



# THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

December 2024

## It is 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 and friends while serving our broader communities.

## Worship in December

Sunday, December 1	Hope is Not an Empty Promise Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck Musician: Karen Froehly
Sunday, December 8	Worship Leader: Rev. Jacquie Robb Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Sunday, December 15	Being There Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck Musician: Karen Froehly Potluck
Sunday, December 22	Solstice Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Tuesday, December 24	Christmas Eve – Cookies, Carols & Candlelight (3 p.m. cookies, 4 p.m. service) Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Sunday, December 29	Sunday with the Sail Bums Worship Leaders: Allison Bankston and Gaylen Smith



## Contact Us

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207-326-9083 • Email: [office@uucastine.org](mailto:office@uucastine.org)  
Website: [uucastine.org](http://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](mailto:office@uucastine.org).

## From the President's Desk

Greetings to All,

Tom and I joined UUCU in 2010 and it is safe to say that our congregation has seen many changes in the ensuing years. I have long resisted taking an official leadership position in our congregation, so it was with some reluctance that I accepted the nomination to become President of the UUCU Governing Board at the 2024 Annual Meeting. Although I am not convinced that my qualifications match what is needed to navigate the uncharted waters of 2025, I will certainly do my best. After presiding over my first Board meeting on 21 November, it is clear that I will need the help and support of everyone in the congregation as we face the uncertainties that lie ahead.



The concert is free and all are welcome. I hope to see you there.

Perhaps the warm weather this autumn has lulled us into thinking that winter might skip us this year. My guess is there is no chance of that, so let's not forget that nature can often put a new perspective on our problems, as Robert Frost reminds us in the following poem:

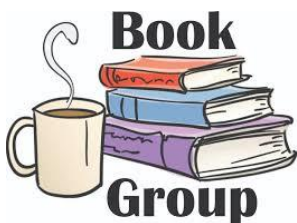
"Dust of Snow"  
by Robert Frost

*The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree  
Has given my heart  
A change of mood  
And saved some part  
Of a day I had rued.*

Our historic building is a very busy place this month. The Community Choir is practicing three consecutive Sunday afternoons from 12 noon to 1:30 pm in preparation for the Community Christmas Concert, which will be held in our sanctuary on Monday, December 9.

Stay safe, keep love in your heart. Thank you for your support.

Marcia Mason,  
UUCU Board President



**Book**

**Group**

## UUCU READS

**Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM**

We are reading *The Second Life of Mirielle West* by Amanda Skenandore.

Based on the true story of America's only leper colony, *The Second Life of Mirielle West* brings to life the Louisiana institution known as Carville, where thousands of people were stripped of their civil rights, branded as lepers, and forcibly quarantined throughout the entire 20th century. For Mirielle West, a 1920's socialite married to a silent film star, the isolation and powerlessness of the Louisiana Leper Home is an unimaginable fall from her intoxicatingly chic life of bootlegged champagne and the star-studded parties of Hollywood's Golden Age.



Consider becoming part of the UUCU Reads book discussion. Drop an email to Debbie at [office@uucastine.org](mailto:office@uucastine.org) and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



## Minister's Meanderings

Presence is our Theme this Month.

Sitting at my desk, thinking about presence, there are so many layers to this word.

At Bangor Seminary all those years ago, we were taught that one of the most important aspects of ministry was to be present to each situation. As UU ministers, we each complete 400 hours of chaplaincy training to cultivate a "ministry of presence." As we enter each room, to minister to the people we are about to meet, we need to not be preoccupied with anything else so that the person about to meet us has our full attention. As for having the right words ready, most of the time it is about listening and being present. Being present does not always mean having the right words ready; most of the time it is about listening and being present.

Here in Castine, the desk I sit at is in a house over 200 years old. My family and I talk frequently about the presence of people gone before. Not necessarily ghosts, although we would welcome them, because recent inhabitants are still

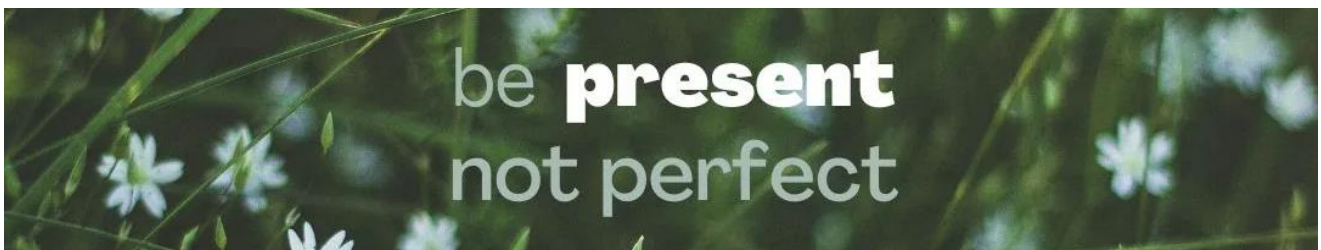


with us. The presence of those who walked these rooms is felt when we look out the windows or the front door and imagine all of the eyes before ours that watched the sunrise or appreciated the beauty of the water and trees.

Being back in New England, particularly Maine, specifically on the coast, one is never alone. The presence of the beloved elms, the laps of the waves, the occasional sound of a boat's horn....the world shows us our little, insignificant place in the order of things, while also holding us in its loving arms as a child of the universe.

Presence is about being there. Being there emotionally for our beloveds, being there physically or on Zoom when we say we will be, and being there in our hearts and minds for whatever may come. This winter, I wish for you an awareness of your place in the order of things so that you may never feel alone.

In peace  
Rev. Amy





## Post-Election Thoughts

*What people have the capacity to choose, they have the ability to change.*

–**Madeleine Albright**

*I was taught to strive not because there were any guarantees of success but because the act of striving is in itself the only way to keep faith with life.*

–**Madeleine Albright**

**Madeleine Albright** was born May 15, 1937, Prague, Czechoslovakia, a champion of democracy who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations (1993–97) and who was the first woman to hold the cabinet post of U.S. Secretary of State (1997–2001). Author of “Fascism, A Warning.”

At the UUCC Sunday service on November 10<sup>th</sup>, people expressed their personal fears and concerns stemming from the outcome of the presidential election. I heard concerns that our younger generations have been dealing with the emotional impact of climate change and now have to deal with rhetoric and fabricated stories of the campaign and its results.

Another member expressed a concern for families living in poverty while trying to raise a family. They could be considered the most vulnerable to climate change and now to unknown future governmental policies. They need our help.

I feel distraught if I focus too much on the current fears and possible implications of the

new administration of our country. On the other hand, I find comfort in considering ways our congregation can build on our strengths and strengthen our vulnerabilities. At our November 10<sup>th</sup> service, I shared with the congregation my high school motto “Dare to be True”. As a young teenager, these words did not have the level of meaning as they do now, years later. Today, I equate “Dare to be True” to our UUCC covenant to be “open to the views of others” and I keep in mind UUA Principles which include “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all”; a great platform from which to work.

I hope these comments will keep us “striving”.

Gil Tenney

*The main thing is to remain oneself, under any circumstances;  
that was and is our common purpose.*

–**Madeleine Albright**



## No Neighbor Left Behind

Even as we work our way through Thanksgiving leftovers and anticipate December holiday dinners, we can also look forward to the January 10th No Neighbor Left Behind meal. This meal will consist of chili, cornbread, salad, and, hopefully, clementines. Yup, it means a corps of makers, bakers, packers, and deliverers are needed. More info will follow during Sunday service announcements.

As ever, it is possible to feel daunted by the task of pulling together such a meal by our relatively small NNLB team—but knowing you all, I have no doubts about our ability to make this happen amid a climate of friendship, laughter, generosity, and compassion. You are an amazing crew with whom it is my pleasure to serve these meals.

Anyone wishing to participate in the preparation, packaging, and delivery of the January meal, Sign up at fellowship hall or contact me at 207-326-4924. All best, Johanna



## Holiday Food Boxes

On Friday, November 22, we picked up 56 Thanksgiving turkey dinners and delivered them to recipient families in the Blue Hill peninsula. All these meals were delivered to households; some had only one resident - but the comment I got from one of these folks was, “Wonderful! Now I can invite people over for Thanksgiving dinner!” How satisfying to know that one gift of a dinner expands to many gifts of dinner invitations to others.



you shop in the Blue Hill store, thank an employee for their support of community initiatives. It makes a difference.

Thanks to the wonderful response from the UUCU and the Trinitarian church to the appeal for funds toward this drive, we have enough financial resources to cover the Christmas ham dinners with perhaps a slight overage that we can apply to next year’s Holiday Dinner effort. A special thanks to Hannaford Brothers in Blue Hill and Josh Stevens with his very helpful crew. Hannaford generously donated all the turkeys and has promised to donate all the hams for the Christmas Dinner. The next time

## Opportunity Fund

The "Building Hope" documentary film on homelessness in Maine, produced by local Kane Lewis Productions and the vision of our Gil Tenney, has now been shown at several regional venues with critical acclaim. It has received first year financial marketing support from the UUCC Opportunity Fund. The marketing plan is gaining steam with upcoming presentations Saturday, Dec 7th at the Ellsworth UU, and Sunday, Dec 8th at the Blue Hill Congregational Church. A special showing is planned for state legislators in Augusta. Eventually we hope the film can be shown at venues throughout Maine.



The question raised by the Opportunity Fund Committee and several Castine leaders is "What Can We Do?" as a local community to help alleviate this statewide AND very local problem.

In response, the Opportunity Fund Committee is facilitating a first planning meeting at UUCC Dec 4th of a Castine Regional Workforce Housing steering group to start exploring opportunities for the development of affordable workforce housing in our region including Penobscot and Orland. Representatives will include Bobby Vagt, Castine town counsellor Roberta Boczkiewicz, and Jamie McNair from Penobscot, a local banker and building contractor. At the first meeting we will hear from Peter Roth on the successful development of the Island Workforce Housing Project on Deer Isle.

Bob Holmberg  
Chair, Opportunity Fund Committee

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## December 15th - Potluck Sunday



It's time to celebrate the Solstice, Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanza and just being together as a community of family and friends. In this season of over-consumption, let's consider lighter dishes of basic body and soul satisfying food to share (and don't forget your veggies!). Family and friends are always welcome! See you Dec. 15 following service.



# 'Tis the Season – About Town and Beyond



## Witherle Holiday Tree Trail

November 29-January 6

With the help of Castine Arts Association, the Witherle Woods magically comes to life every holiday season. Down one of the trails, you're invited to decorate an evergreen (or two!) with biodegradable homemade ornaments. As the holiday season progresses, walk the trail to see fellow Castiners' creativity on display!



Come  
to  
the

# Castine Town Band Holiday Concert

Wednesday, December 4th  
7:00 P.M.  
at  
Emerson Hall,  
Court Street, Castine

Musicians from The Castine Town Band,  
Maine Maritime Academy and other area  
bands celebrate the holiday in Castine.



## Holly Berry Fair And Dinner

**Saturday, December 7, Emerson Hall, Castine**



◆ **CRAFT FAIR** ◆  
4pm-7pm  
Pottery & Stained Glass  
Hand Blown Glass Items  
Silver Jewelry  
Weaved Items  
Designer Placemats  
Silver Ornaments  
Quilts

◆ **DINNER** ◆  
4:30pm-7pm  
Baked Beans & Ham  
Mac & Cheese  
Coleslaw & Rolls  
Gingerbread with topping  
**Adults \$12**  
**Children 12 & Under \$5**  
**Dessert \$4**  
Take out available



◆ **Fresh Christmas Wreaths \$35** ◆  
with pinecones and red ribbon

◆ **Silent Auction** ◆

◆ **Bake Sale Table** ◆



Sponsored by  
Dr. Mary Cushman Circle & In Conjunction with "Light Up Castine"





welcomes you to

# “A Castine Holiday Celebration”

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>  
7:00 TO 8:00 P.M.

at the  
**Unitarian Universalist Meeting House**  
86 Court St., Castine

This is an fun, seasonal, one-hour program featuring carol-singing, brass ensemble, steel band, readings, solos, and choral music.

FMI: [Castinearts.org](http://Castinearts.org); Call 326-9583



December 21<sup>st</sup>  
**Lights of Orland**,  
after 3 p.m. enjoy a  
drive through Orland’s  
magical luminaries.



**Dec 24 - Christmas Eve Service**  
**4 p.m. UUCC**

