

Small Talk

strengthening the small
Unitarian Universalist
congregation

September 2004

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

Small is Beautiful Conference at Ferry Beach is Great Fun!

by the Rev. Jane Dwinell, Small Church Specialist

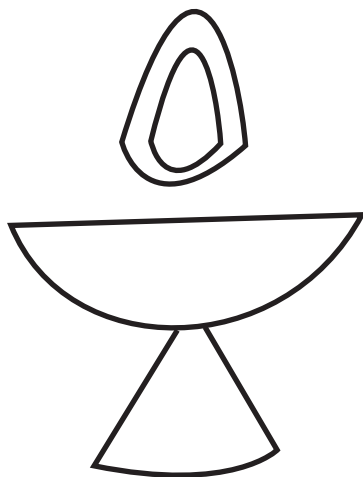
Twenty-five people gathered on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean at the end of August to celebrate, honor and get charged up about small congregations. Unitarian Universalists, lay and clergy, came from small congregations in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Florida to worship, talk, eat, sing, and learn from one another. There was not enough time to do all we had planned!

The greatest gift was how much knowledge there was among the participants. By being together, and sharing hopes and dreams and struggles, as well as things that have worked and haven’t worked, we all learned from each other. Social action projects, creative fundraisers, ways to do religious education, meaningful worship services, inspiring canvasses – multiple ideas came forth.

What are you proud of?

Here are some of the things that the congregations represented had done that they felt good about:

- ⊙ Held an interfaith fundraiser for Seeds of Peace camp
- ⊙ Have great social hours
- ⊙ Became a Green Sanctuary
- ⊙ Held a Work Camp for youth
- ⊙ Hold a yearly interfaith Martin Luther King celebration
- ⊙ Help the local homeless shelter as an interfaith project
- ⊙ Have a sister church in Romania
- ⊙ Did a building restoration and renovation
- ⊙ Held a successful service auction



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About Small Talk

Small Talk is a newsletter published monthly by the Small Church Specialist of the North-east District.

SMALL TALK is devoted to strengthening the small Unitarian Universalist congregation through informative articles, resources, and good ideas.

the Rev. Jane Dwinell,
Content Editor

Dana Dwinell-Yardley,
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If you have questions, comments, or good ideas for future issues...

If you'd like to publicize your small church's events...

Or if you'd like more information...

Please contact the Rev. Jane Dwinell, Small Church Specialist, at:

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- ⊙ Have a congregation who is willing to step up to challenges
- ⊙ Hold an annual Christmas family and mitten tree celebration
- ⊙ Hold annual vegetarian dinners with forums
- ⊙ Made the physical plant energy efficient
- ⊙ Built an accessible fellowship addition
- ⊙ Hold a yearly historic tour of the town as a fundraiser

Here are their challenges:

- ⊙ How to find a mission
- ⊙ How to create a program for teens
- ⊙ How to have a good religious education program
- ⊙ How to make more money
- ⊙ How to reach out to younger people and families
- ⊙ How to identify local needs we can address
- ⊙ How to restore our music program
- ⊙ How to increase attendance on Sundays
- ⊙ How to find and afford a part time minister
- ⊙ How to retain a minister
- ⊙ How to attract multi-generations
- ⊙ How to deal with not having a building
- ⊙ How to deal with burnout in an older congregation

} **Collectively, we have vast amounts of experience that we can share for the betterment of everyone.**

How about you?

Can you relate to any of these challenges, or good works? What challenges do you have? What solutions might you have to any of these challenges? What good works are you proud of? Collectively, we have vast amounts of experience that we can share for the betterment of everyone. Many small congregations feel isolated, and *are* isolated geographically. By coming together in your district, or your corner of the state, or at General Assembly, or at conferences like *Small is Beautiful*, we can become that much stronger. Consider organizing such clusters in your area, or attending *Small is Beautiful* next summer at Ferry Beach in Saco, ME August 26-28.

The Small is Beautiful Song

(to the tune of *All Creatures of the Earth and Sky*)

People from places far and near,
On the shores of Maine we've gathered here.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

We come to learn and also grow.
Small churches, let your beauty show!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Good leadership's the place to start,
Avoiding burnout is an art.
Alleluia, Alleluia!

Worship's important – that's our view –
Speaking and singing, silence, too.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

RE in congregations small:
Freedom to be different – heed the call!
Alleluia, Alleluia!

For grownups – Small Group Ministry:
Growing together spiritually.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Our publications will reach out
With good content and a nice layout.
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Unhealthy budgets – break the spell
Our money can reach out as well!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Small churches can be vital, so –
We want to learn how we can grow.
Alleluia, Alleluia!
Mission and healthiness are key
Then brand-new faces we will see!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

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–lyrics written by Dana Dwinell-Yardley for the
Small is Beautiful conference
may be used with attribution

The Notice Board

Resources, announcements,
things to know.



Join the smalltalk email chat list!

An email chat list, through
the UUA, has been started
for lay leaders, DREs and
ministers of small (less than
150 members) congregations.

If you like email conversa-
tions, and want more ideas
for your small congregation,
then sign up at [http://lists.
uua.org/mailman/listinfo/
smalltalk](http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/smalltalk).

A Musical Resource

The Kingston (Ontario) Unitarian Fellowship is pleased to announce publication of *Now Let Us Sing!*: a songbook for children's services, for intergenerational worship, and for musical pleasure. We believe that this book provides strong musical resource material for any UU RE program.

- ◎ 61 hymns & songs with sections based on a children's version of our UU Principles and Sources
- ◎ Simple arrangements for keyboard and voice, with chords for guitar or autoharp
- ◎ Spiral-bound. 108 pp., including title and first line index

The book is available directly from the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship website kuf.ca/songbook.htm, the UUA Bookstore www.uua.org/bookstore, and Uni-Uniques www.uniuniques.com/.

All proceeds from the sale of Now Let Us Sing! will be used in the development and enhancement of the music program at the Kingston Unitarian Fellowship.

What's Happening... in October, November and December!

Northeast District Events

When?	What?	Where?
October 16 th	Fall District Meeting	Sanford
November 12 th -13 th	NED Board Retreat	China Lake



Small Church Specialist's Calendar

When?	What?	Where?
October 12 th -13 th	North Atlantic District Staff Retreat	Connecticut
October 16 th	Fall District Meeting	Sanford
October 17 th	Leading Worship	Westbrook
November 12 th -13 th	NED Board Retreat	China Lake
November 14 th	Leading Worship	Dexter
December 1 st -6 th	Big Complex Meeting	Boston, MA



**The Rev. Jane Dwinell, Small Church Specialist,
is happy to meet with your congregation!**

Just give her a call at 802.229.4008, or send her an e-mail at sky@vtlink.net.

**Tell your story. Voice your concerns. Share
your wild ideas. Let your voice be heard.**

Contribute to *Small Talk*! Let me know if you have stories or concerns to share for future issues of *Small Talk*. Email at sky@vtlink.net, or snail mail to 1 Liberty St. Montpelier, VT 05602.

