

# The COMMON

## Merton: A Modern Mystic



UU Bangor's Rev. Becky Gunn will be our guest in the pulpit on January 12. She will speak on Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, a modern mystic, a poet, and the author of 70 books.

Rev. Becky writes, "Merton chronicled his spiritual journey,

his dark nights, and his moments of illumination throughout his life. He read about and corresponded with Buddhists, Taoists, and Muslims. His theology was broadly theistic, yet always connected to everyday experience." Circle the date.

### January Calendar

#### Pulpit

5

Rev. Charles  
"Seeing With  
New Eyes"

1 PM

Walking Meditation  
Witherle Woods

12

Rev. Becky Gunn  
"Merton: A Modern Mystic"

19

Rev. Charles  
MLK Jr. Sunday

26

Rev. Charles  
4th Socrates Sermon  
"What is Courage?"

#### Events

9

Governing Board

### FROM THE BOARD

### DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

A hearty thank you is extended to those who already have sent in pledge forms for 2014. Pledge letters were a little late this year, but have now been mailed. Those who have not yet pledged are encouraged to do so. Please be as generous as you can and remember that increases in pledge



income will allow the congregation to expand our social justice and outreach activities.

Progress is being made on several church activities and initiatives.

*continues on page 2*

## FROM THE BOARD, FROM PAGE 1

The new website task force met during December and continues to tweak the content and design. While the January 1<sup>st</sup> operational goal may not be met, the site should be up and running not too long after that.

Charles and I met with the new Vice President for Student Affairs at the Maine Maritime Academy to discuss the possibility of a campus ministry program. We do not have a definitive response yet, but we are optimistic that some type of program will be allowed, possibly starting in late January.

WG Sayre has discussed the potential scope of work regarding the Parish House with Steve Shea, the general contractor for the Witherle Library addition and currently for the Grindle House next door. We expect to get separate estimates from him for (1) repairing the northwest corner damaged by carpenter ants and water intrusion, (2) raising the Parish House and excavating for a lower level, and (3) replacing the roof shingles. During their inspection of the building they discovered that the roof is leaking due to the age and condition of the shingles.

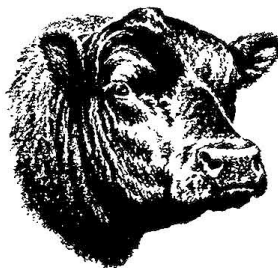
During the December board meeting there was considerable discussion regarding the "Have We Not All One Father" sign that hung in the Meeting House above the pulpit for more than 150 years. With the conclusion of the Castine Historical Society's exhibit on religion and churches, we have been asked to take back the sign. Following the recommendation of the Archives and Artifacts Committee, the board voted to place the sign on a wall in the Parish House with an explanation of the history and origin of the sign. Congregational records will be examined to determine if a vote of the congregation is necessary to accomplish this.

The board also decided that the weekend of January 26-27 would be the best time for Olav Nieuwejaar, our Ministerial Settlement Representative, to come to Castine to speak to the

board and to the congregation. We have suggested that time to him and are awaiting his reply.

Finally, a great big thank you is due Jim Climo for all his efforts in providing the beautiful (and large) tree for the Meeting House. Thanks also to Linda Trumbull for allowing the tree to be harvested from her property and to Joan Bothwell for the wonderful balsam wreaths adorning the Meeting House windows and exterior doors.

Del Davis, President



## DIET &amp; HUMAN HEALTH

Fourth in a series on ethical eating compiled by the Rev. Gary Kowalski

A 2012 study from Harvard School of Public Health researchers found that consumption of red meat is associated with an increased risk of total, cardiovascular and cancer mortality... One Daily serving of unprocessed red meat (about the size of a pack of cards) is associated with a 13% increased risk of mortality, and one daily serving of processed red meat (one hot dog or two slices of bacon) is associated with a 20% increased risk.

In this country, roughly 29 million pounds of antibiotics--about 80% of the nation's total use of antibiotics--are added to animal feed every year to speed livestock growth. This widespread use of antibiotics on animals contributes to the rise of resistant bacteria, making it harder to treat human illnesses.

## CHARLES' COGITATIONS



Observing the beginning of a New Year can be a meaningful and important time in one's life. Depending on your religious, cultural or ethnic perspective, there are a variety of times in the calendar year when you may sense a New Year beginning. But January 1<sup>st</sup> is the official New Year in our calendar and it carries with it a great deal of symbolic meaning. The name January comes from the Roman Janus, the god of portals and thresholds. Janus had two faces so he could view the past and the future simultaneously.

Janus symbolizes the importance of the New Year. Janus with his two faces, looks back and forward and calls for a time of reflection for individuals and for congregations. It is helpful to contemplate if there are things about which we could have been more mindful? Can we look back and identify things for which we are most thankful? The list of ways we can look back is long, but you get the idea.

The past year has been very eventful for us here at UUC. This has been a year of transition and major change. Together with the Transition Team and the Board, we have set things in motion that will help our members process the change that has taken place and soon begin to ascertain what we want our future to look like.

Asking yourself the question about what direction you as an individual and you as a congregation want to be headed in during the year can be exciting, informative, and maybe a bit scary. It may seem easier to just proceed with things and hope for the best, but we all understand this congregation well enough to know that you don't really want that to happen.

It is important to understand that given certain parameters, one has tremendous freedom in helping to determine what the future has in store. The New Year, 2014, is a true threshold time for UUC. It is important for us to realize that we cannot change the past. But if one pays attention to the past, there is greater possibility to shape the changes you want for the coming year.

During January, I challenge you to spend time reflecting on your recent past and your approaching future. Remember our fourth UU Principle holds up the importance of "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning." If truth and meaning are important in your life and in the life of your congregation, then you need to spend time involved in a responsible search for truth and meaning.

Recognize in the year ahead that you are being called to live consciously in the present moment. You are being called to hold up before yourself your best intentions to live the life you desire. You are being called to be the kind of person you most want to be. And you are being called to create the type of congregation you believe is best for you and for the surrounding community. The reward will be both the process and that a year from now you will be able to see how you have done.

## A GLOBALIZATION OF INDIFFERENCE

His Holiness, Francis

As reported by *Salon*, the on-line magazine, Francis' remarks are part of an 84-page document known as an [apostolic exhortation](#), which makes official the platform for his papacy.



How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.

Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a "disposable" culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society's underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the "exploited" but the outcast, the "leftovers." In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic

growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting. To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for that selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase; and in the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.

## The Wisdom of Nelson Mandela



"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate and, if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

*A Long Walk to Freedom, 1995*

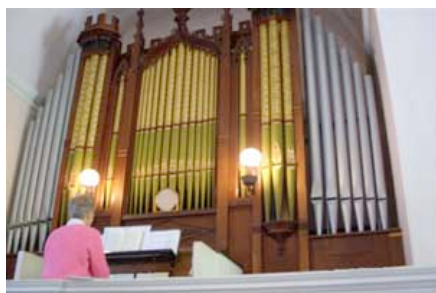


## OUR PIPE ORGAN

Your musician, Gena

Our impressive K. Moeller pipe organ was purchased in 1978 and dedicated in 1980. For you organ aficionados, there are four ranks: stopped wood, tapered metal, cylindrical metal, and metal reeds. It includes a concave pedal clavier.

Before the K. Moeller, we had a Hammond electric organ, which expired when Alexander McCurdy was organist. McCurdy pushed for a pipe organ replacement, either a rebuilt tracker or a new organ. It was decided to go with the electrified K. Moeller.



The next task was to raise \$40,000. From Chairman of the Church Committee (today's Governing Board), Stan Bourne's dedication speech, we learn that Catherine Johnson and Eleanor Fairley were credited with the fund raising push--gifts from young and old, gifts in memory of folks such as early (1798) organists, pumpers, choir leaders, singers, and deacons.

To quote a poem read at the August 1980 dedication by Rev. Denis T. Noonan ,

### The Master's Touch

In the still air the music lies unheard  
In the rough marble beauty hides unseen  
To make the music and beauty needs  
The Master's touch, the sculpture's chisel keen.

## WALKING THE TALK

Rev. Charles

Colin Powell mentioned to me that he had long thought about the possibility of trying some alternate style of worship, like beginning a walk in the woods as a group, starting with a meditation and then being mindful on the walk and ending by sharing one's reflections of the process.

I suggested that we give it a try as a "Walking Meditation," and do it on January 5 in the Witherle Woods.

Sound interesting? Come join in the experience and invite someone you think might enjoy this alternative style-- a Walking Meditation.  
(Pray for good weather!)

## On Membership

Rev. Charles

If you have been attending UUCC and have considered membership, I invite you to talk with me at church, give me a call, or email me at [minister@uucastine.org](mailto:minister@uucastine.org)

The normal process of formally joining our congregation is for a person to contact me indicating interest in signing our Membership Book. Then we make an appointment so that we can talk about membership and I can address any questions you might have, about Unitarian Universalism in general or our congregation in particular. Please know that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Castine wants and needs those who identify with our principles and purposes to join us in our quest to create a caring, welcoming, liberal religious congregation.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kay Hansen  
Religious Educator



During the Thanksgiving season, we learned about the native peoples' deep spirituality and oneness with nature. We participated in a Wampanoag tobacco burning ceremony, a "thanksgiving" ritual offered at the beginning of each day. And Nancy Sayre helped us explore Cherokee religious beliefs and culture.

In December, we focused on ancient stories and rituals of the winter solstice, including those of Native Americans. During January, we will continue to explore native cultures and their earth-centered religious beliefs and cultures.

Our focus will switch from eastern native Americans to the southwest nation of Hopis, who call themselves "the Peaceful People" or "Peaceful Little Ones." This nation is a melting pot of many cultures, bringing together tribes of all regions and living together peacefully as one people. "To be a Hopi is to be in

communion with the Earth and all her people. Deeply rooted spiritual values direct the social behavior of the Hopi people, who remain anti-war, fierce environmentalists and social justice advocates." In our explorations, we will hear the Hopi story of creation, and we will learn about the kachinas, the ancestors of all those who live on earth. We will learn how the kachinas come back to live with the people for six months of the year, beginning with the winter solstice and staying till the crops are grown. In addition, we will learn about the Hopi celebration with kachinas, called Powamu. Powamu is "The Bean Planting Festival."

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A Celtic Blessing for this season:  
"In the New Year, may your right hand always be stretched out in friendship and never in want."

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### From Thomas Merton

"There is a pervasive form of contemporary violence, and that is activism and overwork... To allow oneself to be carried away by a multitude of conflicting concerns, to surrender to too many demands, to commit oneself to too many projects... is to succumb to violence. The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. It destroys our own inner capacity for peace because it kills the root of the inner wisdom which makes work possible."

## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Del Davis, President  
Gil Tenney, Vice President  
Diana Bernard, Treasurer  
Anne Romans, Clerk  
Nancy Guy  
Tom Mason  
Leslie Fairbank  
Deborah Neve, Alternate

The Governing Board meets in the Parish House at 8:30 am on the second Thursday of each month. Observers welcome.

## THE COMMON

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