



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

March 2019

Sunday Service Calendar

Services are at 10:30 am

March is Women's History month as well as the Spring Equinox. Our Sunday services will take up these subjects.

March 3: The Rev. Dr. Duncan Newcomer preaching. His sermon is "The Ascending Feminine: What's a man to do?" Ian Brenner-Simpson is our musician.

March 10: Rev. Margaret Beckman preaching. Colleen Fitzgerald is our musician.

March 17: Rev. Charles Stephens preaching. Julie Gardner & Chris Poulin are our musicians.

March 24: Rev. Margaret Beckman and the Collaborative Ministry Team leading worship. This service will center around the UUA Common Read book, *Justice on Earth: People of faith working at the intersection of Race, Class, and the Environment*. Our three collaborative congregations will all be using this book for this Sunday's service. Colleen Fitzgerald is our musician.

March 31: Rev. Margaret Beckman preaching. Julie Gardner & Chris Poulin are our musicians.



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For questions or comments about *The Common* or to submit items for this newsletter, please contact Jean Lamontanaro at jean.lamontanaro@gmail.com.



Lakeside Reflections, March 2019

When one of us hurts, we all feel the pain. Today, my heart is broken. I feel the pain of our friends within the world-wide United Methodist Church. This week, the general conference of the UMC met in a special session in St. Louis. The delegates voted on how the Methodists will frame their official position relative to Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexual people, Transgender people and all other people who do not conform the historical two-gender/male-female heterosexual binary. The Methodists have been debating this subject for two decades and have, until now, managed to avoid taking a simple up-or-down vote. The vote could no longer be delayed or denied. The Traditional Plan won narrow approval and it will enshrine in church law and discipline the position against acceptance of LGBTQI persons. Such persons cannot be ordained ministers. Only heterosexual marriage can be celebrated or acknowledged. Clergy who support or perform same gender marriages commit a church crime and can be prosecuted. The defeated option was a more nuanced position that would allow for contextual differences of opinion and practice such that



a congregation or a minister could decide for themselves their acceptance of and inclusion as full persons members of the LGBTQI community, thus recognizing that religion, even among Methodists, is local. For members of the LGBTQI community and their supporters, family members, and allies, the UMC door is now firmly closed against them; they will not be permitted entrance in any meaningful capacity. My heart is broken.

I have always thought that all religion is local. Methodists in Maine are not the same as Methodists in Arkansas or Auckland or Buenos Aires or Capetown. Of course, the same is true of Unitarian Universalists. The difference between us and our UMC friends is that we regard our diversity as a strength and our form of religious governance reflects that. We can differ and still be in good standing and fellowship. Our form of governance makes this possible. For the United Methodists, they value a single unified international religious body that makes and keeps the rules for all congregations.

When we struggle with human rights, the oppressed and the marginalized are told they must wait for a seat at the community table until the majority is willing to grant them a place. Women waited (and still wait) for men to grant them equality. Non-whites waited (and still wait) for equality. LGBTQI people still wait for a place at the table of human dignity and equality. When the members of the United Methodist Church

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Lakeside Reflections—continued

(or any religious body) place the value of church unity above the value of human rights, they begin to lose their moral voice and they risk losing the very unity they treasure. Methodists, especially clergy, who believe that they are called by their faith to see and treat LGBTQI people as full and complete human beings, are faced with an untenable choice. Do they stay within the UMC and reject the full humanity, worth and dignity of LGBTQI people, or do they reject the faith tradition of their lives, resign their membership, resign their ordination, forfeit their call and their vocation, and wander in religious homelessness? How does one make such a choice?

If the UMC accepted that all religion is, ultimately, local and that local expressions of religion do not necessarily weaken the whole body, there might have been a way forward together. Now, I fear, there is no way forward together. Can painful and destructive schism be far away?

Our Unitarian Universalist polity protects us from being forced into this kind of impossible

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vote that mandates congregational and clergy behavior, but it does not protect us from the full impact of our own ongoing struggle for full inclusion and welcome and respect. We have our own massive struggles with inclusion of historically oppressed and marginalized groups of people. May we remember as we go forward the pain of the marginalized and support each other in finding our way to greater and greater dignity and respect.

Namaste,
Margaret

Announcing our newest Intern!

Ministerial Intern for Our Three Collaborative Ministry Congregations

We will welcome Ariel Aaronson-Eves as our 2019-2020 Collaborative Ministry Intern sometime this summer.

Ariel will come to Maine from Spokane, Washington where she lives now. She is a student at Starr King School for the Ministry. Her passions include sustainable farming and connecting spirituality and our choices about the food we consume.

The UU Congregation of Castine will be Ariel's primary ministry site and she will split the balance of her time between Belfast and Ellsworth. Lane Fisher and Amy Fiorilli, our first and second Interns, have set a high bar for Interns and we are confident that Ariel Aaronson-Eves will meet that same high standard. We will put together a welcome for Ariel and an Intern Committee when we know Ariel's schedule and expectations.

Meanwhile, let's celebrate!

President's Desk

Thank you to the many helping hands who came together to make the Sunday, February 17 pot luck luncheon a success. From the table set ups, to coffee preparation, to clean up it appears as though it “just happens.” Well, it does not “just happen,” it is a pitching in where you see a need happening. It was a pleasure to have representatives of HOME and Families First join us. Community Compass and Community Childhood Learning Place were also represented and Barbara Royal, Open Door Recovery Center, intended to be present but the demands of ODRC needed her presence.

Thank you, Johanna Sweet for your welcome to Tracy Hair of HOME, as a brand-new United States Citizen by challenging all of us to a trivia quiz about the Great State of Maine

About this time last year, the UUCC board met with Karen Bellavance-Grace of the New England Regional Staff for a board retreat. Karen led us

through some worthwhile exercises. There are two exercises I would like to highlight here.

We were led through a process of determining our learning/working style. Those of us who were gathered learned we were either “orange,” “yellow,” “green” or “blue”. The colors were representative of our learning/working style. Does one of us need to gather more and more information? Does one of us just jump right in without knowing all of the facts? Does one of us prefer to work on a project alone? I have to admit, I do not remember which board member was what color but I do remember that we all have different styles and each style is valuable.

The other exercise entailed listing ALL of the large and small activities at UUCC. Think of the returnable bottles, the snow removal, the lighting of the candles on Sunday morning, ushering/greeting, coffee hour responsibilities, who makes sure the sanctuary is clean, who picks up the mail, who contributes to the Common, who reads the Common? Yes, you and I could add more and more to the list. Karen Bellavance-Grace challenged us to carefully think about each and every activity and ask ourselves, “Does this activity continue to be of benefit to UUCC?”

In the spirit of the question, “Does this activity continue to be of benefit to UUCC?”, please let me know if you have read this issue of the Common. Please send an email, bttenney@maine.rr.com, or stop me on the street or mention it at coffee hour. I will let you know the results.

Take care,
Brooke Tenney, President



Religious Education

In February, our focus was on LOVE and caring for one another. Our project was to make and send valentines to people in the church who are only with us in the summer or members we have not seen for a while. My heart was warmed by the responses we received from our members. Sharing the emails with the children perfectly exemplifies what we would like for our children to learn: that in giving, we receive. Thank you for being a part of our religious education program.

In the first couple of weeks of March, I will be sharing two children's books that I have found especially outstanding in addressing diversity and coping with life circumstances. The first is a recently published book by Jacqueline Woodson, who is the national ambassador for young people's literature and the author of the New York Times bestselling memoir, "Brown Girl Dreaming." In her most recent book, "The Day You Begin," she celebrates the bravery it takes to be who you are even when you feel like an outsider.

The second book that I will be sharing with the children, and I highly recommend for anyone to read is, "Malala's Magic Pencil," by Malala Yousafzai. Malala, who is the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, wrote this book to tell the story of growing up in Pakistan where she began her journey as a young child who wished for a "magic pencil" that would instantly change the injustices she observed in her world. As she became older and her education was threatened, she exchanged the magic pencil for a real pencil and started writing about her concerns. Her words were heard throughout the world, and today, at age 22, she continues to work for quality education for all people.

For the remainder of March, we look forward to celebrating the first day of spring and then, for the final Sundays, we will explore some ideas of, "What is god?"

Kay Hansen, Religious Educator

Thank you!

Dear Jane, Silas, Asa, Luke, Tom, Anita, Mae and Abigail,

I was lying on my bed here at my winter home in Washington, D.C., feeling very sorry for myself because I had a sore back, and then my husband brought me our mail. What did I find? A Valentine from the children at the Castine UU church! My back still hurt, but I felt much better and happier immediately. Thank you so much for taking the time to send me a special treat, and thank you, Kay, for all the special things you do with the children. It reminded me again how lucky I am to be a member of your church and I look forward to being there again with you all next summer.

Love, Carolyn Mathiasen, Washington, D.C.

News from your Collaborative Ministry Team

While all might seem quiet with your collaborative ministry team over these past few winter months, nothing could be further from the truth! Folks from Castine, Belfast and Ellsworth UU churches met on the second Tuesday of February, as they do every month (at 10 a.m. in Ellsworth, if you wanna come talk!) and covered a number of topics that are furthering our goals of providing opportunities and experiences for our communities together, what we couldn't apart.

In the world of improving communication, the collaborative now has a website: <https://bce-cm.org/> who's first goal is helping the collaborative ministry team get things done, but is secondarily a great place to learn more about your collaboration.

There's also a new mailing list for news and announcements about the collaborative. You can learn about this list, how to subscribe, and our other operational mailing list on our website as well (https://bce-cm.org/doku.php?id=join_our_mailing_list). If all that seems confusing, please reach out to Colin Powell at colin@onec.me for information about how to start getting collaborative ministry news in your email!

The CMT is also busy planning another free movie night at the Alamo in Bucksport. Coming up on Thursday, May 23, the Alamo will be featuring a short documentary, "Almost Sunrise," about two Iraq War veterans and their struggle with reintegration into their community. We're busy working with Rev. Al Boyce, who has experience with moral injury, and how we cope when we feel forced to do things that are against our morals. Mark your calendars, and stay tuned!

CMT member Lane Fisher, who has volunteered to organize this year's collaborative service on June 9 announced that Rev. Jodi Hayashida has agreed to lead our service that day.

Lastly, Rev. Sara Hayman from Ellsworth announced that the internship interview committee has one applicant they are actively considering and working with to determine their interest and fit in our multi-congregational internship.

Earth Justice book discussion and Sunday service coming soon!

Your Collaborative Ministry Team of Belfast, Ellsworth and Castine has chosen the UUA Common Read for 2018/19 (*Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Environment*, edited by Manish Mishra-Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom) as our Common Read. All three churches will focus on Earth Justice on March 24, in their respective communities, sharing songs and readings. We will plan a conversation about the book sometime after that service. There are copies of this book available for borrowing in the church office, and through MaineCat. Witherle Memorial Library has also been asked to purchase a copy. Please join us in a Common Read. If you would like to meet regularly to discuss the book by chapter, before then, please contact Colin Powell, one of your CMT members. colin@onec.me

For more information about the UUA's common read, including a helpful PDF discussion guide visit: <https://www.uua.org/books/read/justice-on-earth>

Dollars for Scholars Sponsors Needed

If you are not a sponsor now in our Dollars for Scholars program, you could be the answer to a child's big wish: to finish high school or attend first grade. Back in 2010 or so, members of our congregation learned that children of our Partner Church in Aquino (small village on Island of Negros in Republic of Philippines), were not attending school because of cost. The parents who are mostly rice farmers did not earn enough to pay for tuition (no free education on this island), books or uniforms (mandatory); therefore, their children did not attend school.

Since that aha moment, we have aided in the education of 31-41 children each year. In one way, it is easy. Our American dollars go far. For \$100 a year, uniforms, socks, shoes, back packs, and tuition can be purchased for the elementary children. For \$200 a year, high-school tuition as well as transportation (no school buses) can help the teenagers attend high school. (Actual cost is close to \$800 a year.)

Our Partner Church Committee needs sponsors in order to continue to support 41 children. I have been asked by our Aquino coordinator to consider adding more children to our program. As five students will graduate from high school or college this March, we hope to add five children. Currently, there are ten students without sponsors who our committee supports with fund raising. Because many sponsors have died or moved away since we started this program, we will have 15 children this June to support with fund-raising alone. Please consider becoming a sponsor. You can contact me at elaine4347@gmail.com or 326-0992 for more details. If no answer, please leave me a message.

Thank you for your consideration of making a difference in the life of a child.

Elaine Gerard-Climo

Wood Bank

The last few months of winter is when the demand for firewood is the highest and the supply is at its lowest. This year is no different. We are getting desperate calls from those in need of wood and supplies of dry, seasoned, ready-to-burn wood is scarce.

Our thanks go out to Rodney Flora for offering some of his wood and to Jess Morehouse for keeping his eye and ears open for available wood. Jess has found a source of ready-to-burn wood at sub-market price/cord. Financial contributions to reimburse church funds are needed. Jess has also found some hardwood trees recently blown down and ready to be cut, split and hauled for next winter but we need labor now.

This has been a satisfying endeavor for all involved. Please join us.

Gil Tenney
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Photo by Pellinni at Morguefile.com