



**Unitarian Universalist
Congregation
of Grand Traverse**

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Tuesday through Friday

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Sunday, April 1, 10:30 AM Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Holy Foolishness”

Betsy Emdin and Misty Sheehan

April Fool's Day can be a day of silly pranks, but can jokes and humor serve a higher purpose and give insight into our selves? We'll look at a spectrum of fools across history and culture, and maybe even laugh in church!

Sunday, April 8, 10:30 AM (Easter Sunday) Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Alive Again”

Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck

If Unitarian Universalists do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, nor call Jesus “Christ,” then why do we celebrate Easter with such gusto? Come find out and join in the joyful ritual of flower communion. Bring flowers to share—this year, local flowers are already out!

Sunday, April 15, 10:30 AM Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Reclaiming the “A-Word”

Rev. Jeff Liebmann, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

Atheists have long been considered troublesome and untrustworthy people by many Americans. For many in this country, lacking a God-centered theology makes a person morally bankrupt or spiritually bereft. The current crop of books by writers such as Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett do little to endear the atheist cause, especially to adherents of organized religion. Perhaps the time has come for religious atheists to reclaim the A-word, and come out in support of the benefits of belonging to a religious community without an underlying belief in a supernatural being.

Sunday, April 22, 10:30 AM (Earth Day) Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Feeling Our Grief, Healing The Earth”

Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck

When they learn of the extent and depth of the current ecological crisis, many people become paralyzed by fear and grief. Many cope by going into denial. Yet only by feeling our real feelings—of love, of grief and of anger for our beautiful planet—will we be able to convert them to the energy necessary to save our species. On this Earth Day, we will hold a special Ceremony of Grieving and Healing, designed to help people feel their feelings about the earth in the supportive container of community.

Sunday, April 29, 10:30 AM Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Exuberance”

UUCGT Members and Friends

Friends and members will share personal expressions of renewal, regrowth and regeneration through poetry, art, and song. If you feel moved to contribute, please contact Gretchen Kronk (935-1798), Richard Miller (946-4853), or Mary Van Valin (421-5243) by April 8.

Saturday, May 5, Morning (Time to be Determined)

“A People's History of UUCGT”

Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck

In a special Saturday morning service, we will take time to speak of any residual pain you may be carrying from the history of this congregation and ceremonially release it. In this way you will be able to move forward into your bright future together. Child care will be provided.

Sunday, May 6, 10:30 AM Childcare and RE at 10:30

“A People's History of UUCGT”

Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck

On the Sunday following our Healing Ceremony, we will speak the history of UUCGT, as told by you on your Wall of Wonders. Prepare to be deeply moved and enriched by the experience.

Sunday, May 13, 10:30 AM (Mother's Day) Childcare and RE at 10:30

“Can We Talk? A Mother's Day Gift”

Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck

Our relationships with our mothers, as well as those with our children, are some of the most complicated relationships there are. Come ponder some honest truths about mothering.

the BEACON

**BEACON Deadlines: Last Sunday
of each month, immediately
following the service.**

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Rev. Leisa's Reflections

Early spring is the time when I meditate on how vibrant new life arises seemingly out of nowhere, from dry sticks and from the muckiest dark soil. New green leaves and brilliant blossoms grow from the remains of old dead things that have composted over the winter. It is a miracle that never ceases to fill me with awe.

This is the very miracle taking place in the life of this congregation. From the compost of old history, you are building new life. You have begun the history phase of your interim work. The work of this phase is not to get an accurate narrative of the congregation's history. The work is to come to terms with your feelings about what you have experienced here; it is to tell your truth and to listen to the truth of others. It is to make deep connections with one another as you learn about what has mattered most to you. It is to surface pain that can then begin to be healed and to surface love and joy that can form the building blocks of new life.

On the afternoon of March 25, I had the great privilege and pleasure of guiding a workshop in which this congregation began to create a Wall of Wonders. You may wonder, what is a Wall of Wonders? It is this: on the left side of the sanctuary, there is a timeline of the basic events in the congregation's history. It is a skeleton. The way you flesh out the skeleton is this: you think back in time to things that have happened here that had a great emotional impact on you. You might have been happy, or sad, or afraid, or angry, or many other feelings. You choose a sticky note from all the colors and shapes available and you write down a few words describing both the event AND your feelings about it. Then you put the sticky note up, on about the right place in the timeline. You don't sign your name unless you want to. You put as many sticky notes up as you need to, to express everything you need to express about what you have experienced here. Then you read what others have written too.

In the workshop, after each participant had put up just one sticky note, and read each others', I asked them to think about what it felt like to write what they had written and what it felt like to read what others had written. These are just a few of the comments, as best as I can remember them:

"I feel a sense of relief and release, having put up my real feelings ...now I can move on."

"I feel gratitude and awe toward the people who started the congregation...growing up here, I didn't even know it existed, and now here I am."

"There must be a high level of trust and safety here for people to be able to feel like they can share so honestly."

"Seeing how deeply the people here have engaged with this process makes me feel hopeful for the future."

"I noticed that some themes that came up are things we've been struggling with since the very beginning, such as being welcoming to newcomers..."

"I had to decide how honest I wanted to be. I felt vulnerable and timid, but I decided to go ahead. After I wrote and put up what I wanted to say, I felt glad that I did. I felt relieved."

"Seeing what others wrote gave me perspective...there were people who have been here a long time and people who are new."

"I felt gratitude to have an opportunity to speak honestly. I feel a sense of release."

"It was interesting to see what people wrote. We all have such different experiences and perspectives."

"I find it fascinating that even though some negative things are written up there, the people who experienced them are still here. To me that says something about how much this place means to them."

"This process shows that the congregation is a living, breathing relationship... like all relationships, there will be times of conflict and times of resolution... it was not perfect at the beginning and it won't be perfect tomorrow...but it keeps moving and changing and developing, the way living things do."

It was profoundly moving for me to witness people sharing, some of them for the very first time, their deepest feelings about experiences that wounded them—as well as experiences that brought them great joy and meaning. Important issues were surfaced, as they need to be during this phase. I also got to witness the deep love and caring the people have for each other and for the congregation as a whole. And, I got to witness the vibrant energy, excitement, and gratitude that many of your newest members bring to the congregation. These people are so very glad to have found you. The whole was such a powerful experience that I am considering having another workshop in April, to enable people who would like to participate in one to do so.

I encourage those of you who were not able to come on March 25 to participate in the continuing creation of the Wall of Wonders. Put up as many sticky notes as you need to, and keep reading what others say. The Wall of Wonders will remain up through the end of April. In early May—May 5, to be exact—we will have a special Saturday service during which we ceremonially release any residual pain people are carrying from your history. On Sunday, May 6, there will be a service about the history of this congregation, as told by you, on the Wall of Wonders. I can't wait to see what develops there. It is a great privilege to serve as your Interim Minister, and to be with you as you bring new life into being here.

Blessings,

Rev. Leisa

From the President...

The Board of Trustees met on March 20

Emily Mitchell attended the meeting to present the Covenant on Right Relations prepared by the Transition Team after member input from our Feb. 18 congregational covenant workshop for Board approval and congregational acceptance at our annual meeting on Sunday, May 27.

The Transition Team met three times to incorporate members' comments into this covenant. This covenant incorporates the comments and suggestions represented at the workshop. The Transition Team consisting of Emily Mitchell, John Hoffmann, Sue Pyne, and Nancie Thole has put in much effort to complete the covenant using the criteria and objectives as described in Emily's Flash article of March 22.

The Board approved the covenant to be adopted by and used by our congregation is as follows.

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.

The Board fully accepts and recommends that this meaningful covenant be accepted by and used by the congregation. The Board extends its thanks to the Transition Team and to all of the congregation for all of the time and work and for the full participation in creating this covenant to live by.

—Max Old Bear

ADULT PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

UU Men's Group

The UU Men's Group will meet on Monday, April. 2, 5:30 pm at Ruby Tuesday's. Our discussion will center around an overview of the book "Reason and Reverence, *Religious Humanism for the 21st Century*" by William R. Murry. Copies of this overview are available in the church office. Contact Price Watts (941-7233).

UU "Stretch and Strengthen" Exercise

The class will continue through the Spring.

The Monday and Wednesday Exercise class has become a nice, small ongoing group, improving their strength and endurance under the guidance of our Exercise Specialist and Personal Trainer, Judith Briggs. They will be continuing at least through April and probably May. Some of the group can only come Mondays and some Wednesdays.

Anyone is welcome to join at any time. Whether you have any experience with Strength Training or none at all, you will learn some good things in the class. The group has a wide range of fitness levels so everyone can work at their own rate and intensity. We have some extra mats and weights, but bring your own if you have them. Join us from 11 AM -12 Noon Monday and/or Wednesday.

Any questions; Call **Judith Briggs at 228-4655.**

Not yet a member? Did you know?

This Congregation has an important annual meeting coming up on May 20. The deadline for becoming a member in time to vote at this meeting is April 20.

We invite you to formally join UUCGT now. For further information or to become a member, please contact one of the following: Rev Dr Leisa Huyck, President Max Old Bear 946-1007, Membership Chair Jane Watts 941-7233, or Congregational Administrator Linda Martin 947-3117.

Upcoming classes/education/events will be held on Sunday April 29, 12:00 - 2:00pm and Sunday May 6, 12:00 - 2:00pm. We look forward to being with you.



MUSICAL NOTES

The range of themes covered in April services is amazing. It's been a delightful challenge to find music that moves us to respect our fragile planet, tickle our funny-bones, build strong families and community--and put our thinking and values to the test. Musical leaders from the Vocal Ensemble have stepped up to take a variety of roles and tasks this month, and congregational musicians will enhance services by sharing their talents.

The Vocal Ensemble will sing on Easter, April 8, a joyous canon of love built on an early American tune, called "Let the Praise Go Round." Lots of alleluias! If you have an idea for a musical connection to a service theme, or if you'd like to play at a Sunday service--please contact me.

Nancy Flanagan
nflanagan@centurylink.net
231-228-6731

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ACTION

There is so much overwhelming in this world, so many bad things happening and the good gets overlooked. I was often told that the papers emphasize the bad, the shootings, the deaths, because that is what sells. Is that what we humans like to hear, and buy? One incident comes to mind at once, the senseless killing of a black youth in Florida by a self-appointed neighborhood guard. Is our society so trigger-happy? Do we see killing as the first answer rather than the very last, or one never to be considered at all. Then couple that incident with the poor army officer in Afghanistan. What triggered him to lose control of his supposed knowing of right from wrong? What pressures do we put our innocents in that they tip over the top and lose their finer human senses? And yet, at the same time, I remember and know, many stories from WWII where people went out of their way to help others. So not all is bad. When will we hear about those incidents? Or do they not happen any more? Many incidents that we hear about in the news are never concluded. Like what did happen to those poor children after the earthquake in the mountains of Pakistan several years ago? What about the children who lost everything but their own lives in the earthquake of Haiti? Do we just forget about them and go on? What about the boy soldiers of Uganda and their young sisters that were made into concubines? Are we so hardened, because we hear so much horror, that we no longer care or can no longer respond?

Several congregants have shown interest in what is happening to our neighbors who are immigrants or migrant workers up here in our dreamy, supposedly protected, cherry picking land. There is a lot happening. If you are really interested and want to join the fight, learn more about it all.

Here is an excellent beginning for learning about that problem <<http://lwvgtta.org/issuesactions/MigrantWorkersVisas.htm>>; Start there and join in!

There are many other issues and problems. If you want help finding your niche for pitching in to help, maybe I can assist you. Let me know. There is lots to do. Meanwhile enjoy the very early spring and realize what we have done and are continuing to do to our planet Earth.

Emmy Lou Cholak
231 943-7999



Springtime

SCRIP Cards

What ARE those SCRIP cards?

Many of you have approached me to explain more about the cash cards we purchase to fund our Guatemalan student, Norma. So here goes! The Scrip cards are essentially gift cards, or cash cards that can be ordered for hundreds of businesses here in TC and by catalog. They look a bit like a credit card. Some examples are: I needed to buy blinds for my windows and bought Lowes cards to cover the purchase ahead of time. For every \$100 I spent, Norma's fund received \$6.00. For Christmas, I sent my kids in Alaska

LLBean cards, and for each \$100 spent, Norma's fund got \$16! The best example is when I buy my Oryana cards through our Norma project, the fund gets \$4.00 for each \$100 I spend, and I get to buy locally grown and produced food, supporting our local farmers. Win-win!

The trick is to order the cards ahead of time, so you have them when you need them. The last Sunday of each month I will have a table in the hallway after the Sunday service to take orders for the cards. The cards will then be available for pick up at the same place on the following Sunday.

In our congregation, the most common uses are for gas, groceries at Glens or Meijers, and restaurants. Most catalogs have scrip available, and most of the franchised businesses in town offer them, as well. The cash cards work like credit cards, you just swipe them and you don't even have to sign anything! They never expire and you can use every penny on the card. The percentages may appear small, until you multiply them by 10 or 20, depending on how many of us participate. I think there may be the potential to fund more than Norma, here!

The way the accounting works is Leslie deposits our checks into Norma's account, and the Great Lakes Scrip business takes our payment electronically from that account. As in the examples above, they would withdraw only \$94 for each \$100 that I purchased from Lowes, only \$84 for each \$100 that I spent at LLBean. And at Oryana, the check is for \$96 for each \$100 card purchased. That is how the money accumulates in Norma's fund. Norma's fund needs about \$60 a month to fully sponsor her. Our sponsorship means that Norma gets her school uniform (required in Guatemala), her backpack of school supplies, plus, she and her family receive free health care and the services of a social worker. The teachers at Norma's school receive training, as well, through our funding.

Please do ask if you have questions about the Scrip project to fund Norma and her family.

Mary Van Valin
231 421-5243



Example Oryana Scrip Card.



The RE Scoop

RE Scoop: Spring Plans

It's Spring in northern Michigan, and spring activities will be blossoming in Religious Education!

We'll continue with our activities in 3 separate groups:

Beatrix Potter Group (approximately ages 3-6, preschool through first grade): We'll continue with our activities from the UUA Curriculum "We Are Many, We Are One," which teaches that young children develop a sense of religion in terms of relationships. Many of the spring lessons focus on our relationship with the Earth.

Christopher Reeve Group (approximately ages 7-12, grades 2 – 5): We'll continue with our explorations of world religions through the curriculum "A World of New Friends" published by the Shawnee Mission UU Church. We've already examined Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, and next we'll look at Christianity, Judaism, and Nature-Based Religions.

Susan B. Anthony Youth Group (approximately ages 13-18, middle school and high school): We're continuing with our service project benefitting the Cherryland Humane Society, gathering items that the shelter needs for the animals as well as collecting money and earning money by baking and selling cupcakes. We'll visit the shelter on Saturday, April 14 to deliver our donations, take a tour of the facility, and learn more about the plight of animals in our area. Then we'll decide together on our next project.

We'll also continue to offer a full worship experience for children and youth once a month (and we use the word "worship" in its ancient sense of "worth-ship," or taking time to focus on that which we hold worthy or sacred. On April 8 there will be a multigenerational service in the sanctuary for Easter Sunday; in May we'll hold a chapel service, which is worship in the RE space just for the children and youth.

The RE Committee is looking for more members. If you can attend one meeting a month and help with organizing the RE program and making it happen, contact me!

Also, volunteers on Sunday morning are always needed!

May Spring bring a spring in your step and a blossom in your heart.

- Karen McCarthy, DRE

dre@uucgt.org

Unitarian Universalist Congregation

of Grand Traverse

6726 Center Road

Traverse City MI 49686-1802

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

the BEACON

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

Volume 49, Issue 4

April, 2012

Calendar

All events and programs take place at UUCGT unless otherwise noted and are open to everyone. Programs marked with an * are UUCGT sponsored.

April 2012

01 Sun *"Holy Foolishness," Betsy Emdin and Misty Sheehan; Service @ 10:30AM*

- 01 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 2:30-6PM
- 02 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 03 Tue Bridge Group; Christie McGue, 1-4:30PM
- 04 Wed * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 04 Wed * Peacemakers Needleworkers; 1:30-3:30PM
- 04 Wed * Wednesday Night Supper; Mary Kiner, 6-8PM
- 04 Wed International Folk Dancers; Mary Van Valin, 7-8:30PM
- 05 Thurs * Vocal Ensemble; Nancy Flanagan, 7-9PM
- 06 Fri Meditation Group Retreat; Fleda Brown, 8:30AM-9PM
- 07 Sat Meditation Group Retreat; Fleda Brown, 8:30AM-9PM
- 07 Sat * Coming Out Support Group; Nick Erber, 11AM-12:30PM

08 Sun *"Alive Again," Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck; Service @ 10:30AM*

- 08 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 5-7PM
- 09 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 10 Tue Bridge Group; Christie McGue, 1-4:30PM
- 10 Tue * Women's Spirituality Group; Misty Sheehan, 4:30-6PM
- 10 Tue Sunday Services Committee; Holly Knibbs, 6-7:30PM
- 10 Tue Finance Committee; Kay Sturgeon, 7-8:30PM
- 11 Wed * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 11 Wed * Peacemakers Needleworkers; 1:30-3:30PM
- 11 Wed * Wednesday Night Supper; Mary Kiner, 6-8PM
- 11 Wed * Chautauqua; Judy VanDeWeghe, 7-8PM
- 11 Wed International Folk Dancers; Mary Van Valin, 7-8:30PM
- 12 Thurs * Vocal Ensemble; Nancy Flanagan, 7-9PM
- 13 Thurs Facilities Team; Dave Halsted, 10-11:30AM

15 Sun *"Reclaiming the A-Word," Rev. Jeff Liebmann, Service @ 10:30AM*

- 15 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 5-7PM
- 16 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 17 Tue Bridge Group; Christie McGue, 1-4:30PM
- 18 Wed * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 18 Wed * Peacemakers Needleworkers; 1:30-3:30PM
- 18 Wed * Wednesday Night Supper; Mary Kiner, 6-8PM
- 18 Wed UUCGT Board Meeting; Max OldBear, 6:30-9PM
- 18 Wed International Folk Dancers; Mary Van Valin, 7-8:30PM
- 19 Thurs Michigan Writers Potluck; Theresa Scollon, 6-9PM

- 19 Thurs * Vocal Ensemble; Nancy Flanagan, 7-9PM
- 21 Sat * Coming Out Support Group; Nick Erber, 11AM-12:30PM

22 Sun *"Feeling Our Grief, Healing the Earth," Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck; Service @ 10:30AM*

- 22 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 5-7PM
- 23 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 24 Tue Bridge Group; Christie McGue, 1-4:30PM
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- 25 Wed * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
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- 25 Wed International Folk Dancers; Mary Van Valin, 7-8:30PM
- 26 Thurs * Vocal Ensemble; Nancy Flanagan, 7-9PM

29 Sun *"Exuberance," UUCGT Members and Friends; Service @ 10:30AM*

- 29 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 5-7PM
- 30 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM

May 2012

- 01 Tue Bridge Group; Christie McGue, 1-4:30PM
- 02 Wed * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
- 02 Wed * Peacemakers Needleworkers; 1:30-3:30PM
- 02 Wed International Folk Dancers; Mary Van Valin, 7-8:30PM
- 03 Thurs * Vocal Ensemble; Nancy Flanagan, 7-9PM
- 05 Sat * Coming Out Support Group; Nick Erber, 11AM-12:30PM
- 05 Sat** *"Healing Ceremony" Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck; Time TBD*

06 Sun *"A People's History of UUCGT," Rev. Dr. Leisa Huyck; Service @ 10:30AM*

- 06 Sun Mindfulness Meditation Group; Fleda Brown, 5-7PM
- 07 Mon * Exercise Class; Judith Briggs, 11AM-12PM
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