

- the Beacon -

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

Vol 58 Issue 9

September Services

September 2021



Unitarian Universalist
 Congregation of
 Grand Traverse

6726 Center Road, Traverse City, MI
 49686-1802
 231-947-3117

**UUCGT Office is staffed
 9am-3pm Tue-Fri.**

Minister

Rev. Alex Jensen
alexjensen@uucgt.org

Director of Music

Renée Herman Russell
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Religious Education

Betsy Hammerberg
bre@uucgt.org

Adult Education

Alison Ernst
awa2write@gmail.com

Office Administrator And Bookkeeper

Guy William Molnar
office@uucgt.org

Date	Contributors	Title / Description of Service
9.5	Lay led service Coordinator: Mary Van Valin	Embracing Your Gifts
	Evolving and renewal. See page 2 for more about this service.	
9.12	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Pam Hendrick	Forgiveness
	Yom Kippur is a time that traditionally marks a season of atonement and repentance. As we honor the "Day of Atonement" on the Hebrew Calendar, we'll delve into what forgiveness and atonement might mean for us as Unitarian Universalists	
9.19	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Andi Kramer	The Water Remembers
	Join us in worship as we celebrate the Water Communion and our annual Ingathering as a community for the congregational year! Please drop-off sealed containers of water to be used in the service in a box in the entryway of the building. The waters will be combined, sterilized, and blessed as a symbol of our gathered spirits.	
9.26	Rev. Alex Jensen Coordinator: Amanda Mangiardi	A Change is Gonna Come
	What makes us so resistant to change? Why is change, both as individuals and as a community, so difficult? In this service, we'll explore the significance of change and what holds us back.	

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, September 15
7:00 PM



Please join us!

On September 19th
 At 1:00 PM

Outside In the UUCGT parking lot
 After the virtual Water Communion
 and In-Gathering Service
 For a time of fellowship and celebration
 To kick-off the congregational year!

For more information, contact
 Sandra McDonald at:

m_mcdonald@charter.net

Beacon Editor: Amanda Mangiardi 610-417-0730

Please send submissions to jomangiardi@hotmail.com by the 24th of the month



Rev. Alex's Monthly Message



Dear ones, September is here! We are now officially in the season of a new congregational year! It is also that same season when our children and youth are returning to school, this time in new ways, shapes, and forms. Likewise, we are learning to be a community at the start of this cycle in new ways and ways we still have yet to discover.

“We are at a pivotal moment at the start of this year, as this will set a tone for what we might do, and how, in the coming months.”

I'm thrilled to see the high levels of interest and excitement in our community at this new start! People are writing to me with ideas and questions for how to be involved. Likewise, we are seeing some people return, either from summer migrations or short hiatuses. We are at a pivotal moment at the start of this year, as this will set a tone for what we might do—and how—in the coming months. And I am eager to see how you might like to get involved!

What things catch your interest? Where lie your strengths and passions? Where also might you like to grow and develop? The amazing part of being in this congregation, in our covenanted community, is that there are

safe opportunities to try things out and sample newer ways of engagement and service.

Perhaps you'd like to lend your heart to our Congregational Care Team. Or maybe your interests lie in developing our Sunday Services and shaping worship. Maybe there's an idea in you for a social justice project or outreach with the wider community that's waiting to be realized. We have a multitude of teams and committees within our community that would love for you to jump in! And maybe you have an idea for something we don't yet have...

Wherever and however you find yourself in this new season, my hope is that you'll reach out and get involved in the ministry of our congregation. We need one another. The pandemic has made this clear in the past year. We need one another, as well, to share in our ministry to the Grand Traverse area and our wider world.

So much of our Unitarian Universalist faith involves living out our shared values. I'm eager to see the creative ideas and exciting opportunities we might find together! Be well in this season of new starts and fresh beginnings. Blessings to you as we embark on the journey of this new year.

In faith and love, Reverend Alex Jensen



Service on September 5

“Embracing the Possibilities of Our Own Gifts”

Joan Sheard and Mary Van Valin invite you all to participate in a lay led service on Sept. 5th, titled “Embracing the Possibilities of Our Own Gifts”

This will be a participatory service of artists, musicians, poets and story tellers. Many of us turned to self-expression during these isolating times, and this is a time to celebrate our gifts. We don't have to share masterpieces, just authentic expressions of who we are.

We will have poetry readings, stories told, hopefully art displays; and do we have any dancers out there? Music of all kinds will be welcome. You musicians may need to check with Renée Russell for recording advice, as we play videos because live music on Zoom is not good quality.

We hope to hear from you! Please contact us by August 31st. Joan Sheard at joansheard@aol.com or Mary Van Valin at mgvv77@yahoo.com. Thank you!



Twelve members (10 via Zoom and 2 in absentia) of the Program Council met August 13, 2021. It was great to have Rev. Alex Jensen joining us as he begins his ministry here at UUCGT.

Rev. Alex Jensen is getting a good sense of UUCGT & its committees and is excited and looking forward to being able to meet us all in person.

Ellie Smith relayed information about how the Endowment Committee receives funds, that it grew by \$3,800 in May and that they will be sending an informational letter and survey out to the congregation in the fall after the full member and friends list is updated. Endowment used some of their funds to have all the windows in the building cleaned professionally. MUCH GRATITUDE

Emmy Lou indicated the Social Justice Action team is meeting, considering additional displays of recognition that our facility is on traditional Anishinaabe land, reevaluating potential of helping at Blair Elementary in light of current Covid variant status, working on renewal of our Welcoming Congregation designation, and various UU members are continuing to actively stand up for human rights at local meetings and discussions.

David Hassing has assumed the leadership role with the Facilities committee which is actively working on taking needed actions for improving our air handling system so we can safely resume in person Sunday services.

Lauren Keinath reported various groups are continuing to lovingly work on improvements to their various areas of landscaping.

Renée Russel reported she is continuing to evaluate how VE can safely gather for practicing and regulations related to eventual singing in the sanctuary.

Chris Walter reported for the board they are working closely with with various committees and teams focused on regathering and in-person meeting at UUCGT. They will continue to update the congregation weekly on current status and reopening plans.

Our next meeting will be September 10 via Zoom at 3:00 pm. We will begin with a discussion about PC's role in Shared Ministry

Rick Walter, Chairperson Program Council



ENDOWMENT FUND COMMITTEE

The Endowment Committee met July 21, Treasurer, Don Pyne, reporting \$3,000 had been received recently from Bob and Nancy Doughty as well as a gift in memory of Anne Olney. As of mid-July the Endowment Fund stood at \$144,793.54. Our funds continue to be invested with Vanguard with a mix of 40% of money in a Social Index Fund and 60% in a Bond Fund.

If you have been to the church recently, you may have noticed the sparkling clean windows professionally cleaned this summer with funds dispersed to UUCGT from the Endowment Fund. A small, but significant example of how the Endowment Fund enhances UUCGT.

If you have comments or questions about the Endowment Fund contact any committee member: Ellie Smith, chair; Hal Gurian, vice chair; Nancy Doughty, secretary; Don Pyne, treasurer; and Karl Keinath, Board liaison.





MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM

THANK YOU TO OUR MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM!



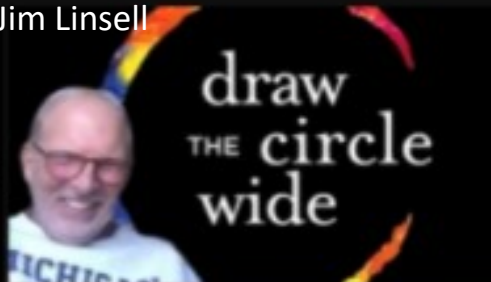
Mary Van Valin



Charles Brackett



Jim Linsell



Chris Walter



Jan Zerbel

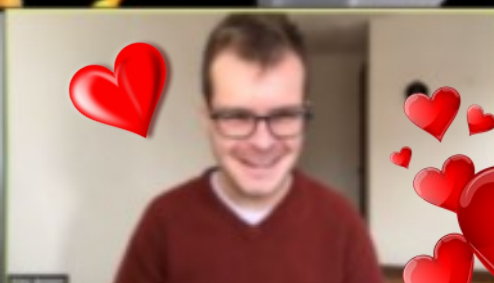


Dusty Coulton



Thank You!

Geoff Norman-Anderson



Alex Jensen



Community Needs Committee

COMMUNITY NEEDS QUARTERLY DONATIONS

The Community Needs Team is glad to let you know that we have been able to make ten \$500.00 donations from funds accumulated at the end of the last quarter.

The recipients of the funds that you so generously give are always very appreciative of the financial support you give them. Receiving donations this quarter:

5 LOAVES 2 FISHES—community meals;
PROJECT FEED THE KIDS—free meals for children;
JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS—legal help for immigrants;
NMC FOOD PANTRY—help for students;
BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER INCARCERATION—support for those incarcerated and families;
FOOD RESCUE—distributing food for hunger programs;

NORTHERN MI SUPPORTIVE HOUSING—keeping people with mental health issues in housing; Child and Family Services
YOUTH WORKS PROGRAM—training for at-risk youth;
NORTHPORT MISSION CHURCH—health crisis needs, medication for Native American people.

Please continue to give to “For Those in Need”, which funds these donations in addition to our Tuesday Lunch program and Congregational Care.

Sandra McDonald—Community Needs



WE SAY A SAD GOODBYE



We say a sad goodbye to Mark Harold Gustafson who passed away August 19, 2021. Mark was an amazing individual who was a beloved member of our congregation. He will be missed, but will always be remembered.

This is a link to his obituary in the Record Eagle:

https://record-eagle-cnhi.newsmemory.com/?publink=125bad532_1345ead



Congregational Care

“The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings.”

Ralph Blum, The Book of Runes



Some changes in our lives (like a move to a new home, a new job or college) usually don't happen because something has blocked the pathway forcing us to move in a new direction. These moves are chosen, and the nervousness that may be experienced is often coupled with excitement.

Other changes--those caused by the loss of a loved one or a job; brought about by serious illness or accident; or precipitated by natural disasters such as fires, storms or pandemics--are quite different. We didn't choose them, and after momentous events like these, a person often has to, in some ways, begin again. That's not easy.

We can be of some help by giving encouragement and support to those who must pass through a “gateway” to a new way of life or even a new vision of who they've become. The Congregational Care Team continues its outreach to those in our community who are experiencing such changes. We know many of you will join us in offering your love and support to these members of our congregation who are presently facing difficult life events:

Sincere sympathy to:

- Solveig Gustafson and family upon the passing of their husband and father Mark on August 19th at the Pavilions.
- Judith Briggs whose sister recently passed away.

Close in our hearts are:

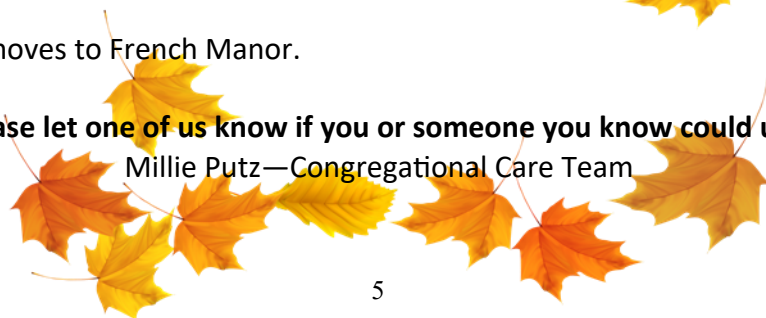
- Don Fraser who is at home, but still feeling the effects of his recent health crisis.
- Margaret Wozniak who is recovering from hip-replacement surgery.
- Marcia Bellinger who was hospitalized for very serious cold and cough and is recovering at home.

Best wishes for a successful transition to:

- Marge Rundell as she moves to French Manor.

As usual, please let one of us know if you or someone you know could use our help.

Millie Putz—Congregational Care Team





OUR HEALTHY CONGREGATION



A Message from the Healthy Congregations Team (HCT)

We've achieved some major 2021 milestones! Rev Alex is with us now and we are gradually meeting more frequently in person. As exciting as this all is, with changes we naturally may experience anxiety. Next month on October 3rd, the HCT will be supporting the Sunday service on Cultivating Relationship to help us connect our covenant to each other with how we respond to a circumstance that we have issues with.

"A healthy congregation is one that actively and responsibly addresses its anxious disturbances, rather than a congregation with an absence of troubles."

A healthy congregation is one that actively and responsibly addresses its anxious disturbances, rather than a congregation with an absence of troubles. Thinking of our congregation as a system, we realize that a change in one part affects other parts of the group--similar to an ecosystem in nature. Thus deciding to respond thoughtfully vs. reacting automatically can be your contribution to the health of your family, group, congregation or community!

Taken from our UUCGT Healthy Congregation Procedure, let's refresh our memory of what we agreed we should do when we feel anxious or upset with someone.

- Talk directly with the person (member, Minister, staff) with whom you have the conflict.
- Anonymous complaints are not acceptable. Own the issue.
- Examine your role in the conflict. Why is this matter important to you? Get clear in your mind what happened and why. Write your thoughts down.
- Email is not an acceptable means of communication in a time of conflict.
- As soon as possible after the incident, agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk in private with the other person(s) involved.
- During the discussion, use "I" statements ("I feel" not "you did"). Actively listen to the other person with your full attention. Check in by sharing what you heard along the way to verify that you have accurately understood her/him. Communicate to achieve understanding.
- If you feel that safety is an issue, or that the conversation is too difficult to manage alone, seek the assistance of an appropriate, mutually acceptable, third party. The Healthy Congregations Team has members who are available to help.
- Avoid any action that can lead to gossip. Choose your support and help wisely.
- If the conflict is not with the person, but with how that person is performing a job (staff, RE teacher, etc.), address your concern to the Minister if one-on-one discussion does not work or does not feel possible.

In other words, when you feel anxious: Notice, Reflect, Respond directly with the other person. Take a couple of deep breaths before responding to help diffuse high emotions for both parties!

Remember our HCT motto: less judgement, more curiosity!!

Respectfully yours,

Your HCT Team:

Barb Culton, Barb Termaat, Jim Linsell, Mary Anne Rivers, Rev Alex, Susan Lio





Social Justice

There are many events overwhelming us these days. Each one alone would be a tragedy in and of itself: out of control fires, earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, and the usual that many, many live with always: lack of shelter, lack of nutritional food, child care so hard to obtain that one can't work and therefore even a greater lack of sufficient funds for life. Top that off with racial inequity and incarcerations for, for what reasons, and poor or no proper education. The list is gigantic!

How does one manage all this? I do not have the answer. I know what others might say: one step at a time, one issue and then another.

“We don't get to choose when we were born. We don't choose what natural disasters, epidemiological emergencies, stock market crashes, tyrannical regimes, or wars our generations face. We only get to choose how we react.”

Let me quote a college quest speaker, “We don't get to choose when we were born. We don't choose what natural disasters, epidemiological emergencies, stock market crashes, tyrannical regimes, or wars our generations face. We only get to choose how we react.”

How do I react? You react? I cannot stop or sit. We must all join together and fight! I am so amazed and thrilled at my friends and fellow workers out there fighting constantly for equality and fairness in this world. We must fight all the crazy ideas from people who don't believe science and want to expose the unvaccinated immune-compromised and children, and want to be a harbor for mutant Covid varieties to emerge, one possibly more virulent than another. This done in the name of the right for “freedom??” Are we here together or each of us alone on this planet?

We are starting a new era here at UUCGT. How do you want to begin? Another project? Join the many fights? Whatever? But in the meantime, go out and fight. UUA get out the Vote. Fight the many voter suppression bills thru ACLU. Help with the natural disasters. Immigration. Incarceration? Donations needed desperately – UUA, Amnesty International, The Red Cross, etc. Click or copy URL for specific help to Women to Women International for Afghanistan:

<https://support.womenforwomen.org/donate/afghanistan-emergency-2x-match?src=HHUA21082A>

Pitch in where you can and many, many thanks!!
 Emmy Lou Cholak– Social Justice Committee

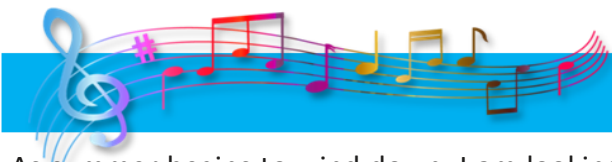


THE BEACON



Articles and submissions for the Beacon are due by the 24th. Please send to:

Amanda Mangiardi at
jomangiardi@hotmail.com



Music Corner



As summer begins to wind down, I am looking forward to the fun and collaboration that the fall and upcoming holidays will bring. While things are constantly changing regarding safety measures due to the spread of the Delta variant, we can still find ways to share the important connection that music provides.

The possibility of live streaming our services is opening new avenues in ways to connect. This year has allowed me to share music experiences by artists that we would otherwise have not been able to hear. This has been particularly powerful as we have opened ourselves to listening to the authentic voices of those who have been silenced for too long. We will be able to continue to offer these authentic moments by being able to share live video during our in-person and at-home service experiences once our hybrid model begins.

This is not at all to diminish the powerful and important experience of hearing the voices and instruments of our own UUCGT community. Just like all of you, I long for the time of congregational singing and our All Music services. Unfortunately, we are not there yet. For the time being, the recommendation of all major choral and band associations and the UUA is that in-person singing continue to be restricted to smaller, masked groups that meet for a short period of time (30 mins) and are spread 6 feet apart, even if everyone is fully vaccinated and even while outdoors.

The Vocal Ensemble will be able to meet in-person for rehearsals and recordings to be used in our services, but will need to follow these safety guidelines. I will be purchasing "singing masks" that will allow extra room for moving your mouth while still trapping the necessary particles. The Vocal Ensemble and all music offerings during services is heartily open to all. The same guidelines will apply to any and all musicians wishing to utilize the sanctuary. I ask that all rehearsals and performances be scheduled and organized through me so I can make sure everyone is able to have a fun and safe experience.

I look forward to seeing how our new technology allows for even more ways to connect and grow as a musical community and I thank you all for your patience, support, and resilience during this time of creative reimagining.

Director of Music
Renée Herman Russell
musicatuucgt@gmail.com



OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

It is wonderful to be back at UUCGT after a summer away! I enjoyed working with Parallel 45 immensely, but I am excited to be back and looking forward to a new year together. RE plans are in constant flux, but I do have a few updates to share:

We have a beautiful new outdoor classroom, created in June by a wonderful group of volunteers. A huge thank you to Kat Norman for facilitating the vision and planning; to Karl Keinath for building the picnic tables; and to all of the volunteers who showed up to assemble arches, clear ferns, and remove sumac. We will appreciate and enjoy this space for many years to come.

On Sunday, September 5, we will hold a "Blessing of the Backpacks" during the service. Children and youth are invited to bring a backpack, pencil case, or other receptacle for learning materials with them when they Zoom in to the service. Special keychains will be sent in the mail next week, which can be attached to backpacks as a reminder of our UU values and as a token of the care that the UUCGT community extends to its younger members.

We will not be doing Zoom RE classes anymore, and instead will be holding masked and distanced gatherings in our outdoor classroom on a few Sundays this fall. Our goal is to provide fun, meaningful, and safe RE experiences in-person. Families, keep your eyes on your email inbox for more details!

Betsy Hammerberg—Religious Education Director

UUCGT Board Meeting Summary



The primary topics for the July and August Board meetings were:

- The arrival of our new minister, Rev. Alex Jensen
- Formation of a Committee on Ministry,
- The safe re-opening of our building,
- Improving the buildings air quality system,
- The start of a new fiscal year with some new faces on the Board of Trustees.

The new Board is comprised of:

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

Re-opening Task Force:

The ROTF continues to monitor the ever-changing Covid-19, and the new Delta variant's impact and challenges. The Board and ROTF gathered for a Discernment Meeting on July 28. A thorough update was shared. The Board will keep the congregation apprised with weekly updates.

Leadership Development Committee:

The Leadership Committee met with the Board on July 28 to select a Committee on Ministry, based on the new policy written by Judy Myers with input from Rev. Alex, approved by the Board at the July 14 Board meeting.

The following were selected and have accepted this opportunity to assist Rev. Alex on The Committee on Ministry.

Jim Linsell
Barb Culton
Alison Kadlec
Jon Luoma
Barb Termaat
Sandra McDonald

UUCGT website refresh - Closed-captioning feature is now in operation for Sunday Zoom Services. Equipment to facilitate live-streaming for Sunday Services and other events has been acquired and will soon be put into use.

Air quality system upgrade - Bids were considered, decisions made to make the air cleaner and safer within the building. New equipment will feature an ionization system.

Other issues to be followed - Pam Hendrick recommends contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances and has started making lists. A Stewardship Committee will need to be in place by end of October. A decision was made to have this committee function for a full year.

Pat Light, Board Secretary

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

the BEACON

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
Volume 58, Issue 9

September 2021

UUCGT Calendar

*The UUCGT building is open by permission & appointment
but the office is staffed:*

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM Tuesdays through Fridays

Many meetings and classes take place via Zoom.

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

September 2021

01	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed 10-11	10:00 AM
01	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86328072766	
01	Wed	Staff Resources	4:00 PM
01	Wed	Weekly Picnic - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
02	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
02	Thu	Congregational Care	2:00 PM
		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89800680852	
02	Thu	Vocal Ensemble with Renee	7:30 PM
03	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunday Service	1:00 PM
05	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM Sign in @ 10:00 AM	
		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87997820177	
06	Mon	Labor Day - Office Closed all day!	
06	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
06	Mon	Sunday Service Coordinators	2:30 PM
06	Mon	Building reserved for Rosh Hashanah	5:00 PM
06	Mon	Men's Group	5:30 PM
		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81706559983	
07	Tue	Rosh Hoshanah Svcs, cont.'d	9:00 PM
07	Tue	Rosh Hoshanah Children's Service	1:00 PM
07	Tue	Sunday Svcs/Coords	1:30 PM
08	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
08	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
08	Wed	Finance Committee	3:30 PM
08	Wed	Weekly Picnic - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
08	Wed	Board of Trustees	7:00 PM
09	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
09	Thu	Vocal Ensemble with Renee	7:30 PM
10	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunday Svc	1:00 PM
10	Fri	Program Council	3:00 PM
		https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81712714419	

12	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM Sign in @ 10:00 AM	
13	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
	Mon	Ministerial Search Team	2:30 PM
14	Tue	Community Sack Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
14	Tue	(Tentative) Staff Lunch	12:00 PM
14	Tue	Sunday Svcs/Coords	1:30 PM
15	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
15	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
15	Wed	Building reserved for Yom Kippur Svcs	6:00 PM
16	Thu	Yom Kippur Svcs, cont.'d (to 6:00 PM)	9:30 AM
16	Thu	Needle Workers, Cong. Care TBA	
16	Thu	Vocal Ensemble with Renee	7:00 PM
17	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunday Service	1:30 PM
19	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM Sign in @ 10:00 AM	
20	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
21	Tue	Community Sack Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
21	Tue	Sunday Svcs/Coords	1:30 PM
21	Tue	Leadership Development	3:00 PM
21	Tue	Creative Writing	6:30 PM
22	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
22	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
22	Wed	Weekly Picnic - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
23	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
23	Thu	Vocal Ensemble with Renee	7:30 PM
24	Fri	Rehearsal for Sunday Service	1:30 PM
26	Sun	Sunday Service 10:30 AM Sign in @ 10:00 AM	
27	Mon	Book Group	10:00 AM
27	Mon	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
28	Tue	Community Sack Lunch, Friends Church	10:30 AM
28	Tue	Sunday Service Coordinators	1:30 PM
28	Tue	(Tentative) Healthy Congregations	4:00 PM
29	Wed	Staff Meeting - Office Closed	10:00 AM
29	Wed	Stretch & Strengthen	11:15 AM
29	Wed	Weekly Picnic - Mike & Sandra McDonald	5:30 PM
30	Thu	Peacemakers Needle Workers	1:30 PM
30	Thu	Vocal Ensemble with Renee	7:30 PM