



# THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

January 2020

## January Services at the UUC Meeting House

*Services are Sunday at 10:30 a.m.*

The Unitarian Universalist Association encourages congregations to engage in theme-based ministry. Our collaborative ministry partners at the Belfast and Ellsworth congregations already follow this model. Let's join with them in the coming year and share with UUs across the nation to focus our worship, our conversations, and our faith development on monthly themes. **The January 2020 theme is *Integrity*.**

**January 5:** Rev. Margaret Beckman "How Shall We Live?"  
Ian Brenner-Simpson, Musician

**January 12:** Rev. Margaret Beckman "UU the Vote – Voting Rights and Engagement"  
Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician

**January 19:** Ariel Aaronson-Eves, Ministerial Intern  
Julie Gardner & Chris Poulin, Musicians  
Potluck Sunday

**January 26:** Rev. Margaret Beckman  
Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician



Photo by Jean Lamontanaro

## 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, Maine 04421  
207-326-9083 • Office Email: [office@uucastine.org](mailto:office@uucastine.org)  
Website: [uucastine.org](http://uucastine.org) • "Like" us on Facebook

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



## Lakeside Reflections, January 2020

There's something about the change of our calendar from one year to the next that causes us to pause long enough to look both backward and forward. It is a time of nostalgia and possibility.

I just started reading ***The Overstory*** by Richard Powers – a Christmas gift from my sister. The book begins with these words: *First there was*



Andrew Wyeth, *Roasted Chestnuts*

*nothing. Then there was everything.* I was hooked. The first chapter is *Nichols Hoel*, but it ought to be *The Chestnut Tree*.

I put the book down after that first part about the Hoel family and their chestnut tree. My family had a chestnut tree. Memories of

that tree and the gathering of chestnuts and family picnics under its shade flooded through me. Warm and loving memories. The tree stood at the side of my grandparents' driveway; tall and wide-spread as a chestnut tree is meant to be. Why or how it survived the blight that wiped out a billion other chestnut trees, I do not know.

We kids would gather hundreds of chestnut burrs as they fell to the ground. I remember bringing them home in brown paper grocery bags. Opening a chestnut burr can be hard work. It requires patience. There a few tricks to making it easier, but nothing to make it quick.

The reward of a firm yellow meaty nut inside was enough to keep us at the task for a long while. My grandfather had an old (even then it was old) chestnut roasting pan that he kept by the fireplace. Sometimes he would collect a few raw chestnuts and dump them into the pan and then carefully, slowly, methodically, he would roast the nuts over the fire in the fireplace. They came out soft and hot. That chestnut roaster is part of the set of fireplace tools I inherited from my grandparents. Now, it sits beside my woodstove.

In college I became acquainted with the painting of Andrew Wyeth and I loved it instantly. I still do. A friend of mine had a coffee table book of Wyeth's art. The pictures were large and beautiful. I poured over the images as we turned the pages. Upon seeing the image of the boy roasting chestnuts over a fire in a 55-gallon drum, I was awestruck. It was as if I was transported back in time to a created memory of my grandfather who as a boy might have been a chestnut roaster (he wasn't – but created memories are like that).

I had no idea how special and unique the presence of this chestnut tree in my life was until I was grown up and gone away. ***The Overstory?*** I'll pick it up again and read on — maybe tomorrow. Today is chestnut memories. Tomorrow I'll think about the future.

May your year be full of happiness, good health and unexpected delights. Happy New Year!

Namaste,  
*Margaret*



## From your Collaborative Ministry Team intern

On the morning of the solstice, I woke early. 3 am early, to be exact. I made myself some coffee, bundled up, and then loaded myself, my backpack, and my dog into the car. I drove around the Bay in the pre-dawn hours, and into Acadia National Park. It was my first time there. The road to the top of Cadillac Mountain is closed this time of year, but I decided that nevertheless, I wanted to get there, to catch sight of that solstice dawn before perhaps anyone else in the entire country, so that I could return and say, "I've seen it. Things are dark now, but it will get better. The light will return."

I had done a little research about winter hiking in Acadia, and knew that I could walk up the road to the top of Mount Cadillac, or take the shorter, likely steeper, North Ridge Trail. I decided to opt for the trail. There as only one other person I encountered on the mountain that morning, whose tracks I followed up the unfamiliar, snow-

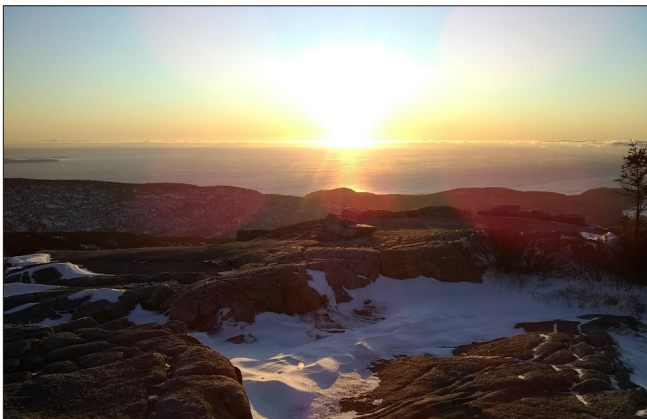
covered trail in the dark. I remain grateful for his footsteps, that allowed me to stay on the trail, which hugs the east side of the ridge, so that I might enjoy the colorful glow on the horizon as dawn slowly approached.

In the end, the sun beat me to the top of the mountain. I still had fifteen minutes left to hike to the summit, it turned out, when I came out onto a ledge and saw the sun's brilliant orb above the horizon. It was 7:07 am. Sunrise had come indeed, as I knew it would. I stood, in awe and wonder at this event that happens every single day, yet which I rarely get to see in such grandeur, if at all. And then I hoofed it the rest of the way up the mountain.

At the top of Mount Cadillac, it was too cold and windy to sit and enjoy the view with my coffee and breakfast, but I managed to find a slightly protected place to feed the dog and myself. Having slid on the ice enough times on my gorgeous ascent, I opted to take the slower but safer road down, enjoying the views that the daylight allowed. The dog trotted ahead of me, reminded me that he was made for athletic, cold-weather adventures. By the time I returned to my car, it wasn't even 9:30.

The light returns, folks. I saw it. Sometimes it requires waking up at god-awful hours. Sometimes it requires traversing dangerous terrain, and you don't always have the footsteps of a trailblazer to follow. Sometimes finding the light requires being cold and hungry, bruised and tired. Hope isn't always easy to find, but it's always out there. A new day will dawn, and may its evidence guide us with courage into the new year.

Ariel Aaronson-Eves, Collaborative Intern Minister,  
UU Congregations of Castine, Belfast, & Ellsworth



## Tea with the Intern!

As your intern minister, I want to get to know YOU better! Please come stop by the office on Tuesday, January 21, from 1 to 2 for tea and conversation. I'm looking at making this a monthly event to help me connect with you!

~Blessings, Ariel



## Secret Santa Success

On December 22, a table in the Parish House overflowed with "Secret Santa" gifts. The room was filled with members and guests here to celebrate the holidays with family and friends. Children bounced about; adults beamed from the joy that engulfed the room. All waited in anticipation (although, the adults would never admit to it) for their name to be called. Judy Sullivan and Jason Sweet handed out the gifts. The Partner Church Committee hopefully had something for everyone. For as Judy said during announcements way back in November, "There will be no Grinch at our Secret Santa party!"



This Secret Santa was different than those played in hospitals, offices, teacher lounges, etc. First, you needed to donate \$10! What, people had to pay to become a Secret Santa? Yep, and each dollar will go to the young people of our Partner Church in Aquino (Negros Island, Philippines.) Dollars for Scholars help elementary, Junior High

and High School students with tuition, uniforms, and school material. In some cases, the dollars buy transportation for the high school students. (There are no school buses.)

On December 2, the Secret Santa-to-be pulled out a participant's name. Gifts were to range from \$8 - \$12 or the equivalent. Nearly every member participated, including all of our children. Some made cookies; others used their allowance to buy a present for the person whose name they pulled.

Thanks to all, \$440 was raised! The gift of giving brought joy - just as Rev. Beckman suggested during her sermon on Joy. We received the message.

Thank you also to Drs. Joan (MacCracken) and Robert Holmberg, Jr. who also became sponsors this month. Their donation of \$100 will support the education of Ricardo Albores, a second grader in Aquino.

Elaine Gerard-Climo  
The Partner Church Committee



## Collaborative Ministry Team Update

### General Assembly, Here We Come!

#### June 24-28 in Providence

Our Belfast-Castine-Ellsworth Collaborative Ministry Team (CMT) has been wrestling down the cost of renting a bus to this year's General Assembly and is committed to making such transportation available to members of our three congregations who will be attending GA in Providence, RI, June 24-28, 2020. (Many thanks to Brooke Tenney for taking the lead on this!) Not only will traveling by bus shrink the environmental impact of traveling to GA and the driving obligation, but it will afford us time to begin or expand friendships and rich opportunities to process our experiences and learnings afterward.



If you have never attended GA, it is a spirit-lifting, mind-expanding, joy-filled experience that will transform your perspective as a Unitarian Universalist—well worth trying to make possible when it's nearby! Now is the time to begin planning.

Early registration for GA is already open, allowing us to pay a lower registration fee and do so

in increments, to be completed by the end of February. Here are the registration rates:

	Early (through 3/15)	Regular (3/15-4/30)	Late (5/1-6/28)
Adult F-T	\$400	\$500	\$525
Youth F-T	\$250	\$300	\$350
Offsite(online)	\$150	\$150	\$150

Scholarships and volunteer exchanges for registration fees are available and must be applied for in March. Part-time registration is also possible. For more information on any of these topics or tips on attending GA frugally, visit <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

Housing from hotels to comfortable university dormitory rooms will be available. Housing reservations will open on March 2, and the less expensive options will sell out.

In other discussions, the CMT is planning another film screening at the Alamo, tabulating responses to our three-church survey, and revisiting our mission. Watch for details on these topics and the GA bus in coming months.

Happy new year from the Collaborative Ministry Team!

Your reps: Colin Powell (chair); Brooke Tenney, Ariel Aaronson-Eves, and Rev. Margaret

## “Decolonizing Faith” Workshop

Developed by UU Minister Carrie Johnson with Wabanaki Reach, “Decolonizing Faith” will come to Unitarian Universalist Church of Ellsworth January 29 from 4-6:30pm. It will be open to the public with a limit of 25 participants. There will be

a suggested donation of \$10, however, no one will be turned away.

Registration is through the UUCE office at [office@uuellsworth.org](mailto:office@uuellsworth.org)

## No Neighbor Left Behind Meal—January 10th

We start the New Year with our first of four meals: meatloaf, mashed potatoes, peas, peaches, and cookies. The cost of most items on the menu have been budgeted to be covered by our church, but manpower and cookie makers are needed.

If you would like to do any of the following, call me or sign up on Sunday, January 5th, after the service:

- Meatloaf Maker
- Potato Peeler & Masher
- Cookie Baker (2 dozen per batch)
- On-site Crew (Friday, 1 - 3 p.m.)
- Driver

The ground beef will be distributed after the service Sunday, as will potatoes. They should be returned to the church by 1 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 10. If you wish to drop off your meatloaf prior to that time—just put it in the refrigerator and label it. The same goes for the potatoes.

Ideally, if they could arrive warm on Friday, ready to be served that would allow us to start plating some meals, while we warm up the other meatloaves and potatoes in our limited oven space.

Of, course, cookies may delivered Thursday or Friday—and if the church is locked, just come by our house at 41 Court Street, and we'll take care of them.

The best to you all in this New Year—and I know I share my feeling of gratitude that we have a community that works together with love and respect in serving the needs of others.

Johanna Sweet 326-4924

## Helping our Neighbors

Over the last six months I've been working as a case manager for families in Hancock County. Many of the families I help are also the recipients of No Neighbor Left Behind meals, the holiday food boxes and wood from the The Wood Bank. I see these families when they are in need. I see their faces when they have to ask for help and I see their relief when they know that help is coming. These are families of humans with all the trappings of humanity. Some of them are lovely and grateful and easy to serve. Others...less so. Some we serve because of who they are and others because of who we are. We cannot get into the business of deciding who is worthy. The equation is too complex. We would get it wrong too often because so many factors cause need. I can tell you that no one asks for help because it's easy. You can rest assured that each family who receives help needs it. At work it is my job to catch those who are falling between the cracks. There is not enough help to go around. I spend my days matching needs with services and every day I run into a genuine need that I cannot fill. So, thank you for every meal you make. Thank you for every box you deliver and thank you for every stick of wood you cut. Without your help there would be many more cold nights and hungry days in our community.

Jessica S. Rollerson

This year 51 Christmas food boxes were delivered. Tammie Cox, a Community Navigator, expressed her gratitude for the ten boxes delivered in her area: "The baskets were very well received...All were met with great appreciation. Merry Christmas."

Gil Tenney

## Abigail “Nabby” Sewell

Some of you are aware that Emma and Colin’s youngest is in the hospital (and has been since Dec. 26) with pneumonia and may be there for up to several weeks. Progress is slow in her fight against both pneumonia and RSV (a respiratory virus that has plagued the family), but in a photo from the hospital sent out by Emma this morning, Nabby is sitting up and playing with some toys—a welcome sight since for the past five days she has

pretty much rested on Colin’s chest, just working at breathing and sleeping.

Emma and Colin are not taking phone calls, but we can give you any additional updates if you’d like. Please keep Nabby and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Love, Johanna & Pedrick 12/31/19

## Coffee Hour Idea

We love our time spent visiting with one another after the services, and we love a little nosh and beverage to go with it—BUT it’s a challenge getting people to sign up to host these morning gatherings.

How about a team approach? On Sunday, January 5, there will be at coffee hour a sign-up poster with spaces for two people (or groups of people) to volunteer to provide food items. It does NOT need to be fussy: some cheese and crackers and something sweet.

Simply sign up on one of the lines and let someone else sign up on the second line—then you two can coordinate how you wish to provide the coffee hour nibbles. I guarantee, you will not be stuck hosting coffee hour alone!

We have so greatly enjoyed our sense of community that this seems a fun continuation of working together and getting to know each other even better.

If you prefer going solo—that’s certainly fine, but for some of the congregation, sharing the responsibility and pleasure of coffee hour may seem less daunting and more fun with a buddy!

All best, Johanna Sweet

## Alaska UU fundraising tour program



Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? If so, **WhaleCoast Alaska 2020** is for you! Four Alaska UU congregations invite you to experience our unique

environmental/cultural/spiritual program this summer. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and unique tour activities.

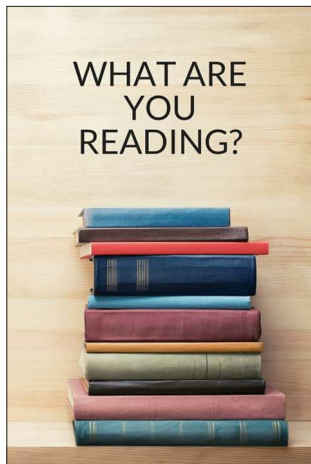
See wildlife, including moose, bears, caribou, whales, bald eagles, sea lions, etc. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Forget the cruise



ships – our program is truly the best way to visit Alaska! Tours led by Dave Frey, member of the Fairbanks UU congregation and Alaska travel expert. Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime. For complete info go to: [www.WhaleCoastAK.org](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org), email [dfrey@whalecoastak.org](mailto:dfrey@whalecoastak.org) or call 907-322-4966. Discount for groups of 8 or more. We would love to share our Alaska with you!

Dave Frey, UU Fellowship of Fairbanks  
WhaleCoast Alaska tour program director

## What Are You Reading This Year? Let's Talk About It!



It's only the beginning of January. It seems premature to ask the question, "What will you be reading this year?" Yet, that's exactly what I'm doing. Several people have made suggestions about what we all might want to be reading and then coming together to discuss. Let's start our reading list now and see where it goes. There

are no rules about what book or books people can nominate for group reading. Good sense would guide us toward books that are of a timely interest, are readily available (Compass Rose Books will help get the books we want) and are well written.

Book discussions could be scheduled about once a month. We could offer discussions in conjunction with Compass Rose Books or Witherle Library or the four congregations in Castine.

Let's get started with a few books already suggested:

**Like Falling Through a Cloud, A Lyrical Memoir** by Eugenia Zukerman. What if the dreaded world of Alzheimer's was also a world of emotional discovery? Eugenia Zukerman's poetry and simple prose, both heartbreaking and ultimately inspirational, ushers the reader into her world as she unflinchingly examines familial loyalties, moments from her past and present, and the need to face an uncertain future due to the diagnosis of a condition that she truly hopes "will remain unnamed."

**Scripture Unbound: A Unitarian Universalist Approach.** by Jonalu Johnstone. In this insightful guide, minister Jonalu Johnstone provides an introduction to reading sacred texts, discusses Unitarian Universalist views of scripture, and suggests ways to use sacred texts within our congregations.

**Erosion: Essays of Undoing** by Terry Tempest Williams. Fierce, timely, and unsettling essays from an

important and beloved writer and conservationist.

Terry Tempest Williams's fierce, spirited, and magnificent essays are a howl in the desert. She sizes up the continuing assaults on America's public lands and the erosion of our commitment to the open space of democracy. She asks: "How do we find the strength to not look away from all that is breaking our hearts?"

We know the elements of erosion: wind, water, and time. They have shaped the spectacular physical landscape of our nation. Here, Williams bravely and brilliantly explores the many forms of erosion we face: of democracy, science, compassion, and trust.

**The Sustainable Soul, Eco-Spiritual Reflections and Practices** by Rebecca James Hecking. A poignant and inspirational guide for a journey toward ecological spirituality and sustainable culture.

**Talking Across the Divide: How to Communicate with People You Disagree with and Maybe Even Change the World** by Justin Lee. A guide to learning how to communicate with people who have diametrically opposed opinions from you, how to empathize with them, and how to (possibly) change their minds.

**When One Religion Isn't Enough: The Lives of Spiritually Fluid People** by Duane R. Bidwell. An exploration into the lives of people who embrace two or more religious traditions, and what this growing community tells us about change in our society.

**On the Brink of Everything: Grace, Gravity, and Getting Old** by Parker J. Palmer. A beautiful book of reflections on what we can learn as we move closer to "the brink of everything."

Want more information about this invitation to book discussions? Want to add your suggestions for what to read this year? Want to sign up and get started right away? Rev. Margaret Beckman is coordinating this initiative and will respond to all inquiries.

If you are away from Castine and want to read the books and join the discussion, we have the technology to bring you in via video conference!!!