



THE TOUCHSTONE

A monthly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

October 2021

Monthly Newsletter

DEEPENING CONNECTION

Dwell in Possibility: Real UCH

Rev Pam Rumancik

The editor of my local paper recently wrote an article celebrating “real Woodstock.” Her observation was that although there were official promotional groups working to make Woodstock a vibrant place, it was the tiny things that individual citizens did which actually made it a great place to live.

That got me thinking of our own UCH community. We regularly celebrate the big things we’ve done as a community: the Green Home Campaign, which significantly reduced our carbon footprint by installing new windows and solar panels among a big list of projects. Or the monthly Share the Plate collections, which support folks out in the world. But what are the small things that make this congregation the vibrant and relevant place we love?



I started taking inventory and remembered the way Tracey Olson initiated the “Wise Elders” Zoom group at the beginning of the pandemic. She reformed a group from “before times” into a new online space for isolated folks to connect and get to know one another on a deeper level.

Or the way Tim Dvorak showed up and cleaned out the refrigerator in the church, so we didn’t return to a smelly mess when we finally did get back.

Or the way Darren Howard and the members of the Membership team really kicked it up a notch to create a fun, memorable, and genuinely welcoming back-to-church picnic.

Or maybe Barb Franz always being one of the last to leave a church gathering, making sure all the clean-up is done.

These are not things done by your paid staff. These are things that people who love this community do to keep it healthy and strong.

Have you witnessed a “UCH Moment” that illustrates our “real UCH”? Do you know about something that’s been done to support our work in the world and in our midst? I can name dozens, but I’m asking you to share your own observations. Look around, pay attention, notice the animating compassion and love which flows through our community, and take a moment to drop me a line at minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org so I can share it with everyone else.

One of the blessings of this community is the way folks give generously of their time, talents, and treasures. Let’s shine a light on one another and celebrate all the gifts, small and large, which reveal and kindle the glowing coal – the “real UCH” at the center of our warm and welcoming congregation.

WELCOMING TIPS FOR EVERYONE

Conversation starters help break the ice:

“Hi! I’m _____. I don’t think we’ve met.”

“What brings you here today?”

Take them to the Visitors’ Table:

“We have a Visitors’ Table over here where you can fill out our guest registry to get on the

“Why did you choose a Unitarian Universalist congregation to visit?”

Welcoming questions can better introduce newcomers to others:

“Have you lived in this area long?”

“What do you do the rest of the week?”

“Are there any questions I can answer for you?”

“Tell me about yourself.”

Don't forget to share something about yourself, like why you attend UCH.

newsletter list, pick up 'News & Notes,' or take home some pamphlets.”

Finishing up the conversation can be almost as hard as beginning. Here are suggested ways to end the conversation:

- Introduce them to someone else
- Lead them to the Visitors' Table
- Walk them to coffee hour

RACIAL EQUITY TEAM

Get ready for a vote on the Proposed 8th Principle at UCH's Annual Meeting in May 2022

By Marian Honel-Wilson, Chair, Racial Equity Team

As I mentioned in last month's *Touchstone*, there is a **movement in the UUA to adopt an 8th Principle** to “affirm and promote journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community” and by taking “actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” Here at UCH, that action has begun! We are putting together listening sessions in as many forums as we can to be sure to hear from everyone in the congregation. What are your questions? Concerns? Hopes? Fears? If you regularly attend a group at UCH (Men's Group, Wise Elders, Chalice Circle, Parents of RE Kids, Youth, Green Sanctuary, etc.), a member of the Racial Equity Team is ready to come to your group to facilitate a discussion on this issue. On November 7th, we'll show the documentary “13th” after the service and facilitate a discussion about how racism is still showing up in our society. A virtual screening and discussion will be held Thursday, Nov. 18th. Let's make an informed choice in May 2022. For more info, visit the 8th Principle website: <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

SUNDAY HOSPITALITY at THE UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HINSDALE

Do you remember your first visit to UCH? Do you remember the first folks you met and talked to at coffee hour? Were you grateful there was another family to help you get to the RE building? Did it feel wonderful to meet some like-minded, friendly, welcoming people who were genuinely glad you came to church? If you answered yes to any of those questions that means that we, the members and friends of UCH have done our jobs!

Welcoming is very important work, and it is a job for us all! There are many people in our local area looking for a community in which to belong. Being welcoming and available to newcomers before and after the service gives them the opportunity to ask questions and learn what we are all about.

In an effort to keep our Sunday mornings running smoothly, to help newcomers feel welcome and to have a friendly, warm Sunday morning feeling for all we are asking for each of our members and friends to serve on a hospitality team

Hospitality is easy! You may choose to be an Usher or Greeter to welcome folks, help them find a seat and invite in visitors. You might volunteer to bring flowers or some special snacks for coffee hour. If you have ever enjoyed the delicious fair-trade coffee we serve you should agree to make some and help clean up after coffee hour. Each hospitality team is responsible for only five Sundays per year so it is a time commitment that everyone can handle.

For more information about our Hospitality Program look for the light blue brochures in the Living Room and on the Information Station in the Alice Warren Room. To find out what team you're on and any other questions contact Pam Fodor re@hinsdaleunitarian.org.

Commit to our Hospitality Program and be the person that visitors remember meeting when they first arrived!

Zoom Worship is Going Away!

Tech News about our Worship Services

Now that we've got your attention... UCH has begun the transition to livestreaming our weekly services onto [Youtube](#) as of October 10th. We will still continue also streaming to Zoom for the 10/17 & 10/24 services but once the team is confident that everything is performing well, we'll be streaming exclusively to YouTube as of Oct 31st.

Links for both YouTube and Zoom Coffee Hour will be in News and Notes and on our [website](#). We will still offer a zoom chat for the virtual coffee hour for those who are not able to attend in person. Because the YouTube link will be less private, we are asking everyone who shares during our candle lighting time to use first names only to protect the privacy of those you are concerned about – unless it is public information such as a death or memorial service.

The decision to make this change has been done thoughtfully and with the recognition that this does add a level of complexity for our at-home users. With the number of volunteers that we have and the equipment we can afford as a small church, we believe that this provides the best mix of professionalism and accessibility possible.

UCH is currently looking for volunteers – especially from our at-home participants – to facilitate the weekly virtual coffee hour experiences. It is simple once you get the hang of it. If you are willing to take a shift facilitating, please let [Darren Howard](#) or someone on the membership committee know and they will get you trained and on a schedule.

A Word About Our Tech Volunteers

A big shout out of thanks for Suzanne Williams and Gene Schafer, along with support from David Mrazek who have gone above and beyond to help our little church achieve levels of multiplatform worship that rival much larger congregations with substantially bigger budgets.

We are thrilled to have Alex Dvorak now serving as paid staff facilitating Sunday mornings. He works with Suzanne & Gene in helping to navigate the ongoing challenges of making our services as accessible as possible.

Many local UU churches are just now getting back into their pews – some are still completely virtual. The only reason we have been able to do what we do is because of the dedication and generosity of these folks. We are truly blessed.



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.

OCTOBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 17th: What Do 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?

All vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person with a mask. The service will also be shared on Zoom.

Sunday, October 24th: We Can Do Hard Things

Rev Pam Rumancik (She/Theirs)

Comfort and convenience are a wonderful gift of modern life. We no longer have to creep out to an outhouse in the middle of the night. The new mattresses are amazing. The temperature in our homes can be managed to keep us toasty or cool. But has all this created a society that doesn't know how to deal with hardship? How can we build our discomfort muscles in order to be the people we truly want to be. All vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person with a mask. The service will also be shared on Zoom.

Sunday, October 31st: Boo! What Mask Will You Wear?

Rev Pam Rumancik (She/Theirs)

Halloween - or All Hallows Eve - falls on a Sunday this year. Since we're wearing masks anyway, might as well make it a fun one! Let's dress up as our favorite characters and examine the masks that we may have to wear in our everyday lives. When is it okay to be yourself and when do you need to hide? This will be a fun service celebrating our individuality, creativity, and bravery in a sometimes scary world. All vaccinated folks are welcome to join us in person with a mask. The service will also be shared on Zoom.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MONTHLY COLLECTIONS

The Social Justice Collection connects us with the larger community outside of church. In September we donated to the Austin Scholarship Foundation out of Third Unitarian church.

Our October recipient is Planned Parenthood of Illinois. [Planned Parenthood of Illinois](#). Especially these days as women's reproductive rights are under attack, Planned Parenthood offers essential health services to low-income women and girls. This month's recipient is chosen in honor of Velaine Carnall who was a tireless supporter of women's reproductive health.



The collection in church is received on the second Sunday of the month but you can donate at any point. Hit the [donate button](#) on the website and choose the Social Action tab.

COVID PROTOCOLS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We are excited to get back to our RE classes and can't wait to see how much our kiddos have grown! Although we wish our program could return to normal, we must be respectful of the situation surrounding the Covid-19 virus. Here are accommodations we think will help keep our families, children, and volunteers safe:

- We ask that our adult volunteers be vaccinated, and we require all adults, children, and youth that are in our buildings to wear masks at all times.
- Our children WILL NOT be starting out in the adult service. Please bring your children directly to their classes any time after 10:15 a.m.
- Children will have a shortened story/lesson in the classrooms with the windows open. The exploration time following the lesson will take place outside. We will be encouraging social distancing.
- Following each Sunday gathering, the classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized so that we can safely meet again.
- If you, your child, or anyone in your family is feeling sick in any way, please stay home and take care. Watch for the following symptoms: Fever (100.4°F or higher), new onset of moderate to severe headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of



sense of taste or smell, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle or body aches from unknown cause.

- If you, your child, or anyone in your family tests positive for Covid-19, we kindly ask that you notify Pam Fodor. She will keep your diagnosis confidential but will need to notify other children and families that were exposed.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in following these protocols. We are blessed to be able to be together again. We love your family and want everyone to remain safe and healthy. Please let Pam Fodor know if you have any questions or concerns. Together we will get through this!

NEIGHBOR NIGHTS

Neighbor Nights Coming this Fall to an Area Near You!!

The Membership Committee is organizing the popular Neighbor Nights this fall for VACCINATED members and friends. Our congregation is spread across several communities and Neighbor Nights gives us an opportunity to get to know the members and friends who live close by.

We have hosts for a few areas but still need hosts for other areas. The host chooses the date, time, and type of event – brunch, lunch, coffee, dinner -- and invites members in their area (list will be provided). The events should be potlucks so the guests bring food and beverage to share. If you would like to host an event please contact Mary Getty (kikget@gmail.com)

Because some of the areas are small, this year we are combining some of them. These are the host areas:
1 & 3) Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills, Burr Ridge, Indian Head Park, Western Springs, Willow Springs

2) Willowbrook, Darien, Westmont – Sandy Buboltz to host

4) Elmhurst, Bensenville, Des Plaines, Roselle, Itasca, Schaumburg

5 & 6) Westchester, Brookfield, River Forest, Riverside, Chicago, Berwyn, LaGrange, LaGrange Park, Countryside, Hodgkins – Liz Reyes and Benjamin Van Horne hosted this event.

7 & 8) Downers Grove, Lombard, Oakbrook, Oakbrook Terrace, Villa Park, Woodridge, Plainfield, Romeoville, Shorewood, St. Charles, Glen Ellyn

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! Gene S. submitted this month, noting that "If you're looking for some homemade bread, this recipe is relatively light on work and not as fussy as many bread recipes. It's also very flexible: experiment with different herbs or toppings with little worry that it will be anything less than scrumptious, and it can be used for sandwiches, table bread, or just snacking (my favorite!). Calls for semolina flour but feel free to substitute bread flour if you don't have any semolina."



<https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/gaels-saturday-focaccia-recipe?epik=dj0yJnU9VklpcWhtcEJzb3lrMjMxRVNVeUpxd1VkTWZwSzl6VnYmcD0wJm49UGkzSHIBNDhLsnRJOE5QbGh3M1IEUSZ0PUFBQUFBR0ZnNzFn>

If you've got a great veggie-friendly recipe to share, please email it to UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com

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

Some Good News – Consumer Choices and the Planet

by Marian Honel-Wilson

I recently heard a sad story on *This American Life* about a family torn apart by climate change. The dad made his kids give speeches at climate events – and yelled and cursed at them afterwards if the speeches weren't up to his standards. He ended up divorced, and the kids still aren't speaking to him.

Obviously, this is an extreme example. Still, when we are trying to talk to others about our beliefs, we typically think that “sometimes the relationship is most important, so I'm willing to prioritize it over the issue” while at other times, “the issue is the most important thing so I'm willing to prioritize it.” In reality, according to Kern Beare, founder of the Difficult Conversations Project (www.DifficultConversationsProject.org), we should always prioritize the relationship because it's only if we're in relationship with people that we have an opportunity to converse with them about issues that are important to us. Beare says that prioritizing the relationship *doesn't at all* mean giving up on our issue, but it does mean truly listening to each other with an open mind.

In Rev. Pam's recent sermon “Some Good News,” she reminded us that if we only focus on bad news, we'll be stressed and anxious. In fact, we'll have *more* energy to fix problems around us if we engage in a three-step process put forward by long-time environmental activist Joanna Macy. First, take a gratitude inventory of the gifts we have; second, actively grieve the losses we've experienced by voicing them out loud – this helps us to acknowledge them in a real way; and finally, figure out what we can do to make a difference and *take action*. With these simple steps, we can create a “great turning” within our communities.

The Green Sanctuary team is engaged in helping our congregation identify steps we can take to make a difference. One important thing is to speak up to demand big-system changes with governments and corporations. However, individual household actions are also important; according to the UN, around two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions are from households. The following are some of the things I've been doing that may give you some ideas, but I want to make it clear that I'm not holding myself up as an example – I know I can always do better.

1. **TRANSPORTATION:** Like a lot of people, my husband and I have been following trends in electric cars. In 2019, we bought a three-year-old Volt, which runs on electric power first until the charge is used up, and then switches over to gas. Its range of 35 to 66 miles (depending on the season/weather) is perfect for short trips around town. Even better, we can charge the battery in our garage without special equipment. Prior to retiring, I worked downtown and often rode my bicycle to the train station for my daily commute. Before he recently retired, my husband worked at home for years. If you have that option, it's a great way to save energy – just avoid the commute altogether! As our grandson lives in Colorado, we have been flying to see him, but now that we're retired, we have the time to drive or take the train there -- both of these options use much less energy than flying. In addition, our vacations are often spent nearby since we have a family cottage in southwest Michigan.
2. **ENERGY:** In our home in La Grange, we insulated the attic and also had an energy audit with a blower test to check the amount of energy lost to air leaks. We then had the leaks sealed with a foam spray. Our NEST thermostat saves energy by automatically turning down the heat and A/C at night or when rooms are empty. Our small ranch home uses less energy than a big home would use. What I still need to do is switch our energy provider to one that focuses on wind and solar. In a couple of years, we'll replace our gas car with an all-electric vehicle. I'm thrilled that Illinois just joined the ranks of states providing a rebate for electric car buyers!
3. **FOOD:** I became a vegetarian in 2007 when I was facilitating a sustainability workshop here at church. Now I'm a “pescatarian” since I eat fish occasionally. I eat local and seasonal as much as possible; with our place in Michigan, we have ready access to a wide variety of local fruits and vegetables. I also buy mostly organic foods from the grocery store in order to support farmers who are building up the soil rather than using chemical pesticides that could end up in our water. When I buy meat for my husband, I look for grass-fed beef and chicken that's been humanely raised in pastures rather than in warehouses. We compost food scraps and have a small tomato and herb garden.
4. **CONSUMPTION:** I often shop at thrift or second-hand stores, try to minimize gift-giving, bring containers to restaurants for leftovers, and purchase glass containers instead of plastic. I often use rags in lieu of paper towels and use bar soap instead of liquid. I recently switched to laundry sheets, and I'm going to try a shampoo bar next. I bring cloth bags when I shop and carry a small tote bag in my purse.

Many of these ideas are so easy that I wonder what took me so long to change my habits! And all of our choices as consumers *can* make a difference. Write to UCHinsdaleGS@gmail.com to tell us what you're doing! For more tips, an action guide and more, visit the United Nations Act Now Campaign:

<https://www.un.org/en/actnow>.

RESPONDING TO THE UN CODE RED FOR HUMANITY

We can see the climate changing all around us and wonder what we can do. UCH is looking for those actions, small and large, which help move us into right relationship with the earth.

One such action is a decision to go digital with the order of service instead of passing out paper copies in the church. This will reduce our usage of paper, ink, and energy. Instead, ushers will be sharing this QR code as you enter the church, and you can take a picture with your smartphone that will open the day's order of service. Like many restaurants, UCH is moving into the 21st century.

In addition, you can find the order of service on our [website](#) each week. We'll also be sharing the order of service on slides between the PowerPoint presentation slides so that you will be able to find the name of that special reading or the beautiful piece of music that Jamie just played.

UCH has done a lot toward lowering our carbon footprint, but there is always room to narrow it even further. If you have other ideas of how we can live in harmony with our earth mother, please share them – or better yet – join our [Green Sanctuary Team](#) as they continue to find more ways to do less!

CHOIR NEWS

CELEBRATION SINGERS BACK IN ACTION!

I have been so pleased that the Singers are again adding their voices to church services. Please join me in thanking these dedicated musicians for their service. Of course, the ideal will be when we're back at church singing – with the whole congregation joining us in our favorite hymns. Until then, our choir will continue recording safely. Looking ahead, we hope to prepare special music for the holiday season. Also, if you are a singer and would like to join us, please reach out to me, Julia Beckman at beckman110@comcast.net. I look forward to hearing from you!



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
Minister
Facilities Manager
Choir Director
Music Facilitator

Pam Fodor - RE@hinsdaleunitarian.org
Rev Pam Rumancik - Minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org
John Cooperrider - Grounds@hinsdaleunitarian.org
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Tuesday & Friday - & by appt
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