



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

November 2023

A Month of Sundays in November

5	Rev. Michael Hall, Worship Leader Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician
12	Rev. Donna Dolham, Worship Leader Karen Froehly, Musician
9	Year in Review – Cindi Kimball Colleen Fitzgerald, Musician Annual Meeting & Potluck
26	Worship Leader – TBD Juliane Gardner & Chris Poulin, Musicians Ribbon cutting at Parsonage



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.

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.

From the President's Desk – November Contemplations

This month is about saving time and those who gave us time.

We start off with Daylight Savings Time, so for a couple of weeks we try to become used to the savings of day light. As you know I am a farm girl but I never noticed the cows enjoyed the extra hour. Next are the elections and our attempt at saving democracy, trying to vote for the people who will give their time working for us. The best effort of course comes from the day we celebrate and honor our veterans, on Veterans Day to those who gave the most and many who are still giving. And finally,



Thanksgiving. thinking of those who taught us how to grow and save our food for times in need, thinking of those who gave and are still giving food, shelter, empathy and love when needed.

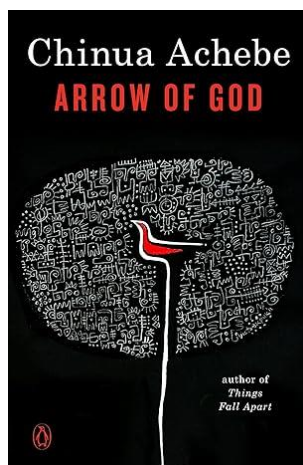
I hope everyone enjoys all of the November changes in the saving of daylight, the feeling of fulfillment in voting, the warmth of sharing food with others and knowledge and the privilege to honor those who gave the most and saved freedom for us to enjoy.

Many thanks for all the support you show me and the Board.

Cindi Kimball, Board President

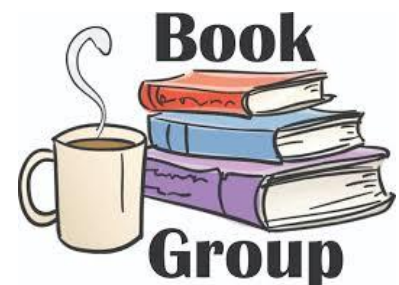
UUC Reads Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM.

November will begin with a discussion of *Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe.



This is the second novel in Chinua Achebe's masterful African trilogy.

When the first novel ends, colonial rule has been introduced to Umuofia, and the character of the nation, its values, freedoms, religious and socio-political foundations have substantially and irrevocably been altered. *Arrow of God* moves the historical narrative forward. This time, the action revolves around Ezeulu, the headstrong chief priest of the god Ulu, which is worshipped by the six villages of Umuaro. The novel is a meditation on the nature, uses, and responsibility of power and leadership.



Consider becoming part of the UU Reads book discussion. Click on the link below Tuesday, or drop an email to office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



Annual Meeting November 19, 2023

November is the month for UUCC's Annual Meeting. Members of the congregation are invited to participate in the Church's governance on November 19, 2023, right after our Sunday worship service. We will be voting on

the budgets and slate of Board members for the coming year. President Cindi Kimball has prepared a look back on the year, and Annual Reports describing the good work our various committees have done over the year are available in the Parish House, or contact Debbie to have a digital copy emailed to you.

We have been busy!



Potluck Sunday November 19th

The democratic process really works up an appetite. Join us after the Annual Meeting for a Potluck Luncheon. Bring a favorite dish and enjoy some conversation and camaraderie. Our own congregational Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving Food Boxes It's our Annual Holiday Tradition!

We are accepting donations for the purchase of Thanksgiving food boxes.

Last year we were able to provide 61 boxes at Thanksgiving and another 66 at Christmas which cost just over \$3,500. As we all are aware, the cost of food has risen. We will not know the exact price of the food boxes until very close to Thanksgiving as it is dependent on the market price of turkeys. Your help is vitally important!

You may donate by check (please note holiday food boxes in the memo), or online by going to <https://uucastine.breezechms.com/give/online>.



Chase's Teacher's Brilliant Strategy to Stop Future School Shootings

Every Friday afternoon, [Chase's teacher] asks her students to take out a piece of paper and write down the names of four children with whom they'd like to sit the following week. The children know that these requests may or may not be honored. She also asks the students to nominate one student who they believe has been an exceptional classroom citizen that week. All ballots are privately submitted to her.

And every single Friday afternoon, after the students go home, she takes out those slips of paper, places them in front of her, and studies them. She looks for patterns.

Who is not getting requested by anyone else?

Who can't think of anyone to request?

Who never gets noticed enough to be nominated?

Who had a million friends last week and none this week?

You see, Chase's teacher is not looking for a new seating chart or "exceptional citizens." Chase's teacher is looking for lonely children. She's looking for children who are struggling to connect with other children. She's identifying the little ones who are falling through the cracks of the class's social life. She is discovering whose gifts are going unnoticed by their peers. And she's pinning down who's being bullied and who is doing the bullying.

As a teacher, parent, and lover of all children, I think this is the most brilliant Love Ninja strategy I have ever encountered. It's like taking an X-ray of a classroom to see beneath the surface of things and into the hearts of students. It is like mining for gold—the gold being those children who need a little help, who need adults to step in and teach them how to make friends, how to ask others to play, how to

join a group, or how to share their gifts. And it's a bully deterrent because every teacher knows that bullying usually happens outside her eyeshot and that often kids being bullied are too intimidated to share. But, as she said, the truth comes out on those safe, private, little sheets of paper.

As Chase's teacher explained this simple, ingenious idea, I stared at her with my mouth hanging open. "How long have you been using this system?" I said.

Ever since Columbine, she said. Every single Friday afternoon since Columbine. Good Lord.

This brilliant woman watched Columbine knowing that all violence begins with disconnection. All outward violence begins as inner loneliness. Who are our next mass shooters and how do we stop them? She watched that tragedy knowing that children who aren't being noticed may eventually resort to being noticed by any means necessary.

And so she decided to start fighting violence early and often in the world within her reach. What Chase's teacher is doing when she sits in her empty classroom studying those lists written with shaky 11-year-old hands is saving lives. I am convinced of it.

And what this mathematician has learned while using this system is something she really already knew: that everything—even love, even belonging—has a pattern to it. She finds the patterns, and through those lists she breaks the codes of disconnection. Then she gets lonely kids the help they need. It's math to her. It's *math*. All is love—even math. Amazing.

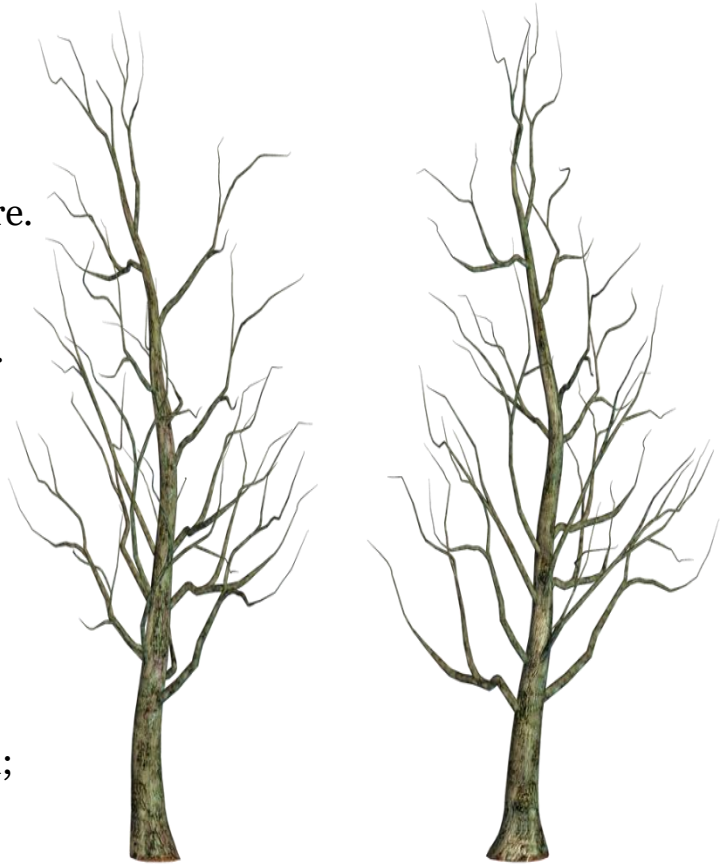
What a way to spend a life: looking for patterns of love and loneliness. Stepping in, every single day, and altering the trajectory of our world.

[Excerpt from an essay that originally appeared in a 2014 issue of Reader's Digest, and shared online in 2018 after Parkland, Florida. Sadly, this issue continues to be relevant.]



TREES

Once glistering green,
With dewy sheen,
And summer glory round them cast:
Now black and bare,
The trees stand there,
And mourn their beauty that it past.
Look, leaf by leaf,
Each leaf a grief.
The hand of Autumn strips them bare.
No sound nor cry,
As they fall and die,
Because they know that Life is there.
So stiff and strong,
The winter long,
All uncomplaining stand the trees.
God make my life,
Through all its strife,
As true to Spring as one of these.
So would I stand,
Serene and grand,
While age strips off the joys of youth;
Because I know
That, as they go,
My soul draws nearer to the Truth.



~G.A. Studdert Kennedy, "Trees," *The Sorrows of God and Other Poems*, 1924.

