



The religious education program of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor inspires all participants to grow spiritually, develop a sense of personal and social responsibility, and experience joy in a loving Unitarian Universalist community.

## You are the gift.

You are the gift that you give to life, and you are the receiver of the gift of others lives. There is no gift too small, too big, not right.

Any gift given with love is enough.

*ANY GIFT GIVEN WITH LOVE IS ENOUGH.*

The gift is your word.

The gift is your touch.

The gift is your thoughtfulness.

The gift is your listening.

The gift is your picture.

The gift is your apology.

The gift is your laughter, your joke,

The gift is your smile.

The gift is your tears, a tissue, a tantrum, a lap.

The gift is your silent eyes watching carefully seeing.

The gift is going beyond habit and into a fresh perception.

The gift is hard work, challenge, stretching, growth.

## The gift is love.

In the light and in the darkness of each year, and day, and heart there is the gift of love.

May we all recognize this season, that what we most want to have and to give is our love, our time, and our presence. The simple things between us are in fact the greatest things there are, when we share ourselves as we are, we live and love deeply.

Enjoy the gifts of love and light and dark as you are, here, now.

Thank you for your gifts,

*Diane*



## Children's Chapel

December 2011

Photo Courtesy of Chris Packard and Laurie Cartier

Children's Chapel has been such a wonderful event, evolving each month into something that continues to become more meaningful for all that participate.

This month, Diane co-wrote and organized a wonderful ritual that asked the participants to look for their light, find their gifts, and share those with the world.

Co-facilitator, Chris Packard, told a story about, how, like clay, we too can find our gifts, and how through the shaping of life's hands, we can become a treasure.

Linda Smith Koehler led the group in a round of songs that spoke about the lights of the Hanukkah, Lucina, Solstice, and we all sang one of our favorites, "This little light of mine."

Thanks to all that participated and helped make the event a success! It truly was a remarkable event. Looking forward to more!

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

**Below, Reverend Becky writes about what it means to cultivate patience and love, gratitude and giving, during a time when we all know it's difficult! Please read it to the family! Thanks Rev. Becky!**

As I write this, I am gazing at a single lit candle. First thing in the morning these days I am taking an on-line course about Advent and part of that class is to light a candle, relax, and center my attention on the flame of the candle. In doing so, I enter a quiet place where I can consider the joy and serious aspects of this five week period leading up to Christmas. I admit that I have never seriously considered Advent – in my youth my church did not 'believe' that Advent was something to be celebrated or even acknowledged...I don't even recall hearing the word Advent until I was an adult. Even then, as a Unitarian Universalists, we don't tend to talk about it much.

This year, however, I decided that it would be a good idea to have the focus of something positive during the time leading up to Christmas. Because most UU's don't celebrate Advent I did some research (as UU's often do) to find out what Advent historically was to early Christian religions. It has always been an exercise in patience – in other words, waiting for the birth of the baby Jesus. Five weeks from Christmas Day it used to be a time of fasting. People would give up certain foods just like some do for Lent (just before Easter). By letting go of some things we love, we appreciate what we have. In modern times, Advent has become less restrictive; it has become a time for slowing down, for being patient, for waiting for Christmas Day to arrive. Some families keep a special calendar that has a door for each day leading up to Christmas. As the days pass, doors are opened revealing a picture. Sometimes there are surprises associated with the door – like a piece of candy, or a special outing. Most of all, using the calendar helps us recognize that patience is required, that everything that is worthwhile involves waiting.

We live in a world of what people call 'instant gratification.' What this means is that when we want something, we want it now. For some this means that they don't want wait for the thing they want. An example might be: Mike wants a bike, he wants it now and doesn't want to wait until his birthday or Christmas. It can be even simpler – I want to go to the movie NOW. And there are occasions when we give into that impulse to do it NOW.

As Christmas approaches, we all want it to happen now...not in three weeks...today or at most tomorrow. But, the reality is that it can't happen today or tomorrow. Christmas is a special day, a day that has a specific date – December 25. How can we handle having to wait for so long? That is what Advent does for us – it teaches us to anticipate Christmas patiently. It isn't easy, but instead of rushing around trying to make Christmas happen sooner than it can happen, if we slow down and appreciate the time leading up to the day, we can actually have a happier, calmer, more focused Christmas. We can focus on how important family is to us; we can focus on how important the birth of any child is; we can focus on giving to others knowing it is just as fun to give as to receive.

My Advent class is helping me be patient and wait, not only for Christmas but also for those other things I want. Perhaps you might find time this season to slow down instead of racing around. Try to find time to light a candle and think of all of the blessings in our lives. What blessings? Knowing that we have people who love us, friends, food on our table, clothes to wear, a roof over our heads, are some of our many blessings. As we think of these things, we can wait a bit more patiently for other good things to happen knowing that we are already immersed in good things.

May you all have happy holidays as we wait as patiently as we can for Christmas.

In UU faith,  
Rev. Becky

# More Community Connections!

## Up Coming:

**Red Cross babysitting Class** is being organized! Contact Diane or Nancy Jacobson for more information

Speaking of **FERRY BEACH** -thanks for your attention- the letters are out! When you are getting very chilly this winter, remember your warm toes in the sand ... at ... FB! (And I don't mean pics on facebook!)

## Pageant

This year our pageant is a home grown collage; we will tell and act out the stories of Hanukah, Solstice, and Christmas as well as sing about them. Join us as we celebrate the light of each tradition and light the mitten tree!

## Mitten Tree

This year we have a mitten tree! The tree will be up in the sanctuary by 12/11. Please bring hats, mittens, and scarves to put on the tree, and food and personal items for under the tree. Items may be added at any time, and will be donated to a charity after Christmas.

**The Senior Youth** are excited about making our new space a bit more homey. We are looking for small comfy love seats, small cafe style tables, and stools to go with. Also, 2 of our youth are participating (along with some of the kids from the Ellsworth & Belfast youth groups) in a service oriented mission trip to New Orleans in April 2012. Teachers – Chuck McKay, Rachel Case, and Karen Childs.

**The K-1 Class** has been learning about the importance of home in relation to animal homes. The class enjoyed making animal homes from blankets, pillows, etc. They also enjoyed exploring Henry David Thoreau and writing nature poetry. We are enjoying several rituals, such as lighting our chalice, welcoming each child in song, and sharing joys and concerns. We are enjoying our class of very sweet and bright children. K-1 Teachers: Summer, Ann, Greg, Connie & Mike

**The 2-3 classroom** has been spending a lot of time getting physical with lots of yoga, interactive community building, and sharing! This month, we learned the "welcome song" by Sara Yasner and learned a little bit about each of us! Classroom teachers are Diane McClellan, Denyse Wilson, Jill Packard, and Karen Childs

## December's Calendar

- 12/4 - Chapel
- 12/11- RE Classes – Mitten Tree UP!
- 12/18 - Pageant – No Family Choir!
- 12/25- **Merry Christmas!!** (No RE Classes / Child Care)

## Don't Forget Family Choir!

Family Choir happens most Sundays at 11:30 am until 12:00 pm downstairs! Everyone is welcome to attend the relaxed singing circle regardless of musical experience. **"If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing."** (Zimbabwean Proverb) For more info, contact Jill Packard at 512-4796

*Winter Solstice, a song by  
Linda Smith Koehler*

*Winter Solstice, time of dark  
and coldness, close your eyes  
and search within, to tap the  
source where you begin.*

*Winter Solstice, time of dark  
and coldness, in the stillness  
of the night, look within to  
find your light.*

*Winter Solstice, time of dark  
and coldness, burrow deep  
within your soul, to find the  
things that make you whole.*

**The mission of RE at the UUSB:**

To inform and enrich the lives of the children, parents, and families of the youth enrolled in the UUSB RE program; To make the RE Program more visible in the UUSB community; To make intergenerational connections within the UUSB community.

"Children need to learn Unitarian Universalism with their minds, hearts, and hands. They need meaningful integrated experiences that are anchored by soul-stirring narratives. They need to learn faith by doing faith. They need experiences that nurture a belief in the transformative power of justice and love."

~Unitarian Universalist Association



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**The RE Program would not be the same without the dedication and hard work of the RE Committee.**

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