

# MUUFLETTER for December 2016

## 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

**Dec. 4: Rev. Erika Hewitt** leads worship on this second Sunday of Advent

**Dec. 11: Rev. Mair Honan - "At the Edge of Compassion"**. Ordained in 2006 in the United Church of Christ, she co-founded an outreach ministry with the homeless in Portland -Grace-Street Ministry ([grace-streetministry@blogspot.com](mailto:grace-streetministry@blogspot.com)). She has written a book of reflections on street ministry, *Walking in the Realm of Miracles*.

Following worship on Dec. 11th, ALL are welcome to join Rev. Erika's New to UU gathering from about 11:45 to 1:00 p.m.

During this hour +, Erika will share insights about the history of Unitarianism and Universalism, and what she views as the gifts (and quirks) of our UU tradition. We'll also field questions from any & all newcomers, and - time permitting - share conversation.

Childcare will be provided for parents who'd like to attend.



### **Dec. 18: A Living Nativity Story led by Rev. Erika Hewitt and Carney Doucette**

Join us for a joyful and intergenerational "pageant from the pews." (That means we tell the story and you act it out!) Our Share the Plate offering will be given to the Lincoln County Animal Shelter. Coffee hour includes a cookie exchange! Please bring a dozen cookies to share, and plan to take some home in return.

### **Sunday, Dec. 25 at 4:00** — "Carols and Kringle"

Rev. Erika and your Worship Associates invite you to bring your family to our worship space for a simple

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### *From Our Minister*

It may not feel like the merriest of holidays, but here it comes anyway: the steady counting down into winter's darkness and the lights that offer their countering cheer. This year I find myself craving the ritual of counting December days, not only to mark time but also to fill the month with as much meaning and cheer as I can muster.

Some of you know that as a preacher's kid (I never missed a day of Sunday school or Bible camp), Advent holds deep sway with me. I always loved lighting the purple candles each week (well: the pink one, on Advent's third Sunday) because it feels so right to pause and to honor the process of waiting. When Lindy - one of your Worship Associates - told me that she wanted to incorporate an Advent wreath into worship on November 27th, it inspired me to revisit this ancient tradition in my own home, where my Advent wreath (and Advent calendar) are already being used.

If you feel pulled to notice our waiting, and to mark time with more reverence, I invite you to turn to the Advent calendar that I've included in this newsletter (page 5). You'll find a daily suggestion to imbue these short days with connection and purpose.

"The holiday season is nothing," writes my colleague Rev. David Breeden, "if not waiting - to get done the chores; to find the right gift; to find time for quiet moments; to accept that our loved ones will not be as we wish them to be."

Whatever it is you're waiting for, hoping for, or even dreading, may we cleave to the practices and the companions who hold us steady and offer us hope.

*In faith,  
Rev. Erika*

### **Christmas Eve Service: Saturday, Dec. 24 at 4:00 p.m.**

Join Rev. Erika Hewitt, Kevin Kiley, and the MUUFles in the Skidompha Atrium for a candlelit service for all ages. We'll hear the nativity story, reflect on the meaning it holds for us over two thousand years later, and experience the magic of Christmas Eve. Our Christmas Eve offering will be divided equally between two causes: the Twin Villages Foodbank Farm and an Easter "reverse offering" that will be used by our congregation's members to do good in the world.

## ***SUNDAY SERVICES, continued***

hour of fellowship. Whether it's to show off your new socks or share your extra cookies, all are welcome to this informal gathering.

**Sunday, Jan. 1, 2017 - *New Beginnings*** with some of your Worship Associates.

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### **Hospitality Schedule**

#### **Greeters**

**Dec. 4** - Jan & Bud Elwin

**Dec. 11** - Lee Warren

**Dec. 18** - Robin Hall

**Jan. 1** - Dick & Jennifer Ober

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#### **Refreshments**

**Dec. 4** - Sandy Barth (Indego Pod)

**Dec. 11** - Kate Pennington (Green Pod)

**Dec. 18** - Nancy Holmes (Red Pod)

**Dec. 25** - *Volunteers, incl. chair movers!*

**Jan. 1** - Tiffany Vencile/Rosie Davis (Blue Pod)

**Jan. 8** - Dick & Jennifer Ober (Purple Pod)

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#### ***Share the Plate***

December's recipient of our monthly collection for charity is the Coastal Humane Society whose Mission Statement is:

*The mission of the Coastal Humane Society is to protect and save animals' lives; to educate and advocate for their welfare; to provide exemplary shelter and veterinary care; to place adoptable companion animals in loving homes; and to enhance the bond between humans and animals.*

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#### **Stand with Standing Rock Sunday, Dec. 4**

Please come to a prayer circle in solidarity with the water protectors of Standing Rock and all indigenous people on Sunday, December 4, 12:30 pm at Veterans Memorial Park in Newcastle. The Fellowship, along with the Midcoast Meeting of Friends and the Second Congregational Church, are hosting the event and inviting other faith groups. Erika is not able to attend, and Lindy Gifford, interfaith chaplain, is organizing it and will offer a prayer for the Fellowship. Please contact her for more information or if you would like to help. [lindyg@tidewater.net](mailto:lindyg@tidewater.net)

The gathering is in response to a call from Chief Arvol Looking Horse, Spiritual Leader of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Nations, to come to Standing Rock for an Interfaith Day of Prayer on December 4. In Chief Looking Horse's words, "The hearts of all people's faiths must now unite in believing we can change the path we are now on. We, from heart of

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## **President's Message**



Hello everyone,

Thanks to all of you who participated in the Annual Meeting on November 13. Because of your support and confidence, the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship unanimously approved becoming a Welcoming Congregation. Pending approval from the UUA, we'll begin publicizing our new commitment to our LGBTQ community, friends and members.

We also unanimously passed the budget for next year, reflecting our commitment to the addition of a Director of Religious Exploration and a new budget line for the Social Justice Committee which continues to be very involved in local activities as well as state-wide initiatives.

Finally, we voted on a new round of board members to fill five slots on the Board. Here is the line-up for 2017: Carol Robins, President; Sandy Barth, Vice President; Dick Ober, Treasurer; Caity Bogdan, Secretary; and Trustees - Rosie Davis, Diane Jensen and Kay Miller.

I look forward to working with everyone and continuing our goals of growth and community involvement in the new year.

I also want to thank the following Board members who will be leaving us at the end of the year: Steve Cole, V.P.; David Bailey, Treasurer; Robin Hall, Secretary; and Jennifer Ober, past president and trustee.

The board worked hard over the past year to create new opportunities for our congregation to grow, and have succeeded in a number of goals that we set our minds to early on in the year. I appreciate every single one of you for all of your hard work, focus and dedication to do what was best for the congregation. Everyone on the board should be very proud of our accomplishments!

I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season

*- In faith, Carol*

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### **PLEDGING**

*Pledging is an act of Stewardship, an act that says members and friends are contributing to the health and vitality of this Fellowship, and to its service to the larger community. Practically, your pledges assist your Board of Trustees and specifically the Treasurer, to manage the approved budget. We thank the many who have already pledged and urge those who haven't to consider doing it this month.*

*- David Bailey, treasurer*

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## Religious Exploration



**Faith in Action: Gingerbread House Decorating** - with DRE Carney Doucet and RE committee members.

On Sunday, Dec. 11, the children will build and decorate gingerbread houses. The houses will then be donated to the Community Supper on Dec. 14 to serve as table decorations. Kate Pennington will supply the gingerbread house parts and decorations. Please bring additional contributions of candy and other edible decorations to MUUF on December 4 or 11. Let's help brighten other peoples' lives with this Faith-in-Action project.



### Advent Activities for All Ages

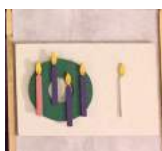
For Unitarian Universalists, Advent can provide an opportunity to deepen our awareness of the spiritual values inherent in this season. Hope, love, joy and peace are all reflected in the nativity story of Jesus. Unitarian Universalists can find hope, love, joy and peace, just as they can be found in the Christian story of Advent. Here is one way you can participate in this Advent season:

Have a conversation each night at the dinner table with your loved ones based on a [daily table top advent question](#). These questions were created with children in mind, but can work for all ages. Take time to slow down in the bustle of this season to talk, listen and reflect using these questions.

Through sharing, let us discover the deeper meaning of this Advent season.



*The Advent Spirit Play Advent Story illustrating the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. Use the link - in blue - to the daily table top advent questions.*



## Share the (Holiday) Love

Do you have holiday cheer to spare? Please consider sending a simple holiday card (or several) to someone whose holiday season will be difficult and lonely; incarcerated members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship (or CLF, our "online/mail" UU congregation).



For a decade, **Rev. Erika** has been writing letters to incarcerated individuals who are comforted and supported by hearing from Unitarian Universalists. You can help by mailing a holiday card with your greetings to the Church of the Larger Fellowship, whose staff will address and mail your card.

The card's envelope must be white and should be unaddressed but with a stamp. The envelopes can't contain anything except for a simple card or they'll be denied by the prison's mail room.

Address outer envelope to CLFUU Holiday Card, 24 Farnsworth St., Boston, MA 02210-1409 and mail your card no later than December 12. CLF will forward cards to Unitarian Universalists experiencing incarceration. To read all guidelines, please visit: <http://www.quest-formeaning.org/wp3/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/HolidayCardsDosDonts.pdf>



### Snowy Sunday? Use Zoom!

During the winter, your Fellowship leaders may decide to cancel worship in the interest of safety. If that happens on one of Rev. Erika's Sundays (January 18 & 29, February 12, and March 12, 2017), she will open her "Zoom room" at 10:30 a.m. on that Sunday.

Zoom is a videoconferencing platform. You have the option of using your computer's camera to join Rev. Erika's space, or just use your phone to call in and listen/talk. Erika will lead a chalice lighting, joys and sorrows, a meditation, and group discussion. It'll be shorter and less formal than a worship service, but Zoom will allow us to connect before we go back to our shoveling/jigsaw puzzling/hot chocolate guzzling.

To join by computer:

1. Go to [www.Zoom.us](http://www.Zoom.us)
2. Click the blue heading "Join a meeting"
3. Enter Erika's designated number: 749-979-5863

To join by telephone only:

1. Dial 646 558 8656 or 408 638 0968
2. Enter meeting ID: 749 979 5863

## *Standing Rock prayer circle..... continued*

Turtle Island, have a great message for the world to unite for our children's future.... This is a very serious time we are in. I know in my heart there are millions of people that feel this is long overdue. It is time that all of us become leaders to help protect the sacred upon Mother Earth. She is the source of life and not a resource."

500 clergy, including 50 Unitarian Universalists, already answered a previous call to Standing Rock on November 3. Many will also go there on Dec. 4 to answer this call, which Karen Van Fossan, Minister, Bismarck-Mandan Unitarian Universalist, describes as "one of the most important invitations we are ever likely to receive, as people of faith and conviction." She goes on, "As those who have visited know, the nonviolent water protector movement at Standing Rock is deeply rooted in prayer. Each day I spend at Oceti Sakowin camp, I feel myself challenged and inspired to live a more prayerful and faithful life."

For those of us who are unable to physically go to Standing Rock, we can still stand reverently in solidarity and pray humbly that we may learn from their vision of a better world. Our prayer circle at 12:30 will occur at the same time as the interfaith prayers at Standing Rock. There are solidarity prayer events being hosted by the Augusta and the Brunswick UU churches, and others, and we are proud to be hosting our own event. Please come and stand with us on Sunday at 12:30 and invite others to join us.

*- Lindy Gifford*

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## **2016 Founders Award**



Past President John Adams was the recipient of the Founders Award at our Annual Meeting. Currently an active member of the Worship Associates, he has been a major influence in the life of this Fellowship

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## *Season's Greetings*



## **MUUF Donates & Assists Food Pantry With 170+ Thanksgiving Food Baskets**

*Chris & Carol Robins load his truck with boxes of food and birds for Ecumenical Food Pantry's Thanksgiving baskets.*

*- photo by Jen*



Every year the Ecumenical Food Pantry in Newcastle packs Thanksgiving baskets for food insecure families in ten area towns. This year, as one of the eight sponsoring churches, our Fellowship stepped forward and helped with this project. Our big contribution was to help pick up and deliver non-perishable food, as well as enough turkeys and chickens for over 170 families.

Many thanks to Robin Hall, Chris & Carol Robins, and Glen Davis for us of their trucks. Many thanks to Joanne Campbell and Joann Danch for volunteering to help. Also, many thanks to all of you who added to the collection plate and donated food items for our basket.

*- Fondly, Jennifer Ober*



*MUUF Board member Jennifer Ober looks over the assembly tables at Second Congregational Church where volunteers from the Fellowship joined those from other churches to prepare more than 170 Thanksgiving food baskets for distribution by the Twin Villages Ecumenical Food Pantry. The November charity plate collection of more than \$200 paid for some of the turkeys & chickens.*

## Rev. Erika's 2016 Advent Calendar

1: Choose a cause — like the food bank or a charity — and save up your loose change for them for the rest of the month.

2: Put on some holiday music — any song you love — and sing along. Better yet, invite someone else to sing with you.

3: All day long, find ways to spread kindness to both strangers and friends.

4: Whether you come to worship or not, pause around 11:00 a.m. — when we usually observe our devotional time — and send prayers or energy to those you love.

5: If you're in the area, come by Newcastle's park at noon to join or honk in support of our anti-racism vigil. (Planning meeting at 12:30)

6: Email or call someone to say "thank you" — whether they're expecting it or not.

7: Snuggle up with your favorite holiday movie or book. (Popcorn optional.)

8: Bundle up and head out into the world: what beauty can you find in nature today?

9: Call someone you haven't talked to for a while, and tell them how much they matter.

10. Choose a household chore and approach it with mindfulness, instead of rushing. Be as present as you can.

11: Box up something you're ready to let go of and pass it on to someone for whom it might bring joy.

12: When was the last time you danced? Put on some music and start moving.

13: Look up into the night sky and find a "star of wonder" to gaze at.

14: Unplug, power down, and head to bed early for a nourishing night of sleep.

15: Every time you hear a phone ring, pause and give thanks for something.

16: Choose to prepare and eat food that will make you feel energetic, strong, and healthy.

17: If you find yourself in a crowd of harried shoppers, pause and send them peaceful energy. Imagine waves of calm settling around them.

18: Have you always secretly wanted to be a shepherd? Join our pageant from the pews!

19: If you have the means, "pay it forward" for the next customer at a coffee shop or toll booth.

20: Do you have a favorite holiday poem or story? Read it to yourself or to someone you love.

21: Mark the winter solstice by going out into the darkness and seeking out lights that make you feel merry.

22: If your heart has opened to the holiday spirit, ask who you might forgive for a past hurt.

23: Set time aside to care for your body. Breathe. Stretch. Move.

24: Enjoy the beauty of music, story, song, and the radiant candlelight at our 4:00 p.m. service.

25: Have yourself a merry little Christmas! Join us at Skidompha at 4:00 p.m. to show off your new socks or sweater.

