

The Common

Happy Thanksgiving!



Yes, say thank you. Indeed, live gratitude daily, not just on the one day in November set aside for thanks. Gratitude should be the center of Unitarian Universalist theology, says the Rev. Galen Guengerich, minister

at All Souls Unitarian, NYC. I first heard him advance this argument at a General Assembly workshop in 2007. Theology? Do we have such a concept? Playing off the UUism that we are entirely free, *con't on p 3*

Calendar

Pulpit

Nov. 2

Rev. Charles Stephens

Nov. 9

Rev. Charles Stephens

Nov. 16

Rev. Charles Stephens

Nov. 23

Rev. Charles Stephens

Nov. 30

Kent Price

Events

Nov. 9

Congregational meeting

Nov. 16

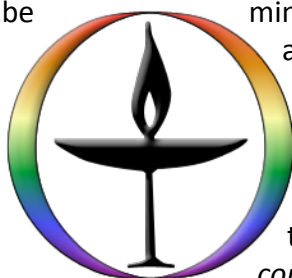
Annual meeting, potluck

Choir, 1pm Thursdays

FROM THE BOARD

DELACROIX DAVIS III, PRESIDENT

The congregation's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, November 16, at the conclusion of the monthly potluck luncheon. In addition to electing members of the Governing Board, we will consider the budget for 2015. The budget will include several large increases that are mostly related to the



ministerial search process and thus are one-time expenditures. These include transportation and lodging expenses for three or four potential candidates and moving and relocation costs for the selected candidate.

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FROM THE BOARD, FROM PAGE 1

Since there is no way to know the location of ministerial candidates or the household size and distance from Castine of the successful candidate, estimating on the high side appears prudent. Any funds budgeted for travel expenses for potential candidates that are unused after the candidating process may be applied to moving and relocation expenses.

Non-recurring ministerial search costs added to the normal operating budget may cause the endowment drawdown guideline of three percent to be exceeded. If necessary, the Finance Committee will consider a special off-budget drawdown to accommodate the extraordinary one-time expenses.

The ministerial search negotiating team is still developing a compensation package for a new settled minister. Compared to the UUA recommended salary guidelines, we have been paying our past and present ministers amounts well below the high end of the scale. If the negotiating team recommends a generous salary increase in order to interest attractive ministerial candidates, it will affect the budget for 2015 and into the future.

These and other proposed changes—a substantial increase in the Pulliam Awards, for instance—could generate considerable comment. Be sure to mark the date on your calendar and come and participate. If you are currently a friend of the congregation and would like your voice--and vote--to be counted please consider signing the book and acquiring full membership benefits. Charles will be happy to talk to you about this.

For many years UUCB draft budgets have been prepared by the treasurer and

presented to the Board. Following Board approval with or without changes, draft budgets have been included in annual reports and considered by the congregation during annual meetings. As budgets have grown and become more complex, it is time to change the process somewhat. The treasurer will now present a draft budget to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will recommend the draft budget to the Board with or without changes. From there the process is unchanged. This method will better align consideration of income and outgo and accommodate the input of the Finance Committee earlier in the process.

As you can see, this year's annual meeting is a very important one in the life and future of the congregation. Hope to see you there!

**An Opportunity to Give**

The Organ Fund is depleted! As you contemplate end-of-year giving, please consider helping to replenish the Organ Fund, which is used exclusively to maintain our lovely pipe organ. The Music Committee hopes some of the music lovers among us will want to contribute in this way.

Thank you: Anne Price, Leslie Fairbank,
Carolyn Mathiasen, Albert Stwertka

PULPIT PREVIEW

Sunday, Nov. 2

"Voting as a Religious Principle."

We Unitarian Universalists affirm the democratic process by voting, urging others to vote, and protecting and promoting the voting rights of all citizens.

Sunday, Nov. 9

*"How Little We Know –
About Compassion."*

This is the fourth in my sermon series on *"Living A Compassionate Life,"* based on Karen Armstrong's book, *"12 Steps to a Compassionate Life."*

Sunday, Nov. 16

"Keeping the UU Flame Burning."

The flame of liberal religion was planted here in Castine more than 200 years ago. This transitional time is critical to keep the flame of UUCC burning brightly. The Annual Meeting following the service is part of that process.

Sunday, Nov. 23,

*"Blessings We Receive from Other
Creatures"*

Studies show that people who have a dog or cat recover better and faster than those who don't have pets. Some of us feel closely connected to animals in our lives. Even if we don't presently have a pet, we have memories of animals we have known.

Sunday, Nov. 30

Kent Price will mark the 69th anniversary of the United Nations with a service on the plight of refugees and displaced persons



On Gratitude, from Page 1

...free to believe whatever we wish, or to believe nothing at all, Rev. Galen recasts the question of belief into something faintly absurd. Where do you live? asks someone you just met. "I'm free to live wherever I want," you reply. This may well be true, but it borders on irrelevance. The person still has no idea where you live.

As for religion, Guengerich posits that we need to be able to say what we believe in language that is positive and relevant. We must be able to talk about something other than freedom, which is the absence of something--creeds, for example, or eternal damnation. People may be attracted to UUism because we don't force-feed doctrines, but they are not likely to stay because of what's missing. And then, and I love this, *"People don't go to Carnegie Hall because of what they won't hear."*

"Our usual way of describing ourselves does not even begin to suggest that we are a religion," says Guengerich. "Religion is constituted by two distinct but related impulses: a sense of awe and a sense of obligation."

For Jews, the defining discipline is obedience, he writes. For Christians, it is love. For Muslims, submission. And what of us? "I believe that Unitarian Universalism should be defined by gratitude." A discipline of gratitude reminds us how utterly dependent we are on the people and world around us, from which flows an ethic of gratitude that demands we nurture a hospitable world environment. The role of religion, writes Guengerich, is to help us find our place as human beings within this universe we call home. Editor.

CHARLES' COGITATIONS



In his poem, "Lyric of Autumn," William Stanley Braithwaite wrote:

*There is rhythm in the woods, and in the fields,
Nature yields:
And the harvest voices crying,
Blend with Autumn zephyrs sighing;
Tone and color, frost and fire,
Wings the nocturne Nature plays
upon her lyre."*

As I write, we are in the midst of a Nor'easter. Wind, rain, and gray sky dominate our Maine world. Sections of New England have experienced flooding and a loss of electricity, but it is milder for us. We come to expect autumnal change as part of the rhythm of life.

An additional autumnal rhythm here is the out-migration of many species of birds and also of "summer folk"--members and friends who grace our area between late spring and fall. About a dozen regular attendees at our summer Sunday Services have returned to their homes in other areas. And of course there are those who dropped in for a service or two during summer who no longer are in the area.

We were happy to see them in the spring and summer when they returned to our community. Though the congregation has grown accustomed to this rhythm of coming and going, we never-the-less feel the loss of their presence when they leave. We see a pew that was occupied by this or that individual or couple and now it is empty. Thus it has been here in Castine and along the coast for many decades.

Of course we know that coming and going is the story of life. The advantage of our climate with four distinct seasons is that we are reminded that there is a season for everything, as is written in Ecclesiastes. If we dare to think that things should be different for us, we will suddenly be reminded by another poem:

*The leaves fall patiently
Nothing remembers or grieves
The river takes to the sea
The yellow drift of leaves.* Sara Teasdale
Your Minister, Charles Stephens



If the weather causes a Sunday Service to be canceled:

- We will send out a congregation-wide email
- There will be a message on our web site.
- The Parish House phone message will reflect our closing.

We will do our best to keep you notified about cancelations, but if you don't feel safe and secure about driving, we encourage you to use your own discretion and stay at home!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Hindu religion is one of the world's oldest religions, beginning more than 4,000 years ago in India. Today, it is the third largest religion, surpassed only by Christianity and Islam. Most of the more than 800 million Hindus in the world live in south Asia—in India, Nepal, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. This ancient religion had its roots in nature religions and has had many influences. Hindus worship in many different ways, but they all share certain common beliefs. They believe in the idea of one Supreme Being or God, called Brahman, but they also recognize many gods (over 300 million) who each represent one part of Brahman. They believe Brahman (God) is in every living thing. The goal of the Hindu is to reach "enlightenment," a oneness with Brahman.

In November, the older children will be introduced to Hinduism, with a shortened version of the story of Rama and Sita from the epic poem, "Ramayana." They will also learn about the "Festival of Lights," **Diwali**, celebrated by many Hindus, usually in October or November.

Thanks to Morgan, Chad, Tom, Erik and Jane for helping to set up for potluck in October. And thanks to Nancy Guy for her guidance and help. The adults enjoyed the spiders and scary jack-o-lanterns. On the third Sunday of November we will again help give to our church by setting and decorating the tables. Maybe we can make it a "Festival of Lights."

We are very sorry to lose Emma Larson-Whittaker as our RE aide. She enjoyed working with our children, but she is overwhelmed with homework and school activities and won't be able to continue on a weekly basis. She will sub for us when she can. We'll have a new Aide in December, but until then we need someone to take Emma's place. Please let me know if you have any suggestions. Also, please consider working with our Religious Education Committee to help with our transitions and new ideas for children and youth programming.

A Hindu Prayer:

May all attain happiness.

May all be healthy.

May all seek beneficial goals.

May no one suffer.

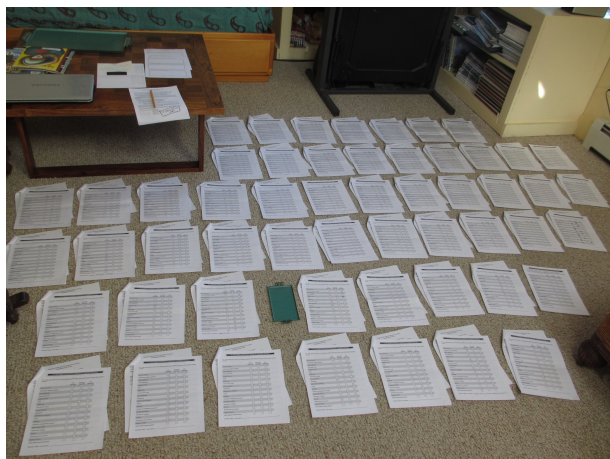
Om Peace, Peace, Peace be unto all living beings.

Namaste,

Kay Hansen, Religious Educator



MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE



Our High-Tech Tabulation Method

This is what you told us in 53 surveys.

Peter Fairbank has completed tabulating the results of the 2014 UUCS Survey that confirms what we probably already know about ourselves. So why did we do it? We followed the suggested UUA process intended to insure that all voices that choose to be heard are heard and that all views are recognized. We need to provide a fair and detailed picture of who we are and what our needs and aspirations are. Potential candidates will be very interested to know about the congregation and the challenges we present for them.

It is no surprise that most of us attend the UUCS for the Sunday sermons and the fellowship provided by coffee hour. Clearly what the respondents value and want to maintain are the positive qualities of our congregation. They see us as warm, accepting, friendly, inclusive, and caring. The congregation provides companionship, a sense of community and fellowship, tradition and stability.

However, we also see ourselves as independent, intelligent, and open. Our congregation wants an intellectual leader who can challenge and stimulate our

thinking and provide spiritual guidance. The sermon topics of greatest appeal involve philosophical ideas and discussion of the values involved in social issues. Not surprisingly, social justice plays an important role in the life of our congregation, as does our historic building and its location in the town.

As for goals, by far the most frequent response concerns retention and increase in membership in general, with a specific focus on young families. The second-most-frequent response relates to an increased presence in the community, connecting growth and outreach to the community through increased programs and activities. And finally, it was pointed out that we need to grow to survive.

Who are we? There's no denying we're white and pretty highly educated, so we're looking for intellectual stimulation and inspiration and are prepared to take on challenges. We are predominantly "older", but so is Maine in general and Castine in particular. Both our state and our towns are increasingly popular with retirees, so it's a replenishing age-group. We respect our small group of dedicated volunteers and our governance structure. But still, we need more age diversity to provide a wider pool of volunteers and bring new ideas and enthusiasm.

The final and complete version of the Results of the Survey has been compiled and printed in limited hard-copy edition. Due to the sensitivity of some of the demographic information collected, we are regulating its distribution. Any UUCS member or friend can view the complete results in paper form in the Parish House. Contact either Debby Neve or Anne Price after Sunday service.

Anne Parsons

HUNGER: CASH VS CANS

Hungry Sunday quandary

Are gifts of cash or checks better than, say, cans of soup and boxes of Cheerios? Well, it depends. Rick Traub of Tree of Life advises as follows:

Cash is great for us because we can buy many items from Good Shepherd for 16¢/pound. For example, for \$1, I can buy five or six cans of food from Good Shepherd and the same cans at the store might cost \$1 each. The savings are even greater with lighter weight items such as cereal, where a box for us might cost 15-20¢ vs several dollars at the store.

Good Shepherd purchases wholesale and they receive free goods that they pass on to pantries with a mark-up to cover their expenses. Our 16¢/pound food has been donated to Good Shepherd and the 16¢ covers their costs.

What is the best way to support Tree of Life?

Great question. As I say above, cash is great. However, there is also a lot to be gained by asking people to donate food. It makes the experience more tangible when someone goes to the store and actually shops for items that are then donated to the pantry. I have heard of churches that actually push a shopping cart down the aisle and people pass their food down and fill up the cart. It can be powerful. Every year at Thanksgiving the kids from Blue Hill Consolidated School come to the pantry to deliver food they have collected in their annual food drive. At GSA they compete to see which class brings in the most food. These are great experiences and a lot different from collecting money and passing it in.

Right now we are thinking about Thanksgiving and need about 60 more turkeys to meet what we think we will need. I did buy 320 turkeys from Good Shepherd at 16¢/pound and the rest will be

purchased retail at a cost of about \$15/turkey unless we get donations or find a less expensive source. Next year we hope to create a turkey drive that can become an annual event, a great project for a group or organization.



What is the most cost-effective way to help hungry people ?

The best short-term way to address the situation is to work locally, like we are doing. But pantries are a band-aid response to a huge problem that will not be solved on the local level. The bigger issues are political and economic in nature and need to be addressed on a national level.

What we do strive for at Tree of Life is to help empower people to take more responsibility for their food and eating more healthily. We provide seeds and seedlings to encourage gardening. We give out recipes for healthy meals using pantry items. We work with local organizations to provide cooking classes and store tours. And we provide as much fresh food as possible, given our financial restraints.

There is a lot more info on our web site: <http://treeoflifepantry.org/>

Next Hungry Sunday is Nov. 2, for Bucksport Community Concerns. Checks payable to BCC.

Rev. Charles Stephens (fuzzy photo, blue shirt), President Del Davis (red shirt), and Alvion Kimball (no photo) were among the work party for Hancock County Habitat for Humanity on October 24. Actually, Alvion should have had two photos as he is affiliated with both organizations working on the Sedgwick home, UU Castine and the Bucksport Garden Club. Well done, guys!



Simple, Decent, Affordable Housing



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

Del Davis, President
Gil Tenney, Vice President
Diana Bernard, Treasurer
Anne Romans, Clerk
Nancy Guy
Tom Mason
Leslie Fairbank
Kent Price, Alternate

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