



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

February 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.

A Month of Sundays in February



- Feb 4 - Worship Leader: Rev. Dr. Jenny Reece
Musician: Juliane Gardner & Chris Poulin
Theme: Being Wild in Church
- Feb 11 - Worship Leader: Rev. Gabe Burford
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
- Feb 18 - Worship Leader: Rev Mark Worth
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
~ Potluck ~
- Feb 25 - Guest Speaker: John McDonald
Musician: Karen Froehly



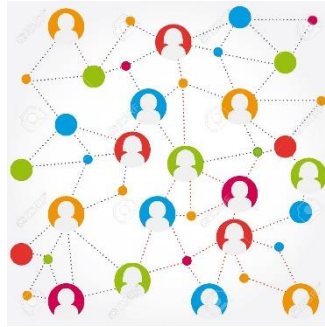
Contact Us

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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.

From the President's Desk

It has been a joy being with my "zoomers" since coming to Florida. I thank them for staying with us during our search for a new minister. What a great group. You all should join us before the service if you can't attend in person. We really do have a nice time together.



In January we were saddened by two members deaths and a damaging windstorm. February is known for cold and snowy storms, so I am afraid we have more to go through. But February is the month of love and so I believe with love, understanding and patience, we will get through all this together.

We will also miss Chad & Morgan as they go off to college. Thank you both for all your help.

We will gain a few more minutes of daylight, thoughts of Spring will be in our minds, and giving our sweetheart a Valentine's Day card will brighten our spirits.

The Board has filled vacant positions as well as the Finance Committee. Our Search Committee is on track with all the necessary administrative requirements. The Opportunity Fund is busy working on lots of projects (see Bob's report later in The Common). No Neighbor Left

Behind delivered 140 meals in January thanks to the guidance of Marcia Mason and Johanna Sweet.

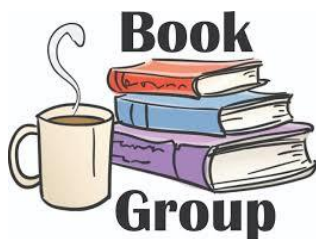
Our renter (Jaime) has settled in. He has had to experience no electricity and heat, but he has stayed the course like all of us. However, I must think that a generator for the Parsonage might be something to consider in the future. Forgive me for that commercial break.

Again, I want to thank you for all your support and kind words.

Cindi

UCC READS

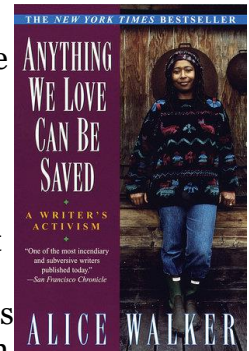
Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM.



We start February with a continued discussion of Alice Walker's *Anything We Love Can Be Saved*, a book referenced by Rev. Elaine Peresluha in her recent sermon at UCC.

In *Anything We Love Can Be Saved*, Alice Walker writes about her life as an activist, in a book rich in the belief that the world is saveable, if only we will act.

Speaking from her heart on a wide range of topics—religion and the spirit, feminism and race, families and identity, politics and social change—Walker begins with a moving autobiographical essay in which she describes her own spiritual growth and roots in activism. She goes on to explore many important private and public issues: being a daughter and raising one, dreadlocks, banned books, civil rights, and gender communication. Here is a wise woman's thoughts as she interacts with the world today, and an important portrait of an activist writer's life.



Consider becoming part of the UCC Reads book discussion. Sign up for our weekly newsletter to get the zoom link, or email office@uucastine.org to be added to the weekly reminder list.

Winter, 2024, Castine

Dearest Congregation,

I share my current news with both much joy and some sadness as well. As many of you know, as of precisely 16 months ago, I now have a new baby granddaughter! I am utterly overjoyed – I had no idea how deep a grandparent’s love could be - to know and love this tiny human is my wild and unsurpassed joy! After almost three months of back-to-back flu, sinus, and Covid (time for a good, long dose of introspection), I have decided it is time to move back to Canada (I have dual citizenship). I am overjoyed to be moving closer to my family (and free health care as I age does sweeten the deal), but I am also mourning all I will be saying goodbye to here in Maine, and each of YOU are part of that.

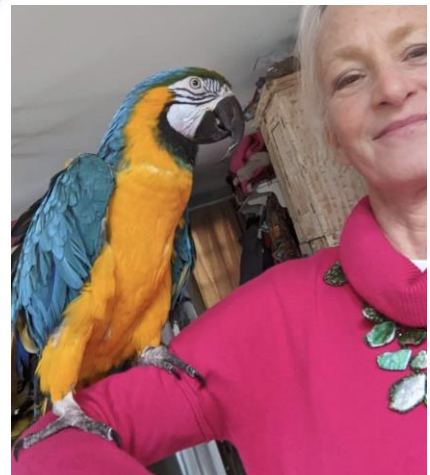


During the time I have come to know this congregation – you, who are its members – I have come to know your deep kindness, your immense integrity, your passion for doing good in this wild world of ours, your welcoming arms, your individual joys and sorrows... I have come to know a group of people I care for deeply. Please know, dear UUCC friends, that you are in my heart.

As for the timeline, my little Castine cabin goes on the market in March, and I plan to be mostly in Canada by the end of May. I will continue to be available as I have been for pastoral care needs through March and will certainly show up at church when my hospice work allows me to. I have one more sermon with and for you all, on Easter, and I shall look forward to it with an open heart and a bittersweet sense of goodbye.

Thank you all so very much for being the amazing humans you are, and for sharing that amazingness with me.

Much Love Always, Rev. Maya Massar



No Neighbor Left Behind

January ushered in a new high in No Neighbor Left Behind meals prepared. Thank you to all who participated on January 12, and special thanks to Marcia Mason who took the reins in pulling those meals together. Over 140 meatloaf portions, baked potatoes, peas, and homemade cookies found their way to recipients throughout our area. An additional blessing to this NNLB date was the ability for volunteers to gather in the UUCU Fellowship Hall for the first time since the renovations began last summer.

Our next meal date is April 11. The specifics of the meal have not yet been planned but your help, as ever, will be needed. I will keep you posted. On a sad note, one of our volunteers, Monique Brown, passed away on January 1st. Her energy, enthusiasm, and gentle spirit will be missed.

Johanna Sweet



Dear Friends of ***Truth Tellers*** and **Americans Who Tell the Truth**:

Great News! ***Truth Tellers*** will begin broadcasting **NATIONWIDE** distributed by American Public Television. Nearly 300 stations have signed on to air the program multiple times through 2025. And YOU have made it possible!

In Maine the broadcast schedule is as follows:

February 8, 2024 8pm

February 10, 2024 2pm

February 29, 2024 on the World Channel



🎭 Concert 🎭

Sunday, February 11, 2 p.m.
UU Congregation of Castine, 86 Court St
free admission

The Romantic Baroque

17th and 18th century's gems for Valentine's Day

Music by

Anna Bon, J.B. de Boismortier, G Sarti, F. Couperin, C.P.E Bach, and J.S. Bach

Ad Libitum Ensemble



Naama Lion - baroque flutes



Marina Minkin - harpsichord

Mardi Gras Concert

with All Donations to benefit the Castine Area Relief Fund

On February 13, Fat Tuesday,
the Castine Arts Association will be
sponsoring a Concert at Emerson Town Hall
from 7 - 8 p.m.

Come Join the Celebration and
Let the Good Times Roll as we Find
ourselves gratefully together following the
recent coastal flooding.



Obituaries ~



Eve Maria Stwertka

Oct. 21, 1924 – Dec. 13, 2023

Eve (Gassler) Stwertka died on December 13, 2023 at the age of 99. She was born in Vienna and grew up in Czechoslovakia, France and England. In 1941 she crossed the Atlantic in a convoy of freighters leading through the Panama Canal, landing in Los Angeles. After finishing high school in Manhattan, she joined the first class of women at Bard, where she met her husband, Albert.

Eve was Editorial Assistant at Partisan Review and a Fulbright Fellow in France. She obtained a Ph.D. at St. John's University, worked as Professor of English at Farmingdale College for 25 years and retired as the associate dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.

Having been Mary McCarthy's student and amanuensis at Bard, Eve later functioned for many years as co-trustee of the author's literary work. Eve published some dozen Young-Adult books, partly with her husband, on science and the environment, and she co-edited the book *Twenty-Four Ways of Looking at Mary McCarthy*.

Eve is the daughter of Austrian Expressionist painter Josef Gassler. She is survived by her husband, her sons Steven and Peter, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Monique Mutty Brown, 57, passed away peacefully at home on January 1st, 2024, surrounded by her family.

She was born on August 3, 1966, in Malden, MA to a large and loving family: her parents, Larry and Danielle Mutty, and her three older siblings, Lawrence, Paul, and Nicole. She graduated in 1984 from Cony High School in Augusta, ME and in 1988 from the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. Monique made many lasting friendships during her years on the hill, which she cherished deeply. Most important of these was her future husband, Jay, who was the resident assistant (RA) in her dorm at the time. They first met one night when she was baking in the communal dorm kitchen and needed to borrow the vacuum to clean up the ensuing mess. He joked that she could borrow the vacuum, but that it was dorm policy for the RA to sample any baked items for "safety reasons." Later that evening, the vacuum was left at his doorstep, accompanied by two chocolate cupcakes.

Monique majored in French at Holy Cross, inspired by the culture and love for foreign languages that was shared with her by her French-Canadian mother, Danielle. After graduating from Holy Cross, she earned a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education and began teaching in Mansfield, CT. Monique touched countless lives as a teacher at Southeast Elementary School, where she worked as a First Grade and Kindergarten teacher for twenty years. Additionally, Monique played a pivotal role in spearheading Mansfield Public Schools'



Monique Mutty Brown
Aug 3, 1966 - Jan 1, 2024



transition from half-day to full-day kindergarten. Her leadership in this initiative had a lasting effect on both the students and local families. Her compassion and creativity shone brightly in her classroom, as did her patience and sense of humor, which were equally necessary to handle dozens of kids with runny noses and untied shoelaces. (She marveled at the lifesaving technology that was the velcro sneaker.)

Both of Monique's daughters - Carolyn (Brown) Certo and Katie Brown - attended Southeast School and loved the years they were able to spend at school with their mom, where they often ate lunch with her and enjoyed the luxuries of riding in a car to school, rather than the school bus. Monique loved participating in school functions outside the classroom, leading face painting and Alex's Lemonade Stand at the annual Fall Carnival, facilitating an after-school program where kids built fairy houses in the woods, and hosting several staff Christmas parties at her house, where the teachers enjoyed competitive games of pool in their basement.

Monique was a natural athlete and played field hockey at Cony High School. Her passion for health and fitness blossomed during her time as the lead aerobics teacher while at Holy Cross. In an issue of the Worcester Gazette newspaper published on November 26, 1984, Monique was interviewed for a story about the dreaded "freshmen fifteen". The reporter described her laughter as she reflected on how "you can't put on weight when you are hiking up all these stairs," a reference to Holy Cross's extraordinarily hilly campus. But if the stairs weren't cutting it, Monique added that her aerobics class at the Hart Center was a great supplement. After college, Monique became an avid runner, participating in the yearly Castine 4th of the July 5K with her brothers and father,

and eventually alongside her daughter, Carolyn (who, at age twelve, requested to run with her mom and then proceeded to complain the entire time). Monique was patient and supportive, and cherished these mother-daughter moments, despite the complaints and far slower pace. Monique later trained and completed her first half marathon in Fairfield, CT with a crew of neighborhood moms - an accomplishment of which she was very proud.

Monique became a keen sailor at a young age and grew up sailing the Penobscot Bay with her parents and brothers. The five of them set sail on many adventures in their twenty-two-foot sailboat, Ninique, where they learned lessons about navigation, weather, and, most importantly, how to have fun when nothing goes according to plan. Monique later carried on this love for adventure and the ocean with her own family, during the many summer afternoons they spent sailing aboard Flicker.

Monique moved to Castine in 2017 to support her parents as her father began hospice. During her time in Castine, she spent many hours volunteering at the Witherle Memorial Library, where she enjoyed being a part of the local community.

Monique's love and legacy is carried on in her two daughters, Carolyn and Katie, whom she loved dearly. She also leaves behind her husband, Jay; her brother, Lawrence Mutty; her brother Paul Cyr-Mutty and his wife, Jo; and her nephews and nieces Deasy, Sarah, Alex, and Aaron. Monique also leaves behind her first grand-cat, Penny, whom she was very fond of. She was predeceased by her father, Larry, and her sister, Nicole.

Donations in Monique's memory may be made to H.O.M.E. Inc., which is a local community assistance charity in Orland, ME that Monique frequently donated to and supported.



Opportunity Fund Report

During the 1/28/24 UUCC Service, Opportunity Fund Committee chair Bob Holmberg gave an annual overview of this past year's donations to regional nonprofit human service organizations. These contributions help fulfill our congregational mission of "promoting the overall wellbeing of our members and friends while serving our broader communities".

During the past year and a half, the Opportunity Fund Committee has donated or committed \$87,000 to 8 regional nonprofit organizations. These donations have been given in prioritized areas informed by past congregational surveys:

- 1) Wabanaki awareness: \$15,000 to Blue Hill Heritage Trust for the 2023 Restorative Ecology curriculum at Castine's Adams School taught by Native American science teachers Kathy Pollard and daughter Ann Ranco-Pollard. Furthermore, \$10,000 has been committed to this summer's Castine Wabanaki colloquy series and historical sign review in collaboration with Castine Historical Partners, the two museums, and select board. This will include several new signs planned with a Wabanaki cultural historian highlighting local Wabanaki history. Finally, we have committed \$10,000 to this summer's Traditional Bagaduce Waterways Camp to explore native waterways and culture.
- 2) Climate Change: \$5,000 supporting the regional Climate Action Net's collaboration of adult community members with school-based student climate action groups in identifying action and solutions.
- 3) Veterans: \$2,000 sending 2 vets to DC in the Honor Flight program.
- 4) Youth and LGBTQ: funding Out Maine and their new Hancock County wide school community-based education and support program.
- 5) Children/ Poverty and Homelessness: \$10,000 to Families First in Ellsworth to start a new housing support program providing mini loans for first housing costs support to single mothers graduating from their two-year support, education, and job training program. There will be the opportunity for mothers to "pay it forward" to others in helping sustain this new housing support program. Second, \$5000 has been given towards statewide marketing of the new Kane Lewis film "Building Hope" documenting the face of regional homelessness and its possible statewide solutions. The "world premier" will be held at our UUCC this June 29th with many invited guests: mark your calendars!

The newest OF contribution announced is a further \$15,000 donation to Community Compass. CC has survived and evolved over the past 10 years since its inception with ongoing support from the Opportunity Fund. CC has become THE local nonprofit providing no barrier, initial access to local family advocate Navigators for individuals and families in crisis in our 9-town region. The CC Navigators accompany them with a "hand up" in linking with needed local resources, services, and opportunity. Unfortunately, with Covid and persisting high costs, lack of affordable housing, area substance use disorder, etc., the community's needs have only increased. Sedgwick CC Navigator Tammy Cox gave sobering anonymous stories of searing, persisting generational poverty among our neighbors and the daunting work she and the other Navigators perform in learning their stories and helping link with critically necessary services. Jessica Valdez, CC director, was there to receive the Opportunity Fund check and express their great appreciation for our ongoing support.

Here is a [link to a survey](#) so the Opportunity Fund Committee will know your wishes and priorities for the Fund. PLEASE TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO FILL OUT AND RETURN TO DEB! Thanks, Bob Holmberg



Save the Date - Film Premiere at UUCC in June

Dear Supporters:

Coming down the final stretch to the Premiere of **BUILDING HOPE** slated for Saturday, June 29, 2024 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine 4-6pm. We expect to have some panel members including Tracey Hair of H.O.M.E. and others. The premiere will be in person and via Zoom. Many screenings to follow.



Cullen Ryan (L), Director of Community Housing of ME and Tracey Hair, Director of H.O.M.E.



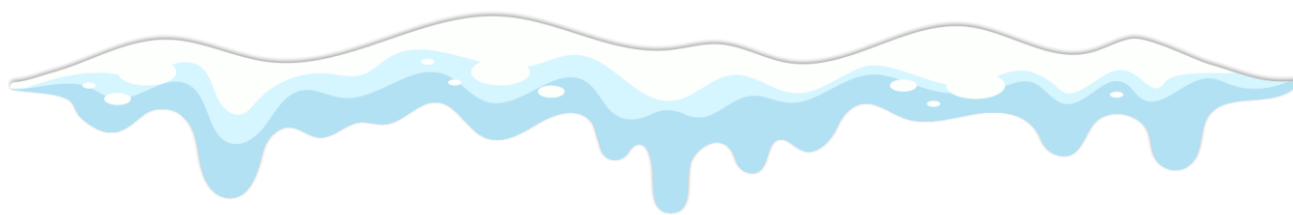
Valley Ave. Bangor Encampment w/ Kathleen and Kelly distributing hot drinks and food to the unhoused

We are pleased to report that Virginia and Stan Bourne have settled into their new apartment in New Hampshire, a much smaller space in a people-rich environment - not their natural habitat. They are doing well and find they really enjoy the frequent visits from their family. Daughter Liz notes that the toddler being given a ride is great granddaughter, Virginia – “a bright light for us all!”



“While it is February, one can taste the full joys of anticipation. Spring stands at the gate with her finger on the latch.”

— Patience Strong



February 29th, 2024

