

UUCOMMUNICATOR

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Oxford

September 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 SEPTEMBER----

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

September 7- This Place and All It Is

As we do once a year, people will talk about what UUCO means and does for them. This is an open house to welcome newcomers. Bring friends! Shanna Flaschka is the service leader.

September 14 - Diversity in Community:
Celebrating our Own Hyphenated Heritages

Leyla Modirzadeh is an Iranian-American who has been doing work with United to End Racism for 12 years in New York City. Since 1995 she's been touring, performing, writing and directing with Ping Chong and Company, a New York based theatre company whose main focus is cross-cultural exploration. She currently teaches in the theatre department at UM.

September 21 - We, Too, Are America

The sermon will be given by Dr. Tony Stringer, whose background is in both science and religion. He is a Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine and is Director of the Division of Rehabilitation Neuropsychology in the Emory University School of Medicine. In his religious avocation, Tony is the Lead Lay Minister for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta. Tony believes that his calling is to a ministry of diversity. He likes to work in the space where people of differing cultures, perspectives, and orientations meet and is interested in the intersection of science and religion. He draws personal spiritual inspiration from religious humanism and religious naturalism, and for several years has been engaged in the study of the traditional religions of West and Central Africa.

Of his sermon topic, Tony writes: "I, too, am America," wrote the poet Langston Hughes, in describing his experience of being rendered all but invisible because of his race. I too, am America, Hughes wrote in describing a vision of his country one day recognizing his beauty and value as a full citizen. We face an historic election, one that is making persons of color visible in ways they have never been before. We are about to witness a series of presidential debates that may be about far more than just contrasting liberal and conservative points of view. If they fulfill their potential, these debates

may start a broader dialogue about the differing ways people experience being an American. Unitarian Universalists bring a uniquely unifying perspective to this dialogue. As a religious minority, we too are often invisible. But we too are America with a vital role to play in forging a new identity that will take our country into the future. This sermon will explore what it has meant, and may one day mean, to be an American.”

September 28 - Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish New Year begins a ten-day period of reflection and repentance where Jews examine their lives, pray for forgiveness and ask God's blessing for the coming year. Join us as we reflect on our lives and look toward the future.

----**SUNDAY SERVICE HEROES NEEDED!**----

One UUCO tradition that many of us especially enjoy is our coffee hour. Thanks to the willingness of volunteers to arrive early to make coffee and set out snacks, members and visitors can spend a few moments before and after the service in informal but well-fed interaction.

Although the tasks of preparing snacks and making coffee are the most obvious ways in which volunteers make this tradition possible, there is another type of work that must be done if it is to remain a pleasant part of our service – and that is clean-up! Clean-up involves making sure all dishes are returned to the kitchen, loaded into the dishwasher and washed; emptying the coffee grounds and cleaning out the coffee makers; sweeping up crumbs from the coffee room, entry hall and main hall; making sure soiled napkins are laundered; moving the chairs to the sides of the hall and placing the blinds over the windows. Taking responsibility for clean-up requires staying about 40 minutes following the end of the service (less time if two people volunteer!).

In previous years the coffee coordinator, the person who made coffee/brought snacks, and/or the service leader took on these additional tasks, but this does not seem like an equitable distribution of

opportunities to contribute to the congregation's well-being. So, we now would like to form an official clean-up crew of 5 – 8 members, who will take turns cleaning the dishes and tidying the hall after the Sunday service. To volunteer for this crew, please contact Beth Boerger at 232-8980 or boerger@olemiss.edu.

-----**FISCAL YEAR ENDS FOR UUCO**-----

At the end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year this past June, UUCO was pleased to see that we stayed within our budget of approximately \$34,000 while continuing to pursue ambitious projects to serve our congregation and community. In addition to paying our bills, keeping the building in good working order, and providing programming for all ages, nearly 10 percent of our funds were used for contributions to worthy causes and those in need. For a more detailed report, members are invited to contact Luanne at uuoxford@uuoxford.com for a copy.

We look forward to another strong fiscal year and thank all of our members and friends for their commitment to our stewardship goals. And special thanks to Financial Trustee Paula Shanks for keeping us on track!

-----**HEALTHY CONGREGATION CON IN BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 11**-----

The Mid-South District asks you to hold the date, as a great opportunity is coming our way:

The 2008 Healthy Congregation Conference will take place in Birmingham, Alabama, at the UU Church of Birmingham.

Conference theme: "Growing a Beloved Community"

Keynote speaker: Gini Courter, UUA Moderator

Keynote address: "Building the Common Good"

Workshop topic: "Leading the Common Good"

All congregations are encouraged to send teams of leaders so that a congregation can have attendees at all the various workshops!

A special gathering for UP! Team leaders will happen on the Friday night before the conference (more details will follow).

You can find more information soon at www.msduua.org, or from June Bryant at junebryant@cox.net.

---**SUCCESSFUL WORSHIP WORKSHOP!**---



Recognize these faces? UUCO members and Rev. Hammond participate in August workshop

On August 16, Rev. Fred Hammond from the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Tuscaloosa presented an afternoon workshop to 15 members and friends of UUCO entitled "**Creating Sacred Space for Transformative Worship.**"

We started with asking, "**What is the intent of UUCO services?**" Our services fulfill a variety of functions including building our community, educating, providing space for sharing and providing quiet space and inspiration. It gives us an opportunity to step outside our beaten path, an opportunity for growth, and it provides sanctuary. Our services help in the search for meaning; they elicit gratitude and provide opportunity to support for each other. In short, our services touch our souls.

"What makes a worship service memorable?" It is memorable when it is thought-provoking, affirms our connections and interconnections, and

shows we are part of a community. A good service gives hope and is emotionally and spiritually moving. It is touching and significant when people share who they really are.

We examined the elements of a service and took some time to explore a variety of ways a service can be organized. Rev. Hammond gave us a quick tutorial on effectively using the hymnal and in small groups, we worked on finding readings and hymns for a particular sermon topic.

All in all, it was a great day!



Rev. Hammond, and UUCO participants

-----NEWS FROM THE MID-SOUTH DISTRICT-----

From Eunice Milton Benton, District Executive, on the web at www.msduua.org :

It's good to be prepared!

Mid-August marks the beginning of a new church year – the time full church programming begins again and the time congregations are most likely to be visited by newcomers, some who are new in town and some who are exploring a new church.

This year it's likely there will be more visitors to UU congregations than usual, given the heightened visibility of Unitarian Universalism around the events in Knoxville and the media coverage in many places.

It's a good time to remind ourselves to be prepared in all kinds of ways. Indeed, we need two kinds of preparedness this season!

First, each of us needs to be prepared to welcome folks who've come to visit a new church. Hospitality is what this is about! Surely we can get this part right in the South!

A visit to www.uua.org will find a wealth of resources about church hospitality in the "Leaders Library." Mid-South's website – www.msduua.org – has still more resources.

Then, there's another kind of preparedness that we need to address: being prepared in reasonable ways for the possibility of a natural disaster or a crisis of the sort that happened in Knoxville. We're reminded because it's hurricane season, and also because we have all just felt the blow of the Knoxville tragedy.

In the latter area, some specific plans for 'Preparedness Strategies' for Mid-South UU congregations will be introduced at the October 11th Healthy Congregation Conference.

It's a good thing to be prepared!

-----ANNOUNCEMENTS-----

On September 25, the Powerhouse Arts Center and the Sarah Isom Center are cosponsoring the following event at 7 p.m., at the Powerhouse Arts Center:

"This Is What Women Want": A project of The Center for New Words (www.centerfornewwords.org)

This is an interactive performance piece in which women literally say what they want for the future, from equal wages to paid parental leave to environmental and reproductive justice—the possibilities are endless! The Center for New Words is producing this program at each debate site this fall! Visit: <http://thisiswhatwomenwant.com>. You can see more about programs at the Sarah Isom Center by visiting www.olemiss.edu/depts/sarah_isom_center

Of particular interest to UUCO members, Terri Wright sends the following:

" I will offer to any UUCO member, who is interested in hypnosis for a specific concern or phobia, a half price discount of \$62.50. Also, if anyone would like a CD of the relaxation session we did during service on July 27, I will be glad to offer those to anyone for only \$10.00. I can be reached by phone at 202-7332 or by e-mail at terri@terrijwright.com."

-----BEING SAFE AT UUCO-----

As a congregation and community, we are starting a process of paying attention to safety and preparedness. There are many facets to this including taking some steps that can help

all of us to look out for our members and friends. If you haven't yet picked up the emergency contact information form at UUCO, please go to www.uuoxford.com, click on Documents, print out the form, complete it and return it to UUCO as soon as possible but no later than the end of September. And thank you!

-----**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 October newsletter on Monday, September 29. Please consider submitting an article!

Many thanks to this month's contributors: Eunice Benton, Beth Boerger, Mary Carruth, Pat Miller, Paula Shanks, Gail Stratton and Terri Wright..