



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

December 2025

It is 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 and friends while serving our broader communities.

A Month of Sundays in

December 7 Worship Leader: Rev. Amy and Rev. Kevin
Musician: Karen Froehly

December 14 Worship Leader: Rev. Amy
Musician: Karen Froehly

December 21 Worship Leader: Rev. Amy
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Potluck

December 24 Worship Leader: Rev. Amy
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald

December 28 Worship Leader: Rev. Vanessa Titang
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald

Contact Us

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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 Victoria Bujan office@uucastine.org.



Minister Meandering

Choosing Hope by Rev. Amy

Hope is a clean burning fuel. It stokes the fire in our heart, pushing us toward our desired outcome. Lovingly, hope shuts out elements that do not serve hope. The proof that it will not go well may be right in front of us but hope can turn the blind eye.



Hope is always there, even as your cherished outcome may change; it is always about choice. We can always choose hope, or something else. Often the choice is hope or fear. Courage is not the absence of fear, it is the postponement of fear. Choosing hope does not mean you will not be afraid; it is prioritizing hope over fear

Hope, that feeling of desire to reach a goal, is always there for us if we choose it

Choosing hope, being optimistic, is how I get through every level of my life. Waking up in the morning, one can greet the day with grump, or with optimism. Optimism (maybe I will only be cold but not frozen) for the day stokes that hopeful fire that maybe things will be good.

As we get near December 21 when the light returns, we hold hope that some day soon it will not be dark by 4pm. Meanwhile, we frame our windows with lights and maybe bring some outdoor cheer inside, like greens and pine cones.

We hold on to the hope that our kindness toward individuals will have a ripple effect, that we can bring about the world we choose to live in. Where people are kind to each other, and caring for those less independent, for whatever reason. Hope is prioritizing what CAN be done over the anger and fear about the awful things happening to us we did not choose.

In this month of dark and cold, choose hope every time you can, even if it does not seem possible. Maybe dream of a tiny success to hope for, even if the big picture is terrible. Working toward something you choose always feels better than fighting off the inevitable bad ending.

I hope your December is filled with choices.

In peace

Amy



President's Letter

The UCC continues to contribute to various organizations in need of support throughout the year. The recently approved 2026 budget kept the philanthropic donations at the 2025 level of giving, which was quite an accomplishment during these tough times. Alberto Rios, State Poet Laureate of Arizona, shares his thoughts on giving.

When Giving Is All We Have

One river gives

Its journey to the next.

We give because someone gave to us.

We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.

We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,

We have been wounded by it-

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet

Big, though small, diamond in wood nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,

But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand and hand,

Mine to yours, yours, to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.

Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you

What I had to give--together, we made

Something greater from the distance.

Respectively submitted,

Marcia Mason



Potluck on December 21st!

When: December 21st,


our traditional 3rd. Sunday potluck day,

Where: 86 Court Street in the Parish House

All are welcome!

11:30 to 2pm ;

in the spirit of Potluck, you may bring a dish to share



Clerk's Summary

The Governing Board held its monthly meeting on November 20th. Three areas of concern were the focus of the meeting. One area of concern is communication between the Governing Board and the Congregation. We need to do better. I gave a summary similar to this in church on Sunday following the meeting and will plan to include an article each month in The Common for those of you who miss the Sunday summary.



Another area of discussion at the Board meeting was regarding a suggestion under consideration to hold a Governing Board retreat in late spring. This would center on the future of UUCC, to discuss strategies and options in light of our declining and aging membership.

Our third focus at Thursday's Board meeting was about maintenance of our historic structures, both the Meeting House and the Parsonage. The steeple is a major concern. As you know, a finial broke off and fell into the Parsonage driveway earlier in the year. E.L. Shea has been engaged to take down, by the first of December, all of the rotted decorative finials and rails that are in danger of falling off over the winter. The Parsonage has recently had a leaky skylight repaired and the contractor noted several other maintenance issues that should be addressed sooner rather than later. We will take a look at priorities and see what our budget will accommodate.

And since communication is a two-way street, we hope you will feel free to bring your concerns to any Governing Board member. This is our church, and your input is greatly appreciated! Included below are the Governing Board members for 2026 and their emails, please reach out.

Debbie Morehouse, Clerk

President: Marcia Mason marciamason@hotmail.com

Vice President: Tom Mason tmason@biochem.umass.edu

Treasurer/Clerk: Debbie Morehouse legacycrafts2@yahoo.com

Members:

Peter Fairbank peterfairbank72@gmail.com

Keith Hagel wordguy1@gmail.com

David Jarrett daviduufa@gmail.com

Alvion Kimball ackimball1995@msn.com

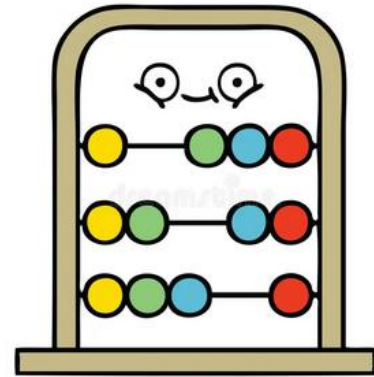
Alternate: Leslie Fairbank b.or_lesliefairbank@icloud.com

Bean Counter's Tally

November 2025

As I start this new "job" of Treasurer, I hope you will let me know what you would like to see from a Treasurer. I look forward to serving you to the best of my abilities.

I am pleased to report that as of the end of October we are successfully living within our means. In other words, our income has covered all of our expenses to date, including the unexpected furnace replacement. Barring unforeseen circumstances, it looks like we will end the year in the green, but I will keep you posted on that.



At the Annual Meeting, the congregation voted to increase what we draw from our investments from 3.5% to 4%. That percentage is based on the average value of the previous 12 quarters, beginning with the third quarter of this year. While that may sound complicated, this method helps even out any wild swings in the endowment's value allowing us to draw a fairly steady amount over time. It's always a balancing act to meet our needs and our communities' needs while keeping our endowment sustainable over the long term. We can thank our vigilant Finance Committee for a good job at this.

We have three investment partners, Morgan Stanley, HM Payson and Maine Community Foundation, tasked with investing our endowment wisely. Certainly, as wisely as can be done in a financial environment that can sometimes seem like a rollercoaster. And, they have done well this year to date. Our investments are up 11.3% overall through the end of October.

2026 pledge letters just went out. Your generous monetary support during the year added to our prudent draw from investments, allows us to stretch our budget to meet the increasing needs of our time. Please take a moment to fill out a pledge form and bring or mail it back to the church.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have on UUCC's financial circumstances.

Debbie Morehouse,

Chief Bean Counter (aka Treasurer)



No Neighbor Left Behind

December 2025

Hard to believe we are looking forward to our next Not Neighbor Left Behind meal, but it's true! On January 9th, we will gather in Fellowship Hall to pack and send out the first NNLB UUCC meal of the New Year! And what will that meal be, you may ask—and the answer is, "I don't know." As the date draws near, I will see what food items are most reasonable and available, enabling us to send out the best balanced, homemade meals we can. Chicken or meat loaf are the most likely candidates, and I will keep you informed. I expect that in the January volume of The Common, all will be revealed!

As ever, we will need cooks, packers, and delivery volunteers, so put January 9 on your calendar, and let me know what volunteer role most appeals to you. After Christmas, I will post the sign-up sheets after the Sunday services.

Wishing you all peace, good health, and loving times spent with family and friends.

Johanna



Upcoming Events

Another date to put on your calendar is December 9 at 7 p.m. The annual Holiday Concert will take place at the Trinitarian Main Street Church. This is an event you do not want to miss! Local performers share their musical and storytelling skills, celebrating the holiday season in a joyful community gathering. Let's just say, you will leave the concert with a smile on your face and a sense of gratitude for opportunity to be together amid the talent of performers who share their gifts so generously.

Following the concert, cookies and beverages are served downstairs —so you might also have a few cookie crumbs lingering on your smile. The concert typically runs for approximately 75 minutes



Come to the
Castine Town Band
Holiday Concert
 Wednesday, December 3rd
 6:00 P.M.
 at
 Emerson Hall
 Court Street, Castine

Musicians from The Castine Town Band, Maine Maritime Academy and other area bands celebrate the holiday in Castine.

Dr. Mary Cushman Circle
 PRESENTS THE
 ANNUAL FUND RAISER



CHRISTMAS WREATHS
FOR SALE

\$45 EACH
 PICK UP DEC 4-5 @
 EMERSON HALL 1-4 PM

ALL PROCEEDS GO
 TO CHARITIES

TO ORDER
 email: juliebohan@me.com or
 call 917-664-2541

Note: Image of wreath is for representation only.
 Actual wreath includes a solid red bow, pine cone and berry clusters

Castine's Interfaith Community Presents

Warm Hands , Warm Hearts

Blanket and Bedsheets Drive

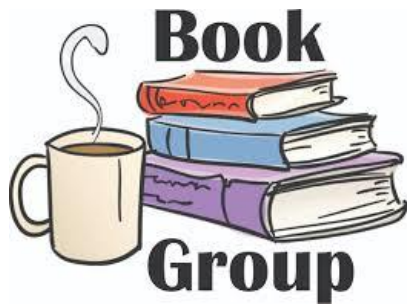


Please donate to Help Local families

All sizes Acceptable
 Lightly used and Clean

Drop off Locations: Local Churches, Emerson Hall, Post office





UCC READS

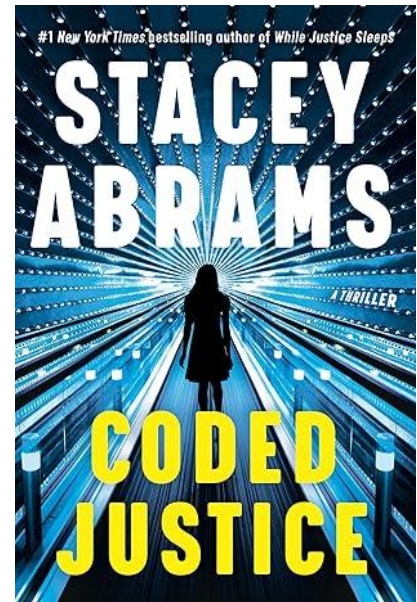
Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM

This week, UCC Reads will continue discussing *Coded Justice* by Stacy Abrams.

IA prescient new thriller in the #1 New York Times bestselling Avery Keene series, by nationally renowned author and leader Stacy Abrams, *Coded Justice* follows Avery down a dark rabbit hole into the breathtaking—and dangerously evolving—world of AI in the medical industry.

Former Supreme Court clerk Avery Keene is back . . . trying to put the past behind her at a prestigious high-end law firm in Washington, D.C. Head down and focused on a new life, Avery is now working as an internal investigator when a high-profile client seeks her out. Camasca Enterprises has a big problem and a short runway. The tech company has developed a new integrated AI system poised to revolutionize the medical industry. To prove its potential, Camasca's charismatic founder, retired Major Rafe Diaz, has picked a complicated target: delivering cutting-edge health care to his fellow veterans. The potential is staggering, but their prototype has been plagued by a series of disturbing anomalies—culminating in the mysterious death of a beloved Camasca engineer.

Consider becoming part of the UCC Reads book discussion. Click on the link below Tuesday, or email office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



Winter's Bright Moments

Poet: Catherine Pulsifer

Winter may be cold and gray,
But special times warm up each day.
New Year's brings a hopeful start,
With fresh resolve in every heart.

Groundhog Day adds a little fun,
Will winter linger, or spring soon come?
Valentine's Day spreads love around,
In every corner, joy is found.

These moments make the season bright,
Filling our hearts with pure delight.
Though winter's long, these days remind,
There's warmth and cheer for us to find!

