



THE TOUCHSTONE

A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

May 2021

Monthly Newsletter



Deepening Connections: Curiosity

As we begin to slowly emerge from the pandemic, we keep hearing that life is going to be different. Even with vaccines and a growing economy, the world we left behind in March of 2020 is gone. Many of us have been reading articles to try and figure out what's coming next. What will church look like as we step into a new paradigm?

One of the loudest declarations is that church is going away. Fewer and fewer young people are making the choice to engage with a faith community. Some authors blame it on the far right, claiming that the prejudice and judgment found in those faith communities have given all of us a bad name. Others say that there are just too many other things competing for people's time – and church seems quaint and old fashioned.

Maybe it is. Maybe the rituals or community of church no longer offer what they once did. But the core of liberal religious faith asks what is true today, for this group of people, in this time and place. We need to ask: What is Unitarian Universalism? What is real and true? How can we serve another generation of people with the same life-affirming faith?

These are important considerations. Those of us who love church don't want to see it fade away. Church can meet very real needs for community and support. It's always been a place where I could wrestle with life's heavy questions and make sense of my life.

But what is Unitarian Universalism to you? I suspect if we asked a dozen people at church, we'd get a dozen different answers. It's a place to be with people who think like you do. It's a place to bring your children for help in raising aware, ethical humans. It's a place to gather and explore. Many say it's a place for seekers. Yet, a minister friend recently said they never wanted to serve a community of seekers. They observed that seekers often think there is a right answer to find. They'd rather serve folks who are curious about the world around them.

Curiosity. It describes being open to the world. Being open to new ideas and new ways of being within it. Curious people don't stop once they've gotten to a place; they remain open to new possibilities. Curiosity is a characteristic of the young. The joy in watching toddlers explore their world is seeing that light of wonder and possibility in everything they see. All young beings are curious as they explore and try to make sense of a new place. They haven't locked onto ideas of what is right and wrong or what is possible or impossible.

Older people tend to think they've found what is right for them. I know that as I near the end of my sixth decade on Earth, I am much more certain of the things I think are true. Some amount of wisdom does come with experience, but there needs to be a healthy balance between wisdom and curiosity. Some of the wisest people I know are still open to new ideas and new ways of experiencing their lives.

What if church was a place to be curious? Not a place with tried and true answers, but one where we all check our assumptions at the door and embrace the wonderment and possibility of youth? Maybe that would be more welcoming to younger generations. It could happen.

I don't have any definite answers today... but I am curious.





Last month I highlighted in my article a youth and this month as the church year comes to a close, I would like to highlight an amazing adult, Joe Saintcross.

Joe has been a RE volunteer for many years, 20 or more, teaching various age groups and classes. But most recently he has been our youth director, holding our Senior High youth for what I think is 14 years give or take a year or two. Being our youth director is not an easy task but it is one that Joe has done with ease and grace. Joe has helped guide our youth to grow into amazing young adults. He has led over 500 Sunday morning youth group meetings all with a spirit of love, acceptance and wisdom that our youth so desperately crave. He has used his own life experience, his love of reading, and his wonderful imagination to create opportunities for learning. His flexibility and genuine interest in the youth allowed for many distracted and long rambling discussions that were equally or even more important to the spiritual growth of the youth than the “planned lessons.” He has a youthful spirit and incredible physical stamina that has accompanied many youth on service trips, retreats and youth conferences. Traveling with youth is especially challenging and Joe never turned down an opportunity to take our youth on an adventure. Joe has endured endless nights on church floors, stayed up way past his bed time, spent hours driving vans loaded with loud teens, strongly encouraged sleep deprived teens to clean up their church before service starts, comforted emotionally upset teen and lovingly challenged stubborn ideas. These are the difficult things but I think Joe would tell you that the positives of watching the youth grow, discover themselves, support one another, find their passions and become young UUs who set off in the world to make a difference far out way the negatives. It may be hard to believe but I have seen Joe work along with our youth to knock out a wall, cut down trees, wash dishes, cook meals for others, shovel horse manure, mow down a field, pack food, sort paper, weave rubber mats, and play the game of Life, all to set an example of how to live out our UU principles. Words can not express how fortunate I have been to have worked with Joe for all these years. He has touched so many youth, including my daughter, and for that I am truly grateful. I know he is looking forward to his retirement from youth work and is anxious to join our congregation in worship on Sunday mornings. But maybe- just maybe- I can convince him to join us for one more road trip. Thanks for everything Joe!

Flower Communion Sunday May 23, 2021



The flowers are blooming! Daffodils are fading as tulips take their place. Fruit and ornamental trees are showing off their finery. Spring is here!

While we cannot be together for our usual flower exchange in person this May, you can take a picture of some beautiful bit of spring and send it to church. Take a picture of yourself or your loved ones with the flower so we get to see all our blooms!

Send your pictures to minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org by Sunday May 16th, and we'll use them in our virtual service. Take pictures of your kids and pets and neighbors and friends with flowers. Let's create the biggest bouquet imaginable!!

Still Having a Dinner Party?

While 2019 seems shrouded in the mists of time, we vaguely recall a service auction where folks offered dinner parties and events to raise money for the church budget. Many if not most of these events were cancelled due to the pandemic.

Did you offer an event, but the date is long past? Do you have the list of folks who signed on? If you have all the info and want to set a new date – just let your guests know.

If it's a little fuzzier – we can be creative. We're looking ahead to a time when we can re-gather as vaccinated folks and begin strengthening ties and forming new ones. Holding the numerous dinners, luncheons and fabulous fun events is one way of getting our mojo back and beginning to feel like church again.

So – check your calendars. If you have an event that you'd like to offer next church year, send the information to Rev Pam or Pam Fodor. We'll create a database and share information as the year gets underway.

Thanks for your warm hospitality and generosity!

Green Sanctuary Program Blooms in the Spring

Our Green Sanctuary committee has prepared an ambitious agenda for the whole congregation to participate in protecting and improving the environment, with 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.

Our first effort is to 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 at providing millions of acres of habitat, a few square feet at a time. Green Sanctuary is making it easy to get started. We are distributing a Butterfly Weed plant to every church member and every household this spring. Butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*, is a beautiful, low-growing plant with bright orange flowers, and it's a host plant for the Monarch butterfly. You can plant it in any sunny spot—even if you have a porch and a planter, you can join in. Very soon, masked butterfly champions will visit your home—don't worry, we'll call or write first—with your own bit of orange sunshine. We're also making seeds of dill, marigold, and other nectar plants available for the asking.

And wait, there's more! Stay tuned to this space, the church's weekly News & Notes, and announcements at church, as all four initiatives unfold. Or join us at our meetings, the first Wednesday of every month; watch church media for Zoom instructions.



Animal Ministry Recipe of the Month

Animal Ministry would like to share a new recipe every month for you to try! Tiff S. submitted this delicious lemon orzo with asparagus pasta salad. Zesty and tangy, perfect for spring!

This <http://beyondwonderful.com/recipes/salads/pasta-grains-and-potato-salads/lemon-orzo-with-asparagus-pasta-salad/>



May Worship

May 9: Three Sisters

This Mother's Day we celebrate our interconnection to the earth and the way life flows through each and every one of us. The three sisters in Native lore consist of the corn plant, the bean plant, and the squash. Together they each contribute something unique which creates a stronger environment for them altogether than they ever would have by themselves. We can learn much from the

Join us for Worship

natural world if we approach with humility and wonder.
Join us! ~ Rev Pam Rumancik

May 16: Senior Bridging Ceremony

Each year we celebrate the passage of time and the maturation of our young people with a bridging ceremony. Bridging is intended to symbolize a transformation from one way of being to another, but maintains our relationship with our graduating seniors. Join us to hear their reflections as they step into adulthood and help us celebrate with parents and friends! ~Pam Fodor, Joe Saintcross, Rev Pam



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.

May 23: Flower Communion

May flowers are now officially blooming all around us. Pick a blossom to share and offer your gifts of beauty and joy to the larger world. ~Rev Pam

May 30: Remembering a Lost Year - Memorial Day

So much has been lost in the past year that it is hard to name it all. We will honor those losses, grieve, and give thanks for the dedication and commitment of so many people. Please send in a picture of someone you wish to remember to **Rev Pam** to be included in the service. ~Rev Pam

Town Hall Meeting Thursday May 13 @ 7:00pm

Your Board of Trustees will be holding a Town Hall Meeting
Thursday May 13th at 7:00pm

You can ask questions about the upcoming 2021-22 Budget and our plans to reopen this all. All are welcome to attend.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82300590822?
pwd=Y0RaVyt0amlYeGQxV01EV0Y2a20xZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82300590822?pwd=Y0RaVyt0amlYeGQxV01EV0Y2a20xZz09)

Meeting ID: 823 0059 0822 Passcode: 422940

One tap mobile +13126266799,,82300590822#,,,,*422940# US (Chicago)



Thrive with Pride Cafe Gatherings for LGBTQ+ Seniors

May 2021: Meet Your Elder Justice Advocates

In preparation for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in June, AgeOptions' Aging and Disability Rights coordinator, Jamie Farrell, will present on key figures who help keep older adults safe at home and in long term care facilities. Join us to learn about your rights, how to protect them, and what to do if you suspect you or someone else has been scammed or exploited.

[Click HERE to join us via Zoom on May 25 at 11am.](#) You can also join by phone! Call (312)626-6799 and enter Meeting ID 966 6129 4106



when prompted.

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!

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



Our staff is continuing to work from home and the office will remain closed. As everyone is fully vaccinated we will reopen.

We look forward to 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

Communication@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

