

# The Ebenezer Star

The quarterly newsletter of the Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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January – February 2020

## New Year – New Possibilities



For many people, it's a tradition to make resolutions for the new year. These are often framed as a dedication to self-improvement, to making something about our lives better. Whether we are dedicating ourselves to joining a gym and getting healthier, to strengthening the relationships in our lives (or finding new ones), to finding a new job or going back to school, or maybe just to dedicate more time to our own self-care, these resolutions are meant to make our lives better, to symbolically recognize that there is possibility for transformation, and that a new year can also leave the door open for positive change in our lives.

This metaphor can be a good way of thinking about our fellowship as well. There have been so many changes in our congregation recently, and they all offer us the possibility to try new things. Since I arrived in August, I've been struck by how open our congregation is to thinking about the future, and how much we really want to make an impact on the larger community. The number of AUUF members and friends who show up for community events is amazing, and I'm so heartened that we're such an amazingly dynamic congregation!

Now, as the new year dawns upon us, another opportunity is before us. The recent vacancy of the office in the RE building means we have the chance to do something very special. The fact that it has its own door to the outside opens up so many possibilities, from a food bank to a clothing distribution point to even the possibility of office space for a community non-profit! There are probably even possibilities I haven't thought of yet!

What would it look like to do something missional that allows us to live our values in the larger world? Imagine the possibilities of being able to make a real difference for others while building community in the Auburn-Opelika area! Imagine how many lives we can touch with the right choice of what to do with this space!

When I get back from my holidays in Indiana, I hope to convene an *ad hoc* committee to look at the needs of both the fellowship and the larger community and make a recommendation to the Board about what to do with this space. Whatever we do with this office, I hope that it will serve both our fellowship and the larger community as we live our values in the world.

So, as we're thinking about the kind of people we will be in 2020, let's not forget to think about what kind of fellowship we want to be as well! I believe Unitarian Universalism has a saving message to offer the world: that we are all loveable and loved, and it is my hope and prayer that AUUF will continue to bring this message to the world for many years to come. I believe we are already making a positive impact on this community, and, with a little love and some resolutions of our own, we can continue this great work well into the future!

Rev. Chris Rothbauer

# A Few Words from our President



Since the last quarterly submission to the newsletter, the Board has been busy! We had our annual retreat which included consultation

from Kathy McGowan, a Congregational Life staff person from the Southern Region. Kathy helped us to gain a broader perspective of the Board's role in the life of the congregation. For many years, our Board has been "in the weeds" with nearly every decision that is made, taking an (over?) active role in decisions both major and minor. A healthier Board will micromanage less and empower committees/congregants more. So, Kathy helped us to be better leaders by outlining a RASCI model of leadership: Who is **R**esponsible? Who is **A**ccountable? Who **S**upports? Who should be **C**onsulted? Who should be **I**nformed? With the help of this model, it is our intention to practice sharing the overall ministry of AUUF- sharing it with Reverend Chris and also with members and friends. AUUF belongs to us all.

At the retreat we also set three goals for this Board year:

- 1) Focus on congregational relationships and healing
- 2) Collaboratively read Governance and Ministry with the Committee on Ministry
- 3) Think about the current relationship between governance and ministry and prepare to enact changes to the governance structure in the 2020-2021 year

What kinds of changes to governance, you ask? Well, currently AUUF has 15 committees and many of these committees are committees of one (the committee Chair)! The hope is that the RASCI model, coupled with a vision of shared ministry and a simplified governance structure will lead to more engagement, more effective and efficient processes, clearer lines of communication and reduced burnout for committees that have more work than one Chairperson can accomplish. This model assumes that AUUF will grow and is a vision for how best to guide our governance so that we are proactive in meeting the needs of a larger congregation. Whether we grow or not, AUUF needs a simpler governance structure.

This last quarter the Board deliberated decisions such as how to proceed on repairing a rotten beam at the front of the Sanctuary, upgrading the playground, creating a RE room for the teens and implementing upgrades that make our buildings and grounds ADA accessible. We voted to expand the purview of the DRE to include overseeing the playground/nursery (supervising staff). We voted to ensure that playground/nursery staff are at least 18 years old. We reaffirmed our commitment to the Johnson Amendment. We allocated funds to begin building the ramp to the Busch basement. We consulted outside engineers and in-house experts about the rotten beam and concluded that we will write a grant in 2020 for help with funding of this potentially extensive project. Busy Board beavers, gnawing on all sorts of problems!

Warmly,

Amy Phillips  
Board President

# INSTALLATION OF REV. CHRIS ROTHBAUER

Plans are underway for the installation of Rev. Chris Rothbauer as our second settled minister on Sunday, April 26 at 4:00 pm! The installation committee is hard at work making sure this event will be special both for Rev. Chris and the members of our fellowship! Friends, family, and colleagues of Rev. Chris from around the country will be joining us for this special celebration, and your presence and participation will make it truly memorable!

This will be the first time a minister has been installed at AUUF. What, though, is an installation?

In the words of Rev. Erika Hewitt:

An installation service formally celebrates the covenantal relationship between a minister and the congregation that has called the minister. Often, though not always, an Installation service occurs within the first year of a settlement between a minister... and a congregation to which they are called. It marks the congregation's successful completion of the ministerial search process—the weeks and months of self-examination and self-promotion as they hope to attract someone who is qualified to be, and who wants to be, their new minister. The congregational vote to call the minister—often held months earlier, during the minister's candidating week—is the act that leads to the installation, which is a celebration of the joy both parties feel for having found one another, and their agreement to enter into a covenant of shared ministry.

An installation shouldn't be confused with an ordination. An ordination occurs once in minister's life and celebrates the formal start of their ministry after years of study, discernment, and formation in preparation to serve. An installation is about the relationship between the congregation and the minister.

An installation isn't something that the congregation does for the minister but, rather, honors and celebrates the promises our congregation and Rev. Chris make to one another as we knit ourselves in shared ministry. The installation will be a symbolic beginning of what we know will be a fruitful ministry together!

More details about the installation service will be announced soon as participants are confirmed. In the meantime, the installation committee will be looking for volunteers! We will especially be looking for cooks, sewers, and people with a spare room they are willing to open up!

If you would like to volunteer to help with the installation service, please contact Rev. Chris or a member of the installation committee (Carolyn Levy, Jan Newton, and Kristen Starr).

## Don't Miss Theology on Tap!



Theology on Tap is a monthly opportunity to discuss spiritual, religious, theological, and philosophical topics in a relaxed environment. Participants have the opportunity to discuss a number of different views on topics over light refreshments. Theology on Tap is facilitated by Rev. Chris and meets on the first Thursday of each month except in January when we will meet on the second Thursday due to proximity to the New Years holiday) at Red Clay Brewing Company, 704 North Railroad Avenue in Opelika.

Upcoming sessions and themes will be: January 9 – Truth, February 6 – Love, March 5 - Covenant

For more information on Theology on Tap, email Rev. Chris at [minister@auuf.org](mailto:minister@auuf.org).

## Stewardship Campaign and Canvass



Each year AUUF conducts a stewardship campaign prior to the Finance Committee proposing a budget for the upcoming year. Along with the stewardship

campaign we also canvass our members and friends for comments/suggestions on a couple of pointed questions to help improve how we approach things at our Fellowship.

The kick-off date for Stewardship/Canvass will be January 26 and will close on March 7. So stay tuned for more details in January about this year's theme and how you can participate.

Laura Kloberg, Board Member, VP of Finance

## Get to Know the Organizations that use AUUF Space



Several years ago, the AUUF Board voted to allow progressive organizations to use our buildings. Since then, the number of organizations using AUUF space has

grown, and the impact has been felt throughout the community. The organizations use AUUF buildings for free, although they are given the opportunity to donate funds to AUUF. Two of those organizations are Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), and the Auburn Justice Coalition (AJC).

PFLAG Auburn Area is working to unite people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) with families, friends, and allies. PFLAG is committed to advancing equality

through its mission of support, education, and advocacy. PFLAG meets monthly at AUUF. Find out more at [www.auburnpflag.com](http://www.auburnpflag.com).

AJC seeks to promote equity, transparency, justice, and action. AJC believes it is important to encourage awareness of important social issues, collaborate with the entire community on issues of injustice and

inequality, and to seek to strengthen justice and equality in the community.

Their goal is also to support

the current work of community groups, and provide what we can to reach those goals. AJC meets monthly at AUUF. To join their newsletter, email [auburnjusticecoalition@gmail.com](mailto:auburnjusticecoalition@gmail.com).



# Updates From the RE Classes

The RE classes have had a busy year, full of fun and learning. Below are updates about what we have been up to and what will be happening in our RE classes in the New Year!

## Spirit Play I

The pre-K/Kindergarten Spirit Play class began the RE year with a story reminding us of the seven UU Principles or, as we talk about it in Spirit Play language, the seven promises we make to each other. The story was created to make the promises more concrete by connecting each promise to its own color and symbol. Following the story, the children selected and decorated a small-ish gift box symbolizing the first promise of respecting the gift that each of us are to each other. That box then served as a container for the other six promise symbols, which they could also choose to artistically enhance. The themes of subsequent stories corresponded with the first and seventh promise (to value and care for the earth which we share with all living things). The children have made collages and planted seeds and have “wondered” about such things as what it means to make a promise, how they might be like a flower or a fish or a tree, and what it means to grow.

Robin Russell and Ellen Abell

## Spirit Play II

We are choosing stories, such as last month's book, *The Girl Who loved Animals* by Kathy Keleher, that exemplify our 7 principles- or promises- as UUs. This story explores our Orange Promise, to offer fair and kind treatment to all. In December our Spirit Play story, *Crow Boy* by Taro Yashima, reminds us to respect all people. This is our first UU principle. We will be discussing with

the children how to show respect to others and themselves.

Billye Welbourne and Sam Price

## Dumbledore's Army

Dumbledore's Army has been discussing our seven principles with topics ranging from hunger to animal welfare to recycling, and much to the delight of the kids, we have also learned a lot of Harry Potter lore from potions to charms, to magical creatures.

Conar Rochford

## Peace Train

Peace Train has begun discussing “To This I Give My Heart,” a coming-of-age book which is leading us through topics about our UU identity. It's deep and it's fun. We watched an episode of Arthur and discussed how shocking it was. Shocking that Arthur is in fact an aardvark

and is still a third-grader after two decades and has a cell phone. Cool that he and his friends are so accepting. On some Sundays we've had our own teen RE room: outdoors, when it's warm (global warming isn't all bad). Once a month we hike through a magnolia forest to the sandy beach of Choctaw Creek and perform sophisticated water chemistry monitoring analyses. Water's good. Most importantly, we have had many constructive, philosophical, enlightening discussions about school, relationships, and life.

Shawn Jacobson



# AUUF Kids at The Mountain



The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center is located in Highlands, North Carolina. The Mountain has camps and activities for kids and adults. The Mountain also includes cabins, event space, and the cafeteria. One really unique part about the Mountain is that they have Dwarf White Oak trees, which is an endangered species.

I went to intermediate camp at the Mountain last summer for one week. We did a lot of activities, one of which is potholes. We all got on a bus and went to a natural waterfall in a National Forest, where there was a bunch of really deep holes filled with water that we could jump in. We also did an egg drop, which is where you get a box and build a structure to protect an egg, and try not break to break it when you drop it off a tower. Mine didn't break. Another Activity was where we hike down the Mountain to the activity barn, which is located in the field at the bottom of the Mountain. Med rock - or Meditation Rock - has one of the best views of the mountains.

The cafeteria had good vegetarian-friendly food. The views from the Mountain were also really beautiful. They also had really fun activities such as the field pothole and the egg drop. The kids and counselors were all very nice.

I returned to the Mountain in November, when Ariana, Liya, and I went to Youth Con, a weekend Con for kids. We arrived late Friday night. One of the activities was the field, and we also played board games. On the last day we ate ice cream for breakfast.

I am looking forward to going back to the Mountain next summer.

By: Monty Retzlaff-Taylor



## Minister and Staff

<i>Minister</i>	Rev. Chris Rothbauer minister@auuf.org (334) 246-9313	Drop-in Office Hours Off-Site: Wednesdays, 3-6 pm: Starbucks, 2056 Interstate Drive, Opelika On-Site: Thursdays, 9 am-12 pm: Upper Busch Center Make an appointment with Rev. Chris online: <a href="https://revchris.appointlet.com/">https://revchris.appointlet.com/</a>
<i>Director of Religious Exploration</i>	Julie Meadows auufdre@gmail.com (334) 740-0798	Drop-in Office Hours On-Site: Sundays 8 am-10am
<i>Office Administration</i>	Zenda Davis officeauuf@gmail.com	Schedule Building Use: <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0T-X0RN-qKGm5o-yoJrF9bq4p9PHJcAEuYiY-ZyKWeobqSw/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0T-X0RN-qKGm5o-yoJrF9bq4p9PHJcAEuYiY-ZyKWeobqSw/viewform</a>
<i>Minister Emerita</i>	Rev. Diana Jordan Allende Dallende1010@gmail.com	

## 2019 – 2020 Board of Trustees

<i>President</i>	Amy Phillips	president@auuf.net
<i>President Elect</i>	C.J. Marbutt	presidentelect@auuf.net
<i>VP Finance</i>	Laura Kloberg	finance@auuf.net
<i>Secretary</i>	Ruth Crocker	secretary@auuf.net
<i>Treasurer</i>	Darrell Crutchley	treasurer@auuf.net
<i>Trustee (exp 6/20)</i>	Kristen Starr	trustee@auuf.net
<i>Trustee (exp 6/20)</i>	Diana Eidson	trustee@auuf.net
<i>Trustee (exp 6/21)</i>	Chris Basgier	trustee@auuf.net
<i>Trustee (exp 6/22)</i>	Jim Newton	trustee@auuf.net

## 2019 – 2020 Council Chairs

<i>Aesthetics</i>	Carolyn Levy	aesthetics@auuf.net
<i>Buildings</i>	Fleming Blackburn	buildings@auuf.net
<i>Communications</i>	Becki Retzlaff	communications@auuf.net
<i>Congregational Support</i>	Emily & Peter Livant	congregational@auuf.net
<i>Denominational Affairs</i>	Lisa Simmons	denominational@auuf.net
<i>Green Sanctuary</i>	Jan Newton	green@auuf.net
<i>Grounds</i>	Noriko Aoi	grounds@auuf.net
<i>Membership</i>	Angie Hodges	membership@auuf.net
<i>Music</i>	Andrew DeVelschow	music@auuf.net
<i>Nominating (exp 6/20)</i>	Jason Pratt	nominating@auuf.net
<i>Nominating (exp 6/20)</i>	Terry Rodriguez	nominating@auuf.net
<i>Nominating (exp 6/21)</i>	Laura Kloberg	nominating@auuf.net
<i>Religious Exploration</i>	Ayesha Alam	re@auuf.net
<i>Social Action</i>	Billye Welburn & Jim Bradley	socialaction@auuf.net
<i>Sunday Services</i>	Amy Kaiser & Robert Zabawa	sunday@auuf.net
<i>UUSC</i>	Cindy Reinke	uus@auuf.net

**Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**  
**P.O. Box 669**  
**Auburn, AL 36831-0669**

**Location: 450 East Thach Ave.**

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#### AUUF MISSION

The Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a community dedicated to affirming a reverence for life and enriching the spiritual lives of its members. Here we honor the one and the many; here we welcome a diversity of thoughts, beliefs and passions; here we speak without fear and listen with open hearts. We gather to care for one another, share our burdens and joys, and celebrate life's passages. Strengthened by this Fellowship, we bring a liberal religious presence to our larger community and work for a safe and just world.

Sunday Services are always at 10:00 a.m.  
Web Site: [www.auuf.org](http://www.auuf.org)  
Email Listserv: [Connect@auuf.org](mailto:Connect@auuf.org)  
To Subscribe: [auuf.org/subscribe](http://auuf.org/subscribe)  
[Facebook.com/AuburnUUFellowship](https://Facebook.com/AuburnUUFellowship)  
Newsletter submissions: [communications@auuf.org](mailto:communications@auuf.org)

The name of our newsletter, The Ebenezer Star, was inspired by the original purpose of the building in which the Auburn Unitarian Universalist Fellowship meets and an architectural feature on its ceiling. Newly freed African American women and men constructed this building as a place of worship for their Ebenezer Baptist congregation. Inside, a hand-carved, four-pointed star is the unique focal point of the beautiful ceiling. It is our hope that The Ebenezer Star will serve – as storied stars often do – as a guide for navigating your journey while finding connection, meaning, and community.