



The Chronicle

MARQUETTE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

JANUARY 2013

The Balancing Act

I hope all of you have some unique moments to treasure from the holidays and have a wonderful year with lots of support during the challenging times, as well as much happiness to share!



In our *Soul to Soul* group we'll be talking in our next session about addictions. I tend to bounce from project to project without always taking the time to sort, organize, and file. Yes, that can be an addiction, since it keeps me from having the life I want to lead: a simpler one. I'm also not completely free or happy when I walk past a pile of papers. A New Year's Resolution for me will be to find a balance, perhaps being a bit more "scheduled" so that I can be more clear, as I head into the next project.

Did I mention a dark chocolate addiction, too? No snacks to me please, but it would be wonderful if you could bring some healthy snacks to the kids. See Sarah Johnson to sign up for a Sunday.

At our December Board meeting we put into place Peter Morales's name to be re-elected for a second term as UUA President. Morales has served UU's well, particularly in his strong ethical stance on immigration rights and reform and his concern for the environment. Go to <http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/officers/president/index> to find out more. A nomination does not constitute endorsement, and congregations are free to nominate any number of candidates.

One of my favorite selections from the back of our UU hymnbook is by author/civil rights leader/chaplain, Howard Thurman*, which was set to music by UU minister, Mary Grigolia. I'll close with it, hoping - no matter what our beliefs - we will ponder it and seek a bit of balance in our lives around...

"The Work of Christmas"

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal the broken,
to feed the hungry,
to release the prisoner,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all,
to make music in the heart.*

In shared ministry,
Barb Michael
President, Board of Directors

* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Thurman

∞ With Gratitude to Melissa Middleton ∞

During the past 4 1/2 years Melissa Middleton has served our congregation as RE Coordinator. Her guidance, collaboration, and teaching has helped our RE Program grow and thrive. Melissa has been integral to finding curricula, offering Our Whole Lives, running our events like Heifer Dinner, coordinating service projects like serving dinner at Room at the Inn, and so much more! She will be sorely missed. Morgan H-G said, "I'll miss having Melissa there to help us calm down and focus."

Melissa, thank you for your service. We will miss you and deeply appreciate all you have done for the children of MUUC. Your unwavering calm and loving presence has been a blessing to all of us. We wish you well on this next adventure!

---From the RE Committee

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

Job Announcement:

We are still looking for a Religious Education Coordinator. If you or someone you know is interested in this position, you may view the posting at the Michigan Works website: <https://jobs.mitalent.org/job-seeker/job-details/567626>, or contact Sarah ∞Johnson.

Volunteer needs:

If RE is to survive, much less thrive, the congregation needs to step up. This need is especially dire for the next couple months as we continue our search for a new coordinator. If RE is to continue, we need more involvement from more adults on a regular basis. Please ask yourselves how important children are to your congregation, how important a quality children's program is to what the UU means, how important teaching UU values to the next generation is to you. The MUUC kids are awesome and a joy to interact with.

At this point we need volunteers for the two classes described below.

For the older kids (age 11 and up):

We are exploring two themes with the older kids this year: creating and implementing their own local service projects and exploring their own beliefs and spirituality.

We need:

1) a volunteer to meet with the kids on an on-going basis (but not every Sunday) to facilitate their planning and implementing their service projects. you can have them tell you what they have done this year, what they liked about it, (or didn't) and get them moving towards planning the next one. They said they wanted to go to a nursing home and take ice cream Sundays, or decorate cookies with the residents. We think they should go to an undeserved home, for example Norlite instead of Broodridge. We need someone to help them through this process, keep their conversation on track and coordinate the event. The kids are awesome and capable, they want to do this, they just need someone to play a focusing role for them. Taking part in service projects with these kids is super fulfilling, it will bring you more joy than the recipients of the projects. It'd be a shame if the congregation can't come up with a volunteer to guide them through this. They want to do the congregation's service in action, they just need a little guidance and structure.

2) numerous volunteers to sign up for a day at a time to talk to the kids about your own spiritual journey, how your own path and beliefs evolved over time, what things helped your journey etc..... Ask them some questions, and we will try to have them ask you questions. But as we have no coordinator or lead teacher you may need to help the process along a bit. feel free to bring in props, for example if music or art making is part of your path, bring music or an art project.....

For the younger kids (ages 6-10):

We need a volunteer or two for each Sunday. We will give you a lesson plan or you can create a meaningful activity of your own. Signing up for more than one Sunday in a row would be great but if you can only do one, please sign up anyway.

For kids under age 5:

We have a volunteer for the rest of the year. They enjoy supervised play, practicing the UU principles, in the small "Tadpole" room.

Thank you to December volunteers: Sari Embley Kim Frost, g.g. Gordon, Sarah Johnson, Beth King, Morganna Penglase, Hailey Spillane, Nancy Sullivan and all those who helped with Heifer Dinner.

Melissa Middleton

Call for Our Whole Lives (OWL) Teachers:

OWL will be offered again next fall (October 2013 - May 2014).

Please let Sarah Johnson or another RE Committee member know if you are interested. Training is required and can be completed this upcoming spring.

Information regarding this valuable sexual education program is available on the UUA website: www.uua.org.

Heifer Dinner:

Wow, what an evening. The kids measured the success in many ways, all the new faces, the need to bring out more tables and chairs, two tables full of soups, so many coats the rack broke from the wall, and of course the money: \$2351, an all time high. They decided to buy 3 biogas stoves, 1 water buffalo, 1 veterinarian health kit, 1 gardeners kit, 3 llama, 1 goat, 1 sheep, 1 pig, 2 bundles of trees, 4 trios of rabbits, 3 hives of bees, 6 flocks of chicks, and 2 shares of the women's empowerment fund.

Room at the Inn:

Thank you to everyone who brought ingredients for our dinner. This was a great congregational/RE event. Almost all of the youth participated in some way, either preparing the food or serving dinner at the Faith in Christ Church. The kids were so impressed by their experience they think we should do this on a regular basis. There is talk of a congregational Room at the Inn Club to deliver a meal once a month or so. Special thank you to Kim Frost, Michelle Halley, Sarah Johnson, and Michelle Lexmond.

Getting to Know Tom Spencer

It all began in November of 1952 when I was born at Camp Polk, Louisiana. My Dad was in the Army at the time. When I was about three weeks old, he moved my Mom and me back to Port Huron, Michigan, while he was stationed in Germany for a year. After his tour in Germany, he got out of the Army and went to work for Pontiac Motors. So I grew up in a blue-collar family and community. Along the way, a sister came in 1956 and a brother in 1963.

I graduated from Lake Orion High School in 1971, and, a year later, I went into the Air Force. I went to school to become a computer operator on main frame computers and was stationed in Cheyenne Mountain in Colorado Springs, CO; Wright-Paterson AFB in Dayton, OH; The Panama Canal Zone; Duluth AFB in MN; Ramstein AB in Germany; Andrews AFB in Washington, D.C. and Senbach AB in Germany. My last assignment was at Wurtsmith AFB in Oscoda, MI, which brought us back home to Michigan. I retired right after Desert Storm with 20 years in the service as a Technical Sergeant. I do not miss the Air Force and it was time to retire, but I do miss the camaraderie, the friends I made in the military and the sound of jets.

When I came home from Panama, I met Kim. We started writing to each other, I came home on leave, we were engaged on our third date and married six weeks later. We have been married for over 33 years now. Our son, Scott, was born in Duluth in 1980 and our daughter, Tami, was born at Landstuhl Army Hospital in Germany in 1982. Scott is married, is an Army recruiter in St. Cloud, MN, and has three boys and one girl. Tami is also married and lives in Farmington Hills, MI. She has a little girl and her second child is due in May. We have a great relationship with our kids and with our grandkids. I love being a Papa.

Shortly after I retired, I heard the call to become a pastor in the United Methodist Church. After working on computers for 20 years, I wanted to do something different, something where I was working with people and, perhaps, making a difference in their lives. The year after I started the paperwork to become a Local (or Licensed Lay) Pastor, I was appointed part time to a small church near Tawas. It was filled with Grandmas who wanted to treat me like a grandson. I absolutely loved my time there. After a year, the Bishop felt that I could handle more than this small church, so he sent me to three churches in the thumb of Michigan. I had the churches in Peck, Melvin and Buel townships. It was quite a shock moving there as it was like moving back to the 1950's. It was a very different culture there than what I was used to. Then I had two churches in Rose City and West Branch. My last appointment was to two churches near Oxford, MI. It was then that I became ill due to what I assumed at the time was Parkinson's and the stress of dealing with churches that were sometimes hard to work with. It turned out I did not have Parkinson's; it was the stress and the medications I was taking that was making me ill. If you do notice that my hands shake at times, it is because I have essential tremors.

So I retired from being a pastor. I am ordained in the Church of Secular Humanism, and I can do weddings. My wife had also become a United Methodist pastor and was fully ordained in 2011. She now pastors the Grace UMC in Marquette and the Skandia UMC. I have become a stay at home house-husband. I do fill in occasionally as a preacher, such as I do at the MUUC. I am among a few other retired pastors who have memberships in both a United Methodist Church and a Unitarian Universalist Congregation. I first heard of the UUs while I was attending school to become a Local Pastor. I was intrigued and wanted to learn more about this denomination. I liked what I read and so when I found out there was a UU Congregation in Midland, I went and checked it out. It was not long after that they asked me to preach on a Sunday. While we were living in Waterford, I became active and preached at the Paint Creek UUC in Rochester. I continue to enjoy my association with Unitarian Universalists and consider myself to lean more towards their theology and polity now than the UMC.

To close, I'll share a little about my interests and hobbies. Besides my wife, kids and grandkids, who mean the world to me, I am also somewhat of a Renaissance man. I have lots of interests. My major in college was history with minors in philosophy and sociology. In history, my main areas of interest are American, European and military history. I have a historical museum in my office, and I collect different things to do with military history. I also have a hat collection, which I shared on Sunday at the MUUC. And I am also a "war gamer." For those who may not know what that is, it is a more historically connected version of chess or the game of Risk. I do play computer war games but prefer face-to-face games as I enjoy the interaction with a live person across the table. Some of the best and closest friends I have ever had have been those whom I've faced off with over a board war game.

I am also working on my family genealogy and have a lot to share about who I am related to or descended from. I'm very interested in politics and international affairs. In 2007-08, I made an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Congress in the Livonia area. The money just was not there for me to campaign against better known names. But it was a great learning experience. One last thing: politically and theologically, I am a Progressive Liberal and proud of it.

Tom Spencer

Next Board Meeting: 6:30 pm, Tuesday, January 15, 2013, MUUC Meeting House

Congregational Meeting! 12:15 pm, Sunday, Jan. 27, 2013, MUUC Meeting House



< Kathy Klos recently led a service on the UU roots of Christmas traditions.

New Year's Day on Presque Isle



JANUARY SERVICE AND FORUM SCHEDULE

Date	Service (11 a.m.)	Forum (9:45 – 10:30a.m.)
Jan. 6	“The Technology of Transcendence.” Service Leader: Nancy Irish	“Congregational Conversation about...Right Relations.” Host: MUUC Board of Trustees
Jan. 13	“Rumi: What Does a 13 th Century Sufi Mystic Poet Have to Say to a 21 st Century American UU.” Service Leader: Sarah Redmond	“Marquette CARES: A Recycling Program.” Host: Heidi Gould
Jan. 20	“What Percent?...Not Talking Milk.” Service Leader: Barb Michael	TBA
Jan. 27	“Enough.” Service Leader: gg gordon	“The Line” (video). Host: Barb Michael

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