

Weekly E-Blast

Unitarian Universalist Community Church

Wednesday, February 16, 2022

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69 Winthrop St., Augusta ME
(207)622-3232 – info@augustauu.org
www.augustauu.org

A Message from the Minister

How do you find inner stillness and compassion amid a storm? What is stillness when the demands are constant? Recently, a colleague asked some questions about stillness. They felt poignant. I've also heard these questions come up in our church context, as folks struggle with personal and family problems. For me, stillness is taking a moment to breathe or pause and just sit in the "in and out" of my breath. It also comes at other times. This weekend my partner and I visited some friends in Boston. I especially found time for stillness in visiting a good friend's house. I felt safe and at home there. On Sunday, while attending the social justice service, I watched the snow falling outside on his deck through a picture window; the world felt peaceful and still.

A big thank you to the social justice committee for their service on Sunday. It was meaningful and moving! One thing they addressed was the proposed 8th principle. Do you want to learn more? This website is a helpful resource- <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>.

As always, you are invited to reach out to me for any reason. I am available for a conversation by appointment. As an interim, I am especially interested in getting to know individual members and hearing your thoughts. Additionally, I am available for pastoral care conversations on a range of topics. For at least this month, I am continuing to offer weekly "Coffee with Chloe" sessions on Tuesdays from 10-11 am on the church zoom.

Sending peace,
Chloe Briede, Interim Minister
chloeucc@gmail.com
207-623-3663

Upcoming Services

Worship Theme: February Widening the Circle

Let us explore the challenges and adventures of Widening the Circle.

<p>THIS Sunday February 20, 2022 10:00 a.m. via Zoom</p>	<p>"Centering Empathy " Chloë Briedé, UCC Interim Minister</p> <p>One tool that can help us widen our circle of perspective and inclusivity is empathy. It is the intention to set aside our ego and feel with another person. Chloe's sermon will talk about the power of empathy. We will also share joys and sorrows together as a community.</p> <p>Special thanks to our worship associate Marilyn Gordon, our pianist, Karen Foust and to Chloe for also managing our Sunday tech needs.</p>
<p>NEXT Sunday February 27, 2022 10:00 a.m. via Zoom</p>	<p><u>"To be Determined"</u></p> <p>We tentatively have Penobscot Nation Tribal Ambassador Maulian Dana scheduled to speak this Sunday. Please standby for more information as Ambassador Dana is amidst a busy legislative session. Chloe will offer opening words and a prayer.</p> <p>Special thanks to our worship associate Sara Hodgkins, our pianist, Karen Allen and our Sunday tech, Marty Peters. We may also have special music from the UCC Choir. Stay tuned...</p>

All services and events are held in the UCC Zoom Room unless noted.

[Click here to join:](#)

For other ways to join Zoom, see [General Information](#)



Did you miss the following services?

Sunday 2/6/22 – "Widening the Circle of Concern" - with Chloë Briedé, UCC Interim Minister

Watch the complete service by clicking the following link: [Link to 2/6 "Widening the Circle" service](#)

Sunday 2/13/22 – "On the Side of Love",

UCC Social Justice Committee

Watch the complete service by clicking the following link: [Link to 2/13 "On the Side of Love" service](#)

Upcoming Special Events

INVITATION from the TRANSITION TEAM

THIS SUNDAY February 20, your TRANSITION TEAM is **INVITING YOU** to discuss the overview of feedback from our Listening Circles that we sent out last week. We are eager to hear your feedback and answer any questions you may have about this or any other aspect of our transition to a new settled minister. Join us in the church zoom room right after Sunday's service. We hope to see you there!



"Coffee with Chloë"

For at least the month of February, Minister Chloe will be on the church zoom on **Tuesdays from 10-11 am** to chat and check in with UCC-ers.

No RSVP required; drop in when the spirit moves. Chloe is calling this event "**Coffee with Chloë**," but feel free to bring a warm beverage of your choice.

Join us for Finance 101 – March 6th

(after Sunday service in the "What's on Your Mind" Zoom session)

Each year, the Finance Committee offers an educational, question and answer session on the church budgeting process; we call it Finance 101. This year's presentation will happen on Sunday, March 6th (Stewardship Sunday) and will be combined with the monthly What's on Your Mind session held by the Board of Trustees. It will begin at 11:00 am, directly after the morning worship service and is scheduled to last one hour.

This year's budget is largely influenced by four major items:

1. A 3.3% salary increase for our staff
2. The costs of a settled minister search
3. Hiring a bookkeeping firm
4. Decreased fund raising potential for the coming year.

We will discuss each of these items in the weekly e-blasts over the next few weeks. Today, we'll start with the proposed salary increase.

In keeping with our UU principles, UCC always strives to be a fair employer, providing our staff with a safe, respectful working environment and fair compensation. The 3.3% salary increase is based upon a UUA recommendation and a recognition that inflation is having a significant impact upon our staff. The Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees have all agreed that this increase is appropriate for the incredible diligence and flexibility exhibited by our professional staff over the past year. They have repeatedly risen to the unique challenges imposed by the COVID pandemic on every aspect of our church life from weekly worship services to maintaining our church office.

MUUSAN Updates:

Thanks to everyone who wrote a letter! We met our goal of having over 500 letters sent to the Judiciary Committee in support of LD 1626, the bill regarding tribal sovereignty. Our MUUSAN network came through!

MUUSAN invites you to an on-line workshop on **Saturday February 19 at 10 AM: ADVOCATING EFFECTIVELY FOR UU VALUES AT THE STATE LEVEL** with Rep. Bill Pluecker from the Rockland UU Church. Feel free to send any questions you have for Bill to (admin@muusan.org)

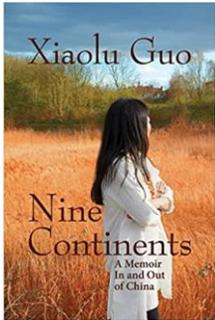
REGISTER [here](#) .

For answers to questions or to learn more about the Maine UU State Advocacy Network, contact Michaela Loisel at michaelatloisel@gmail.com or Kathy Kellison at kell6787@gmail.com

Connections by Day of the Week

ALL church events and meetings are reflected on the UUCC calendar
Click below to view ALL events, including any group meetings or other business meetings.
<https://www.augustauu.org/calendar-and-communications/>

<p><u>Monday</u> Each week</p> <p><u>6:30 – 8:00</u> <u>p.m.</u></p>	<p><u>Peaceful Heart Sangha</u></p> <p>You may join us at 6:15 to settle in.</p> <p>Please contact Marty Soule for updated login information at email martysoule@gmail.com. FMI: peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com</p>	
<p><u>Wednesdays</u> Each Week</p> <p><u>5:00 – 6:00</u> <u>p.m.</u></p>	<p><u>Gentle YOGA</u></p> <p>Hosted by Debbie Mattson</p> <p>Please join us a few minutes before 5:00 to settle in so we can begin our class right at 5:00 p.m. Click the link below to join. https://maine.zoom.us/j/95825651125?pwd=UWJpOVFjVFJGb3dMWmZoOTRXa3VoUT09 Password 174192 - FMI: DebbieMattson@hotmail.com</p>	
<p><u>2nd & 4th</u> <u>Wednesday</u></p> <p><u>10:30 a.m. -</u> <u>Noon</u></p>	<p><u>Seasoned Souls</u></p> <p>Seasoned Souls is a group of older church members that meet as a study/support group to talk openly about topics related to the aging process. Seasoned Souls is open to any church member over 65 years of age. We will meet in the UUCC Zoom Room.</p> <p>FMI: please contact Diane (dmoongrove@gmail.com or 446-6162) or Stefanie (stefbarley@gmail.com or 629-8890)</p>	

	- More Connections by Day of the Week -	
<u>Thursdays</u> <u>Each Week</u> <u>8:00 – 9:30</u> <u>a.m.</u>	<u>Peaceful Heart Sangha</u> <p>You may join us at 7:45 a.m. to settle in. Meet from 8-9:30</p> <p>Please contact Marty Soule for updated login information at martysoule@gmail.com. FMI: peacefulheartsangha@gmail.com</p>	
		
<u>1st</u> <u>Thursday</u> <u>Noon-1:30</u> <u>p.m.</u> <u>Next Meeting</u> <u>is: March 3</u>	<u>Read, Learn, Share</u> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div> <p>Our next meeting will be March 3, 2022. We will meet in the UCC zoom room from Noon – 1:30 p.m. to discuss <u>Nine Continents A Memoir in and Out of China</u> by Xiaolu Guo. Anyone interested in this book is welcome to join us whether or not you have attended before. FMI about this or any meeting of the group, contact June Zellers at jzellers@roadrunner.com or Kathy Kellison at kell6787@gmail.com We would love to have you join us.</p> <p><i>A gripping memoir about growing up in—and leaving—China, from one of Britain's most acclaimed young novelists. ~Kirkus Reviews</i></p> </div> </div>	
<u>2nd & 4th</u> <u>Thursday</u> <u>9:00 – 10:30</u> <u>a.m.</u>	<u>Writing Group</u> <p>This is an open group that gathers and writes together to explore spiritual themes. The writing is used as a conveyance to connect more deeply with ourselves and each other. We are not writing to develop skill.</p> <p>Come and try it out; there is no obligation to come each time we gather. We meet in the UCC Zoom Room.</p>	
<u>4th Sunday</u> <u>1-2:30 p.m.</u> <u>Next Meeting</u> <u>is: Feb 27th</u>	<u>Goddess / Earth Circles</u> <p>The February 27, 2022 Wicca Follow-up: How does/could Wicca enhance our spirituality as UUs? Would you like to have additional sessions on Wicca? Resource: What is Wicca? A Beginners Guide to the Wiccan Religion https://wicaliving.com/what-is-wicca</p> <p>Goddess/Earth Circles focuses on Goddess and women’s lives, earth-based spirituality, role of women today. All ages and genders welcome. More information on UCC website: Minister/Staff/Church Life--Goddess Contact Helen Zidowecki (207-582-5308), hzmre@hzmre.com)</p>	

Financial information from UUCC Treasurer

At the recent What's on Your Mind? session, a request was made that information about the finances at UUCC be put into the e-blast. SO....Here it is!

As the treasurer, I present a draft of the monthly report to the finance committee on the first Thursday of the month meeting. Edits, corrections, questions are shared, and a final report is done for the Board for the meeting on the third Thursday of the month. Each report is for the previous month's income and expenses. This changes as new expenses are paid and new income is deposited into the bank accounts.

The figures below are from the Feb. Board meeting report. They represent all activity through Jan. 31, 2022. This is 58% of the fiscal year.

Pledges paid to date: \$116,615 which is 80% of the goal of \$145,500.

Annual appeal: Donations of \$6,030 without the match added yet.

Offering received during services: \$65.00

Total income from all sources: \$180,937 which is 72% of budget goal of \$241,880

Total expenses to Jan. 31, 2022: \$119,299 leaving a positive balance of \$61,638

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Martha Naber, Treasurer, at marthanaber73@gmail.com.

Widening the Circle

Link for UUA Article II Study Commission Widening the Circle of Concern Report:

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>

Link for Information on UUA Article II Commission and Individual Survey:

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission>

In the Sunday Feb. 6th Sunday Service, Interim Minister Chloe highlighted the UUA Widening the Circle of Concern Report. The Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change represents the culmination of the Commission's work analyzing structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism and makes recommendations to advance long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism.

Appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in 2017, the UUA Commission on Institutional Change served through June 2020. The members and staff of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change were Chair Rev. Leslie Takahashi, Mary Byron, Cir L'Bert Jr., Rev. Dr. Natalie Fenimore, Dr. Elías Ortega, Caitlin Breedlove, DeReau K. Farrar, and Project Manager Rev. Marcus Fogliano.



The Augusta Food Bank is happy to receive donations from our congregation again. We used to collect items in the coatroom, but that has to change because of Covid. We learned that the most needed items right now are:

Chicken Noodle Soup, Tomato Soup, Mayo, Oil, Spaghetti's, Cheese, and Butter.

Please drop off your contributions at Judd House during Lynn's office hours (Tuesday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.). For more information, contact Stefanie Barley at stefbarley@gmail.com, or Carolyn Ladd at 621-2362. Thank you."

Board of Trustees



Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Augusta

Board Meeting

A G E N D A

February 10th, 2022

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/8238070673>, then enter passcode: 6971

Join by phone: dial 1 646 558 8656, at first prompt (meeting id: 823 807 0673#)

Chalice Lighting

Words to Inspire: Kathy

Check in

REPORTS

1. Clerk's Report: Karen / **VOTE**
2. Treasurer's Report: Martha
3. Finance Committee's Report: Harry
 - a. Update on Judd House tenant / **VOTE**
 - b. Stewardship strategies (see below)
4. COVID-19 Task Force's Report: Terry and Harry
 - a. Update on reopening, ventilation and small group meetings
5. President's Report: Kathy

a. Settled Ministry By-laws

b. Script for recruitment of search committee

6. Minister's Report: Chloë

NEW BUSINESS

- Congregational Covenant: Micheala Loisel, CoM
- Stewardship Campaign/timeline and board roles: all

FY2022-23 Budget Review

EXECUTIVE SESSION

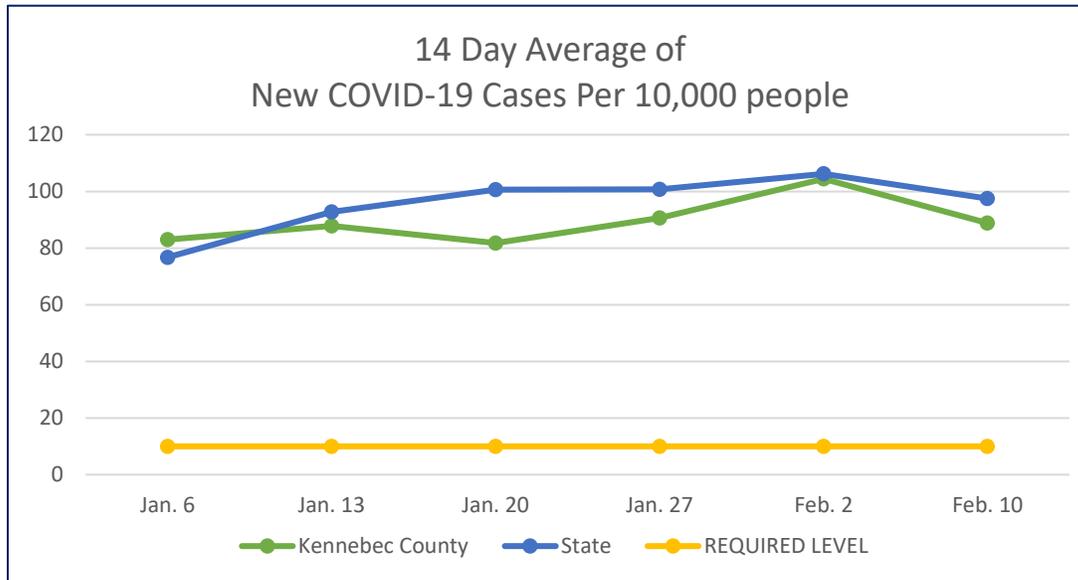
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Board meetings are open to ALL. If you have an item that you would like the Board to consider, please contact Kathy Ann Shaw at kathyannshaw@roadrunner.com. Next Board meeting: March 10, 2022

COVID-19 Updates / News

Update from COVID-19 Advisory Group

The plan for reopening UCC for in-person, indoor gatherings approved by the Board on August 12, 2021 depends on the COVID-19 pandemic being under control in our state and county. The Board adopted a Maine CDC metric that measures “community (person to person) transmission” of the virus. **The necessary CDC metric for us to reopen is no more than 10 new cases per 10,000 people in Kennebec County or the State of Maine.**



The present CDC metric data indicates that it is still unsafe for us to safely reopen.

Discussions continue around reassessing the re-opening plan approved by the Board in August. The discussions may lead to a changing of the metrics OR to reopening the church. Discussions are continuing at the COVID-19 Advisory group meeting and Board meetings. More information will come. Stay tuned...

Dr. Don on Covid-19

Dr. Don on COVID-19 Covid Numbness Is Prolonging The Pandemic

The United States reached a grim new milestone last week with more than 900,000 people dead from Covid-19. The daily death toll is at its highest level in about a year, rising 39% over the last two weeks, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. So why are so many people living like it's pre-pandemic with packed bars, unmasked travelers in airports and states and municipalities announcing the end to school mask mandates.

There seem to be plenty of reasons, many of them psychological, ranging from pandemic fatigue to an assumption that the worst is over. “In the United States, we’ve normalized a very high death toll,” says Anne Sosin, a

fellow at Dartmouth College's Nelson A. Rockefeller Center for public policy. "Ironically, it's prevented us from being able to return to any sort of 'normal.'"

Unlike the past waves, Omicron's massive death toll seems to have barely made a ripple in people's consciences. This is a mix of pandemic and compassion fatigue, says Marney White, a psychologist and epidemiologist at the Yale School of Public Health. "Many people view the Omicron variant as a low threat to them, either because they're already vaccinated, or they've already had the Covid-19 virus. "They've deemed their personal risk to be minimal, and feel that they've sacrificed enough."

Pleas to think of the elderly, or the immunocompromised, or those too young to get vaccinated, often fall on deaf ears. So does the argument that cutting off Omicron's spread can help prevent the virus from mutating into an even more dangerous variant. "We've stopped interpreting this as a collective battle that we all need to fight," White says. People seem to have "normalized" all the deaths, says Gale Sinatra, a professor of psychology at the University of Southern California. "Research shows that we have a human tendency to turn away from mass suffering, as a form of self-preservation," Sinatra says. "The fact that the United States now has over 900,000 deaths from Covid-19 seems almost impossible to wrap our heads around. Our brains resist processing that information because it's so overwhelming."

More recently, people are expanding their pandemic risk tolerance because they've seen a recent nationwide decline in overall Covid cases. As of Feb. 2, cases were down 53.1% from their peak on Jan. 15, according to the CDC. That makes it easy to assume the worst is already over, says Dr. John Swartzberg, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, Berkeley. "We know that hospitalizations and death counts tend to go down two to four weeks after cases," he explains.

But experts say we're not going back to "normal" any time soon. The CDC currently projects as many as 60,000 new Covid deaths by the end of February. This perception that normal is just around the corner is damaging, Swartzberg says. "One of the biggest mistakes that we've done throughout this pandemic is relaxed restrictions such as masks and social distancing too soon after each surge. As a result, we end up with a new baseline of cases higher than from where we started in the previous surge." The result, he stresses, is even more outbreaks, flight cancellations, delivery delays and school closures. "It's frustrating for Americans, but it's even more frustrating for us infectious disease experts, because we know that if we'd just waited a few more weeks, much of this could have been avoided," he says.

Even once the current wave subsides, our definition of "normal" may need to change. Living with Covid won't be as simple as pretending it doesn't exist anymore. Sinatra suggests, for example, that masks could be required on flights or in large venues during the fall and winter, going forward. Those sorts of measures may be necessary to prevent future disruptions to businesses, schools, and other walks of life. "Wearing masks isn't what's sidelining workers from their jobs and taking kids out of schools, it's Covid," Sosin says. "If we don't control this virus, it will end up controlling us, permanently."

Send your questions, comments or suggestions to donnaber1364@gmail.com

General Information

**All worship services AND virtual events (unless noted) are held in the
UCC ZOOM ROOM**

Other ways to UCC Zoom Room Zoom:

- 1. Join from your internet browser by clicking this link or typing this into your browser:**
<https://zoom.us/j/8238070673>, launch Zoom, then enter **passcode: 6971**
- 2. Select “Join Meeting” from the Zoom application on your computer or mobile device.**

UCC Meeting ID: 823 807 0673 – then enter **passcode: 6971**

- 3. Join by phone:** dial 1 646 558 8656 (**NOTE:** toll charge may apply)

At first prompt (meeting id: 823 807 0673#)

At second prompt: press # (no personal id needed) <No passcode needed when joining by phone>

NOTE---*6 is mute AND un-mute on your phone. The host cannot mute or un-mute people who phone-in.

HOSTS: Once in your meeting, claim the host using the **HOST KEY** as you have done in the past.

Ad-hoc Covid-19 Advisory Group

This group has generously volunteered to be available to support members with personal safety, health or travel questions, concerns, or anxieties. Feel free to reach out to one of them directly.

Betty Cairn, RN	StonehengeMaine@yahoo.com	207-215-6394
Terry Lee Cairn, ND, MSOM, Lac.	tlcnaturalhealth@yahoo.com	207-557-2557
Harry Grimmnitz, MD	hgrimmnitz@gmail.com	207-685-9270
Don Naber, Ed.D	donnaber1364@gmail.com	207-887-1104
Cathie Nielsen, MD	cathieenielsen@gmail.com	207-441-0248
Marty Soule, PA-C	martysoule@gmail.com	207-685-9270

UCC Pastoral Ministry Team

We are here for you. Feel free to reach out in times of need for compassionate listening, for casual conversation, to share some good news, to share your struggle or just to say hello.

Martha Pelletier, Chair	207-685-9592 (H)	Mjpell14@roadrunner.com
Helen Zidowecki	207-582-5308 (h)	hzmre@hzmre.com
Tracy McNaughton	207-623-3110 (h)	tracy.mcnaughton@yahoo.com
Peggy Lamb	207 622-5174 (h)	plambflowers@outlook.com

Caring Cooperative support includes rides, meals, errands, get well and condolence cards as well as companion visits.

If you would like to request or suggest meal support: contact Martha Pelletier 685-9592.

If you would like to request or suggest cards: contact Angie Blevins, 592-5655 or Peggy Lamb 622-5174.

UCC Small Group Ministry



Looking for greater human and spiritual connection during this most disconnected of times? Small Group Ministry offers this vital need in our spiritual community, and so much more! For more information, contact Michael Conley at 207-248-7948 or at es-therpearl67@gmail.com.

Press [Ctrl-Home] to return to Pg. 1

UUC Office Hours – NEXT WEEK

UUC Office Hours

Tues, Wed, Thurs and Friday

8:00 am to 1:00 pm. <plus 7 flex hrs >

Church Administrator: Lynn M. Smith,
admin@augustauu.org or 622-3232

Interim Minister, Chloë Briedé

Email: chloeuucc@gmail.com

Office: (207) 623-3663

For pastoral emergencies please call her cell phone (757) 234-1303. She will return your call as soon as possible.

Minister Briede's office hours:

Monday No office hours - Sabbath

Tuesday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Thursday Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Friday No office hours – Writing day

<Other hours available by appointment>

Staff Contact information:

Church Administrator, Lynn M. Smith, admin@augustauu.org, Phone 622-3232

Coordinator of Lifespan Faith Formation, Monique McAuliffe, LifespanFF@augustauu.org

Music Director, Bridget Convey, musicdirector@augustauu.org