



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

March 2021

Sundays in March

MARCH 7:

Rev. Margaret Beckman, worship leader

Ian Brenner-Simpson, musician

International Women's Day (March 8) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality. The 2021 Theme is "Choose to Challenge"

MARCH 14:

Ministry Intern Bettina Lehovec leads worship

Colleen Fitzgerald, musician

MARCH 21:

Joint Service with UU Belfast and UU Ellsworth – our collaborative ministry team leads worship

MARCH 28:

Rev. Margaret Beckman, worship leader

Colleen Fitzgerald, musician

"Women Who Change Our Lives"

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 while serving our broader communities.

Contact Us

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207-326-9083 • Office 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 Jean Lamontanaro at jean.lamontanaro@gmail.com.

Lakeside Reflections, March 2021



“Grief and Hope”

January 19, 2020 is the last time we gathered together on Sunday morning in our historic Meeting House. Beginning January 20th, painting of the interior began now remains freshly painted and uninhabited. We gathered in the Parish House on Sunday mornings in a cozy arrangement of chairs and piano and coffee hour until March 15th when the crushing reality of the COVID-19 virus caused us to close our buildings until we could safely reopen. This month marks the one-year anniversary of those events. We are still waiting to safely re-open our buildings. We had no idea last March that we would be gathering on Sundays and other days via Zoom this March. We still do not know when it will be safe to reopen.

What we do know is that we have come this far together. We have welcomed people from across America into our Sunday zoom worship who could not be with us in Castine, but who are happy to come from the comfort and safety of their homes. We have greatly missed several regular Sunday morning members and friends who cannot or choose not to gather on Sundays via zoom.

Church is different now. Life is different now. Some aspects of our changed lives seem to be improvements and have opened us to new possibilities of being together and of being our

best selves. Some aspects of our changed lives have been painful and disappointing and we long for the time when life will be more like our best selves.

In the last year, we have witnessed extraordinary suffering. Many of us live with other health conditions that increase the risks of becoming seriously ill if we contract this virus. We have now lost more than half a million lives to Covid-19 in this country alone. For every life lost there is a grieving family and circle of loved ones. We are surrounded by grief.

We grieve all those who have died. We grieve the loss of close contact with loved ones. We grieve the loss of gatherings that we may at one time taken for granted. We grieve the birthdays not celebrated in festive parties. We grieve the weddings postponed. We grieve the memorial services to celebrate the lives of those we have loved skipped. We grieve all that might have been and has not been.

And yet, we are also surrounded by hope. Hope does not eliminate or erase grief. Hope lives beside grief and invites us to see that there are possibilities for happiness, fulfillment, new ways of being together that transcend distance, and a more healthy future that awaits us as we continue to create it.



Here in Maine where I live, there is the hope that everyone who chooses to be vaccinated against the Covid virus(es) will be vaccinated before the

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Lakeside Reflections, Continued

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end of summer. Just this week, our state CDC opened the eligibility for shots to all those 60 years of age and older. As I talk with those of you who have gotten one or both doses and as I register for my own doses now, there is a giddy kind of hope. We understand this hope. There is a relief that comes with vaccination that gives us hope about not just our own health and well-being, but that of everyone. We protect each other when we follow the CDC guidelines. With a great deal of hope, we are watching the guidelines for re-opening buildings and events.

We hold two hopes close during this time of

transition. We hope for the day when we will return to the Castine Meeting House. We hope to keep everyone firmly within our circle of love and care – those near by and those farther away. Technology and determination are our companions in these two joined hopes.

What a year it has been. I am grateful to have come this far with all of you. In our grief and in our hope, we care for each other. The future lies before us. May we create the future that supports our very best selves.

Namaste,
Margaret

From Your Collaborative Ministry Team Intern

Hello, dear People. Here we are in March already! The days are getting longer, the cold is waning, and there's a slight smell of spring in the air. In Arkansas, crocuses already are starting to bloom. Spring will come more slowly here, but it will come, like the miracle it is each year...

We're thinking about commitment this month. What does it mean to be a people of commitment? To whom or what are you committed? How does that shape and undergird your life?

One of my commitments is to presence — to living into the magic of each day. Remembering, or trying to remember, the beauty and grace of the world around us. The present reality we live within. I offer this poem by Alla Renee Bozarth as a celebration and an invitation.

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From Your CMT Intern, Continued

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How would your life change if you lived every moment as a prayer?

With love,
Bettina

What Is Prayer? By Alla Renee Bozarth

Prayer is intimacy with the Great Mystery.
Be every moment aware of the Presence —
how you are loved!

She takes off Her wings
to heal you, He surrenders
everything for your sake.
At all times in every
hidden, open place
It lives in your deep
soul's core, It moves
in your moving and acts
through your skin
and the skin or bark or shell
of all living beings— forms of angels,
and also of water, rocks, and fire.

So be awake to the life that is loving you
and sing your prayer, laugh your prayer,
dance your prayer, run
and weep and sweat your prayer,
sleep your prayer, eat your prayer,
paint, sculpt, hammer and read your prayer,
sweep, dig, rake, drive and hoe your prayer,
garden and farm and build and clean your prayer,
wash, iron, vacuum, sew, embroider and pickle
your prayer,
compute, touch, bend and fold, but never delete
or mutilate your prayer.

Learn and play your prayer,
work and rest your prayer,
fast and feast your prayer,
argue, talk, whisper, listen and shout your prayer,
groan and moan and spit and sneeze your prayer,
swim and hunt and cook your prayer,
digest and become your prayer.

Release and recover your prayer.
Breathe your prayer.
Be your prayer.

Let prayer be your thinking
and thriving, your passionate
living and humble dying
back into Earth and God.
Let prayer be your senses and sex,
your political power, your confusion
and vision for good.

Let teaching tolerance and all childcare be prayer.
Let your mistakes be a prayer, and your
unknowing.
Let remorse and forgiveness be prayer.

Make love in every act,
create growth in each intent.
Nature in any form serves
as sanctuary and temple.

Let your bath be an oracle chamber,
every trip anywhere a pilgrimage,
and your dreambed each night
the Holy of Holies.

And so you are praying.
So you do what you be,
and all your being is blessed
and all your life is a prayer.
And all your acts are a blessing.



Collaborative News from Your CMT

Greetings from your Collaborative Ministry Team! Our shared life on Zoom has opened up new possibilities for cross-pollination. Members of ALL THREE congregations are invited to attend the following Zoom classes offered by Belfast Faith & Renewal. Offerings from other churches may follow in coming months.

Conversations About the End of Life:

First Mondays beginning March 1, 10-11:30 a.m. Contact Jacqui Robb jrobb@gmail.com. Join us for a new monthly drop-in discussion group about the end of life. We will be discussing the practical, medical, emotional and spiritual aspects. By exploring the practicalities of preparing for the end-of-life, we are hoping that the journey we embark on will enable you to move forward with knowledge to support you during this time. It has been expressed by those attending these groups that it is refreshing to be able to talk about this topic with others.

Big Open Heart: Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. Feb. 26 – April 2. To register, email Bob Huber, skychariot85@gmail.com. In our everyday lives, we can practice remaining open; open with curiosity to whatever arises within us and outside of us. This enlightened approach is known as Bhodhicitta. We will cover basic Shamatha Buddhist meditation practice, loving kindness meditation (Metta) and Tonglen. This is a continuation of Bob's earlier classes and is open to newcomers.

Exploring Our Dreams: Sundays beginning March 7, 4-6 p.m. Contact Allison Morrill at allison@belfastharbor.net. Dream life offers a unique avenue for personal and spiritual growth, especially when explored with a trusted group. Each week each member will be invited to present one dream. Then others may offer

interpretation ideas for the dreamer to consider. We'll also exchange information about dreaming and tips on recall. Note: At the initial meeting, with no obligation, those present will discuss: Introduction to dreams; techniques to aid recall and keep a journal; ways to recount a dream; value of feedback from others. At that meeting, each person will decide whether to join for the rest of the next six sessions.



Wintering: A Writing Session: Saturday, March 13, 10-noon. Register by March 7 with Linda Buckmaster, lsbuck1@gmail.com. Immerse yourself in some time to reflect, renew, loosen up, and explore through writing. Using prompts from the sublime to the ridiculous we'll give ourselves permission to get a little lost. Come play with words, and who knows what we'll find! Absolutely no experience necessary. Experienced writers can get re-charged.

And don't miss the **Collaborative Anti-Racism Conversations** offered by all three ministers and intern on the second Tuesday of each month, 4-5:30 p.m. through June. Our ministers will take turns facilitating this monthly conversation about racism and doing our work re: decolonization and being anti-racist activists. Each session will include a presentation of some sort (a video clip, case study or reading) followed by conversation, deep listening and engagement with each other. Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4695376814>

Our next **three-church worship service** is planned for March 21. Stay tuned for details.

Your Collaborative Ministry Team



Collaborative Anti-Racism Conversations

Your Collaborative Ministers: Revs. Amy, Rev. Sara, Rev. Margaret and Bettina Lehovc, Intern Minister will take turns facilitating this monthly conversation about racism and doing our work re: decolonization and being anti-racist activists. Each session will include a presentation of some sort (a video clip, case study or reading) followed by conversation, deep listening and engagement with each other.

These monthly anti-racism conversations will happen each **on ZOOM each 2nd TUESDAY from 4-5:30pm, October 2020 through June 2021** and are open to the members and friends of our three congregations. We use the Belfast Zoom connection.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4695376814>

Meeting ID: 469 537 6814

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,4695376814# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,4695376814# US (New York)

New Shades of Blue Concert

Did you miss the New Shades of Blue Live Stream Concert at the Camden Opera House on February 26? Good news you can watch the recording now! For this event New Shades of Blue, Juliane Gardner (lead vocalist, keyboards) and Christopher Poulin (lead vocals, guitar, flute), were joined by jazz clarinetist Brad Terry.

You can watch the concert as a video, either on the video section of the COH FB page; https://www.facebook.com/camdenoperahouse/videos/?ref=page_internal, or on their YouTube page; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQRDPs98SjZynsmp3fwD4nQ/videos>

From the Congregation

January 6

We stare at the steps of the Capitol
as Ghosts of yesterday's assault
butt against our consciousness
scourge our sense of peace
with Confederate flags and
banners proclaiming the rights
of a broken would-be king.
We watch bad to worse,
worse to obscene,
obscene to unthinkable
this attack that will not stop
until the lies end
and the power-mongers relent
from their ambitious annihilation
of truths we thought could not be destroyed.

One in the mob,
half-naked, half-human,
howls the charge
and we see our own mouths screaming,
reflected in the shards of glass.

Johanna Sweet

January 2021

Religious Education

This month the children of Castine sustained a deep loss. The passing of our dear friend Irene Hall is one that is felt by many. I am honored to have known her and grateful for all she gave us. I will miss her and I know the children will too.

Jessica Rollerson

Opportunity Fund Update

The following message is from Bob Holmberg, former board president of Community Compass.

Good News: we will be receiving \$15,000 this March from the UUCC Opportunity Fund.

This UUCC Opportunity Fund has been our most loyal funder over our first years of development.

They really allowed us to begin and sustain our growth. We had received 3 previous, generous OF grants starting in 2017.

The OF taskforce and UUCC congregation look for longer term “partnership” relationships with a few strong social justice organizations which connect with the voice of those in need. I am so proud that we fit their high bar.

They appreciate the need for longer term infrastructure support for non profit organizations, beyond yearly grants which often do not fund necessary “administration” costs such as salary for our director.

I have emphasized with the OF taskforce our desire to have strong ongoing communication with the UUCC congregation about our work: results and stories from our clients connecting with Navigators in “working together, breaking the cycle of regional poverty”.

UUCC also appreciates our endeavor to be a “big tent” facilitating organization in building a regional support network in the Community Advisory Board and Connected Community Forums.

Bob Holmberg

Wood Bank News

Castine wood bank makes it to the *New York Times*.

The phone rang recently. A very nice voice introduced herself, as Marguerite Holloway, an environmental journalist teaching at Columbia University and writing an article for the NYT on wood banks in Maine. <https://journalism.columbia.edu/faculty/marguerite-holloway>. I never would have guessed that our small and sometimes struggling wood bank would make the circulation of such a media giant. We're thrilled when the *Castine Patriot* picks up our story.

Marguerite arrived. The first day she interviewed Tracey Hair, H.O.M.E.'s Executive Director, and Clint Claggett who does “everything wood” for H.O.M.E. from making shingles to H.O.M.E.'s wood bank. I found this an intriguing article on H.O.M.E., its people, its history and the impact of climate change on those struggling with the stresses of poverty and homelessness.

The second day, Marguerite came to the Castine wood bank then on to Surry to view a new site provided by the Blue Hill Heritage Trust. It is gratifying to see the emerging network of concerned citizen working together for a worthy cause. Here is the link to “Where there's no heat: You Need Wood, You Get Wood” by Marguerite Holloway published Feb 19, 2021 and updated Feb 20, 2021.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/19/climate/wood-banks-winter-maine.html>

Gil Tenney

A Message from the UUA President

The following is from an email message from Unitarian Universalist Association President Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray

In the last year, we have experienced trauma unprecedented in our lifetimes. The assaults on our democracy, the devastation caused by COVID-19, repeated incidents of deadly police violence, the rise in white supremacist violence and the impacts of climate disasters continue to take their toll. So many lives and livelihoods have been lost. We are exhausted. We are grieving.

To everyone in Texas, we send you our love and care and pray that you and your loved ones are safe. To leaders in communities impacted by these deadly winter storms, if your congregation, members of your community or local partner organizations are in need, the UUA's Disaster Relief Fund is a resource for financial grants to help in this time. Please be in touch with Lisa Presley at lpresley@uua.org with any questions about applying for grants.

Over the weekend, we awarded a grant to the San Marcos UU Fellowship to bolster a community effort to house and feed those experiencing homelessness. We also organized a shipment of water to First UU Church of Houston to distribute in partnership with neighborhood organizations. These are small offerings in what will be a long recovery, but they are real ways that UUs make a difference through the UUA's Disaster Relief Fund.

For those who are able, your donations to the Disaster Relief Fund will help us respond to the urgent requests coming in.

During times of grief and loss, we have traditionally found comfort and resilience in gathering together. As religious communities, it

is what we do. Yet, we now approach the first anniversary of when, due to the pandemic, the UUA and most of our congregations shifted to all-virtual gatherings. For many, this has been an additional source of grief and isolation and can make it more difficult to process our grief and pain.

Given the layers of stress and trauma, the need to care for ourselves is more important than ever.

Encourage each other to take time off—and heed this advice yourself. It is critically important to support congregational staff and religious professionals, especially those who hold marginalized identities or who have children, to take time off.

We must recognize the level of trauma that has disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous and Latinx people and communities of color. Additionally, many of our children are experiencing untold stress and challenges. Parents are giving all they can to support their kids and their livelihoods.

It matters that we lean more deeply into compassion and care, for these are practices that remind us we are not alone and reinforce our humanity and our interdependence. There is no more important practice or culture to develop in this time.

May you be kind to yourself and others. And may you have space to tend to your heart, your spirit and your well being. Our ministries and leadership will benefit from it.

Yours, Susan

Please visit <https://giving.uua.org/disaster-relief> to donate to the Disaster Relief Fund.

Inter-Generational Climate Conversation

You are invited to Participate in an **Inter-Generational Climate Conversation**

MARCH 20th at 4 PM

It is a rare opportunity for each generation to learn about each other and from each other.

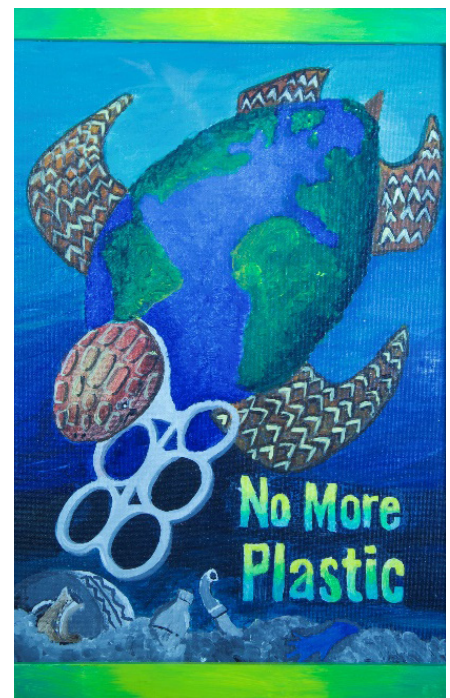
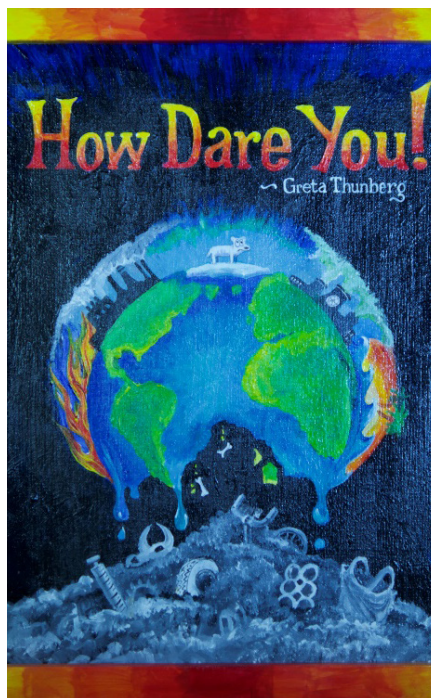
- For **Elders**, to discover what our youth think about the climate situation in which they find themselves
- For **Youth**, to find out how elders feel about the world they are leaving behind for the young

- For **Adults**, to explore how to mentor/parent young children who are becoming increasingly aware of the climate crisis

Rob Shetterly of *Americans Who Tell the Truth* will moderate the discussion. The event is convened by *Climate Action Net* and the youth *Climate Empowerment Project*, and is co-sponsored by the Blue Hill Public Library.

More information at www.climateactionnet.org

Registration will be limited. Please register at: <https://bhpl.libcal.com/event/7531419>




The graphics on this invitation are from a set of 17 climate note cards created by 8th grade Deer Isle Stonington students, and can be ordered on the CAN Website.



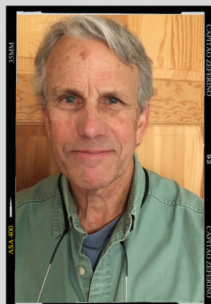
COMMUNITY COMPASS

Do You have questions about the COVID Vaccine?

Community Compass Presents:
Ask your LOCAL and TRUSTED
experts all about the new
COVID Vaccine 



March 5th at
5:00pm via Zoom
Recording
available



Retired pediatrician
Dr. Bob Holmberg
hosts panelists from
our local Northern
Light Health Care
Centers, School Nurses
and more to talk about
the facts and your
questions.

Register or submit questions by emailing
director@communitycompassdowneast.org

