



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

May 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 May

- | | |
|--------|---|
| May 4 | Worship Leader: Rev. Kevin DeBeck
Musician: Karen Froehly |
| May 11 | Guest Leader: Rev. Dennis McCarty
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald |
| May 18 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Karen Froehly
Potluck |
| May 25 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald |

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.



Minister's Meanderings

Imagination

Now that the weather is getting warmer and plant life has begun to return, it is easier to summon up the old imagination machine. In the dark, cold months, we call on Imagination to help us stay buoyant. Access was harder, then, than it is now.

I can imagine my planter boxes overflowing!

I can imagine us filling more seats on Sundays!

I can imagine more people talking more, with more people, because it is nice to hang around outside and chat. When the wind is not hurting our bodies.

I imagine that more of our neighbors will keep finding ways to keep letting our politicians know that we will not sit idly by and have our freedoms taken away.

I imagine what it will be like to go through the entire Spring to Summer season with all of



you; my family and I arrived last year in late July and I began working at the congregation August 1. I imagine May and June full of returning faces.

What can you imagine?

For yourself?

For our congregation?

For your communities?

For this nation?

Let us be free to imagine good things for ourselves and for others, and feel courageous enough to bring it up.

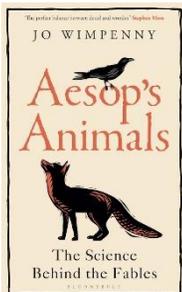
Imagination shared is a great way to see imagination become real. With shared ideas, shared work, shared vision, we can make things happen. Let imagination be your summer fuel, within beloved community, always being created as we go.

In peace

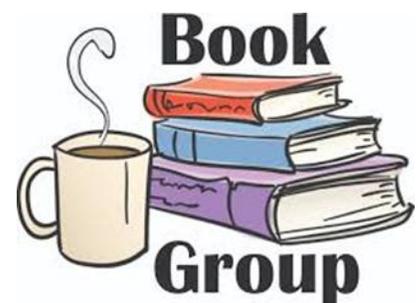
Rev. Amy

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

This week UUC Reads will begin May reading *Aesop's Animals* by Jo Wimpenny.



In *Aesop's Animals*, zoologist Jo Wimpenny turns a critical eye to the fables to discover whether there is any scientific truth to Aesop's portrayal of the animal kingdom. She brings the tales into the twenty-first century, introducing the latest findings on some of the most fascinating branches of ethological research – the study of why animals do the things they do. In each chapter she interrogates a classic fable and a different topic – future planning, tool use, self-recognition, cooperation and deception – concluding with a verdict on the veracity of each fable's portrayal from a scientific perspective.



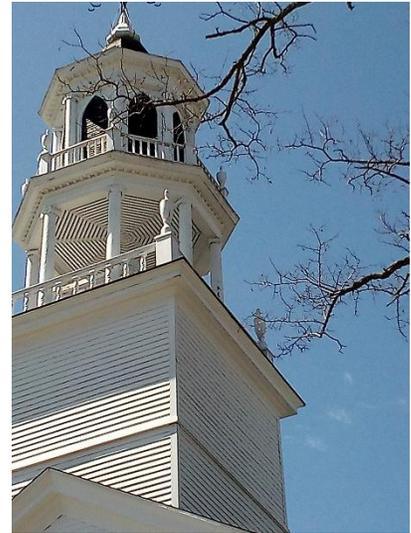
Consider becoming part of the UUC Reads book discussion. Drop an email to Debbie office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.

From the President's Desk

We have a steeple problem!

Most steeples consist of a spire, lantern, belfry and tower.

One of the eight wooden finials on the low balustrade rail at the base of the lantern apparently blew off during strong winds on Easter Sunday. We're lucky that no one was injured and no damage was done to a parked vehicle. The age of the finials is uncertain, but we fear that years of rain and snow have caused the wood to rot. Because of the location high on the steeple, above the belfry, it will be a challenge to examine the condition of the structure.



The timbers in the bell tower were restored in 2012-2013 by Preservation Timber Framing from Berwick, Maine. Perhaps it is to our advantage that in northern New England there are talented craftsmen with experience in the repair of historic church steeples. Our next step will be to assess the extent of the problem and then to get cost estimates from contractors who are qualified to do the needed repairs. Of course, the final challenge will be to find room in the budget to fund such a project.

Thought for the day: John Lewis

"Speak up, speak out, get in good trouble, necessary trouble and help redeem the soul of America."

Respectively yours,
Marcia Mason, UUCU Board President

Movie & Potluck Nights

Looking for an evening of good food, good conversation, and a terrific movie? The Castine Arts Association welcomes you to the final three movie/potluck events:

May 6 Star Wars, Episode 4 (The original film that started it all!)

May 20 - Rabbit-Proof Fence

June 3 - Tom Jones

These evenings begin at 5:30 p.m. with a potluck meal served at Emerson Town Hall. The film begins upstairs at 6:30 p.m. All are invited and there is no fee other than the food you bring to share. And based on this seasons films and feasts, you won't be disappointed!



Partner Church in the Philippines

Below is a letter recently received from our Partner Church in the Philippines:



On behalf of Aquino Congregation, I write this letter to express our heartfelt gratitude. As we close another school year, we want to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude for your faithful support and partnership. Because of your continued generosity, many of our students were able to finish this school year with hope, strength, and encouragement.

It has not been an easy journey—some faced financial challenges, health issues, and personal difficulties—but your help has made a big difference. Your support provided more than just assistance; it gave our young learners the courage to keep going, the motivation to dream, and the belief that they are not alone.

This end of school year is more than just a pause—it is a step forward. Each student supported by your love and kindness is now stronger, wiser, and more inspired to reach their goals.

On behalf of our students, their families, and our congregation, we say thank you. Your partnership continues to shape lives and create a better future for our communities. We hope you feel the same joy we feel, knowing that together we are building something meaningful and lasting.

May our shared commitment to love, learning, and justice continue to guide us.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Rev. Jeremias Bacaling Jr.

*UUCP Director of Religious Freedom and Relations
Scholarship Coordinator*

No Neighbor Left Behind

A big thank you to all who baked, packed and delivered the 130 meals sent out on April 11th.

July 11th is our next NNLB meal date. In July, we typically make up Italian sandwiches on hoagie rolls, with sides of chips and watermelon. I will keep you updated as we get closer to the date.

In the meantime, know that your efforts are appreciated as we strive to prepare home-cooked nutritious meals that support people in our local communities.

All best, Johanna Sweet



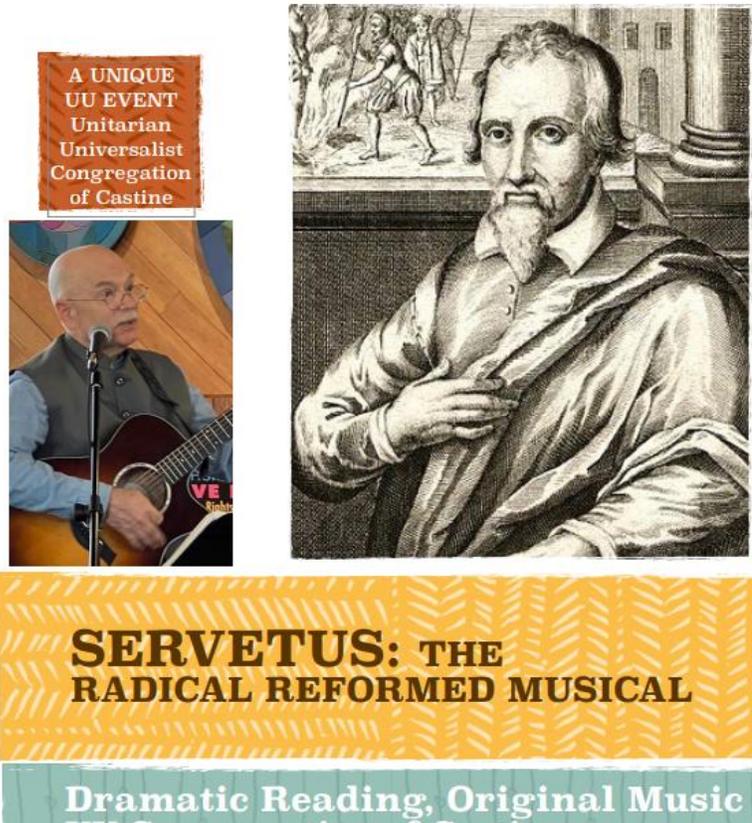
Servetus: The Radical Reformed Musical

UUCU – May 8, 7 p.m.

UUCB – May 16, 7 p.m.

Our collaborative ministry will welcome Rev. Dennis McCarty for two performances of his one-man musical show about Michael Servetus.

Michael Servetus (1511-1553) wrote his brilliant religious treatise, “On the Errors of the Trinity,” at age 21. His beliefs would be pretty tame today. He worshipped a loving God, believed in human beings’ inherent worth and dignity, and followed Jesus. But his writings were so offensive to church fathers in his own time, Reformed Church leader, John Calvin, had him burned at the stake.



Additionally, Rev. McCarty will be our Guest Speaker at UUCU on Sunday, May 11th.



Before entering Unitarian Universalist ministry, Reverend Dennis McCarty wrote well-reviewed novels, plays, magazine articles—and many songs. Among his many books is this summer’s Unitarian Universalist hot topic: *A Gadfly Report: Exploring Unitarian Universalism’s Reactionary Fringe*. He wrote *Servetus: The Radical Reformed Musical* several years ago, and is once more taking it on the road as a one-person presentation of dramatic reading and original songs. The dozen songs in *Servetus* range from blues to jazz to rock ‘n’ roll—even some unplugged heavy metal. McCarty

draws his musical inspiration from sources as various as Judas Priest, B.B. King, KPop—or even walking the ancient streets of Hill St. Genevieve, near the University of Paris.

Opportunity Fund

Your Opportunity Fund Committee has worked expeditiously this first quarter of 2025 to carefully research and then selectively support regional non-profit service programs which best reflect our UUCC Mission and the priorities you chose in last year's OF Congregational Survey. These Opportunity Fund priorities include: poverty and homelessness alleviation and prevention; and supporting at risk children and youth.

Programs supported to date include: statewide marketing of the locally produced documentary film on homelessness "Building Hope" (\$8,000), Families First of Ellsworth (\$5000), HOME (\$20,000), OutMaine's new Hancock County wide school LGBTQ support and education program (\$15,000), second year of the Bagaduce Watershed Kayak Expedition Camp for graduating area 8th graders (\$10,000), and Community Compass poverty crisis navigator program (\$15,000).



In addition, an appreciative area resident who read about our UUCC Opportunity Fund activity in the Castine Patriot has anonymously added further support to these programs.

Here is some recent feedback from Families

First and our support in helping them start a transitional housing support fund for previously homeless mothers with children:

"Thanks to your generosity-we are able to continue providing funds for residents as they transition into permanent housing. Your support is truly making a difference in their journey toward stability. We are excited to share that some of our residents are "paying it forward" by volunteering as mentors to new residents, fostering a supportive and welcoming community,.. strengthening their path to independence. Your support is truly changing lives, and we cannot thank you enough."

Bob Holmberg
UUCC Opportunity Fund Committee Chair

Third Sunday Potluck

May 18, 2025

Join us for our third Sunday Potluck Luncheon on May 18th following service. Bring a dish and bring a friend, the more, the merrier. We look forward to sharing a meal and friendly conversation with all!



Faithfully Protesting - A Fireside Chat with Rev. Amy on being political in church

There is no way around it, these are strange times we are living through. There are many calls going out to save democracy; may ours be faithful. I have chosen just one area of religious life to write about for this time—the sacredness of inclusion.



but because they denote bigger stories about combating racial segregation or fighting for civil rights. Individual stories make the abstract more concrete, the past more complex.

One thing about Unitarian Universalists is that we believe, in general, that when you know better, you do better. We are always trying to do better and remove barriers so that more people feel safe in our communities. This happens through legislative protection, but also through friendships. Learning new things often leads to meeting new people. Including them may change things in our lives, and we accept it and welcome the changes. When it comes to inclusion, we believe in widening the circle, every time, over restricting who fits, or is allowed, into our small circle. Another expression is, don't cut the guest list—lengthen the table. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are goals for most levels of congregational life and mission, which are the exact principles the government is targeting. Whole DEI departments were fired, with programs and their funding cut. Websites and physical sites have had their historical plaques changed to erase histories featuring people of color, women, and other minoritized people. We will protest, in many forms, the erasing of core values like DEI. Those are real people whose jobs got cut, and real people cut from history. It is wrong.

From a recent Smithsonian article by Martha A. Sandweiss

“In recent weeks, as part of a broader assault on historical records, exhibitions and books, government functionaries have scrubbed countless government websites of historical names: civil rights activist Medgar Evers, Medal of Honor recipient Charles C. Rogers and baseball star Jackie Robinson, among others. Amid fierce public pushback, some of the sites have now been restored. Critics insisted those names mattered, not only because they honor individual accomplishments,

When Ira Hayes, the Pima Indian present in the famous image of the flag raising at Iwo Jima, loses his clear tribal affiliation in an article headline, we lose something. It's no accident that most of the names and stories scrubbed from the record are those of people of color.”

We who believe that tapestries, like families and societies, are made richer with more diversity, hold inclusion as a core value. To see your neighbor as “other” and not as “neighbor” goes against who we are. Many people in history have held their values dear as they protest tyrannies.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer stayed faithful while fighting the government during WWII. One of his quotes reminds me that we cannot simply protect those who suffer now without working to also dismantle the system against future harm. *“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”* When we show up and give voice to our values, when we let politicians know that we will not vote for these actions, we are driving a spoke into the electoral machine. Also, we can vote.

If a bunch of people holding up signs in Bucksport means that Representatives got 300 phone calls that week instead of 100 then our protest is working!

If people who love democracy and due process need to connect with like-minded people to keep spirits up, we will build that Beloved Community.

If you can get to a big city to swell the numbers, do it so that maybe the press will truthfully report it.

If you stay home and pray, or fill out cards, that is also needed. Whatever you feel is your best way to protest our erosion of rights, do it, and do it faithfully!





May Basket

This was left on the door of the Parish House today.

Can you read what it says?

“Happy May Day from Adams School Garden Club & Pre-k/Kindergarten”

Happy May Day Everyone!

