, September 9, 2007, to determine the current concerns of the members of our congregation in response to the question, "What concerns you personally right now about life in Oxford and Lafayette County?"

We had 20 responses to this question. We had 15 responses to the follow-up question, "If you could fix one problem that has affected your life in Oxford and Lafayette County, what would it be?" The responses to these questions were tallied and the results reported to the leaders of the Amos Network.

The top five concerns identified by UUCO are: 1) uncontrolled development and the subsequent threat to green space and natural beauty; 2) quality public education for our children with opportunities for art, music, dance and drama, as well as complete, intelligent health education and support systems such as school buses, libraries, and nutritious foods served to the children in school; 3) affordable housing, the cost of living, and shopping, including supporting farmer's markets and local production of both food and goods, a sustainable economy; 4) the growing segregation of all elements of our community, as the gap between the rich and the poor widens and vestiges of racism continue to

separate blacks and whites; 5) traffic and transportation tied with affordable health care and such health care issues as obesity and diabetes among our children.

To read the complete report, along with a complete tally of the responses, please see the UUCO Amos House meeting report narrative posted as a PDF on the UUCO Web site.

-----UUCO PLANS FALL RETREAT!-----

NOVEMBER 3-4!

SAVE THESE DATES FOR THE UU RETREAT!

Mark November 3 and 4 on your calendar, and we'll fill in with the details shortly. UUCO is renewing the custom of the Wall Doxey retreat, an opportunity for members and friends to get away, get to know each other better, enjoy nature and accomplish great things!

Our goals for the retreat include opportunities to talk with one another about our mission statement as we revisit it in its tenth year, and to see where the congregation might go with some special areas of interest that have been voiced repeatedly by our members. These include the creation of a green sanctuary, establishing an adult education group, effective fund-raising, and ... whatever else you might suggest!

Watch your e-mail or snail mail for more details and registration information, which will reach you by mid-October. And it's not too late to join in the planning; just contact Gail at byges@olemiss.edu.

-----MID-SOUTH DISTRICT NEWS-----

Healthy Congregations Conference

The Mid-South District's Healthy Congregations Conference is Saturday, October 6, 2007. The host congregation is the UU Congregation of Gwinnett and they have arranged for us to use space at Canon United Methodist Church in Snellville, GA. The

theme for this year is "Living Unitarian Universalism." There will be workshops for Finance, Justice, Leadership, Membership and Communication with an emphasis on the UUA, Religious Education, and Worship and Ministry.

Every congregation should put together a team of leaders and potential leaders and head for Snellville October 6. The Ingathering is at 9:00 am and features Kay Montgomery, the Executive Vice President of the UUA. She is speaking on "Insurmountable Opportunities." You don't want to miss this conference! Register now online at www.msduua.org

Our Whole Lives Facilitator Training

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Facilitator Training For Grades 7-9 and 10-12 will be offered at the UU Fellowship of Montgomery, Alabama, October 12-14, 2007. The training begins Friday at 5 p.m. and continues through Sunday at 3 p.m. OWL Trainers for the weekend will be Tom Harnett and Jane Detwiler, AASECT Sexuality Educator and Planned Parenthood of MA Educator and Trainer.

The *Our Whole Lives* curriculum is based on a philosophy of comprehensive sexuality education that helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, the curriculum provides facts about anatomy and human development, and helps leaders to clarify their values and understand the spiritual, emotional, social, and political aspects of sexuality as well.

For more information *Contact:* Courtney McKenny OWLatUUFM@gmail.com, (334) 279-9517, or visit the Unitarian web site at <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/ourwhole/>. To register, visit the new Mid-South District Web site at www.msduua.org.

-----EVENTS AT UU HALL THIS MONTH-----

Please note the following activity for the last day of September!

Musical gathering on Sunday, September 30

On Sunday, September 30, there will be a musical gathering one hour before the service. Beginning at 10:00 a.m., we will practice hymn harmonies with Christine, learn new songs from one another, jam with guitar and other instruments, etc. All are invited!

--OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS OF INTEREST TO OUR UUCO CONGREGATION-----

We have received notice of an interesting new book, *Thank God for Evolution!*

The Reverend Michael Dowd and his science writer wife, Connie Barlow, are America's UU evolutionary evangelists. They have spoken in more than 250 UU churches and fellowships over the past five years and were recently featured on the cover of the *UU World*.

Reverend Dowd's forthcoming book, *Thank God for Evolution!*, has been endorsed by five Nobel Laureates and 120 other luminaries, including prominent UU ministers. You can see more details by visiting the web site: <http://thankgodforevolution.com/nobel>. Copies of the book are available at the same sight at a reduced cost, and downloadable materials are there as well for those of us who would like to disseminate this perspective in our community.

-----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 Octoberr. Our deadline for submissions is October 23. Luanne can be reached at lbuchana@olemiss.edu, or at 234-3833. Have a great October!