



# THE TOUCHSTONE

*A quarterly publication of the Unitarian Church of Hinsdale*

Summer 2018

## Dwell in Possibility: Time for Reflection

by Rev. Pam Rumancik

*"I like it when a flower or a little tuft of grass grows through a crack in the sidewalk. It's so heroic."*

— George Carlin

**T**here are times in life when all you can do is scratch your head and wonder — really? That's where Karen and I found ourselves recently. In spring of the past three years, each of my parents has died, Karen's mom died, and Karen got the dreaded diagnosis of cancer. Caught early, surgery was all that was required, and she is recovering well, but still — really? It's gotten so that I am wondering what I can do to ward off malevolent spring spirits. Maybe some naked dancing ritual in the woods come next February — that would scare them!

Just kidding. In reality, this is one of those seasons of life that each of us face. Times when bad news follows bad news; when it seems no matter what, we can't catch a break. It could be job loss, bankruptcy, illness, loss of friends, family or pets; there are times when life seems relentless. It's a part of the human condition and not a question of "if" but "when."



What can we do to weather these stormy seasons? Scientists posit that one of the reasons homo sapiens have flourished is because of our highly developed empathy. Not that other animals don't have it; they demonstrably do. It's just that humans have taken it to another level. We care for each other and support each other. We make room at the table for those needing sustenance, deliver casseroles, offer emotional support, hold hands and listen when there's nothing else to do. Karen and I have benefited immensely from this loving support from the church community and our friends and families.

The human spirit is strong and resilient. It continues to thrive and push through the darkest of times, but how can we help it? What can we do when we're in the middle of such a time?

First, breathe. Find that calm center and rest there for a bit. Remember your connection to the whole of life.



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**Reminder:**  
*Sunday service  
in the summer  
begins at  
9:30 a.m.  
starting June 10*

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Childcare and education services are available.

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# Our Children Are Like Seeds

Pam Fodor  
Director of Religious Education

This parent reflection was printed in the *UU World*, and I love it so much that I am going to share it with you again:

A SEED: small, dry, and hard: a compact piece of energy. To push up through the earth - to become more than a possibility – a seed requires a convergence of nourishing actions and beneficial happenstance over which the seed itself has no control. Seeds must fall or be planted into hospitable soil. They must get enough - not too much – water, sunlight, and nutrition. They must be protected from predators yet available to pollinators.

Our children arrive to us in similar circumstances: future yet to be revealed, cultivation required immediately. The nurturing of a

child's need to blossom comes from the home and family into which that "seed" falls. Unlike planting a seed, however, when we begin to raise children, we cannot know what sort of "ground" will be the best for them because we cannot know what sort of "flower" they

have the potential to become. As parents, unlike gardeners, we lack the seed packet with its picture on the front, its instructions on the back. Are you doing everything that a chrysanthemum needs to thrive? Maybe your child is a sunflower or a daisy.

We can only try to do what we think is best: Provide safety.



Model kindness. Teach open-mindedness. Invite play. Create opportunities for our children to discover who they are, what they are good at, what and whom they love.

Only time and experience – theirs – will reveal whom you are raising.

This summer I hope you have time to tend your garden. I hope you can create adventures in nature, make opportunities to help others, be playful and silly. And hold tight to what is important!



Happy Summer!

## Dwell in Possibility

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Next, look around for the people with whom you can connect. Share with a friend, a therapist, a minister (ahem – that would be me). Our burdens are halved when someone we know can hear them; sharing takes away the pain of isolation that so often amplifies challenging situations.

Even in the midst of pain, find places of gratitude. We will miss Karen's mom deeply. She was one of the most generous and genuinely kind people I

have ever known. Even so, we are grateful that her death came quickly, without suffering, and that she recognized family and knew herself to be loved right to the end.

Life lobs many challenges, sometimes in clumps which seem insurmountable. Thankfully, it also offers connection and support if we can remember to reach out and let people know we are in trouble. Deep inside, each of us has a burning spark of life – a will to overcome whatever might befall us. Like the flower growing through the cracks in the concrete, we will find the sun again.

## Minister's Sabbatical

Rev. Pam has gotten a waiver from the board of trustees in order to take one month of her earned sabbatical this June. She will preside over the final regular service of the year on June 3rd, observe a month of sabbatical which will involve reading and putting, and then take vacation until the second week in August.

As many of you know, the last few years have been particularly challenging with the loss of both her parents, her wife's cancer surgery and the recent loss of her mother-in-law. She is very grateful for the kindness that has been shown and trusts that some time spent in study, meditation, and contemplation will allow

her space for renewal and replenishment in her grieving.

The summer church services will continue as last year with a mix of lay leaders and guest ministers. Rev. Pam is lining up ministers to cover for pastoral care emergencies so please do contact the office if such an emergency arises.

# Welcome New Members!



Sarah Vladika, son Asher and daughter Zoe



Brian and Emily Stouffer, son Colin and daughters Lucy and Nora



Jim and Jane Hulbert



Carol Doty



Char Cepkek

Photography by  
Jami Murphy



Andrea Mandal and daughter Alessia



Lenny and KC Edgin and son AJ



Judith Green

Nathan Makdad and Ashley Kennedy,  
son Luke and daughter Nora

# Green Home Progress Update — The Home Stretch

Karen McDowell

## May 2018

In preparation for the 2018 Annual Meeting, the Green Home Committee is pleased to inform you of the progress on the energy efficiency campaign. It was impossible to calculate how long this process would take. As we searched for contractors, entertained bids, gained information, and carefully considered highly technical details - and thus opted to increase the project's ambition - costs increased. Completion is on track for this summer, but funds are \$10,000 short (see part VI).

### I. Resolution

(summarized) from the 2016 Annual Meeting, when the congregation agreed to:

- install new roof with insulation on RE building (completed)
- install solar panels on RE roof (completed; energy output report in part II)
- put in new energy efficient windows in RE (in progress; see part III)
- put in new heating system for improved efficiency in both buildings (pending; see part IV)
- add AC in both buildings (not specified if limited to certain key areas or whole facility) (see part IV)
- replace church storm windows (nearly completed; see part V)
- continue researching the types and costs; begin raising funds; inform the membership of progress\*

\*From time to time, updates have been posted in News & Notes, and occasionally announced in church (and remember the All-Solars celebration?).



### II. RE Roof and Solar Panels

Both are completed (sadly, the panels are not visible at ground level).

These projects were begun first (2017) to address leaks in the RE roof and meet deadlines for solar panels installation. We had to notify all of the neighbors within a two-block radius regarding the zoning meeting, testify at the zoning meeting, and then testify again at the full village board meeting. Since going live last November, the solar panels have produced 8.88 MWh of electricity.

We anticipate even more impressive results during summer's long, sunny days.

### III. RE Windows and Siding Panels

Work in progress.

In the fall of 2017, work also began to replace the leaky original (1950's) windows with energy-efficient awning windows. Siding panels between the lower and upper floors were removed, to be replaced with dark bronze. Pam Fodor's office and three

north-side rooms had in-window AC's, which were removed. The old air conditioning units in the rooms for the Minister and Director of Operations remain in the wall until the AC for the building is installed (section IV). Work was suspended for winter. This month work resumed, and all the new windows are installed. Screens are being added. When the AC is installed, the old units can be removed, and the siding panels will be finalized. At some future point, doors, gutters, downspouts, and other trims will be painted to match the dark bronze.

### IV. Air Conditioning/ Heating

Installation is to begin later this month!

This component has been the most challenging. Our original plan was to replace the old, inefficient boilers and add air conditioning to as many areas in both buildings as possible. We realized that by continuing to rely on fossil fuels for our heat, we would still be directly contributing to climate change despite the addition of solar panels. We are acutely aware that humanity needs to transition

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Solar panels on the RE Building roof

## **Green Home Progress**

*continued from page 4*

to an all-electric, renewable-energy-based economy as soon as possible to avoid the worst effects of climate change. Could we manage to do this in our relatively small congregation with a modest budget?

Our seventh principal – Respect for the interdependent web of all existence – demanded that we try.

During our exploration of air conditioning options, we learned that Mitsubishi heat pumps would allow us to both heat and cool our spaces on a room-to-room basis in an environmentally responsible way. We commissioned an engineering study to confirm that such a

system would meet our needs. Committee members visited another church that uses this system. Considerable attention was given to the placement of the units and compressors for function and aesthetics, including landscaping.

After months of discussion, the final bid has recently been accepted. We realized that excluding larger areas had many drawbacks, so instead of cooling only the upper levels of both buildings, we decided to include all rooms except for small areas in each building. Thus, the Alice Warren Room and the rooms in lower RE, which are also used for tutoring and lessons, will be cooled. ComEd determined that implementing that heating and

cooling system would require upgrades to our power systems.

These changes have increased the funds needed to complete the project by \$50,000 (see part V).

### **V. Storm Windows on the Church**

Nearly completed.

Finding a company to do the storm replacements for the church was also difficult, resulting in delays. There were two contractors

involved in this project: 1.) a painter, who has removed the storm windows and scraped, caulked, and painted the frames; and 2.) a window company that will measure, manufacture, and install the new storm windows and screens. This should be completed

in a week or two. Then, all our windows will be cozier, and the exterior color will be uniformly brown.

### **VI. Funding: The Clock Was Ticking or The Domino Effect or On Borrowed Time and Money.**

Our final concern heading into May was securing the remaining \$50k balance needed to complete the revised project. Delaying AC/heating installation until we had raised remaining funds risked waiting until summer, 2019. Doing so would: 1.) extend the project's completion date to three years; 2.) continue our reliance on greenhouse gas-emitting boilers; 3.) leave some rooms without AC;

and 4.) delay the installation of the RE siding.

The consensus was that further delays were unacceptable, and we asked the Board for funding help. At their May meeting, the Board approved an additional \$20,000 from the Capital Reserve Fund. A generous donor gave \$20,000, leaving a \$10,000 deficit, which we have faith will yet come from member donations. Finding a loan is a last resort.

We are astounded by the generosity of all donors. We still believe in everyone having ownership in these improvements, since we all benefit from the comfort they afford. We are spiritually enriched by knowing we are living our seventh principal and caring for the planet.

### **Bottom Line**

If you have not yet contributed: We would raise all required funds if every member household that has not yet donated gave \$250 (only \$.68/day!), which can be paid over five months if necessary. Think how good you will feel to join the cause and help us celebrate 100% participation! We really need you to get us to the finish line. How COOL will that be!

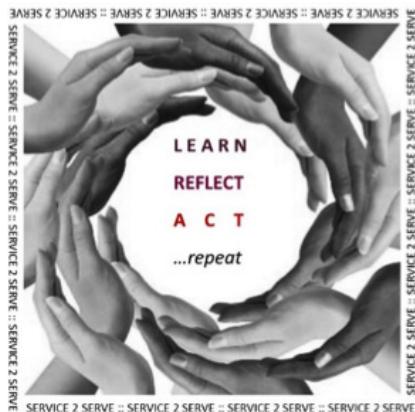
If you already contributed: Thanks! Now ask, "Can I can chip in just a little more?"

How to chip in: You can contact any member of the Green Home Committee (below) with your intention/payment.

Thanks to all who stepped up and did their share. You light up my life. You are the sunshine of my life. You warm my heart. You are so cool.

Green Home Committee members: Benjamin Van Horne, Diane Gormely-Barnes, David Lloyd, Karen McDowell, Steve Trout, Ron Solberg, Julia Beckman, Rev. Pam Rumancik ●

## Service 2 Serve Experiment Continues



We did gain a couple of ongoing and worthwhile projects:

One is working to eliminate the backlog of untested rape kits in our criminal justice system. Sally Burke is leading this effort and will be presenting a movie in conjunction with another

Unitarian Church in the coming months. We have also engaged the attention of State Representative Silvana Tabares to help in this work – a success to celebrate!

Leaders will be looking at what the next iteration of Service 2 Serve might be – exploring ways to reach out into the community and help our church make a difference. You're welcome to be part of the planning process – send in your ideas and watch News & Notes for upcoming meetings.

We are following in the footsteps of Thomas Edison, who after thousands of failed attempts at a lightbulb, refused to give up,

Stay tuned – we'll be looking at our next experiment in church outreach soon.

simply saying, "I have gotten a lot of results! I have found several thousand things that won't work!"

Stay tuned – we'll be looking at our next experiment in church outreach soon. ●



# Thank You

*From Tiffany Schafer, Animal Ministry*

**T**hank you to all who baked and bought at this year's Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale! We raised \$500 for Lulu's Locker Rescue, making this our most successful sale yet. We'll be hosting a late summer retreat at the Schafers' to plan for next church year, and all are welcome. Email UCHAnimalMinistry@gmail.com to be added to our email list and keep current on our activities. ●

## Caring Circle Reminder

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The Caring Circle continues in our efforts to provide support to our church community in times of need, transition and celebration. 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 by our

members 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 email. We can provide assistance that may include simple errands, rides, meals, and small chores. ●

### **AREA 1**

---

(Hinsdale, Clarendon Hills,  
Burr Ridge)  
Deborah Stillman –  
630-908-7508  
Pam Fodor – 630-795-0295

### **AREA 2**

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(Willowbrook, Darien, Westmont)  
Catherine Goering 630-325-0310  
Jen Hopkins – 630-488-9889  
Sandy Buboltz – 630-613-7099

### **AREA 3**

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(Indian Head Park, Western  
Springs, Willow Springs)  
Susan Hebble – 708-784-1688

### **AREA 4**

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(Elmhurst, Villa Park, Bensenville,  
Des Plaines, Roselle)  
Lynn Brackett – 630-279-5851  
Mary Getty – 630-833-3082  
Karen Hays – 630-209-9340

### **AREA 5**

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(Westchester, Brookfield, River  
Forest, Riverside, Chicago,  
Berwyn)  
Nancy Kranz – 708-870-1247  
Nancy Keane – 708-352-0454

### **AREA 6**

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(LaGrange Park, LaGrange,  
CountrySide, Hodgkins)  
Nancy Weill – 708-352-9128

### **AREA 7**

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(Downers Grove, Lombard,  
Oak Brook)  
Jill Jackson – 312-231-9870

### **AREA 8**

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(Woodridge, Plainfield,  
Romeoville, Shorewood,  
St. Charles, Glen Ellyn)  
Paula Sejut-Dvorak –  
815-210-1909  
Janice Sejut – 630-207-2856