

- the Beacon -

Sunday Services at 10:30 AM

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www.uucgt.org. Email: office@uucgt.org

June 2020



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse

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until further notice.**
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Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 3, 2020
7:00 PM

Due to COVID-19, Sunday Services will be on Zoom

- We will be bringing you a service each Sunday at 10:30 AM. Sign-in at 10:00 to chat!
- Please be on the lookout for emails and notes in the **Flash** from Rev. Cathy with an invitation to a Zoom meeting.
- You will follow those instructions in order to join the service that Sunday.
- Please continue to be patient with us as we strive to bring you virtual services that connect our community and give us strength and purpose going into the next week!



UUCGT President's Letter – June 2020

Folks, we are at a fork in the road. As you know, we have been unable to hold in person services in our facility for over two months. Your Board, Minister and I are realizing that we will not be able to get back together in our Sanctuary for some time to come, maybe as long as a year.

Frankly, we cannot maintain social distancing with 100 people in our Sanctuary, plus group singing is an enhanced way to spread the virus. In addition, our Congregation is particularly vulnerable with many of us over sixty years of age and a significant number of us with underlying medical conditions.

It would not be responsible for us to start in-person services again until conditions improve. Perhaps not until an effective vaccine is widely available. The risk is just too great. Our national UUA organization is encouraging us to not open too soon.

So, back to that fork in the road.

One path we could take is to become discouraged. "Oh, woe is us". To me, and to many of you, a big part of being a Congregation is to be able to gather most Sundays, catch up with our friends and share in the message and singing of our worship together. We miss the physical social interaction. Shaking hands, hugging, sharing coffee or tea after service and being in the same physical space together. It would be easy to give up and drift away from the fellowship of our Congregation.

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**"Folks, We
are at a fork
in the road."**



UUCGT Annual Meeting
Sunday, June 21, 2020
Following Sunday Service

**We will be voting on a Ministerial Search Team
Board Candidates** 

From our Board President

(Continued from previous page)

The other path is to stick with it through what may be some tough times. We have a great Interim Minister supported by a strong staff. Our Religious Education and Music programs are on a good upward path. We have developed excellent on-line worship. While different from what we are used to, it can be just as fulfilling.

Most of our committees and groups are continuing to meet using the on-line tools we are quickly adapting to. New small groups and adult classes are underway, meeting on-line. We have added Friday evening Vesper Services and on-line office hours. We are exploring some innovative ways to connect those in our Congregation who are not "computer savvy". We are encouraged that our search next year for a Settled Minister will happen and be successful. In many ways, we are feeling even more connected than before.

My wife, Sandra, and I are choosing the latter path. Our Congregation has been resilient in tough times before. We believe we can do it again. We hope you all choose to join us. With your help we can get through this and come out the other side even stronger than we were before.

Mike McDonald
President, Board of Trustees



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Board of Trustees



Tom Darnton (Board - 3 year term, 2020-23)

I was raised in the Congregational Unitarian Church of Flint, Michigan, and before moving to Charlevoix in 2013, I was an active member of the UU Congregation of Ann Arbor for many years. I first attended UUCGT in March 2014 and joined in November. I have been a member of the Leadership Development Committee and currently serve as a Trustee and Board Vice President, and have a particular interest in building our organizational capacity. I maintain a law practice and serve on two non-profit boards, all of whom live in Ann Arbor. I enjoy sailing, skiing and good food all year around. I have four adult children.



David Hassing (Board - 3 year term, 2020-23)

My wife and I became UUCGT members in September 2018 to bring non-dogmatic spiritual reflection and growth to our family.

I grew up in the Twin Cities, Minnesota and worked in restaurants until after college when I moved to New York City and built a career in architectural design. Now I own my own small company and am the father of two great kids. I also have a volunteer citizen seat as Vice-Chair of the Traverse City Planning Commission.

The UU's seven principles ring true to my own personal values and I'm glad to be a part of a community that is built from them.



Pam Hendrick (Board - 3 year term, 2020-23)

Pamela Hendrick has been a member of UUCGT since August of 2018. She is co-chair of the Sunday Services Committee. Prior to her move back to Michigan she was a member of the UU Congregation of the South Jersey Shore serving on the Sunday Services Committee, the Racial Justice Task Force and the Committee on Ministry among others. She is retired (Emerita) Professor of Theatre Arts from Stockton University in New Jersey. She is married to Jon Luoma and their son, Benjamin Luoma, is a hospital chaplain in Providence Rhode Island where he lives with his wife, Michelle, and daughters Marjorie and Maia. What Pam truly values about being a UU is connecting spiritually, emotionally and intellectually with kindred spirits.



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Board Candidates 

Endowment Committee



Hal Gurian (3 year term, 2020-23)

Hal has been a member of UUCGT for several years, co-chair of Sunday Services Committee for five years, and on Congregational Care for five years. He operated a small retail and wholesale business for 40 years. He is active in political and social justice causes, recently leading efforts to end gerrymandering in Michigan, and has had leadership roles in Rotary Club. He served six years in the U. S, Army and Reserves. He is married to Annie Gurian and has three children and eight grandchildren.

Leadership Development



Charles Brackett (2 year term, 2020-22)

Charles has been a member of UUCGT for ten years, and has participated in the Arts Committee, Shantideva Fan Club, Men’s Group, and is our unofficial photographer. grad of U of M, he had a career in R and D at Bell Telephone Labs and helped found a company producing high-speed communications systems. finds this congregation stimulating and enriching, and appreciates its orientation toward Social Justice, openness and lack of prejudice. lives and travels with his partner, Ellie Smith and has three adult children and ten grandchildren.



Nan Worthington (2 year term, 2020-22)

Nan found her way to the UUCGT community in 1987 after meandering through the Methodist and Presbyterian meadows. She has pitched her tent here finding the intellectual stimulation, community involvement, and acceptance of Pagan beliefs gave her a moral home. Her three children were raised in this community. When not frolicking in the meadow, Nan has had careers in NICU nursing (charge nurse, transport nurse and nurse educator), singing opera, and acting. She also seeks out travel opportunities to pagan spiritual sites, creating needlework, and participating in musical experiences.

Congregational Care



Please send some positive thoughts to Bob Hicks, he is dealing with a serious heart condition and will be having a procedure on Tuesday.



Safe Harbor is running a Day Shelter seven days a week from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm each day to give access to showers, laundry facilities, computer stations and charging stations. We are limiting the number of guests and using both the dining room and tables in the parking lot to ensure social distancing.

We need to fill two volunteer slots. If any of you feel comfortable doing this, you can copy and paste this link to find out more or to volunteer. Thanks for considering this opportunity.

<https://gtsafeharbor.ivolunteer.com/dayhosts>

Mike McDonald

Reflection from Rev. Cathy

Dear Ones,

UUA General Assembly will be virtual this year (June 24 - 28). It is affordable with full-time registration for \$150, and I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to join with UU's from all over the country and around the world. This year's GA will feature prominent leaders from within and beyond our UU faith tradition. We will learn together, worship together, and brainstorm together how we can be a leading force to usher in a more compassionate and just world. There will be prominent speakers at GA this year such as our Ware Lecturer, Naomi Klein.

Check out the schedule of events, program descriptions and featured speakers below:

A PDF of the 2020 Program Book will be posted when available. The final program will be available in mid-June.

Available now: [Schedule of Events](#)
[Program Descriptions](#)
[Featured Speakers](#)
[GA Mobile App](#)

Here is a message from our UUA President, Susan Frederick-Gray addressing the murder of George Floyd

"I am holding George Floyd's family and loved ones in my prayers as they grieve his murder. And I offer prayers of solidarity for the people in Minneapolis, coming out with masks, working to practice physical distancing, and refusing to be silent or complicit in the violent system that murdered [#GeorgeFloyd](#). Some powerful photos are collected here: <https://bit.ly/3gryGak>.

People of faith, particularly those of us who are white progressives, need to combat the systems of criminalization in our country. Systems of policing and criminalization in this country are inherently violent, steeped in and created to reinforce white supremacy, anti-blackness, and racialized control.

Systems like violent policing are built on the larger layers of racism and white supremacy that operate everywhere – in ourselves, in congregations, in workplaces, in public parks, in everyday interactions of white people dismissing, denigrating, attacking, and undermining Black people and Black leaders.

We must all commit to dismantle white supremacy everywhere it shows up. We cannot advance the values of justice, equity, dignity, compassion, and interdependence without working to dismantle the culture of white supremacy."



A Way to Write is an online creative writing workshop led by RE teacher Alison Ernst using the [Amherst Writers and Artists](#) (AWA) method based on Pat Schneider's book *Writing Alone & With Others* (Oxford University Press 2003).

These workshops provide a safe and supportive space for both new and seasoned writers to practice their art and generate new work. Creative writing is an art form available to everyone.

A writer is someone who writes, and every writer has a unique voice.

Each 3-week workshop meets once a week for one hour via Zoom

Sign up for ONE of the following sessions:

Monday nights: 7-8 p.m. beginning June 8

Tuesday afternoons: 3-4 p.m. beginning June 9

There is no charge for UUCGT members and friends. Individuals outside the UU congregation are welcome to attend with a \$30 fee for a 3-week session. Sliding scale is available. Interested? Email Alison at awa2write@gmail.com indicating which session you want to attend (Monday or Tuesday) as well as your phone number and whether or not you are a UU congregant.

Contemplating a Good Death

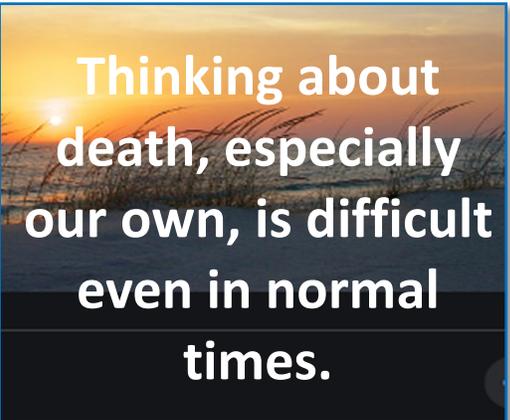
Contemplating a Good Death in the Time of Crisis
by Donna Stein-Harris

A family member in New York suffered a stroke about six weeks ago, right before COVID19 took over our lives. She is 77, and up until her stroke, she was healthy, active, and looking to the future. Her future is uncertain now, compounded with a possible exposure to the virus contracted in the rehab facility she's in.

Family can't visit her, healthcare policies are a moving target, and information is contradictory. Arranging for her to come home has its own complications not the least of which is possibly exposing her children and home healthcare workers to the virus. Fear and anxiety are part of my New York family's daily life. These are not normal times, especially in New York.

In Northern Michigan, the situation is different. We're more spread out and most people, I've observed, are now practicing social distancing and wearing masks. All are good public health practices. But even if we're doing all the right things, we are experiencing a high level of community anxiety about this highly contagious and potentially life threatening virus. And, even if it's unspoken, we're all thinking about our own mortality.

Thinking about death, especially our own, is difficult even in normal times. In Death Cafe* we talk a lot about our fear of dying. Interestingly, most people aren't afraid of being dead, but rather how we get there. Will I be in pain? Will I be alone? Who will remember me? What happens to my stuff? How do I talk to my family and friends about what I want?



Thinking about death, especially our own, is difficult even in normal times.

But when you look at all those concerns, there is a solution for each one of them. But those solutions require thoughtful planning and action. And all of the tools we have at our disposal require some form of communication.

Make sure your trust and will are current. Fill out a medical directive and appoint a health power of attorney (different than a regular power of attorney), that outlines your end of life wishes. This requires filling out forms and that can be tedious. Many of us start these legal processes but get waylaid. But now there is a new sense of urgency that we can't ignore.

There are many things we can do that don't require legal action. Talk to your family and loved ones. Tell them what you want at the end of your life - I want to be left alone, I want everyone with me, I want pain medication or not, I want all medical interventions possible, I want to let nature take its course, I want to be at home or in assisted living. Tell them what kind of funeral, memorial, burial, or cremation you want. Talk about all those things that are often thought of after the fact.

How do you get those conversations going? "There's something on my mind that I'd like to talk to you about." If the response is, "I don't want to talk about that," then say, "I know this is hard to talk about. All you have to do is listen."

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Contemplating a Good Death

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If there is still resistance there is another solution. Write everything down and make sure everyone who needs to know gets a copy. Then there is no ambiguity. No chance for misinterpretation. This is a step everyone should take even if everything has been discussed. If you want help, there are online tools that can help you organize your thoughts including “The Five Wishes” (fivewishes.org).

Keep in mind that anything you say or write down can be changed. The challenge is remembering to let people know if you’ve changed your mind.

The most important thing you can do is to let people know that you care about them, that you love them. Mend fences now, not with recrimination, but with love. This is not an easy task and not always resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. Sometimes it’s easier to write things down than saying them out loud. And you will have at least tried.

But what happens, like what is happening to my relative in NY, where things are moving so fast that it feels, actually are, out of control. We’re all feeling that loss of control right now. We’re all feeling vulnerable. How do we take those feelings of internal chaos back to clarity, back to what we can control.

There is one simple step. It’s what should be the first and last thing we do. Tell people you love them. Let them know what they mean to you, how they have enriched your life. Even the little things. “Thank you for sharing that book with me. It’s one of my favorites.” “Remember when we were kids and Aunt Anna took us for ice cream every Friday after school. We had so much fun together.” “I still use your shortbread recipe. Yum!”

Write these thoughts and feelings down to be delivered after your death to your whole family or to individuals. Start a journal, create an Emotional or Ethical Will. Let them know what was important to you and what your life was like and how they played a part in it. It can include life lessons, values, and expressions of gratitude (nextavenue.org, [celebrations of life.net](http://celebrationsoflife.net)).

In Death Cafe, our conversations often focus on what is a good death. It’s different for everyone, as you would expect. But the key elements always include planning and communicating those plans. But sadly in times of chaos and uncertainty we can’t always expect our good planning to be followed. But we can tell people we love them. Now!

Don’t wait.

*Death Cafe is an informal discussion group that explores end of life issues. It is not grief counseling or therapy, but rather an opportunity to increase awareness of death with the view of helping people to make the most of their lives.

Donna Stein-Harris is a Death Cafe facilitator in Traverse City, MI



Write it down for your loved ones.

