



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

April 2020

April Services — Services are Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

All April Sunday services will take place through video streaming at ZOOM.

Watch each week for a series of announcements about connecting to the Sunday service. An invitation to the Zoom meeting will come three ways: one from Jean Lamontanaro, our editor for The Common; one on our Facebook Page; and one on MailChimp that comes from the UU Congregation of Castine on Thursday or Friday, and Sunday morning

April 5th: Vanessa Williams, a seminary student at the UU Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary and member of the Ellsworth UU Church will lead worship. The Rev. Mark Worth will be worship associate. Music support from Ian Brenner-Simpson. ZOOM technical support from Ministerial Intern, Ariel Aaronson-Eves.

Vanessa will preach about “Hope” – so plan to attend.

April 12th (Easter): Rev. Margaret Beckman and musician Colleen Fitzgerald will lead worship.

Two services on Easter Sunday. Sunrise meditative outdoor (via ZOOM) service at 7:00 a.m. for those who wish a quiet reflective start to the day. More traditional (still on ZOOM) service at our regular time of 10:30 a.m.

Stay alert for more details about your participation in our Easter service.

April 19th is another in our COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY JOINT WORSHIP series. Ariel Aaronson-Eves will lead worship. The whole worship team from our three congregations will collaborate to bring a message of Earth on the Sunday before Earth Day (April 22nd).

April 26th closes out the month. Rev. Margaret Beckman will be leading a worship service that speaks to our situation when we get there! Our District Spring Assembly and Annual Meeting scheduled for that weekend has been postponed until Autumn or later. We live in the midst of cancellations and postponements.

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

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For questions or comments about *The Common* or to submit items for this newsletter, please contact Jean Lamontanaro at jean.lamontanaro@gmail.com.



Lakeside Reflections, April 2020



Late summer sunset – Green Lake

Tuesday, I saw a single loon floating on the widening strip of open water along the shore. It could have been a duck – I wasn't very close, but I want to think it was a loon and so I shall think it was a loon and I shall conclude that the loons are returning to Green Lake. The ice will go out in a few days. It's time.

While we humans are home bound during the COVID-19 outbreak, the melting ice and the returning loons are following the patterns they have established over thousands of years. The earth and all her creatures, except us, are doing what they are meant to do. We are living under very different conditions from the ones to which we've become accustomed in our 21st Century lives. This virus has become the thing we talk about and worry about and plan around and take extraordinary precautions to avoid bringing into our homes or our bodies. Our sense of "normal" is completely upended. We are learning new things and remembering old things to make our days more pleasant. Who would have predicted that ZOOM Church would be the way we share our Sunday mornings, and yet, here we are each Sunday sitting in front of a computer, smart phone or tablet smiling as the tiny pictures of our companion Sunday morning worshipers float by on the screen. There's a gift of a different kind of togetherness here that we ought to notice and appreciate.

Some of us are almost glad to be stuck at home, so far. Others of us are truly struggling with the restrictions on our freedom of movement. A few of us are well and truly alone – without smart phone or internet. In these days of COVID-19, there is much to concern us, maybe even frighten us. Some of us may get sick and probably recover, but a few may not recover and we will grieve the loss of anyone we have known in this life. We rail against this virus that has invaded every part of our world and attacked people in a furious sweep across the land.

There is much to be angry about and much to complain about, for sure. But, what good is coming from this health crisis? Any?

There are some sweet moments in these days of COVID. We are connecting with people near and far away by video conference. I had a video conference with my family and over 20 of us from Maine to San Diego logged into ZOOM just to say hello to cousins and siblings – some of whom I haven't seen in decades. That hour was a sweet gift. When we were saying our parting words, we paused long enough to say, "I love you, be well."

"I love you." Three words that mean so much. This is a confusing, uncertain and scary time. "I love you." I love each of you. I love being your minister. We're all doing the best we can right now. We may not be perfect, but we are good enough. People are generous and compassionate.

We will get through this. We will. Human beings have faced times like this before. We will sustain crushing losses; our hearts will be broken time and time again. And still, we will get through this. Will we take the good things we are learning now

Continued on next page



Lakeside Reflections— continued

with us when the virus has run its nasty course? We are slowing down now. We are learning the difference between what I want and what I need and are focused on needs and letting wants drop away. I hear many of you speak about gratitude and connecting with people in deeper ways. We are able to enjoy being outdoors. Walking takes on a deeper pleasure. Watching spring return to Maine is a daily ritual now and we all have the time to notice each subtle change – whether a single returning loon or a small cluster of crocuses. The birds are beginning to sing for their sweethearts. There are moments of joy and grace and love. Let's slow down and notice those moments and be glad. There is time for lamentation – also an honest emotional response to COVID life – let's allow the moments of delight find their way to us too.

Finally, I'd like to share with you the message from our UUA President, Susan Frederick-Gray. She reminds us that we are not alone. We are an association of congregations and together, we are making our way forward.



This photo contains a “hot link” to the video or you will find the video on the Internet here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBUhn2ZQpSI&feature=youtu.be>

Blessed Be. I Love You.
Namaste, *Margaret*

Minister's Office Hours from Home

It's hard to stay connected when we don't see each other in person and can't gather together for coffee and conversation. We are making all kinds of adaptations to remain close to each other and to support each other during this time of COVID-19. Margaret can't hold office hours at 21 Main Street in Castine, so she will hold office hours from home via open chat time on Zoom.

Zoom Invitations will go out via our MAIL CHIMP email system.

Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. beginning April 7th

Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. beginning April 9th

If you don't get those weekly mailings and would like to ... please contact Margaret and she will get you added to the Mail Chimp list.



The Meeting House is empty. Our Sunday Services are full!

Our buildings are closed until Governor Mills advises that Mainers may once again gather together safely. COVID-19 has changed all our lives.

Though our building is empty, our hearts are full. Sunday services are happening via Video Conferencing on ZOOM. You should have received invitations to Sunday worship via Zoom the last three weeks in March. On March 29th, we had Joint Worship with Belfast, Castine and Ellsworth. Over 200 people attended on Zoom.

We will have Sunday worship on Zoom for all of April and perhaps May. Log-in invitations come to you in emails or on the church's Facebook page.

Having trouble figuring how Zoom works? No



worries. Contact Ariel Aaronson-Eves (aaaronson-eves@ses.skm.edu) or Margaret Beckman (minister@uucastine.org) for a little help. We want to see everybody at church on Sunday!

President's Desk

Juxtaposition

This morning it was my pleasure to take our dog, Denali, for a walk, sun shining, thirty degrees, beautiful Penobscot Bay in view. The birds are calling and singing, the Canada Geese are stopping by. The calendar says it is spring. Social distancing, closing of non-essential businesses and schools, and of course, the news feels like we are hibernating.

On Tuesday, March 24 in a first-person essay, Jessica Lustig, an editor for the New York Times, wrote about caring for her husband as he struggles with Covid 19. She writes, "It is as if we are in a time warp, in which we have accelerated at 1 1/2 time speed, while everyone around us remains in the present—already in the past to us—and they, blissfully, unconsciously, go about their ordinary lives, experiencing the growing news, the

more urgent advisories and directives, as a vast communal experience, sharing posts and memes about cabin fever, about home-schooling, about social distancing, about how hard it all is, while we're living in our makeshift sick ward, living what will soon be the present for more and more of them."

When Ariel called last week to see how we were faring in these altered times, I told her this seemed to be one time it is beneficial to be a homebody. Our days are bookended by the twice daily dog walks. Even in hibernation it feels good to have some structure.

May you all find what gives you comfort in these altered times,

Brooke Tenney

From your Collaborative Ministry Team intern

I thought I'd be writing this column from an airplane, somewhere over the Atlantic or the Mediterranean, en route to Israel and Palestine on a pilgrimage with my final seminary class. Instead, I'm writing from the den at my parents' house in New Hampshire. With all that's changed in our lives in the past week and a half, it seems certain that the world in which you read this column will be different in ways we can't even imagine yet. So I find myself writing to my future self as much as to all of you.

I've taken a bit of an inventory of some of my feelings at the present moment, with a set of questions to check back in with in the days and weeks to come. I invite you to answer these questions for yourself, and observe how they may change from one week, day, moment, to the next. Here are my questions and answers on March 21, 2020:

Where do you find hope?

- In the planting & germinating of seeds, in the future that inevitably comes.
- In stories of people helping each other.

Where do you find joy?

- In long walks with the dog, with crocuses and daffodils and other signs of early spring
- In maintaining connections with friends far away
- In people out-of-state or housebound getting to worship with their church families

What are you afraid of?

- People suffering unnecessarily
- Corporations/government/individuals taking advantage of our physical distancing in some harmful and nefarious ways

- Things returning to exactly how they were before
- People I care about dying

What are you grieving?

- My cancelled/postponed trip to Israel/Palestine
- The prospect of in-person graduation
- Time off to visit in person with friends

What are you appreciating?

- The lack of commute
- Having valuable skills and a flexible schedule
- Zoom – and Starr King School for the Ministry, for the many opportunities to get familiar with this program
- Margaret, Sara, & Amy – for their flexibility and support
- My parents, for having a home where I can settle in, be fed, and work remotely

What are you grounding in?

- My body, listening to when I need to go outside or slow down or eat something or hydrate...

Take care of yourselves, dear ones, knowing that you are wrapped in the love of your congregation, of our three collaborating congregations, and together – socially connected yet physically distant – we shall navigate these challenging and confusing times.

Love,
Ariel



UUC COVID-19 Update

**What UUC is doing.
The Building is Closed.
We are Open!**



- Closed all our buildings to the public
- Moved our Sunday morning services and all necessary meetings to on-line conferencing through ZOOM
- Staff who can are working from home
- Made several work accommodations in our normal procedures to continue our congregation's work and follow COVID-19 Guidelines
- Stepped up Pastoral Care contacts with members and friends
- More frequent communications by phone and email
- Collaborating with other Castine churches to provide needed service and support
- More collaborating with our UU partners at the Belfast and Ellsworth congregations
- Other duties as assigned



What YOU can do

- Keep up with UUC Communications
- Stay Home – Help Flatten the Curve and Avoid Exposure
- If you go out – follow the guidelines for doing only essential errands – like food and medicine
- Check on your friends and neighbors more frequently
- Send a card or letter to someone you love
- Be gentle with yourself and others. Be slow to anger and quick to forgive
- Keep up your regular contributions to our congregation (mail your checks to PO Box 520, Castine 04421 – we'll get it) and to your normal group of organizations.
- Consider doing more if you can because some of us cannot do as much as we would like to do
- Play outdoors – maintaining recommended social distances – and hike, fish, walk, and generally adore this beautiful State of Maine we call home (for all or part of the year)
- Keep a regular schedule in your life as you stay home most of the time
- Call, text or email Rev. Margaret Beckman, Ministerial Intern Ariel Aaronson-Eves or someone you know from our congregation if you are lonely, tired of all this, need a good cry or a hearty laugh – and especially if you begin to feel sick with symptoms of COVID-19
- Come to Church On-Line @ ZOOM on Sunday mornings. We need to see each other and know that our congregation is stronger together as we make our way through COVID-19
- Share your joys and sorrows
- Breathe in peace, breathe out love

Ferry Beach Retreat



The Collaborative Ministry Annual Ferry Beach Retreat for 2020 is scheduled for August 21-22, 2020. August! Warm weather. Ocean still cold, but maybe a few hearty souls will swim. Outdoor games a must. Singing at the bonfire for sure.

Registration for the Belfast, Castine & Ellsworth UU Retreat is OPEN. Registrations are due

early ...very early. You need to register BEFORE MAY 15th in order to reserve your place in the Camping Grove or Rowland Hall. Program details are not yet finalized, but that shouldn't deter anyone from registering – it will be a great weekend no matter the program details!

To get registered, please see Rev. Margaret Beckman. Soon!

More information about the facility is at the Ferry Beach website www.ferrybeach.org

Mid-Winter Feast Celebrating 100 years of the Vote for Women

On March 7, nearly fifty people gathered to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Vote for Women over bowls of soup, chili, and chowder. Large yellow paper flowers with centers of brown buttons decorated tables at Emerson Hall. Smaller yellow flowers with purple and white streamers – the colors of the suffrage movement were given to the women attending.

To top off our celebration, Rev. Margaret Beckman gave a slide show on the history of those dedicated women who worked tirelessly for the right to vote. She also gave prizes to Trivial Pursuit questions testing our knowledge of suffrage heroines, both nationally and locally.

Thanks to Judy Sullivan we also hosted a Raffle. Three cheers to Compass Rose, the Castine Historical Society, Pedrick Sweet, and Jess Morehouse for their very generous donations. The Raffle netted \$175.00.

It seemed like each member of UU contributed

a soup, chili, chowder, salad, bread, and/or dessert; too many to list here. Please know that your time and expense to help our fundraiser be a success is greatly appreciated. Thanks to all your donations, we not only had a delicious supper but raised \$860. After expenses, the evening netted \$888.68. This money will go to Dollars for Scholars, our program to support the education of youngsters in the village of Aquino, Philippines. Thank you all!

Partner Church
Committee



Starfish Camp Scholarship

Considering the abundance of discouraging news, I found the following recent email an inspiration for hope of another summer of laughter, adventure, new friendships and healthy experiences awaiting children whose families ordinarily could not afford summer camp.

Starfish Camp Scholarship

Making a difference in the life of a child

Good evening Gil,

I thought that you might like to know that River (Nichols Day Camp Director) and I have now visited the principals of all the elementary schools in our area plus Tracey who covers children in Orland.

We were received with genuine appreciation by all. Jay Corbin, principal of the Penobscot Community Elementary, told us a story about a young boy who went to camp last summer, and according to one of his parents, it was a life changing experience for him. It is nice to hear

these positive reports. I hope you appreciate what a great opportunity you have provided for these young people whom the Hatch Fund and Community Compass sponsor.

We emphasized that we wanted the campers who attended last year to return this year. I stuck my neck out and told all the principals that if they had more children than the numbers we gave them, I would do my best to find some funds to send those children to camp.

Best wishes,
Skip Greenlaw
Community Compass Board Member

Email of 3/9/2020

For more information
<https://www.communitycompassdowneast.org/all-posts/2019/8/30/starfish-program-links-three-nonprofits-to-send-kids-to-camp>

Gil Tenney

Spring is here!

Signs of spring are evident all around us, including outside the Parish House.

Photo by Jean Lamontanaro



Pandemic by Lynn Ungar



What if you thought of it as the Jews
consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?
Cease from travel.
Cease from buying and selling.
Give up, just for now,
on trying to make the world
different than it is.
Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom you commit your life.
Center down.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.
Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has come clear.)
Do not reach out your hands.
Reach out your heart.
Reach out your words.
Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

3/16/2020

UU World Magazine, published by the
Unitarian Universalist Association

An Imagined Letter from Covid-19 to Humans

Stop. Just stop.

It is no longer a request. It is a mandate.

We will help you.

We will bring the supersonic, high speed
merry-go-round to a halt

We will stop

the planes

the trains

the schools

the malls

the meetings

the frenetic, furied rush of illusions and “obligations”

that keep you from hearing our

single and shared beating heart,

the way we breathe together, in unison.

Our obligation is to each other,

As it has always been, even if, even though,

you have forgotten.

We will interrupt this broadcast, the endless
cacophonous broadcast of divisions and distractions,
to bring you this long-breaking news:

We are not well.

None of us; all of us are suffering.

Last year, the firestorms that scorched

the lungs of the earth

did not give you pause.

Nor the typhoons in Africa, China, Japan.

Nor the fevered climates in Japan and India.

You have not been listening.

It is hard to listen when you are so busy all the time,
hustling to uphold the comforts and conveniences

that scaffold your lives.

But the foundation is giving way,

buckling under the weight of your needs and desires.

We will help you.

We will bring the firestorms to your body

We will bring the fever to your body

We will bring the burning, searing, and flooding

to your lungs

that you might hear:

We are not well.

Despite what you might think or feel,

we are not the enemy.

We are Messenger. We are Ally. We are a balancing force.

We are asking you:

To stop, to be still, to listen;

To move beyond your individual concerns

and consider the concerns of all;

To be with your ignorance, to find your humility,

to relinquish your thinking minds and travel

deep into the mind of the heart;

To look up into the sky, streaked with fewer planes,

and see it, to notice its condition: clear, smoky, smoggy,

rainy? How much do you need it to be healthy

so that you may also be healthy?

To look at a tree, and see it, to notice its condition:

how does its health contribute to the health

of the sky, to the air you need to be healthy?

To visit a river, and see it, to notice its condition:

clear, clean, murky, polluted? How much do you need

it to be healthy so that you may also be healthy?

How does its health contribute to the health

of the tree, who contributes to the health of the sky,

so that you may also be healthy?

Many are afraid now.

Do not demonize your fear, and also, do not let it

rule you. Instead, let it speak to you—in your stillness,
listen for its wisdom.

What might it be telling you about what is at work,

at issue, at risk, beyond the threats of personal

inconvenience and illness?

As the health of a tree, a river, the sky tells you about

quality of your own health, what might the quality of

your health tell you about the health of the rivers, the

trees, the sky, and all of us who share this planet with you?

Stop.

Notice if you are resisting.

Notice what you are resisting.

Ask why.

Stop. Just stop.

Be still.

Listen.

Ask us what we might teach you about illness

and healing, about what might be required so that

all may be well.

We will help you, if you listen.

Kristin Flynz, 3/12/2020

