



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

November 2020

Sundays in November

The theme for November is HEALING. All of us could benefit from time for healing this month. We will need time to heal our souls and our hearts after this contentious and divisive election season. We may not know the full results of our elections for many days or even weeks. What we do know is that there will be those among us who are thrilled and those who are disappointed or even frightened. We will take time to recognize, honor and release some of our angst and anger as we move toward healing our nation to the extent that we can in the coming weeks – it will be a beginning. We will need time and good friends and family to heal our heartbreak about being separated from our loved ones on Thanksgiving.

Please plan to be together on Sunday mornings as we continue to worship on Zoom. It is not yet safe to gather together indoors in groups and we will follow the best advice and counsel we can get on how and when to open our buildings more fully. For Sunday mornings, Join Zoom Church at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87844196635?pwd=akJJOGIwVzVTbE8vT3dURzV5UUslUT09.>

Meeting ID: 878 4419 6635 Passcode: 033162

November 1: Rev. Margaret Beckman “Healing Ourselves; One Sun, One Ground, One Sky”
Ian Brenner-Simpson, Musician

November 8: Rev. Margaret Beckman “Healing Through Umbutu”
Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician

November 15: Rev. Margaret Beckman “Healing Through Community” – It’s our UUCS Annual Meeting!
Juliane Gardner & Chris Poulin, Musicians

November 22: Collaborative Ministry Intern Bettina Lehovc will lead our worship
Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician

November 29: Rev. Margaret Beckman “Wounded Healers”
Music, TBA

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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Website: 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.

Lakeside Reflections, November 2020



Part of my morning routine is my walk with Cedar. Almost always, I have a cup of coffee with me as we slowly and methodically make our way down the road and through

the woods on our half mile trip to collect our copy of the Bangor Daily News (yes, we still read the paper copy of the paper). In November, we take special care to don the hunter orange that is seen on just about everyone throughout the month. It's a Maine thing. Hunters are out on their annual mission to bag a white-tailed deer and non-hunters are determined not to be mistaken for the elusive doe or buck. So, dig out your best orange fashion and be safe.

November also brings us into the winter holiday season. We move past Samhain, Halloween or Day of the Dead (by all these names) and we shift toward Thanksgiving and then December's light-filled holy days and holidays. Needless to say, retailers have already made the shift as all Halloween items are 80% off, Thanksgiving decorations get a tiny corner of a shelf and December holiday decorations and food specialties take over a third of the store. Do I exaggerate? Maybe a bit. Yet, we know that Thanksgiving this year is different.

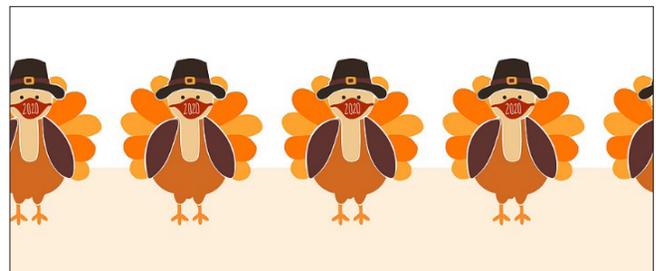
How do we celebrate what for many families is the biggest holiday/family day of the year when we can't be together around a single table with a 22lb. turkey and all the fixings? There will be

some major sadness about empty chairs at the dining room table and watching Thanksgiving Day football alone. Acknowledging our sadness is good for us. We need to be able to share our sadness, for it is a very real and deep emotion. Finding ways to live into a celebration that fulfills our desire to remember and practice gratitude and generosity and love for family, friends and neighbors of all kinds does not deny our sadness but perhaps makes us ever more aware of what these holidays mean for us to cherish.

A few thoughts about how we might do that. Telephone or video conference with everyone who would be with you. Write, yes get out your notecards and a pen, to those whose company you will miss. Write to someone you know who might be especially lonely on Thanksgiving and tell them you care. Contribute to our congregation's Thanksgiving Dinner In a Box (\$60 per box) for folks in our area who are food insecure – the need this year is greater than in years past. Organize an outdoor dance party with your neighbors – it will warm you up and give you fits of laughter. Spend a few moments counting our blessings.

Remain thankful – not because of the pandemic, but in spite of the pandemic. Love abounds – no matter what.

Namaste, *Margaret*



From Your Collaborative Ministry Team Intern

Growth Curve Ahead

Relationships are messy. Being human hurts.

I spent the weekend on virtual retreat with my colleagues — other student ministers preparing for service. It was a rich and intensive two days of music, small groups, featured speakers, and sharing.

Some deep ‘aha’ moments arose. I got to see the best of who I am — the strength and courage I bring to ministry — and the worst, or perhaps I should say some rough edges, some nonintegrated history that still brings me pain.

Good news, right? I’m human! Those rough edges are the growth curve, the learning edge, the sacred place where another layer of healing can begin.

But it’s not easy. I’ve made the needed external amends. (No egregious offense here, folks, just a minor misstep that has given rise to deep and ancient pain within me.) Now I have to sit with these turbulent feelings of anger, confusion, shame, and pain.

The Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg tells us that these difficult states of emotion are visitors, not to be confused with the totality of who we are. My task is neither to slam the door in the visitor’s face nor let the visitor take over my house, but to practice something in-between: a gentle hospitality that says, “Come. Sit at my table. You are welcome here.”

My task is to hold the painful emotions and the larger reality of who I am, and to do so with grace.

And so I breathe into my heart center. I breathe into my pain. I breathe into emotion so big I don’t know what to do with it. I do the other things I know are helpful: I journal about it. I dance. I call my therapist. I reach out to friends. I pray.

And slowly, slowly, the edges of emotion begin to soften. I start to see the gift that is there. I don’t

know how this will resolve itself but I know that resolution will come. I know that somehow this upset will lead to awakening. To another level of wisdom, integration, and growth.

I know that love is bigger in the end.

I used to experience this state of emotion as Winnie-the-Pooh with his head stuck in the honeypot, stumbling frantically in the dark. Pooh and Piglet had seen their own footprints in the snow and decided they must belong to a Heffalump, a fearsome creature that lived entirely in their own imaginations. They set a trap, using Pooh’s honey as bait.

But Pooh awakened hungry in the middle of the night and decided to go get a taste (just a smackerel, you know). He stuck his head all the way in to get to the honey at the bottom of the pot, and couldn’t get the pot off again.

Poor Pooh! The Heffalump could arrive at any moment. Terrified, Pooh bumped around, stumbling over roots, growing ever more frantic until finally he managed to smash the pot open on a rock. Terrorizing himself with groundless fantasies and imagined fears.

I’ve moved from bumping around with my head in a honeypot to practicing hospitality when painful emotions arise. Such movement, such growth, in 20-some years!

Won’t you join me in celebrating the growth that is possible, in my life and in yours?

How do you deal with difficult states of emotion when they arise? Can you practice hospitality to the unwanted feelings that are really only our forgotten selves, crying out for recognition and for healing?

Can you return, ever and always, to love?

Warmly,
Bettina



From Your Ministerial Intern

Grounding Amid Election Tension

By Vanessa Williams
10/30/2020

I have always been passionate about politics. Growing up, my father was an avid follower of the 24-hour news cycle. What was an annoyance in childhood, of hearing the news announcers, became an accepted and welcomed part of my life by the time I was in adolescence. The first time I was aware of the importance of the presidential election was in 2000, during the Bush v. Gore election.

It was quite an election to welcome one into the world of politics, as there was nothing normal about this election. As day after day followed the close of polls, and the counting of precinct and hanging chads continued, I was both confused and intrigued by this process. So much was at stake! The fate of the free world rested on an imperfect electoral process. This was much to take in at the formidable age of 12—weren't adults supposed to have all the answers? Had no one already foreseen these issues and outfitted a solution in advance?

20 years later I have already voted in the 2020 presidential election, and with the complexities and conflicts of the current two-party system feel more reassured that my ballot will be counted. The election date has not yet arrived, but the pressure is on, from both sides. Local channels air political ads, back-to-back, between shows and on commercial breaks, likewise on the radio.

It is hard to avoid the politics, that along with the coronavirus has taken over the nation. I am aware that not all electoral cycles are as tenuous, but presently fear and uncertainty for the future are in the balance for individuals nationwide with elections. And thus, I am thinking not just about my own hopes for election outcomes, but for the safety and wellbeing of others as they endure these stressors.

With the tension of this election, I pray you have space for peace of mind. Moments of deep breathing and relaxing, with eyes closed, time to remember the self and that which is being worked for, not just the repetition of political ads and their fear mongering tactics. Breathe. Find means of enjoying the day and may it ground you. May you find yourself amidst chaos that is around you. Feel your body as it is positioned here on earth, in this space and time. Remember who and where you are.

I hope you might partake in efforts to find grounding on your own, and thus I have included a link to a short video detailing and exercising some grounding techniques.

https://youtu.be/nPvsNf_Z_RE

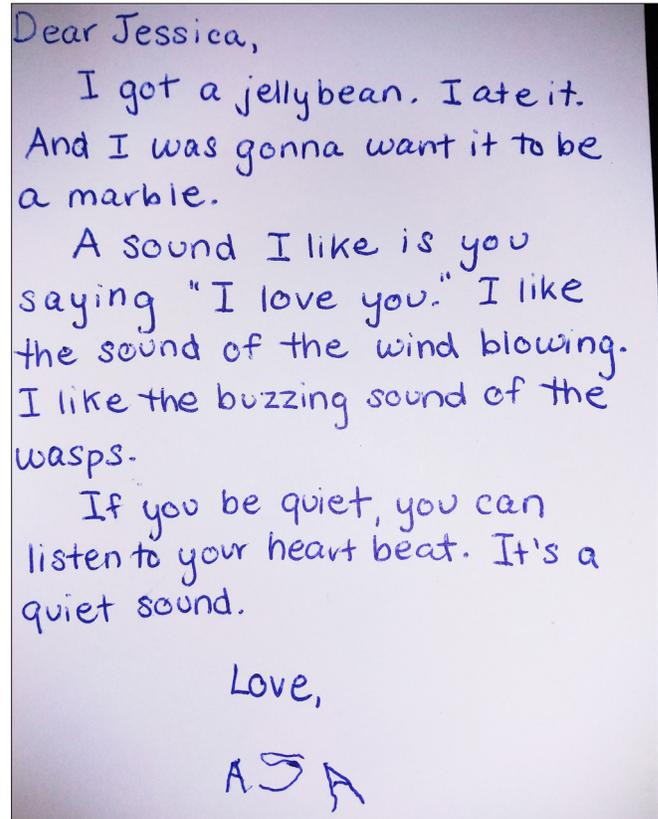
As the election comes and goes, with whatever results we are left with may you find piece and use these small measures to stay grounded and focused in your own life.

Blessings!
Vanessa



Religious Education

In October we resurrected the Religious Education Program! I have received clear feedback from parents that they are not interested in anything that requires screen-time. So, I will be sending each child a little care package each month. This month I sent each child a card (with baby animals on the front) with a message about listening inside. This is great fun because I can address each child at their developmental ability. For our youngest child I asked her about the sounds her ducks make. For our oldest child I asked if she knew about the connection between being a good listener and a good leader. This letter writing campaign also helps me grow my relationship with each child which is perhaps the most important part of any childcare role. I'm happy to say we have eight children participating. Next month I will send out a package about healing. I've included an image of the sweet card I received from Asa.



Remembering Anne Parsons

Anne and I had been together for over sixty-two years. We met and fell in love at a Grinnell College recruiting event in the summer of 1954, which was successful, not only because we graduated from Grinnell four years later; but also because we were married in the Unitarian church in Omaha, Nebraska.

Our marriage in the ensuing half century was not without its ups and downs, one of the “ups” being the arrival of our two sons, Christopher and Jonathan, and later our Daughter-law, Beverly. The “downs” would include her battle with breast cancer in the 1960s.

In all the years in which I knew her, she was a

magnet that attracted committee leadership, and confidence in that leadership. Those here in the UUCU know this better than anyone. Not long ago, she assumed a leadership role at a difficult time in the Congregation’s history, and helped to bring us to where we are today.

My thanks to all of you who offered your condolences, but especially to Reverend Margaret for her eloquence at Anne’s grave, and to my former academic colleague Chris Johnson, who, although from hundreds of miles, managed to sum up a lifetime of memories.

Lynn Parsons

ANNUAL MEETING

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine will hold its 2020 Annual Meeting via Zoom on Sunday, November 15th at 11:30 a.m. – following the morning service.

Copies of the Annual Report will be available by email prior to the meeting.

Zoom link = <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87844196635?pwd=akJJOG1wVzVTbE8vT3dURzV5UUslUT09>

Meeting ID: 878 4419 6635

Passcode: 033162

One tap mobile = +16465588656,,87844196635#,,,,,0#,,033162# US (New York)

Dial by your location = +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Please plan to attend this important meeting. If you need assistance with the technology of connecting to Zoom, please contact the church administrator at info@uucastine.org.



Election week offerings to Put on Your Calendar:

Each of our three Collaborative Ministry congregations will provide ways to connect with each other following the November 3rd elections. You are invited to attend any or all of these times to gather together.

Tuesday November 3rd 6pm Special Vesper's Service w/ Rev. Amy from UUCB.

Come be nourished and offered comfort and hope on this election day evening vespers service. As we all wait with baited breath to know the outcome may it give you peace to be with others as we hold sacred space for silence, music, word and ritual. Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/4695376814> Meeting ID: 469 537 6814 Phone +1 646 558 8656

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What to Do After the Election, continued

Continued from previous page

Wednesday November 4th 8am Special Morning Matins w/ Rev. Sara from UUCE.

This service to hold contemplative space for spiritual grounding the morning after the election. Join Rev. Sara and others from our three church collaborative for a moment of peace and reflection on what promises to be an emotional day no matter the outcome. <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/97730349818> Meeting ID: 977 3034 9818 Phone: 646-876-9923

Wednesday November 4th 9am-11am Open Space with Rev. Amy from UUUCB.

A time to share and reflect on the election. Rev. Amy will open her Zoom room directly following the Morning Matins service for anyone who would like to gather together for conversation and community. This two hour Zoom room is open for folks to come and go as they need to. It is a space to share thoughts, fears, hopes and any other emotion that may be present. Come as you are and know you are welcome. <https://zoom.us/j/4695376814> Meeting ID: 469 537 6814 Phone +1 646 558 8656

Wednesday November 4th 1:00-4:00pm Open Space with Rev. Margaret and Intern Vanessa Williams.

Our Zoom room will open at 1:00 p.m. for anyone who wishes to 'drop in' for a chat or to simply sit in solidarity with others. It will be good to be together.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86243317287?pwd=YWtEWVJ TbHJROHIGOHFOdVh4ajg3UT09>

Meeting ID: 862 4331 7287 Passcode: 117477

Dial by your location = +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

The UUCB Meeting House will be open from 1:00-4:00pm so that parishioners may come in for an individual quiet time of prayer or meditation, to light a candle, to reflect on the days and years ahead. Covid-19 health and safety precautions will be observed. No activities or group discussions will take place inside the building. People may choose to gather on the Castine common at safe distance with face masks and care for each other's health and safety.

Thursday November 5th 3:30-4:30pm Open Chat with Rev. Margaret.

This is our regular Thursday afternoon gathering time and everyone is welcome to come and go as you please. Although election results may still not be known on Thursday afternoon, we may feel the desire to simply be together in the uncertainty and the waiting.

Meeting = <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81700635417?pwd=V0N2a2UxQTM4aG lKc l hjMU0rRVNBZz09>

Meeting ID: 817 0063 5417 Passcode 381804

Phone +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)