



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

January 2025

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 January

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Jan 5 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald |
| Jan 12 | Worship Leader: Rev. Vanessa Titang
Musician: Karen Froehly |
| Jan 19 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Potluck |
| Jan 26 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musicians: Karen Froehly |

Contact Us

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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

The weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas were unusually busy this year at UUC. Much time was spent preparing for The Castine Community Christmas Concert, which was held in our sanctuary on December 9th. Our church really came alive. The pews were full, the music was AMAZING, and the hot chocolate bar and delicious cookies were a huge success. Thank you, Cindi and Alvion, for the beautiful Christmas tree and festive decorations!

I continue to recycle the bottles from the drop box on a monthly basis. The funds collected go toward the Dollar for Scholars program.

UUC was in charge of the Little Free Pantry Program in November, but most of the previously donated items had not been taken, probably because the existence of this resource

is not widely known. Therefore, our "donation table" in the Parish House is still well stocked. The ministers' collaborative will continue to consider ways to make improvements and get the word out.

2024 is behind us. It has proven to be a year of great uncertainty for many people in all parts of the world and the New Year presents us with many challenges also.

I wish you all good health and happiness in 2025.

The whimsical poem below by Emily Dickinson playfully depicts the power of a snowfall.

Respectively Submitted
Marcia Mason/President



Snow flakes

*I counted till they danced so
Their slippers leaped the town,
And then I took a pencil
To note the rebels down.
And then they grew so jolly
I did resign the prig.
And ten of my once stately toes
Are marshalled for a jig!*



Minister's Meanderings

January's theme is STORY. Stories are particularly human, an interpretation of events, whether they happened or not. When I am telling a story to kiddos I often say, some stories are true and some stories are not, and this, this is a story.

Truth or objectivity might be the goal of journalism or academic pieces, but when it comes to stories, truth is not as important as the lesson or meaning of the tale.

I am writing this right before Christmas, and last night I was so happy to watch the televised Kennedy Center show honoring Bonnie Raitt and others. What I appreciate about Bonnie Raitt in particular, and singer/songwriters in general, are the stories told within the songs. Often these stories rhyme, which helps us remember them. Then they are put to music, also helping us remember them.

I have been listening to Bonnie Raitt since I was a child, being exposed to great musicians by my older siblings. Those women and men wrote about real life, and also created characters for us. Bonnie Raitt's dear friend, John Prine, had a particular gift for stories,



telling us about Sam Stone the Vietnam war vet addicted to heroin, and about Loretta and her husband growing older in the song *Hello in There*. Of course, John and Bonnie together have spread the word of *Angel* from *Montgomery*, who was

“an old woman named after her mother.” These songs make up the stories of my life.

What about the stories of YOUR life? Are they read aloud? Sung in the car? We all listen to, and learn from, stories that are sometimes true and sometimes not (think Aesop's Fables, for instance.)

As January's cold may cause a more internal examination and focus for many of us, keep some friends around you in the quiet cold. You might spend time with Alice from Arlo Guthrie or Wendy or any of the Mary characters from Springsteen songs. The story may be true, or not, but it will be a story to stick with you.

I'm looking forward to sharing our stories together.

In peace
Rev. Amy



January Potluck

January 19, 2025, is the date of our next Potluck Luncheon. Don't miss the lively conversation and, of course, the good food! Bring a tasty dish and a friend.

WE'LL SEE YOU THERE!



No Neighbor Left Behind

A challenge is upon us, but, as always, we are equal to it!

Our next meal is on January 10, and it will consist of chili, coleslaw, corn muffins/bread, and fruit (clementines, if available). The challenge is the fact that Pedrick and I will be away until the night of January 5. Yup, it will be a bit of a five-day scramble—but working together, we will make it happen!

We need 6 people to make chili and deliver the containers to church by 2 p.m. on the 10th. The chili should be hot when delivered. I will provide the meat, beans, soup, onions, and containers that will be available on January 7th for pick-up, or as arranged.

The chili recipe is as follows:

8 pounds ground meat
 3 40-ounce cans of kidney beans
 (with sauce—DO NOT DRAIN.)
 8 medium onions—chopped
 8 tablespoons of oil
 8 10-ounce cans of tomato soup
 (UNDILUTED)
 5 1/2 cups of water
 2 2/3 tablespoons of salt
 5 1/3 tablespoons of chili powder
 2 2/3 tablespoons of vinegar

1. Sauté chopped onions until translucent. Put in a large stovetop pot.
2. Brown meat. Pour off fat. Add to onions.
3. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer until thickened, stirring frequently to prevent scorching. It may take a while to reduce because of the volume involved.
4. Fill pans and cover with foil/paper lids, foil side down.

This recipe fills 24 1-lb size aluminum pans.

We also need 12 corn muffin recipes to fill 10 cupcake papers per recipe. These should also be dropped off by 2 p.m. on the 10th.

Corn muffin recipe:

1 cup white flour
 1/2 cup cornmeal
 1/2 cup sugar
 2 teaspoons of baking powder
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 cup oil (canola or other)
 1/2 cup milk
 1 egg.

1. Sift dry ingredients into a bowl.
2. Make a well and add the oil, milk, and egg.
3. Stir together until just moistened.
4. Divide among 10 muffin papers.
5. Bake at 400 F on the middle rack of your oven for approx. 20 minutes, being careful not to burn the bottoms. Test with toothpick if unsure of doneness.

At fellowship hall, these muffins will go in waxed paper bags.

Other volunteers are needed to be at the Parish Hall by 1 p.m. Here, we will make the coleslaw and portion it into lidded cups. We will also portion out grated cheese. I will have these ingredients and containers ready for us. We will pack the meals in bags, accompanied by a piece of fruit. They should be ready to hit the road between 3 - 3:30 p.m.

E-mail johanna.s.sweet@gmail.com to let me know how you would like to volunteer in providing this meal. I won't be able to get back to you until the 6th of January, but it would help me greatly to have your confirmation by the time I return home. If you do not hear from me by the 6th, please call me at 326-4924.

If you would like to be one of the drivers, email me and I will pass that information on to Pedrick.

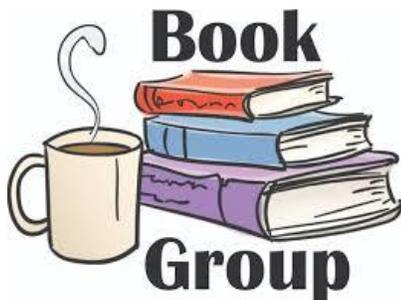
Phew!!!!!! A lot of moving pieces going on here in order to put together 144 meals! As always, I look forward to working with you and sending out these winter-hearty dinners. All best, Johanna



Holiday Meals

The Holiday Meals drive was successfully completed with deliveries of sixty-one Christmas ham dinners to numerous disadvantaged families in the eastern Hancock County area on December 22nd. Thanks to so many generous donations to this drive, we will have a healthy financial carry-over to start next year's effort. Happy Holidays to all whose holidays were made happier!

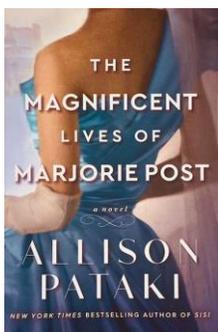
~Pedrick Sweet



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

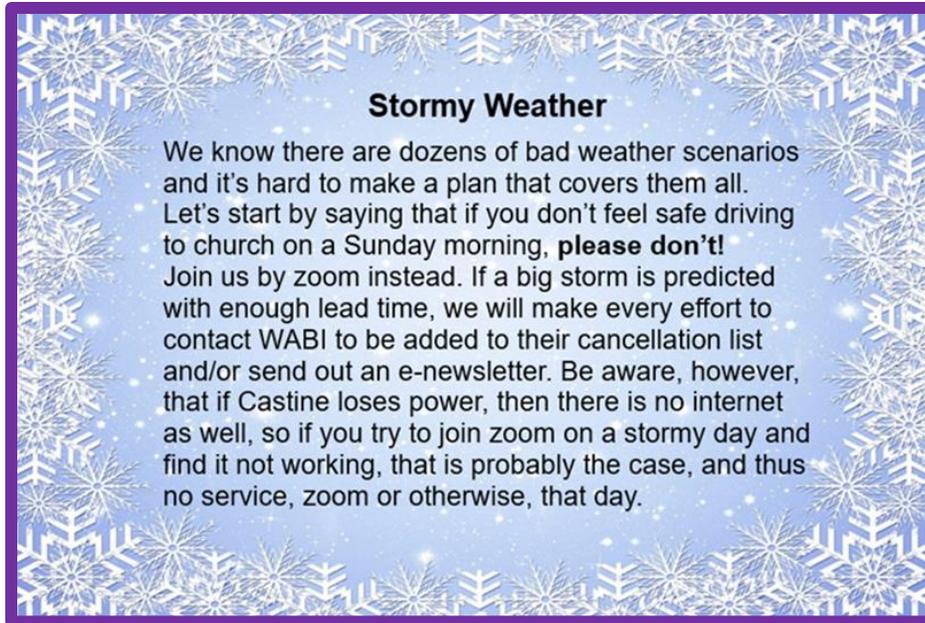
UCC Reads will be taking a break over the holidays, returning on January 7 to finish discussing *The Second Life of Mirielle West* by Amanda Skenandore and begin *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post* by Allison Pataki.

Based on the true story of America's only leper colony, *The Second Life of Mirielle West* brings vividly 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. When a doctor notices a pale patch of skin on her hand, she's immediately branded a leper and carted hundreds of miles from home to Carville, taking a new name to spare her family and famous husband the shame that accompanied the disease.



The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post is Allison Pataki's ninth novel. Published in 2022, it tells a fictionalized version of the life of Marjorie Merriweather Post, the real-world philanthropist, host, businessperson, and political actor, from her earliest beginnings to heiress of the Post cereal empire, to building Mar-a-Lago, to Russia, and so much more, through her death in 1973.

Consider becoming part of the UCC Reads book discussion. Drop an email to Debbie at office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



The Train Ride by Lydia Patrick from Words of Wisdom blog of UUCG, January 12, 2024

One of the last holiday Hallmark videos I watched last year was called, “This is Christmas” and I posted about it on my social media thread as it was very Unitarian in its theme, and I felt it was worth mentioning.

Of course there was a romantic thread and a save the day excitement at the end. But most of the story was about a guy who rode the same train every day into the city for work with fellow travelers – all the same folks – who rarely noticed or spoke to each other. Some days the train was delayed or they were forced to take an alternate train and there was talk of this train being retired and folks transitioning to a bus route instead.

Of course now that main character starts thinking about how they can stop this change and how they need to rally for the cause. This starts the ‘wheels in motion’ for him to bring

everyone together in hopes of making a connection that could surely not be broken.

He plans a party for the holiday and offers a no pressure commitment to whoever and whatever this becomes. Someone offers drinks from her small wine business. Someone offers to do the invite – a young graphic artist who is a whiz at design. Another rider is part of a band and they offer to play for free. Someone else knows someone who might have a venue. And slowly folks start talking about family and tradition and bits of themselves.

When the drama unfolds as it always does in these movies what saves the day is community. These people who are now ‘connected with the humanity around them’ and unwilling to let go of their connections.

What a great way to start the year!
Connected....

2025 UUC Church Directory - Updates Wanted.

Help us stay connected. Please let Debbie know any changes in your contact information such as mailing address, email address, home telephone number or cell phone numbers. Expect the new updated version around the second week in January.

