

MUUFLETTER for April 2018

Newsletter from Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

SUNDAY SERVICES SCHEDULE

Always at 10:30 a.m.

Porter Meeting Hall, Skidompha Library

Entrance on Elm St., Damariscotta

April's theme: Stewardship of Our Interdependent Web

Apr. 1: "Is This a Joke?" Easter service led by Rev. Erika Hewitt.

April 8: Rev. Charles Stephens, guest minister. **"What More Did I Think I Wanted"** Last year was an abundant "mast year" in Down East Maine. The trees were heavy with acorns and pine cones. Such abundance has and continues to provide an abundance of food for wildlife. There are internal rhythms within the natural world, of which we are a part: both boom and bust. Natural rhythms have existed for countless eons but it depends upon us to help keep the rhythm balanced

April 15: Guest speaker Tom Handel of the Nagaloka Buddhist Center in Portland. Nagaloka is part of the Triranta Buddhist Community, a school of Buddhism designed specifically for Westerners. Tom is a Mitra, a teacher, and frequently leads Dharma talks at the center. He was a longtime resident of Newcastle, and former director of Mobius in Damariscotta.

April 22: All Creatures Great and Small — Intergenerational Animal Blessing -

Rev. Erika Hewitt In this Blessing of the Animals, we'll allow our pets to relax at home. Instead, please

bring a picture, memento, or other symbol of an animal that you love — be it your pet or the animal that speaks to your spirit. We'll celebrate all creatures of the Earth, seas, and skies, examining the gifts they bring to our lives.



April 29: "Special Places" by Courney Belolan. There are different places in the world that connect us to different parts of our own lives, as well as to the greater web of life. Visiting these places can have the power to transport us both deep into ourselves and far outside of ourselves.

May 6: Stay tuned for details about our Beltane/35th Anniversary Celebration!

Minister's Column



It's an odd thing to call both Maine and Oregon "home," but it's my truth: in both places, I feel held, and in sync with the energy of both the earth/water and its people. That's notable, because I don't feel that way in many places (on my travels, I usually find things to appreciate... and then look forward to returning home).

I'm grateful that my ministry with you is flexible enough that I can go home, to Oregon, every winter. During my two and half weeks there last month, I spent time with three generations of my family, remembering our late Grandma Lillian. I also spent a lot of time by myself, recharging with walks on the beach (and confirming that no matter how long I live in Maine, I will always prefer a sun that sets into, rather than rising over, the ocean). I took advantage of the perks of a big city (celebrity lectures, excellent dim sum) and visited the familiar, cherished spots that have been favorites for over 30 years of my life.

At the end of this month, I'm returning to Portland, Oregon - but this time, I'm wearing my "UUA staff" hat, to serve our UU religious professionals at their Pacific Western Regional Assembly. I'll be guiding nearly two hundred clergy, educators, and music directors through a day of learning together, so that they can return to the congregations they serve with new tools in their spiritual toolboxes. (I will also, I'm certain, eat some excellent dim sum.) I'll linger in Oregon, at a spirituality writing retreat, for a few more days.

Toward that end, **I will be away from email and voicemail from Tuesday, April 24th through Thursday, May 3rd.** When I get home, I'll have a week to connect with you and the Fellowship's leaders, and will then be traveling again as I provide training to several of our congregations in the Midwest before attending my 25th college reunion. (Can't wait!)

I will be **away again from Wednesday, May 9th through Sunday, May 20th.** During that time, your Board members and worship leaders will field questions and concerns, and will contact me if there's an emergency.

Just like early March, when I left one home to return, happily, to you and to midcoast Maine, I will return to our shared ministry with joy and with eagerness to find "home" in one another.

Keeping the faith, Rev. Erika

Donna Dolham to be Ordained MUUF past president needs singers

Donna Dolham will be ordained Saturday, June 16th, 2018 @1:00 at the First Universalist Church in Auburn, Maine and is inviting any Midcoast UU Fellowship singers to join the choir!

Choir will be gathering an hour prior to the service to practice together for "Life Calls Us On" by Jason Shelton. If you are interested, please contact Donna @ ddolham@tds.net or 207 701-1581. The choir will also provide hymn support during the service. Opening hymn will be "I Am Willing", Donna will send music for interested singers.

(all non-singers welcome to the ordination)

Hospitality Schedule

- April 1** - Rosie Davis (Red Pod)
- April 8** - Tiffany Vencile (Blue Pod)
- April 15** - Dick & Jennifer Ober (Purple Pod)
- April 22** - David Bailey (Indigo Pod)
- April 29** - Kate Pennington (Green Pod)

Greeters

- Apr. 1** - Rosie Davis
- Apr. 8** - David Bailey
- Apr. 15** - Bill Child
- Apr. 22** - Sally Sapienza
- Apr. 29** - Robin Hall
- May 6** - *Your name here*

New Website Coming

A new website is in the works for MUUF, based on a design theme shared by many UU congregations. At this point the roll-out date is uncertain, but it won't be long.

The new site is based on the WordPress platform and has a number of graphics and features currently unavailable to us.

John Adams, our longtime volunteer webmaster, has asked to step back. The board is extremely grateful to John for his many years spent voluntarily building and maintaining our current site.

A subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, comprising Carol Robins, Bob Whitmire and Dick Ober, is working on the new site. Dick has invaluable experience with WordPress and is leading the redesign effort.

The old site will remain in place until the new site is ready. The web address will not change. The old site simply will disappear and the new one will take its place.

Message from the President



Dearest Fellowship & Friends,

Spring has been glimpsed just around the corner! I was excited to see the first signs of growth in my garden just the other day and am looking forward to saying goodbye to the last of the snow. I have enjoyed seeing the continued evidence of vitality and growth in our Fellowship as well. The children presented what they had learned at OWL to the congregation the other Sunday, and we have continued to fill the library with joy and community every week.

Moments when things are going well are good times to take a look around and take stock. The Board has been taking on this sort of "foundation work" in many different ways this year. The Bylaws are being updated to reflect the current operations of the Fellowship, the website is getting an update to be more easily maintained and upgraded in the future. In addition to these important jobs, the Board has also been looking at the policies that govern the Fellowship. There are several standards across UU congregations, such as a Disruptive Behavior Policy, and a Safe Congregation Policy, that the Fellowship has not previously had in place.

In concert with the Committee on Ministry, the Board has just adopted a Disruptive Behavior Policy, and a Safe Congregation Policy is in the works with the Religious Exploration Committee. The two documents are intended to help guide Fellowship leaders in ensuring that the Fellowship is a safe and healthy place for all our members. Both will be posted eventually to the new website, but for now the Disruptive Behavior Policy is attached to this Newsletter (*page 5*) If you have any questions, feel free to discuss with any member of the Board.

I'm looking forward to continuing with this foundation work through the rest of the year, and continuing in the maturational growth of our congregation.

In Faith, Caity Bogdan

More Information for April 15 Speaker

The Nagaloka Buddhist center in Portland is part of the Triratna Buddhist Community. We're a small Sangha associated with a much larger retreat center, Aryaloka, in Newmarket, NH. Aryaloka has a good brief explanation of Triratna on their website. Here's a link to that page: <http://www.aryaloka.org/about/about-triratna/>



Religious Exploration

Carney Doucette, Director

Spirit Play Stories for April will reflect on our theme of Stewardship of the Earth.

- April 1 – Special Easter egg hunt
- April 8 – The Dory Story
- April 15 – The Elders are Watching
- April 22 – Multigenerational service – all children attend worship
- April 29 – Julia Butterfly Hill – Saving the Redwood Forests

Faith in Action Project – We care about all animals on this planet, including our pets. So, on Sunday, April 22 we will have a food collection for pets along with a blessing of animals. *Please bring in pet products on this Sunday.* We will hide the items and then have the children find them. Then the pet products will be donated to the [Lincoln County Animal Shelter](#). Check their website for a list of items needed, although wet dog and cat food is always appreciated.



OWL (Our Whole Lives) sexuality class illustrating different emotions in a family.



Learning about aging, threading a needle with cloudy eyesight.



Learning about aging, using a wheelchair.



Rev. Erika, Caity Bogdan, Patti Anderson, Phyllis Loney, Rev. Susan, Carol Robins, Joan Whitmire, Rosie Davis, Sandy Barth, and Bob Whitmire.

MUUF Visits UUA

Headquarters in Boston

Board and congregation members visited the UUA in Boston and attended a service with our very own Rev. Erika. They enjoyed a tour of the UUA, lunch with UUA staff and a meet and photo opportunity with the UUA's President, Rev. Susan Frederick-Grey. (see photo at left)



Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Disruptive Behavior Policy

March, 2018

In keeping with our Covenant of Good Relations, the Midcoast UU Fellowship strives to keep its members of all ages physically and emotionally free from harm. The Board of Trustees may deny attendance at any congregational service or function to any congregation member, friend, or visitor deemed to be disruptive or harmful to the Fellowship. This behavior includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Threats to the safety of any adult or child
- Disruption of worship services, congregational functions, congregational activities, or virtual/online spaces dedicated to the Fellowship.

Disruptive behavior, and the response(s) to it, might take these forms:

I. Life-threatening and urgent

If the disruptive situation is life-threatening, any person may take all appropriate measures, including calling 9-1-1.

II. Urgent (but non-life threatening), requiring immediate response

If the verbal or physical disruption persists long enough to interrupt the event, Fellowship leaders may wish to confer, however informally, and take appropriate action without putting themselves (or anyone else) at risk.

worship: If intruders verbally or physically disrupt worship, the minister and/or worship associate is responsible for maintaining the atmosphere of the service and may choose to call for a song to drown out and/or distract the disruptive behavior. A Board or COM member will go to the Religious Education area to advise those adults about the disturbance. If possible, someone could video the occurrence for possible future legal need, but do not release the footage to the public or retain the footage beyond its immediate or legal need. Don't engage in discussion. Tell the intruder(s) they are trespassing on our sacred space and ask them to leave the property peacefully.

III. Non-urgent

The Fellowship's members will use the Covenant as a tool to assess and resolve non-urgent disruptive behavior. If it becomes apparent that the disruptive behavior is a pattern (i.e., unlikely to resolve on its own), at least two people from the following bodies will confer to formally address the disruptive behavior:

The minister; any member of the Board; any member of the Committee on Ministry; and if necessary, a worship associate

Those leaders will choose any of the following steps, as they deem appropriate and/or necessary:

A. Conduct a face-to-face meeting to resolve the issue, held between a Board Member, a responsible Fellowship member, and/or the Minister and the offending party. The Board and Minister will be informed about such meeting.

B. Send a letter from the appropriate Fellowship leader and/or the Minister to the offending party, specifically outlining the behavior that needs to be corrected. (This step may be conducted in addition to the step above.) The Board and Minister will receive a copy of the letter.

C. Conduct a meeting between the Board of Trustees, at least one member of the Committee on Ministry, and any other parties involved in the dispute, with the purpose of reviewing actions taken thus far and developing an appropriate action plan for addressing the issue.

If an action plan is developed, it will be administered by the Board of Trustees. Action plans may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Exclusion of the offending person(s) from Fellowship worship services, functions, or activities for a certain period of time.
- Specific conditions, behaviors, or terms under which the offending person(s) may return to the Fellowship, and/or attend worship services, functions, or activities.
- Specific conditions, behaviors or terms under which the offending person(s)' membership or attendance will be immediately terminated.
- Permanent termination of the offending person(s) from membership at Fellowship, and/or exclusion from participation in Fellowship activities. Permanent termination shall require a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees. If membership is terminated, the offending person(s) will be informed in writing within 30 days.

#