



Sunday services: 10:30 AM; religious education classes, 10:30 AM

www.uucgt.org

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**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
of Grand Traverse**

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December Theme: Spirituality

Sunday, December 6: 10:30 AM (One Service Only) "Annual All Music Service"

This UUCGT tradition features volunteer singers and instrumentalists, both amateur and professional in solos and ensembles. The message is the music.

Sunday, December 13: 10:30 AM (One Service Only) "Holiday Pageant"

Rabbi Chava, Sarah Montgomery-Richards, Children, Youth & Adults of the Congregation

Join us as we celebrate the season and the true spirit of giving! Light, love, and wisdom will be honored as we gather together during the winter holidays.

Sunday, December 20: "A Winter's Morn of Poetry" - Rabbi Chava & UUCGT Members

9:00 AM: Contemplative Meditation and Children's RE

10:30 AM: Sunday Service and Children's Programming

A beloved UUCGT tradition, we invite members of the community to bring a favorite poem – original or from another author – to share. So we can plan thoughtfully, please email or call Rabbi Chava by DECEMBER 4 and let us know what you would like to share. We are particularly interested in works that celebrate themes of winter, natural beauty and healing.

Save the Date: Christmas Eve at The State, Thursday, December 24th – 6:00 PM

It's On! See the service description under Upcoming Events on page 2.

Sunday, December 27: Service Details TBD

January Theme: Reason

Sunday, January 3: 10:30 AM "Looking Back, Looking Forward: We Begin Again in Love" (One Service Only) - Rabbi Chava

Let's start the new year off with a look at some of the great things that have happened in the past year. What is the best thing that happened to you and your family in 2015? What do you look forward to this coming year? Congregants of all ages will enjoy participating!

Sunday, January 10: 10:30 AM (One Service Only) "The Art of Medicine" Members of the UUCGT Congregation

Sunday, January 17: "Martin Luther King Day Weekend" - Rabbi Chava

9:00 AM: "Learning The Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism, Part 1" - Rabbi Chava

10:30 AM: Service TBD

BEACON Deadline:

No later than the 25th of the month
preceding the issue date

Stan Cain, Editor

231 938-1506

Send submissions to
beacon@uucgt.org

January Theme: Reason

Sunday, January 24: "Doubt" - Rabbi Chava

9:00 AM: "Learning The Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism, Part 2" - Rabbi Chava

10:30 AM: Sunday Service and Children's Programming

What is the place of doubt in the life of reason? Why was the term "doubting Thomas" used as a negative? How can doubt help us on the road of life, and when does doubt take on its shadow aspects?

Sunday, January 31: 10:30 AM (One Service Only) "Humanism" - Members of the UUCGT Congregation

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Unitarian Universalism

In January, Rabbi Chava will offer a 2 part class on the Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism. Classes will take place at 9 AM on January 17 and January 24. Come, learn and stay for the 10:30 AM service! In February we return to contemplative reflection in our 9 AM programming.

NMC Extended Education

Meeting Jesus in His Jewish Context @ NMC Extended Education

Join Rabbi Chava as we explore the Jewish context of Jesus. Explore why knowing this can help to deepen your understanding of the ministry of Jesus. By looking at Jewish approaches to God, sacred text, and cosmology, you will discover how Jesus taught and why his message was both timely and timeless.

Tuesdays, February 16 through March 1, 3:00PM-5:00PM at the University Center. Call (231) 995-1700 for more information and to register.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday Meditation

Wednesday Mindfulness Meditation will take place in the Sanctuary from 10:00 - 10:30 AM on December 2, 9, 16, and 30.

"The Reverend and the Rabbi"

Saturday, December 12, 7:30 PM

They are Back! The Reverend and the Rabbi: Rabbi Chava and the Rev. Robin Carden – Suttons Bay Congregational Church. Join Rabbi Chava and Rev. Robin for their annual joyous yet gentle romp through the winter holidays. Rabbi Chava will premiere her "UU stand up comedy" at this event!

Brew Crew with Rabbi Chava

Brew Crew! Join us for coffee and conversation at Brew on Front Street (108 E. Front) on December 4 and January 22 from 10 - 12 noon. Drop in for any length of time and hang out with Rabbi Chava and your UU friends.

!Save the Date – Christmas Eve at The State!

PLEASE NOTE - we have received confirmation to hold our community event at The State again this year!

WHEN: Thursday, December 24 - 6:00 PM

Join your UU congregation family and the whole community as we once again celebrate Christmas Eve, Solstice, Hanukkah, Christmas and the joys of winter – Rabbi Chava, Sarah Montgomery-Richards, Denny Richards and storyteller, Jenifer Strauss, as well as a host of guest musicians will light up the night in peace, joy and fellowship.

The Flying Rabbi!

Please note: Rabbi Chava has two awesome professional development trips planned in January - Rabbapalooza (OHALAH Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal annual meeting is its official name) January 8 - 13, where she will present a workshop on the joys of leading of a UU congregation. Then, from January 31 to February 5, Rabbi Chava is teaching at the Academy for Spiritual Formation. You can read more about this at: <http://academy.upperroom.org/events/five-day-academies>



Reflection: “Why Can’t We Just Move On?”

Friends, I first want to thank you for the last two Sundays of worship together; how pleasant and lovely it was - plus some good laughs. I hope you enjoyed Thanksgiving.

By now, you are aware that we are facing significant challenge in our beloved community. The conflict has been “above the surface” for about three and half months and is consuming an enormous amount of resources; it is affecting the board, the staff, volunteers, many members of the congregation and our congregation’s reputation as a peaceful, loving place.

Many of you, regularly, are calling, stopping me in the hall and emailing me to ask, “Why can’t we just move on?”

In my view, here’s why.

First, it is important to understand that everyone cares deeply about the UU: about our history, our current practices and our future. There aren’t bad guys – just people earnestly concerned with where we have been, where we are and where we are headed, and differing about that destination. Passion sometimes comes through to others in less than hospitable ways, and as the passion increases, it can be harder to move toward each other with grace and candor.

Here’s one take on why we are where we are. During my extended interview process with the Ministerial Search Committee and then my candidating week (remember “candy dating” week?), one thing was made very clear to me: the congregation needed growth. Our membership and attendance numbers were stable-to-declining, particularly among younger families with children. One of my charges was very clear: *help us grow!*

Who doesn’t want to see all our beautiful, sweet, new members welcomed at a Sunday service? Who isn’t excited to see the sanctuary robust and the parking lot full? Who wasn’t delighted with the response to last year’s Christmas Eve service [and! so looking forward to continuing that tradition at The State, 6 PM Christmas Eve]? We ALL want to see UUCGT thrive and become the community it can be, for ourselves, our children and for the broader world. This **outreach, growth and expansion** are part of what I was charged with nurturing as your called Senior Spiritual Leader.

In measuring the size of congregations, one model, based on average Sunday attendance, often used is this: family size, pastoral size, program size and corporate (400 to 1000 average Sunday attendance). There’s also a megachurch size – think Joel Osteen. Our growth has been so rapid in the last year that we skipped from being a family size congregation – in our language a Fellowship – to being a Program Size congregation. We skipped over the pastoral phase and went right on ... we are overachievers! ☺

We’ve done a good job managing logistics of growth: expanded Sunday programming for all ages, new hymnals, more parking, expanded staffing, a great new member welcome process, a physical plant cared for lovingly by the Facilities team, creative outreach, on and on. All these things we are managing beautifully, and I am deeply grateful for the scores of volunteer and staff hours that have made this happen.

Here’s the challenge: UUCGT asked for growth, **but we were not necessarily ready for it spiritually, for what growth means in governance process, or how many losses there are in change.** In the Fellowship days, everyone basically knew everything. We were all in it together: we each took our turn (or more precisely, turns!) on the Board and Committees, and there was little need for confidentiality, professionalization of processes or a more institutional view of governance. It was a family; that stuff simply wasn’t necessary. This meant that “power” was shared across the congregation, and no one felt left out of any decision making processes.

Today things are different. I have pointed out, in my writings and from the pulpit, that we are not able to function using the standards of a fellowship or family-size congregation anymore. In one email to several people, one of you wrote, “Comments are frequently made (even from the pulpit) that this results from an inability on the part of older congregants to move on.” While perhaps this is how some of my words were heard and interpreted, this could not be further from the truth of what I was trying to say and what I thought I was saying. It has nothing to do with age, length of membership, or even with ability to move on but with **HOW** we move forward, and with how we deal with the changes and losses that occur as the congregation grows. We are no longer the small fellowship where everyone gets to know everything, do everything and where the governance is model is flat. We are a solidly Program Size congregation today – achieving one of the goals with which I was charged – and this necessitates change much deeper in the operating procedures, governance and culture than the things above the surface.

During my candidating week, at the public Q & A, one of you asked, “What can we do to get ready for your arrival?” [which was then nine months hence], I said: “Prepare the culture and governance structure for deep shift. Be ready for growth and the grief of losing some of the ways ‘we’ve always done it.’” In her fine book, *Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*, Alice Mann writes that in growth, “a congregation must deliberately relinquish familiar patterns of behavior and begin to act as a larger congregation acts.” Letting go of the familiar is difficult.

In my view, the current situation goes deeper than an employee’s resignation and the response to it; what this has raised is a level of organizational self-assessment, and it is this much deeper place - of the unspoken, invisible, strongly-long-held self-concepts of UUCGT and how it is supposed to operate that our current situation stems. It also brings to the fore what changes as a congregation grows: the sense of every member intimately knowing what is happening and being able to shape the changes that occur.

In a seminary required reading text in organizational management, *Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations*, author David Brubaker rightly points out that “conflict may result not only when some members resist the changing power dynamics, but also when the change in structure surfaces latent conflict in the system. When the infrastructure of any system is rattled, the cobwebs of conflict are like to also be shaken loose.”

Some members are likely unaware that our congregation has faced such significant tensions as we witness now and even has had “splits” before. As someone said recently, “This isn’t our first rodeo.” In the past, tensions around this deeper level of our spiritual culture were often resolved by focusing on a person; tensions were resolved with departures. Departures of members (temporarily in protest or permanently) and staff (either through resignation or firing) allowed underlying tensions to settle back beneath the surface, and we could indeed “move on” because the ostensible object of conflict moved on. Many congregations, when faced with the level of change our successful growth has achieved, find themselves in conflict situations similar to ours; the results are often a shrinking back to the size that feels most comfortable, and where the changes are no longer necessary.

Today, we have a different scenario - we don’t want people to leave, and we don’t want to let the conflict go unaddressed so that UUCGT shrinks back and ends up serving a smaller proportion of the population. (Rather than pulling away, what UUCGT needs is more of both the long term and newer members to volunteer to serve in various functions of the congregation to enhance its continued forward movement both internally and in the wider community and world via our social justice and outreach programs.)

We are doing the hardest work of all: staying with what is difficult and reshaping the deeper parts of ourselves. When we do this kind of work individually, the work of the soul, it can be so difficult! Much needs to be released, grieved, welcomed, celebrated. It takes a lot of energy to be transformed. This is no less true organizationally; in fact perhaps more so – we are dealing not with a single human soul and psyche but the gritty work of doing it together, in community, with all our quirks, personalities and adaptive strategies.

If we want to make sure that the congregation’s environment is safe for all of us, we must commit to the hard work of remembering how to create beloved community - in part by ensuring that we live into our covenant. That means that sometimes we need to call out behaviors that may be intending to live it out, but are having the opposite impact. *Intent often does not equal impact*, and naming how we are out of covenant can be one of the first steps back. It is time for us to learn how to recovenant again, so we can not only weather this storm, but insure that in the future we can live more fully into our shared Safe Congregation, Right Relations and Conflict Management policies. This is hard work and sometimes has unpleasant edges, but it is necessary if we’re not to repeat the exhausting “rodeo” cycle of creating departures in order to move out of the discomfort of stress and change by reducing back to where we were. There are better ways to be together.

I wish I could tell you this is a short term process, that next week we will see the light at the end of the tunnel, but this will take time to address: time, patience, dialogue and, in my opinion, professional facilitation to do the “below the surface” work revealed by this current situation. We have members deeply committed to this work and who have already made efforts to make this happen. For this I am so deeply grateful.

We are truly committed to building a congregational community that welcomes everyone (i.e., growth and community leadership) and is a safe and sustainable environment; the path of working productively with conflict, size transition and governance transformation are our next steps. For those of us committed deeply to a model of deep ecumenism and living the seven UU principles from our six sources in northern Michigan, this is the work at hand.

Hang in there, friends. The house of peace and love will shine once more.

Rabbi Chava

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse

(231) 947-3117

rabbi@uucgt.org

Our Congregational Covenant

A brief history

Each UU congregation develops their own covenant. It is not chosen for them by the Unitarian Universalist Association, and we are no exception. As a congregation, we were all invited to work through a “round table format” to write our own covenant. In 2012, The social hall was filled with tables of people armed with large sheets of paper and colored markers. Each person added their own thoughts, ideas and feelings. Soon the walls were covered with colorful sheets where the process of sharing and condensing continued. The Transition Team worked long and hard to encapsulate all of our thoughts and feelings into one document, our covenant, our promise to each other. This covenant was presented to the entire congregation where it was adopted by our vote.

**This is our covenant,
our promise to each other.**

Mindful of our vibrant Congregational history and steadfastly committed to a strong future, we strive to promote good in the world and aid each other in ethical and spiritual development.

To this end, I willfully covenant to:

- Welcome with open minds and hearts all who gather here;
- Inspire and respect others, from youngest to oldest, on our various spiritual paths;
- Assume good intentions, communicate directly, share ideas freely, listen willingly disagree respectfully, and forgive easily;
- Support the ministry of our Congregation through gifts of time, talent and money.
- Encourage all voices to speak and be heard, as we participate in a collaborative and democratic process.

May we each renew our covenant and hold ourselves and others to these standards of right relations in all that we do.

Kay Sturgeon,
Acting chair of the Committee on Ministry

All About Us

We hold in our hearts:

Anne Hughes who was recently diagnosed with breast cancer.

Bill Wells is now suffering with Shingles. He is at home and his son is staying with him.

We continue to be mindful of:

Carol Still has moved to The Nest at Cherry Hill Haven. Her daughter, Nancy Landfair, who is still at the Villas (formerly Bortz Health Care) is glad her mother has more help now.

Paul Ward - who we were happy to see back at Sunday services.

Judith Briggs
jbriggs002@centurytel.net



Membership News

The entire Membership Team

— Cathy Annelin, John and Pinkie Hoffman, Sue Pyne, Charlotte Shea, Chris Walter, Rick Walter, and Jane Watts — continues to Welcome, Greet, Facilitate

into membership, and Nurture (in Partnership with other groups at UUCGT) prospective, new and current members.

INVITATION!! Calling any interested persons to become a member of our Membership Team. We have fun meetings, planning for routine and new activities. If you enjoy people, love talking with them, and would like to facilitate their joining our loving, caring community, then this is the Committee for you!

ATTENTION ALL NEW MEMBERS within the last year:

Just a friendly reminder that some of you still need to fill out the **Bio Sheet, Member Interest Survey and Pledge Form found in your New Member Folder.** Please take the time now or ASAP to **complete and turn the forms in** to the office or Welcome Table. The Committee uses this information to introduce you to the congregation in a short Beacon article. Questions? Contact one of us. Thank You So Much!

BUT WAIT! THERE'S SOMETHING A BIT MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT. A GENTLE REMINDER - FOR ALL NEW, CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: Membership

at UUCGT involves a 3-Step Process - **1. Meet** with spiritual leader Rabbi Chava Bahle and attend Orientation Session; **2. Sign** the Member Book (in a Sunday Service); and **3. Pledge** your financial support and Make financial Contributions. If you have completed **Steps 1 and 2** but are still lacking **Step 3**, please do so at your earliest convenience to finish the job. There, of course, is no minimum or required pledge amount; that is up to you as you consider supporting the work of the congregation. Please know that UUCGT is required to send the following amounts annually for every member: \$60.00 to UUA and \$24.00 to the MidAmerica Region. Pledge Forms are available in the office, or can be sent to you electronically. Or, simply have a conversation with Sherri Novak, Business / Financial Administrator who can be reached in the UUCGT office, 231-947-3117.

GREETER OPPORTUNITIES - We encourage all **NEW Members and Current Members** to sign up to be a Greeter some Sunday for either the 9:00 am or 10:30 am service. This is an excellent way to meet other members of the congregation

and for them to meet you. No committee meetings, could be a one-time commitment. Just **sign up on the bulletin board near the office or call Charlotte Shea at 883-9357.**

FOR PROSPECTIVE NEW MEMBERS - IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS:

February 14, 2016 - 15 Minutes With the Rabbi 10:00 - 10:15 am - Individuals or small groups; Informal chats for prospective members interested in learning more about UUCGT.

FUTURE 15 Minutes With the Rabbi - in 2016: April 3 and May 8.

Prospective Member Orientation Sessions in 2016: February 7 and April 24 - 12:00 Noon - 1:15 pm: History of UUCGT, Getting acquainted, Brief Q/A about UUism with Rabbi Chava, Board and Membership Committee representatives, Pre-register if child care needs are needed (several week notice required).

New Member Welcome Services - Scheduled As Needed

Beacon Availability - For local members and friends who do not have reliable e-mail access, copies of the BEACON are available at the Welcome Table. For those out of town without e-mail access, it is suggested that a \$25 payment be made to help cover the cost of mailing the Beacon to you. Thank you.

Spotlight on Some New Members:

Kevin and Sue Malone joined UUCGT May 3, 2015. Their children include, Abi, a high school student interested in art and psychology, Adam, a U of M student, and Maddie who attends Pathfinder School and likes art, reading and Legos. The Malones were drawn to UUCGT for fellowship, the spiritual environment, and their own as well as Maddie's deeper spiritual growth and involvement. They have a desire to belong to an inquisitive, open-minded community. When Kevin is not busy being Dad and an airline pilot and Sue is not occupied being Mom and homemaker, the family really gets into the outdoors with summer sailing, biking and swimming and Nordic and Alpine skiing in the winter. In the Spring, a film they enjoyed was **"Woman In Gold"**, and a fascinating book that kept them captivated was **The Narrow Road to the Deep North** set in the despair of a Japanese POW camp on the Thai-Burma Death Railway. Sue and Kevin look forward to spiritual exploration, fellowship and their daughter Maddie's RE experience. After being members for awhile they will be willing to help with church functioning and committees.

Barb Termaat signed the Member Book on March 1, 2015 along with her dear mother-in-law, Jo Polk-Matthews. She was previously an active member at the Valley UU in Chandler, AZ. Barb's daughter, Adriana, is an Elk Rapids high schooler involved in volleyball, friends and service. Barb is a Manager with the Cisco Networking Academy. Leisure activities in the summer include being outdoors on the water and in the woods, and being with family and friends. In the winter Barb continues to walk, and also gathers with family and friends and reads. Her favorite book as of March was **Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less.** Barb appreciated the shift she noticed in the community since Rabbi Chava became the faith leader. She hopes to be inspired, challenged and encouraged to further develop her spiritual journey. Barb likes the ideas of Green Sanctuary, a possible extension / satellite of UUCGT in Elk Rapids, and Spiritual Dance.

Sherry Davis is one of our newest members, being welcomed and having signed the book during the service on October 11, 2015. This is a "new-old" tradition the Membership Committee wishes to promote. Sherry has two adult sons, Jake and Ross. Her occupation is a Service Administrator in Nutri-

tion Education, including cooking instruction. Many of us have appreciated Sherry's articles in recent Saturday issues of the TC Record-Eagle. When Sherry is not busy with work and offering a variety of nutrition for health workshops, she enjoys biking, hiking, reading and skiing. A favorite book is **Rational Emotive Therapy** by Dr. Albert Ellis. The UU Covenants and the UUCGT having a secured minister / rabbi are what led Sherry to membership. She looks forward to learning, nurturing her spirit and making friends. Sherry is very interested in social opportunities at UUCGT including Greeting, Hospitality and Community Needs.

WELCOME Kevin, Sue, Maddie, Barb and Sherry. We are very happy to have you in our midst. We will spotlight more 2015 Members in upcoming Beacons.

Chris Walter
Chair, Membership Team
chris9709@sbcglobal.net or 421-3069

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Ann Swaney, Leadership Development and Mary Grover, Policy Committee presented the new policy on Standing Committees at the Wednesday colloquium on November 18. The objective was to acquaint current and prospective committee members with the policy approved by the Board in May of this year formalizing the process that Standing Committees can follow in order to have consistency across the organization. We believe that following the policy can help to strengthen governance and build confidence in leadership abilities within the congregation.

Committee chairs were encouraged to send copies of their agendas and minutes to the office for retention. Many thanks to Bonnie Mathias and Peg Kaufman who have organized the archives of past records. It was agreed that it would be helpful to convene a forum of committee chairs that meet regularly to coordinate and communicate activities.

The Leadership Development Committee

Social Justice and Action

There is a tremendous amount of hate being spewed from our legislators and presidential candidates, coming to us thru the airwaves of TV, radio, social media, bombarding us day and night, if we listen.

With the horrors of Paris fresh in our minds, Muslims' lives are being threatened every day and are at risk of physical attack. And this is supposed to be America where our Statue of Liberty, given us by France, sends a welcome signal to all who want to enter our shores. And our constitution gives the rights of Freedom of Speech, Freedom to practice our own Religion. Although there is the right of free speech, that has been limited by the Supreme Court making the speaker of words that incite violence, responsible for those words. Today's words seem on the verge of inciting and in some instances has. But the hateful garbage that we constantly hear, unfortunately influence many to hate, clouding unthinking minds with angry vengeful thoughts which could erupt into negative actions.

Black Lives do Matter! With the high rate of incarcerating Blacks, and their quickly being gunned down on our streets, unarmed, often a teenager or younger boy, creating a

culture of fear and a need for justice now! Their Crime: guilty for being Black in a culture that fosters white supremacy.

We as Americans must stand up, speak out, protect the rights of fellow Americans and hopeful immigrants to our country whose voices are being squelched with foul rhetoric. During a recent presidential candidate rally, a Black person asked about the rights of Black lives. That candidate suggested he be thrown out of the hall. To help that expulsion, nearby listeners attacked him, threw him to the ground and kicked him. I am ashamed of all that is going on in the name America!

We should have learned from Nazi Germany, the horror of ignoring the rights of others and labeling people, dehumanizing them, asking the general public to betray them. We should have learned from past mistakes, when we rounded up, isolated Americans of Japanese decent, caging them behind barbed wires in our deserts. When will we treat others and ourselves with respect? We degrade ourselves as we allow our fellow Americans to desecrate and attack others, verbally and physically. I feel respect for, and wish acceptance of, and

love for all our fellow Americans of African and Muslim descent, and for our immigrants still wanting to join the hopeful aspects of our country America.

Join me, and many Americans, asking the government to allow those potential immigrants, expelled from their country due to devastating war, be allowed in and accepted into our country, passing through the beacon of freedom, the Statue of Liberty. Not all Americans are bad, just like not all Syrians are terrorists. We must write Letters to the Editors, call our legislators, and speak out strongly, not tolerating insults, physical or verbal, to any of our fellow Americans, Muslim or Black, or our hopeful new citizens.

We will be starting a Social Justice Book Group in January, studying racism first. Please see me for more information. Emmy Lou Cholak <sjatcmi@gmail.com>

Emmy Lou Cholak
sjatcmi@gmail.com

(Editor's note: Printed as received as per writer's request.)

Local Community Needs

\$3016 was distributed last quarter to those in need by your Local Community Needs Committee. We gave \$1266 to the Commission on Aging - \$500 for dental needs and \$766 for emergency heating. \$500 was given to the Grace Episcopal Food Pantry and \$1000 to the heating assistance fund through Northwest Michigan Community Action. Additionally, UU was a Table Sponsor at the Empty Bowls Fundraiser for Food Rescue on November 8th with our contribution of \$250. Food Rescue is a Goodwill program that provides extra food from area restaurants and grocery stores to local food pantries.

In the past, UU members submitted Donation Request Forms to our committee resulting in Local Community Needs funds going to charities important to UU members. Aside from Safe Harbor requests, this has not happened in several months and our committee is unsure why. Perhaps you trust us to make wise decisions? Perhaps you are unaware of how to make a request? We are interested in feedback about this – let us know your thoughts.

Due to this change, we have made an effort to better educate ourselves about local charities and have invited representatives to our meetings. Marsha Johnson from the Commission on Aging spoke this quarter about the work of her agency. Last quarter we heard from a Goodwill representative about the Workers on Wheels Program.

Welcome to Karl Kristen, our newest member.

If you have donation requests or feedback for us, please contact any member: Liz Bruning, chair, Shari Cope, Karl Kristen, Joan Sheard, and Chris Walter. Our mission is to give to charities that support people in need in our five county area. We will meet again in January.

Thank you to all who support this important UU mission.

Liz Bruning
bruiningpl@charter.net



Lifespan Experience

This month you will notice a great many differences in my article.

No comic, no colorful text, no litany of upcoming events and ways to be involved. Instead I write to the community in simplicity regarding the state of programming within our congregation. When we launched our expanded Sunday programming, we were aware that although a programmatic shift to different options for children would take 2-3 years to take hold and that there would be some transitional pains along the way, and we accepted this challenge because it is the future of religious education – it is the RIGHT thing to do if we are to meet the needs of those families who are interested in curriculum based programs as well as the needs of those families for whom drop-in programs are the best fit.

As an educator, I take this as an opportunity to “educate” around what has brought us to this point. Unrest since the middle of August has deeply impacted our program. To be clear, it is unfortunate that just as we were preparing to launch this programmatic change that unrest began and that it has perpetuated. In my opinion, a good deal of the volunteers we have lost (although not all) have been a result of said unrest. Likewise, attendance has been low for children congregation wide – in all programming models since the outset of this year. While some of this can be attributed to program transition, some can likewise be attributed to the un-

ease that some families feel given current tensions. The result is that we do not currently have the volunteer base nor the attendance to support this programmatic development at this time.

So, I regret to inform the community that beginning January 1st, 2016, there will no longer be 9am Religious Education for Children and Youth. Adult Programming such as contemplative reflection and adult classes will continue at this time. There will be childcare provided for infants and children through 5th grade during 9am Adult Programming. We will continue to offer an option for children at the 10:30am service. Both the format of this program as well as any potential option for teens will be determined by our ability to staff said programs. This decision was a collaborative one on the part of the Ministerial Team and has been discussed with the Lifespan Experience Committee.

It is our hope that we could return to offering a curriculum based option for children at 9am in the future if there is sufficient volunteer support and support from families by enrolling and committing themselves to the program.

As for my regular programming updates for this month, please see the congregational calendar and watch your Flash for updates.

Sarah E. Montgomery-Richards
Director of Lifespan Experience
dle@uucgt.org

Thanksgiving at Twin Lake Lodge

Plenty to eat, good friends, music by the Vocal Ensemble - What more could you ask?



**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Grand Traverse**
6726 Center Road
Traverse City MI 49686-1802

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

the BEACON

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

Volume 52, Issue 12

December, 2015

Calendar

All events and programs take place at UUCGT unless otherwise noted and are open to everyone.

December 2015

- 01 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 02 **Wed** Mindfulness Meditation Rabbi Chava 10:00 - 10:30 AM
 02 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 02 **Wed** Sunday Services Committee Nancy Cotcamp/Hal Gurian 1:00 - 3:00 PM
 02 **Wed** Wednesday Night Potluck Sandra McDonald, 5:30 - 7:00 PM
 02 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
 03 **Thu** Peacemakers Needleworkers 1:30 - 3:30 PM
 03 **Thu** Vocal Ensemble 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 04 **Fri** Brew Crew @ Brew Café 10:00 - 12:00 PM Rabbi Chava
 04 **Fri** Facilities Committee Dave Halsted 10:00 - 11:00 AM
 05 **Sat** Two Cellos Concert Campbell & Friesen 8:00 - 10:00 PM
- 06 **Sun** **Sunday Service - All Music (one service) 10:30 AM**
 06 **Sun** Special Congregation Meeting / Vote 11:30 - 12:00 PM
 06 **Sun** Arts & Exhibitions Group 12:00 - 12:30 PM
 06 **Sun** Mindfulness Meditation Group Fleda Brown 2:30 - 6:30 PM
 07 **Mon** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 07 **Mon** Open Gay AA Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 08 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 08 **Tue** Committee on Ministry 6:00 - 7:00 PM
 09 **Wed** Mindfulness Meditation Rabbi Chava 10:00 - 10:30 AM
 09 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 09 **Wed** Wednesday Night Supper: \$5 donation Sandra McDonald 5:30 - 7:00 PM
 09 **Wed** Colloquium H.G. Smith 7:00 - 8:00 PM
 09 **Wed** Finance Committee Mike McDonald 7:00 - 8:00 PM
 09 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
 10 **Thu** Peacemakers Needleworkers 1:30 - 3:30 PM
 10 **Thu** Vocal Ensemble 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 11 **Fri** Friday Night Out Sarah Montgomery-Richards 5:30 - 9:00 PM
- 13 **Sun** **Sunday Service - Holiday Pageant (one service) 10:30 AM**
 13 **Sun** Program Council Rabbi Chava 12:00 - 1:00 PM
 13 **Sun** Mindfulness Meditation Group Fleda Brown 5:00 - 7:00 PM
 14 **Mon** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 14 **Mon** Open Gay AA Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 15 **Tue** UUCGT Board Meeting 12:30 - 2:30 PM
 15 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 16 **Wed** Leadership Development Ann Swaney 9:30 - 11:30 AM
 16 **Wed** Mindfulness Meditation Rabbi Chava 10:00 - 10:30 AM
 16 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 16 **Wed** Wednesday Night Potluck Sandra McDonald 5:30 - 7:00 PM
 16 **Wed** Benzie UU Solstice Potluck & Program Frankfort 6:30 PM

- 16 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
 17 **Thu** Peacemakers Needleworkers 1:30 - 3:30 PM
 17 **Thu** Brewing Community 5:00 - 7:00 PM Hofbrau, Interlochen
 17 **Thu** CUUPS Sarah Montgomery-Richards 6:00 - 7:00 PM
 17 **Thu** Vocal Ensemble 7:00 - 8:30 PM
- 20 **Sun** **Contemplative Reflection 9:00 - 9:45 AM**
 20 **Sun** **Sunday Service 10:30 AM**
 20 **Sun** Mindfulness Meditation Group Fleda Brown 5:00 - 7:00 PM
 20 **Sun** Solstice Service / Potluck Sarah Montgomery-Richards 6:00 - 7:00 PM
 21 **Mon** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 21 **Mon** Open Gay AA Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 22 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 23 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 23 **Wed** Wednesday Night Supper: \$5 donation Sandra McDonald 5:30 - 7:00 PM
 23 **Wed** Colloquium Sarah Montgomery-Richards 7:00 - 8:00 PM
 23 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
 24 **Thu** Christmas Eve at The State 6:00 - 7:00 PM
- 27 **Sun** **Sunday Service (TBA) 10:30 AM**
 27 **Sun** Mindfulness Meditation Group Fleda Brown 5:00 - 7:00 PM
 28 **Mon** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 28 **Mon** Open Gay AA Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 29 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 30 **Wed** Mindfulness Meditation Rabbi Chava 10:00 - 10:30 AM
 30 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 30 **Wed** Wednesday Night Supper: Pizza Sandra McDonald 5:30 - 7:00 PM
 30 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
- January 2016**
- 03 **Sun** **All Congregation Service (one service) 10:30 AM**
 03 **Sun** Mindfulness Meditation Group Fleda Brown 2:30 - 6:30 PM
 04 **Mon** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 04 **Mon** UU Men's Group 5:30 PM Minerva's
 04 **Mon** Open Gay AA Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 PM
 05 **Tue** Bridge Group Paul Christ 1:00 - 4:30 PM
 06 **Wed** Mindfulness Meditation Rabbi Chava 10:00 - 10:30 AM
 06 **Wed** Stretch & Exercise Judith Briggs 11:00 - 12:00 PM
 06 **Wed** Sunday Services Committee Nancy Cotcamp/Hal Gurian 1:00 - 3:00 PM
 06 **Wed** International Folk Dances Richard Fidler 7:00 - 9:00 PM
 07 **Thu** Peacemakers Needleworkers 1:30 - 3:30 PM
 07 **Thu** Vocal Ensemble 7:00 - 8:00 PM
 08 **Fri** Friday Night Out 5:30 - 9:00 PM Sarah Montgomery-Richards