



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

April 2021

A Month of Sundays for April 2021

April 4: Special Easter Sunday Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m. with Intern Vanessa Williams

We have diverse and inspiring Sunday Services this month - all on Zoom at 10:30 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

April 4:

Easter Worship Leader: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Worship Associate: Intern Vanessa Williams
Musicians: Julianne Gardner & Chris Poulin

April 11:

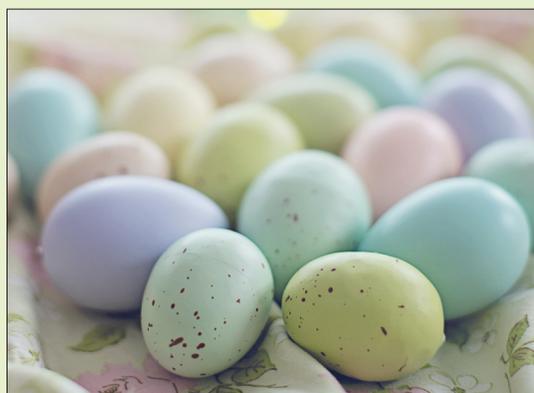
Worship Leader: Rev. Charles Stephens
Worship Associate: Intern Vanessa Williams
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald

April 18:

Special Guest Preacher: Rev. Tet Gallardo, President of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines
Worship Associate: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musicians: Julianne Gardner & Chris Poulin

April 25:

Worship Leader: Intern Bettina Lehovc (this is Bettina's final Sunday with our congregation)
Worship Associate: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald



by Jill Wellington at pexels.com

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
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, April 2021



by Pixabay at pexels.com

To say that earth is in our hands, the hands of humanity, is beautiful poetry but not very accurate. Earth will survive the human species. She is not dependent on humankind for her existence.

On the contrary, we are dependent on Earth for our existence. It is, therefore, odd at best and insanely suicidal at worst for humans to undervalue and ignore the health and well-being of Earth. For, as we all know, Earth is the only planet we know of that can support human life. Earth supports billions of life forms; a diversity that literally boggles my mind and fills my heart with gratitude. Life here – all life – is precious, and irreplaceable once extinct. We are given the privilege and responsibility to live on this Earth in the ways of reciprocity. We are neither superior nor inferior to other species or aspects of Earth. Our 7th Principle reminds us that we affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. In 2021, I believe we must live beyond the promise to respect our web. We must live in ways that enhance and embrace this web of existence.

April 22nd is Earth day, as it has been since the first Earth Day in 1970. The theme for this year is “Restore Our Earth.” There are so many ways to interpret this theme. Let me invite you into intellectual, physical and spiritual interpretations of the theme. We need to increase and expand our understanding of Earth and the ways that human presence here has failed to enhance and embrace the well-being of Earth and all her life. Then, we might better understand and

promote specific things – policies, practices, legislation, rituals, behaviors – that we know will be helpful to our selves and our descendants. We can select things that we can physically do. A physical, hands-on commitment to making changes in our lives, or holding fast to current ways, that embrace and enhance Earth. This is no small assignment. Change is hard. We are constantly faced with the question, “What am I willing to give up, change, or adopt to embrace reciprocity and well-being with Earth?” Lastly, let us take our spiritual prowess and power seriously. Thought is energy. Prayer, ritual, meditation, focused concentration, and mindfulness in all its expressions is effective beyond our imagining. What can I do? What will I do for Earth and my place here? A serious consideration, not just rhetoric or wishful musings.

Here is a link to the Earth Day website with 51 actions we can take right now.

<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-tips/>

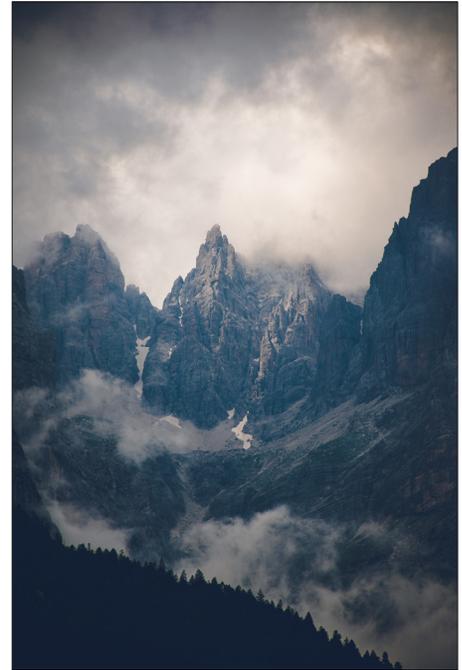
Here are a few examples: participate in meatless Mondays, be prepared to clean up every outdoor venue you visit. Make sure our local utility companies are actively working to expand renewable power supplies. Arrange your gardens to promote pollinators and butterflies and eliminate invasive plants and trees as possible. Just a few. There are many more things we can do. Let’s get going and keep going. Earth gives us so much and makes our lives possible. Giving back is our appropriate response.

May your April days be filled with the beauty of Spring.

Namaste,
Margaret

Earth by Mark L. Belletini

This is our earth.
 It falls through heaven like a pearl
 in a glass of plum wine.
 There are no other earths that I know of.
 There are no other skies that we have mapped.
 This is our earth.
 The Oneness who gave birth to it
 remains nameless.
 There was no midwife then
 to bring us word of the birth-cry.
 We only rejoice that it is.
 This is our earth.
 Ice caps its head. Glaciers clasp its feet.
 Warm wind, like the breath of a lover, breathes around its breast.
 Mountains thrust up to the clouds, bringing joy.
 Storms blow across its shores, bringing fear.
 Silvery fish capture sunlight and bring it down
 into the deep, as on shore, valleys spread
 with ripening fruit. Cities teem with the
 poor and disenfranchised in the shadow of
 golden towers. Children live and also die.
 Highways throb. Monks sit in silence. Mothers
 work. Crickets chirp. Teachers plan. Engineers
 design. Fathers write letters.
 People marry
 with and without the blessings of law.
 People cry.
 They laugh, and brood, and worry and wait.
 This is our earth.
 There are no other earths.
 Before its wonder, philosophers fall silent.
 Before its mystery,
 poets admit their words are shadow, not light.
 And all the great names religious teachers have left to us—
 Ishtar, Shekinah, Terra Mater, Suchness, Wakan
 Tanka, Gaia—
 suddenly refuse to announce themselves.
 And so we too fall silent,
 entering the time where words end
 and reality begins.



by Philip Ackermann at pexels.com



by Arthur Brognoli at pexels.com

Source: "Sonata for Voice and Silence"

<https://www.uuabookstore.org/Sonata-for-Voice-and-Silence-PI6996.aspx>

<https://www.uua.org/offices/people/mark-l-belletini>

From Your Ministerial Intern

Resiliency and the New Normal

At some point in March 2021, we reached the one-year mark of the new normal that has befallen us in the form of a worldwide pandemic. A year ago, we were unable to go out, to do anything; go to the store only in sophisticatedly executed trips of one brave soul, full masked and gloved to gather necessities and the bring them, and possibly the illness, back.

I looked back on poetry I wrote during this time last year, when lockdown was all we knew, and the uncertainty of what came next meant that this was most likely short lived, and we would all tell tales of it when it was over. But it never exactly ended, it just evolved. My written words tell of learning this rogue illness, how we slowly became aware of what precautions to take—to remain 6 feet apart, avoid the touching of faces, and washing hands regularly and vigorously; of supplies that dwindled at the supermarket, and necessary items becoming privileged prizes; and then eulogies—ultimately from the illness lives were lost. This was apocalyptic, and yet life was monotonous, lonely, and isolated.

How much I had forgotten that had been the start of our new normal a year ago! After going through states of shutdown and reopening how

much we lose in not *remembering* what was occurring. It is over a year later, and the end has not yet come to pass. The uncertainty, and implicit worry over ailment has not left us, it just remains dormant.

And we have become *resilient* in learning this new reality that is here, invisible, but seen through the gaze of shuttered storefronts that did not survive shutdowns; of labyrinthic store aisles, and masked smiles on our fellow compatriots. We have been through much, but over a year things becoming normal as such may have made us lose sight of all that we have endeavored. It is not necessary that we reflect on all the negativity and sadness that has passed, but simply appreciate all a body has come through.

We have made it in a continuous storm and lost many along the way. We mourn them and lift their memories. This life that we are living on this globe that is spinning is a gift even in these difficult times, even in these times of abnormal normalcy. May your spirit remain strong in whatever events the next 365 days come to bare, and as you go remember how far you have come, how much you have passed through, and be restored with the knowledge that still, your time is not done.

Vanessa Williams, 3/30/2021

From Your Collaborative Intern

Spring is the Season of Becoming

My favorite Easter memory is this: Sitting at the kitchen table, helping my mother and older sister dye eggs. It was the first time I'd been invited into this ritual. Always before, I'd been on the receiving

end: one of the little kids who raced around the yard hunting eggs in the morning.

Now I was a big kid, helping create the magic for the younger ones. Dipping hard-boiled eggs into cups of brightly colored water. Checking their

Continued on next page

From Your Collaborative Intern, continued

Continued from previous page

progress and dropping them into the dyes again, watching them turn deep shades of turquoise and yellow and rose.

There was no sense of disappointment in moving from egg hunter to egg dyer. (Of course, we older kids got to hunt the eggs too!) Just pride, in being on the other side of the magic, creating the wonder for the little people I loved.

This was a moment of becoming, of moving from one stage of life to the next. These moments are not always so easy, we know! They can be awkward and unwanted and uncomfortable. But if we hold on to the inevitability of change, maybe we can hold on to the beauty in it too.

Springtime is a season that teaches us about change. Not as poignantly as autumn, when life goes dormant for a while. But just as ephemeral — the first snowdrops giving way to violets and trillium, early buds blossoming into full leaf. Each day becoming just a little bit warmer, a little bit longer, as the earth turns and we cycle toward summertime.

The celebrations of spring — Passover and Easter — remind us of change. Passover commemorate

the exodus from Egypt, that foundational event in Israel's history when a band of fugitive slaves became a nation.

Jews gathered for the Passover Seder relive the story all over again. It didn't just happen in the past, they remind one another. It happens each year, that pivotal story of leave-taking and risk. Trading the security of today for the uncertainty of tomorrow. Becoming what tomorrow calls us to be.

Easter celebrates the possibility of new beginnings. The good news that even death gives way to life! The medieval mystic Hildegard of Bingen coined the term *verditas* — or the greening power of Christ apparent in every greening bud and branch. There is some power in the world that will not be stopped: a life force energy that recreates itself.

These are truths to hold onto. One thing becomes another. Tomorrow calls us into growth we don't know possible today. Every becoming has an ending within it, but every becoming is a beginning, too.

May the spirit of growth and change bless all your becoming.

With love, Bettina

Collaborative News from Your CMT

Exciting news! Our Collaborative Ministry Intern for 2021-22 is our own **Vanessa Williams!** Vanessa is a member of the Ellsworth congregation, and has been serving a part-time internship with UUC Castine this year. We welcome her into the collaborative ministry

program, along with her husband, James, and daughter, Amelie.

There are several new collaborative offerings starting this month. The **UUCB Climate Action**

Continued on next page

Collaborative News from Your CMT, continued

Continued from previous page

Team and the UUCE Green Sanctuary Task Force are joining forces to sponsor a four-part series on **Plugging in for a Greener Future: Options for your Household.** The Zoom sessions will be from 7-8:30 p.m. each Monday from April 19 to May 10. For more information, contact Corliss Davis at cdavis5468@roadrunner.com or Doug Bird at birddoug137@gmail.com.

Bettina Lehovc will offer a five-part series on **Claiming Your Spiritual Leadership.** Spiritual leadership is for everyone. It's an orientation of the mind and heart that seeks to answer: How can I serve my congregation and world? How can our congregations equip each member and friend for this vital work? Five Thursdays via Zoom, 6:30-8 p.m., April 1, 15, 22, 29, and May 5. Contact Bettina for more info or to register: blehovc@gmail.com or (479) 521-4375.

Rev. Amy Fiorilli will lead **Adventures in UU History and Theology** starting April 7. The

class will meet via Zoom from 10-11:30 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays in April and May. Open to the three-church collaboration! Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about our faith. For more information, contact Rev. Amy at amyfiorilli@gmail.com.



Our next **Collaborative Anti-Racism Conversation** will take place on Zoom from 4-5:30 p.m. April 13. Rev. Sara Hayman will lead us in an exploration of the proposed 8th principle, which speaks to “journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” Join us! <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4695376814>

Your Collaborative Ministry Team

Religious Education

This month in R.E. we kept things light and spring-y. When I wrote to the kids I talked a lot about starting seeds, putting eggs in the incubator and of course, baby goats. There is nothing more unabashedly joyful than a goat kid playing with other goat kids. They are a lesson and a balm every time I visit the stable. The mother goats are named Cinnamon and Moonsilver. When their time came Moonsilver acted as midwife to Cinnamon by immediately stepping in and cleaning up the babies while Cinnamon rested. Within about 20 minutes Cinnamon was back on

her feet and assisting while Moonsilver had her own twins. Cinnamon cleaned them up for her and in no time four little ones were running back and forth between their two mamas. The load was lighter for each mother and the babies got more of what they needed. Sharing our lives is like that. Raising children together is like that. Everyone gets more of what they need. I'm sure the goats wouldn't have it any other way and neither would we. Happy Spring!

Jessica Rollerson

The Isolation Blues; reflections during covid-19



“ice out”

This blog post is from Rev. David Hutchinson who serves the Unitarian Universalist church in Houlton, Maine. <https://backwoodsblog.com/2021/03/30/isolation-blues-44/>

Last Thursday night I stepped outside by the back of our shed at the farmhouse (I instantly knew what had happened) and I could hear the loud roar of rushing water in the darkness toward the river – ice out! This is a much anticipated annual event in the north woods and Mainers usually mark it on the calendar to compare from year to year soon to be followed by canoe runs and anglers hitting the water. This year the ice went out without fanfare; there were no jams, pile-ups and the breakup happened fast. The ice wasn't as thick as usual and when the temps hit 65 for a couple of days in late March that's all it took for a quick exit downstream. The next morning at daylight I headed down to the river to evaluate the situation and to stand on the river bank and experience the raw power of nature in Spring. The pounding of water literally shakes the air and the ground. Our property is located on the oxbow of the north branch and the waters making the fast and wide turn have stripped the banks clean as it accelerates; the velocity of ice speeding over the ledges in reckless fashion as it careens its way towards Canada...

Here is a poem that chronicles several “ice-out” years at our place in the north woods. Yay everyone, Spring is here!

Still in the woods, Dave
March 30, 2021

Ice Out

the river is rushing by
a strong spring current
flushing the north woods
of its winter build-up
of snow
ice
deer shit
and broken branches

this river tundra
which has held its own
for so long during
the lengthy winter months
as a transportation corridor
for the deer herd
coyote
ski-doo
and occasional
back country skier
now feels the undercurrent
beneath it as spring overtakes
its reluctant bulk
and now immanent exit downstream

I look and a duck floats by
in wild fashion
riding the waves
quacking as he goes

Continued on next page

The Isolation Blues, continued

Continued from previous page

Soon the canoers will follow suit on
sunny week-ends
with their plastic coolers
and six-packs of
aluminum beverage
and excited conversations
of their annual spring run
from Harvey Siding
to Russell Rock
hoping not to capsize
too often or too long

One year I remember sitting on the ice
slabs alongside the riverbank watching the ice
chunks go by, when I looked to my left and about
fifteen feet away a beaver was sitting doing the same
thing as me. He looked at me, I looked at him, and
we both looked back at the river; calmly, reflectively,
knowing to the depths of our being it was not safe
to be out there.

this year the ice was jammed for weeks at this spot
driving slabs on top and in-between each other
jagged edge to the sky
grinding bark off trees
standing too close to the action
crushing some in ice age fashion
splintered sticks in a moving ice landscape
the water rushes its way in and around the jags
creating mini waterfalls
dramatic runs and
temporary water shows
free of charge
to any onlookers
of the moment

I stand on the rope bridge

rushing water
roar of nature
movement of spirit

drinking a hot cup of camp brew coffee
thinking of an old Grateful Dead song

easy wind
the river keeps on talking
but you never hear a word it says...
the river keeps on talking
the river keep on talking

April 18, 1998



“ice out on the Meduxnekeag” 2021