

- the Beacon -

Sunday Services at 10:30 AM

www.uucgt.org

Email: office@uucgt.org

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AUGUST SERVICES

August 2022



Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse

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UUCGT Office is OPEN
Tuesday-Friday 9:00-3:00

Minister

Rev. Alex Jensen
alexjensen@uucgt.org

Director of Music

Renée Herman Russell
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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2022 -2023

Chris Walter	President
Tom Darnton	Vicepresident
David Hassing	Secretary
Dusty Coulton	Treasurer
Pam Hendrick	Trustee
Judy Myers	Trustee
Amanda Mangiardi	Trustee

Board Meeting
Wednesday 8.17..22
7:00 PM

7.22

Lay Led Service

Beth Marshall guest Minister
Coordinator: Andi Kramer

Try a Little Tenderness

Fr. Gregory Boyle writes that "Judgement takes up all the room you need for loving." This morning's service explores how we might challenge ourselves to see beyond that which we don't understand, to the tenderness of the human being within.

14.22

Lay Led Service

Coordinator: Amanda Mangiardi

Your Five Minutes

Congregants will speak for five minutes on topics related to spirituality, the 8 Principles, and/or the UU sources.

21.22

Lay Led Service

Jane Lippert Guest Minister
Coordinator: Mary Anne Rivers

Fight or flight / Black or white

"I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next. Delicious ambiguity." --Gilda Radner

28.22

Rev. Alex (Rev. Alex returns)

TBD

Alex will be back from his time of rest New member orientation after service

Don't forget the Tony Talk coming up!



Beyond Diagnosis

August 7 at 9:00 in the social hall

Smoking causes cancer. Mental illness causes violence. My former spouse destroyed our marriage. The human brain is quite adept at cause and effect thinking. Quick, efficient and often inaccurate, this way of viewing the world yields simple answers to highly complex issues. This discussion will explore the challenges of not only developing a broader perspective on the human condition but also the wisdom of embracing ignorance. Discarding some of our cherished notions about problems in families, congregations, and society may lead to a more thoughtful way to engage those whom we 'diagnose' on a regular basis, viz., those who do not think and believe like we do, at least at first blush.



MINISTER'S MESSAGE *from* REV. ALEX

I am currently on leave from my pastoral duties for Vacation and Study Leave through Monday, August 22nd, 2022, returning to the Office on Tuesday, August 23rd. This is an important time for my own rest and rejuvenation, and I will not be monitoring emails to this inbox or calls during this time.

If you are seeking pastoral care and support, please contact Joanie Jackson or Pat Light, Co-Chairs of the Congregational Care Team, at iljinishi@gmail.com; (231) 883-9292 or tcpatsyann@gmail.com; (231) 409-8195. Additionally, my cell phone (231) 944-6935 will be answered by Rev. Wendy von Courter, who is available for pastoral emergencies. Her direct number is (231) 884-6434.

For administrative and all other questions, please email Arica Eshelman, Office Administrator, at office@uucgt.org.

In faith,



Greetings,

I just wanted to check-in with you all as your newly elected Board of Trustees President. I am very happy and honored to be serving your congregation in this way along with a wonderful Board - Tom Darnton - Vice President, Dusty Culton - Treasurer, David Hassing - Secretary, and Trustees Pam Hendrick, Amanda Mangiardi, and Judy Myers. Rev. Alex serves Ex-Officio.

Before moving on though, how about that wonderful leadership by Pam Hendrick during this past program year? Leading with grace, caring and shared leadership in a year that we welcomed our brand new settled minister, plowed through lots of COVID restrictions and adjustments, and saw us through office administration transitions. THANK YOU Pam, we are grateful.

Please reach out to any of us with any ideas or concerns that you would like your Board of Trustees to consider. We encourage congregational members to attend at least one of our meetings which are 3rd Wednesdays, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. Check the Calendar on the website for the Zoom Link, or let me know ahead of time, I'd be happy to send you the Agenda and the Link. We are all in this together. Stewardship of UUCGT depends on all of us doing whatever we can to support our thriving, learning, and loving community.

Chris Walter—Board President





Summer brings bright blossoms to the Sunny Maple Garden at UUCGT

Take some time to stroll through or just view from the edges.

This is the adopted garden to the West of our building and directly outside the large office windows.

The photo is of some orange butterfly weed and some lemon thyme plants in bloom.

The lemon thyme plants are the short green/white plants in flower.

We welcome you to come with snippers and take some lemon thyme for your culinary efforts. We are still in the process of weeding and removing some undesirable invasives, and if you wish to help, please check with us.

Enjoy Summer!

Chris and Rick Walter

Lemon thyme is one of approximately 350 varieties of thyme, loved for its sweet citrus aroma and taste. It shares the minty, earthy and floral notes of regular thyme, but with a subtle essence of lemon that neutralizes the bitterness sometimes found in its more well-known relative. It's scent and flavour are at their strongest in summer, just before it begins to bloom.

Lemon thyme can be used to flavour poultry, seafood, and vegetables, and will accentuate the natural flavour profiles of fish and meat dishes in particular. It can be added to marinades, stews, soups, salads, sauces, *bouquet garnis* and stuffing, and a few sprigs also make an attractive garnish. You can substitute it for lemon, lemon juice or zest to add a subtle earthiness to a dish, or substitute it for thyme to add some zesty brightness.



Discussion Group

Misty Sheehan is leading a discussion group for those who are interested on the book: "Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace" By Vandana Shiva



Earth Democracy is both an ancient world view and an emergent political movement for peace, justice, and sustainability, to experience the earth as a family and community consisting of all beings and humans of all colors, beliefs, classes and countries.

Living democracy is the space for reclaiming our fundamental freedom, defending our basic rights, and exercising our common responsibilities and duties to protect life on earth, defend peace, and promote justice.

When economic dictatorship is grafted onto representative electoral democracy, a toxic growth of religious fundamentalism and right-wing extremism is the result. Earth Democracy protects the ecological processes that maintain life and fundamental human rights.

We will discuss on the following dates:

Wed Sept 21 7-9 Wed Oct 12 7-9

Wed Sept 28 7-9 Wed Oct 19 7-9

Please let me know if you are interested in attending. I can purchase the book for you for \$15.95 at Powells and you can pay me back or you can purchase it yourself. I need to know by Sept 1 if you want me to purchase the book. Please email me if you want to attend. (mistysheehan11@gmail.com)



Congregational Care



It's been scientifically shown that spending time immersed in nature reduces stress, lowers heart rate, lowers cortisol levels, decreases inflammation, boosts the immune system, improves mood, increases the ability to focus, jump-starts creativity, increases energy levels, and makes us more generous and compassionate.

Consider the book by Julia Plevin: "The Healing Magic of Forest Bathing: Finding Calm, Creativity, and Connection in the Natural World."

I was reminded of the value of forest bathing by the YouTube service from Birmingham. Even if some of us can't scale steep mountains or even make our way on rocky paths or through bramble-covered passages, we can still reap the benefits of the natural world. We can sit, listen and feel the restorative presence of nature. And we can take others in need to those healing places.

The Congregational Care Team visits, phones, sends cards, and helps in any way we can those whom we know to be in need. Maybe sometimes we should consider forest bathing when we are thinking of how we can help others through hard times. Why not treat someone in need to this experience? Consider the new pathway around Boardman Lake, the Pellizzari Natural Area, or even our own memorial pathway through the trees.

All of the members or friends listed below would probably appreciate knowing you're thinking about them. Maybe some would even appreciate some quiet time in the nature.

Keeping in our thoughts:

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

Sending love and support to those who have experienced major loss in recent months:

Nancy Doughty
Paul Ward
Solveig Gustafson
Ann Swaney
Christie McGue
Bernie Hanchett



And, as usual, please let 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
Co-Chair: Joanie Jackson	231-883-9292	jljnishi@gmail.com
Co-chair: Pat Light	231-409-8195	patricialight@sbcglobal.net



VOTE!



Many of us recently signed petitions that have been circulating that are meant to secure some of our freedoms, even though some state legislatures are posed to vote them down. Some of us feel strongly that we have certain rights and that these rights should be a choice for all of us. Besides the one to have our votes count, another is the one guaranteeing control over our own bodies. Many of us remember fighting for this right 50 years ago. What I want for my body may be different than what you want for yours. I can accept that and feel comfortable with each of us making our own informed decision. Again, this year the fight for this Right had a new title. It was called Reproductive Freedom for All. It was about the right to not only have a safe medical Abortion, but also have our care and medical needs met during all aspects of pregnancy, before and after.

That for All can have many meanings. Obviously for all females, yes. But many of us see it as a right for the males too. Although contraception can and should be used, accidents can happen. If an unavoidable pregnancy occurs, a way to have control over our bodies, is a freedom that men can enjoy too, as they hopefully support their partner to terminate it if they decide that together. It is her choice over her own body, but in a deep rewarding relationship, it is his too.

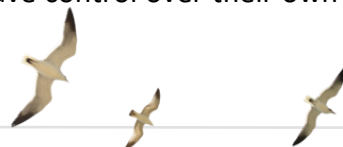
A chance relationship resulting in a pregnancy is also a choice and the responsibility lays with the woman to do as she sees best. So far, there should be no reason for that chance with contraception easily available for both the partners. But that word available, may not always be true. With today's assault on women's choices, the availability for having control is threatened. Some members of the Supreme Court are even talking of ruling against availability of contraception!

In the case of rape, or especially rape by incest, that should be an entirely different situation. The right for termination should be easily available and supported in an open caring society that respects all peoples. I have helped to prosecute such situations where the women's rights were so terribly transgressed. This is especially true when a child is involved. The beginning of puberty and the possibility of becoming impregnated is happening younger and younger than it was when many of us were kids. That is a crisis and needs the support of family or family substitute and society when such a horror takes place. Having a child carry a pregnancy and deliver it can cause physical death. It certainly causes death of childhood and the opportunity to grow up naturally with a healthy body and healthy emotional outlook.

There are other incidents where pregnancy can kill the intended mother. An ectopic pregnancy is a well-known one. Now that we have access to ultrasound and other X-ray techniques, we can often determine not only the sex but the health of the fetus. An extreme deformity can be life threatening to a fetus as soon as born. To carry such a deformed fetus can be depressing and even life threatening to the well-being of the mother due to her reactions and fears and feelings of self-worth or fears of abandonment. Some become suicidal. This can be threatening to the relationship even in a good partnership and needs counseling and support.

There are many aspects of this issue that have been, and am sure will be, written and talked about. It is important for all of us be sure we, family, neighbors, friends, are aware and go to the polls to vote in November for Reproductive Freedom For All. It is everybody's right to have control over their own body! If you have questions, please let us discuss them. Thank you!

Emmy Lou Cholak—Social Justice Committee



Exciting Facilitator Training Opportunity

UUCGT has just re-affiliated with the UUA's offering of the Soul Matters curriculum. This affords our congregation and its leadership invaluable guidance and opportunities for participation at many levels throughout the year.

There are currently several Soul Matters groups which have been meeting the past several years. Also the Sunday Service Team, Religious Ed and Rev Alex use versions of this material. A bonus of this Soul Matters package is **Facilitator Training** through a one-time Zoom for a couple of hours.

We are offering **Facilitator Training** through this program for anyone interested in easily learning some facilitation skills for any small group/committee you may be in or want to begin. Useful for Book Groups, Men's or Women's Groups, Transforming Hearts discussions, etc. We are hoping to expand the popular Soul Matters Groups and continue and/or repeat Transforming Hearts and will need more facilitators in order to do so. Or you may want to simply gain a new skill for use in the future.

Sign up times will be announced soon for **Facilitator Training** in mid-September or early October. More specific information will appear in the Flash and the Beacon as available. There will be a small fee depending on the number of participants.

We believe that part of building a healthy community is opening avenues for participation for everyone, in as many ways as possible. And that relationship-building depends on opportunities to connect with one another.

From Barb Culton, Susan Lio members of the Healthy Congregation Team & Christine Walter for the UUCGT Board of Trustees



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June 2022