



# THE TOUCHSTONE

*A quarterly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale*

Fall 2017

## Dwell in Possibility: The Evolution of Church

*by Rev. Pam Rumancik*

It is good to gather together again and begin a fall season in our church. Classes are being formed, committees are meeting, events are being planned, and many of us gather together each Sunday for fellowship, sustenance, and rejuvenation. This is the church experience that folks in Hinsdale have experienced for generations: coming together to be reminded of the best within us, and to offer help in overcoming challenges and obstacles that every life faces.



Unitarian Universalists don't gather because we have to; we gather because we understand that we are better – more whole and connected and alive – in community than we are alone. For me, that is a powerful and blessed

reason for being in church.

But the world around us is changing rapidly, and younger people are not staying in the churches they grew up in. This iteration of church does not seem to have the same call to younger generations.

Mainline Christian churches have been watching their numbers drop precipitously over the last decades, while UU churches have been barely holding ground.

Survey after survey shows that Millennials are not fed by traditional church activities. It's an ongoing conversation whether the transformation has been wrought by the constant connection of

social media, by overwhelming and demanding schedules that many keep to maintain their livelihoods, or simply by discovering other outlets that feel more relevant and meaningful. The important takeaway for churches is that doing things the way they've always been done seems to be the recipe for becoming extinct.

Our Hinsdale congregation has experienced this societal shift

**We gather because we understand that we are better in community than we are alone.**

in its own way. The average age of members has been steadily increasing over the

years, even as we welcome new families into the fold. People are more likely to make lateral moves, from another faith, than to stay connected as adults to the church of their youth.

What does this mean for the future of our beloved community? What experience of church would invite younger members and keep our youth as part of the fold?

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# 2017-18 Church Year Religious Education Course Offerings

*Pam Fodor  
Director of Religious Education*

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## **Play Group**

### ***Birth Through Age Three***

For our youngest children from birth through age three, paid high school youth will provide opportunities for the children to learn through play, build relationships with the church and its members, and have fun during “church time.”

## **Spirit Play**

### ***Four Years Through Grade Two***

Children ages four years through second grade will be introduced to 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 mediate correct answers but truly wonders with the child. It gives children real choices through freedom within a structure that promotes a sense of community and develops an underlying sense of the spiritual and the 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.

## **We Believe: Learning and Living Our UU Principles**

### ***Grades Three and Four***

It seems that Unitarian Universalists are often stating what they do not believe. The purpose of this curriculum is to help our young people make positive statements about our Unitarian Universalist faith and to highlight how the seven principles are helping to shape the youth they are becoming.



## **Bibleodeon**

### ***Grades Five and Six***

This curriculum introduces young Unitarian Universalists to the stories and history of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles to help them make connections to Biblical references in today’s literature, art, music, and politics. However, participants don’t just read but experience great stories of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles. They encounter a crime scene that tells the story of Cain and Abel. They face down the temptation of candy. They conduct a Bible Women’s Awards Night. They construct masks of animals that didn’t make it onto the ark, and build living sculptures.

## **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 and 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. ●

# Message from UCH Board President

Liz Reyes

I've been thinking about how to share my Unitarian Universalism faith with my family, friends, and other acquaintances. All around me there are people with similar values, careers, concerns, and interests, yet I rarely talk to these people about "church." I've improved in this area and have a few interested



parties in my orbit, but so far no one has attended a service. I want to get better at this. I want to share our faith and do it in an informative, engaging manner. I know it's possible!

I'm looking forward to exploring this further with my UCH family, maybe in a larger more organized manner, or in a smaller, more informal manner.

Here are a few articles that provided some food for thought:

<http://growinguu.blogspot.com/2011/08/organizational-maturity/asking-friends-to-worship-oh-my/>

<http://www.uucw.org/component/content/article/733-what-to-say>

Let me know what you think! ●

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I want to share our faith and do it in an informative, engaging manner.

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## Green Home Update

Dave Lloyd and Karen McDowell

The new roof on the Religious Education building was installed in August. This solves the leakage problem that has been ongoing for years. No more

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**No more buckets and trash cans in the (RE) offices and hallways!**

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buckets and trash cans in the offices and hallways! Also, the new roof means that we are ready for solar panels. The contract for solar panel installation was finalized and signed by all parties the week of August 28. Construction will start within a couple of weeks, and within a month or so, our solar panels will be in place and producing power!

Installation of the new, energy-efficient windows in the RE building, to replace the porous, 50's-era-single-panel aluminum

windows, will start within the next month, just in time to keep our kids warmer during the winter season.

On the heating and air conditioning front, we have gone from a plan to replace the aging boilers and install air conditioning in the upstairs of the church and RE buildings, to a heat pump system that should be able to heat and cool all levels of both buildings, cost less, and save energy and operating costs. We have received specs for the system requirements and are determining the electrical requirements and costs from several installers. Look for new heat and air conditioning by the spring.

We have multiple quotes for replacement storm windows for the church building. While replacing the storm windows, we will need to have the frames repainted, and we are getting quotes for both jobs. We hope to have the storm windows replaced this fall. ●



# Service to Serve

Rev. Pam Rumancik

A group of folks in the church are in the process of exploring a new way of experiencing a church "service." Rather than following the traditional protestant model of readings, hymns, responsive readings, and a sermon (talking, talking, and more talking with music in between), we are exploring a service that focuses on what it really means to be *of service*.

Still in the planning stages, we envision a service that is low on the talking aspect of church and high on the participatory, active and involved part. A service that begins and ends with doing.

Working in tandem with the Social Justice and Worship Circles, we are looking at inventing a new kind of service that might have families meet for an afternoon of clean up in a local Forest Preserve, or pack up box lunches for families without homes. It might look like watching a movie about income inequality, or working with a church across town to support their efforts. It might look like cooking up and serving a free meal to anyone who's hungry in the area.

How might our church talk less and give back more? These are the questions we'll be asking as we create an additional service, while leaving

our current morning program intact.

Rev. Karen Mooney, a community minister serving UU Prison Ministries of Illinois (and wife of Rev. Pam), will be helping to develop and organize this new project.

If you would like to help birth this project, have questions, or simply would

like to learn more, contact Rev. Pam, minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org, Dave Lloyd, Social Justice Circle Coordinator, Linda Rio Reichmann, Worship Coordinator, or leave your name at the office at 630-323-2885. ●

**We are exploring a service that focuses on what it really means to be *of service*.**



**THE BEST WAY TO FIND YOURSELF IS TO LOSE YOURSELF IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS.**

# Dwell in Possibility

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What might a vibrant and relevant church look like five or ten years from now? These are the questions we will be discussing in the coming year. The Board of Trustees is going to be examining these issues in depth and a plan for including the whole of the congregation will be rolled out during the year.

One idea that is already being considered is having a second service that is radically different from the traditional one. Look for another article about the "Service to Serve" that will experiment with alternate ways of being engaged with the world.

For the time being, our homework is to be thinking about what an excellent church looks like – both right now and as we grow into the future. What does it sound like? Feel like? Smell like? Where is our church already excellent? What could be improved?

Both beings and institutions that can hold onto their inner light and truth while evolving their outside form manage to adapt and live to see another century. I invite you to engage in our beautiful and blessed evolution of the concept of church. ●



# Beloved Conversations at UCH: Meditations on Race and Ethnicity

Rev. Pam Rumancik



“If you told me 10 weeks ago that I’d be sitting in circle with Black Christians, singing a gospel song about interconnectedness, I would have told you that you were crazy!”

– White, male humanist

“Thank you for telling something I didn’t want to hear. You’re helping me return to the real intentions of my heart.”

– White, female, Jewish elder

“Simply because Black people know oppression does not mean we have nothing to learn about how we’ve been shaped by racism.”

– Black, female lay leader

## Class includes retreat and eight follow-up sessions

**B**eloved Conversations is a teaching and learning curriculum that holds both the tensions and joys of an intentional multicultural community. The curriculum assumes that every conversation with another human being is a cross-cultural conversation, even if your conversation partner is from the same cultural group. Nested inside communities of faith, Beloved Conversations creates the first step – a learning laboratory – for how to live healthily in a multiracial, multicultural, and often theologically diverse community.

Beloved Conversations opens with a 1.5-day learning laboratory in the form of a “retreat.” The Retreat explicitly models the pedagogy and spirit of the curriculum. Once a learning community is formed, eight, two-hour seminars are designed as follow-up sessions to help participants locate their individual and group assumptions about race and ethnicity in their lives. The curriculum is experiential through and through, using music, visual arts, digital media, theater, film, and the best practices of small group ministry to make its point.

**The Retreat is led by an authorized staff member from the Fahs Collaborative, and the eight sessions that follow the retreat are facilitated by two facilitators from within the congregation.**

We are looking to create an additional class for the spring. Contact Rev Pam at [minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org) or the office at 630-323-2885 x101 to register. ●



## Our New Partners

Rev. Pam Rumancik



**T**his fall the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale became official partners with the local organization DuPage United, which is a member of the IAF. Founded in 1940, the Industrial Areas Foundation is the nation’s largest and longest-standing network of local faith and community-based organizations. The IAF partners with religious congregations and civic organizations at the local level to build broad-based organizing projects, which create new capacity in a community for leadership development, citizen-led action, and relationships across the lines that often divide

our communities. Learn more about the IAF here: <http://dupageunited.org/about-iaf/>

We have already paired with DuPage United (DU) on their Solidarity project, which stands with our Muslim neighbors as they fight discrimination and prejudice in these challenging times.

A main characteristic of DU work is to create tangible results in the face of overwhelming challenges. Two main foci are addressing mental health issues and affordable housing in DuPage Country. DU successfully persuaded state officials to

provide Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for all officers in the county and helped create a training program to meet the need. A current push is to create CIT centers where trained officers can take people in a mental health crisis. Currently, officers’ only options are to take people experiencing a crisis to jail, take them to a regular emergency room, where the crisis might continue to escalate with long wait times, or leave them alone and hope for the best. A CIT center would offer a staffed alternative and keep people with health issues out of the prison system.

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# Who Are Your Caring Circle Captains?

(Save this to use later!)

In our efforts to provide support to our church community in times of need, transition and celebration, our Caring Circle is available for our congregation.

Our ability to provide support is made possible not only by the many volunteers who offer their time, but also by the information

that is provided to us so that we may reach out to those in need. The Caring Circle provides support and coordinates assistance such as phone calls, cards, visits and emails and is able to provide assistance that may include simple errands, rides, meals and small chores.

Please refer to the area listing and contact information below.

**Please note that due to new volunteers stepping forward, and also to changes in the UCH congregation, you may have a new Caring Circle captain or be in a different area than you were previously. ●**

## AREA 1

(Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills, Burr Ridge)

Deborah Stillman –  
630-908-7508

Pam Fodor – 630-795-0295

## AREA 4

(Elmhurst, Villa Park, Bensenville, Des Plaines)

Lynn Brackett – 630-279-5851

Mary Getty – 630-833-3082

Karen Hays – 630-209-9340

## AREA 7

(Downers Grove, Lombard, Oak Brook)

Cathy Zimmerman –  
630-810-0561

Jill Jackson – 312-231-9870

## AREA 2

(Willowbrook, Darien, Westmont)

Catherine Goering 630-325-0310

Jen Hopkins – 630-488-9889

Sandy Buboltz – 630-613-7099

## AREA 5

(Westchester, Brookfield, River Forest, Riverside, Chicago, Berwyn)

Nancy Kranz – 708-870-1247

Nancy Keane – 708-352-0454

## AREA 8

(Woodridge, Plainfield, Romeoville, Shorewood, St. Charles, Glen Ellyn)

Paula Sejut Dvorak –  
815-210-1909

Janice Sejut – 630-207-2856

## AREA 3

(Indian Head Park, Western Springs, Willow Springs)

Susan Hebble – 708-784-1688

Gail Stone – 708-354-7797

## AREA 6

(LaGrange Park, LaGrange, Countryside, Hodgkins)

Nancy Weill – 708-352-9128

Megan Griffin – 708-314-0644

## Acoustic Renaissance 2017/2018 Concert Schedule

[www.acousticren.com](http://www.acousticren.com)

*All concerts begin at 8:00 p.m. and are held at the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale.*

Saturday October 14, 2017 –  
Archie Fisher

Saturday November 4, 2017 –  
Anne Hills, Steve Gillette and  
Cindy Mangsen

Saturday January 13, 2018 –  
Sons of the Never Wrong

Saturday February 3, 2018 – Kitty  
Donahoe and C. Daniel Boling

Saturday March 3, 2018 –  
Bill Staines, with special guest  
Putnam Smith

Saturday April 7, 2018 –  
Heather Pearson Acoustic Trio

Saturday May 5, 2018 –  
Kenny White

DU is also working with local authorities to establish proactive plans for dealing with hate crimes, situations of local bullying, and possible instances of ICE officials doing raids of people of color in the area. Rev Pam is a member of the Crisis team that is forming for Hinsdale.

There are many ways to be involved, and DU will be an integral part of our UCH Social Justice Circle work on local issues. If you would like to offer your hands to the work, contact the office at 630-323-2885 or Rev. Pam at [minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:minister@hinsdaleunitarian.org). ●