

The COMMON

Every Day is Earth Day

April 22, 1970

April 22, 2017



Rev. Pam Gross delivered this prayer, here shortened, in the State Capitol in February. Pam is a member of MUUSANs Steering Committee and the former minister at UU Community Church of Augusta.

God of many names... Source of All Being, We pray for the poor in our State. We pray for the hard working people of Maine who struggle to survive. May the needs of the poorest among us be given priority, so that in a time of plenty we will share our plenty...

so we can live in a state where the best of each is given to all and the best of all returns to each.

God of many names... Source of Wisdom, We pray for those making important decisions for all of our people. In the Spirit of

kindness and compassion that is at the heart of Maine people, we ask for careful consideration of **all the needs of all our people**... May they work for a great State with opportunity and inspiration for all, a state that broadens EVERY life and Blesses EVERY home.

CALENDAR

Pulpit

April 2

Colin Powell

April 9, 16, 23, 30

Rev. Margaret Beckman

Events

April 2,

Hungry Sunday,

Tree of Life

April 8

Filipino Supper

April 23

Potluck lunch
(moved from April 16)

April 27 8:30 am

Board meeting,
(moved from April 20)

Lakeside Reflections, April 2017

Sometimes a thought or an image or a phrase gets lodged in our minds and it just sits there, demanding nothing more than to be noticed ... constantly. But then, noticing becomes wondering and wondering becomes ruminating and ruminating is thinking deeply about something. "Connections are made slowly." Why is that phrase with me so often these days? It comes from a Marge Piercy poem, doesn't it? Is it a reading in our gray book? Yes. But why this phrase? Why now? What are these words put together just so trying to teach me or show me right now? Ruminating requires energy. Sometimes it replaces sleep. Often it leads to places we didn't know to go. Here is where my thoughts have me ... so far.

Connections are made slowly. It requires time and effort, not always unpleasant effort, but effort nevertheless. Among people, we make connections with family - almost without noticing when we are very young. We make connections with friends and lovers and workmates; these we know are made slowly and tended carefully if we want them to last. Nature makes connections slowly. Evolution is a process of making connections over many generations of adaptation. Geologic time for making connections is very slow and cosmic time might be even slower (though I don't know if there is any time in cosmic connections, but I'll save that one for another day).

Connections can be broken or destroyed or fatally injured very quickly. A single event can tear apart families or friends or lovers. A decision that

favors one part of creation can destroy the connections with another part. Organisms might be layers of connections made slowly over time and then a cataclysmic event occurs and all those carefully crafted connections are broken or severely weakened. I suppose in some ways this is how the universe keeps growing and collapsing and growing in complexity and then falling into chaos in a process that reorders itself in new and different ways. But, I'm not the universe and my connections are a critical aspect of my life and my sense of myself and my place in things.

All around me, I see that connections that seemed to be in decent repair and holding steady are broken. There have always been people with whom I have a good connection who don't agree with me about everything - especially religion and politics - but we carry on in respect and admiration for the decent and respectful people that we are. Now, I sense that those connections can be broken. We have become so polarized in our views and there are social, cultural, and political forces that seem to be rewarding the breaking of our connections between each other.

They can be broken in an instant. And they will not be quickly or easily repaired. Among persons. Among families. Among friends and colleagues. Indeed, among nations. It is now acceptable to behave in ways that polarize and fracture our connections. I am sad about this. I feel as if we are losing something precious in our lives.

Then, I think about my faith and I recommit myself to living our principles and our values to the best of my ability. I resolve to be among those keeping and making connections - however slowly it goes. Ours is a faith of hope and resilience; quick to include others and slow to condemn. Ours is no caravan of despair. We come time and time again to make and remake connections that make us better people and strengthen the ties that hold this whole amazing universe together in Love. I want to be part of that work - work that connects and reconnects. Margaret

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Leslie Fairbank

The Governing Board has affirmed a suggestion by Finance Chair Gil Tenney that we realize a Social Justice “dividend”. The confluence of a strong Stock Market and a projected reduction of social programs by State and Federal governments offer an opportunity to make substantial gifts to a few local programs in addition to the Pulliam Grants.

To this end, a Task Force has been formed consisting of Gil Tenney, Margaret Beckman, Diana Bernard, and Anne Parsons. They will investigate and recommend the groups or projects to be supported by this one-time donation. When a plan has been formulated and presented to the Board, a Congregational meeting will be held to share with everyone the decision and the reasons for choosing each recipient.

If members or friends of the Congregation have suggestions of groups with which they’re familiar and think are worthy of support, please contact a member of the Task Force and offer your recommendation. We expect that the sharing of the “dividend “ will further increase involvement of our Congregation, members and friends, in a process of investing our resources in local institutions that represent a practical application of our seven principles.

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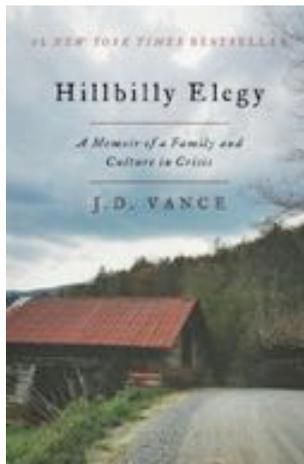
General Assembly this year will be in June in New Orleans. Some 4,000 delegates and observers will make policy, attend workshops, and elect a new president from among three candidates—all women. History is bound to be made as all previous presidents have been men! UU Castine will be represented by Rev. Margaret Beckman and lay delegates Emma Sweet and Colin Powell.

If you wish, you can attend GA on your own as a nonvoting participant. It’s a great experience!

Hillbilly Elegy, by J.D. Vance

The Collaborative Ministry Team of the UU congregations of Belfast, Ellsworth, and Castine invites you to an evening discussion of our second Collaborative Read, “*Hillbilly Elegy*,” by J.D. Vance. The Castine group will gather in the Main Street office at 5:30 pm on Thursday, June 1.

From the book jacket: “*Hillbilly Elegy* is a passionate and personal analysis of a culture in crisis—that of white working-class Americans. The decline of this group, a demographic of our country that has been slowly disintegrating over forty years, is reported on with growing frequency and alarm, but has never before been written about as searingly from the inside. J. D. Vance tells the true story of what a social, regional, and class decline feels like when you were born with it hung around your neck”.



This #1 Times bestseller, published in 2016 by Harper Press, is hailed by Times’ David Brooks as “essential reading for this moment in history.”

The Economist: “You will not read a more important book about America this year”.

When we gather on June 1, participants will begin the discussion. Later, we will share our thoughts via the magic of videoconferencing. Start reading!

A Growing Year: The Collaborative Ministry Internship

Lane Fisher

March was a “pile it on” month! In Ellsworth we held eight small-group discussions that will lead, we hope, to the articulation of a new mission statement; I took part in most of them, as did Rev. Sara, Robin Lovrien, and Mary Haynes. In Belfast, several people asked me to meet for pastoral care in Rev. Deane’s absence, and I led multigenerational worship, which, darn it, played much better for the adults than the children. (Lessons learned helped a new version of that service in Ellsworth the following week, where I also led a midweek, “welcome spring” vespers service.) In Castine, I was finally able to join the Social Justice Committee for a meeting, as well as attending the board’s. Unless I’m preaching, Saturday is normally my one cleanly “off” day, but in March I attended three Saturday workshops in a row—in Bangor, Framingham MA, and Ellsworth. Whew!

The Collaborative Ministry Team did not meet in February, since two of our three ministers were away, but several of us regret that. We did meet in March to plan additional three-church activities for this year: another collaborative book discussion and a second film at the Alamo in Bucksport. The book, *Hillbilly Elegy*, is described in page 3 in this issue, and watch the UUBB and next month’s newsletter for details on the film.

April will also include some travel. I’ll join the New England Region’s UU ministers at their spring retreat early in the month and then will travel to Woburn MA with several from our churches for our first Regional Assembly, April 21-22. They both promise to be well-filling!! Back at my desks, surveying our congregations on how members might like to expand their social justice focus is at the top of my list.

Winds of change are stirring. Before March is out, the primary candidate to be next year’s intern will have been interviewed. As I write, I have just 13 weeks left in my internship, and it’s jarring to realize I won’t be in “my” churches for events now being discussed. In fact, interns are supposed to break contact with their internship congregations for a year afterward, and I’ll be talking shortly with the director of ministerial credentialing about how to apply that rule to our extraordinary situation.

Meanwhile, I have 13 weeks full of wonderful people hither and yon and will savor those relationships.

With blessings and love,
Lane

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Safe Passage kids in Guatemala

Many thanks to Jess Rollerson for reminding us of a remarkable crowd-funding organization called Faithify. With a broad focus on UU issues, both donors and recipients can do good and do well on any of quite a few good faith projects. Give it a look at faithify.org.

While the project that caught Jess’ eye was in the Indian subcontinent, it’s worth noting that Safe Passage in Guatemala (and Maine) are prominently featured.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kay Hansen

Though there is still snow on the ground as I write this article, it is feeling more like spring. The sun feels warmer, the days are longer, the pussy willows are blooming, and we have planted some flower seeds in our religious education class. During the month of April, we will focus on "Climate Justice Month" (March 22-April 22) and our 7th principle that says we care for our Earth. So, we will begin the month by talking about things we can all do in our daily lives to keep our planet healthy for all life. We will take a look at some of the things we throw away and see how we might recycle or reuse some of it. On Easter Sunday, we will celebrate new beginnings in the season and in our lives. I am inspired by the following:

The Stream of Life

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in the numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

Rabindranath Tagore

Leadership Workshop

On Saturday, March 18, UU churches from Augusta, Rockland, Bangor, Belfast, Ellsworth, and Castine gathered for a workshop in Ellsworth that focused on the issues of leadership in churches. Karen Bellavance-Grace (New England UUA) led discussions revolving around the leadership

structures of congregations and how they might be changed to include more people in the life-blood of churches. She suggested the possibility of doing away with committees and thinking of other ways to get the work done-or forming committees that only meet when an issue needs to be addressed.

She entertained the thought of doing away with an event that is causing a problem in sustaining a committee and volunteers to do the work. Stop it for perhaps a month. In doing this, you may find out if it is important enough to the spirituality of the church. Will people come forward to help find a solution to the problem? (It was interesting how many churches have issues around "potlucks and coffee hours!")

It was proposed that churches look at their mission and their passions and gather people to do that work. Most people are attending the church because they believe in the mission of the church- they want to do *that* stuff. When we were asked what the individual churches' passion and life-blood was, I felt confident in saying that the Castine Church is passionate about Social Justice; that work is getting done.

Rev. Pam Gross, from pg.1

Spirit of Life, with gratitude for the air, the waters and the earth of our state, we pray for continued stewardship of our resources, these resources we have received from our ancestors, entrusted to us for passing on to generations yet to come... May we, the People of Maine, be guardians of this land, which nurtures, holds, and blesses us all...

God of Many Names...

May the People of our State Truly broaden every life and bless every home. Every Life. Bless Every home. God of Many Names...

So May It Be. Amen.



Dear ABBY:

(published in the Bangor *Daily News* and nationwide on Saturday, February 18, 2017)

My fiance and I are getting married in a year. We have some very close gay friends and I have gay family members on my mom's side.

The majority of our family is gay-friendly, but a few of them on my father's side are very open about their dislike of the LGBT community.

Our ceremony will be at a Unitarian Universalist church because we love that they are supportive of the LGBT community and want everyone to feel comfortable and accepted on our big day. I'm terrified that my family members will do or say something to hurt or offend guests at our wedding who have same-sex partners.

I am considering putting a note on my wedding website that our wedding will be a celebration of love and to please set aside political and personal beliefs and accept every one of our guests during this happy occasion. Would this be appropriate?

Dear Bride:

Do not post that message on your website. In a telephone conversation with those whom you think may have a problem, tell them that some of your guests will be same-sex couples and ask whether this would make them uncomfortable. If the answer is "yes," do not invite them.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Leslie Fairbank, President
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 Tom Mason
 Jessica Rollerson
 Marcia Schatz
 Rodney Flora, Alternate Member

The Governing Board meets in the Parish House at 8:30 am on the third Thursday of each month. Observers always are welcome.

THE COMMON

The Common newsletter is published monthly and distributed in both electronic and photocopy forms. All members and friends are invited to submit items for consideration. Send submissions or comments to editor Kent Price at kapricorn75@gmail.com. Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

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The Seven Of Pentacles

Under a sky the color of pea soup
she is looking at her work growing away there
actively, thickly like grapevines or pole beans
as things grow in the real world, slowly enough.

If you tend them properly, if you mulch, if you water,
if you provide birds that eat insects a home and winter food,
if the sun shines and you pick off caterpillars,
if the praying mantis comes and the ladybugs and the bees,
then the plants flourish, but at their own internal clock.

Connections are made slowly, sometimes they grow underground.
You cannot tell always by looking what is happening.
More than half the tree is spread out in the soil under your feet.
Penetrate quietly as the earthworm that blows no trumpet.
Fight persistently as the creeper that brings down the tree.
Spread like the squash plant that overruns the garden.
Gnaw in the dark and use the sun to make sugar.

~ Marge Piercy ~

(In Praise of Fertile Land, edited by Claudia Mauro)