



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

February 2023

The Soul Matters theme for February, unsurprisingly, is
“The Path of Love.”

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| 5 | Collaborative Ministry Joint Worship Service. Our service today is hosted and lead by the UU Church of Ellsworth. We are invited to attend in person at the Ellsworth Church or via Zoom link. The link is below & in the weekly email for the first week of Feb. |
| 12 | Our Guest Minister this week is Rev Hillary Collins-Gilpatrick. Hillary is the settled minister at First Universalist Church of Yarmouth. Colleen Fitzgerald is our musician. |
| 19 | Rev. Margaret Beckman, Worship Leader Unitarian Universalism is a religion of LOVE – everything else is commentary. A quick look at our history of practicing love in action. Karen Froehly is our musician. Potluck Sunday |
| 26 | Rev. Margaret Beckman, Worship Leader Our final week of the Path of Love, we celebrate LOVE SONGS of all kinds. YOU have a great chance to participate. Please send your favorite love songs (love of people, pets, Earth, the stars, whatever) – poetry, photographs, music, songs, artwork – anything that reflects your love in this one wild and precious life we share. Send your items to: minister@uucastine.org - mark the subject line “LOVE.” We'll use as many of your choices and selections as possible given a one-hour service time. Chris Poulin & Juliane Gardner are our musicians. |

Our Mission

To establish and promote an open and welcoming congregation that supports and sustains the spiritual, ethical, intellectual and overall well-being of our members while serving our broader communities.

Contact Us

P.O. Box 520, 86 Court Street, Castine, ME 04421
207-326-9083 • Email: office@uucastine.org
Website: uucastine.org • “Like” us on Facebook
For questions or comments about The Common or to submit items for this newsletter, please contact Debbie Morehouse office@uucastine.org.

Lakeside Reflections February 2023

I live in two worlds – at least two worlds. One world is characterized by the beauty of new fallen snow in winter, the warmth of a fire in the woodstove on cold winter evenings, and the love of family, friends and our Beloved Community. In Maine, we get an average of 2 feet of fresh new beautiful snowfall in January and about 77 inches of snowfall each year.

Many of us have learned to love winter for its own sake. We endure the tricky driving, countless hours of shoveling walkways and driveways, and the New England requirement to rake the roof to keep the edges from building up ice dams. The reward – unsurpassed beauty and the joy of skiing, skating, snowshoeing, building a snowman and the simple wonder of the low level sunlight casting a golden glow through gently falling snow.

The other world I live in is the one outside of my cocoon of safety and goodness. In that world, gun violence has taken over the evening news and fills me with horror, dread, and despair. Already in 2023, there have been 52 mass shootings ([Gun Violence Archive/Vox](#): four or more shot in one incident, excluding the perpetrators, at one location, at roughly the same time). Easy to see, that is many more than one per day. Eighty-seven people have been killed and 211 have been injured. (<https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/reports/mass-shooting>).



Photo: Pixels- Pixabay

There are no words sufficient to describe our grief and horror and anger. How many more lives will be taken before we as a nation come together to say, “Enough! No more!”?

We must act to end the endless cycle of mass shootings and equally endless excuses for doing nothing by our elected officials in the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. I do not know what will finally move a majority of Representatives and Senators and the President to enact sensible gun control, but I do know that we ought not rest until that day comes. Let us reason together about how we individually and a congregation might respond and take action. Doing nothing makes us complicit in the perpetuation of this cycle of deadly violence. Let us be part of a solution. As people of faith, we pray, and we also act.

A Prayer from the Sisters of Mercy.

God, our hearts are broken with pain at the senseless deaths caused by gun violence. Families mourn, children live in fear, and some in our nation respond by arming themselves with more guns with greater capacity to end life. Our disconnection and alienation has caused some to turn to guns for protection and safety. We ask that you touch our hearts with your love, heal our brokenness, and turn us away from violence toward peace. Help us to transform our own hearts and to seek peaceful ways of resolving our differences. Let our hands reach out and connect with those who feel alone, those who live in fear, and those suffering from mental illness. Let our voices be raised asking

our legislators to enact gun laws to protect all in our society, especially those most vulnerable. Let our pens write messages demanding change while also scripting words of hope and transformation. We ask this in the name of the God who desires that we live together in peace. *Amen*

Unitarian Universalist, Rev. Keith Kron, offered a prayer after the shooting at a nightclub in Orlando. Today, and forever, I grieve the loss of life. I grieve for the people who died in [name of most recent shooting]. I grieve for their families, friends, and co-workers. I grieve for those who were there and feel both lucky and guilty that they survived while others died. We have witnessed another national tragedy.
 (Full text: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/grieving-orlando>).

Our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has published statements of faith, actions of immediate witness and calls to congregations to work for sensible gun control for over a decade. We are still at work. We cannot rest until it is finished.

As I gaze at the beauty of our new fallen snow this morning, I also hold in my heart and soul the grief and despair of our nation as yet more people fall victim to mass shootings every single day. Let us be among those who understand with theologian and activist, Cornel West, "... justice is what love looks like in public."

May it be so,
 Margaret



~ SUNDAY SERVICE ~

February 5, 2023 at 10:30 a.m.

**MULTI-PLATFORM, 3-CHURCH COLLABORATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE!
 (IN-PERSON at the UU CHURCH OF ELLSWORTH & ACCESSIBLE ON ZOOM!)**

"LOVE: It's About so Much More than Affection!"

Revs. Margaret Beckman, Amy Fiorilli & Sara Hayman, Worship Leaders

This Sunday, February 5th, our UU Church of Ellsworth hosts the 2nd of three Collaborative Worship Services of the year with our sibling congregations of Belfast and Castine. All are welcome to come to church in person in Ellsworth or to join in the worship circle on ZOOM. Drawing from the work and wisdom of bell hooks, we'll reflect on what being truly loving entails. How are we choosing to embody love and be loving in our lives and as members and friends of our UU congregations?



2/5 Worship Service Zoom Meeting:

<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/95798163799>

Meeting ID: 957 9816 3799

Phone: 646-558-8656



From the President's Desk

Since February is the month of love, I hope we will take time to share ours with others. We have members who have been ill, in the hospital and some are working hard on trying to get well. Others just simply can't leave their homes and need some friendship. Cards, calls, or visits will be loving acts to share.

For outreach we had a marvelous looking meat loaf picture in the newsletter to show something about our No Neighbor Left Behind deliveries. This month we are showing a picture of some of our members enjoying our Pot-Luck lunch with each other. My grandson was a guest at the last one and certainly did not walk away hungry. This is such an important activity to learn about each other.

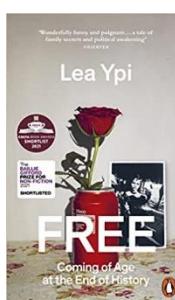


The weather in Florida is warming up and I am enjoying working in my gardens. Don't give up, you will be doing that sooner than you think.

Cindi

UUCC Reads Book Group Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM.

Currently reading and discussing *FREE* by Lea Ypi :



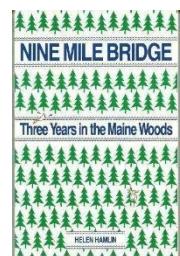
In a memoir that is by turns "bitingly, if darkly, funny ... and truly profound" (Max Strasser, New York Times), Lea Ypi reflects on "freedom" as she recounts living through the end Communism in the Balkans as a child. "This is history brought memorably and powerfully to life" (Tara Westover, author of *Educated*).

Ypi's outstanding literary gifts enable her to weave together this colorful, tumultuous coming-of-age story in a time of social upheaval with thoughtful, fresh, and invigorating perspective on the relation between the personal and the political, and on deep questions about freedom: What does freedom consist of, and for whom? What conditions foster it? Who among us is truly free?

Up Next:

Hamlin, Helen. *NINE MILE BRIDGE, THREE YEARS IN THE MAINE WOODS*. In this critically acclaimed Maine classic, first published in 1945, Helen Hamlin writes of her adventures teaching school at a remote Maine lumber camp and then of living deep in the Maine wilderness with her game warden husband.

Consider becoming part of the UU Reads book discussion. Drop an email to office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



OPPORTUNITY FUND COMMITTEE

We had our first Opportunity Fund Committee meeting of the new year by zoom on Jan 26th. Bob Holmberg has agreed to be the new chair, replacing Cindi Kimball as she moves on to UUCC Board President. Much appreciation by us all for her good work as OF Chair these past 4 years! Other members present besides Cindi and Bob included Anne Price, and Pedrick Sweet. Margaret and Diana Bernard were unable to join. We are looking for a few more good folks to join us!

Our first action of the year was to fulfill the 3rd of a three-year annual OF pledge of \$15,000 each to H.O.M.E. and Community Compass. Community Compass (CC) Board Chair Skip Greenlaw and ED Jessica Valdez joined to give their annual report. CC now has 4 community Navigators serving our 9 town region to “connect people in need with the opportunity to thrive.” They share geographies and expertise: two have social worker training, one a school counsellor, another an early childhood specialist, another has a particular ability with homeless teens, and one is particularly resourceful as a food insecurity expert for our region. They are increasingly functioning as critical need / crisis support family advocates who are receiving collaborative referrals from other area human service non-profits as Downeast Community Partners, Health Peninsula, and HOME. Navigators function as a low barrier, local family advocate familiar with poverty barriers and regional resources who provide a “hand up” in assessing needs, helping link with services, and most importantly follow-up with the family to help assure impact. CC Navigators have followed approximately 140 clients this past year. Major needs include homelessness (coordinate with HOME), transportation (coordinate with DCP and Friends in Action), food insecurity (coordinate



with Healthy Peninsula and local food banks), and substance use disorder (coordinate with Healthy Acadia).

Community Compass links particularly with HOME with an increasing focus for both programs in “homeless diversion”: working closely with a family in crisis to prevent impending homelessness.

A new possible project has been proposed in tackling a major regional need: transportation, whether for those in need from poverty, disability, or old age infirmity. The committee will be considering the purchase of a small van in collaboration with either Downeast Community Partners or Friends in Action, the two major regional transportation non-profits.

Further support is also being researched for Wabanaki Reach (the major statewide educational and restorative justice group for Wabanaki Native Americans), and OutMaine! (the major statewide non-profit providing LGBTQ youth awareness and support). It will be important to determine possible local activities from these organizations if they receive our support.

Finally, we have recently learned through Gil Tenney of a proposed “restorative ecology” natural science and Native American history educational program for all students at the Castine Adams School involving Blue Hill Heritage Trust and Native American teachers. We had our first meeting with them on January 26. Exciting possibilities for wins for students, parents, teachers, our UUCC congregation, and the whole Castine community.

We will be considering all of these at our next monthly meetings: Friday, February 3. Lots of exciting “opportunities” to spread the mission of the UUCC, thanks to this wonderful Fund and the generosity of our church. Stay Tuned.

Bob Holmberg, (bobholmberg@me.com)
UUCC Opportunity Fund Chair



Unitarian Universalists Review Principles and Purpose

After two years of study and work, thousands of conversations with UUs and presentations at the 2022 General Assembly and the January UUA Board Meeting, finally we have a

New Proposal for UU Principles and Purpose!

Rev. Margaret Beckman will devote the Sunday service on March 19th to this very important subject. At our 2023 UUA General Assembly in June in Pittsburgh, PA, delegates will VOTE on whether to proceed with congregational and UUA GA adoption of the proposal at the 2024 UUA General Assembly.

This change has been many years in the creation. At first look, it may seem too radical a departure from what we know and love. Take some time to sit with the report (link is in the letter below) and let the values and covenants come to you in their own way.

Here is the letter from our UUA President, Susan Frederick-Gray, about this exciting proposal.

January 2023

Dear Unitarian Universalists,

Happy New Year! I am sending you care as we begin another year. This, 2023, is an important year for Unitarian Universalism.

We are currently in a multi-year process to consider changes to our UUA Principles and Purpose. This process began in 2020 when the UUA Board appointed an Article II Study Commission. This is a dry name for such important work. The reason is our Principles, Purpose, covenant and Sources are contained in Article II of the UUA Bylaws.

Our seven Principles and six Sources – which we know and love – were adopted in 1985. They offered a substantial (even radical) change from what preceded them. The changes came through years of effort by UU women, particularly the UU Women's Federation, to push for greater gender equality in UUism, support for women in the ministry and to eliminate sexist language from our Bylaws, hymns, and yes, from the version of Article II passed in 1961 (at the time of consolidation).

But the changes didn't just address gender, they made significant language changes that reflected the times. It removed language of God, man, and brotherhood and added the language of interdependence and the Sources reflecting the growing theological diversity of our tradition.

As a lifelong UU, coming of age after these changes, I am grateful. They changed our movement in ways that were important for the success of women leaders, ministers, and for me, as our first elected woman President. These changes, at the time, brought fierce dissent. But more, they inspired excitement and possibility.

Why do we need a review of the Principles and Purpose?

In the mid-2010's, the ground began to shift again – much as it did in response to the women's movement. The emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, the election of Donald



Trump with his racist and misogynist campaign, and the urgent calls to confront white supremacy culture in our own movement – all of these compelled UUs to ask questions about whether our Principles reflected fully who we are and who we need to be.

By the 2017 General Assembly, there were multiple grassroots efforts to change our Principles. The first was overwhelmingly adopted, to change “prophetic women and men” to “prophetic people” to move beyond gender binary. There was also a proposal to change the first Principle from “the inherent worth and dignity of all people” to the “inherent worth and dignity of all beings.” This proposal was ultimately tabled as delegates grappled with the reality that we still had a lot of work to do on living the first Principle *for people*. Discussions of the Eighth Principle were also happening and by 2020, hundreds of UU congregations had adopted it! The Eighth Principle recognized the need to go beyond aspirational principles to commitments to dismantle systems of oppression – calling us from aspiration to action.

It was within this context that your UUA Board appointed an Article II Study Commission to integrate these conversations and lead a discernment process for our whole Association about core values, covenant, and purpose. The Board gave the Commission a broad charge to review, change, or reimagine Article II to “enable our UUA, our member congregations, and our covenanted communities to be a relevant and powerful force for spiritual and moral growth, healing, and justice.”

After two and a half years of study and conversations with thousands of Unitarian Universalists, the Article II Study Commission submitted their report and proposal to the UUA Board of Trustees for its January 20th meeting.

Read the Report & Proposal - https://www.uua.org/files/2023-01/a2sc_rpt_01172023.pdf

This spring, congregation delegates and the Board can propose amendments to the proposal. The proposal and amendments will be considered at General Assembly this June and a majority vote is required to continue consideration at GA 2024. If any of the delegate amendments are accepted, and if the proposal receives majority approval, then the Article II Study Commission will make any necessary changes to create a final draft for consideration at GA 2024. The final proposal will require a two thirds majority vote at GA 2024 to be adopted.

Seven years ago, when I was beginning my campaign for UUA President, I approached the process with an intention to be open to the process while letting go of outcomes. My hope for us as Unitarian Universalists is that we approach discernment about Article II with similar openness. May we enter our conversations with a spirit of curiosity, holding off attachment to outcomes, and listen with our whole hearts and to the fullness and diversity of voices in our community. May the process itself deepen our understanding of and commitment to our faith.

Love, Susan

Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray spends her days strengthening the thriving mission of this faith. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and playing with their dog, Hercules.



Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN)



MUUSAN is a statewide advocacy and public policy network anchored in our Unitarian Universalist faith and animated by its principles. MUUSAN welcomes as partners and collaborators all those who share our values. We link our 25 Maine congregations and many friends in an active legislative ministry.

Unitarian Universalism calls us to change oppressive policies and structures to those that promote human development, protect the environment, and support communities. Our mission is to educate and to organize for a more just society.

MUUSAN Issue Groups

Realizing that we cannot respond to every issue and solve every problem, we have chosen four areas of public policy as our priority issues.

- [Democracy in Action](#)
- [Health Care](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [Racial, Native and Immigrant Justice](#)

The cry for justice never sleeps. Our Maine UUs follow Maine-based legislation that will impact our justice work within our state. Get involved. There are 26 congregations in Maine working together for a more just and equitable state. <http://www.muusan.org/>

February Days

by Ellwood Roberts

The icy northern blast sweeps by,
From wild wastes of the Arctic snow;
Above us droops a wintry sky,
A bleak white landscape lies below.
But, 'neath the chilly Polar blast,
A low, sweet undertone I hear:
"The wintry storms will soon be past,
And pleasant Spring-time days are near."

In Winter's stern and icy grasp,
Are river, pond, and rill, to-day;
Like iron bonds his fetters' clasp,
Like despot's rule his frosty sway.
But only yesterday I heard—
Though all the landscape was so drear—
The sweet voice of a lonesome bird:
"The Spring-time days will soon be here."

The air is icy, keen and chill,
All Nature lies in sleep profound,
That seems like death—so cold, so still—
But flowers are biding underground.
The sun mounts up, from day to day,
His beams each morn more full of cheer.
And to our hearts they seem to say:
"The Spring-time days will soon be here."

The ice and snow will soon be gone,
The Spring-time waits the sun's warm rays,
Already we can trace the dawn
Of brighter, warmer, sweeter days.
Each morn we watch for signs of Spring,
Each evening feel its coming near.
All Nature's voices seem to sing:
"The Spring-time days will soon be here."

And though an Arctic wind sweeps by
From wildest wastes of ice and snow,
And though above us wintry sky,
And desolate white fields below—
Beneath the wind's wild organ-blast,
A low, sweet undertone I hear:
"The wintry storms will soon be past,
The sunny Spring-time days are near."

