

THE TOUCHSTONE

A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

Mid-August 2021

Monthly Newsletter

DEEPENING CONNECTION

NOT SO ORDINARY TIMES

“May you live in interesting times.” Often incorrectly ascribed as a Chinese curse, this saying seems to encapsulate the place we find ourselves in history, yet “interesting” falls far short. With the second (or third or tenth) surge of a Covid variant, solid ground beneath our feet always seems a few steps away. Add to that the recent U.N. statement highlighting the dire state of our global climate catastrophe, and it feels like we have stepped out of normal and predictable into an alien landscape.

In ways, this has always been true. The only thing permanent in life is change, but the pace of that change has reached dizzying speeds. Is there any place to find respite and support?

UCH is that place! With all the changes swirling about, our relationships with people who care and who share our values can create a place to gather and breathe, a place to find rest in a stormy landscape.

As I get back into the church year, I’ve been wrestling with how we can support one another in the continuing changes ahead. Joanna Macy has been on my reading list. Macy, a Buddhist monk, teacher, and eco-warrior, has looked clear-eyed into the maelstrom of climate disaster and found a way to be whole and human in the midst of chaos. Many of you know that I’ve also done training with Margaret Wheatley called “Warriors of the Human Spirit,” which begins from a place of acknowledging what is so that we can make the best and most helpful choices for ourselves and our fellow humans. Such choices are crucial as we navigate unfamiliar and shifting terrain.

The world is different from the one that most of us grew up in. We see it not just in masks being worn everywhere we go, but in the deeply entrenched tribes of “us vs. them” that divide so many public arenas which used to be held in common. We see it in the forecasts for increasingly intense weather, fires, floods, storms, droughts. We are already experiencing such events, which can no longer be explained away within the spectrum of “normal.”

The world as we have known may be ending, but we are still here. Still raising our families, still making a living to feed those families, still having to chop wood and carry water to be human each moment. What will it mean to retain our values, our humanity, as the world continues to shift? Can we live in right relationship with the Earth and with our fellow humans amid such challenges?

This is the work of a faith community. It’s not about having the right answers; it’s about asking helpful questions and supporting one another in living our truest and most beautiful lives no matter what might confront us. Business as usual does not allow space for truth and beauty in a time of upset. Each of us can stop and assess, and make real choices based on who we want to be and what our values call us to instead



of just continuing on autopilot. Autopilot may have gotten us here but is no longer an option.

Currently, I'm reading *Active Hope* by Joanna Macy. I invite you to find it. Get it on audiobook for driving or folding laundry, get it on Kindle to read in your most comfy spot. Get it from the library or Anderson's Bookshop or online from Fair Isle Books & Gifts, owned by our own Debbi Daniel-Wayman. Let's read it together and begin some deep conversations about how we can live together in a swirling landscape of change.

This time, while challenging, also offers an opportunity to live fully into what is and to be the people we are truly called to be. It won't be easy – and it won't be comfortable. Yet I trust, if we bring our voices and hearts together, we can create a space of beloved community that engages the fullest and most beautiful parts of ourselves. Life may change, but love will continue to shine. Bring your luminescence and let us shine together.

Blessings, Rev Pam

AUGUST WORSHIP NEWS - Virtual Preaching

Back in March, when we believed we would remain virtual until September, a group of local ministers gathered to pool resources and create a collective of worship recordings that could be shared during the summer months. UCH joined the collective and contributed one of Rev Pam's services, which secured us seven additional services to use.



When everything shifted and opened back up in June, your creative and generous worship team members decided that they really wanted to get back into the building and were willing to lead services in the summer months. There have been some amazing, inspiring, and thoughtful services in June and July, and we are grateful to these wonderfully creative folks.

But now we've hit August, with a surge in the Delta variant, and we think that it might be good to be extra cautious for a while. **Masks are again required in the building** and coffee hour will be held outside. While Rev Pam is back from vacation, she will not be preaching until our ingathering on September 12th, but she will be in the church offering some of the recorded services from that Worship Collective. August 29 will feature the Rev Hilary Krivchenia, minister from the Palatine UU church. Each consecutive week will feature another recorded message both within the sanctuary and on Zoom.

We are hopeful that by September the surge will have leveled off, and we can begin returning to a new normal. At the same time, we'll continue to follow CDC recommendations and make the best choices we can for the safety and well-being of our congregation.

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, September 5th: Goodness and Mercy

Rev. Allison Farnum (she/her/hers)

In a dominant culture that fetishizes crime and punishment while remaining apathetic to the failures of the penal system, our Unitarian Universalist theologies remind us that we can rely on deeper truths of goodness and mercy that still hold each of us accountable in and to the interdependent web of life.

BIO: Rev. Allison Farnum is the Minister and Director at the Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois, a statewide ministry that focuses on equipping Unitarian Universalists in Illinois to transform institutions and

Sunday, September 12th: Water Communion Ingathering Service

Rev. Pam Rumancik (she/theirs)

We begin our church year with an all-community Ingathering service. Everyone is invited to bring in a small amount of water that has some meaning in your life. It could be from a trip to Lake Michigan, the backyard spigot of a favorite grandparent, some virtual water that represents someplace you wish you had been able to go. Bring your water and your story. We will collect them all and then filter and purify the water to be used in rituals in the coming year. There will be a picnic in the yard following the service.

Hope to see you there!

Sunday, September 19th: Some Good News

Rev. Pam Rumancik (She/Theirs)

It feels like all we hear is the bad stuff. Income inequality, Fires, Floods, Disease - so much so that anyone might be forgiven for climbing under the bed and not coming out. Those things are happening, but they are not the whole story. There are also amazing and good things happening in the world that we need to hold up and celebrate. Bring your own good news to share!

Sunday, September 26th: What Can You See?

Rev. Pam Rumancik (She/Theirs)

John Mellencamp's song "Jack & Diane" features the line "Life goes on, long after the thrill of living is done." In exploring why it might feel that way, we pause and examine how we see the world. What expectations get in the way of being able to see the fullness of a person, place or thing? Babies help us see the world with fresh eyes - can we retrain ourselves to see that way even as we get older - refusing to be jaded and instead finding joy?



Join us for Worship via [Zoom](#)



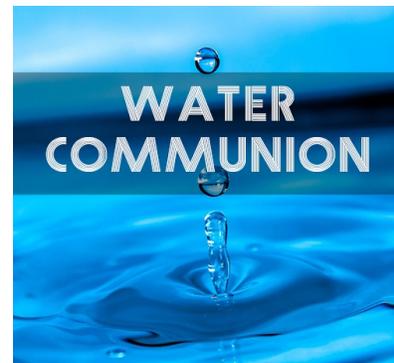
The service will be uploaded to [YouTube](#) by Tuesday morning. Past services are also available to watch on the church's Youtube Channel.

WATER COMMUNION Sunday September 12, 2021

Our annual ingathering and water communion is currently being planned for Sunday, September 12 at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to share in this yearly ritual by bringing some water that has special meaning to you. Water from lakes and ponds, from far away trips or backyard spigots, is gathered into a beautiful bowl and blessed by the assembled community. This water is then filtered and purified and used for child dedications and other rituals of blessing throughout the church year.

If you are hesitant to join in person, you are welcome to drop your water off at the RE building in the coming weeks. Include your name and the meaning your water has, and we will include it in the ritual. Office hours are from 10 – 12 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday through Labor Day weekend. If you call ahead, other times for drop-off can be arranged. Pam Fodor is out, but Lily, John, and I will be on hand to gather your offering for our ritual.

This will be our first ritual in the building since the beginning of the pandemic. As of this writing, the Delta variant of Covid 19 is on the rise, and people are being asked to wear masks again and to stay home if not feeling well. We will continue to Livestream our services on Zoom so that at-risk folks can participate from the



safety of home.

Even in the middle of challenge and anxiety, we gather as a human family to celebrate the unique and beautiful gifts that each person offers to this faith community. We look forward to celebrating with you.

The Blessings of Technology – And People to Run It!

As of this writing, the Delta variant of Covid 19 is on the rise, and people are being asked to wear masks again and to stay home when not feeling well. Livestreaming on Zoom will continue so at-risk folks can participate from the safety of home.



We are incredibly grateful for our volunteers who have investigated, researched, discussed, and experimented with ways to ensure we can continue to gather online during pandemic times. While it is easy and familiar to hold church in the building, and our volunteers figured out pretty quickly how to Livestream a virtual service, there are enormous challenges in doing a hybrid of the two to keep all our church constituencies happy, healthy, and well-served.

Suzanne Williams, Gene Schafer, Jamie Pastman, and David Mrazek have worked with Randy Styka (from Acoustic Renaissance) to purchase the needed equipment and devise a plan that will support such advanced tech work. Alex Dvorak joined the team as paid staff on Sunday mornings, and he has been working with our volunteers to put together a plan for the beginning of the church year. Make sure you say thank you to all of them for their hard work and dedication to making this happen.

New equipment is still being secured, and wiring is being finished in the church to accommodate these different needs. A period rolltop desk has been installed to secure the equipment with the least disturbance to the character of the sanctuary. As of this writing, it looks like we will begin broadcasting directly to a YouTube channel this fall.

One of the challenges of hybrid worship is that we are necessarily a divided group on Sunday mornings. To continue the virtual coffee hour gatherings of the past year, we need some help from you. We will be creating a Livestream on YouTube because that works best with our equipment, but that is not conducive to a gathered coffee hour, so we will be establishing a Zoom coffee hour after the service. We need volunteers to step up in the rotation to facilitate virtual coffee hours so that everyone at home can still touch base, check-in, and share their lives. That facilitator will then share news from the group with the church so that important connections can be maintained. Please consider volunteering to facilitate this group occasionally.

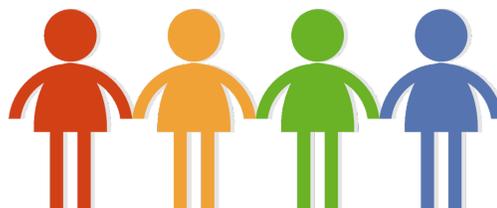
We are leaning in and working together to support all our folks as we move into a new reality. Thanks to our amazing leaders in this work, and thank you for your patience, your support, and your contributions to making sure Church 2.0 works!

2021 - 2022 CHURCH YEAR CURRICULA

PLAYGROUP

Birth through Age Three

Paid high school youth and young adults will provide an opportunity for the children to learn through play, build relationships with the church and its members, and have fun during “church time.”



SPIRIT PLAY

Fours Years through Grade One

After experiencing a brief “Time for All Ages” in the adult service, children ages four years through first grade will gather in their classroom to experience the magic of Spirit Play. Spirit play seeks to engage children in the questions of life within the context of the Unitarian Universalist faith. The program encourages independent thinking through wondering with an adult who does not mediate correct answers but truly wonders with the child. It gives children real choices through freedom within the structure that promotes a sense of community and develops an underlying sense of the spiritual and mysteries of life. Each week stories are presented through active storytelling followed by a “wondering” time that opens up the child’s response to the story. Time is then allowed for the child to work directly with that story, or another, or respond to the story through art materials.

CHAPEL SERVICE

Grades Two through Six

After experiencing a brief “Time for All Ages” in the adult service the second through sixth graders will gather in Joshi Chapel for an age-appropriate chapel service which will explore the sources of our Unitarian Universalist living tradition including sharing, wondering, meditation time, and hands-on activities and projects.

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven **principles**, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. We live out these **principles** within a “living tradition” of wisdom and spirituality drawn from the following sources: direct experience of mystery and wonder, words and deeds of prophetic people, wisdom from the world’s religions, Jewish and Christian teachings, science and reason, and the spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions.

COMING OF AGE

Grades Seven and Eight

Our Coming of Age program uses the four elements of rituals, learning, testing, and celebration to acknowledge our young people’s transition from childhood to youth. The youth meet weekly to tackle life’s “big questions”. Through the year the youth learn who they are, decide what they stand for, and write a faith statement, which is shared with and celebrated by the congregation.

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Grades Nine through Twelve

Senior High Youth Group youth meet weekly with adult advisors to participate in a supportive environment in which they can explore their feelings about themselves, their world, and their religion. Some curricula are used, as determined by the desires of the group. Youth and advisors work jointly to plan and participate in social action projects, leadership development, and opportunities for worship. The youth will be invited to attend district and local youth conferences throughout the year and will create and present a worship service for the congregation.

Animal Ministry Recipe of the Month and Blessing of the Animals

Animal Ministry would like to share a new recipe every month for you to try!

Gemma G. submitted this delicious recipe for Breakfast Burritos:

<https://thehungrywaitress.com/sweet-potato-and-black-bean-breakfast-burritos/>

If you've got a great veggie-friendly recipe to share, please email it to

UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com



Save the date! Animal Ministry and Rev. Pam are hoping to hold the annual Blessing of the Animals on the afternoon of Sunday, September 26th if conditions permit, so stay tuned.

Please note: Animal Ministry will be moving its meetings to the 3rd Sunday of the month at 11:30 am beginning in September.

Green Sanctuary

Getting (Re)Acquainted with SCARCE

Did you know that the Western Suburbs has an amazing resource for recycling, education, and community outreach? Some of you may already know and love this wonderful organization, but if they are new to you, allow us to make an introduction. Based in Addison, IL, SCARCE provides a plethora of resources and education for helping to create a greener, more sustainable world.



SCARCE stands for **S**chool & **C**ommunity **A**ssistance for **R**ecycling and **C**omposting **E**ducation. They are an award-winning environmental education non-profit dedicated to creating sustainable communities. They accomplish this through innovative and hands-on education programs for schools and organizations, demonstrating care for people and our natural resources through their Reuse Center, and engaging the broader public through community-wide events and programs. For over 30 years SCARCE has been implementing change to foster a more sustainable future. SCARCE'S mission is helping people discover how easy it can be to make a meaningful difference for our kids, for our environment, for our future...and often for all three at once.

How Can YOU Get Involved?

VOLUNTEER - Volunteers are needed on an ongoing basis to help run rescue programs. Volunteers can also assist with one-day community events and special projects.

DONATE - SCARCE gives away all of its books and school supplies and, thus, depends on donations to pay the rent, utilities, and staff of the Book Rescue, Tools for Schools, Super Crayon Project, and other rescue programs.

RECYCLE at SCARCE - SCARCE receives funds for recycling keys, holiday lights, electrical cords & wires, and small metal items. SCARCE also benefits from recycling a variety of items through Terracycle programs.

PARTICIPATE - Come to SCARCE for an event, workshop, or program or contact SCARCE to schedule a presentation at your location.

SUBSCRIBE - Subscribe to SCARCE newsletters to learn about local events, eco tips, and "green" news in the community. You can also follow SCARCE on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Scroll to the bottom of any page on their website to sign up or follow our social media pages.

We invite you to check out SCARCE's website where you will find resources for eLearning, recycling options beyond what you can put in your blue bin, classes, tours, legislation that impacts the environment, community events, and so much more. SCARCE even publishes a guide to help communities host a Pumpkin Smash which keeps tons of pumpkins out of landfills.

Visit them at: www.scarce.org

Choir News

Ongoing uncertainty about Covid Variants and rising levels have caused us to continue moving cautiously with singing together.

We are looking for folks who are willing to record hymns so that we can use them safely during the services.



Julia is purchasing 'singing masks' for those who want to try and practice together outside or with a lot of ventilation. Keep watching News & Notes for updates as we move forward. Contact [Julia Beckman](#) or [Jamie Pastman](#) to participate in making music for the fall.

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...



If you are facing challenges, 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!

Staff Info & On-Site Days:

Director of Programs	Pam Fodor - RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Returns Sept 7
Bookkeeper	Lily Field - Finance@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Wednesday & Friday
Minister	Rev Pam Rumancik - Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org	Tuesday & Friday - & 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	Communication@hinsdaleunitarian.org	
Touchstone	uchtouchstone@gmail.com	
Board President	Bob Daniel-Wayman - President@hinsdaleunitarian.org	

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