

MUUFLETTER for February 2019

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

February's Theme:

February 3 - Multigen Service: Brigit's Day, Celebrating Imbolc. Courtney Belolan, Carney Doucette, and Lindy Gifford will lead a multigenerational service celebrating Brigit's Day. There is no RE or childcare this Sunday!

February 10 - "The Ways of the Great Below"

Rev. Erika Hewitt Our service will center around the oldest written story known: that of Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth, and her descent into the Underworld. This ancient narrative makes it clear that our human impulse not merely to wander, but also to search, is woven into the DNA of our human psyches. We'll also enjoy special music by Carter Ruff.

After the service, all are invited to join Rev. Erika for a conversation about our Monday anti-racism vigils.

February 17 - Hide and Seek by Aram Mitchell. We go out - as heroes, pilgrims, foragers - in order to return with a contribution, to connect with the elements of the world, to uncover portions of our process of becoming. While the journey often functions in ways that disrupt complacent behaviors and broaden narrow world-views, it can also become an "out" that disguises a fear of belonging. How do we engage the mythic weight of the human experience of journey with a strong commitment to home? How does the spiritual practice of journeying contribute to the project of liberating us from alienation?

February 24 - Sins of the Fathers. Bob Whitmire, a Worship Associate and Vice President of the Fellowship, will talk about growing up in the segregated South, and his personal struggle to escape the culture of overt white supremacy he was born into. Bob is a North Carolina native, a Vietnam veteran and a former journalist. Now retired, he occupies his time growing old as gracefully as possible.

March 3 - "Acceptance Is a Small, Quiet Room"

Rev. Erika Hewitt

Join Erika as we explore what it means, and doesn't mean, to practice acceptance — including acceptance of things we don't like.

Minister's Message



What kind of blessings or obstacles are you encountering on your current journey? What — or who — calls you forward? When you feel stuck or lost, whose wisdom

is greater than your own?

Years ago, before you and I even knew of each other's existence, I went through a painful loss. Looking back now, I see that my faith in life, and my ability to show up for life, was at its lowest that winter. I felt as though my journey — my life journey, my spiritual journey, however you spin it — had been halted... but then I received a gift that helped my journey move forward again: my friend Virginia — a UU leader who's also a birth coach — told me the story of Inanna.

The ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna is the oldest human story in written form. Inanna, whom the Babylonians called Ishtar, was a goddess: the Queen of Heaven and Earth. She was a priestess, a warrior, a mother, a hunter. The story of her journey to the Underworld will be at the heart of our service on February 10th, inviting us to consider our individual journeys and how — even when they seem to hit a dead end, or cause us to lose hope — those journeys are always shifting, almost always invite us to accept change, and sometimes offer us the chance to experience transformation.

In faith,

Rev. Erika

Our first Circle Supper of the year

Friday - February 15

Celebrate Valentine's Day
with the Baileys in Newcastle
sign up sheet available Feb. 3

(storm date Sat. Feb. 16)

Message from the President



Greetings Friends,

I hope you are all managing to stay warm on these chilly days. We had our first cancelled service due to the weather and were able to hold service via Zoom. Hopefully everyone was made aware of the cancellation in a timely manner? Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or comments regarding this.

Your Board, Rev. Erika and Carney had our Board Retreat on January 26th. It was a very successful and productive day. We got to know each other and our new board members better, thus enabling us to work even better as a board. We were able to set some goals for us to work on, to help benefit our wonderful Fellowship. We will give more details once we have a plan in place!

Should anyone need to contact me, my email is rosiesdavis@gmail.com, my cell number is 207-380-3011. Please feel free to contact me anytime, especially if you have a question or concern for Rev. Erika, which cannot wait, on a Tuesday and Wednesday as these are her days off.

*In faith,
Rosie x*

Invitation to Join MUUF Immigration Justice Initiative

Sandy Barth invites you to join with her in seeing what a small group within the Fellowship might like to pursue for the cause of immigration justice.

She has been collecting information and contacts on different paths that might be doable for a small congregation like ours that is not in the center of a lot of immigration justice activities. She has been attending MUUSAN (Maine UU State Advocacy Network) meetings for the past year and a half and has joined the Racial, Native & Immigration Justice Issue Group that is generating a lot of ideas and sharing resources and specifics about what other Maine UU churches are doing.

There are also local non-UU churches that are pursuing immigration initiatives. If you have an interest in immigration issues and would like to explore what might be feasible for our Fellowship to undertake, please see Sandy or contact her at:

sbarth1942@gmail.com or call her at 563-5565.

RE Stories & Activities for February



Carney McRae Doucette,
director of
Religious Exploration

RE Sunday Mornings

February 3 Multigenerational service on Imbolg.
All children attend worship.

OWL Sunday at UU Rockland

February 10 Labyrinth Story

February 17 Julia Butterfly Hill

OWL Sunday at UU Rockland

February 24 John Murray and the Winds of Change

Facilitators Needed for Our Whole Lives (Grade K-6)

Currently, some of our children are participating in OWL (Our Whole Lives Sexuality) for grades 4-5. Last year, I facilitated the K-1 OWL for MUUF. We would like to have two trained facilitators for OWL K-6, to continue offering these programs. The Mid-Maine DRE group – Carney's peer group of Religious Educators, is organizing a facilitator training in Augusta from April 12 to April 14. Members of MUUF are invited to talk to Carney Doucette if this is an interest for you. We cover the cost of training. See the flyer on page 4.

Pre-Teen Conference coming up in March

The Unitarian Universalist Society of Bangor will be hosting this year's pre-teen conference for ages 9-12. The theme is "Journey" and will be held Saturday, March 16, 12 noon to Sunday, March 17, 11:30 a.m. Registration forms will be sent via email and for pick up on Sunday morning as soon as they are available. This is a great opportunity to meet other UU children and have fun! Contact Carney (dre@uurockland.org) with any questions. If a parent is interested in chaperoning, please let Carney know.

Faith in Action at the Central Lincoln County YMCA

Thanks to Karen Kleinkopf who worked with a group of our children at the FARMS (Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools) kitchen on Monday, January 14. Mason, Autumn, Toby, O'Doshie, Maia and Finley, along with adults, Rosie, Tiffany Liz and Molly worked with Karen to make dal soup for the community supper later in the week. They also prepared and enjoyed sliced cucumbers with dip and roasted beets with garlic!

See photos on page 3



Karen Kleinkopf at Y-Farms gets RE group ready to cook



The cleanup crew

Liz Greenleaf oversees shaving cream



Early Days of the Midcoast UU Fellowship by our first president, Roger Duncan

Part 2 of a 4 part article

From here more or less regular services were held but there seemed to be no planned program until on November 19 we held our first Program Committee meeting at Dan Schick's. After talking old houses and drinking coffee, the Committee decided on Reverend Robert Ives on Boatbuilding for Bad Boys on December 5, Rev. Turner on December 12 (no topic), Candlelight Service on December 19 (no leader, no music, no topic), December 26 no service, January 2 Open, Duncan in reserve.

However several good programs gave us momentum enough to get through the holiday season. Laurie James did a good program on Margaret Fuller. Reverends Lothrop and Turner filled in with thoroughly professional services on short notice, and Dan Schick read a service by Rev. Peter Richardson. Many choirs and many churches joined in an ecumenical service in November in which we were invited to take the collection. On December 5 the reserve speaker spoke, and we heard Rev. Turner again on December 12. Our first year's program culminated in a Candlelight Service ending with carols, Santa Claus is Coming to Town, Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and Silent Night. We held no service on the 26th and were left standing on rather unsteady legs by faithful ministers and a few terrified amateurs.

We soon got going, however. On Sunday, January 9, 1983 we gathered five groups to discuss our goals and purposes: Fellowship, Religious Growth, Education, Sound Organization, Worship. We still had no elected leadership, but Jean Pillimer, Dan Schick and the Davisons seemed to have an unofficial grasp of what was going on and there was always the touch of Reverend Barth's guiding hand behind us.

Things got done. On Sunday morning, Lee Smith opened the door and turned up the heat. Reverend Leonard Helie, Jean Howe or Douglas Ludwig was at the piano. The coffee pot bubbled, and every Sunday someone turned up in the pulpit to give us intellectual and spiritual refreshment.

At first no children came. Then Dan Schick volunteered for one month to teach whatever children came. On the last Sunday of the month, one came. Soon after, Mary Duncan and Molly Eipper got into the program and when the three Ludwig children joined we began to talk seriously of religious education.

Submitted by Sandra Barth
Original MUUF member

****Part 3 will appear in March's Newsletter****



Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education Facilitator Training for K-6

Friday, April 12 - Sunday, April 14, 2019

Where: Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Augusta, Maine

When: Friday, April 12, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, April 14, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Cost: Tentatively set at \$325 per person (includes
lunches, dinners and snacks)
Home hospitality available

To reserve a spot, ask questions or request a registration form, contact: dre@uurockland.org
Price will be set by mid-February. Your organization may provide the cost of training. Be sure
to ask.



**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT - Rev. Erika wrote the Lincoln County News traditional page one Christmas Message (first ever by a UU Minister, as mentioned on editorial page)
Two letters about it were published in January**

The Life-Giving Message of Christmas

Rev. Erika Hewitt

The world is such a tender place that it can be hard to remember to take care of one another – yet to me, this is the imperative of being human. For me, Christmas underscores the call to care for one another. It’s a reminder that every person is worthy of love, and that we belong to each other as members of the human family.

I grew up in a family and in a faith tradition that placed Jesus at the heart of the Christmas season: the infant Jesus who grew up to be a teacher of love and radical inclusivity. Throughout his ministry, Jesus – consistently, reliably, and not without clear instructions to his followers – turned his attention toward those who were pushed aside, disempowered, rejected, or forgotten. He allied himself with, and drew to him, the people who most needed to hear the message that they were not alone ... and he did so without inviting discussion as to whether they “deserved” that care.

Although I left that faith as a young adult – and spent a few years as an atheist before arriving at my current stance of wonder and reverence for the Great Mysterious – neither my soul nor my ethical framework has surrendered the responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable and the most marginalized among us are being cared for.

In fact, even in my second decade as a pastor (and yes, the universe demonstrated quite the sense of humor by calling an atheist to be a minister), my faith asks me to keep examining, and broadening, what it means to say “us” or “we.” When greed or fear creates the division implied by a “them,” where is connection still possible, and how widely can we draw the circle?

When I get lost in our cultural arguments over who Jesus was and what he intended his followers to do with his teachings, I turn back to the stories themselves. The birth narrative related in Matthew’s gospel calls to me most powerfully this year. Unlike Luke’s narrative, there’s no mention of a stable, shepherds, or angels singing “Alleluia.” Instead, the writer glosses over Jesus’ birth to focus on a sinister subplot.

When Jesus is born, learned scholars, or magi, go to Jerusalem to visit Herod, the Roman empire’s puppet-king. A cruel, manipulative ruler, Herod is so threatened by the child’s birth that he instructs the magi to return with a report about where to find Jesus. But after encountering Jesus, the story goes, a strong sense of foreboding prompts the magi to disobey the king’s orders. They make the life-giving choice to resist abetting cruelty.

Joseph then receives a similar warning: go to Egypt. You are not safe here. Jesus and his parents left their homeland of Judea, sheltering in Egypt for several years. They chose to become refugees, accepting loss and risking the unknown, because staying meant certain death. Their refuge was life-giving, allowing Jesus to grow into the prophet he became.

As I write this, the world is learning of another young child and father who fled violence in their homeland, and sought safety in another land – ours, days ago. That story has a tragic and damning ending: the death of 7-year-old Jakelin Caal inside our border, within a culture of cruelty.

No political rhetoric, however craftily spun, can divorce these parallel stories, 2,000 years and half a world apart: one of a refugee child who died not just of dehydration but also of apathy, and another refugee child who went on to wield

please continue to last page

Christmas message and letters continued...

his power – a “power with,” not “power over” – on behalf of the most vulnerable.

Every person reading this message knows what it’s like to struggle – with loneliness, with fear, with poverty or addiction or grief. Many of us have experienced the pain of feeling alone in our struggle, in our brokenness. The life-giving message of Christmas is that we do not journey alone; we do not struggle alone; we do not heal all by ourselves.

In these deep winter days, amid both the tenderness and terrible harshness of the world, may we remember that we’re all in this together. All are worthy of love. All are worthy of receiving life’s gifts. And all of us have a role to play in bringing healing to the broken places.

(The Rev. Erika Hewitt is the minister of the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, which meets at Skidompha Library in Damariscotta. She came to Maine in 2012 after serving Unitarian Universalist congregations in California for a decade. She lives in Bath.)

Disappointing Story

To the editor:

I always look forward to the “Christmas story” on the front page of The Lincoln County News every year. It is always on the left-hand side of the front page in a large pink box. Usually there is a story about Christmas!

This year it was a bit different. The disappointing “story” by the Rev. Erika Hewitt started off traditionally but soon transgressed into little more than a political rant.

Let’s hope the coming year the column will return to the tradition of the spirit of Christmas.

Christiana Poole Newcastle

Truth, Not Politics

To the editor:

After reading Christiana Poole’s letter in the Jan. 3 edition (“Disappointing story”), I must reply.

At first I thought I had missed something in Rev. Erika Hewitt’s Christmas story and went to the story to see where it “transgressed into little more than a political rant.” It’s true I looked at it through the eyes of a longtime Unitarian Universalist, having been one of the founding members of the Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship back in 1983. I found truth, not politics, speaking to me in the story with the parallels between now and 2,000 years ago being very clear.

One of the main jobs of faith communities today is to engage in the work of justice. Especially the Unitarian Universalist congregations across Maine and across the country are trying hard to provide welcoming and safe spaces to all. We all need to create communities of people whose primary goal is to elevate and improve all of our lives, no matter how long it’s been since your family immigrated to this country.

Sandra Barth Newcastle