

# Midcoast Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

## February 2020 Newsletter

### SUNDAY SERVICES SCHEDULE

*Always at 10:30 a.m.*

*Porter Meeting Hall, Skidompha Library*

*Entrance on Elm St., Damariscotta*

### February's theme: Forgiveness

#### Feb. 2: "Missed Opportunities"

Rev. Erika Hewitt

Today we'll examine some moments from our Unitarian, Universalist, and UU histories in which we could not—and did not—rise to our best selves as a religious movement. How do these moments guide our present choices to live our faith and our professed values?

#### Feb. 9th: "Finding Naming Bestowing Blessings"

Guest Minister, Rev. Mark Glovin

Worship Associate, Tiffany Vencile

This Sunday our neighbor to the north Rev. Mark Glovin will lead worship. Together, we'll reflect on the ways we recognize and care for our blessings. As MUUF prepares for our first sabbatical, we'll name the importance of gratitude and boundaries And caring for each other and the world.

**...and Children's Chapel with Rev. Erika Hewitt**

Our children will spend the full hour with their minister.

#### Feb. 16: "Be Your Own Valentine"

worship for all ages led by Rev. Erika Hewitt

What does it mean to practice self-love?

To accept our bodies, our mistakes, our growing edges, and our shadow side?

Join Rev. Erika for this non-traditional service, which will include a chocolate communion!

Our SHARE THE PLATE offering will be given to CHIP. *This is Rev. Erika's last worship service until she returns to the pulpit on May 31st.*

(If this service is cancelled due to weather, join Rev. Erika on the Zoom videoconferencing platform at 10:30 a.m. for a brief and informal service. Go to [www.Zoom.us](https://www.zoom.us), click the blue link that says "Join a meeting," and enter 749-979-5863.)

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Rev. Erika Hewitt

### Minister's Column

As I prepare to disappear from the newsletter for three months—and use sabbatical to fill my well so that I can return to you refreshed and replenished—here are my

#### Ten Congregational Commandments Suggestions for Sabbatical:

1. Laugh together. Laugh often. Let that laughter remind you of the joy that lives among and between us.
2. Show up to worship—for yourself and for others. Don't decide whether to come because of the topic or the preacher. Instead, come on Sunday mornings because your spirit might need it, or the person sitting next to you might need you there.
3. Be willing to learn what you don't know (yet). Sabbatical will teach us new things about our shared ministry—things we didn't even know we could learn. Be open to those lessons.
4. Answer the call. In this Fellowship, you are cared for... and you're called to care for others, and for the congregation as a whole. When our leaders ask for help, they trust you to respond as best you're able.
5. Embrace uncertainty. If you're feeling confused or lost, ask a congregational leader for direction. If you're still feeling confused or lost, ask again. Know that mistakes will be met with grace—and sometimes, muddling through is just fine.
6. Forgive failures. If you or someone else in the congregation causes hurt, breathe. Pause. Turn away from the keyboard.

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*(Services-continued from page 1)*

**February 23: "11th Hour Forgiveness"**

Lisa Kynvi, guest minister

Worship Associate, Patricia Anderson

Lisa will reflect on lessons on forgiveness from hospice work: Needing forgiveness, and offering forgiveness—to oneself, and to others. What strength can we draw from the courageous acts of people at the end of their lives? Will their stories influence how we live our lives now?

Lisa Kynvi is a UU seminarian who will be MUUF's first (ever!) intern, beginning this fall. The current church year she's doing fieldwork at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier (Vermont). She lives and works in Massachusetts, and loves driving north.

**March 1: "Expanding the Sacred Circle"**

Worship Associate: Bob Whitmire

In these times, we live within an extremely diverse theological landscape. The term "sacred" may or may not have meaning for us as a society, at least within a spiritual context. MUUF Board member David Bilski explores his personal journey on the road to the sacred, particularly as it applies to the natural world and our engagement with it. His sermon draws on the work of poets Wendell Berry and Gary Snyder, as well as his upbringing in the Catholic Church. Prior to his retirement in 2016 from University of Washington Libraries in Seattle, moving to Maine, and becoming a member of the Midcoast UU Fellowship in June of 2017, David and his wife Jill were members of the University Unitarian Church in Seattle.

*(Minister's Column-continued from page 1)*

Talk directly to one another. Listen. When your heart has healed from acute injury, consider whether forgiveness is the necessary ingredient for repair.

7. Express gratitude.\* Say "thank you" more often than usual, to more people than usual.

8. Be true to our covenant: our Fellowship's promise that building community is an ongoing spiritual practice of our Fellowship. Lean into our promises to be brave and welcoming, to challenge, to communicate, to forgive, to heal, to grace one another with the spirit of love.

9. Wield the power of our Unitarian Universalist faith. Our religion is a tool for fighting sexism, homophobia, classism, white supremacy culture, and other forms of oppression. Our world is hungry for the justice and liberation that you know how to name.

10. Remember that the congregation is yours (not the minister's). This beloved community is yours to build, to nourish, to shape, and to imagine into the next seven years.

\*Thank you for this sabbatical. Thank you for the past 6 and a half years of laughing, learning, and growing together. Thank you for tending the flame while I reconnect with Spirit, who guides my ministry but whose voice sometimes gets drowned out by the chorus of daily obligations.

I love you, and I can't wait to see you when I return in late May.

In faith, Rev. Erika



## Religious Exploration

### RE Sunday Mornings

**Sunday, February 2 –**

Carney D. McRae  
Mindful Sunday with Lindy Gifford. Walk the Labyrinth and reflect on the meaning of Imbolg/ Brigit

**Sunday, February 9 –** Children's Chapel with Rev. Erika

**Sunday, February 16 –** All Ages Worship – Children attend worship

**Sunday, February 23 –** Toolbox of Faith: Democratic Process

### Walk the Labyrinth

On Sunday, February 2, adults are invited to walk the labyrinth. Lindy Gifford will be facilitating this mindful practice.

### Pre-Teen Conference Registrations available

This year's pre-teen conference (ages 9-11) will be held on March 21-22 at the Rockland UU Church. UU Churches from Rockland, Belfast, Augusta, Bangor, and Ellsworth, along with our own children will be gathering here as we celebrate the Spring Equinox; learn about the Persian New Year – Nowruz; and practice finding balance in our lives with mindful activities. Registration forms are now available. Contact Carney ([re@uumidcoast.org](mailto:re@uumidcoast.org)) if you do not have one yet.

### Justice work in Kenya and All Ages Trip for 2022 proposed

For many years, I (Carney) dreamed of having an opportunity for all ages to travel somewhere out of our comfort zone where we could learn, grow and serve!

Joyce Mohr, a member of UU Rockland and co-founder of Acacia in Kenya project, and I talked about this possibility. This invitation is being extended to MUUF. For those healthy enough to travel to that part of the world, we are proposing a trip in May 2022 to Kenya. For those who can't travel, but would like to help, there is plenty that can be done. We will have an informational meeting and potluck supper on Sunday, March 1, 4-6 p.m. at the Rockland UU Church to envision what this might be.

Children and youth can come on this trip if accompanied by their parent/caregiver. Joyce has been to Kenya many times with many groups. She will be able to answer questions around safety and health concerns. If you would like more information on Acacia in Kenya or the trip, please email Carney at [re@uumidcoast.org](mailto:re@uumidcoast.org).



## PRE-TEEN

### U.U. Overnight Retreat

Join us as we celebrate the Spring Equinox with food, fun and wonderment!

**When:** Sat. March 21-22, 2020

**Where:** First Universalist Church in Rockland

**What:** A sleepover retreat for children ages 9-12

**Cost:** \$25.00 (Cost includes dinner, dessert, breakfast and any guest speaker fees)

**RSVP:** Registration forms due to your DRE by March 9





*Bob Whitmire*

## President's Corner

Let us all breathe a sigh of relief, inhale deeply, and hurl a great “Huzzah!” to the heavens. Why?

Because there is no red ink on our final balance sheet for 2019.

According to our treasurer, David Bilski, total Fellowship income for 2019 was \$66,348—\$5,854 over the budgeted \$60,494. Expenses for the year amounted to \$62,449—\$1,955 over the budgeted \$60,494. We built a balanced budget in the fall of 2018, and in 2019 spent more than we budgeted, but took in more than enough to cover it.

Heaps of thanks to David, former treasurer Dick Ober, accounting wizard Bob Lightfoot, and other more financially knowledgeable board members than yours truly for keeping us out of the ditch. I've come to understand that our budget is a moral document, not just a bunch of cells in a spreadsheet, that it reflects who we are and where we want to go as a community of covenant. It took a couple of years for that to permeate my thick skull.

But ultimately, this success is down to you, members and friends of the Fellowship. We didn't print extra money in the bowels of Skidompha Library. You, the congregation, through

your generous pledges, willingness to dig deep during the weekly offering, and extra gifts in the course of the year, created the space necessary for us to live our mission of nurturing spiritual growth, engaging in justice, and loving joyfully, without limits.

A most profound thank you!

~ Bob Whitmire  
He/Him/His

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## The Hospitality of Parking

Of the many people who come to



worship on Sunday mornings, we know that every week we'll welcome first-time guests and people with compromised

mobility. To extend a special welcome to them, we choose to leave open all of the parking spaces in the library's Elm Street lot.

If you're physically capable of walking a block or two, we ask you—every Sunday—to please park somewhere other than the parking lot. Thank you for showing your care and compassion in this way.

## Pronouns: An Update from the Welcoming Congregation Committee

As a Welcoming Congregation, MUUF has made a commitment to welcome and embrace people of all gender identities and expression. One way we can publicly show that commitment is to correctly use people's pronouns.

Back in elementary school, I was taught that pronouns and gender identity were simple. People were either male or female. The pronouns "he" and "him" were for males, "she" and "her" were for females, and "they" and "them" were the plural versions. Nowadays, however, we recognize that gender identity is a broad spectrum, not a narrow binary. Pronouns are still simple, though! Some people use female pronouns, some use male pronouns, and some use gender-neutral or nonbinary pronouns, often the singular "they" or "them" but sometimes other choices such as "zie," "sie," "hir," or "zir."

Starting this month, the Welcoming Congregation is asking all MUUF members and friends to add your pronouns to your MUUF name tag. Near the name tags board, we will put out preprinted stickers that you can apply to your own tag, or you can choose to hand-write your pronouns below your name. We plan to have the stickers ready starting February 9.

Why does it matter that we publicly display our pronouns? I'll let writer Sinclair Sexsmith tell us why in their own words:

*"Dear cis\* people who put your pronouns on your 'hello my name is' name tags: Thank you. When you do that, I feel more comfortable putting my pronouns — they/them. I feel*

*nonbinary. I feel more comfortable asking people to use the pronouns that feel most like me, that make me feel most seen and whole, instead of just resolving to be mis-gendered and mis-represented.... When we're doing the socializing part of whatever event we're at, and we are introduced, I automatically feel warmer toward you — regardless of your gender or presentation. I feel much more comfortable talking to you, because you already tell me you know a little about gender."\*\**

Perhaps, like me, you sometimes have difficulty using "they," "them," and "their" as singular because you were taught that those words are only plural. I can tell you that it gets easier with practice. And it gets easier when you realize how important it is to people who use nonbinary pronouns. Language can evolve over time. In fact, the Merriam-Webster dictionary designated the singular "they" as 2019's "word of the year."

We hope that everyone will participate in this important public way of acknowledging gender diversity. Perhaps you will also consider adding your pronouns to your e-mail signature or your biography on social media accounts.

On behalf of the Welcoming Congregation Committee, I thank you, and I invite you to ask questions if you would like more information on pronouns.

--Kate Pennington, she/her/hers

\*cis or cisdgender is the term for people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

\*\*You can read Sinclair Sexsmith's full article online at [Medium.com](https://medium.com).

## Climate Change Films to Inspire Hope and Action

This event is presented by our Fellowship's Social Justice Committee. On Saturday, February 8th, two locally produced films addressing climate change will be shown in Porter Hall at Skidompha Library in Damariscotta. One film is titled "Climate Justice Stories", and features Maine climate activists of diverse ages, gender, and cultural backgrounds, and the second, "Maine Roadtrip to the Future", showcases actual climate solutions that have been implemented by communities throughout the state of Maine.



(Aerial shot of solar array on Damariscotta Baptist Church, from the film *Maine Roadtrip to the Future*)

Immediately following the films you can join filmmakers Andy Burt and Charlie Hudson for a discussion about the films and possible local actions you can take. There will be information provided about new opportunities you can take advantage of as the result of a new solar law in Maine. Students from Lincoln Academy's Climate Club have been invited to share information about their current activities to address

climate change. And there will be lots of additional information available at the event about available resources and easy ways to become involved.

The event runs from 10:00am – noon, and is free and open to the public. If the event is cancelled due to weather, the new date will be Saturday, March 21, 2020. For more information, you can email Jill Linzee at [jlinzee@comcast.net](mailto:jlinzee@comcast.net) or call: 207-677-3703.

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### Hospitality Schedule

**Feb. 2 - (Blue Pod) - Tiffany, Joelle and Kay**

**Feb. 9 - (Purple Pod) - Dick Ober, Bob & Joan**

**Feb. 16 - (Indigo Pod) - Lindy, Rob & Molly**

**Feb. 23 - (Green Pod) - Kate, Phyllis, Deb Arter, Tim & Karen**

**Mar. 1 - (Red Pod) - Rosie, Bob Lightfoot, Deb Lomas**

**Mar. 8 - (Blue Pod) - Tiffany, Joelle and Kay**

**Mar. 15 - (Purple Pod) - Dick Ober, Bob & Joan**

**Mar. 22 - (Indigo Pod) - Lindy, Rob & Molly**

**Mar. 29 - (Green Pod) - Kate, Phyllis, Deb Arter, Tim & Karen**

Submit all newsletter / order of service information to [news@uumidcoast.org](mailto:news@uumidcoast.org)