Space Needs Task Force
By Michael Bowe

As the congregation is aware from several events since January 2012, the Space Needs Task Force has been actively exploring our future space needs as a result of our increasing numbers. Many of our church members have engaged in the process of considering a space that better serves our needs.

Over the past year, the task force held cottage meetings exploring growth, devised and distributed a congregational survey on growth questions, and in early March, sponsored a weekend visit from Tricia Hart, U.U.A. consultant and minister from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Tricia has assisted a number of other UU congregations with similar needs over the past decade. About 60-70 of us took part in the weekend meetings with Tricia, giving and receiving ideas about the growth of our church. Thank you to all who participated in these events.

Tricia’s report on her visit to Belfast is expected soon, and should include her recommendations based on the input we provided her for how we might proceed. Her report should help the Task Force better develop a useful overview of our space improvement process, along with a timeline for important steps along the way. In addition, Tricia will be available for future consultation if we so choose.

As the Space Needs Task Force discussed with Tricia in a weekend wrap-up discussion, we have several immediate steps before us, including having a structural engineer assess the condition of our building and the feasibility of restoring the original upstairs sanctuary. After that, we will hire an architect to do programming and conceptual design. As an initial step towards engaging an architect, we have recently sent Requests For Qualifications to a number of firms. While the engineer will thoroughly evaluate our church building, we will also continue to consider off-site alternatives.

While the Space Needs group is obtaining reports from building professionals over the next months, Tricia suggested we as a congregation need to complete our new mission statement, as it will help guide renovation and building choices.

The Space Needs Committee just completed a search for a structural engineer to assess our Miller Street building. After considering several strong candidates, we selected Resurgence Engineering and Preservation from Portland. Resurgence has considerable experience evaluating older Maine buildings, many very similar to ours. We not only liked the depth and breadth of their expertise, but their beautiful photography of existing Maine buildings helped us visualize our future space needs.

The Space Needs Committee is now securing architectural proposals from interested local architects with extensive experience in UU project design. Engaging an architect requires considerable care and consultation as we seek a person who understands and appreciates UU values and our congregation’s unique traditions.

Come share with us!!  Your Mission Team needs your input.

The Seven Principles describe our shared values. Our new Covenant describes how we practice those principles as we work and worship together. A new Mission will describe our purpose, and how we want the UU Church of Belfast to be viewed by the larger community. We need a powerfully-crafted Mission to guide our future decisions on staffing, space needs, worship, social justice projects, everything!

But a Mission has no meaning unless it represents the desires of our children, our youth, and all loyal members and friends. Help shape the next critical piece in our congregation’s development by signing up for one of our cottage meetings:

- Thursday, March 28th, Home of Wendy Watkins and Scott Denman, 7:00-8:15 PM (please arrive at 6:45 if you would like to socialize before we begin)
- Sunday, April 7th, Church Sanctuary, 11:30-12:45
- Monday, April 8th, Home of Judith Simpson, 10:00-11:15 AM (please arrive at 9:45 if you would like to socialize before we begin)

Please take the time to lend your voice to the process. Your voice counts. RSVP to Judith Simpson at jsimpson@midcoast.com or 338-0579.

From your Mission Team: Kathy Muzzy, Chris Goosman, Judith Simpson, Wendy Watkins, Liz Fitzsimmons, Chris LeGore
April Sunday Services

Services start at 10:00 AM at the UU Church of Belfast, 37 Miller St., behind the Belfast Free Library. Please call 338-4482 for more information. Children, infants and new faces are always welcome. Please join us!

April 7
Rev. Deane Perkins

April 14
Rev. Deane Perkins

April 21
We must move from incremental change to transformative change to preserve the environment. Why I’m committed to Window Dressers.

This service will be sponsored by our Green Sanctuary Committee in honor of Earth Day. The speaker will be Frank Mundo, co-founder of the Window Dressers project.

April 28
It’s time to Make War on War
Rev. Dick Snyder

Is ending war a pipe dream or a possibility in our time? Is it human nature to be at war? What will it take to end our massive war economy and our nation’s obsession with war? What resources can the faith community draw upon and have to offer in the struggle to end war?

May 5
Rev. Deane Perkins

There are many ideas and reactions to potential building changes, and we invite any comments or input for the Space Needs Committee: Roger Lee, Jan Anderson, Michael Bowe, Gemma Scott, Sarah Nicholson, Chair, and Deane Perkins.

Life of the Church
Jane Dopheide, Council Co-Chair

The life of our church is not unlike each of our individual and family lives-complicated and filled with multiple interconnected dimensions. As you see in this edition of the newsletter, our dedicated Space and Mission teams have been hard at work researching and establishing a process for us to move forward in our growth.

These two teams are linked in a critical way. Before we as a congregation can decide what kind of space we need, we as individuals and as a congregation need to carefully re-consider and invest in a new and vibrant Mission.

Last fall, after we unanimously approved a church covenant of Right Relations, the Mission Team led an inspiring worship service and introduced the mission process in the November Newsletter. The article stated that the Mission “will guide every major decision the Church makes over the next five years.” In that same newsletter, Rick Davis—senior Co-Chair—suggested, “our Mission statement will emerge from our own individual, often passionately held visions and dreams.” With the help of our covenant, those individual desires need to be crafted into a Mission statement that captures our collective visions and dreams as a congregation.

The passions, love, hard work (and a little dumb luck) of a small group of folks have brought us to this place. Now it is time for many more to join in forming a vision for our future that sustains us as a congregation and brings the power of our Seven Principles out into our community and the world.

I will be reading with deep interest and gratitude what the Space and Mission teams have to share and look forward to the lively discussions that follow as we create a new, vibrant and sustaining Mission for UUCB. Please join me!

Spring “New to UU” Class

• Have questions about the Unitarian Universalist faith?
• Want to know more about our principles and history as a congregation?
• Considering joining the church?
• Come to the spring “New to UU” class!
This class, which will meet April 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th from 1:30-3:30 at the Belfast Unitarian Universalist church, is intended to answer these questions and many others that you may have. The first of these four sessions will look at the personal religious journeys of class participants and what led them to our church.

The second class will take a look at the history of Unitarianism and how that has shaped our modern faith. The third will look at the way we govern ourselves. And the fourth class will be an opportunity to ask questions that have still not been answered.

The class will be led by Bill and Gina Cressey, Marty Daniels, and Rev. Deane Perkins. Child care is available if needed. Light snacks will also be provided. This class is recommended for anyone seriously considering joining the church.

To register, please contact Corliss Davis, Membership Development chair, at 930-3562 or cdavis5468@roadrunner.com.

Meet your Sexton
At this point, most of you are aware that I (Patty Heath) have been hired on as the Sexton of the UU Church of Belfast, Maine. I thought I would use a bit of space in the newsletter to explain my duties, and how I qualify to perform said duties.

First of all what exactly is a Sexton? In Webster’s New World Pocket Dictionary you will find the word Sexton sandwiched in between Sextet and Sexual Intercourse. (Not a bad place to be, unfortunately the only place you’ll find this Sexton is wedged between the Council and multiple committees!) It is defined as simply: official who maintains church property.

I am not the cleaning lady or the Janitor. Although both of these jobs are incorporated into my position, I see myself as much more. I think a more appropriate title might be Space Engineer, (which is a big step up from one of my former titles- Space Cadet!) I believe one forms an almost intimate relationship with any space that one struggles to keep clean. I am getting to know every inch of our church, and the energies that flow through it. I have studied Feng Shui, I am a builder of Labyrinths and a designer of gardens. These gifts and many more make me much more valuable to the church than just “the cleaning lady”.

I am very part-time. My four hours a week could easily be filled with just the cleaning of the bathrooms and the vacuuming and mopping of floors but there is much more to do like the shoveling, the constant stacking and unstacking of chairs, changing light bulbs finding “things,” taking clutter to storage, opening and closing the building for special events, buying supplies, cleaning the kitchen and the sorting and disposal of recyclables and trash. I like to declutter and I have a McGyver-like ability to use what we have on hand.
hand to keep things running smoothly.

I’ll finish by saying that it is indeed a great honor to serve as the Sexton of this amazing congregation. I will get frustrated at times, and I’ll apologize now for times I may seem short. If there is anything I can do to help anyone, please don’t hesitate to ask.

Your Green Sanctuary Committee will once again be hosting this year’s Earth Day service, Sunday, April 21st. This year, guest speaker Frank Mundo, co-founder of Window Dressers, and longtime member of the Rockland UU Church will speak to us about the Window Dressers organization which has built window inserts for more than 300 families (including many in our community) saving them thousands of dollars in heating bills over the next 10 years, not to mention saving energy—and in part—the Earth! His sermon will focus on the “Why of Window Dressers” why we volunteer, and how service speaks to UUs as a form of worship. We hope to see you there.

Social Action Committee
The Social Action Committee provided the church Service on Sunday, Mar. 24. Our topic was “The Conscientious Objector—Yesterday and Today.”

If you missed the service because of the weather (There’s nothing so white as Springtime in Maine) or would just like to have a few excerpts in print, here they are. The material was prepared by Stephen Allen, SAC chairman, and Cathy Mink, SAC member, and the main speaker was church member Scott Denman, who was a Conscientious Objector in 1971. The special singer was Patty Heath.

President Kennedy, in one of his lesser-known statements, said:

“War will exist until that distant day when the conscientious objector enjoys the same reputation and prestige that the warrior does today.”

You may think that the idea of the Conscientious Objector is something from the past—say the Vietnam War or the Korean War—since we now have an all-voluntary military. No one is required to join. But it is NOT a subject from the past. Some young people, male and female, do join a branch of the military, as the result of recruitment, which takes place several times a year at Belfast High School.

But then, they may find out later
that they are NOT mentally or psychologically prepared to kill someone—whether the killing is done in person or whether it is done with computer-operated drones. It may SEEM like a computer game, but it is not—and they often can see the terrible results of the “game” they have played.

So they may become a Conscientious Objector AFTER they have joined. Is there a price to be paid for this? Of course there is. And the price is often jail. After all, they agreed to be a soldier, and now they are an objector.

In the spring of 1971, the Wayne County, Ohio, Selective Service Board granted the request of Scott Denman for designation as a Conscientious Objector. At the age of 18, Scott’s spiritual, political, and philosophical values fueled his decision to become a Conscientious Objector. As a young peace and environmental advocate, Scott was deeply influenced and motivated by the teachings, lives, and violent deaths of Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. Scott was also significantly influenced and supported in his decision by his NAACP-active mother Lucille and his father Nathaniel. From the late 1960s through the early 1970s, Scott joined many anti-Vietnam War marches in Ohio and Washington, DC, and participated in or co-organized various anti-war rallies, meetings, public forums, and peace vigils.

(Scott then told of his experience as a C.O. Excerpts from his remarks were not available at the time this newsletter was written.)

The history of conscientious objecting in America is a long one. Sometimes it has been respected and sometimes not. It goes all the way back to Henry David Thoreau—and further—and all the way up to Muhammad Ali—and beyond.

The first recorded conscientious objectors in America were members of religious sects whose faith forbade them from using arms in warfare. But America was not necessarily a safe haven for pacifists. At times they were considered heretics whose freethinking was subversive to law and order.

During the Civil War, if you did not want to fight and had some money, you could simply hire someone for $500 to take your place.

By World War One, conscientious objectors had become a large and diverse group. They represented many religions, as well as political and social groups.

During World War Two, about 72,000 men applied for Conscientious Objector statues. But many of them did volunteer to work as Medics.

During the Vietnam War, the number of draft resisters—for whatever reason—grew large and became a movement of its own. Massive anti-war rallies were held—which finally brought an end to the war.

Here is what some famous conscientious objectors and those who practiced Civil Disobedience have said:

Henry David Thoreau was once jailed for refusing to pay a poll tax that was used to disenfranchise blacks from their right to vote. Visiting his friend in jail, Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “Henry, why are you here?” Thoreau replied: “Ralph, why aren’t you here?”

Albert Einstein said: “The conscientious objector is a revolutionary. On deciding to disobey the law, he sacrifices his personal interests to the important cause of working for the betterment of society.”

Muhammad Ali said: “I got no quarrel with the Viet Cong. They never called me ‘nigger.’”

Mohandas Gandhi said: “My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him.”