

January 2021 Happy New Year!

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THE TOUCHSTONE

A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

Deepening Connections: Joy and Woe



Rev Pam Rumancik

Are you breathing? Can you relax a bit and release the tension within your body? Take a moment now, breathe. Simply allow this moment to sink in.

I admit that I spent a lot of time in the kitchen today. Making soup, washing up pots and pans, doing simple chores that don't ask much of me.

I was, of course, avoiding writing; trying to figure out what in world I might say that offers anything of value in a world so badly off its axis.

What do I know to be true on this particular day in January?

Well, I know that we are alive.

The sun still shines – even if hidden behind a thick bank of clouds.

The world still spins through a vast and trackless space. Grandfathers still pass butterscotch drops to little ones. Zoom meetings still freeze up. Friends and family love us.

Even today, when there is so much, so much. Even during the week that the 45th president of the United States urged his followers to insurgency for the first time in our country's history. The People's House was laid siege. Shots were fired. People lost their lives. And that's not even mentioning the worldwide pandemic or impending global catastrophe.

All that is true. And the fact that we are here - able to be present to our lives, able to breathe – is also true. This is one of the great mysteries of human existence. Our ability to hold opposing sides of life together in one moment. This thing called life includes wonder and beauty and connection while at the same time offering horror, suffering and pain. As the hymn goes, joy and woe are woven fine.

Like so many generations before us, we are appalled at the depths some of our fellow humans are willing to stoop for wealth and power. We are bemused by the discrepancy between what our country & culture claim to value and what we experience to be true.

This month we explore the complementary feelings of Consolation and Desolation. Each is a part of every life no matter what the station or accoutrements there gathered. In my heart of hearts, I believe this is the real purpose of church. Helping one another pick our way through myriad mine fields. Encouraging one another to keep going even when all seems lost.

None of us have answers that will fix everything. We can't clean up the mess in Washington or stop global warming.

Heck I can't even stop our puppy, Ruthie, from stealing my shoes!

But... We can see one another. We can be present to people around us who are doing their very best to leave this world just a little better than they found it. We can see, appreciate, encourage, applaud.



We can offer a butterscotch.

Honestly, the best that any of us can ever do is bring our humanity with us into the world; to show up and to pay attention; notice our own feelings and responses. By paying attention to the needs of our fellow humans, showing up with a kind word, a casserole or basket of muffins, even with simply a smile, we contribute to a better space right here and right now. It's not rocket science or the stuff of Nobel prizes, but it does make the world go around with a little more kindness, caring, and humanity.

And that's the best I've got today.

Love & Blessings,
Rev Pam

Saturday Jan 23 @ 2:00pm on Zoom



Long-time church member, Betty Mathias, passed away this past August at the age of 94. She lived in Brookfield, IL for many years and was a member of the Friends of the Brookfield Library and the UCH Women's Alliance. She was a friendly and welcoming part of the Sunday morning greeters for many years, always making folks feel at home with a big smile and warm chuckle.

There will be a memorial service for Betty on Saturday, Jan 23, 2021 at 2:00pm on zoom. All friends of Betty are invited to share pictures and memories with Rev Pam by Jan 19th minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org.

Please share this information with others who have known Betty. Her absence leaves a hole in the fabric of our community and we miss her.

Time: Jan 23, 2021 02:00 PM Central Time (US and Canada)
Zoom meeting at <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/92320218270>

Meeting ID: 923 2021 8270
One tap mobile
+13126266799,,92320218270# US (Chicago)
Find your local number: <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/92320218270>

You are Needed!

Got some time on your hands? Want to give back to your church community and work with fun, dedicated people?

Our annual pledge drive is coming up and we need a Pledge Captain to help organize and facilitate a unique experience. The pandemic offers an opportunity to take wisdom from the past and create a new process for connecting with our members and inviting folks to support the church for the coming year.

You will have a great team of experienced people to work with, but we'd love to have someone with a fresh perspective leading this year's effort. This is a one-time opportunity – you will not be locked into this position for the rest of your born days – so... what do you have to lose?

Contact [Rev Pam](#), [Darren Howard](#), or [Pam Fodor](#) by Jan 21st to learn more. This could be a wonderful opportunity to create new connections and offer your creative talents to a very good cause.



Director of Programs News: Pam Fodor

Thank goodness 2020 is in the past! It seems like this past year has just been the pits- nothing good. But I know there were some highlights. Right? There has to be a few? Even in a good year it is hard to remember all the laughs, blessings, funny mishaps and joys of the previous year. Wishing for a way to collect all of these good things I search Pinterest for some sort of clever something. Journal? Nope- not my thing. Scrapbook? Nope- I will only do it one or two times. Then I came across an idea for a Memory Jar. This hopefully will be a way for The Fodor Family to remember the little joys all year long.

I have placed a crystal ice bucket (that I never use) but you can use a mason jar or vase on my kitchen table and a stack of colorful note papers and a pen. The plan is that every few days one of us will jot down something that made our family laugh or smile. On New Year's Eve 2021, we will empty out the jar, unfold each paper and read them one by one. It will be a chance to really remember all the little things that shape our lives.

I encourage you to make one too! The big things we can remember. But sometimes the little things are the most meaningful!



The note that is in there says that

End of 2020 Update from the BOT President Bob Daniel Wayman



Wow, what an amazing first half of the church year we have had! Our congregation and church staff have risen to the many challenges that 2020 threw at us. We have shared great remote church experiences together, and we will end the calendar year in a healthy financial condition.

At the beginning of this church year, the congregation had numerous discussions about the impact COVID-19 might have on our church. We worried that conducting our church services over Zoom and meeting remotely for church groups would lower engagement and possibly membership. We had no idea how our fundraising events would go and whether members would be able to maintain their pledges. In addition, our renters were cutting back on their use of the buildings. All of this led us to worry about attendance and if our budget would hold up. In response to this uncertainty, we adopted a conservative budget with several options to cut back spending if necessary.

Today, we are in far better shape than we feared. Despite the pandemic's challenges and the craziness of 2020, the entire church has demonstrated the flexibility and commitment needed to overcome it all. Staff and members have developed an online service presentation that I believe looks better than many other churches our size. Attendance at Sunday services has remained strong, and we have attracted new members. The congregation has continued to be generous with pledges, and the recent *Zoomraiser* delivered way beyond what we had budgeted[LK1]. All of this has resulted in a better-than-budgeted income. Meanwhile, costs have been held below budget while we still perform expected church functions and maintenance including repairing storm damage and upgrading our Wi-fi network. With all this in mind, the board authorized one-time bonuses totaling \$1050 this month for Rev. Pam and the staff in appreciation for their hard work during the pandemic. While challenges lay ahead, we enter the new year in strong shape.

I would like to personally thank the congregation, all the volunteers including my board members, and the staff for your efforts this year. A few of my friends thought I was a bit crazy to volunteer for the role of president, particularly this year, but you have all made this job a joy. I look forward to a great 2021!

Soul Work - 2021

We've had some great opportunities for connection and spiritual growth over the fall months. Our SGM group has 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 has offered forest walks and a group gathered to publicly grieve over climate destruction in November.

2021 brings with it a number of new opportunities to compliment these wonderful offerings.

Lenny Edgin & Gene Schafer are offering a 10 session class called [Spirit in Practice](#). The program begins January 28th and continues on the 4th Thursday of every month at 7:00PM Registration is Required Contact [Len](#) or [Gene](#) to sign up.

A spiritually centered book club is also forming to read "[Braiding Sweetgrass](#)" by Robin Watt Kimmer. The group will meet in the afternoon on Zoom, perhaps every other week for an hour and a half, discussing perhaps a chapter at a time depending on the length of the chapters. Recommended by Debbi Daniel-Wayman, this book combines a look at indigenous

Animal Ministry Looks Ahead



Companion Animal Grief Support

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, Animal Ministry had to cancel its annual flagship event, the Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale for 2020. As we look ahead to next year, we are hoping to revive the bake sale in a modified format, such as ordering ahead, delivery, etc. rather than our traditional buffet style approach for safety reasons. Stay tuned for more details on how you can bake and buy next year! We will be unable to hold our annual January post-holiday gathering as well in 2021.

wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teaching of plants. Debbie will order copies so contact [Cathy Blanford](#) for more information if you'd like to participate. Exact day and time still TBD.

Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry, our parent organization, has started a monthly Zoom support group led by a UU chaplain for people dealing with the grief of losing their beloved companion animals. Please email UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com if you would like info on how to participate in this new offering.

January Worship

January 10: Consolation & Desolation

At the start of 2021, we look at the ways humans have survived difficult times in the past and how those times often create a crucible for transformation. No one welcomes trials and tribulations, yet they are an inevitable part of life. What can sustain us and even help us thrive in these times? What experiences have you had which offered you growth through challenge? What consoled you in your darkest hour?

~Rev Pam

January 17: To the Mountain Top

In the months before he was assassinated, Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr said that he'd been to the mountain top and seen the promised land. What did he see? How can we do the work of climbing up that mountain ourselves and finding our place in this world? We'll explore King's words and see what kinds of things stop us from seeing clearly ourselves.

~Rev Pam

January 24: A New Day

Description coming soon. ~ Ron Solberg

January 31: Poetry is my Religion

Are you a poet who doesn't know it? Do you turn a phrases easily or does poetry feel like a foreign language? Each of us finds a different way to connect to that inner knowing and poems are one way that allow a glimpse of the hidden sage within. Which types of poetry speaks to you? Rhyming? Ancient? Traditional? Poetry slams? Let's explore this avenue of knowing that feeds souls and opens a space of wonder and connection. ~Rev Pam



Join us for Worship via [Zoom](#)

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



Thrive with Pride Cafe Gatherings for LGBTQ+ Seniors

UCH Tuesday Jan 12th - Discussion of Senior Rainbow Assistance Program.

The December plenary featured the co-founders of Senior Rainbow Assistance Program, Jessica Jonckheere and Jennifer Jonckheere. Jessica presented on the history and mission of Senior Rainbow, and we had a Q&A session after the presentation.

Click here to view the presentation on our YouTube channel.

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.

What's Next: January 2021: Healthy Living in the New Year

Join us live on Zoom on Tuesday, January 26 at 11am! Peggy Tully,

Details: Thrive with Pride Café
Time: Jan 12, 2020 11:00 AM Central Time
(US and Canada)
Join Zoom
Meeting [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?pwd=RnhidTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1aIZTK211Zz09)
[pwd=RnhidTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1aIZTK211Zz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82329996123?pwd=RnhidTIUSXlhL3E2R3I1aIZTK211Zz09)
Meeting ID: 823 2999 6123
Passcode: 616471

AgeOptions Health Education Implementation Coordinator will present on helpful program to help you "Take Charge of Your Health," manage a chronic condition like diabetes, prevent falls in your home and outside, and promote balance and well being with Tai Chi. See more or find a program near you at the IL Pathways to Health Website (click here to open this page in a new tab) .

Click HERE to join us via Zoom on January 26 at 11am. You can also join by phone! Call (312)626-6799 and enter Meeting ID 966 6129 4106 when prompted.

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 with a call to 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: Food Empowerment Project



Food Empowerment Project is a vegan food justice organization and a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) founded in 2007 by Lauren Ornelas. Their goal is to raise awareness about how our food choices can change the world. Food Empowerment Project encourages people to use their individual choices to eat with their ethics and use their collective voices to help bring about positive change. They encourage healthy food choices that reflect a more compassionate society by spotlighting the abuse of animals on

farms, the depletion of natural resources, unfair working conditions for produce workers, and the unavailability of healthy foods in low-income areas. Food Empowerment Project seeks specifically to empower those with the fewest resources. People can contribute by make your checks out to the Food Empowerment Project or to the church and put Jan / FEP in the memo line. Mail to 17 W Maple St Hinsdale 60521. Or donate through the donate button on the website www.hinsdaleunitarian.org.

Learn more about their good work at: <https://foodispower.org/>

Staffing Reorganization Update

The only thing that's permanent is change. An adage to remember even in a church that changes slowly over the years. You may have read that the pandemic is not changing so much as accelerating changes already in motion.

The trend of people working from home has gotten super-sized. Many businesses which had been declining were pushed abruptly into bankruptcy. More people are bundling different jobs together to create a sustainable income. Many churches are struggling to remain viable.

Lucky for us, UCH has remained strong during the pandemic disruption. We are grateful for the continued support and engagement of so many of our members even during trying times.

However, one challenge has been staffing. The strong volunteerism of past decades has given way to more reliance on paid staff in order to maintain many aspects of church health. Modern folks have either done their time putting in long hours for the church or are simply

John Cooperrider has been hired as an onsite facilities manager for ten hours a week. He will make minor repairs and oversee the various inspections which need to happen throughout the year. A Building Tech Team will offer him counsel and information on the different aspects of maintenance.

In addition, we've hired Cherita Axel to manage the communications aspects of our congregation. She has a great deal of experience and is a UU – bonus! - and will be able to maintain the various avenues of communication, making sure we are putting our best foot forward in attracting folks to our little faith community.

We've increased Jamie Pastman's hours so that he can, with the support of Gene Schafer and Suzanne Williams, manage and improve the church's worship technology to keep us all connected and engaged. None of these positions existed in the past and represent an increase in our staffing budget. We believe that each of them will help the church be stronger, more resilient,

stretched in too many directions by the demands of daily life in the 21st century. Higher expectations of what is possible coupled with less volunteerism has left bare spots.

One of these was building & grounds maintenance. Since Herb Hiestand moved away, there has been no one keeping a close eye on all the problems surfacing in our aging structures.

Another was the growing need for communications on the different levels of social media. In the past an ad or two in the local paper was sufficient but we now know that most folks searching for a church find it via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & Yelp. It takes a lot of know-how and attention to keep us up to date in all these areas.

Combined with the fact that fewer and fewer folks stop by the office on a regular basis, our staffing needs have been changing over the years and the pandemic has forced us to take a hard look in order to align our staffing with today's need. In response, we have come up with a new organizational staffing plan which hopes to wisely use the resources of the church.

and more connected with a virtual and changing society. This also means we are taking time to evaluate the need for a central office person. With Linda Liberacki's departure, we are reassigning many of her tasks to other staff members and waiting to determine what exactly will be needed when we regroup as a community in the fall.

Truthfully, this means you won't be able to call the office for all your church needs – although Pam Fodor, Lily Field and Rev Pam will do our best to help. We encourage everyone to acquaint yourself with the chart below (and on our website) so that you know who to contact when you have a need or a question at church.

Remember, this is a work in progress, trying to balance the evolving needs of the congregation with the resources that we have. We appreciate your feedback and help in creating the most sustainable and helpful staffing structure possible.

Thanks for helping us move into the new year on a good footing!

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 the upsurge in Covid cases our staff is working from home and the office is closed.



Staff Info & On-Site Days:

Director of Programs:	Pam Fodor - RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Tuesday
Bookkeeper:	Lily Field - Finance@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Wednesday
Minister:	Rev Pam Rumancik - Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Thursday - by Appt
Facilities Manager:	John Cooperrider - Grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Friday - as needed
Choir Director:	Julia Beckman - ChoirDirector@hinsdaleunitarian.org	
Music Facilitator:	Jamie Pastman - Music@hinsdaleunitarian.org	

Social Media Manager: Cherita Axel - Socialmedia@hinsdaleunitarian.org
News & Notes: Communications@hinsdaleunitarian.org
Touchstone: uchtouchstone@gmail.com
Board President: Bob Daniel-Wayman - President@hinsdaleunitarian.org

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