

The COMMON

Rev. Erika Hewitt to preach in Castine April 6

Our guest minister on April 6 will be the Rev. Erika Hewitt, from the Midcoast UU Fellowship, in Damariscotta.

She writes, “my faith rests in the power and solace of community. Whether on Sunday mornings, at committee meetings, or to share social time, we come together as a beloved community that loves generously and lives fully.

I believe that religious community provides a steadfast presence for each other even as we bear collective witness to injustice and hatred in our world. Together, we can bring greater wholeness and healing to the community and to each other.

*See Page 5 for more from
Rev. Erika*



CALENDAR

Pulpit

April 6

Rev. Erika Hewitt

April 13

Rev. Charles Stephens

April 20

Rev. Charles Stephens

April 27

Rev. Charles Stephens

Events

April 10

Special Board meeting

April 17

Monthly Board meeting

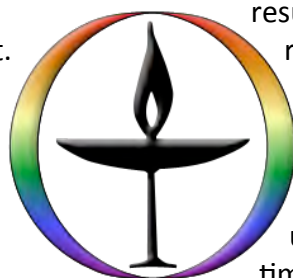
April 20

Potluck lunch

FROM THE BOARD

DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

The process of selecting the Ministerial Search Committee has begun in earnest. Board members have started to contact congregational members to obtain names of persons recommended for service on the committee. On April 10 the Board will hold a special meeting to compile the



results. The four individuals who receive the most recommendations will be contacted to determine their availability to serve on the committee. If the top four are unable or unwilling to devote the time necessary... *continues on pg 2*

FROM THE BOARD, FROM PAGE 1

.....for the work of the search committee, the Board will continue down the list until four committee members have been selected in this manner.

In the next step, the Board will select three more persons to serve on the Search Committee, with the objective of having a broad representation of the congregation included on the committee.

On Sunday, May 4, immediately following the service, a congregational meeting will consider three issues. The first will be a vote on the makeup of the Search Committee. The only options will be to vote for or against the entire slate of seven members. No substitutions or amendments will be in order.

The second issue will be determining whether the bylaws should be amended to require 90 percent of those present and voting to call a settled minister. Our bylaws currently require 80 percent. The Unitarian Universalist Association strongly recommends requiring a vote of at least 90 percent. The bylaw change has been posted in the Parish House and at least 30 days will have passed before the vote, complying with the requirement for bylaw changes.

The third issue will be further consideration of the Have We Not All One Father banner. The suggested signage explaining the history and significance of the banner will be posted in the Parish House.

Another sign issue involves the sign made last year replicating the weathered boards hanging in the Parish House

above the counter top. The new sign is designed to be weather resistant. At its March meeting the Board voted to seek approval from the Castine Historic Preservation Commission to place the sign on the Meeting House side facing the town common. The current thinking is to place the sign near the corner of the Meeting House occupied by the harpsichord.

Finally, here are two updates on matters mentioned in previous Board columns. The first deals with consideration of installing a generator to operate the heating system in the event of power failure. We now have an estimate, but with the heating season hopefully near an end and with raising the Parish House and building a lower level still under consideration, the Board has deferred action on this at present.

The second concerns starting a campus ministry effort with the Maine Maritime Academy. Charles and I met in March with a third-year MMA student who leads a campus religious group. We suspect the theological views of the students in the group are likely quite some distance from those of many in our congregation. However, we are all optimistic that if we concentrate on areas of agreement rather than on where we have divergent views we may be able to make progress. We intend to focus on opportunities for community involvement and addressing social justice issues. Members in the MMA group are interested in more activities involving action and less on discussing theology and the bible. We hope to have one meeting with the group before the spring term winds down in late April.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kay Hansen, Religious Educator

In February, as I composed my contribution for March's newsletter, I was "hopeful" that my doorway would look more like spring at the next writing. As I begin this article, however, (just 6 days from the first day of spring), I see very little change. The driveway still has a layer of ice and, luckily, a layer of snow on top so I can manage to get in and out. Next month at this time--bring on the mud!!



Yoruba bronze head sculpture, Nigeria, ca. 12th century AD

Because of snow days and changes in scheduling, we did not complete our March exploration of traditional African religions. So far we have learned that in most traditional African religions, people believe in one god with a number of other gods to support them. God can be a man, a woman or both. We heard one story from the Republic of Benin that tells how twins, a man and a woman, were in charge of completing the world after their mother started it. They in turn had "seven" sets of twins that they put in charge of the earth, the sky, and the space between. Storytelling is a very important part of traditional African religions and the culture as a whole. Stories can be about creation and religion and may teach lessons of life. Sometimes the stories are acted out in a ceremony (with music and dancing) to invite the spirits of ancestors to visit and listen to their call for help.

In April, we will continue our exploration and hear more African folktales, including some modern day adaptations. We will learn about the tradition of masks and statues to invite the spirits of ancestors into the daily lives of the African people. We will have a chance to look at some traditional African art including jewelry, hand-carved statues and a West African drum, along with the colorful illustrations of books of African folktales. We will also make and play the African game of Mancala. Also look for special activities for Easter and Earth Day on Sunday, April 20.

* * * * *

The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another. The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month.

Henry Van Dyke

Death is something inevitable. When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace. I believe I have made that effort and that is, therefore, why I will sleep for the eternity.

Nelson Mandela
1994



CHARLES' COGITATIONS



One of the things I love about this time of year is tapping maple trees. The temperatures so far have been a little too cold to trigger the flow of the sap in the maple trees. But spring is here, at least on the calendar, and there is promise of warmer days.

I have my trees tapped and my buckets (and gallon milk jugs) are out and ready to catch the clear, sweet flow that I will boil down for my small harvest of maple syrup. It takes a great deal of effort to tap the trees and slowly collect gallons of sap day after day. Even when I start boiling the liquid down, it takes time and patience until it is ready to put on waffles and pancakes.

For me the flow of the maple sap is the real promise of spring. It foretells the budding of new leaves and new life that appears not only on the maple trees but in all the plants, bushes, and trees that seem to come back to life after the long cold winter months.

I like to envision the tap roots going deep into the soil being urged by the change in temperatures to start sending the sap up through the larger roots surrounded by rocks, soil, and sleeping insects and worms, up into the trunk of the tree and out to the limbs and the farthest

branches enabling new and exciting growth to take place.

This is similar to what I see taking place here within the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine. As the calendar moves on during this transitional time, certain actions are being triggered. The Ministerial Settlement Representative from our District, the Rev. Olav Nieuwejaar, visited our congregation back in February. Rev. Nieuwejaar will return again to help guide the Search Committee and the whole congregation through the search process.

Recently, the Board divided the members of the congregation among themselves so they could call each member to get suggestions for potential Search Committee members. This feels like an exciting time when valuable information is being drawn up from the roots of the congregation and flowing to the elected congregational leaders who will be sending this new energy and new life out to the rest of the congregational body.

This begins an exciting time of searching not only for your new minister, but also searching deep down for your vision of where you want UUC to be headed...

When I arrived as the Transitional Minister on June 1, 2013, two years of waiting to call your next settled minister seemed like a very long time. But now that you are at the beginning stages of forming a Search Committee, the time seems so much shorter. This begins an exciting time of searching not only for your new minister, but also searching deep down for your vision of where you want UUC to be headed in the next few years and then selecting a minister who can help you follow your vision. It is a pleasure and honor for me to be serving you as your Transitional Minister during this time.

With Love and Warmth,
Charles

ON MORAL ECONOMICS

The Rev. Peter Morale
President, UUA



What would an economy and society founded on our religious ideals look like? First, it would have far, far less inequality. I do not believe in some romantic notion of complete equality. (I even believe that some economic inequality is a good thing. Incentives and rewards have their place.)

Second, we would have very different measures of success. What good does it do if we have rapid economic growth if that growth goes to a tiny portion of the population and is purchased at the expense of environmental degradation and mistreatment of workers? Why not measure progress by its benefits to ordinary people?

Building upon this, I believe people need to contribute in order to have dignity. I believe it is more moral to expand employment than to create growth.

Following that, I would be happy to trade growth for sustainability. In the society ruled by compassion and by responsibility to the interconnected web of existence, we would never allow damage to the environment in order to produce growth. Indeed, our entire obsession with growth strikes me as a kind of idolatry that ends up involving human sacrifice.



FIVE SENSES, ONE SELF

The Rev. Erika A. Hewitt

Let us remember and celebrate, this morning,
that each of our bodies was woven together in the depths of mystery:
cells multiplying, tissue taking form, organs taking up their function,
all under the silky cover of skin.

Let us gather in reverence for the gift of these bodies,
whatever their ages, their shapes, their abilities,
and may we know them to be channels of the world coming alive through us:
These bodies, these blessings, bring the world to life
through seeing, taste, hearing, scent, and touch.

May we bring to our intricately woven bodies a sense of sacred care-taking.
In doing so, let us also be grateful for the embrace of the Holy:
the Presence that creates and sustains life,
the Mystery that knit together each of our bodies,
and the force of Love that celebrates our desires.



MUUSAN The March 8 meeting of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) drew 20 activists to the Augusta church from a number of UU congregations. Those attending were privileged to hear reports from the Rev. Sara Huisjen and the Rev. Carie Johnsen of their trip to Raleigh NC for the Mass Moral March on February 8.



Rev. Sara, minister of the UU Church of Ellsworth. The planners of the march aimed at forming the broadest coalition possible in working for justice. Attracted initially by a "Standing on the Side of Love" letter about the march, Sara was enthusiastic about being part of this history-making event and the Ellsworth congregation supported her, both spiritually and financially.

What's in a phrase? Sara reported that the march organizers consider this a *Movement* – not a *moment*. Rev. William Barber, president of the NC NAACP was lead organizer and a brilliant spokesperson. More than 2,000 UUs traveled from 32 states to attend, including 77 UU ministers and President of the UUA, Rev. Peter Morales. All Souls in Washington DC filled two buses!

Logistics were very well orchestrated, Sara said. Folks picked her up at the airport and brought her to Raleigh. But the event was much more than housing and travel. Sara talked about the challenge for some UUs to translate the language of traditional faith so that it speaks to us, but we need to do this to be brave and do the work. We

understand we will not agree on everything, but we need to agree to work together.

Rev. Barber is convinced that these issues present a serious and impressive call to the heart. Barber called a variety of faith leaders to discover what the moral issues are that bring us together. Participants were encouraged to find out what is going on in the states where we live and continue the work. Sara brings a sense of passion to this and gratitude for the work that is happening already in Maine. Know what your values and convictions are, she advises. We don't need to adopt someone else's vision, but we do need to follow our own call to justice work. Morals are where the religious and the secular can find common ground.

Rev. Carie, minister, UU Community Church of Augusta.

Fusion Coalitions comprise a radical paradigm shift on how we do justice. For example, "Cover Maine Now" brings together a number of institutions and individuals to focus on one issue—expanding Maine Care.

Prompted by the imbalance of power in North Carolina politically, many groups came together to amplify their voices with the motto of "Forward together, not one step back." For many months, all these groups came together on Moral Mondays to stand together on voting rights and other social justice issues.

We in MUUSAN have hesitated to get involved in too many issues because it might diffuse our work. But might this be the way to go forward? Perhaps our way is illuminated by UU religious diversity itself and how that diversity is important in our congregations. Each other's work is important. Come together around language of morality. Look for collaborators. Maybe MUUSAN can find ways to enter into coalition with other groups. People are energized by moral argument vs. scientific explanations.

U.S. DOD: NO SKEPTICS HERE



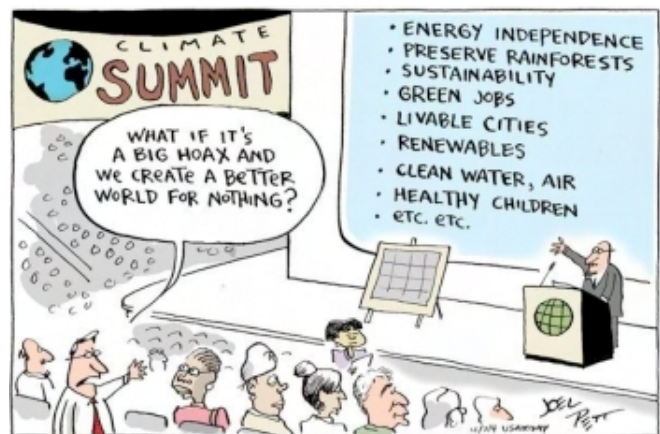
People are climate skeptics for a variety of reasons, including partisan politics, the security of investments, an inability to think centuries ahead, even religious belief: can puny humans really affect God's creation? But it's noteworthy that the skeptics do not include hard-headed military planners, folks who spend the most federal dollars and who cannot afford to make a big mistake. Following are excerpts from the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review Report, released in February. Ed.

"The impacts of climate change may increase the frequency, scale, and complexity of future missions, including defense support to civil authorities, while at the same time undermining the capacity of our domestic installations to support training activities."

"Climate change poses another significant challenge for the United States and the world at large. As greenhouse gas emissions increase, sea levels are rising, average global temperatures are increasing, and severe weather patterns are accelerating. These changes, coupled with other global dynamics, including growing, urbanizing, more affluent populations, and substantial economic growth in India, China, Brazil, and other nations, will devastate homes, land, and infrastructure. Climate change may exacerbate water scarcity and lead to sharp increases in food costs. The pressures caused by climate change will influence resource competition while placing additional burdens on economies, societies, and governance institutions around the world. These effects are threat multipliers that will aggravate stressors abroad such as poverty, environmental

degradation, political instability, and social tensions – conditions that can enable terrorist activity and other forms of violence."

"Finally, the Department will employ creative ways to address the impact of climate change, which will continue to affect the operating environment and the roles and missions that U.S. Armed Forces undertake. The Department will remain ready to operate in a changing environment amid the challenges of climate change and environmental damage. We have increased our preparedness for the consequences of environmental damage and continue to seek to mitigate these risks while taking advantage of opportunities. The Department's operational readiness hinges on unimpeded access to land, air, and sea training and test space. Consequently, we will complete a comprehensive assessment of all installations to assess the potential impacts of climate change on our missions and operational resiliency, and develop and implement plans to adapt as required."



"Climate change also creates both a need and an opportunity for nations to work together, which the Department will seize through a range of initiatives. We are developing new policies, strategies, and plans, including the Department's Arctic Strategy and our work in building humanitarian assistance and disaster response capabilities, both within the Department and with our allies and partners."

CHARLES' APRIL CALENDAR

March 30 Charles begins two weeks of vacation; Steven Lewicki, Coordinator, Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition, will be speaking.

April 6 Rev. Erika Hewitt, guest minister. She serves the UU Midcoast Fellowship in Damariscotta.

April 13 "What is Good?"
Fifth in my Socrates Sermon Series. Have you ever wondered about what was the best action to take in a certain situation? How do you determine what is good to do? Is there a universal or is it situational? What would Jesus or Socrates or Buddha or you do?

April 20 Easter Sunday
"The Wisdom Way of Jesus." Jesus was a teacher of wisdom. The wisdom he taught was the way a person should live. Some of his later followers taught more about who Jesus was and what people should believe about him. Jesus, however, spent most of his effort in helping his followers understand how they could live truly transformative lives.



April 27 "Standing On The Side Of Love," originally scheduled for a snowy February 9. If we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of all people, how does it cause us to stand on the side of love? As you may know, "Standing on the Side of Love" is an interfaith campaign sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association, one that's making a difference.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

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The Governing Board meets in the Parish House at 8:30 am on the third Thursday of each month. Observers welcome.



THE COMMON

The Common is published monthly and is available via email and photocopy. All readers are invited to submit items for consideration. Send submissions or comments to editor Kent Price at kapricorn75@gmail.com. Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

CONTACT US

The Rev. Charles J. Stephens
minister@uucastine.org
326-9083 (Meeting House)

Del Davis, President
chadbourne.davis@roadrunner.com
326-0828

Kay Hansen, Rel. Education
hansen85@myfairpoint.net
667-9421

Becky St. John, Office Administrator
office@uucastine.org
326-9083