



LOVE &
LIGHT
FROM THE
MOUNTAINS
TO THE SEA

Touchstone

August, 2009

*A Quarterly Communication for
Small Unitarian Universalist Congregations of the
Northern New England District Unitarian Universalist Association
NNED-UUA Small Church Specialist, Rev. Karen Brammer*

In this issue you will find:

- Three great practices of small congregations in the NNED
- Voices from small congregations Part 1 GA 2009
- Announcements

Great Practices

**Nottingham Community Universalist Church,
NH** (9 members, Part-time consulting minister
Rev. Dr. Ben Fowler) submitted by
Congregational President, Jill Sunde



Nottingham lists these
accomplishments for last year:

- ✓ a new website
<http://www.nottinghamuu.org/>
- ✓ volunteer-led religious education (3-4 children regularly)
- ✓ regular practice of being very welcoming to guests with “the best coffee hour this side of Concord”
- ✓ average 12-15 in worship (More than their membership!)
- ✓ a summer book discussion to stay in touch
- ✓ musical concerts
- ✓ twice yearly fund raisers for the local food bank

**First Congregational Society Unitarian,
Eastport, ME** (6 members, lay led) submitted
by Ann Cornelison

This congregation has chosen to create a UU lending team to help alleviate poverty in the world through Kiva –You may lend as little as \$25 to a specific low-income entrepreneur in the developing world: a baker in Afghanistan, a goat herder in Uganda, a farmer in Peru, a restaurateur in Cambodia, a tailor in Iraq)) It's a simple, low-key way of promoting Unitarian Universalism as well as Kivangelism. Check out the Unitarian Universalists lending team (and participate if you'd like), and learn more about lending teams on Kiva in general at [Kiva](http://www.kiva.org) (www.kiva.org)



Philippines General Store
Elena is requesting PHP 14,000 from kiva lenders. She manages a general store business that is very helpful in sustaining her daily basic needs.

First Universalist Parish of Chester, VT
(66 members, Part-time settled minister, Rev. Telos Whitfield) By Director of Religious Education, Madeline Bergstrom



This congregation created different statements to clarify its understanding of itself in the world. The DRE created this skit for worship to help understand the different functions of each statement (see website www.chestervtuu.org to read actual statements).



Affirmation:

In come I, your Affirmation,
With my bullhorn in my hand.
I speak out loud and clear each Sunday
in UU churches across the land.
What is this place that you've walked into?
A spiritual home for religious liberals.
What do we celebrate? Growth, creativity,
And, of course, social responsibility.
I have some friends with me this morning
Whom you might not know as well.
Right now, I'd like you all to meet them
And hear what they have to tell.

Mission Statement:

In come I, your Mission Statement,
A map and compass for this Parish boat.
Without me, you can't tell where you're going,
Or why you work to stay afloat.
So print me on flyers, brochures, press
releases;
And use me to set your board's goals.
I'm on grant applications and IRS filings.
I'll steer you through dangerous shoals.
As boatloads of new sailors join us all here,
And new islands show on the horizon,
Revise or revisit me every three years,
And you'll be a truly wise one.

Words of Welcome:

My arms spread wide, I'm Words of Welcome,
Stating loud and clear,
That all ages, sizes, creeds, and colors
Are always welcome here.
But why does this even need saying, you ask?
Shouldn't folks know our door's open?
When most see a church, though,
They honestly don't know
that someone like them can come in.
Most churches don't welcome lesbian folks,
Folks bisexual, gay, or transgender.
If we want to welcome everyone in,
We must say it over and over.
We're a group mostly white, mostly straight,
mostly older.
Some are more timid and some are much
bolder.
Words of Welcome say clearly, and loudly,
and joyous,
That our doors are wide open, and
YOU can come join us.

Covenant:

I am a covenant, sisters and brothers.
I am a promise we make to each other
About how we will act and how we'll behave
Wherever we meet, in a church or a cave.
In committees and meetings, when conflicts
arise,
A covenant can guide us in all that we do.
We promise good boundaries, respect, active
listening.
We don't live our principles just in the pews.
We UUs are funny, we don't have a creed.
We think that a covenant's all that we need.
We don't have agreed-upon contracts with
God,
But we do have each other, and we think
that's good.



Small and Vital

During a 2009 GA workshops for small UU congregations, those present brainstormed the IMAGE small congregations want to project to our larger UU faith community which is the same image they want to live into.



This includes

Strength is not related to size.

Small congregations have been here and will remain.

Small congregations are the backbone of the UUA.

In small congregations, everyone participates in caring for everyone else. Being small congregations allows us to be more intergenerational.

Small congregations are known in our communities.

Many of our small congregations are located in a small community, and there we can have a very large presence.



Announcements

Presidents' Gatherings for Congregations of all sizes, with break-out groups for different size congregations, (previously promoted as "RPM" meetings for Religious Educators, Presidents and Ministers).

- **September 19**, 10:00-3:00
Middlebury, VT
- **January 20**, 10:00-3:00
Concord, NH
- Maine – date and location still to be determined

New 3-year cycle for [Planning for Growth and Vitality](#) to begin 2010. Click here to learn more --[PlanningForGrowth](#)

Kick-off dates are

- **January 9-10** in Vermont
- **January 29-30** in Maine.

Contact Karen Brammer if your congregation might be interested:
kbrammer@uua.org

[Healing Moments Alzheimer's Ministry](#) has received a grant from the UU Funding Panel. The program is looking for 4 congregations in New England to do training for the Alzheimer's Ministry. Contact jadeangelica@gmail.com **ASAP**

[Climate Change](#) - Imagine if all 600 small congregations in the UUA did a creative event to affirm our desire to reduce CO2 to 350 parts per million and made sure that their event was listed with the international 350 campaign. It would be proof of 'small and mighty' making a difference on the international political landscape. This [brief video](#) www/350/org/strategy-video is convincing and clear about the importance of the coordinated events. October 24th is the date. Please consider creating a public event with your congregation and click on 350 events at the top of the page to [get connected and make it count](#). www.uuministryforearth.org .