



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

December 2022

~ Worship in December ~

- Sunday December 4th Reflecting the Sacred - Advent
Worship Leader: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musician: Karen Froehly
- Sunday December 11th Winter Festivals of Light and Faith
Worship Leader: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musician: Karen Froehly
- Sunday December 18th Solstice Traditions
Worship Leader: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
- Wednesday December 21st **Community Blue Christmas Service**
Candlelight Service at 5:00 – 5:30 p.m.
Outside on the Town Common – bundle up
Worship Leaders: Revs. Andi Lloyd & Margaret Beckman
- Saturday December 24th 3:00 p.m. Tea and Cookies – Parish House
Reflecting the Sacred - Christmas
4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – Meeting House and Zoom
Worship Leader: Rev. Margaret Beckman
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald

Sunday December 25th – Merry Christmas! No service today.
See you on New Year's Day at 10:30 a.m.

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, ME 04421
207-326-9083 • 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 Debbie Morehouse office@uucastine.org.

Lakeside Reflections December 2022

Winter comes upon us this month. The Winter Solstice is more than half a month away now, but it seems as though winter begins to touch us around the edges as soon the calendar turns to December. The days are shorter. The light is lower. The nights are longer and colder. The gifts of December are numerous. For many of us the best gift during the month of December is the variety of ways that we bring light into our own little worlds. The cultural celebration of Christmas begins as soon as Halloween and Thanksgiving decorations are put away. We light up the night with thousands of lights from simple tiny white lights to amazingly intricate displays of color and motion on buildings and in yards.

Light in the darkness is a joy and a necessity during the darkest time of year. As the annual trip of earth around the sun begins to bring us more light, we can relax our dependence on artificial light, the flames of our many candles. Experiences of people from as long ago as human memory exists tell us that people have looked forward toward the return of the sun almost as soon as the light noticeably diminishes in Autumn. The only way for us to get to springtime early sunrises is to live fully and completely each day in the darkness nature brings us at this time of year. It is a time of year with its own beauty and peace.

For me, this darker time of year with its companion elements of joy, silence, and waiting is especially meaningful. Many of you already know that I have been diagnosed with rectal cancer. Some of you will learn about it right now. My cancer is treatable and usually the cancer can be eliminated completely. This is the goal upon which I base my



hope and expectation. The treatment for my cancer is long and challenging with a combination of radiation therapy, chemotherapy and finally surgery that will require much time and attention for 10 to 12 months. As I begin

treatment in early December, the darkness seems to be my close companion. I light candles and trim the house with sparkling lights of the season to help keep the light and darkness in some kind of mutual balance. I meditate and focus my energy in the silence of the season of the year and the season of my soul. And, I wait. I wait for the healing power of modern medicine to take effect. I wait for healing power of the prayers, good wishes, focused energy and love that you and so many others are sending into the universe to take root in my body and soul and help me remain spiritually and physically whole.

Throughout this time of treatment, I will continue to serve this congregation that I love so much, as well as I can, for as long as I can. There will be things I cannot do. There will be times when I am in Boston at the Dana-Farber Cancer Center for treatment when I would rather be in Castine and at home with my family in Dedham.

Rest assured, our congregation is well served by our amazing staff and lay leaders. We are in conversation and always evaluating what is best for all concerned. I remain available by phone (207-299-5520) and email (minister@uucastine.org). I plan to see you on Sunday mornings. If you have specific questions or concerns for me, please reach out. You may also contact our church office administrator, Debbie Morehouse, at office@uucastine.org or call the church. Cindi Kimball is our newly elected President,

and she too is available to answer questions or address concerns.

Meanwhile, light your candle and bring light into the world where you are as I am doing the same from both Maine and Massachusetts. Yule time is sacred time for me. The Yule log and the winter wreath of candles and adornments are with me. I trust

you will surround yourself with the light and warmth of this season in the ways that are meaningful to you.

May we continue to be a blessing to each other and the world.

Namaste,
Margaret

INVITATION TO AN INTERFAITH BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

A Zoom-based event for Castine people and all our friends everywhere.

Information session

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6th at 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

(Zoom link below)

Reading time in December. Discussion begins in January 2023

Are you feeling overwhelmed with a nagging sense that ours ought not to be a nation controlled by a single religious/theological worldview? You can be part of the solution!

Our discussion is not all doom & gloom and pointing symbolic fingers at others. There is great cause for concern. There is no reason to be or feel helpless. We can make a difference and be the change we hope to see in the world.

Rev. Andi Lloyd of the Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine and Rev. Margaret Beckman of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine will co-lead a discussion of this book and the ways all of us are both wittingly and unwittingly impacted by the forces promoting White Christian Nationalism. We will begin by watching the discussion with Rev. Carter Heyward – an Episcopal priest, theologian, and author of the new book *The 7 Deadly Sins of White Christian Nationalism*—sponsored by the Maine Council of Churches and the BTS Center. (A video recording of the discussion can be found [here](#).)

And this is your invitation to join! The book promises to be an important, challenging read; reading it in community—reading it together across our neighboring faith communities—promises to be a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect, discuss, and wrestle together on what the rise of Christian nationalism means for us as people of faith.

Thanks so much for being part of this – Andi Lloyd and I were talking this week and we're both excited to read and discuss this book and this topic with all of you. Hard though the topic is – hard though the *book* is – we both feel like our conversations can ultimately lead to a genuinely hopeful, positive place.

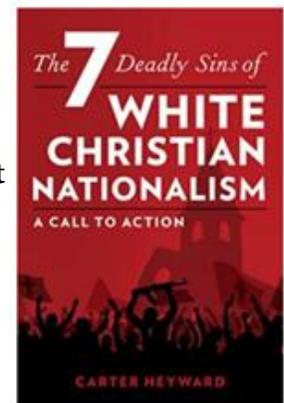
See you all soon, and let me know if you have any questions about any of this!

Here's the Zoom information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85262242720?pwd=Rk53NHhZLotHWHpFVFlEWEFTm9Gdz09>

Meeting ID: 852 6224 2720

Passcode: 290546



Note from our President

Hello Friends,

First, I want to thank Brooke Tenney for her leadership and then want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your Board President. We have a wonderful board and am sure we will do a good job for our congregation and community.

December is always a busy time and it is easy to become overwhelmed, but just take a deep breath and enjoy the many blessings we enjoy. We will have a Christmas tree this year after Covid's interruption and some special decorations by our church children. Don't forget the Christmas Concert on December 12th at our church at 7pm. Enjoy our potluck on the 18th after the service and I hope to see you in person or online on Christmas Eve for our service. There will be none on Sunday Christmas Day.



Again, thank you for your support and remember to BREATHE!

~ Cindi



Wood Banks are now a hot item (Pun intended)

\$8,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Agriculture to provide feedstock to firewood banks; and to provide financial assistance for the operation of firewood banks.

<http://www.forgreenheat.org/issues/firewoodbanks.html>

The Castine Wood Bank is much like a food bank. Where there is a need for heating assistance, firewood may be a solution. We are submitting a grant proposal for a much needed, one cord capacity, trailer with an hydraulic dump capability. Grants are available from \$1,000 to \$15,000 but no single item requested can exceed \$5,000. A trailer costs approximately \$8,000, so additional funding will be necessary.

It appears that we have a very good chance of approval in (I hope) December.

The Castine Wood Bank was started in 2015. We have been recognized by a number of publications including the NY Times. The volunteer base continues to grow but it is aging. Maybe you can imagine 70 and 80 year-olds throwing logs on the back of a truck knowing we will be handling it again upon delivery. Camaraderie is worth it and the gratitude upon delivery is inspiring. Much like a food bank we see an appreciation that the community cares.

~ Gil Tenney



'Tis the Season!



Dec. 4 - Second Annual Festival of Trees, a festive get-together for residents of Surry and our generous surrounding communities. Entrance and refreshments are free and every child who attends will take home a small gift. Come to the Rural Hall, 680 Surry Road, Sunday, December 4, 1pm to 4pm.

Dec. 7 - Castine Town Band Holiday Concert, at 7 p.m. at Emerson Hall, including musicians from The Castine Town Band, Maine Maritime Academy and other area bands.




welcomes you to

"A Castine Christmas Celebration"

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12TH
7:00 TO 8:00 P.M.

At the UU Meeting House
86 Court St., Castine

This is an enjoyable, varied, one-hour program featuring carol-singing, brass ensemble, readings, solos, and choral music.

Admission is free. Children are welcome.

FMI: Castinearts.org; Call 326-9583



Dec 17 - Lights of Orland, 3 p.m., to help set up at Orland Fire Station.



Dec. 21 – Community Blue Christmas, 5 p.m. on the Common



Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Service
4 p.m. UUC




Thanksgiving Meal Boxes

A collaboration with Community Compass (a UUCU grant recipient) and Trinitarian Congregational Parish of Castine.

A few expressions of gratitude:

“One man came out to accept the food and his wife followed. When she saw what we had, she smiled from ear to ear. It was a million \$ smile, and one I will never forget. I think that we all are doing important work. Too bad we could not do more.” - from Skip Greenlaw, Board Chair of Community Compass

“One lady called me twice to say thank you. She had been recently hospitalized for an extended amount of time. She said she honestly didn't know how they would afford a Thanksgiving Meal with just her husband working and the bills piling up. They had recently lost their food stamps as DHS decided that her husband made too much. However, his income hardly covers the bills and gas to continue to get to work. People seemed much more thankful this year. Things are much harder with inflation.” - from Tammie Cox, Community Compass Navigator

UUCU financed and delivered 61 boxes. Additional boxes were delivered by Community Compass. The cost per box was \$25.13. Any extra funds raised are being carried over to the Christmas Box deliveries.

Thank you all for your support, Gil Tenney

No Neighbor Left Behind

In October, a group gathered at the church to prepare our quarterly outreach meal. We packed 124 meals consisting of lasagna, Caesar salad, an apple and cookies and send them off with Gil Tenney, Pedrick Sweet, and Jess Morehouse for delivery.

The initial reaction to the whirlwind of cutting, plating, mixing, bagging, etc., the various components of the meal by our food prep groups is that the time spent together getting the meals ready is just plain fun! As we searched for the missing salads, danced and dodged around one as we pulled together the meal's components, then counted and recounted the bags, making sure all was ready to send along—we found ourselves ultimately laughing,



pleased with the final outcome of our efforts and looking forward to the next opportunity to gather and serve...but that is only part of the story.

Yes, this is a service project, and we are grateful to be able to support neighbors who may need a helping hand, knowing that all of us depend on neighbors reaching out to us just as we reach out to them. We are a community. It is what we do. We are connected to one another, and we support one another.

The most important aspect of this NNLB outreach occurred not during the planning or packing of meals, however, but in their delivery. It is through delivery that members of our church make personal contact with individuals and families.



When Pedrick and Gil returned from their “runs” on October 14, they both shared concerns: someone’s health seemed on the decline, another person didn’t answer the door, and a third individual, with known health issues, had left his door unlocked and was nowhere to be found.

Pedrick and Gil could not ignore what might be serious needs being experienced by these friends—and that is what Bob Holmberg, Pedrick, Gil, and Jess experience when making deliveries: they become friends enabling a greater trust, intimacy, and dignity to take place.

The good news is that after Pedrick called two of the individuals about whom he was concerned, he found them well. He was

able to make sure that their meals were delivered successfully.

In the case of the person Gil encountered whose needs have increased, he and Pedrick reached out to offer additional help to support this family.

Bottom line: We each serve our greater community as we are able. We use our time and our gifts to make a difference in one another’s lives, but this month I am especially grateful to our drivers who are the face of our church as these meals are delivered and whose compassion deepens our connections with one another.

Please consider joining us as we get the opportunity to do this again in January! Thank you.

Here is a reprise of some favorite NNLB recipes. The chicken rub recipe makes a pretty wicked fish taco seasoning mix, and the meatloaf recipe sneaks in grated carrots for a veggie boost. Enjoy!

NNLB Chicken Meal, from Internet

Rub Recipe: The recipe calls for 4 leg quarters serving 6. I think serving 4 makes for more sense. Note: Thighs work beautifully as well.

1 T paprika (smoked is recommended)
1 T salt
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp Italian seasoning
1 T olive oil
1/2 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp black pepper

Make the rub by combining all of the spices then adding the oil. You may also save some rub for roasted vegetables, if that appeals.

Let chicken temper for a few minutes after taken from the refrigerator. The meat will cook more evenly. Pat dry the chicken, then rub the mixture onto the outside as well as under the skin.

Place coated chicken pieces on a baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees F for approx. 50 minutes. To maximize crispness do not crowd the pieces. When poked with a fork, clear liquids should run out. Internal temp should be 165 degrees.

NNLB Meatloaf

2 lb. 80% lean ground beef (or whatever other meat variety you like to use)

1/4 cup milk

1/2 cup plain breadcrumbs

1 pkg. onion soup mix

1 large carrot—grated—1/2 cup

2 eggs

barbecue sauce

Soak the breadcrumbs in the milk and set aside for a few minutes. Add all ingredients together and press into a large bread loaf pan.

Top with barbecue sauce and bake at 350 F for approx. 40 minutes. Meat thermometer should

read 160 degrees.

This recipe generously serves 6



Collaborative Anti-Racism Conversations

Second Tuesdays 4-5:30pm on ZOOM

Next Meeting: December 13th from 4-5:30pm

Facilitator this month: Rev. Sara Hayman

Conversation Topic: Reckoning with Our Local UU History

What do we know about our Maine UU congregation's historic ties and involvement in slavery and the genocide of indigenous people? What uncomfortable truths do we need to acknowledge and wrestle with? What are we learning from other research and work of other Maine UU congregations at this time? Where do we begin and how might we engage in truth-telling, healing and accountability?



Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4695376814>

Meeting ID: 469 537 6814 **Phone:** 646-558-8656

All are welcome to come and be a part of this learning community. Each month, we explore a topic together about our efforts as individuals and UU faith communities to be more anti-racist people and congregations.

Orland-based non-profit get \$600K from Bezos fund to help homeless

By [Morgan Sturdivant \(wabi.tv\)](https://www.wabi.tv) Published: Nov. 22, 2022 at 6:06 PM EST

ORLAND, Maine (WABI) - They're calling it a game-changer.

H.O.M.E Inc. says they have received \$600,000 from the Bezos Day 1 Families Fund. It's the largest grant in the history of the non-profit.

Personal notes: At the 2017 UUCC Annual Meeting, the congregation approved financial support for H.O.M.E. Later, I asked Tracey Hair, the new executive director, how our support impacted H.O.M.E. Her response - "It gave me a voice." Her voice and personal story have since been heard throughout Maine and beyond and UUCC support has continued.

Abject poverty, family tragedies and homelessness are all part of Tracey's story. Her success now as executive director of H.O.M.E. is an inspiration for us all. A few years ago, I was inspired to engage a film producer (Kane-Lewis Production) who could portray the stories of Tracey and others who successfully broke the chains of poverty and homelessness. Tracey often remarks "mentors are in fact the only reason I am alive."

Funds have been raised to produce a documentary film "Building Hope." Filming is underway with hopes that our church can be the site for the first screening later in 2023. Planning for such an event can contribute to our goal of a thriving congregation.

The Bezos Fund grant is powerful evidence of Tracey's success and a UUCC opportunity to tell our story of supporting our broader communities.

Happy Holidays!

Gil Tenney