

The Common

Happy Thanksgiving!

Feast, festivity, and family: our distinctively American celebration.



In the Fall *UU World*, Kimberly French observes that “the human being is the only animal that agonizes over what it eats.” Indeed, Anne and I raised goats for 23 years and early on we stopped eating chevon (goat meat).

On the other hand, we also raised turkeys and nevertheless enjoyed their company at Thanksgiving.

The tension between loving and eating animals remains.
Ed.

CALENDAR

Pulpit

Rev. Charles J. Stephens will be in the pulpit every Sunday in November.

Events

November 3
Fall back to Standard Time

November 5
Election Day

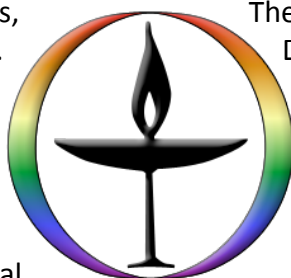
November 17, noon
Pot Luck Lunch & Annual Meeting

November 28
Thanksgiving Day

FROM THE BOARD

DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

On September 14 UUC Board members, Transition Team members, and the Rev. Charles Stephens participated in a day-long session at the Retreat at Betsy's Cove in Bucks Harbor. All present felt the location for the retreat--a beautiful, new facility built to accommodate such gatherings--was ideal.



The retreat was facilitated by Donna Dolham, a consultant with the Northern New England District (NNED) of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

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CHARLES' COGITATIONS, ON NOVEMBER

As the days get a bit colder, I am building a woodshed and getting my wood cut, split and stacked to make sure I have dry wood for the winter. Doing that, I think about something Fred Buechner wrote, "We keep at our jobs whatever they happen to be. We keep the car in repair. ... and try to get the furnace cleaned once a year. We see to it that our clothes are reasonably clean and that there's something in the refrigerator for breakfast. We do the best we can taking care of the very young, the very old, and sometimes each other. If you have ever watched ants at work on a bare patch of lawn, you have seen us.... Life is busyness for all of us. Keeping still comes harder." (*Telling Secrets-A Memoir*)



Being quiet or staying still does come harder for many of us. But taking moments to slow down and be still is important. It allows us to pause, reflect and stop *doing* long enough to appreciate *being*, being alive, being in relationship to others, being fortunate enough to experience all that we are able to experience and fortunate enough to live in relative abundance when compared to the larger world.

I love autumn. It is a season of seeming contrasts; on the one hand it is a time when cooler temperatures infuse me with greater physical energy and added exuberance--ah, the crisp cool air. On the other hand the shorter days and longer nights cause me to be more reflective about life and how we are here for the time being. Maybe the two are related, the latter helping me be aware and appreciate the former.

I encourage you to take some time this November, to pause, be still, and appreciate the present moments in your life. There is much in the world about which we can be sad and fearful. And we definitely need to be on the side of those who act to make this a better, more compassionate world for all people and all sentient beings. We have the opportunity to practice an aspect of one of our UU Principles this very month--that is, to affirm and promote "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process" within society at large. Don't miss the opportunity and civic duty of being an intelligent, informed and compassionate voter of our country.

Also this month take time to be still, breathe in the crisp cool air of the changing seasons and then exhale any fear, pain, or sadness that may be bottled up within. We need the spiritual and emotional energy and deeper sense of purpose that stillness can bring to our days and our nights.

Like the ants, life for us can turn into a pattern of busyness. Unlike the ants, we humans can choose to pause, be still, be awake and aware and then reflect gratefully for the gift of being alive. I encourage you to pause, be still, and reflect often this month. You might even make it a practice in your life.

With Love and warmth,

Charles

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



Kay Hansen, Religious Educator

In October's *The Common*, I reported that the children would be learning about the Islamic month of Ramadan. Well, we didn't quite get that far. We became very involved with creating patterns and designs and printing them on prayer rugs, similar to what Muslims may use regularly for their requirement of praying five times a day. We learned that in religious art Muslims avoid images or realistic forms of people. Rather, they create designs and patterns that represent people and ideas; then they decorate many things (mosques, books, fabric, pottery, floors, walls) with repeated designs. It is believed that repetition is comforting and represents Allah's laws that always remain the same.



We learned about "The Five Pillars of Islam," the five fundamental requirements of a Muslim. First and most important: a Muslim believes and says, "There is no other god but Allah; Mohammad is the messenger of Allah."

The second pillar is praying, done five times a day.

The third is giving money to those less fortunate.

The fourth is fasting during the month of Ramadan.

And the fifth is an expectation that all Muslims visit the holy city of Mecca once in their life.

In November, we will conclude our exploration of Islam by learning about the rituals, foods, and celebrations of Ramadan, concluding with the three-day celebration of Eid al Fitr. We will continue some decorating in the traditions of the people and, just as charity and giving to others is a part of their religion during Ramadan, we will also be thinking of projects to help others.

During our Thanksgiving season, we will learn about the Native Americans' deep spirituality and oneness in nature, and we will participate in a thanksgiving ceremony similar to what the Wampanoags may have engaged in when the Pilgrims came to their land.

CHANGING CULTURE

Anne-Marie Slaughter, quoted by Amanda Gordon at Salon.com

Anne-Marie Slaughter, the Princeton professor who wrote "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," in *The Atlantic*, said three things can be done to change our male-dominant culture:

First, "When you read a newspaper and see the word 'women,' think to yourself, 'the majority of the population.'"

Second, "Each time you talk about a male colleague who has children, describe him as a 'working father.'"

"The final thing is, the next time a man in the workplace tells you that he and his wife are expecting a child, ask him how he's going to be managing that. Ask him how he's going to juggle his new responsibilities."

NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL

Rev. Peter Morales
UUA President

On October 8, I was arrested along with faithful partners, committed organizers, and community leaders in Washington, D.C. We stood together and were handcuffed and led away together to tell Congress to get back to work on compassionate immigration reform.

I felt compelled to go to Washington, as part the [National Day of Dignity and Respect](#), to bring attention to the 11 million immigrants currently being held hostage by the federal government, because of inaction.

Immigration reform isn't just a religious or partisan issue--it is a moral issue. Equality is not only a religious value, but also a basic American value: there should be no "second class" U.S. citizen. Immigration status does not change one's worthiness of basic human and civil rights. No one should be despised or scapegoated. No one should be criminalized unjustly. No human being is illegal.

I went to Washington and participated in peaceful civil disobedience to tell Congress that *now* is the time for compassionate immigration reform; *now* is the time to heal these broken families; *now* is the time to restore their hopes and dreams and to give them the respect and dignity they deserve. Please join me in sending this message to Congress. [Contact your senators and representative today](#) and tell them you want compassionate immigration reform *now*.

When I was elected the UUA's first Latino president, I felt a sense of duty to bring

attention to this issue. From the beginning, I championed immigration reform within the UU community, leading to the adoption at this year's General Assembly of our Statement of Conscience, ["Immigration as a Moral Issue."](#)

In 2010 in Phoenix, along with local partners and UUs, I was arrested for civil disobedience in an effort to combat Arizona's anti-immigrant law, SB1070. Afterwards, we worked with our UU state networks to defeat Arizona "copycat" bills across the nation and to support immigrant-friendly legislation. And we joined with other leaders of faith calling on President Obama to suspend deportations and grant administrative relief to migrant families while we wait for Congress to act.

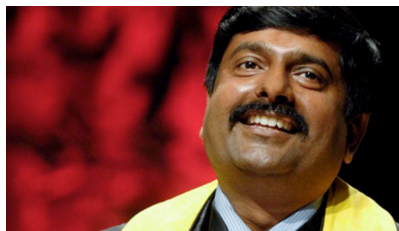
It was a long struggle to convince Congress to pay attention. We must not let them turn their backs on 11 million people now. We must not let families continue to be torn apart. We cannot let our elected leaders fail us. We have the votes in the House of Representatives to pass immigration reform with a path to citizenship--we just need the House to schedule the vote.

That is why the time is now. The consequences of inaction would be devastating for so many people living in this country--just this summer nearly 50,000 people were deported. We cannot let that number rise anymore.

I invite you to stand with me on the side of love. Love keeps families together. Love respects the inherent worth and dignity of all people. And love has no borders.

This article is excerpted from one that appeared initially in the Huffington Post of October 22, 2013.

BENDING THE ARC



Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

Our long struggle for compassionate immigration reform hangs in the balance over the next three weeks. Speaker John Boehner could allow a bill to come to the House floor for a vote. There is bi-partisan support in both chambers and polls show that 70 percent of registered voters want immigration reform. All that's stopping us is the lack of action in of our elected officials.

Please join me in [telling Speaker Boehner we need a vote on immigration reform and urge him to bring a bill to the House floor?](#)

I am grateful for our religious movement and the people who have been standing on the side of love with immigrant families. My family is one of those. In 1994, I came to the US from India on a student visa to study for the ministry. My wife and infant son joined me the following year. Despite producing the required paperwork, we were subjected to an arduous, often dehumanizing process before being granted visas. Even

though we had the requisite documents, too often we have been told to leave because we did not belong here or had to prove that we were here legally. Even after becoming citizens in 2012, my family and I live with constant reminders that we are outsiders, people who don't belong. For millions of others, the lack of papers has led to detention, deportation, and the tearing apart of their families.

During my ministry in Florida, I met migrant farmworkers who would wake every day before 4 am and be packed into old school buses to travel to fields to pick 2.25 tons of tomatoes per day, just to earn minimum wage. Some of these workers would be picked up, detained, and deported without their wages, their families' survival threatened, all because they went into town for a small break. Since I have been in the Washington, DC, area I have met courageous undocumented migrant leaders who have travelled here to advocate for their right to remain, risking arrest and deportation.

My faith accepts me for who I am, as I am, without prejudice or preconditions

In October I was proud to witness UUA President Rev. Peter Morales demonstrate his profound commitment to immigrant justice by getting arrested on the steps of the Capitol with other prominent

faith leaders and six members of Congress; see page 4. He carried all our voices to Washington that day—all of us who have witnessed, organized, and formed partnerships for migrant justice through our congregations, youth groups, UU state advocacy networks, or individually in our communities.

Now, we need to come together once again to seize this historic opportunity, to lend our shoulders and hands to bend the moral arc of the universe toward justice.

The role of government is to protect the rights of all of the people and to preserve the common good. What sustains me through my personal experiences and my witness for justice is my Unitarian Universalist faith. It accepts me for who I am, as I am, without prejudice or preconditions. By showing hospitality of the heart and hand, my faith community helps me feel grounded and at home in this country. May it be so for all people.

Rev. Abhi Janamanchi is Senior Minister at Cedar Lane UU Church in Bethesda, MD. He previously served as Senior Minister for the Unitarian Universalists of Clearwater, FL, for 14 years and is a former President of the International Association for Religious Freedom.

FROM THE BOARD, FROM PAGE 1

An oversimplification of the transition period between settled ministries divides it into three areas: figuring out where the congregation has been, where it is now, and where it wants to be in the future. Part of the retreat was spent talking about where the congregation has been, especially the past 30 or so years of our history. This task was similar to the timelines that Charles has spoken about from the pulpit and the paper rolls that people have contributed to in the Parish House during the past few weeks.

As participants spoke, Donna recorded comments on display boards and subsequently prepared minutes of the gathering. What follows is a condensed version of her notes, with three general time periods indicating significant events or conditions in the life of the church.

1982-1989

Rev. Charles Stephens serving as quarter-time minister

Church experienced high minister turnover before Interfaith Parish instituted

Interfaith Parish was happening

Transition time for Castine

Vital time for UU

UUs felt we were not benefiting from the Interfaith Parish situation

Concern that UUs wouldn't survive as a separate identity if we stayed in the Interfaith Parish

It was the beginning time of a strong congregation

IN SUMMARY: No Structure/informal

1989-1998

Mark Worth began service as quarter-time minister in 1991

Up to 50 Active Members

A very Active Women's group was instrumental in putting on church fairs and suppers

Since 1980 we have had Congregational presence at General Assembly nearly every year

Congregation is Fair Share, paying its full amount of dues to the UUA and the Northern New England District

IN SUMMARY: Survival Mode/Accommodating

1998-2010

Mark Worth became full-time minister 2007

While membership grew from 40 to 70, some members/friends stopped attending

Endowment grew significantly from Pulliam bequest

Name Change from Church to Congregation

Have We Not All One Father banner removed from Meeting House

Greater level of conflict within congregation; assistance sought from and provided by NNED

Partner Church Program Started

Committee on Ministry's first year (2007/2008)

Concerns voiced with ministry, especially with pastoral care

Congregational retreat held to explore opportunities with bequest

Church Board became more empowered

Covenant developed

Church developed an increased connection to community

IN SUMMARY:

Learned how to negotiate conflict

Demonstrated strength and courage

Learned to value each other

Greater interconnectedness

On hearing the participants' comments, Donna remarked that it appeared the congregation had demonstrated a great ability to deal with changing situations and seemed well poised for the next steps.

Comments about the above material are welcome. If something is misstated or something important omitted, please contact Rev. Charles Stephens (minister@uucastine.org) or Transition Team Chair Anne Parsons (ahparsons@roadrunner.com)



Emma Sweet and Colin Powell are delighted to announce the arrival of Jane's little brother!

Pedrick Silas Sewell was born at 3:26 a.m. on Saturday, October 19, weighing 9 lbs. 12 oz. and measuring 22 in. long.

Want to see for yourself? Everyone is welcome at a baby meet-and-greet at the home of proud grandparents Pedrick and Johanna Sweet on Sunday, November 3, from 2-4 p.m. Their house is located in the village across from the academy playing field on the corner of Court and Pleasant--number 41 Court St. Hope to see you there!

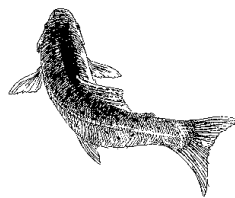
ETHICAL EATING: Biodiversity

Second of a 5-part series
compiled by Rev. Gary Kowalski

We are in an era of unprecedented threats to biodiversity. The loss of species is estimated to be running 50 to 500 times higher than background rates found in the fossil record. Livestock now

account for about 20 percent of the total terrestrial animal biomass, and the 30 percent of the earth's land surface that they now pre-empt was once habitat for wildlife. Indeed, the livestock sector may well be the leading player in the reduction of biodiversity, since it is the major driver of deforestation as well as one of the leading drivers of land degradation, pollution, climate change, overfishing, sedimentation of coastal areas, and facilitation of invasions by alien species.

Pollution from industrial animal agriculture is a leading contributor to the Gulf dead zone, which occurs when water oxygen levels drop too low for some water-dwelling animals to survive.



While the dead zone used to strike the Gulf every few years, it now forms every spring, killing aquatic life, destroying habitat, and altering the marine food web... Fertilizer used to grow animal feed is perhaps the most significant offender, as the vast majority of U.S. feed and industrial farm animal production is concentrated in the Mississippi drainage basin.

*Sources provided on request.
Ed.*

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
Del Davis, President
Gil Tenney, Vice President
Diana Bernard, Treasurer
Anne Romans, Clerk
WG Sayre
Nancy Guy
Tom Mason
Leslie Fairbank, Alternate

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

THE COMMON
The Common is published monthly and distributed in both electronic and photocopy forms. All members and friends are invited to submit items for consideration. Send submissions or comments to editor Kent Price at kapricorn75@gmail.com. Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

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