

VIEWPOINTS DECEMBER 2007

FIRST JOINT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

See flyers for:

Winter Meeting: "Hot
Topics for Congregations:
Managing Differences"

Gathering the Power of
Small Group Ministry



Friday, April 11

and

Saturday, April 12, 2008

At the

New England Center of the Univer-
sity of New Hampshire

Durham, NH

Plan ahead to be sure your congregation is represented at the **INAUGURATION OF THE NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT!** Our goal is for 100% participating of the 74 congregations in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Come to hear **Rev. Bill Sinkford**, keynote who brings the endorsement of the UUA.

All congregations are asked to bring their banners for the banner parade. Clergy and Religious Educators are invited to robe and process.

Planning is underway to make this a truly multigenerational event with full children's programming and youth participation.

Details on page 6! Registration materials will be available in your church office and on the district website(s) by January 1, 2008.

**REV. MARY HIGGINS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

'Tis the Season



“Tis the season.” Those words are ringing in my ear right now but there is the inevitable question of “Tis the season” for what? The first word that pops up in my mind is that it is the season for gratitude. I have been serving in these two districts for more than a year now. Each time I meet with you, in clusters, boards, committees, individually, happily or unhappily, I say a little prayer of gratitude as I drive home. There are so many of you who care about our faith. It seems there is more than a little of the energizer bunny in many of you: This little eternal battery keeps your lights burning even when you are working harder than you want to and even when you are not achieving the results you hoped for as quickly as you thought possible. I see on a daily basis your hearts opening to a fresh insight or a new commitment. I have experienced your generosity as you dig deeper into your spirits and bring forth the miraculous and the timely expressions of our faith. I have witnessed forgiveness given and received gracefully.

I believe that the force that brings us together in our faith communities is a force that we are often afraid to name and work for. We are sometimes afraid to believe that a community of hope, healing and love is possible, but you keep showing up and working hard just in case it is! We have a need to be in each other's presence as both trusted and trusting companions on the journey to find meaning in this life. We are sometimes afraid how much we need each other to achieve our wholeness and heal the planet. In the name of all that we care about, so many of you show up week after week with hands and hearts ready to engage in creating just such a meeting place in your sanctuary and beyond.

I feel that same gratitude as I think of the ways so many of you reached out to me during my surgery last spring, during the illness and ultimate death of my dear father this fall, followed immediately by my Mom's major surgery. I have felt a bit knocked about, yet when I open my eyes, there you have been, faithful friends. You have convinced me that dreams of communities of love, hope and health are attainable if we just believe they can happen. We do not have to be trapped in a cycle of despair, for that cycle traps our fears and keeps our faith from shining in and through us. “Tis the season” to believe that we serve no one by “playing it small.” Others are not looking to anyone but us to build the dream which transcends our fear. We are adequate to respond to the challenge of creating our community just as we are; human beings in our full, yet imperfect unfolding.

For our walk together, I am grateful. Let us take time in this season to be thankful, spirited, and most of all our holy, and precious selves. ‘Tis the season’.

Mary

REV. KAREN BRAMMER
SMALL CHURCH SPECIALIST

Here come the holidays and what better time than to consider how a book might be the gift your congregation, your leadership or you might be nurtured by. I want to give you a few suggestions and hope you consider picking up one of these fine resources. All of these can be borrowed through the District Library or purchased at reasonable prices.

Bright blessings to you, and an island of peace for this increasingly busy time of year.

Small Church Specialist, Karen Brammer

FOR LEADING CONGREGATIONS THROUGH the HEART CHANGES needed to make the shifts in culture toward more and more vitality try;

Leading Change in the Congregation; Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leadership by Gilbert R. Rindle which can be purchased through The Alban Institute. (alban.org)

FOR TIPS on the HEALTHY FUNCTION of CONGREGATIONS try;

Big Ideas for Small Congregations; a Friendly Guide for Leaders by Jane Dwinell and Ellen Germann-Melosh brand new and excellent resource for small congregations from the first Small Church Specialist for the Northeast District, Jane Dwinell. Please go to the website spiritoflifepublishing.com and print out an order form.

Churchworks; A well-Body Book for Congregations by Anne Odin Heller which has been a tremendously helpful staple of UU congregational health for 8 years. This can be purchased through the UUA bookstore (uaa.org)

TO LEARN HOW the SIZE of the congregations MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN HOW THINGS WORK go to;

Sizing Up A Congregation for a New Member Ministry by Arlin J. Rothauge through the Episcopal Church Center (ecusa.anglican.org)



RE CONNECTIONS BENETTE SHERMAN

Trainings/Workshops

OWL trainings in Mass Bay District

January 4-6, 2008 Registration Deadline: December 17, 2007

January 11-13, 2008 Registration Deadline: January 7, 2008

LREDA Chapter Retreat

January 16, 2008

Senexet House, CT

May 10

Youth Summit/ Nashua

ON THE ROAD AGAIN



My car going on the road to visit UU congregations, youth cons, and other conferences

My Subaru and I have traveled from Bangor to Burlington and from Peterborough to Portsmouth and points in between over the last few months. I've had the pleasure of meeting youth from both districts, youth advisors, Board presidents, min-

isters, religious educators, and others. I've visited churches with steeples in their front yard, preached from a high pulpit, slept at Ferry Beach while Hurricane Noel swept the coast of Maine, and got lost in the hills of Bangor.

Much of what we do in faith communities is establish and nourish relationships. We can't grow in our faith very successfully without relating to others, caring for others, and encouraging each other to greater depth of spirit.

District staff are fortunate to engage with many of you in different situations. We can appreciate the struggles and the joys of people working together towards a new vision of one district. Wishing you all a peaceful and safe holiday season

Benette Sherman

LREDA FALL CONFERENCE

Many religious educators, ministers and youth advisors went to LREDA (liberal religious educator's association) fall conference to receive more information about *Tapestry of Faith*, the UUA's Lifespan Faith Development's Office free and online lifespan curricula. The adult curriculum, *Spirit of Life* is now in field testing but can also be viewed online and downloaded for use. <http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritlife/index.shtml>. *Tapestry of Faith* provides us with faith outcomes for every age

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group. Those outcomes are ethical development, spiritual development, UU identity, and faith development. Judith Frediani, the Lifespan Faith Development Director, suggested that our religious education programs have been viewed as bobbing rafts with no connecting bridge—that we have not always done a good job of integrating religious education into the life of the congregation. Religious education should enable us to acquire self-awareness, but should also be prophetic, and *Tapestry* melds these together. Frediani assures us that *Tapestry* can be adapted to different



structures of religious education programs (workshop rotation, pillars, way cool Sunday school, etc)

Stories are used as a centering devices within each strand or outcome, and through a process of reflection and action our stories also become prophetic.

Tapestry of Faith offers us clarity of purpose and continuity in faith formation across the lifespan. It eases communication about what our vision is and how we implement that vision. I hope many of our congregations will use the resources as they become available.

YOUTH SUMMIT REPORT IS ONLINE!!

T

his report offers some of the best work in youth ministry I've seen in 15 years. I urge everyone to read it at http://www.uua.org/documents/youthconsultation/070720_summitreport.pdf

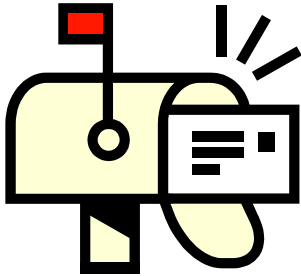
It offers conceptual definitions on youth empowerment and youth ministry and muses on the future of YRUU as a structure that can support the vision of the Summit. The Summit cites six themes that appeared in national consultations to and with youth:

Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth
 Welcoming All Youth in a Multicultural World
 Building a Multigenerational Faith

Organizing Youth Ministry for Success
 Moving Beyond a One-Size-Fits-All Ministry
 Preparing and Supporting Adults for Youth Ministry

Within each of these themes the Summit supplies a vision statement, objectives and activities. I have great hopes that this report will guide congregations, the district and the UUA as we partner with youth in their and our ongoing faith formation. Both of our districts will have their own Youth Summit on May 10 at the Nashua Church from 10-3 p.m. The NH/VT's District Youth Council and the Northeast District's Youth Adult Committee, religious educators, youth advisors, parents and other youth are invited to attend and contribute thoughts and ideas towards the new district's youth ministry vision.

...MORE ABOUT THE FIRST JOINT ANNUAL MEETING



Plan ahead to be sure **YOUR** congregation is represented at the inauguration of **THE NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT!** Our goal is for 100% participation of the 74 congregations in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Come to hear **Rev. Bill Sinkford**, keynote, who brings the endorsement of the UUA. Come to reminisce with former district staff and past presidents of both districts. Come to be part of a new day dawning.

The Conference runs from 5:00 pm Friday April 11 to 4:00 pm Saturday April 12. Registration opens at 5:00 pm. There is ample time to mingle with friends across the district and browse the exhibits and vendors including the UUA bookstore. We will kick off the evening at 6:00 pm with a **Reception** in the adjoining Acorns Restaurant. Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available. Please note that you will need to register separately to attend the reception.

The festivities begin at 7:30 when you are invited to join the **banner parade** that will open the evening's celebration in the Great Bay Room. The program will be appropriate for all ages though nursery care will also be provided. If you haven't made a church banner yet, this is your opportunity to unveil it along

with our new district banner.

Saturday's program begins at 8:00 am with a continental breakfast (and all day coffee, tea, and refreshments) for everyone. Ingathering and **Opening Worship** at 8:30 am will be led by Mary Higgins. At 9:00 both districts will conduct their **Annual Meeting (s)** culminating in the final vote for consolidation. Simultaneous to the business meeting, **Bill Sinkford** will arrive for **Conversations with Youth**. At 11:00am, the youth will join the adults for **Bill Sinkford's Keynote Address** welcoming the new district to the UUA.

A buffet lunch including vegetarian and meat entrees takes place at noon in the Acorns Restaurant for everyone registered at the conference. After lunch ministers and religious educators will robe and process into the Great Bay room for the **Closing Celebration** being planned by Mary Higgins and Ministers from both chapters of the Minister's Association. The program will include an anthem written for the event by Grace Lewis McClaren. A choir joining voices from all three states is being planned to provide music throughout the conference.

The **children's program** (ages 3-11) begins at 8:30 am and takes place at the Durham Fellowship, a .4 mile walk from the conference center. **Peter Bowden** children's television producer, director, writer, artist, and consultant based in the greater Boston, MA area, joins **Carney Doucette**, DRE from Rockland ME, and **Pat Gardiner**, DRE from Brunswick, ME for an action-packed day which includes lunch

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at the Fellowship. The children rejoin the adults at 1:30 pm for the closing ceremony. Nursery Care for infants and toddlers will be available from 8:00 am to 12 noon and again from 1 to 4 in the afternoon.

The Portsmouth Church (1/2 hour away) has offered overnight accommodations for a simultaneous **Joint District Youth Gathering**. Registration and programming will be handled separately by the Youth Adult Committee of NED and the District Youth Council of NH/VT.

Overnight accommodations are available at the New England Center on a limited basis. Home Hospitality is offered by members of the Durham Fellowship. A list of area motels and B&Bs will accompany registrations when they arrive at your church.

Plan to attend this historic multigenerational event with full children's programming and youth participation. Bring your whole family and share the experience with your church family. This is an event not to be missed

Ann Kebbell
for the Joint Conference Committee

Register on-line beginning January 1, 2008

TRANSITION UPDATE

We are 7 months from finalizing our consolidation and are very much looking forward to formal birth of the new district. As many of you know the new district will be named the Northern New England District. The motto will be "Love and Light from the Mountains to the Sea."

Through the consolidation process we have had an in-depth opportunity to reflect on what brings us together as UUs and how our association with each other is stronger than we could ever be on our own as individual congregations. Mark your calendars for April 11 and 12, 2008 for our shared annual meeting and celebration of the culmination of this process. It promises to be amazing. There will be excellent children's programming as well as programming for the adults.

I look forward to seeing you there
Carol Hess

Chair, Transition Team

PLANNING FOR GROWTH WORKSHOP

Many thanks to those who have sent in their applications for the Planning for Growth training for Small Congregations! *

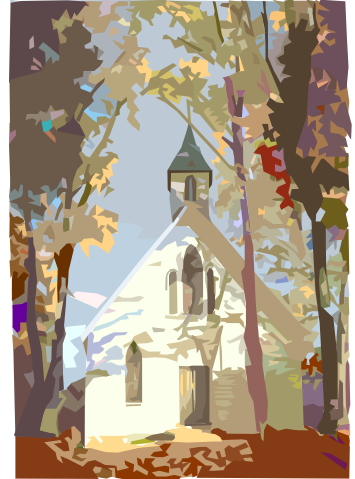
The training is most effective if there is a critical mass of participants (five congregations and 30 people). We were short of that mark for the November training, which has been cancelled. Now we refocus on the April training.

**THE TRAINING WILL BE FRIDAY, APRIL 25 TO SUNDAY,
APRIL 27, 2008**

(ENDING SUNDAY AT 2PM)

LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, JANUARY 11
2008**



Please send your application to Karen Brammer, kbrammer@uua.org as soon as possible. The training team will make decisions about which applicants will participate by the end of January. No applications can be taken after the deadline.

This may seem like a long time from now, but with holidays between now and then, it is wise to do the application as soon as possible. Those who have already sent in their applications will have priority. It seems there are more congregations interested in this date than we have space for, and so we are working on the possibility of a second training in the spring – stay tuned.

Contact Karen Brammer kbrammer@uua.org if you need more information about this program.

MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE AND VERMONT DISTRICT CONSULTANTS

This summer the first group of sixteen district consultants were trained to serve your congregations when the need arises for expert facilitation, strategic planning, financial stewardship development,

capital campaign strategies, small church, mid-size church and religious education consults.

This dedicated group of stipended volunteers is paid a small honorarium and travel expenses. This is a partnership between your

congregation and your district. The actual fees charged will be determined by your congregation's status as a fair share congregation to the district and the UUA. The fees are never more than \$125.00 for the first

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**"We're trying to
create a beloved
community..."**

Small Talk

Rev. Jane

Dwinell



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three hours and \$30.00 for each hour after that. For those who are Fair Share to either the district or the UUA or both, the fees are

less. What a wonderful gift these volunteers have to offer.

Please give your district office a call at 603.228.8704 and talk to Mary Higgins, Benette

Sherman or Karen Brammer about your congregation's needs. We are here to help broker the perfect matches between consultants and congregations.



AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS

In recent years, the Northeast District has established an awards program to honor outstanding contributions to Unitarian Universalism. We are eager to share this process with our friends in New Hampshire and Vermont. We will be presenting our awards at the joint annual meeting on Saturday, April 12, 2008. You have received information about the

process. If you need more information, please contact Kathy Kellison, chair of the NED Awards Committee.

REMINDER

AWARDS SUBMISSION ARE DUE TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE BY JANUARY 11, 2008.

There are three types of awards:
 I) Awards to individuals
 II) Awards to congregations
 III) Continental UUA awards.

FAITH IN ACTION AROUND THE NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Gleanings from your newsletters. . . When you read about what other churches are doing, you may want to start an action at your church!

Waterville: Buying cfl lightbulbs and giving them away to people who are least likely to buy them.

Bangor: Participated in an event on the Augusta capitol steps demanding equal rights for all gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans and their families.

Allen Avenue: Actively supporting approval of same-sex marriages.

Planning a Global Warming Service in January. Holding a film series and discussion on the Peacemaking Study Action Issue. Shares the collection plate with a worthy organization each month.

Sanford: Selling stainless steel water bottles. Spreading news about ethical eating and water conservation.

Brunswick: Exploring ways to engage in the Peacemaking Study Action Issue. Urging Senator Collins to support the Media Ownership Act.

South Paris: Conducted a collec-

tion for UNICEF and will make donations to Christmas for Teens.

Kennebunk: Held a special offering for Habitat for Humanity.

Yarmouth: Their Green Spirit committee provides fair trade coffee and chocolate every Sunday, and they provide information about recycling to the congregation. Their church library provides further information.

Belfast: Worked with the local authorities to develop the Community Resolution Team, using the Restorative Justice model.

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
ASSOCIATION NEWS**

**NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE UU
PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES**

Last January the Commission on Appraisal sent packets to all UU churches that informs people about the review and information about how to participate. The Commission has extended the deadline for Congregational Comments until January 15, 2008. If you can't find the packet, you can download it from www25.uua.org/coa.

For those viewing on-line, proceed to the next pages to see the two flyers that are inserts in the hard copy of *Viewpoints*.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2008

FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

JUNE 25—29, 2008

... but there is something your church needs to do to certify your church membership! Go to: [uua.org/leaders/data services](http://uua.org/leaders/data_services). All congregations must file for certification by February 1, 2008.

Next Viewpoints deadline: February 5, 2008

1st ANNUAL JOINT SPRING CONFERENCE
FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
APRIL 11 & 12, 2008
DURHAM, NH
REGISTER SOON!

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, ME
Permit No. 113

NORTHEAST DISTRICT UU
OFFICE
48 LANTERN LANE
WINDHAM, ME 04062-4414

Hot Topics for Congregations

FEBRUARY 2, 2008 No snow date!

MANAGING DIFFERENCES

Take home ideas and techniques. Learn how to see the range of positives. Share your stories with others who have similar roles in their congregations, such as ministers, religious educators, musicians, ministerial associates, congregational leaders, or interest in social action, finances, congregational growth. Nourish body and spirit by spending a day in the company of other UUs.

Registration and refreshments at 8:30 am

Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick, 15 Pleasant Street, Brunswick, Maine

Directions at <http://www.uubrunswick.org>

Facilitators: *Rev. Mary Higgins, Rev. Karen Brammer, Helen Crane Wing* (see next page)

PROGRAM

9:00 am	Worship <i>Rev. Sylvia Stocker</i> , Brunswick (Congregations are invited to light candles of celebration or concern.)
10:15	Polarity Management (see next page)
12:15 pm	Lunch
1:15	Nonviolent Communication (see next page)
3:30	Closing Ritual

There will be a concurrent program for children age 12 years and under.

Questions? Contact: Helen Zidowecki, NED Program Committee, 207-582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com or Joy Blanchette, District Office, 603-228-8704, uua-me.nh.vt@comcast.net

=====*Detach and Mail to District Office.*=====

REGISTRATION through January 20 is \$18; after January 20, \$20. Children under 12 free.

Register early! Space is limited to 80 participants. No “walk-ins”!

Make checks payable to NED UUA

Register on line with a credit card (small fee) at www.nhvt.uua.org OR

MAIL to **UU District Office, 10 Ferry Street, Concord, NH 03301**

Name _____ Congregation _____

Please give contact information that can be added to the Participant List for the conference:

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

If children are accompanying you, please give names and ages.

Special considerations, such as mobility and other needs:

Dietary: vegetarian___ vegan___ other _____

Do you need HOME HOSPITALITY? _____

Considerations, such as smoking or pets.

Suggested donation for Home Hospitality (range \$15-35) to be arranged with hosts.

THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY TASK FORCE PRESENTS

Gathering the Power of Small Group Ministry

March 8 at Allen Avenue UU Church, 524 Allen Avenue, Portland, Maine

March 15 at First Universalist Church, 9 Easy Street, Pittsfield, Maine

9 AM to 1 PM each day

Congregations that have Small Group Ministry and those considering starting
Congregational Leaders, Ministers, Coordinators, Facilitators

Bring a team!

Tentative Schedule:

9:00 AM Registration/gathering/refreshments

9:15 AM Welcome and Overview of the Conference

9:30 AM Sessions by Interest. Choose one on the Registration Form

1. "Starting Small Group Ministry Program in Your Church" *Rev. Helen Zidowecki*
Leadership & congregational buy-in, role of minister, selection/training of facilitators,
time-line and public relations. *Includes Small Group Ministry in smaller congregations.*

2. "Facilitators—New and Experienced" *Carol Hayden*

Facilitators, bring your questions and your comments, along with your hair-raising and hand-clapping experiences! There will be ideas and resources regarding facilitation.

3. "Questions and Answers for Ministers, Coordinators, Steering Committee Members" *Kathy Kellison*
Bring your puzzlements and inquiries, your frustrations and "Yes!" moments. What are the challenges of coordinating and sustaining Small Group Ministry?

4. Children's Program for children under 12 years of age. (Youth can participate in the above sessions.)

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Small Group Ministry (Con't)

12:30 PM Reconvene as total group to consider Likes and Wishes and What we are taking home

1:00 PM Adjourn (Lunch not provided)

REGISTER by February 29 at a conference fee of \$10. March 1 the registration fee is \$13. Children under 12 years are free.

To register, send this form to: Unitarian Universalist District Office, 10 Ferry Street, Suite #318, Concord, NH, or go on-line at www.nhvt.uua.org (with credit card and fee of \$1.50)

For questions or more information contact: Helen Zidowecki, Small Group Ministry Task Force, 207-582-5308, hzmre@hzmre.com or Joy Blanchette, UU District Office, 603-228-8704, uua-me.nh.vt@comcast.net

This program is also supported by the Northeast District Glenn Turner Fund