



# THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

December 2021

## SUNDAY WORSHIP December 2021

Date	Worship Leader	Musician
Dec. 5	Rev. Lane Fisher	Julie & Chris
Dec. 12	Vanessa Williams	Colleen
Dec. 19	Margaret	Julie & Chris
Dec. 24	Margaret	Colleen
Dec. 26	Margaret	Colleen

### 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.



Photo by Valerie Boltneva from Pexels



Photo by Markus Spiske from Pexels

### Contact Us

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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, December 2021



We've had our first snow of the season. The December Holy Days and Holidays are fully arrived.

I'll be back in the pulpit and in the office at 21 Main Street in Castine beginning on December

15th. It will be good to see you all – some in Castine and others on-line.

Sabbatical has been wonderful. Christy and I traveled to parts of New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona. You'll be hearing more about that as time goes by. I've been spending time with family pictures (1951 – 1981) and making digital files from slides. I have rested and done some reading that has absolutely nothing to do with UU ministry. I am ready to be back with all of you and to serve our congregation.

*Happy Holidays and may you receive great blessings in 2022 and for all that this New Year will bring.*

Namaste,  
*Margaret*



Ancestral Puebloan Dwelling  
Long House (Mesa Verde National Park)



Remembering Christmas past – 1965



## President's Desk

Thank you to all who brought bags and boxes of warm clothing to my house. Gil and I filled up the back seat and rear of the car with nary an inch to spare. I am sure those items that were gifts rarely used and those much loved are being put to good use by the wreath makers as the winter cold arrives.

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Margaret's sabbatical is drawing to a close. I expect we are all looking forward to hearing about her adventures. I am also curious about what new perspectives she will bring to us.

Thank you all for your support in the last three months. We had Debbie Morehouse "run the board" for us every Sunday. She also helped me make sure the Annual Report was formatted properly to be sent to everyone. Thanks to Jean Lamontanaro for keeping us on track with the

Common. Becky St John has kept things humming on Monday and Friday, bills are paid and donations duly noted. Cindy Kimball, as a sabbatical committee of one, kept track of Sunday mornings and welcomed us all to the Zoom services. Peter Fairbank sharpened his pencil and presented us with the budget for next year.

I am aware of the problem of saying thank you to individual people. The possibility of forgetting someone exists. For those of you who were also very helpful and not named please consider yourselves thanked with as much gratitude as the others.

As we quickly approach the shortest day of the year and a time of celebration may you have meaningful times filled with joy.

Brooke Tenney

## Service on December 5

### What Grows in the Dark?

**Worship leader:** Rev. Lane Fisher

**Musicians:** Julie Gardner and Chris Poulin

In this season of lengthening nights, let us consider how to befriend the dark—even in our unwanted waking hours. A special note to our youngest members: this service will include a wonderful Lemony Snicket story.

Lane Fisher was our first collaborative intern and is now minister to Peterborough (NH) UU Church—commuting from Belfast, her longtime home.

## Thanksgiving Meal Boxes

Once more, the Thanksgiving Meal Box program was a great success with 57 boxes delivered. UUCC membership donations totaled just over \$1,570, more than covering the cost of \$1,380. So we have a head-start on Christmas. Traditionally, the requests for Christmas exceed those of Thanksgiving.

I extend my thanks to very one involved, the drivers and donors. It was a wonderful commitment to the challenges of food insecurity.

Gil Tenney

## “Gratitude and Notes from an Intern”

**November 26, 2021**

Since commencing the 3-church collaborative internship in August 2021 life has been a whirlwind of activity for me. And this last month things opened up that allowed this collaborative internship to really take precedence.

In August, due to constraints around Covid-19 precautions, my Clinical Pastoral Education in a hospital (required for school and by the UUA for ministers in training) was delayed; and as a result, pushed *into* my internship year. Thus, as September started my responsibilities included clinical placement hours, seminary classes, and internship (as well as also being called “Mom”, of course)—Being the ever determined individual I thought, “I can do this.”

Considering my workload, in their experienced wisdom, the three ministers of Ellsworth, Castine, and Belfast allowed me to arrange my full-time internship a bit differently. I then imparted *part*

*time* in internship, along with everything else. By early November my (300) clinical hours were done; and I had engaged enough with the 3 congregation to have many of you then eager and ready for more time working with me. Amid doing all these things I have been ever grateful and motivated by little reminders received via email or otherwise from congregants lifting me up and commenting on my work—these gifts are priceless!

Now going forward full-time, I am excited about groups I am planning to run within the congregations, involvement in holiday planning and festivities, and all that comes next! From me to you, I bestow gratitude and best wishes as we move into the winter holiday season. Blessing to you all!

In gratitude,  
Vanessa Williams

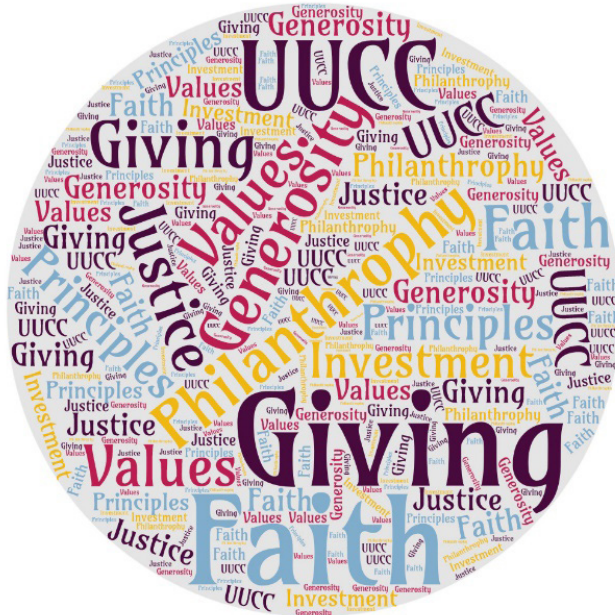
### A Thank You

Eve Stwertka wants to thank Vanessa for her words of wisdom about the theology we carry naturally inside us. Mine works somewhat like hers: many influences, much cogitation, and at last, Unitarianism.

### Call for Submissions

Do you have something to share in the next issue of The Common? Submit an item to Jean Lamontanaro at [jean.lamontanaro@gmail.com](mailto:jean.lamontanaro@gmail.com) by December 28 for the January Common.

## Final Month to Make your 2021 Contributions to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine



It's already December and that means our year is drawing to a close – both the calendar year and the congregation's fiscal year.

The generosity of our members and friends during this time of Covid and on-line meeting for worship and doing the work of our faith has been wonderful.

If you are able to make a year-end contribution – please do.

If you've been meaning to finish up your pledge or planned giving to UUCC – please do that before the end of December.

If you make your charitable, philanthropic and faith contributions at the end of the year – the time to include UUCC in your giving has arrived.

The life and vitality of our congregation and our faithful presence in the world depend on the financial support of our members and friends.

**Thank You!**

## The Gift of Giving

*Thank you to Johanna Sweet for submitting this text from the reading she did at the service a couple of weeks ago. The reading is a passage written by Frank Sonnenberg entitled "The Gift of Giving."*

Give out of love, not obligation.  
 Give when it's least expected.  
 Give without strings attached.  
 Give from your heart.  
 Give of yourself.  
 Give to show that you care.

Give help without causing helplessness.  
 Give something that takes personal sacrifice.  
 Give to make a difference.  
 Give without keeping score.  
 Give for no reason at all.  
 Give a little if you can't give a lot.  
 Give without attracting attention to yourself.  
 Give without being asked.  
 Give of your experience.  
 Give to those who need it most.

## December Rituals of Light and Faith



We are now in the season of **Advent** (November 28-December 24) – the four weeks that lead to Christmas in the Christian tradition. Advent is a time of waiting and expectation. It is a time for making room for all still awaits our welcome into our lives. It is a time for personal devotion, family sharing and congregational reflection. Each week during Advent has a special focus. At home and at church, we might have an Advent Wreath with five candles. We light a candle for each week as the time builds to Christmas Eve or Christmas Day when we light the final candle. UU Minister, Megan Visser, has created readings for each week during Advent. You are welcome to use these readings at home as you light candles.

<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/ritual/advent-wreath-words-four-sundays>

**First Week – Hope.** We light this candle as a symbol of hope and expectation. May we dare to open the shadowy places in our lives and

memories to the healing light of community. With the creative power of hope, we express our longing for peace and prepare our hearts to be transformed.

**Second Week – Peace.** We light this candle as a symbol of our longing for peace. We bring our hope into the world when we practice peacemaking. Our caring community aspires to be a source of freedom from violence and exclusion. May we become the ones “we have been waiting for” (as June Jordan writes). Together, may we strive to create a lasting peace.

**Third Week – Joy.** We light this candle as a symbol of joy—not just any simple cheer, but the experience of joy that cannot be contained. Advent asks us to proclaim our gladness as a gift to the world even when sorrow and uncertainty abound. May we share our hearts through our words, our music, and the way we live our lives. Let the fullness of our joy lead to more freedom.

**Fourth Week – Love.** We light this candle as a reminder that there is no greater power in the world than love. Through this community, we can become a blessing to one another: our love is magnified, and lives are changed. We can hardly wait any longer for the wonder of love to be revealed. May we risk enough to become vulnerable and welcome holy tenderness.

**Christmas** – We light all the candles in gratitude and celebration.

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## December Rituals of Light and Faith, continued

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**Hanukkah** (November 28 – December 6), which is Hebrew for “dedication,” is the Festival of Lights. It commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian Greek army, and the subsequent miracle of rededicating the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and restoring its menorah, or lamp. The miracle of Hanukkah is that only one vial of oil was found with just enough oil to illuminate the Temple lamp for one day, and yet it lasted for eight full days.

### UU Hanukkah Blessings

by **Lorenzo Bosman** (UUA Worship Web)

We honor the great mystery of the universe, the source of all, which deems everything sacred by its power to unite us, and gives us the radiance that we bring forth together as we kindle the Hanukkah lights.

We celebrate the spirit of life, wellspring of all that we perceive and imagine, as we look upon with reverence the wondrous great fortune which has been bestowed upon our ancestors throughout antiquity.

We cherish the wonder of each thing, the order of the universe that binds us together with all of nature, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.

**Winter Solstice** ends the shortening of days. December can be a dark month both physically and emotionally. We seek to embrace the darkness and the gifts it offers. We light candles to provide the calm and steady reassurance that the darkness is not complete and it is not forever.

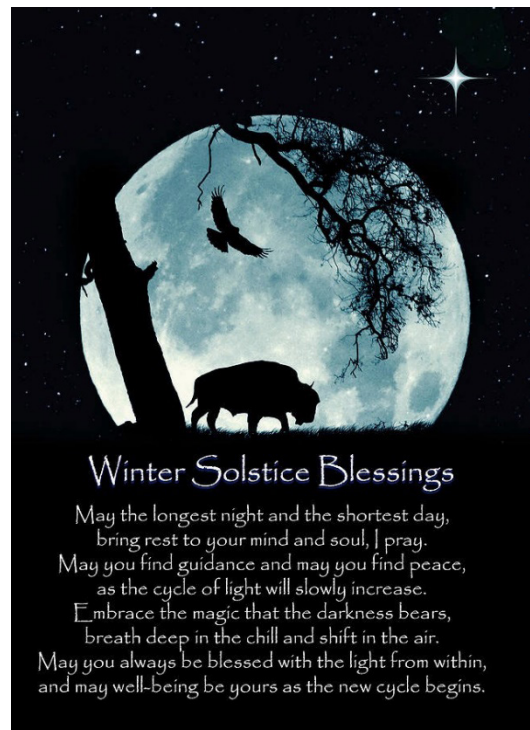
### Winter Solstice Reflection

by **Gregory Jones** (UUA Worship Web)

On this, the longest night of the year, we are warmed by the certain knowledge that tomorrow will welcome more light than today.

As it has for eons—for billions of years—the coming of light brings life.

May we be awed by the great miracles of light and life, and faithfully nurture the mystery and magic of wonder.



### Winter Solstice Blessings

May the longest night and the shortest day,  
bring rest to your mind and soul, I pray.  
May you find guidance and may you find peace,  
as the cycle of light will slowly increase.

Embrace the magic that the darkness bears,  
breath deep in the chill and shift in the air.  
May you always be blessed with the light from within,  
and may well-being be yours as the new cycle begins.