



# THE TOUCHSTONE

*A quarterly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale*

Spring 2017

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## Unitarian Church of Hinsdale

17 W. Maple  
Hinsdale, IL 60521

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630-323-2885

Sunday Services begin  
at 10:30 a.m.

Childcare and education  
services are available.

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## Dwell in Possibility: A New Spring Rising

*Rev. Pam Rumancik*

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Where does hope live?  
In the songs of returning robins?  
In the tiny sprouts of green appearing in dark winter beds?  
In the quiet breath of a newborn? In a community of friends?

Spring is on the horizon for this longitudinal position. Long awaited. Cause for spontaneous bursts of smiling and the removal of woolen wear. A fresh breeze is blowing and warm days are near.

After a long, dark and challenging winter, I can see the signs of spring as I look out my front window. The star wheel has turned, and my external world is growing brighter.

But what about the rest of my world? Is there hope that fears will diminish? Is there hope in a prosperity that will embrace everyone? Can we find a way through the continued assaults on values that Unitarian Universalists hold dear?

My hope rests in the basic goodness of emotionally healthy people. My faith rests in our deepest connection to one another and to the earth; in our ability to hear one another's stories; in the deepest truth of our being – we are



human in relationship. We know life through our connection to one another. We are not alone.

Sufi teacher Neal Donald Klotz observed that a Jewish Rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, was able to offer healing to people because he affirmed their inherent value. He reminded them that they were

connected to a deeper and more vital reality – that they mattered in the universe.

Isn't that what people need to hear today? Isn't that the longing, the hole in the center? We need to be reminded that we are not separate, isolated entities, but that we are inseparably interwoven. Our thoughts and feelings, our knowledge and experience, our bodies, minds and spirits are all of immeasurable worth.

This is the deepest truth of our human experience. Waking up to this truth is like observing the return of spring. It is coming home again to life, to growth, to vibrancy and hope.

The end of winter's tenure leaves much to slough away: salt, grime, rot, and the littered debris of long neglect. But spring is near. Her gentle winds, her call to life, are on the horizon. Spring is here, and life can flourish once again. ●

# President's Message

Liz Reyes  
President, Board of Trustees

## Greetings, UCH friends

These past few months have been an exercise in adjusting, adapting, acting, reacting, and finding new ways to approach our new reality. I remind myself daily that I need to take the long view but also act in the moment. This is not a time for me to wait things out but rather to engage and take meaningful actions, both big and small. The Women's March in D.C. was like a catapult at its end, shooting us off in different directions to address many issues. I've spent the last few weeks getting organized and finding resources to help me plan my actions.

There are a lot of resources out there, and I plan to visit

this page often, as it is hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI): <http://uu-advocacy-illinois.org/take-action/>. This

I'd love to hear how you are adapting and where you are finding inspiration and joy.

site offers an "Action of the Week" and also provides detailed information on other timely issues and how they are connected to our UU values. There are many other good websites, and if you are interested, I'd be happy to share with you what I've learned. Rev. Pam is also sending out email blasts with weekly action items.

I find inspiration and food for thought from Krista Tippett's radio show, "On Being": <https://onbeing.org/programs/>. The shows that aired on February 2

and January 19th still have me thinking; they can be accessed via the website. Another previous episode featured the author Isabel Wilkerson. I'm making



my way through her book, *The Warmth of Other Suns*.

I'm working hard to keep my life as balanced as possible. My busy and demanding job takes a lot of energy, and I want my family to have my undivided attention as much as possible. Several

months ago, I read a book about will power, so I now schedule my workouts a month in advance to take the decision-making out of the exercise equation. I read lots of magazines every week and a healthy handful have nothing to do with current events. When I'm feeling down, I watch SNL clips on line. I'd love to hear how you are adapting and where you are finding inspiration and joy. I hope each and every one of you is finding a way to stay engaged and be hopeful.

I wish everyone peace and good health. Thank you for reading and being a part of our UCH family. ●

## Animal Ministry

### Food for Life: Healthy Basics Class

UCH and DuPage UU Animal Ministries are pleased to co-sponsor a FREE class each Tuesday in April from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the DuPage UU church in Naperville. Each week provides discussion, a cooking demonstration, and the opportunity to taste healthy dishes with light impact on the interdependent web. Classes are facilitated by UU minister Rev. Russell Elleven and space is limited! Sign up by calling 847-780-6690 or emailing [russell@genesis129.org](mailto:russell@genesis129.org) or read more at <http://www.genesis129.org/>. Don't miss this unique opportunity. See the flyer on page 9 for more info.

### Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale

Animal Ministry needs YOU to help make this the best, biggest, tastiest bake sale yet! Our annual bake sale will be held Sunday, May 7, following the service, and we'd love to see everyone volunteer to bake one item! Buyers are appreciated too, and the price is \$7 for a plate or bag of plant-based treats! Bakers can email [AnimalMinistry@hotmail.com](mailto:AnimalMinistry@hotmail.com) to volunteer. We're happy to help convert your favorite family recipes. Proceeds this year go to the Genesis 1:29 Project to sponsor the Healthy Basics Class described above! ●

# Meditation Practices for Children

Pam Fodor

Director of Programs and Religious Education

In a world of sensory overload from school, family, sports and activities, kids need meditation as much as adults. Meditation helps kids develop focus, regulate their own emotions, and learn how to pay attention inside and out.

However, while adult meditation is all about turning the senses inward, with kids, often the first step in meditation practice is consciously, and with focus, exploring the five senses. Try the following simple meditation exercises with your children to encourage calm and focus, even for just a few seconds!

## 1. Listen!

Bell Meditation - Invite children to sit up tall in "criss-cross applesauce" and let their eyes close. Ring a bell or singing bowl, and ask kids to use their sense of hearing to explore the sound. Ask them to listen very carefully, and as soon as they hear it, stop, and raise their hands. After this practice becomes easy, they can practice attentive listening without the bell. Ask them to close their eyes and listen to the sounds in their space. Which are closest to them? Which are far away? Which to the left, or right? You can also try this meditation



while walking down the street or lying in bed before falling asleep.

## 2. Sing!

Relaxation Song - This meditation combines song with touch and brings even the

youngest of kids to a place of peace. Invite kids to sit up tall.

Meditation helps kids develop focus, regulate their own emotions, and learn how to pay attention inside and out.

Sing the syllables Sa Ta Na Ma, or try an affirmation like "I Am Strong." With each syllable, touch a different finger to the thumb, starting with the pointer finger and moving to the pinky. Once comfortable with that, suggest to children that they practice singing, whispering, and singing quietly in their minds. This is a self-soothing exercise and can be done discretely anywhere kids want to calm down, from the train to the classroom desk to the dinner table.

## 3. Breathe!

Take Five Breaths - Our breath is always with us. Learning to check in to it from an early age is a

major tool. Have children try this: "take 5 breaths," inhale for five, and exhale for five. Use fingers to count while breathing. Slowing our breath will slow down our minds. Ask children: Can you feel your heart rise and fall as you breathe? Can you feel the breath enter and leave your nose?

## 4. Watch!

Cloud Gazing - This is a great technique for slightly older children. Sitting quietly, pay attention to inhaling and exhaling. When thoughts or feelings come up, think of them like clouds passing through the mind, which is like the sky. We can watch the clouds come and go just like we can watch clouds in the sky move and shift in their

shapes. Some children may not sit too long, but just introducing this concept is a great preparation for adult meditation. And the awareness that things are always changing and things do pass is important to share and practice observing with kids.

They call these meditation practices because it will take practice. Don't be discouraged if your child only can sit for a few seconds. Keep at it! Before long your child will find these quiet moments invaluable, and so will you! ●



## Welcome New Members

On January 29, 2017, six new families joined our UU community in Hinsdale. Please welcome them into our church family.



### *Kitty and Kristin Adora*

Kitty and Kristin have a daughter, Audrey; four cats, Issac, Deschner, Sashi, and McConaughy; and one guinea pig/honorary cat, Aldous. They live in Willowbrook and enjoy watching Netflix and playing cards. Kristin also enjoys listening to music while she plays Destiny on Xbox. They were drawn to UCH while looking for an all-inclusive church that is friendly to LBGQT people, an important cause. Kitty's favorite quote is "We all have something." You can find them on Facebook.

### *Sandy Buboltz*

Sandy lives in Westmont with her cat, Snickers, a Torby she rescued through the Humane Society. She enjoys horticulture and any other activities surrounded by nature, and she is an active writer. Sandy cares about the freedom of all people and animals, and felt attracted to UCH due to the diversity of the congregation and the love for all as individual persons. Her favorite quote is from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived, this is to have succeeded."



### *Megan and Brianna Griffin*

Megan and Brianna live in Brookfield with their two cats, Herman and Pierce. They both enjoy music, and Megan also counts learning (her philosophy is to never stop), reading, and being outside as hobbies. Brianna is a gymnast and a singer who also enjoys spending time with her friends. Megan is especially interested in dyslexia research, and is involved in a Children's Dyslexia Center, where she helps teach children to read using the Orton-Gillingham Approach, which stresses sequential phonics. They were first drawn to the UU faith during a Christmas service with her family in Monterrey, CA, five years ago.



### *Jennifer Hopkins*

Jennifer has two sons, Grey and Benjamin, and a pug, Theo. After living all over the country, she settled in the Chicago area about fifteen years ago and now calls Elmhurst home. She was attracted to UCH after looking for a diverse church which allows people to explore different types of beliefs and has a strong social action focus; she is particularly interested in working to protect the environment and civil liberties.



Jennifer's hobbies are cooking and reading fiction; one of her favorite books is *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. Her favorite quote is the Serenity Prayer.

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## New Members

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### Kristina Sundermann

Kristina, Sophia, Lyla, and Brian live in La Grange, where they are anxiously awaiting the newest member of their family: an Australian labradoodle. Kristina decided to join UCH after feeling an

embrace of individuality and free thought, and a love for the UU principles and their ability to allow her children to grow as individuals.

She is devoted to the cause

of stopping human trafficking, and spent three years as the Cook County Juvenile Prevention representative on the Cook County Human Trafficking Task Force. Kristina's hobbies include art, sports, reading, and movies. Her favorite quote is "Art allows you to lose yourself and find yourself at the same time," by Thomas Merton. You can find Kristina on LinkedIn.



### Linda Hutchinson Vogt

Originally from Vermont, Linda has lived in the Chicago suburbs since 1973. She currently shares her Lombard home with her four cats and works as a registered nurse. She has a daughter in New Jersey and a son and grandson in Thailand.

Linda was introduced to the UU church by close friends and decided to sign at Hinsdale after enjoying the friendliness and inclusiveness of our members. Her hobbies include outdoor activities such as gardening, bicycling, and hiking, as well

as crafting, reading, music, theater, and traveling. She is especially concerned about universal healthcare and environmental protection, and her philosophy is "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." You can find Linda on Facebook.



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## Calling All Unitarian Universalists!

*Cathy Blanford, CAUUC President*

**D**id you know that in addition to being a part of our special congregation here in Hinsdale you are also a member of CAUUC (Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council), the Midwest Unitarian Universalist Association and the national Unitarian Universalist Association? It seems that especially now in our world we are all feeling the need to join with others of like mind to make our collective voices stronger and more effective than our individual voices.

As President of CAUUC, I have the privilege of meeting regularly with folks who represent many

other UU congregations in the Chicago area. Together we work on marketing our denomination, communicating among our congregations, and providing stimulating and inspiring workshops for UUs from all our congregations. I would like to invite you to participate in some of these events and to share with me the great feeling that comes from getting together with so many wonderful people.

The next major event is the Midwest UU Assembly, which is going to be held very nearby in Oakbrook on April 28, 29 and 30. It will be a good opportunity to experience being with a large

group of UUs. Our annual General Assembly is going to be held in June in New Orleans this year. A number of us went to the assembly in Columbus, Ohio, last year and shared a very powerful experience. CAUUC will be offering our next workshop, this one on Radical Hospitality, late in May. Local UU ministers and the CAUUC board will be working together to provide a UU revival late in August. Watch your News & Notes for more information about these upcoming events, and please consider joining us. You won't be sorry! ●

# The Little Church that Could

Rev. Pam Rumancik

The Unitarian Church of Hinsdale is the church that not only can, but does. While attending inter-church UU gatherings, I have been struck by the active participation of our members. We are often better represented than some of our much larger sister churches in the area. This is a place where people show up!

UCH is a little church that does big things. It is a place of heart, enthusiasm, and “can do” spirit.

Since I arrived, I have watched this community set goal after goal and work together to achieve those goals. People here believe that they can make a positive difference by showing up, by listening, by saying yes. In reflecting on our ongoing work, I thought it might be nice to celebrate. Apologies in advance for anything left off this list – send in your own triumphs so we can celebrate them as well.

## *In the past two and a half years, UCH has:*

- Adopted a new Mission Statement – and enthusiastically lived into that vision
- Created a robust worship team to help deliver thoughtful services
- Reconstituted a knowledgeable Finance Committee to provide oversight and support
- Supported our teens as they raised money for life-changing mission trips
- Celebrated regular, joyful all-community worship services including a Hogwarts Christmas Pageant
- Honed policy governance to empower greater church participation
- Developed and advanced a vibrant music ministry
- Created multiple avenues for deepening community connections including;
- Small Group Ministry, One to One campaign conversations, Men’s Group, Movie Group, Morning Forum, Beloved Conversations. These on top of the ongoing Women’s Alliance, Non-fiction Book Group, Parents Group, and Spirituality on Tap
- Opened our space to the wider community for a Violin School, Tutoring Program, AA groups, and exercise classes in addition to a regular schedule of recitals and meetings
- Studied structural racism and posted a banner witnessing our commitment to racial justice
- Created a Green Home Campaign to restructure the church plant and significantly reduce both our carbon footprint and energy costs
- Created a broad spectrum of ways for members to serve: from supporting PADS for homeless families, to connecting with CRS and Muslim groups, supporting reproductive rights (both legislatively and on the ground by offering clinic escorts), traveling to Springfield to witness for environment, social, and restorative justice, organizing folks to show up at local marches, participating in DuPage United events for solidarity, offering insightful speakers and classes, taking part in clean-up efforts, writing postcards to our legislators, and posting signs reflecting our values.

Again – this is the tip of the iceberg.

Beyond these accomplishments, the church provides caring support for folks when life becomes challenging and offers regular opportunities to gather and have fun. This is truly a community that strives to create a sense of belonging and purpose. Made up of human beings – none of us perfect. There are disagreements, hurt feelings and misunderstandings. But the inspiring part is that people continue to show up, continue to stay in relationship, continue to find a way forward in the midst of life’s inevitable setbacks.

I am so glad you are here with me, celebrating not only our successes, but our commitment to creating an environment that truly represents our Unitarian Universalist values. Unitarian Church of Hinsdale is a place where Beloved Community is practiced – where we strive to affirm the worth and dignity of every person and actively live out compassion, forgiveness, generosity and hope. The world needs us now more than ever – we are so glad you are here. ●

# The Response of a Thoughtful People – Social Justice at UCH

by Rev. Pam Rumancik

*“One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity.”*

~Albert Schweitzer

For many people, the world has changed since November 8, 2016. Fear is on the rise: for personal safety of vulnerable populations like immigrants, Muslims, Mexicans, and other brown-skinned folks; for the continued existence of agencies and areas that put public good above private – like the EPA, Public Education, scientific exploration, the arts; and for common decency. The new regime has unleashed an ugliness and a bullying mentality that runs roughshod over any voice that dares to offer dissent.

Losses in personal freedom, in protection for the vulnerable, and in hope for a country that lives up to its stated values will continue to mount in the coming months and will be disheartening. However, we can remain true to our core values and take action to push against fear and unwelcome changes.

Resist. Stay awake. Connect. Be the love and change you wish to see.

There are myriad signs of hope if we just look around. Many once complacent people are saying “no more.”

The Women’s March – in Chicago and around the world – energized people to believe they can make a difference. More marches and actions are being planned. Organizations are receiving record numbers of donations in support of the environment, reproductive justice, immigration rights and anti-racism work.

Our church community is in the midst of an upsurge of energy and action as well. Since January we have welcomed 11 new people as they signed our membership book, and our weekly attendance has jumped. Thanks to our work in the community, we are called upon to comment by local newspapers regularly.

Our Social Justice Circle has responded to the challenge with a new plan of action. Allying with the DuPage UU Church in Naperville, UUANI, & Indivisible, we have come up with a coordinated, sustainable plan of action to promote our Unitarian Universalist values and principles for the near future.

The assembled folks adopted a three-pronged plan of action:

- National / Time-sensitive: Coordinate with UUANI (UU Advocacy Network of Illinois) and share weekly action events with everyone who would like to participate.

- State and Local: work in partnership with DuPage United and DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church on Restorative Justice and Anti-Racism actions.
- Sustaining: Strengthen and create sustaining relationships within the community through One-to-One conversations, Community Organizing trainings, and community conversations sponsored by the church. Work in tandem with the Chicago Area UU Council (CAUUC).

We will share one email each week with time sensitive opportunities to make a difference on the local or national level. We will also post these opportunities on our website here: [http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org/new/?page\\_id=2891](http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org/new/?page_id=2891).

This church community is committed to remaining a beacon of hope in the work for justice and peace for all people. We are working together – our board, our social justice circle and all other parts of the church – to not only shine our light, but to blow our horn, ring our bells and dance an invitation to peace, justice and love. Do your part – shine your light! Trust that love wins. ●

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## Denouement

*Rev. Pam Rumancik*

**Y**ou know it's a bad day when the end of your grief-burning-bowl ritual involves the fire department...

For those of you wondering exactly what happened at the end of the service on grief when the smoke alarm kicked everyone out of the church, here is a quick synopsis:

First – there was no actual danger, just lots of steam and smoke. The ritual involved a metal bowl on a metal support on a metal stand. There was a fire extinguisher within reach.

The amount of grief released was surprising and intense, and so many slips of paper were dropped into the bowl that the candle placed to ignite them began to melt. This provided a fuel source for the fire even after the papers had burned away. Our

worship associate, the brilliant and quick-witted Jill Jackson, inverted the chalice bowl over the metal bowl to smother the flame, which worked very well. The issue arose when water was poured into the bowl, for good measure, sending a plume of steam and ash into the air and setting off the smoke alarm.

After the fact, the fire chief affirmed that it was better to have smothered the flame by placing a lid over it than to have used a fire extinguisher in this type of contained situation. He said the force of the extinguisher would have propelled the contents of the bowl around the sanctuary.

There were many insights gained from this discharge of grief including not underestimating how many people might participate and bringing plenty

of paper; using a tea light, which would have offered a more limited ignition source; using dissipating flash paper instead; and keeping a pot lid handy.

I have led, and experienced, this ritual many times, yet there was a mix of elements which took this one beyond the ordinary. I deeply regret an unceremonious ending to a beautiful ritual. The faces of those dropping their representations of grief into the bowl revealed a tenderness at the heart of the human experience. We carry pain with us all the time and need opportunities to transform and release it from our bodies and souls. This experience was a potent metaphor for both how much grief lies buried in our community and how the release of that energy needs sensitive care and attention. ●



[http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org/new/?page\\_id=1783](http://www.hinsdaleunitarian.org/new/?page_id=1783)





## NUTRITION AND COOKING

**FREE!**  
but  
Seating is  
Limited

- nutrition information
- cooking demos
- delicious recipes
- supportive group

**DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**  
1828 Old Naperville Road  
Naperville, IL 60653

6:30-7:30 PM



Tuesday, April 4	Power of Your Plate
Tuesday, April 11	How Foods Fight Diabetes
Tuesday, April 18	Foods for a Healthy Weight
Tuesday, April 25	How Foods Fight Heart Disease

The Food for Life program is a direct service nutrition education program of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. PCRM is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit that promotes preventive medicine, conducts clinical research, and encourages higher standards for ethics and effectiveness in research.

Co-sponsored by  
Hinsdale and DuPage  
UU Animal Ministries

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**Physicians  
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