



THE COMMON

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF CASTINE

September 2026

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

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Sept 6 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Karen Froehly |
| Sept 13 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald |
| Sept 20 | Worship Leader: Caleigh Grogan
Musician: Colleen Fitzgerald
Potluck |
| Sept 27 | Worship Leader: Rev. Amy DeBeck
Musician: Karen Froehly |

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 Hank DeBeck office@uucastine.org.



Bell Problems

Sometimes things don't go as planned.

Unfortunately, this is happening to our long-awaited steeple repair project.

The removal of rotten wood on our church's steeple was to begin in August 2026. Various replacement pieces have been ordered, carefully measured, and we're now ready to start the repair process.

When Mike Becker of E.L. Shea Builders and Engineers arrived on site last week to take additional measurements, he noticed the bell had fallen and was "resting" on the floor of the roof in the belfry! We knew that the wooden bell support beams were weak and needed attention, but we were unaware of the extent of the deterioration, which I guess was an oversight considering the age of this historic structure.



Various internet sites indicate the original 692-pound bell, cast in 1802 by Paul Revere and Son, hung in the meeting house for three decades before being removed and eventually stored in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. In 1831, a new, heavier 996-pound replacement bell was cast by Paul Revere's son, Joseph Warren Revere. This bell now rests in disarray in the steeple – the attached photograph shows why we need a structural engineer to approve a plan to rehang the bell. Hopefully we will soon enjoy the sound of our bell calling us to Sunday services.

To be continued....

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcia Mason/Board Chair





Beginnings

This month, for beginnings, I want to talk about my own trip through ministry. In September we will welcome Caleigh Grogan to our pulpit when we BEGIN our potluck schedule again, on September 20.

Recently she contacted me to let me know that she will be visiting our MFC (Ministerial Fellowship

Committee, comparable to sitting for your boards as a doctor or lawyer) at the end of September. It brought back so many memories for me, many with UUC.

Back in 1996 when I BEGAN seminary, I had not been active with UU church very long, and completely unchurched until then. Discerning a call required academic classes as well as gaining practical experience, with preaching, leading rites of passage, and more. At that time, the UU churches of Ellsworth and Castine were yoked parishes being served by the Rev. Mark Worth. He visited campus in Bangor to meet with UU students and to teach us our History and Polity.

I was an extreme newbie to religious practice itself, as well as discerning a call I felt to serve. Mark and I drew up a pre-internship agreement for me; it was too early in my formation for it to count with the UUA, but would help with discernment and formation. Meanwhile, Kevin and I were BEGINNING our family. Professionally, I was an eager supply preacher, often visiting Castine, and learned how to meet with wedding couples to plan and officiate their big day. Hospice volunteer training was important, because pastoral care was at the basis of my call to ministry, especially at the end of life.

After graduation, my family went to Virginia for my UUA internship, after being supported by multiple Maine churches for 8 years. I value this time, its lessons, my dear mentors, and all the wonderful people I met along the way. Every September, with the BEGINNING of the seminary school year, and Kevin's as a student, (then student teacher,) I grew to feel that the cycle of life starts with summer's end.

May we all remember and mark the BEGINNINGS signaled by the seasonal change, together.

In Peace and Love, Rev. Amy



Clerk's Summary

The Governing Board held its monthly meeting on August 20th. As I've pointed out before, Governing Board meetings often have a flow as one topic leads naturally into another. This meeting was no exception.

In preparation for beginning the project to replace the rotten finials and rails on the steeple, our contractor, E.L. Shea, discovered that the supports holding the bell had failed and the bell is now sitting on the roof of the belfry. See the article **From the President's Desk** for information on this unanticipated development.



This led to a discussion put forth by the Budget Committee regarding the needs and wishes of the Building and Grounds Committee for 2027. See the **Bean Counter's Tally** for more on this.

Also pertinent to the Budget, the Minister's Contract comes up for renewal in 2027. The Board learned about the timeline and process for ministers when they go in search of a new position. The Board assured Rev. Amy that her position is secure and negotiations regarding the terms for a new contract and Parsonage agreement will occur in due course. To that end, a Ministerial Contract Committee was formed consisting of Peter Fairbank, Barbara Fleck, and Debbie Morehouse.

Expanding upon the Minister's focus, time and expense, discussion morphed into thoughts about how to get young people to come to church, especially MMA students. While most suggestions concentrated on getting young people to Church on Sunday, Rev. Amy suggested that Sunday may not work for the college-age group for a variety of reasons, and she suggested doing something at another time such as holding Dinner Church one night a month. This might also attract families with small children who would enjoy a night off from cooking dinner. More thought and consideration will be given to this and other suggestions. If you have a suggestion, let Rev. Amy know.

Last, but certainly not least, the Board turned its attention to the Pulliam Grant Committee's recommendations for this cycle of grants. These were approved as recommended. Announcements with the names of the recipients and amounts will be coming out in September, stay tuned.

The Governing Board's next meeting will be September 17th at 10 a.m.

Debbie Morehouse, Clerk

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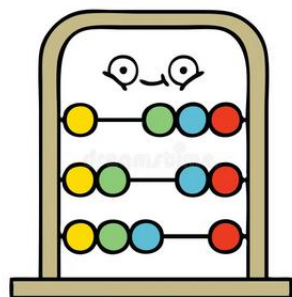
Alternate: Leslie Fairbank

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Bean Counter's Tally

through August 20, 2026



Just when I thought all the documentation had been sent to the accountant working on our Financial Review (as reported last month), they requested a few more things. These have been sent off and we await any further requests or the finished Financial Review and recommendations.

Our endowment currently stands at 9.6M through mid-August. To date, our budgeted income is keeping up with our expenses and we are well within our budget guidelines for 2026.

And, speaking of budget, the Budget Committee met on August 6th for the first go-around with creating a budget for 2027. We went line by line projecting estimates for each. The Building and Grounds Committee, as expected, has a long list of needs and wants, afterall, it isn't easy or inexpensive keeping up with the maintenance on two historic buildings. We decided to poll the Governing Board on their thoughts regarding priorities. Their sentiment, based upon the current high value of the endowment, is that this may be the time to get ahead of these expenses and position ourselves for any downturn the market may have in store. Their input was very helpful, and the Budget Committee will meet again on August 27th to begin the whittling process as we shape a budget that meets the needs and advances the goals of UUCC.



Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have on UUCC's financial circumstances.

Debbie Morehouse,
Chief Bean Counter (aka Treasurer)



First Sunday

Day of Giving for the free little pantry

Please bring non-perishable items to the parish house to help restock the Little Free Pantry behind the clinic. This Resource is being used and appreciated by our community. Help us keep it filled with nutritious food.

Thank you for Giving!

Opportunity Fund update

We are all aware of spiraling costs that take the highest tolls on households with limited means. The Castine Wood Bank is an initiative to help reduce the difficulty of deciding where limited resources should be allocated. Recently, the Opportunity Fund donated \$2000 to the Castine Wood Bank. This money will help the wood bank to continue purchasing truckload quantities of hardwood logs that can be cut and split into fire wood. This fuel is delivered to families who rely on wood heat either in addition to or in replacement of oil heat. It also helps defray the costs of fuel, tools and supplies necessary to keep the bank running.



The Castine Wood Bank is very grateful to the UUCC's Opportunity Fund, and will continue to provide as much firewood to the underserved in Castine and surrounding communities in the future.



No Neighbor Left Behind

Hard to believe that we will be orchestrating the October NNLB meal in just a few weeks! As you know, I look for meat sales to determine our menu, but in October, we have typically offered chicken, meatloaf, or pork tenderloin accompanied by potato, a vegetable, and apple crisp. This article is simply a reminder since the October 8th meal date will be fast approaching and breathing down the

neck of the October The Common publication. So know that you are appreciated and much needed as we work together to send out this meal. Our recipient numbers have dropped from two years ago when 140+ was not unusual. We now typically prepare 120 dinners.

As for our July NNLB, I am happy to report that things went very smoothly and efficiently in preparing and sending out this summer menu of subs, watermelon, and chips. In fact, we have proved to be SOOOOO efficient in the past, that we scheduled our meeting time to be at 2 p.m. Impressive!

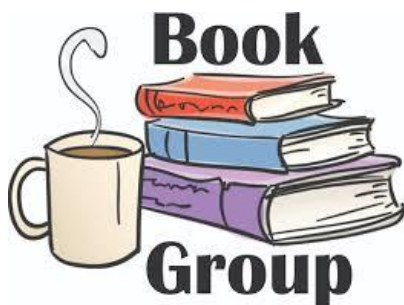
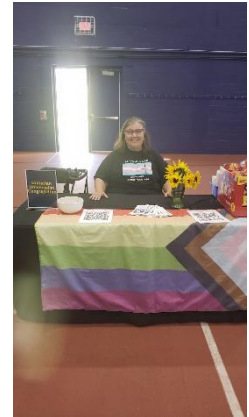
I look forward to working with all of you and will keep you updated as the menu is finalized.

As ever, all best, Johanna Sweet





Thursday, September 3, UUCC will be represented at the Community Fair at MMA from 4-530pm. This picture is from last year's table. If you are affiliated with the school in any way, plan to visit or even sit with me to talk with students about our congregation!

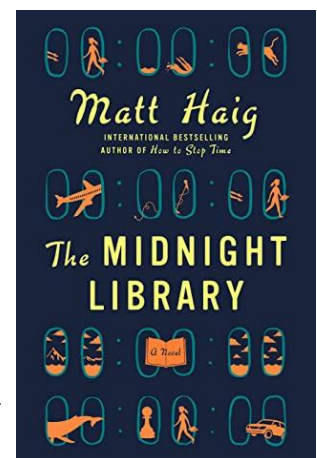


UCC READS Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m. on ZOOM

This week, UCC reads will be discussing *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig.

When Nora Seed finds herself in the Midnight Library, she has a chance to make things right. Up until now, her life has been full of misery and regret. She feels she has let everyone down, including herself. But things are about to change. The books in the Midnight Library enable Nora to live as if she had done things differently. With the help of an old friend, she can now undo every one of her regrets as she tries to work out her perfect life. But things aren't always what she imagined they'd be, and soon her choices place the library and herself in extreme danger.

Before time runs out, she must answer the ultimate question: what is the best way to live? Consider becoming part of the UCC Reads book discussion. Click on the link below Tuesday, or email office@uucastine.org and we will add you to the weekly reminder list.



Yet another phishing scam

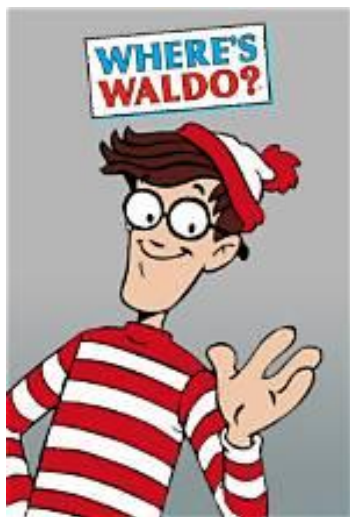
is making the rounds of some of our churches. In this scam, someone is reaching out via email or phone asking for a copy of the directory. In these cases the emails are ones for the staff or board of the congregation and in the case of the phone calls, the calls are coming up on caller ID as the church phone number.

Scammers are trying to get the directory

either for doxing and harassment reasons or to sell the information.



no one will ask you to give them the directory or other confidential information nor will anyone ask you to purchase gift cards for them. If someone does reach out and seems like a person we need to respond to please reply back to them in a different manner (different email, text, phone). Do not reply to the email, text or phone number from the original contact. This is one way we all care for each other.

**New FALL schedule**

Beginning September 1 until further notice, here is the schedule for both the minister and the administrator:

Rev. Amy

Is in the pulpit most Sundays

Monday and Wednesday in the office

Tuesday OFF

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday around for meetings and writing days

Our administrator Hank (Henry)

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10-1, other days as needed



DORIS RUSSELL IS TURNING 100!

please join us for a
**COMMUNITY
CELEBRATION**

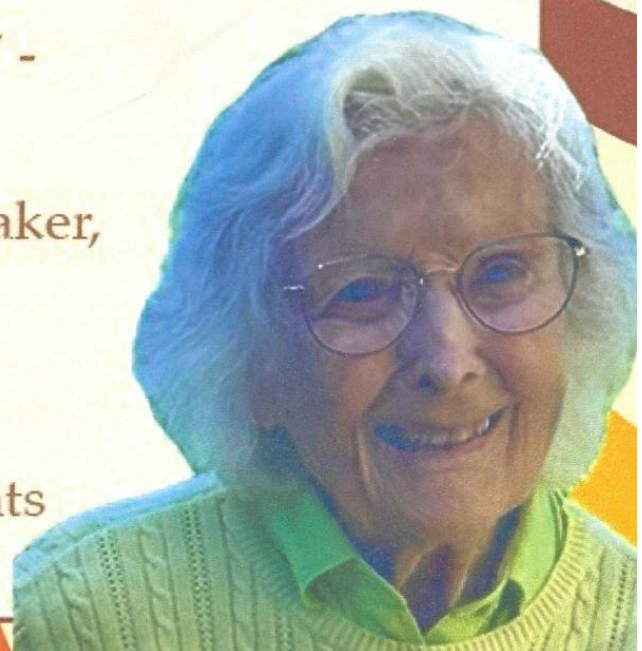
Sunday, September 13
Emerson Hall

1:00pm

Screening of "Doris" -
a short film by
Cinematographer &
Documentary Filmmaker,
Sam Russell

1:45-4:00pm

Reception
with light refreshments



50th
Annual

Common Ground Country Fair



CELEBRATE RURAL LIVING WITH MOFGA

SEPTEMBER 25, 26 & 27, 2026
UNITY, MAINE

GATES OPEN AT 9:00 AM

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
P.O. Box 170, Unity, Maine 04988 • 207-568-4142 • mofga.org

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When you're there, look for the folks from the Unitarian Universalist church of Ellsworth! When you buy an egg roll, tell them you're a UU!

