



The BEACON

Sept. 5, 2011

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton, New York

Minister: Rev. Douglas Taylor

Moderator: Kate Thorpe

Moderator-Elect: Jason Smith

Director of Religious Education:
Lynn Garman

Music Director: Vicky Gordon

Organist: Gail Elyse Schmick

Office Manager/Beacon Editor:
Lee Shepherd

Upcoming Sunday Services, 10 a.m.:

September 11 "Ingathering."

Return to two services at 9:30 and 11:15 a.m. Don't forget to bring a sample of water from your summer journeys for our Water Communion Ceremony.

September 18 "Covenant"

Rev. Douglas Taylor

Here's the truth: We don't have beliefs or creeds at the center of our faith, covenant is the center and is the best center we could hope for. The UUA covenant is our Seven Principles. Most of our Small Groups have covenants. But the church doesn't have one in a formal sense. We should look into this.

OFFICE HOURS: 9 a.m. to
1 p.m. weekdays.

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Phone: 607.729.1641

Fax: 607.729.1899

Email:

office@uubinghamton.org

Web: www.uubinghamton.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE:

Please e-mail to the above
address, or a leave a hard
copy on the office desk by
the deadline printed below.

**NEXT BEACON
DEADLINE:**

**Friday,
September 16**

*Items received past
the deadline will be
included in
subsequent issues.*

Calendar

Sat., Sept. 10

9-5 p.m., Book Sale; 10-4, Lifespan Retreat;

1 p.m., Tai Chi

Sun., Sept. 11

9-2 p.m., Book Sale; 9:30/11:15 p.m., Worship;

10:30/12:15 p.m., RE Registration Receptions;

12:45 p.m., Rainbow Alliance;

12:45 p.m. Zen of Drawing

Mon., Sept. 12

10 a.m., UUW; 3 p.m., Crones; 6:15 p.m. Parents' SGM;

7:30 p.m., Library Committee

Tues., Sept. 13

6 p.m., SGM

Weds. Sept. 14

10 a.m., SGM; 6:30 p.m., SGM;

7 p.m., Worship Committee

Thurs., Sept. 15

6:30 p.m., Board meeting; 6:30 p.m., Choir;

7 p.m., CUUPs

Fri., Sept. 16

7 p.m., Peace Film Series

Sat. Sept. 17

9:30-2 p.m., RE Teacher Ingathering;

1 p.m., Tai Chi; 7:30 p.m., Cranberry Coffeehouse

Sun., Sept. 18

9:30/11:15 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m., RE Registration

Reception; 12:30 p.m., Green Sanctuary; 12:45 p.m., Zen

of Drawing; 1:30 p.m., Adult RE Course: Wicca 101;

2 p.m., Memorial for Laura Kirkland

Mon., Sept. 19

7 p.m., Aesthetics Committee

Tues., Sept. 20

5:30 p.m., Adult RE Committee

Weds., Sept. 21

7 p.m., Vets for Peace; 6 p.m., Threshold Committee;

7 p.m., Membership Committee

Thurs., Sept. 22

6:30 p.m., Choir

Fri., Sept. 23

11:30 a.m., SGM

Sat., Sept. 24

1 p.m., Tai Chi

Minister's Column

For pastoral issues, please contact Douglas by cell phone at 607-221-4638 or by e-mail at dtaylor@uubinghamton.org. Offices hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.; other days by appointment.

This summer, we started reading the Harry Potter books with our youngest. I know one of the great things about the books was how young people were reading the books on their own, which was exciting for teachers to see: young people actually wanting to read books! But in our family, Harry Potter was first a book to be read out loud together. We finished the first two books this summer.

Here is something I noticed, particularly in the second book. Harry Potter does amazing things and defeats terrible evil in each book. But he never does it alone. In fact, he hardly does any of the work. He is only successful because his friends, family, and teachers do things to help him along the way. This is not to say he does nothing. Harry Potter is courageous and kind, he is persistent in addressing a problem and loyal to his friends. But none of his accomplishments are his alone – even though he is the center of the book.

In the second book for example, one of his friends figured out what the secret monster was and how to fight it. It was the headmaster of the school who sent Harry the special bird and sword which Harry used to fight the monster. Certainly, Harry is the one who killed the terrible monster in the end. But he had a lot of help along the way.

So, imagine the story of your life. I hope you seem some similarities. Certainly, I never defeated a great evil once every year while I was in school; but it is fair to say I am the center of my story and I do accomplish things in my life. My accomplishments happen very much like how I described Harry Potter's accomplishments. I've had a lot of help. I've been blessed by the work and support of others. And I know I have played the supporting role in many other people's stories.

Think about the situations in your life: at home, at work or school, here at the church ... are there examples when you play the role of the hero or the one responsible to come through? Are there times when you play the role of the supporting friend offering vital help? Are there times when you are the wise teacher or mentor not actually participating in the adventure, but at the right moment, giving the key to those who do the work and get the reward?

We are all the centers of our own stories. But we each play very important roles in other people's stories as well. And in the grand overarching story of life, we all play the roles of friend, supporter, provider, mentor ... and together we spin a wondrous tale!

—douglas

REflections

DRE Lynn Garman will be in the office Sunday, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Call 729-1641 or e-mail dre@binghamton.org.

September is one of those transitional times of the year that brings both a touch of sadness that the long, easy days of summer are over, and a sense of excitement and anticipation as we begin anew; begin another school year, another religious education year, another church year. I revel in the long hours of summer daylight, the opportunity to sleep just a bit longer in the morning, and live a more relaxed, easygoing schedule that better accommodates my rhythms. And, I look forward to the return of routine at home and at church. I have missed seeing many of you over the summer, and look forward to re-gathering in beloved community. I, and others, have been busy throughout August preparing for the start-up of our Religious Education Programs. Here are some of the exciting things we can look forward to:

An RE year for children and youth exploring ethics, justice, and service learning, inspired by our Unitarian Universalist beliefs and principles

A full and diverse offering of Adult Programs for adults of all ages and stages in their faith journey

An exemplary group of teachers, both new and experienced, RE parents and UUCB elders, ready to nurture our children and adults on a religious and spiritual journey

A larger, energized RE Committee ready to listen and build community connections

Continued refinement of our Lifespan Faith Development vision

Monthly opportunities for engaging our children in creating a more just world through our Faith in Action activities

Registration receptions, and a registration process that engages our families and enables us to learn more about the children in our program and the aspirations of parents

Increased youthful energy throughout the life of the congregation, including monthly fellowship activities for our Middle School Youth

Increased attention to the safety and security of our children and congregation through the implementation of background screening for volunteers

Increased opportunities for our Young Adult community

Looking forward with joy to seeing you in church.

—Lynn

RE Calendar

September 10 – Lifespan Visioning Retreat

September 11 - Ingathering Sunday with Multi-generational Worship; Nursery open

September 11 – RE REgistration REceptions

September 17 – Teacher Ingathering and Training

September 18 –RE Classes begin, Teacher Dedication, RE Registration Reception

September 18 – Youth Group begins

RE REgistration REceptions

The Religious Education Committee invites all parents and families (and other interested folks) to attend a REgistration REception, following both services on September 11, or on September 18 between services. Come meet the RE Committee who guides our program, learn about this year's programs and activities, share your interests and aspirations, and build connections with other families in our congregation. Please remember that children and youth need to be registered each year in order to ensure that we have accurate and up-to-date information on each child.

Would You, Could You, Teach RE?

While it is true that we have an exemplary group of adults assembled to lead our children and youth in the religious education program, we are in need of a few more! We need leaders for our fall program for the following groups:

9:30 – Preschool and Kindergarten, *We Are Many, We Are One* - Nurtures spiritual growth, creativity, and connection to our UU community and larger world through stories, games, and projects.

9:30 – Grades 4 – 6, *Toolbox of Faith*, Unpacking symbolic tools of our faith, children experience key qualities that shape a UU identity, faith, and personal call to action.

11:15 – Middle School, *Amazing Grace*, and *Heeding the Call*, Two curricula that encourage youth to view themselves as agents of change as they develop qualities crucial to justice work.

Leaders generally commit to two Sundays each month and work with a co-leader. Curricula plans and all needed supplies are provided by the DRE. For more information, and to say “Yes, I could!” please contact Lynn Garman, DRE.

Is This a Conversation For You?

Sunday, Sept. 25 at 1 p.m. in the Sanctuary, Craig Schwalenberg will facilitate a conversation regarding the Board's decision to deny reinstatement of membership to a former member. The relationship was originally severed six years ago and both the original decision and the one recently made were difficult and with mixed feelings. The Board is hosting this conversation to provide an opportunity to process and reflect on the board's decision and the core values that guided them.

The conversation is open to all congregants, but those who feel particularly touched by this situation are especially encouraged to attend.

Mission Statement Update

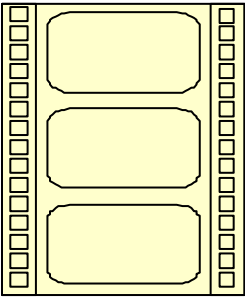
At our June congregational meeting, we had a productive discussion about our proposed mission statement. While a final statement was not approved, we were able to gain insight into the desires of the congregation. The board has asked several community members to work on a revised statement that will incorporate three words chosen by the congregation. The outcome should be presented at a fall board meeting and presented for a congregational vote before the end of this year. If you want to know more, contact Kate Thorpe, Lois Einhorn, Rachel Light, Suzanna Spiese, Del Boss, Jo Ann Freer or Scott Clarke.

NOTES FROM OUR MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Adult Choir: If you have ever entertained the thought of singing with the Adult Choir, September is a wonderful time to start! We are a welcoming group of enthusiastic people who join in our love of music and desire to express ourselves through song. We embrace a variety of musical styles (e.g. spirituals, show music, classical, folk), and encompass a range of musical backgrounds. You need not have a “trained” voice to participate. The ability to sight-read is also not required.

If interested, please join us for our next rehearsal on Thursday, Sept 8 in the sanctuary. If you have any questions or would like more information, I can be reached via e-mail at vgordon@stny.rr.com.

—Vicky Gordon



The Peace, Justice, and Sustainability Film Series

Friday, Sept. 16: *What Would Jesus Buy?*

The first film of the series will be Friday, September 16, at in the Social Hall, with refreshments at 6:30, film at 7 and discussion afterwards.

What Would Jesus Buy is a docu-comedy about the commercialization and over-consumption of Christmas. The film follows Rev. Billy Graham and his Church of Stop Shopping Gospel Choir in their attempts to persuade people to buy fewer Christmas presents or find other ways to stop over-consumerism at Christmas. The producer is Morgan Spurlock of *Super Size Me* fame. It's a fun film that makes serious points in humorous ways.

Friday, October 7: *The Economics of Happiness*

Refreshments 6:30, film at 7 in the Fireside Room and discussion afterward. *The Economics of Happiness* describes a world moving simultaneously in opposing directions. On the one hand, an unholy alliance of governments and big business continues to promote globalization and the consolidation of corporate power. At the same time, people all over the world are resisting those policies, demanding a re-regulation of trade and finance—and, far from the old institutions of power, they're starting to forge a very different future.

Communities are coming together to re-build more human scale, ecological economies based on a new paradigm – an economics of *localization*. Learn about the issues, and see what is happening around the world as groups rise to take control of their lives and their communities.

The film series is a project of the Social Justice Committee, the Green Sanctuary Committee, the Rainbow Alliance, and Broome County Peace Action.

If you can help set up chairs and clean up, e-mail Carol Miyake.

Building Use Reminders

Congregants are reminded of the following when using rooms at UUCB:

- *Use only designated rooms and parking areas in back of church (handicapped parking OK in front).
- *Smoking not allowed in the building.
- *Please show respect for the building – leave it clean, wipe up spills on carpet, floor scuffmarks. A broom, mop and vacuum are in the janitor's closet.
- *Put away all chairs and tables, and return furniture to its original configuration.
- *We strongly urge you NOT to use disposable plates and utensils, especially Styrofoam. UUCB is designated a "Green Sanctuary" congregation, which tries to be environmental in all aspects of its operation.
- *Be sure to turn off and unplug coffee pots.
- *Trash is to be taken to dumpster; located in back parking lot; empty compost tub in kitchen into compost bin, also in back parking lot.
- *If your group is the last out, be sure all windows are closed, lights out and doors locked.

Travel With Unitarians

Experience our historic roots and explore this fascinating part of Europe – Transylvania and Hungary, June 4-18, 2012

How about travelling to a place where a Unitarianism was founded 450 years ago? That's Transylvania! One fourth of all Unitarians live here. Their beautiful, unique churches are a joy to behold.

We'll have a three-day stay in a Transylvanian Unitarian village - attending church, sharing a relaxed picnic and experiencing rural village life. We'll explore castles and other cultural places, enjoy the food and art and the beautiful landscapes. From Cluj-Napoca, Romania, to Budapest, Hungary, the cost is \$2,075 US, plus airfare. That includes nine nights in Transylvania and five in Hungary, private coach, most meals, escorts and guides, three and four-star hotels, as well as staying with a family or in a guest house when we are in the rural village.

This specially designed tour for Unitarians everywhere will be facilitated by the UU Partner Church Council Pilgrimage Service, which has more than a decade of experience facilitating UU visits to this part of Europe.

For details, see www.nuuc.ca
Contact: Beverly Carr, bgcarr@rogers.com
Neighbourhood UU Congregation



GREEN MATTERS

What you can do to help end racism: Make friends with people of races other than your own.
— UUCB Task Force on Racism

EcoForum:

City of Binghamton Climate Action

This is one of more than 1000 events that are taking place worldwide as part of 350.org’s Moving Planet day to focus attention on climate change. At our event, Amelia LoDolce, Director of Sustainable Development for the City of Binghamton, will discuss the recently completed Climate Action Program (CAP) for the City. Two years in preparation, the CAP includes a comprehensive greenhouse gas inventory for the City and recommends measures to reduce carbon emissions in transportation, housing and commercial buildings, and daily city operations. Importantly, Amelia will also discuss those changes necessary for the City to successfully adapt to our ever more rapidly changing climate. A Q&A will follow her illustrated presentation.

Sunday, Sept. 25th, 12:45 - 1:45 p.m., Fireside Room

24 Hours of Climate Reality

24 Presenters. 24 Time Zones. 13 Languages. 1 Message. 24 Hours of Reality is a worldwide event to broadcast the reality of the climate crisis. It will consist of a new multimedia presentation created by Al Gore and delivered once per hour for 24 hours, representing every time zone around the globe. Each hour, people living with the reality of climate change will connect the dots between recent extreme weather events — including floods, droughts and storms — and the man-made pollution that is changing our climate. For our time zone, the webcast will be from New York City at 7 p.m. on Sept 15, but you can view any of them. See climaterealityproject.org for details.

Green Sanctuary Meeting

Our first meeting after this summer break will be held on Sunday, Sept 18 at 12:30 in room 12. Drop in and find out what we’re up to!

Recounting Racism

Lavinia Adler wrote: When I saw the bit in the *Beacon* about speaking up whenever someone says something racist, I was reminded of how my daughter Rima dealt with a situation in high school. It's the thing that's made me proudest of her in all these years -- even trumping her getting a PhD.

In the late '80s, she was hanging around at Binghamton High School with a group of her white friends. A boy from Rima's group made a derogatory comment about a group of black kids across the way. Rima instantly replied, “Watch your mouth. I'm black!” The kid looked stunned and said not another word.

Do you have a brief anecdote about an encounter with racism? Send it to Ruth Blizard.

—Task Force on Racism

Fundraiser Concert

Plan to attend a benefit concert for Oscar Sinclair, Sun., Sept. 18 from 2-7 p.m. at the Blind Tiger Pub, 4402 Watson Blvd., Johnson City, featuring Driftwood, the Java Joe Jammers and more. \$10 admission. Oscar, an active member of the Youth Group and Congregation, has Hodgkin’s disease.

Volunteers Needed

A regular task that is simple and helpful is changing the sign board in front of our building on a weekly basis. If you are interested in helping to maintain this vital communications link to our passing neighbors, contact our Sunday Services Coordinator Ron Clupper.

Social hour snacks and goodies are provided on a “potluck” basis. Feel free to bring in contributions of any amount as the spirit moves you. If you are interested in “adopting” a specific Sunday social hour, a sign up sheet will be provided on the volunteer bulletin board. If sign ups are listed with enough advanced notice, adopters will be listed in the *Beacon* and e-blast.

Adult Religious Education Events

Welcoming Congregation

Rev. Douglas Taylor and Denise Rampulla
Four Tuesdays, October 18, 25, November 1, 8 20
years ago, our congregation went through the
"Welcoming Congregation" workbook. In '99 a
second edition came out with new sections. These
four sessions will bring us up to date with the lat-
est edition of the workbook. Included will be the
sessions on Transgender Identity, Bisexuality, and
Racism and Homophobia.

Process Theology

Rev. Douglas Taylor
Wednesdays, Nov 16, 23, 30
"Process theology is the name for an effort to
make sense, in the modern world, of the basic faith
that God is Love." So says the introduction of our
text for this course. I have talked generally about
"Process Theology" in several of my sermons,
come learn more about it through this class.

New UU

Rev. Douglas Taylor and Rachel Light
3 sessions, Saturday 9-1,
October 15, February 11, and May 19
Offered periodically from with Rev. Douglas Tay-
lor and Rachel Light. For newcomers to the con-
gregation. Lunch provided. Call 729-1641 to re-
serve a spot or sign up on the bulletin board.



**Sign Up Sheets for All Workshops/
Classes/Events are on the
front hall bulletin boards.**



Newcomer SGM Forming

All newcomers are invited to join a discussion
group to explore UUism and this Congrega-
tion's activities and structure with two seasoned
facilitators, Toby and Libby Anderson. Especially
for newcomers to UUCB,
this group will meet on 2nd and 4th Tuesday (7-9
p.m.), and will begin as soon as enough newcom-
ers sign up on the bulletin board. Look for the
sign-up sheet on the Small Group Ministry
board. For more information, call the Andersons.

Spirit of Life, a UUA curriculum

5 Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. in Room 10
September 28 and October 5, 12, 19, 26
Facilitated by Heather Kirkland and Scott Clarke

Spirit of Life workshops offer participants space,
time, and community to explore their Unitarian Univer-
salist spirituality. Each focuses on a different aspect of
the spiritual life, framed by the lyrics of Carolyn
McDade's song of the same name. Like the song, the
workshops are designed to be welcoming to Unitarian
Universalists of many spiritual and theological persua-
sions. Participants are invited to claim an inclusive defi-
nition of spirituality and recognize the spiritual aspects
of their lives.

This class will be meaningful for long-time UUs as
well as those who are new to our faith. The full curricu-
lum may be viewed on the UUA's website.

Wicca 101

9 Sundays, 1:30 – 3:45 p.m. in Room 10 (Oct. 9 and
Nov. 13 in Social Hall)

September 18 through November 13

Facilitated by Dawn Goldenberg and Adee Wilson

Ever wondered what Wicca is all about? Join us this
fall to explore this positive and life affirming nature-
based religion that views the masculine and femi-
nine aspects of the Divine as equal. It is believed that
we are all capable of healing ourselves and the world
around us. We will look at Divination, ritual, the ethics
of practicing Magick and more.

UU Basics

Rev. Douglas Taylor. First Sunday, after each service
(20 minutes), Drop in for a brief monthly talk (with
Q&A) about our Unitarian Universalist history and
practice. All are welcome to attend, newcomers are par-
ticularly encouraged.

Topics are as follows:

Oct. 2: Our Local UUCB History

Nov. 6: American Universalist Beginnings

Dec. 4: Our Various Theological Practices

Jan. 1: Unitarianism and Social Justice

Feb. 5: Covenantal Theology and Congregational
Polity

March 4: American Unitarian Beginnings

April 1: Hymnody and How We Worship

May 6: 50 Years of UU Merger

June 3: Transcendentalism and Beyond

UWU To Feature Poet

Hanna Zacks, who spoke to the UWU two years ago to introduce her book of poems, will again address the group about her new book, *More Than Meets the Eye; A Journey Into the Mysteries of Psychic Phenomena*. All women in the congregation are welcome. 10 a.m., Mon., Sept. 12 in the Fireside Room.

Special Collection

The special collection on September 11 will be for the Dick Antoun Interfaith Fund. The fund was set up to further the work of the late Professor Antoun in the areas of faith and cultural understanding through dialogue. He had a focus on Middle East and Muslim studies. Specifics of this have not yet been finalized, but will be within the next several months.

CUUPs Corner

CUUPs (The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans) welcomes all to participate to our pagan-oriented events. We facilitate a discussion night a ritual night, and a drum and dance night every month. All levels of experience are welcome, all we ask is that you have an open mind and a willingness to participate with the group. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Darin.

Thursday, Sept 15 at 7 p.m. in the Social Hall - Discussion, Etiquette for Interacting with Other Worldly Beings

Wednesday, Sept 21 at 7 p.m. at the Bundy Museum (129 Main St, Binghamton) — Fire Circle Spirituality Group (drumming and dancing)

Thursday, Oct 6 at 7 p.m. in the Social Hall - CUUPs Ritual, Ancestor Ritual in honor of Samhain

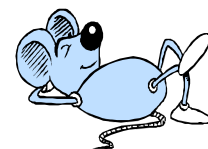
Thursday, Oct 20 at 7 p.m. in the Social Hall — CUUPs Discussion, Similarities Between Samhain and Dark Moon Energies.

The Church Mouse

Your thank-you goes here to the unsung heroes who make UUCB a very fine place indeed. Please submit your items to office@uubinghamton.org.

Thanks to Jean Ploutz for painting the women's bathroom.

Thanks to Jeff Donahue for helping with the Sanctuary sound system, to Carolyn Boss for gardening and weeding, and to Jim Bryden for landscape work and continual repairs to our leaky skylights.



Cranberry Celebrates 40th

The Cranberry Coffeehouse will begin its 40th year of providing quality traditional and acoustic music to the Binghamton area with a wonderful duo from Virginia, The Honey Dewdrops. On Sat., Sept. 17, 7:30-10 p.m. in the Social Hall. \$8 admission.

Writing and singing in the veins of folk and old country music, the Dewdrops entwine harmony singing with tight instrumentation and craft songs that are simple and fine-tuned. Theirs are new songs from the southern mountains that ring with originality.

On Oct. 15, dulcimer player Curt Osgood is joined by guitarist Jim MacWilliams and banjo player Rob Siegers for a fine evening of folk tunes. \$8 admission.

And on Sat., Nov. 12: Singer/songwriter Annie Hills (note that this is a week earlier than usual.) Having performed with Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Steve Gillette and Cindy Mangsen, to name just a few, Anne weaves musical tapestries of poetry and instrumental beauty. 7:30-10 p.m. \$8 admission.

Sunday, December 4: Special Presentation at 3 p.m., Nowell Sing We Clear celebrates Christmas as it was known for centuries in Britain and North America -- a joyous celebration of the midwinter and holiday seasons featuring John Roberts, Tony Barrand, Fred Breunig and Andy Davis. There's no better way to usher in the holiday season. Tickets sold in advance.

Call Chris Koldewey for more information.

Reminder About Childcare

For childcare for committee or other church meetings, the event coordinator must arrange childcare at least one week in advance. Contact Lynne Theophanis.



The BEACON

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION OF BINGHAMTON**

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Binghamton, New York 13905

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Welcoming
Congregation.

**A Splendid Array
of Adult RE
Courses
See Inside
For More Information**