



**The Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of
Petoskey**



Newsletter

December 2024

A Special Message to those who are not (yet) members:

You are welcome here! At any time in the months or years to come, if you feel marginalized or threatened because of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, range of abilities, or whatever, remember that UUCOP--like all UU churches--is radically inclusive! We aim to be a sanctuary for all, a support group where we each can explore and discover our own spirituality. Reach out to our minister, or drop in for a Zoom service or activity. We'd love to meet you!

Sunday Services

Join our services via Zoom at https://unitarianpetoskey.org/?page_id=6071

December 8—Hope—Celebrate hope with music and poetry. This is a Triangle Service, shared with Bay de Noc & Marquette.

December 15—Climate Crisis Positives—Tom will help us discover the good things being done.

December 22—Virtual Coffee Hour—Enjoy conversation with your friends

on the topics of your choice.

December 29—Spiral Intention—The world moves forward in a spiral. This service will contain an interactive portion based on labyrinths and spirals. Printed materials will be sent prior to the service. You can print out coloring pages or use the printed materials to create clay labyrinths and spirals. We recommend Crayola air dry clay or Model Magic clay. Both can be purchased at Walmart or perhaps Meijer or similar.

January 5, 2025—New Year's Visions

Click “Upcoming Services” on our webpage, <http://unitarianpetoskey.org>, to keep up with the informational and inspirational topics planned by our Program Committee.

Help with Co-op Services

Audrey McMullen, Program Committee Chair

We invite all members of the congregation to a deeper spiritual dive as we look for hymns, readings, and other tidbits that relate to a given service theme. Our hope is that wider participation in service design will be a stepping stone to deeper relationships with each other and with our faith.

What is involved: One meeting (times to be announced) to explore structure and content for a service. Time on your own for reading and hunting for music on youtube, worship web, etc. -- or writing your own thoughts. These components will be offered to Rev. Alice and woven into the service to support the main theme.

Benefits: When you intentionally explore, you encounter the thoughts of those who are intimately involved in the issues of our times. You gain insights relating to the main topic, but also you'll take "side trips" as you search, giving yourself a broad understanding of how faith intersects with our daily lives.

T-shirts are coming!

Fifteen of us soon will be “letting our little light shine” in beautiful blue t-shirts at meaningful events around town! The shirts have been ordered and should arrive in about two weeks. To retrieve yours, please coordinate with Diane Lake to pick up and pay for your shirts. If you prefer to have your shirts mailed to you, just let Diane know and reimburse her for mailing costs.



As a reminder, the final shirt costs, including tax, follow:

x-small, small, medium, large, x-large--\$ 18.81

xx-large--\$ 22.04

xxx-large--\$ 25.52

Holiday Messages for Friends who are Incarcerated

The Worthy Now Prison Ministry of the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) has over 1,880 members experiencing incarceration. CLF has asked for our help in sending brief holiday greetings to each of them. Please mark your calendar to join your fellow congregants along with members of the Traverse City UU Congregation on Zoom.

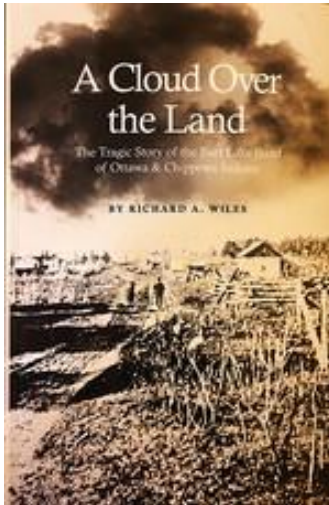
Join from our home page, unitarianpetoskey.org. Click on Attend/Zoom Our Services.

Saturday, December 7, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

You will receive templates to print out and suggestions for messages. You will need to provide your own envelopes and stamps.

This is a quick and inexpensive way to make the season brighter for a few people who don't receive many holiday greetings. We're often told how much our few words of cheer are appreciated.

Book Group to Discuss Local Issue



[A Cloud Over the Land](#) by Richard A. Wiles tells the tragic story of the Burt Lake Burnout of 1900. While the theft of ancestral lands is hardly unique, this story takes place in our own backyard, impacting a local band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians forever. Their story is being told now loud and clear, and perhaps we are ready to hear their cries. Everyone is invited to join in discussing this bit of our local history.

Sunday, December 15, 1:30 p.m. Via Zoom.

Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/91482271553?pwd=Nmttekp1MmFCL0hOVmduYz#success>

Or, go to www.unitarianpetoskey.org

Click on **Attend/Zoom Our Services**

Click on the link for **regular services and book club meetings**

Suggest a Quarterly Giving Recipient

This generous congregation makes a donation to a selected charitable organization each quarter. Our goal is to support one international, one national, one state, and one local organization each year. So far this fiscal year, we have made contributions to UU the Vote, a national effort to encourage citizens to vote, and the international UNICEF fund to aid the Children of Gaza. For the next two quarters, we are seeking worthy local and state organizations. Your input is needed to make the best possible choices. Please give your suggestions to any board member, or send an email to PetoskeyUnitarians@gmail.com.



Musings from the Minister, Rev. Alice Diebel

Many of us are heartbroken about the swing in our nation toward authoritarianism. It feels like a significant loss of progressive ground and a blow to democracy. In the wake of this change, we need to spend some time

grieving the loss of our democratic vision: a beloved community that welcomes and supports everyone. And then we need to sort out what it means for us as Unitarian Universalists (UU).

UUs do not hold a single theology; we have many paths to the sacred. What we do hold on to, is that we share values about how we should try to live in the world. Most of us think that we create our social world through our actions toward and with others; it is a living tradition. What do we need to do to create more love during a time of fear and “othering”?

We need to continue to include and love our neighbors, people that other faiths may fear or shun, and belittle or exclude. Every time we hear hate or fear out of the mouths of our political leaders, we need to speak to it. Don't allow it to continue without resistance.

We need to build coalitions among people in our communities who want to join us in loving our neighbors. Together we can be a model for those around us. Let us show love through our actions.

Unitarian Universalism is needed now more than ever. If you have a beloved friend or family member who is afraid, invite them to join us. We are a safer and inclusive space. And friends, let us be aware of the pain that exists among people threatened by this administration: the LGBTQI+ community, immigrants, women, and people of color. I am also concerned for our libraries, schools, and institutions that keep our country running smoothly. Let us work together in love to always center those in need and do the work that needs to be done.

In faith and courage,
Rev. Alice



September Retreat

Remembering fun times!



Our Goals

Our retreat in September had many benefits: getting to know our Triangle partners and each other a little better, enhancing our spirituality, learning some new things, as well as setting some goals for visibility for UUCOP. Your board is working to complete your ideas with measurable objectives and tasks for each of the visibility goals that you selected. Most are simple things, like putting up posters and planning get-togethers, but written goals will keep us on track. It's still a work in progress, but we should be able to share more details with you soon.

A note from your president

Barbara Sugden, UUCOP President

I was born on the shortest day of the year. Maybe because of that, or maybe because I'm a confirmed introvert, going into the dark season has always held a special appeal for me. For me, it's a time to think and feel and figure out what I'm all about right now. So, sometimes, the rah-rah of the season rubs me the wrong way, and I just want to slow down, reflect, and be quiet in order to come away fulfilled and on track for renewed life.



Words from Wendell Berry provide some guidance:

*To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.”*

This season, I am looking forward to simple things: creating a lovely holiday brunch for family; a walk in the crisp, cold air; and joining the Worthy Now effort to send greetings to people who are spending holidays incarcerated.

However you celebrate, I wish you and yours a caring and fulfilling holiday season.



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