

- the Beacon -

Sunday Services at 10:30 AM
www.uucgt.org
 Email: office@uucgt.org

Vol 58 Issue 11

November Services

November 2021



Unitarian Universalist
 Congregation of
 Grand Traverse

6726 Center Road, Traverse City, MI
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**UUCGT Office is closed
 until further notice.**

Minister

Rev. Alex Jensen
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Renée Herman Russell
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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2021-2022

Pam Hendrick	President
Chris Walter	Vice Pres
Tom Darnton	Treasurer
Pat Light	Secretary
Mary Anne Rivers	Trustee
David Hassing	Trustee
Kat Norman	Trustee

Board Meeting
Wednesday 11.17.21
7:00 PM

Date

Participants

Title and Description

11.7.21

Rev. Alex Jensen
Coordinator: Amanda Mangiardi

Holding History

What is the power in knowing our history? How can we pass along these special moments and stories to future generations? This Sunday, we're kicking-off a congregational history project to add these memories and stories into our archives. We'll explore the richness in telling our stories and the power of memory as a gift and legacy for those still to come.

11.14.21

Rev. Alex Jensen
Coordinator: Pam Hendrick

Our Moral Wounds

What is the full, human cost of war? How do we answer morally for warfare and violence carried out on our behalf? This Sunday, we'll discuss this concept of 'moral injury' and our collective moral implications, as we remember and honor the sacrifices of Veterans and Service Members.

11.21.21

Rev. Alex Jensen
Coordinators: Margaret Wozniak
Susan Smith

Discordant Thanks

Thanksgiving can be a complicated holiday. Holding the themes of gratitude and abundance with the histories of colonization and violence against Indigenous Peoples, we'll reflect on what it means to gather in this time and how we can hold and make sense of this complex history.

11.28.21

Lay-Led Service
Coordinators: Mary Anne Rivers
Mary Van Valin

Our UUCGT History

How did we get here? Holding the stories of how several members found Unitarian Universalism and UUCGT. We will hear the religious journey stories of various members and reflect on our own journeys to Unitarian Universalism.

PLEASE NOTE

Rev. Alex will be on vacation the week of Thanksgiving from November 23 through November 29, 2021. For care, support, or pastoral emergencies in his absence, please contact Pat Light at patricialight@sbcglobal.net or (231) 409-8195.

Beacon Editor: Amanda Mangiardi 610-417-0730
 Please send submissions to jomangiardi@hotmail.com
 by the 24th of the month



MINISTER'S MESSAGE *from* REV. ALEX



Dear Ones,

When have you experienced “grace”? This sense of care and support that you don’t necessarily ask for or feel that you deserve, but it’s there anyway? Who in your life, or within this community, has been there for you in moments of real grace? Not as this supernatural experience, but as this real, practical experience of unconditioned lovingkindness?

“Who in your life, or within this community, has been there for you in moments of real grace?”

I think a lot about how, for myself, grace was something I encountered when I started attending services at my home congregation in Fremont, California. I think about how it felt to be loved as I was, in a time when you’re told so many other painful messages as a teenager.

This was grace in how it met me where I was when I needed it. I couldn’t ask for this community to embrace me, but they took me in as one of their own anyway.

To this moment, my heart is still on fire from the love that they shared with me; extending to me a grace and pure sense

of love that convinced me that what we do in our congregations matters, and that I want to dedicate my life to this.


Though “grace” is a term with heavy connotations in Christianity, I struggle to find a word that better captures it. Certainly, grace doesn’t need to be this mercy extended to me on behalf of a deity. Instead, I notice grace in those moments of deepest humanity. The moments when we are called to be our better selves and we rise to the task. Grace is one of the things I’d argue Unitarian Universalists are fairly familiar with; it’s part of the air we breathe, in how we aspire to love and cherish the worth and dignity found in every human heart.

In this season of abundance, there are many who are hungry and without shelter who could use some grace. Instead of relying on divine guarantees, we as Unitarian Universalists understand that we, ourselves, are the ones to do the doing; the ones that must reach out and care for our neighbors.

Likewise, the upcoming holiday season serves as a reminder of this grace. We see it in gathering around tables laden with food. We notice it in our jubilation and our joy for the sharing of stories and laughter. We witness it in our own hearts, and the hearts of those we love—and those we hardly know—alike.

In this season of grace, I hope you will assist our hungry and unhoused neighbors at Safe Harbor in this time of greater need. Through this, we might glimpse yet more of the grace that we’ve already received, though we might not feel like we deserve. Let’s lavish this grace on a world that so needs it!

In grace, faith, and love,


Reverend Alex Jensen





A Few Notes!

Our holiday programming is beginning to take shape and I'd like to invite anyone who would like to be part of our holiday music to reach out to me by November 15th. All are welcome!

Our Vocal Ensemble is now meeting ***in person*** on Thursdays in the sanctuary at 7pm.

Thanks to our updated HVAC system, we are able to meet indoors together for an hour. Masks and social distancing are required but we do now have special Singer's Masks that allow ease of breathing and singing.

Each week the ensemble will learn and record hymns for upcoming services as well as special music to highlight different themes. Again, all are welcome. I will continue to develop my communal website to provide singing resources and practice videos for new songs.

I look forward to hearing from anyone interested in being a part of our music ministries at UUCGT.

You can email me at musicatuucgt@gmail.com.

In joy and harmony,

Director of Music
Renée Herman Russell
musicatuucgt@gmail.com



Safe Harbor of Grand Traverse is an all-volunteer, nonprofit corporation, dedicated to the preservation of the health and welfare of people experiencing homelessness. The primary goals of Safe Harbor are to offer food, shelter and hope for guests staying in our shelter.

UUCGT's Safe Harbor commitment will be **November 27 through December 4.**

Here's the sign up link: musicatuucgt@gmail.com

Here's the food donation link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f49adaa22a5fbc07-safe>

General volunteer info and FAQs: <https://www.gtsafeharbor.org/>

Please contact Rich Faller rf2cv6@gmail.com 231-342-9695 for more information.

Thank you for your support!





Nine members (7 via Zoom and 2 via email) of the Program Council met October 8, 2021. Following opening words, chalice lighting and official approval of the 9/10/2021 meeting minutes, Rick Walter introduced a discussion on possible alternatives to our traditional Thanksgiving feast at Twin Lakes Lodge.

Is there anything we can do as a Team to help us all stay connected and bring the Spirit of Thanksgiving to our Congregation and Community?

- Providing turkeys to needy families in the Grand Traverse area was discussed.
- We also expressed interest in expanded focused discussion periods both before and after the service on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving.
- Rick will seek volunteers for implementing decided activities at next PC meeting.

During committee check-ins we discussed committees rotating the members that attend Program Council so that more individuals have a better picture of what PC does and the workings of UUCGT.

Now that a new directory is compiled, Endowment will be sending an informative questionnaire to the members. When you receive it, please fill it out and return directly to the Endowment committee in the envelope that will be provided.

Membership reported the September 19 Parking Lot Party had over 60 in attendance and the auction raised \$1,030 which was donated to Women for Women International. <https://www.womenforwomen.org/where-we-work/afghanistan>.

Rick and Chris reported the listing of UUCGT committee/group opportunities, with new categorical listings, descriptions, and contact individuals is nearly completed. Thanks for all the input from many individuals.

Alex reported on his many activities of settling in including plans for the Pride events of October 16. Social Justice is continuing to focus on actions that are needed as well as a new Congregational Read early next year - educating ourselves on a topic.

Renee reported the VE is now practicing in the sanctuary with new masks that allow better breathing while singing. Chris Lautz reminded us all that the previous 3 years Gamble Award winners need to gather and select awardees for 2021.

Our next meeting will be via ZOOM on November 12, 2021 at 3:00 pm. All are welcome to attend - check calendar for zoom link.

Rick Walter, Chairperson Program Council



THE BEACON



Have something for the Beacon? Send to editor Amanda Mangiardi by the 24th of the month.
jomangiardi@hotmail.com



Congregational Care



"I like spring, but it is too young.
 I like summer, but it is too proud.
 So I like best of all autumn,
 Because its tone is mellower, its colours are richer, and it is tinged with a little sorrow.
 Its golden richness speaks not of the innocence of spring, nor the power of summer,
 But of the mellowness and kindly wisdom of approaching age.
 It knows the limitations of life and its content."
 — Lin Yutang



We wish that everyone could bathe in the fullness of the season. Sometimes, however, life's challenges make experiencing mellowness difficult. The Congregational Care Team's mission is to help make life a little easier for those in our congregation who suffer.

The following are those in our midst who are especially in our thoughts today:

Sending our love and concern as they grieve

Paul Ward
 Solveig Gustafson
 Bill Hansen



Keeping in our thoughts

Shari Cope Gary Deavel
 Barb Bloomer Ann Chinn
 Kay Wentzel Nancy Landfair
 Marge Rundell Don Fraser

Improving!

Nancy Fraser
 Ellie Smith
 Pam Hendrick
 Susan Smith
 Stan Cain

Erratum:

In the October *Beacon* it was erroneously reported that Stan and Dorothy Cain had moved to Bay Ridge "assisted living," but they are living in an apartment there. Dorothy reports that "Stan is doing well with his stroke recovery. Now he uses a cane instead of a walker most of the time, and his speech and vision continue to improve." Good news!

All of these members of our congregation would probably appreciate calls, cards, and other demonstrations of your concern...or maybe just a friendly "Hello!"

And, as always, please let one of us know if you or some other UU member could use our help.



CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

Rev. Alex Jensen	231-947-3117	alexjensen@uucgt.org
Chair: Joanie Jackson	231-883-9292	ilinishi@gmail.com
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Millie Putz	989-330-2611	melindaputz@me.com



I'll say it straight. I am having issues. We used to use the word problems, but now they are called issues. Lots of things, issues, have changed. So much is happening that it is threatening our culture, our society, our supposed Democracy. Where are we going? Downhill? I read the first 1000 pages of the *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Have you? Try it. We are on that same path! Why is our country so vulnerable to these influences? Why are we going there? And another; it is happening in many countries around the world. Why?

Is it jealousy and fear of losing their way of life that the minority of *White-Have-It-All's* fear? Is it realization that the rest of us are losing all opportunities to gain any of what the *Haves* have? What are the real causes and why? What can we do?

All the issues are Social Justice Issues. For example, the Rights to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness," since "all men are created equal" written in our Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson, a slave holder.

Let's take the first Right, Life. I have a right to Life. The next person does too but maybe he feels he values some other Right even more than that for Life. So, he does not get vaccinated, not wear a mask. That is infringing on my Right to Life. We live in a society together! Doesn't he, all of us, have an obligation to follow the understood rules in our society that we all have the Right to Life. He may lose his, but does he have the right to impose that loss of Life on me?

**"There is an old saying:
"If you say nothing,
then you are
agreeing
with the loudest
voice."**

Do we need two school systems? One would be for kids whose parents want to protect their kids from getting sick by having them wear a mask, from other kids whose parents feel not wearing a mask is more important than Life. I want the Right to Life, and a healthy one too, for my kids, all kids. And you want?

To vote is a constitutional Right. It is our responsibility really, an obligation. Some are afraid if they let others vote, that they will lose the vote and their privileges. Of course, they don't say it that way. They say they are protecting the vote from "fraud." Their fear is encroaching on my Rights! This is a special social justice issue because the *Haves* want to limit the vote of only certain targeted people, poor, people of color, immigrants, etc.

The list goes on and runs deep. What do we do? There is an old saying; if you "say nothing, then you are agreeing with the loudest voice." It is our obligation to speak up, act, protest, rally, write letters, call those supposedly in charge, make our voices heard! Join groups that do things like that so you have support and can be heard loud and clear: STOP, Save our Democracy!

Come to the SJA meetings and learn you are not alone; express how you think our UUCGT can help you and help save our Rights together. Thanks!

Emmy Lou Cholak— Chair Social Justice Committee
sjatcmi@gmail.com





UUCGT participated in Up North Pride 2021.

On Saturday, October 16, members of UUCGT attended the Up North Pride festivities at F&M Park followed by a march to the Open Space. It was a rainy cold day, but many people attended and Rev. Alex was there to talk to them. We had a fun activity for kids who created their own



ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thanks to all who responded to the recent survey. Missed it? It's never too late to share your thoughts about what you would like to see in the Adult RE line up. Just send me a message at awa2write@gmail.com.

There is room in the current Adult RE offerings:

Writing Workshops:

- Mondays 7 - 8 p.m.
- Tuesdays 9 - 10 a.m.

Soul Matters group:

- One Thursday morning a month, the third or fourth

Contact me if you are interested in joining: awa2write@gmail.com

Adult Education
Alison Ernst
awa2write@gmail.com



BOARD SUMMARY



Hello Friends.

Let's start with some good news.

Reported by our Treasurer, Tom, the preliminary report for fiscal year 2020/21 indicates we emerged with an \$18,000 surplus! There will be an accountant approved final report presented by our Financial Committee in the very near future.

The delay with this report, in part, was the switching of software systems and the absence of Guy in Aug and no one to cover for him. Your Board recognizes this problem, and is preparing a contingency plan for backup to cover for Guy when necessary.

On-going preparations for an eventual return to in-person Sunday Services continue.

- The Board approved **"Gathering Parameters"** for Music presented by Renee, Music Director.
- We also approved the ROTF current guidelines of masking by all who enter the Church.
- When services resume, attendees will notice temporary changes, such as a reduction of chairs in the sanctuary.

ROTF determined, due to recommended 6 ft. distancing, only 35 people can attend.

- There will not be any gathering within the Social Hall.
- Weather permitting, we can meet outside.
- When it appears all will be safe for this limited attendance, there will be more detailed information available.
- Rev. Alex and the Staff are requesting a month to prepare for our safe return.
- The Board has invited the ROTF on Oct. 27, to another Discernment Meeting to discuss the current Covid issues and what other area churches are doing.

Website updates:

- Mary Ann and Chris Lautz have been trained on the new website. They are working on bringing the site up to date, such as copies of the Board minutes, Board packets, and Beacon. They work at home using designated computers.
- Live streaming updates: Installation nearly complete, 6 lights for proper lighting, Ethernet cable to be installed under the carpet, and extensive training, from MusicHub.LIVE, for Rev Alex, Renee, Betsy, Geoff, Pam, Amanda, Mary Ann, and Chris L.

New Business:

- Leadership Development Committee has developed a new version of the job descriptions for Board members.
- Rev Alex and Pat attended a Zoom Service of the Benzie Fellowship. They were very welcoming and delighted to see Rev Alex. Pat is now on their Zoom list and will be attending more of their gatherings.

Take care, stay safe, be well.
Pat Light—Board Secretary





Financial Summary

As of June 30, 2021

(100% of fiscal year)

	Current Year (2020-2021)		Prior Year (2019-2020)	
Budgeted Income Received YTD	\$291,029*	107.3%	\$286,274	108.7%
Budgeted Expenses Paid YTD	\$272,996	98.9%	\$254,366	96.6%
"For Those in Need" YTD	\$ 12,972		\$ 15,311	

*Income for 2020-2021 includes recognition of \$39,825 of income from the Payroll Protection Plan loan we obtained in spring of 2020. As this loan was forgiven by the Small Business Administration in May 2021 we are now recognizing the amount as income. The PPP loan was used to pay wages of our employees in 2020 and other allowable expenses. This income has resulted in a significant surplus for 2020-2021 which will ultimately be used to help balance our budget for 2021-2022.

This final 2020-2021 report is three months late due to a number of factors including a six week absence of our Accountant, a software conversion, a change of ownership at our bank and a planned review by an outside accountant. A year to date report for fiscal 2021-2022 should be available next month. Rest assured, in the meantime, that income is being deposited, bills are being paid and our staff is being compensated.

It is significant to note that for the second straight year we have exceeded budgeted income and kept expenses slightly under budget resulting in surpluses both years. Thank you for your generosity that has made this possible.

Budgeted income includes the total of all pledged and unpledged donations and miscellaneous income including building rent, etc. "For Those in Need" collections are in addition to Budgeted Income Received and are disbursed quarterly to worthy causes, including Congregational Care, Tuesday Community Lunch and other Community needs outside our congregation. The percentage reflects the portion of the total amount of income or expense budgeted for the fiscal year.

If you want more detailed information, you can look at our website, click on Board, then on Board Packet, then on Monthly Comparison. Questions can be directed to your Finance Committee which includes Dusty Culton, Nancy Doughty, Karl Keinath, Mike McDonald and Jim Walworth.



**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Grand Traverse**
6726 Center Road
Traverse City, MI 49686-1802

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

the BEACON

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
Volume 58, Issue 11

November 2021

UUCGT Calendar

The office is staffed: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesdays through Fridays

Many meetings and classes still take place via Zoom. However, the Board of Trustees and the Re-Opening Task Force are meeting regularly so as to continue monitoring public health data and to make prudent decisions regarding in-person gatherings in the building.
Check back often for updates!

November 2021

01	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
01	Mon	Men's Group	5:30 PM
02	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
02	Tue	Sunday Services Comm. & Coords.	1:30 PM
03	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
03	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
03	Wed	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
03	Wed	Supper - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
03	Wed	Voters Not Politicians Forum (outside grp)	7:00 PM
04	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
04	Thu	Congregational Care Team	1:00 PM
04	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
04	Thu	VE Zoom Rehearsal with Renée	7:00 PM
05	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
07	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM	Sign in @ 10:00 AM
08	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
09	Tue	Endowment Comm., UUCGT Social Hall	9:00 AM
09	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
10	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
10	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
10	Wed	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
10	Wed	Virtual Supper - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
10	Wed	Board of Trustees	7:00 PM
11	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
11	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
11	Thu	VE Zoom Rehearsal with Renée	7:00 PM
12	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
12	Fri	Program Council	7:00 PM

14	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM	Sign in @ 10:00 AM
15	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
16	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
16	Tue	Leadership Development	3:00 PM
17	Wed	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
17	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
17	Wed	Membership Comm., UUCGT Library	4:00 PM
17	Wed	Virtual Supper - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
18	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
18	Thu	Congregational Care Team	1:00 PM
18	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
18	Thu	Book Club	4:00 PM
18	Thu	Committee on Ministry	5:00 PM
18	Thu	VE Zoom Rehearsal with Renée	7:00 PM
19	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM

21	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM	Sign in @ 10:00 AM
22	Mon	Book Group, UUCGT Social Hall	10:00 AM
22	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
22	Mon	Ministerial Search Team	2:30 PM
23	Tue	Rev. Alex on vacation through 11/30	
23	Tue	Guy out of office through 11/29	
23	Tue	OFFICE CLOSED UNTIL TUE 11/30 at 9:00 AM	
23	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
23	Tue	Social Justice Action Team via Zoom	4:00 PM
24	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
25	Thu	THANKSGIVING DAY	
26	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunday Service	1:00 PM

28	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM	Sign in @ 10:00 AM
29	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
30	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
30	Tue	Healthy Congregations Team	4:00 PM