

- the Beacon -

Sunday Services at 10:30 AM

www.uucgt.org

Email: office@uucgt.org

Vol. Issue 1

January Services

January 2022



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse

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UUCGT Offices are staffed Mon-
Thu, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.

Minister

Rev. Alex Jensen
alexjensen@uucgt.org

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2021-2022:

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

Board Meeting
Wednesday 1.12.22
7:00 PM

Date	Service Creators	Title / Description
1.2.22	Lay Led Service Coordinator: Margaret Wozniak	The Power of Small Joys. Members of our congregation share their personal moments of joy.
1.9.22	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Dan Tholen	Divided We Stand? Many people experience a "Great Divide" in our present political situation, country, and world. How do we dialogue across such difference? Are we divided now more than ever?
1.16.22	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Amanda Mangiardi	Realizing Beloved Community Join us for this service honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we explore Dr. King's vision of creating Beloved Community, we'll delve into the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism and its roots within our faith. (Gamble Award)
1.23.22	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Pam Hendrick	Intentionality At times, our intended outcomes can sometimes be different from the actual impacts we have. How do we approach intentionality and living intentionally in the midst of this risk?
1.30.22	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Mary Anne Rivers	Spiritual Practices 101 This Sunday, we'll explore the importance of spiritual practices and what cultivating deep spiritual practices has to offer, even if we ourselves are less spiritually-minded or practiced!

Register for January services!

All congregants are required to pre-register for services using this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49AEA92AABF8CF8-January>

To attend you must:

- Be fully vaccinated.
- Remain masked at all times.
- Leave 6 feet of space between your group and fellow groups of congregants



MINISTER'S MESSAGE *from* REV. ALEX

A new year is breaking! And what an exciting year this will be for our community! At the start of each new year, as is the case with other threshold moments of beginning, we are offered a chance to start over and anew. We are given a time to consider our ways of living and what might be different with our living in the new year. What this translates to for us as Unitarian Universalists is to consider our present commitments and ways we might more fully live into those commitments—or wish fresh commitments we wish to take on in the coming year.

As a covenantal tradition, there is no richer meaning for us in terms of *commitment* than living out a sense of covenant with one another and our wider world. Covenants help hold us accountable. Indeed, the simple act of signing the Membership Book in our community is a bold affirmation of our congregation's covenant, the basis for why it is that we gather and how it is that we want to live and be with one another. In terms of the early Puritans—from whom we inherit this congregational structure—covenants weren't easy. When someone entered into a covenant and agreed to be bound to a church, it was a serious matter; only after thorough examination could a person be released from its bonds. This points to the gravity and seriousness of what it means for us as Unitarian Universalists and how seriously we might take these covenants. Covenants are not to be entered into lightly. They are commitments that take hard work to uphold and live by.

Our Principles, as well, serve as a covenant between our wider UU congregations. They provide a framework for what it is we promote in our communities; the values and statements of conscience that guide us as we discern our spiritual paths. I often find that there is great depth in the Principles than first meets the eye. To really consider what it means to live radically in a way that affirms the worth and dignity of *every* person is a real test of faith. To understand one's connections and interconnectedness points to a way of living beyond just what one individual believes. The Principles offer a richness that might give us starting points for reflection for the dawning year.

“To really consider what it means to live radically in a way that affirms the worth and dignity of *every* person is a real test of faith.”

At the turn of this year, what is it that you're looking forward to? What hopes, dreams, or wishes are you holding? What commitments are you eager to take on, and which ones might you need to revise or even let go of? How might you be in better covenant with what you hold most sacred?

As you discern this, I hope you'll take a moment to reflect on what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and to live this faith out loud. There is a whole world out there in need of our message. And while we might not be ready evangelists, we certainly believe that we are the ones to do the work of living our values.

From your Minister, with deep faith and love,

Alex Jensen



WE SHARE OUR GIFTS



Sitting in the Light

by

Carol Ritter

The Winter Solstice draws a bit of attention in its subtle drama: the slow-motion erosion of the days slows to a halt and the interminable darkness, especially if aided by exorcism or hope-generating rituals or mention on the evening news, starts to lessen. The usual response to the damning of the darkness is to extol the virtues of rest and contemplation that the shorter days had brought. Well, that gift isn't what it used to be. For most people in the developed world, it probably just means more screen time. Certainly not more dark or more silence. The era of wistful winter contemplation before glowing fireplace embers is pretty much over.

Memories remain with me from my camping excursions, when length of day and night really did matter. Running out of time to set up a proper camp and gather firewood is an example. The sun will not slow its descent because everything is taking longer than you might have guessed. And nothing creates a connection between you and the arrival of the sun like shivering in your sleeping bag at 4 AM, urging the new day on, so you can do something, build a fire, warm in the first rays of light and drink cowboy coffee.

“One fact, that anyone sitting in the dark staring at a campfire or a winter bonfire learns, is that the fire not only illuminates one's immediate surroundings in a romantic orange glow, but it also blinds a person to everything else.”

One fact, that anyone sitting in the dark staring at a campfire or a winter bonfire learns, is that the fire not only illuminates one's immediate surroundings in a romantic orange glow, but it also blinds a person to everything else. You may be transfixed by the primordial organically-surreal lightshow working itself amongst the charring logs. The blazing blue understated explosions of trapped gas, the sudden collapse of what had been a sturdy chunk of a tree trunk just an hour before, the yellows, reds and oranges which dance with an air of both mischief and purpose. The bright sights and soft sounds consume your attention. But you cannot see much beyond these hot jewels.

Remember the living creatures out there and the unfamiliar eyes that may see you in a different light. The illumination you now bathe in is not necessarily your friend, as any guerilla fighter or Buddhist sensei could tell you. Being enveloped in a special warm comforting light only increases your vulnerability. Plus, it may blind you to things you may need to see. What other kinds of glow are liable to blinding us? Wealth, success or any kind of luck at all. Any degree of these can cause us to become unconcerned or unaware of what is going on in the dark woods behind the picture-perfect warmth and brilliance of our campfire lives.



THE BEACON

Do you have something for the Beacon?

Submissions are due by **end of day on the 23rd** of the month.

Please send to jomangiardi@hotmail.com

Submissions like the above personal reflection from Carol Ritter are welcome!

WELCOME BACK!

OPENING THE SANCTUARY



The sanctuary is now open!

The photos above are from our beautiful hybrid service on Christmas Eve. You can watch this by going to our Youtube channel:

[UU Congregation of Grand Traverse \(UUCGT\) - YouTube](#)



Program Council

Eleven members met December 10, 2021. Following opening words, chalice lighting and official approval of the 11/12/2021 meeting minutes, Rick summarized the Sunday Services-initiated project - a Thanksgiving fund drive that collected more than \$700. Seven Meijer \$100 gift cards were distributed to migrant families. Any additional funds will go toward similar Christmas gift cards.

Green Sanctuary's proposal to support the Oil and Water Don't Mix campaign to Shut Down Line 5 was supported by the Board on Dec 8. Green Sanctuary and Social Justice Action will put an internal campaign together to educate and lobby for a congregational vote on this action at an upcoming meeting sometime early in 2022.

Several committees (Stewardship, RE, & Hospitality) reported they could use additional volunteer members to help do the important work of UUCGT. If you find you need additional JOY in your life - Please consider an increased donation of your time to UUCGT.

During Committee Check-ins: **Green Sanctuary** reported they are getting re-established for focus on Environmental issues; **Congregational Care** was preparing for Mark Gustafson's Memorial Service; **Endowment** reported they had an excellent response to their congregational mailing indicating congregation is active and willing to support; **Hospitality** is preparing for both the Winter Solstice and Gustafson Memorial Service; **Wednesday Night Suppers** will be on intermittent basis - stay tuned to the Flash; Betsy reported **RE** will continue to meet twice a month, the classroom is being painted and both Rev Alex and Betsy will be taking intensive OWL training in January in preparation for offering an OWL class to 7th-9th graders in February; **Landscaping** and the **Memorial Garden** committees are on hold during the winter, two internments are planned for spring when the ground thaws; **Social Justice** will help coordinate a congregational read of "Caste" in the new year; **Membership** is organizing members to be greeters for in-person services and to collect offering baskets.

An extensive discussion was initiated about the by-laws statement that in order to be a member, individuals need to make a pledge. As we learn more about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, if we want to be as inclusive as possible, should this pledging requirement be deleted? This will be a major part of our January Meeting. If you are interested, please plan to attend on Zoom at 3:00 pm on January 14th.

Rick Walter—Chair Program Council



Music Corner

I just want to take this time to thank our generous vocalists and musicians who have lent their time and talent to making our services so special and beautiful over the last year, particularly under such challenging and changing circumstances. My hope is the new year will bring more ability to make music together in the same space. As we continue to navigate and explore the possibilities of these changing times, I continue to openly invite everyone to participate in our music programs in whatever way might feel fulfilling and joyful. We can always brainstorm together. Our Vocal Ensemble is always open to all and we'll continue to work to create even more opportunities for everyone to engage. May your new year be filled with joy and warmth and harmony.

Director of Music

Renée Herman Russell
musicatuucgt@gmail.com



**“Let our New Year’s resolution be this:
We will be there for one another as fellow members
of humanity,
in the finest sense of the word.”**

Göran Persson

***Sending our love and support to
those who will spend this Yuletide
season without their partners:***

Paul Ward
Solveig Gustafson
Bill Hanson
Ann Swaney

***Wishing them continued improvement after
recent health problems:***

Mary Grover
Connie Mooney

Keeping in our thoughts:

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

All of these people would probably appreciate your letting them know you’re thinking about them: Cards, phone calls or maybe a brief visit.

As usual, please let one of us know if you or some other member or friend of our congregation could use the Team’s help.

YOUR CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

Rev. Alex Jensen	231-947-3117	alexjensen@uucgt.org
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Co-chair: Pat Light	231-409-8195	patricialight@sbcglobal.net
Judith Briggs	231-228-4655	judithbriggs3@gmail.com
Barb Gibson	231-360-8284	barbgibson40@gmail.com
Hal Gurian	410-340-7323	hgurian1@gmail.com
Carolyn Kelly	231-392-5761	carolynk113@gmail.com
Marty Leavenworth	231-421-8081	martyleavenworth@gmail.com
Amanda Mangiardi	610-417-0730	jomangiardi@hotmail.com
Christie McGue	231-941-1923	clmcgue@gmail.com
Connie Metcalf	231-313-3714	cmetcalf633@gmail.com



At this time of year, it is the time for giving! Many also need to receive. The two go hand in hand. Here in our congregation, we have a great need to give, but there are some here who also need to receive. We all need to be on the receiving end at some time. We all need love and attention. In this, the second, or is it the third year, of the pandemic- we all need some of that loving receiving. I am talking of giving of ourselves, to our neighbors and friends we do not even know yet. It is time to give. Give what? Give recognition of existence. Give recognition of individual worth and value. Give recognition of another's ability to give and another's ability to receive.

Can we do that? We are wanting, willing, eager to have small support groups for those of us in need to receive the warmth of friendship, or understanding of like pains as when a child crosses expected barriers, or with a too demanding, needy invalid or parent, etc. Please let us know your Need and give to us the opportunity to help organize support groups where one can share openly. We are not talking "therapy!" We are talking sharing! Together we can feel better and do better. Let's try. Contact any member Congregational Care Team, Chair, Joanie Jackson, jljnishi@gmail.com

While talking giving locally, I know you won't forget those that are alone for the holidays. A call, an inclusion in a task can mean a lot. No one wants to be waited on, but most want to just be included. So easy. Just do it!

And while talking including, think and plan. Rev. Alex is suggesting we might want to read a book together and discuss it. For example, reading *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. We would then have small group discussion to share, understand it better, and in so doing find and cement new friendships. Let us know if you would like to be a leader for such a group. Thanks! I would be honored.

There are circles beyond our little lively one here. I think of the needs in Texas and in many States where there is ongoing voter suppression. I mention things to do in the Flash but let me reiterate a few here.

1-SecureMiVote is NOT what it says! Do NOT sign those petitions!!

Those petitions need only enuf signatures so the legislature can pass voter **suppression** bills into law bypassing Gov. Whitmer's veto. They are meant to secure White Republican voters! Please see more here- <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/gov-whitmer-vetoes-michigan-voting-reforms-some-had-bipartisan-support>

2- While the Supreme Court ponders, we can each take some action to protect Women's Health. Please read and sign!

<https://action.aclu.org/send-message/defend-abortion-access-all>

3- Congress has the power to stop this voter suppression wave cold, legally and constitutionally. The only question is whether it has the political will. **[Tell the Senate to put voting rights at the top of its list – and not allow procedure to get in the way.](#)**

4- Plan ahead- peaceful rally for Democracy on Jan. 6-

<https://www.facebook.com/events/traverse-city/candlelight-vigil-for-democracy/3004431256494686/>

And many thanks! May this New Year bring peace and hope to many, many across the globe! Peace from wars and famine and peace from fear of the pandemic. And may it bring Hope for health and happiness throughout the year and years to come.

Emmy Lou—Chair Social Justice Committee

sjatcmi@gmail.com.

BOARD SUMMARY



DATE: December 21, 2021 At our December 8th board meeting we continued the behind-the-scenes work toward the reopening of the UUCGT to services and gatherings.

The Reopening plan document prepared by the Reopening Task Force has been instrumental as we discuss the parameters and metrics used to consider people once again gathering safely in our building.

As specific questions come up we have been adding further detail and language as necessary so that the document can continue to serve in its intended use as the pandemic continues to affect our lives.

The board will meet in person in January for a ½ day long retreat when we'll rewrite the board covenant, debrief from the New Minister retreat in October and otherwise strengthen our bond as we work together for the congregation.

The board heard from Rick Walter representing the Program Council and support from the Green Sanctuary Committee the idea for the UUCGT to join the many other Michigan faith communities and sign on to the Oil and Water Don't Mix resolution calling to shut down the Line 5 pipeline.

The board supported the idea and voted to bring the decision to sign the resolution to the congregation for a vote at a future special meeting.

The board also supported the hiring of an accounting firm to oversee UUCGT finances. More details about their scope of work will be discussed at the next board meeting scheduled for January 12, 2022

David Hassing—Board Secretary



GREEN SANCTUARY

The Green Sanctuary Committee proposed that UUCGT join the many other churches in Michigan who have taken a stand to support the shutting down of Line 5 and for protecting our Great Lakes and the original homeland of the Anishinaabek.

The dignity and worth of all people is basic to who we are as Unitarian Universalists. The potential harm the Line 5 pipeline under the Straits of Mackinaw poses to the Great Lakes waters and to our Anishinaabe neighbors is horrendous. Recently we have begun opening our services with a Land Acknowledgment statement.

Our seventh principle urges us to respect the whole web of life, and the harm an oil spill would do to the ecosystems of the Great Lakes is frightening. This is our chance to be allies and actually express support for our Anishinaabe neighbors and the need to shut down the 68 year old Line 5 pipeline.

Watch for information about the UUCGT Board calling a special meeting of the congregation to vote yea or nay on UUCGT signing on as a faith community to Oil and Water Don't Mix campaign to shut down Line 5.

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of Grand Traverse**

6726 Center Road
Traverse City, MI 49686-1802

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

the **BEACON**

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
Volume 59, Issue 1

January 2022

UUCGT Calendar

The UUCGT office is staffed 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mon-Thu.

Some meetings take place in person, some via Zoom.

Zoom links and updates can be found in Thursday *Flash* newsletters
and here: <https://www.uucgt.org/calendar/>

Sign up to attend any of the January Services in person:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49AEA92AABF8CF8-January>

January 2021

02	Sun	Virtual Social Hall (Zoom link in <i>Flash</i>)	10:00 AM
02	Sun	Sunday Service (YouTube link in <i>Flash</i>)	10:30 AM
03	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
04	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
04	Tue	Sunday Service Comm/Coords	1:30 PM
05	Wed	Staff Meeting	10:00 AM
05	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
05	Wed	Website Team Meeting	11:30 AM
05	Wed	Supper together? TBA	5:30 PM
06	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
06	Thu	Congregational Care Team	1:00 PM
06	Thu	Peacemaker Needle Workers	1:30 PM
06	Thu	Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal	7:00 PM
07	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
09	Sun	Virtual Social Hall	10:00 AM
09	Sun	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
10	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
11	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
12	Wed	Endowment Committee (via Zoom)	9:30 AM
12	Wed	Staff Meeting	10:00 AM
12	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
12	Wed	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
12	Wed	Finance Committee (via Zoom)	3:30 PM
12	Wed	Staff Resources	4:00 PM
12	Wed	Board of Trustees	7:00 PM
13	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
13	Thu	Peacemaker Needle Workers	1:30 PM
13	Thu	Book Club	4:00 PM
13	Thu	Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal	7:00 PM
14	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
14	Fri	Program Council	3:00 PM

16	Sun	Virtual Social Hall	10:00 AM
16	Sun	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
17	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
18	Tue	Community Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
18	Tue	Leadership Development	4:00 PM
19	Wed	Staff Meeting	10:00 AM
19	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
19	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
19	Wed	Membership Committee	4:00 PM
20	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:00 AM
20	Thu	Congregational Care	1:00 PM
20	Thu	Peacemaker Needle Workers	1:30 PM
20	Thu	Committee on Ministry	5:00 PM
20	Thu	Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal	7:00 PM
21	Fri	Tech Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
23	Sun	Virtual Social Hall	10:00 AM
23	Sun	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
24	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
25	Tue	Community Lunch	10:30 AM
25	Tue	Social Justice Action Team (via Zoom)	4:00 PM
25	Tue	Healthy Congregations	4:00 PM
26	Wed	Staff Meeting	10:00 AM
26	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
26	Wed	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
27	Thu	Rev. Alex Office Hours	11:15 AM
27	Thu	Peacemaker Needle Workers	1:30 PM
27	Thu	Book Club	4:00 PM
27	Thu	Vocal Ensemble Rehearsal	7:00 PM
28	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunda Seervice	1:00 PM
30	Sun	Virtual Social Hall	10:00 AM
30	Sun	Sunday Service	10:30 AM
31	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM

