



THE TOUCHSTONE

A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

April 2021

Monthly Newsletter

Deepening Connections



Leaping Ahead

Along with warming temperatures, daffodils, and returning geese, a regularly occurring rite of spring is the beginning of the church's annual program fund pledge drive. We look at what we spent last year, what we want to do next year, gather input from the groups within the church and then figure out how to keep this institution healthy and sustainable long into the future.

This church is made up of all of us. These words from our offertory each Sunday are at the heart of what it means to be a congregational church. Everything the church is and does emanates from the gift of time, talent and treasure given by our members. There is no larger body sustaining our work. On the contrary, as a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, we help sustain that larger association. Based on our annual budget, UCH dues come close to \$20,000. We do get a lot in return in terms of curriculum for religious education, training, resources and support during challenges or transitions.

But this church is you. It is the people who sit in the antique chairs in the sanctuary during regular times and who sit in zoom meetings this past year. It exists within a building but, as we've seen so clearly this year, it is not the building. It is the people and the relationships which grow from all the things we do together.

This church grows out of shared committee meetings and volunteer outreach; out of work on the church grounds, raking and planting; out of sharing meals and planning events. It grows out of pride in our youth as they spiritually and emotionally mature in our RE programs. It grows out of shared worship, and out of those communal celebrations which both celebrate and mourn milestones of life. It grows out of singing, planning, eating, and inspiring one another.

Maybe this was a year that you got more involved because it was easier to attend zoom meetings than to drive at night. Or maybe you had to hang back more because you have little ones at home who made extra zoom meetings untenable. Maybe you've had more time to be involved – or less. Each of us have had different experiences of this shared pandemic year. But we do share a relationship with the other folks who make up the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale.

People are being vaccinated. Restrictions will be lifted. By fall we trust that many of us will again be able to gather in our historic building – and those with reservations will still be able to join online. Our lives are made of the choices we make, the places in which we invest, the way we put our resources in the direction of highest good. We hope that this spring, as you sift through obligations and resources, you will agree that our church community is a top priority.

UCH is as only as dynamic as the many human beings which comprise its community. As we bounce back from the depths of the pandemic, your generosity will allow a leap forward into an abundant and vibrant future

This church is made up of all of us.

Director of Programs News

Pam Fodor

UCH has some amazing young people!**Lucas Barnes** is a high school junior who started a clothing line a couple of years ago and has used the pandemic year to expand his business. What a driven entrepreneur! Read on for an interview with Lucas.



Tell me about your company.

LB: Last year, I started an online company, Treevas, which sells clothing with my graphic designs and commits to planting a tree for each purchase. For my newest business project, Treevas Goods Co., I also now sell minimal wallets that I personally handcraft from sustainable, plant-based leather alternatives. Blending minimalist design and function with traditional leather aesthetics, I have created an original series of 2 (soon to be 3) wallets named "The Desert Series." This name is inspired by the fact that my wallets are made from "Desserto," a leather alternative sourced from cactus leaves. Furthermore, I guarantee net-zero carbon emissions for every order. This is possible with my promise to plant 5 trees per wallet ordered, use re-purposed packaging, and ensure 100% carbon-offset for each delivery through a company I work with called Sendle.

How did you get started?

LB: I stumbled upon an online leathercraft video which was really satisfying to watch. For a while, I shrugged it off as just something cool. With time, however, I thought about the possibility of doing a sustainable version of that as a business. I thought it would be fun and interesting to work with my hands. After thorough research and trial and error, I developed an efficient production process. Having extra time to experiment in my basement workshop is one of the few positive aspects of having so many of my other activities canceled during Covid.

What is/was your motivation?

LB: My previous project, Treevas Organic Clothing, was just an online business, and it always felt like something was missing because I had to rely on a fulfillment company to produce my clothing. With Treevas Goods Co., I was motivated to work with my hands. However, there were a lot of things I could handmade to sell. I went forward with selling wallets because I knew I could make it very sustainable, with the possibility to plant hundreds or even thousands of trees per year, making a real difference over time.

What do you hope to accomplish through your company?

LB: As any entrepreneur would say, your first business probably won't be successful. In fact, you probably won't succeed until your tenth. Treevas Goods Co. is my sixth! While I'm not expecting to reach the stars, I'm hopeful that TGC will be profitable enough to provide a financial foundation for my future business ventures. I will continue to experiment with the business even after I head to college in 2022, where I plan to study Industrial Design and Sustainability.

How can we see what your company has to offer?

LB: Visit www.treevasgoods.co to learn more and purchase my wallets. I have posted a video there that explains my wallet-making process, and I do all of the product photography myself also. You can also follow [@treevasgoods.co](#) on Facebook and Instagram.

UCH's Statesville Calling Virtual Screening and Panel Discussion Event



On March 13, 2021, UCH hosted a virtual screening of the documentary film *Stateville Calling*, followed by a panel discussion (available here). The film follows the prison activist and reformer Bill Ryan. Watching the film, we learn that with the “war on drugs” in the 1980s and 90s, America embarked on a mass incarceration program that resulted in a huge expansion of prisons. With a racialized and politicized fear of crime, prison terms got longer and the idea that prison was for rehabilitation gave way to the view that prison was for punishment. Parole was eliminated in Illinois in 1978, and so-called “truth in sentencing” policies resulted in reduced opportunities for “sentencing credits,” meaning most people in Illinois are serving most if not all of their entire sentence. Prison populations ballooned - Illinois today has nearly 40,000 people in prison, not counting juvenile detention centers, jails, and people on mandatory supervised release. Unfortunately, many of us, myself included, did not spend a lot of time concerned with what was going on in the courts and behind bars over the last 40 years.

During the panel discussion following the film screening, we heard from Rev. Allison Farnum of the Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois, which seeks to change this throwaway attitude towards people in prison. UUPMI invokes our First Principle - “the inherent worth and dignity of every person.” UUPMI works with the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship to encourage congregations to help people learn about prison issues and become “prison pen pals.” By committing to a relationship with a person behind bars, we engage with the humanity of the person. We start empathizing with their plight. We may learn that they have remorse for their crimes and that they have done their best to rehabilitate themselves with whatever resources were available to them. Even if you don’t currently have a prison pen pal, you can attend our UCH prison pen pal meetings to learn about people held behind bars. You can also help us advocate to bring back parole.

Another member of our panel was Oscar “Smiley” Parham. Prior to being released based on a clemency petition, he was sentenced to mandatory life on the “theory of accountability” (which in Illinois holds people responsible for crimes committed by associates under the so-called “common-design rule”). Mr. Parham has a job and is a junior at the Theological Seminary at North Park University. He recently got married and bought a house. Mr. Parham believes that the possibility of parole is important because it keeps hope alive and provides a prisoner with an incentive for good behavior and rehabilitation.

Bill Ryan, featured in the film, was also on our panel. He took the opportunity to talk about some of his relationships with people behind bars. Our fourth-panel member was Jeanne Bishop, author of the book [**Change of Heart: Justice, Mercy, and Making Peace with My Sister’s Killer**](#). She spoke eloquently about her journey towards reconciliation with her sister’s murderer.

The most poignant moment for me was when Rev. Farnum spoke of how working with prisoners “enlivens” her faith. As she stated, “no one is outside the circle of love” -- we all need “connection, redemption and community.”

Submitted by Marian Honel-Wilson, Chair, UCH Racial Equity Team

Green Sanctuary Program

Blooms in the Spring

Our Green Sanctuary committee has prepared an ambitious agenda for the whole congregation to participate in to protect and improve our environment. There are four major components. Some of these steps we can take right away, while we’re social distancing; some we’ll do when we are all back together.

Save Butterflies and Bees: Butterflies, bees, and other pollinators are under stress from chemical pesticides, disease, and loss of habitat. There is a nationwide campaign called Homegrown National Park that aims to provide millions of acres of habitat, a few square feet at a time. We can all help provide food and homes for our valuable insects by devoting a little—or a little more—garden space to native plants that feed and host pollinators. Even if you have a porch and a planter, you can join in. We will provide lists of wildflowers that are easy to grow and are attractive, information about which butterflies use which plants as hosts, and links to how you can participate in programs like Monarch Watch and the National Wildlife Federation's Wildlife Habitat certification.



Save Energy: There is a lot of information on how to conserve energy to ease the global climate crisis. But what's most important? Which action has the highest impact? We'll provide a list of the most effective ways to reduce energy use and encourage everyone in the church to keep track and share our stories—with rewards for the biggest savers.

Reduce Waste: An increase in food delivery and carry-out has reminded us of how much waste we all produce each day, individually and as a society. What we throw away, especially plastic, ends up in our waterways and ultimately in our lakes and oceans. There is a worldwide Zero Waste Movement that we can all join—if not to eliminate all trash and garbage, then to make serious reductions. Again, we'll share our stories and celebrate our successes.

Eat Healthy and Feed Our Neighbors: You truly are what you eat, and even if you don't mind chemical residues in your own body, eating organic keeps harmful chemicals out of the earth, air, and water. We'll encourage each consumer to buy organic (it's cheaper than you might think) and do the ultimate to manage the food you eat -- grow your own. Also, the Produce that comes from our home gardens can help feed our neighbors. We'll provide information about local food banks that are happy to accept a portion of our harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables.

And wait, there's more! Stay tuned to the Touchstone, the church's weekly "News & Notes," and announcements at church as these initiatives unfold. Or join us at our meetings, the first Wednesday of every month. Follow our church media for Zoom meeting instructions.

Animal Ministry

Recipe of the Month

Animal Ministry wishes you a happy Earth Day! This month's recipe is a perfect-for-spring Lemon Cream Pasta from Taylor W:

<https://theveglife.com/lemon-cream-pasta-asparagus-peas-vegan/#wprm-recipe-container-12835>

If you have a favorite vegan recipe to share, please send the link to UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com



A plant-centered diet helps the Earth in a multitude of ways. Here are some fast facts about animal agriculture's carbon footprint:

Water Use

- 1/3 of the planet's water use is for animal agriculture
- Water footprint per gram of animal protein is 1.5x that of legumes
- Producing 1 lb of beef requires ~1,800 gallons of water
- Producing 1 lb of wheat requires ~100 gallons of water

Land Use

- Cattle grazing is responsible for 80% of the deforestation of the Amazon
- Animal agriculture covers 1/3 of the earth's surface

Carbon Emissions

- Clearing forests to allow cattle to graze releases hundreds of tons of CO2 into the atmosphere (second only to fossil fuel use)
- Livestock are responsible for 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions

Pollution

- Livestock and poultry farming pollutes our air with allergens, gases, dust, and particles
- Pollution from factory farms threatens public health by spreading deadly disease-causing pathogens

2021 Soul Work

Soul work encompasses a group of offerings that allow our community to ponder, wrestle, discuss and grow. This spring continues many of our year-long programs. The small group ministry folks have been meeting faithfully to practice deep listening and reflect on monthly topics, the meditation group gathers every Monday for contemplation of a Dharma talk and time to breathe, Linda Karlen offers forest walks, and Len Edgin and Gene Schafer are leading a Spirit in Practice group which is exploring a wide range of practices to try on and see what might fit.

Check out the [Soul Work page](#) on our website to see what's available and join something that calls to you. The upcoming dates for Forest Walks are: **April 25, May 16**

Feel free to contact [Rev Pam](#) for more information or to offer your own practice to the congregation.

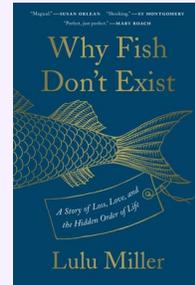
Spiritual Book Club - New Book!

Why Fish Don't Exist by Lulu Miller

Beginning Tuesday April 20, 2021 1:30 - 3:30pm

This Soul Work group meets bi-weekly to discuss a few chapters of the book at a time. Members take turns

leading each session, finding meaning in rich conversation and shared insight. Contact [Susan Stephens](#) or [Rev Pam](#) to be added to email list for updates and questions for upcoming sessions.



Why Fish Don't Exist by Lulu Miller

Part biography, part memoir, part scientific adventure, *Why Fish Don't Exist* is a wondrous fable about how to persevere in a world where chaos will always prevail.

April Worship

April 11: Hope Springs Eternal

As more and more people are receiving vaccinations, there finally seems a cause for hope. The amazing thing about human beings is that we manage to hold onto hope in the darkest of situations. What sustains you through dark times? Where do you locate hope? ~Rev Pam

April 18: Loving the Green Earth

Spring is popping out all over and hungry souls drink in the rich aroma. It has been suggested that the despair felt by much of our country, despair fueling lowered life expectancies among white men in particular, might well be caused by a kind of species hunger; an awareness that we are cut off from the richness of nature - from our source. We have gone astray. How did humans live sustainably in the past? How can we reclaim our birthright? ~Rev Pam

April 25: Taking a Collective Breath

UUANI Justice Revival

As spring waits on the horizon, can we breathe? Stop holding tightly to all that has happened and exhale, together, into a world once more beginning to offer possibilities? We can breathe as vaccines become available. We can breathe as we once again gather together, small groups at first and then ever-growing circles. We can breathe into a new administration, breaths of accountability, breaths of attention, and breaths

of hope that the first 100 days are met with plans for a more just 100 days to follow. We have work to do to create a just world where everyone can find their breath but we gather to celebrate all the work that has brought us this far and to sustain one another, hand in hand, we move together into the greening world. It is time to breathe. Let us take a collective breath together. ~ Service put together by UUANI featuring participation of over 20 Illinois UU churches - including UCH.

Join us for Worship



Join us for Worship via
[Zoom](#)



The service will be uploaded to [YouTube](#) by Tuesday morning. Past services are also available to watch on the church's Youtube Channel.

When Are We Getting Back Together?

Last spring a dedicated group of church folks prepared a 'get back to church' plan, thinking it would be much sooner than later. We are very grateful for their thoughtful work and still holding that report for guidance.

However much has changed and new information has come in and church leadership is continuing to gather information in order to make the best decision possible for our church community.

Your Board of Trustees is reviewing information from the MidAmerica Region of the UUA and setting up criteria for making these choices. We will hold a Town Hall later this month to discuss plans for the future. Thanks for your patience! We are all in this together and will make it through to the other side!



2021 Pledge Drive

Watch your mailbox for details and keep April 10th open for some good community fun!

If UCH had a time machine, we could turn back the dial to marvel at our rich history and past accomplishments such as being a home for diverse speakers, responding to social action needs, and adopting green initiative.

Then we could turn the dial to its upright position and be grateful for the wonderful way we supported each other and our church during this last year. Despite the pandemic our congregation flourished and we are so grateful.

Lastly, we could dial ahead to experience all the exciting things that our future holds: being back



Dear UCH Members and Friends,

As participants and stakeholders in our church community, you know the importance of a thriving and sustainable Unitarian Church of Hinsdale - especially now as we recover together from the effects of a life-altering pandemic.

UCH is a beacon of sanity, compassion and connection in a world that desperately needs to be reminded that we are interconnected

together again for worship, RE and programs, continuing our hybrid models to include many more folks in our community, and celebrating our 151st Anniversary.

We are not just bouncing back from the last year but leaping forward toward many more! Watch for more pledge drive info coming soon to your e-mailbox and your snail-mailbox! Save the date April 10th for a super fun trip through a time machine!

beings supporting one another and thriving together.

You have received a pledge packet in the mail offering you financial information on the work of UCH and multiple ways to submit your pledge. You can see the [2021-22 Pledge Brochure here](#).

You can also visit the [UCH website for more information here](#). Your support is vital so that an accurate budget can be formulated for coming 2021-22 church year.

Please click the Pledge button below to submit your pledge right now.

[Pledge Button](#)



Thrive with Pride Cafe Gatherings for LGBTQ+ Seniors

Age Options created Thrive with Pride Cafes to combat social isolation among LGBTQ+ older adults. This network of community sites provides social support and vital information to LGBTQ+ older adults and caregivers in suburban Cook County. Thrive with Pride Cafes are envisioned as safe spaces for older adults and caregivers to learn more about benefits, share their stories and discuss topics that matter in a safe and affirming environment.

April 13 @ 11:00 am

Join us live on Zoom on Tuesday,
April 13 at 11:00 am!

We'll discuss the next Age Options program. Click [HERE](#) to join us via Zoom on April 13 at 11:00 am.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?pwd=RnhjdTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1alZTK211Zz09)

[pwd=RnhjdTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1alZTK211Zz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?pwd=RnhjdTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1alZTK211Zz09)

Meeting ID: 823 2999 6123

Passcode: 616471

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,82329996123#,,,,*616471# US (Chicago)

UCH Music in the time of COVID

Like everyone involved in keeping UCH programs engaging and inspiring during the pandemic, musicians have been challenged. Thanks to the talents of Music Coordinator Jamie Pastman, the challenge has been met. Not only has he added his creative piano arrangements of hymns, pop, and classical music but he has also composed lovely music as well. As if that's not enough, he's learned the technical skill of weaving videos and live performance into each service.

The Celebration Singers love singing together in one room, but have summoned their courage and virtually recorded lovely music on Zoom for Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve, with the help of Jamie and K. Mooney. We will continue to provide virtual music while eagerly awaiting the time when we can be together again. Completing these vocal contributions are the solo and family gems from John Cooperrider; K Mooney; Tim Hays and his son, Eric; the Teppema and Budziak families. And who can forget the lovely flute solos from Carolyn May. Remember the children singing Jingle Bells before Christmas --and Nora and Luke Makdad playing flawless piano? We so appreciate these gifts of music from our church family. They'll keep us inspired until our family is back in our church home.



UPDATE: Scam Alert



They are still at it... Each month a new wave of emails go out asking folks to contact Rev Pam for an urgent matter.

Do Not Respond!

Your minister will never ask you to buy gift cards or make purchases of any kind. If in doubt of any communication, contact Rev Pam at minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org.

All others are fake email addresses. Delete them.

A Little Help From Your Friends...



The pandemic crisis has been going on for many long months now and even with an end in sight, many folks have been affected in ways great and small. If you are facing challenges right now, know that your church is here to help. An emergency relief fund exists at all times for church members experiencing financial difficulties.

Help with groceries, utilities or other unexpected events is available by contacting **Rev Pam**. You are loved and cared for. If you are in trouble, let us know so we can help. That's what community is for!

Monthly Share the Plate: Faith in Place

April is Earth Month! We know that Climate Change Won't Wait.

Faith in Place empowers people of all faiths and spiritual consciousness to take action for environmental and climate justice.



You can donate through our website or by mailing a check to UCH, 17 W Maple, Hinsdale, IL 60521 - mark April / Faith in Place in the memo line.

Who Should You Call?

January's Touchstone gave a detailed explanation of our new staffing structure and the reasons for change over the past year. Please read about it [here](#) if you still have questions. UCH is in a process of evolving to fit the changing needs and opportunities presented by the march of time. The chart below illustrates the staff member covering each area. You are always welcome to contact [Rev Pam](#) or [Pam Fodor](#) if you have questions.

Staff Member	Support Area	Contact information
Rev Pam Rumancik	Worship, Pastoral Care, Theological exploration, general support	minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org (440) 570-9812
Pam Fodor	Religious Education – All ages Membership, Caring Committee, Space Sharing / Events	re@hinsdaleunitarian.org (630) 323-2885 ext 110
Lily Field	Bookkeeping – Pledge reports, reimbursements	finance@hinsdaleunitarian.org (630) 323-2885
John Cooperrider	Heating/cooling issues, property maintenance	grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org (630) 435-0164
Cherita Axel	Communications – articles for News & Notes and Touchstone, Press releases, Facebook events	communications@hinsdaleunitarian.org socialmedia@hinsdaleunitarian.org (224) 388-0957
Jamie Pastman	Musician, Worship Technology	music@hinsdaleunitarian.org (847) 651-4324
Julia Beckman	Choir Director – joining choir, ideas for musical events	choirdirector@hinsdaleunitarian.org (630) 605-7069



Due to continued high Covid rates, our staff is working from home and the office will remain closed.

We look forward to vaccinations and the opportunity to be with you again soon!

Staff Info & On-Site Days:

Director of Programs:

Bookkeeper:

Minister:

Facilities Manager:

Choir Director:

Music Facilitator:

Social Media

Manager:

News & Notes:

Touchstone:

Board President:

Pam Fodor - RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Lily Field - Finance@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Rev Pam Rumancik - Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org

John Cooperrider - Grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Julia Beckman - ChoirDirector@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Jamie Pastman - Music@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Cherita Axel - Socialmedia@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Communications@hinsdaleunitarian.org

uchtouchstone@gmail.com

Bob Daniel-Wayman - President@hinsdaleunitarian.org

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday - by Appt

Friday - as needed

Unitarian Church of Hinsdale /
www.hinsdaleunitarian.org

