



# THE TOUCHSTONE

*A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale*

January 2022

Join us at: [www.hinsdaleunitarian.org](http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org)

Monthly Newsletter



## DEEPENING CONNECTION

### Dwell in Possibility: *Looking for Christmas*

A younger version of me loved Christmas. I loved the decorating, the shopping, the baking, the hiding gifts from the kids. I loved parties with friends and family gatherings. It was the most wonderful time of the year – the day when Jesus was born, and God promised salvation and light to all.



I remember visiting my mother-in-law, listening as she complained about having to get her Christmas tree down from the attic and thinking, “I hope that never happens to me – I love loving Christmas.” But these days, I feel some sympathy for Helen and her lack of enthusiasm for the holidays. I find myself trying to resurrect the wonder of the season, the excitement and anticipation. I believe it’s still in there; it just feels buried under all that must get done and all that must be contended with.

Later this month, Karen and I will be traveling to Portland, Oregon to spend a week with my daughter Genny, and we are both looking forward to that. We’ll go hiking and see the mountains and visit the coast. It will be lovely.

Still, that excitement of a special season when anything is possible seems far away. Maybe it’s all the loss we’ve experienced - loss of innocence, loss of beloved family members, loss of hope for a country that can pull together despite our differences. Maybe it’s the ongoing pull of the pandemic and the lack of carols in church. Maybe it’s just the accumulation of the years, but I am looking for something that I feel I have lost. In one of my favorite carols titled [Looking For Christmas](#),” Clint Black writes:

*I'm looking for Christmas  
I've gotta find Christmas  
Flying back in my mind  
Does anyone know of this Christmas  
A long ago Christmas  
Sleigh bells ringing, carolers singing  
Only bringing the long traveled message of love*

It's a beautiful song which speaks of a longing for the magic of the season. While I've given up belief in a God who sent his son to save the world, I still yearn for that long-traveled message of love; a sparkle of light in a world that feels worn and tired. Perhaps people with young ones in their lives can more easily find holiday sparkle and magic and experience the glow of Christmas. I am grateful for that time in my life and so happy for everyone experiencing that now.

But I suspect that many of us are still looking for our mythological Christmas. One where peace on earth is both promised and possible; where humanity can learn of compassion and generosity from the birth of a lowly babe. One where angels sing, and Scrooge can have a sudden and life-changing awakening.

Black sings: *Aren't we all wise magi, sharing his wisdom, creating a kingdom, as born on this Christmas and each Christmas day that will fall.*

I'll continue to look for Christmas this year, for the hope in a star, for the possibilities of peace. It is the darkest time of the year, but each of us carries some bit of that primordial light within our being; each has the kindling to help bring more light to darkness – to help us move toward longer days and brighter tomorrows.

Wherever you are, whoever you are missing, whatever is good or sad or challenging in your life this year, may Christmas still find you and bless you with its peace. May light, hope and love fill you – and create within you a sturdy Christmas that can last the whole year through.

Blessings of peace and love to all~ Rev Pam

## TDC'S HOLIDAY GIFT:

### 7 tips for creating connection instead of conflict

#### Tip #7 Show your own vulnerability

Remember this: your nemesis might be on edge too. They may dread confrontation and disagreement over issues as much as you do. Consider being honest about your nervousness, disclose that you are not trying to change them, and express your hopes that you can have a better conversation. Such vulnerability often pushes others to collaborate with you by managing themselves better to support your goal of comity.



Wouldn't it be great if we could look forward to the holidays with zero dread of conflict? At the Dialogue Company, we believe in the power of positive dialogue, and we believe in your power to transform conflict over politics and other contentious issues into helpful dialogues that actually build connection. We offer these dialogue tips so that you might

spread the love over this upcoming holiday season by offering these gifts of dialogue with others.

### **Tip 1: Relax**

Knowing that certain people and their views cause you to get upset, practice mindfulness to recognize when you start to get triggered and how you can stay in control. Maybe it's deep breathing or progressive body relaxation or humming - whatever it takes to come back to center and stay in control.

### **Tip 2: Change your goals for the conversation**

Often, we enter conversations with those we disagree with the goal of representing our position strongly or even changing the other person. Let that go. Your goal is not to win. Your goal is to build connections.

### **Tip 3: Focus on experiences**

Get curious instead of furious. Even in the context of highly divergent beliefs, people telling stories about experiences they have had creates a stronger sense of connection. Learn how to be sincerely interested and say: That's an interesting way of seeing that. I would love to hear about an experience you had that confirms how you see this. Reading newspapers and watching TV are not personal experiences. Try to guide them to share a personal experience.

### **Tip 4: Know your boundaries, and stick to them**

Some topics are just too much for you. That's okay! Think in advance about your off-limits topics; and if they come up, say that you would prefer not to talk about that to keep the peace. If the other person crosses the line by being insulting or rude, consider taking an immediate break from the conversation. Whether you return in two minutes or twenty, you can invite them to go back to right before they said what was over the line. You don't have to have a new argument about what they said.

### **Tip #5: Revel in commonalities**

Humans are wired to define who is "like them" and who is not. Diffuse the "we vs. them" propensity by being explicit about what you have in common - what affiliations, family status, hobbies, it also most does not matter. Finding commonalities can go a long way towards keeping at bay that very human instinct to look out for enemies we need to attack or be afraid of. When your divergent opinion on substantive issues emerges, look for values, experiences, or goals that might be in common despite your differences of opinion about how the world operates.

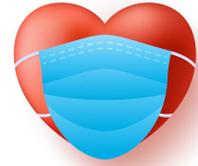
### **Tip #6: Be humble and own your part of the problem**

A good deal of conflict - especially about politics, but not only that - comes from one person trying to persuade another person to see a problem that is invisible to them. When we do this, people usually experience us as implying their blindness to the issue is itself part of the problem. One way of reducing the blame factor in dialogue is to place our behavior or thoughts as part of the problem, at least occasionally. If you are trying to persuade someone that racism is a problem, talk about your occasional racist reactions. If you are trying to help a roommate take more responsibility for the clutter in the house, point out times when you don't tidy up as much as you should. Connecting yourself to the problem creates a feeling of shared experience instead of blame.

## COVID UPDATE

### O my Gosh~ Omicron

With the new strain of Covid arriving in our midst we remind all our beloveds to take a little extra care.



Update by Bob Daniel-Wayman

#### The Situation:

- Cases of COVID, driven by the Delta variant, have risen significantly since the beginning of the church year. The Omicron variant is much more contagious and it is now here in the Chicago area. Based on events in places where it arrived earlier than here, it will soon sweep through our communities and become the dominant variant driving increased cases. Since it is very early, there is limited insight into how dangerous it is but we see no reason to assume that it is less dangerous than Delta.
- We have been fortunate that we have not observed any infections in our congregation. Thanks for getting vaccinated and wearing your mask at church.

#### Things we all can do:

- Masks are still one of the most effective things we can do to protect ourselves, our congregation, and the larger community.
- While there is limited information available it is clear that getting a booster vaccine shot is effective in reducing the likelihood of infection and even more in reducing the likelihood of hospitalization.
- Please protect yourself, get vaccinated, get boosted, wear a mask, and reduce your exposure to indoor gatherings.
- Stay home if you're not feeling well.

#### Christmas Eve

- We currently plan to hold the Christmas Eve service in person and on live stream.
- We will be keeping windows open in the sanctuary for ventilation (you will want to dress warmly) and we will forgo coffee and snacks after the service.
- We particularly ask that our members and guests be vaccinated and boosted to protect themselves and the community.
- We encourage all members to thoughtfully balance their personal safety with our human need to congregate together and share the season. However you choose to participate, in person or online, please know that you are a valued member of our community.

*Our goal is to make it through to the other side with everyone safe and sound.*

*Take care of yourself so we can all take care of others. Be safe!*

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### Grief Cairn: This altar is a space to bring your own sorrow and offer it to the world.

Rev Pam Rumancik

You may have noticed a table in the Rutherford Living Room at the back of the church. It has a cylinder with stones within it and pictures and quotes around the climate change our plant home is experiencing. There is tremendous pain in the story the pictures tell and the realization that we cannot seem to act together to stop this degradation of our beloved Earth. Pain can lead to paralysis – which only increases everyone's suffering.

One step in moving through grief is to name it, acknowledge it and see it



clearly. This altar is a space to bring your own sorrow and offer it to the world. Take a stone from the basket. Hold it a moment and imbue it with the pain you are carrying. Lay it on the pile.

There is no restriction on what grief you are offering. It can be planetary, communal, personal. Pain is real and acknowledging and sharing it can offer a space of respite and lightening.

This cairn is based on ones built by ancient peoples to acknowledge and share their grief. Some exist centuries later as a testament of the power of making visible our shared experiences.

If something is weighing on your heart, you are always welcome to make an appointment to connect with Rev Pam. Conversations also help us connect and relieve the pressure of despair.

You are also simply welcome to hold a stone and then put it on our pile. We grieve with you -for all the sorrows of this world.

## WELCOME OUR NEW BOOKKEEPER

**We are happy to welcome Jeffery as our new bookkeeper at UCH!**

Jeffery attended Indiana University where he graduated with a bachelor's and a master's degree. Jeffery comes to UCH with a wide range of experience having worked in project management, information technology, financial management, organizational development, and facility maintenance.

Jeffery truly believes that good stewardship is important. From a young age, he was taught the importance of proper stewardship, and it is now as a working professional that stewardship takes on more meaning and a greater purpose especially as it relates to God's resources. Outside of keeping busy with work, Jeffery is a devoted husband to his wife Jae and a proud father of two amazing little boys.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE



**HUMANITARIAN  
SERVICE PROJECT** *In Love and Service*

[WWW.HSP.AGENCY](http://WWW.HSP.AGENCY)

465 Randy Rd, Carol Stream, IL 60188  
ph: 630-221-8340 email: [hsp@hsp.agency](mailto:hsp@hsp.agency)

CHRISTMAS OFFERING | CHILDREN'S PROJECT | SENIOR CITIZEN PROJECT

Humanitarian Service Project is so grateful for the generosity of everyone at The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale! The church's donation of over 75 toys and gift cards in the amount of \$625 will help many DuPage families have a happy holiday season.

Thank you again for your continued support!



The **Humanitarian Service Project** (HSP) started in Karole & Floyd Kettering's home in 1979 to help impoverished families living in DuPage County during the Christmas season by providing them with an abundance of groceries and gifts.

The **Christmas Offering** continues today, providing nutritious food and Christmas presents to 2000+ children and 133 seniors living in poverty. Over 25 tons of food and 10,000+ gifts are distributed each December.

The **Senior Citizen Project** began in 1982 with 3 seniors and presently serves 140 seniors monthly with nutritious groceries delivered straight to their door.

The **Children's Project** started in 1992 as the Children's Birthday Project with the goal of creating wonderful birthday memories for children living in poverty. Today this program also provides nutritional support at critical times during the year, school supplies, and a beautiful birthday box.

## Update on the Recently Reunited Aurora Family Seeking Asylum

THANK YOU SO MUCH for your generous cash and winter clothing donations to this family. They have been so appreciative.

Remaining household and clothing items needed: TWIN BOX SPRING AND FRAME; MEN'S SNOW BOOTS (size 8 for the 8<sup>th</sup> gr. boy and size 9 for the dad); WOMEN'S SNOW BOOTS (size 8 for the 7<sup>th</sup> gr. girl and size 8 ½ for the mom). This month we are collecting PERSONAL CARE ITEMS (such as toothpaste, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, laundry soap) as well as Christmas presents for the family and VISA and WALMART GIFT CARDS. The children's Christmas wish lists include a basketball for the boy and a hairdryer or curling iron for the girl. The family has ongoing needs for financial support to cover rent, utilities, food, and miscellaneous.

**Cash donations may be run through the church by writing a check with "Aurora family" in the memo.**

If you would like to join this effort, please contact Bonnie Wayman-Dodd or Marian Honel-Wilson. More info is in the November Touchstone.

# ANIMAL MINISTRY RECIPE OF THE MONTH

This month's recipe is from Taylor W, who says this recipe was a hit with diners, was easy, and supper yummy! If you have a great vegan recipe to share, please email it to [UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com](mailto:UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com)

## Thai Red Curry Sweet Potato and Lentil Soup

<https://www.fromachefskitchen.com/thai-red-curry-sweet-potato-and-lentil-soup/>



**Save the date for our post-holiday dinner!** Animal Ministry is planning to resume our annual post-holiday dinner on Thursday, January 6, 2022. However, in light of the new COVID variant, we have decided to pivot, likely to a potluck or carryout format at the Schafers' in Darien. All are welcome, but RSVP required at [UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com](mailto:UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com) by the end of 2021.

**Compassionate Consumerism during the holidays.** Animal Ministry encourages you to consider the impact that your holiday purchases have on our animal friends. A Well Fed World is a great alternative. More information is available at: <http://AWellFedWorld.org>

**Please note:** Animal Ministry has moved its meetings to the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:30 am.

## GRINCHMAS 2021

**Our annual pageant is back! Live and in-person! (and streaming)  
Join us in UCH Whoville on Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am!**

Trim up your tree with fuzzle fuzz  
And fluffer bloofs, and wuzzle wuzz  
Trim up your uncle and your aunt  
With yards of whoflut flay  
For today is a silly Who Christmas day  
With merriment and participation  
For you and every generation!

Wear your pjs or dress like your favorite Who  
and join us for a Sunday of great fun!



## GREEN SANCTUARY

### Consider Carbon Offsets for Your Holiday Travel

Are you traveling by plane over the holidays? According to the Sierra Club, worldwide, airline travel contributes to roughly 2% of carbon emissions, which are key drivers of climate change. Travelers can purchase carbon offsets to help fund development of carbon-neutral energy projects at a level equal to the amount of carbon emitted by their flights. While carbon offsets are not a quick-and-easy fix to the carbon costs of air travel, they can help us to think about the true costs of our travel choices.

Interested in learning more? Go to <https://sustainabletravel.org/our-work/carbon-offsets/>, which takes you to Sustainable Travel International, identified by treehugger.com as offering the best air travel carbon offset program of 2021. You can learn more about offsets, calculate the carbon footprint of your flights, and

# UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

## December Theme: Healing

Ian MacLaren wrote, "Be kind; everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle." Since this is true, we are all in need of healing, and we are all called to be healers. While healing is physical, it is also emotional and spiritual. In some cases, while physical healing may not be possible, emotional and spiritual healing become even more important. Healing is the "repair" of the self and the world.

### Friday, December 17, 2021 at 7:30pm: Pagan Winter Solstice Celebration

Lay Leaders

Gather as we approach the darkest night of the year to celebrate the returning of the light. A time-honored tradition at UCH, we celebrate with music, drums and readings.

*This service will be shared on Zoom.*

### Dec 19, 2021: No-Rehearse Church Pageant - Happy Grinchmas

Each year we gather to celebrate the joy of the holidays with an all-community pageant. With many of us tired of all the Covid machinations and maybe feeling a little bit Grinchy ourselves, we look at what the true meaning of Christmas might be. All masked and vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person. The service will also be shared on [YouTube](#).

### Dec 24, 2021 at 4:00pm: Christmas Eve: Looking for Christmas

For the second year now we approach the holidays and wonder how it will work? Life has been challenging for eons though and our ancient stories often give us the tools we need to see that light and feel the love that always surrounds us. Join us for a quiet service, finding light and hope in our community. All masked and vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person. The service will also be shared on [YouTube](#).

**No Service on Dec 26** - you can visit past services on our [YouTube Page](#).

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## January Theme: Renewal

Renewal is a necessity built into the fabric of life. It is one aspect of the repair of the world. Winter fallowness is a process of renewal giving birth to another springtime. Whether we relax, rest, or sleep, renewal should be the result. When it is not, more is needed physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually to return us to wholeness. Things fall apart and must be put back together again.

### January 2, 2022: Widening the Circle: Begin Again in Love

A new year; a new beginning. While looking at the merits and challenges of adding an 8th principle, we might also examine what else is missing in our faith home. What about forgiveness? Grace? A place to begin again? On this first Sunday of the year, let's find a way to acknowledge our shortcomings and begin again - together. All masked and vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person. The service will also be shared on [YouTube](#).

## January 9, 2022: Rest, Renewal, Rebirth

What sustains you? What do you do to find that blessed space of renewal? Let's talk!

All masked and vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person. The service will also be shared on [YouTube](#).



You can view the Sunday service live and recordings of past services on our [YouTube channel](#).



Join us for Virtual Coffee Hour via [Zoom](#) after the service

*Because we are now live to the world, we ask that when discussing Cares and Concerns live during the candle lighting time, you use only first names to protect the privacy of those you are concerned about, unless you are announcing public information such as a death or a memorial service.*

## 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](mailto:minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

All others are fake email addresses. Delete them.

## STAFF INFO AND ON-SITE DAYS

Director of Programs  
Minister

Pam Fodor - [RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org)  
Rev Pam Rumancik - [Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org)

Facilities Manager  
Choir Director  
Music Facilitator  
Social Media Manager  
News & Notes  
Touchstone  
Bookkeeper  
Board President

John Cooperrider - [Grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:Grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org)  
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Bob Daniel-Wayman - [President@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:President@hinsdaleunitarian.org)

Mon - Thursday  
Monday Sabbath. Tuesday  
on-site - other days virtually  
Friday - as needed

On-site Sat & Sun - 10am -  
2pm

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