



The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Petoskey

Newsletter

March 2025

UUCOP exists to offer an open, tolerant, religious community to nurture spiritual growth and to value diversity.

Mark your calendar!

Sunday, March 2--Picture for virtual banner. Let's be included in the UUA's General Assembly Banner Parade! Wear your blue t-shirt if you wish, and be sure your name is set on Zoom as you'd like it for public viewing. We'll take a screen shot to include on a virtual banner, along with our t-shirt logo and a dot on a Michigan map showing where Petoskey is located.



Sunday, June 15--Annual Meeting. Our Annual Meeting will be held both in-person at the Carnegie Building in Petoskey and via Zoom beginning at 11:00 a.m. If you are not yet a member and you'd like to vote at this meeting, you are invited to join before **June 1**. (Just reach out to any board member, or email PetoskeyUnitarians@gmail.com, and we'll get back to you.) Members are welcome to submit agenda items by **June 5**.



In-person summer services and activities coming

We've all been waiting to gather in person! We have booked the Carnegie Building in Petoskey for all Sunday services [April 27](#) through [August 31](#). These will be hybrid (both in-person and on Zoom,) so you can still attend from the comfort of your home if that works better for you. We also are planning some in-person picnics, book group meetings, coffees, and social gatherings; you'll hear more about these soon.

We're hiring

Since we will be meeting in person at the Carnegie Building this summer, we are looking to hire an Audio-Visual Technician to help make these hybrid (in-person and Zoom) services as seamless as possible. This person will work about 2.5 hours on [Sunday](#) mornings to set up equipment, serve as Zoom host, and record the sermon. They will store the equipment during the week and transport it to and from our services. A full [job description](#) is available on our web page. This could be a great opportunity for a reliable student or adult interested in earning some extra income. If you know of potential candidates, please ask them to submit a resume by mail to UUCOP, P.O. Box 873, Petoskey, MI 49770 or via email to PetoskeyUnitarians@gmail.com.

Some Upcoming [Sunday](#) Services

[March 2--Supporting Sanctuary and Solidarity.](#) Bob Lewis will help us answer questions like "How do we trigger solidarity with the stranger? Who are we willing to harbor? Who is *we* and who is the *other*?"

[March 9--Covenant.](#) What do we promise one another? How do we keep covenant? Rev. Alice Diebel will lead our service with the UU triangle congregations: Petoskey, Bay de Noc, and Marquette.

[March 15--St. Patrick's Day.](#) Nancy Kinney will coordinate some fun with Irish limericks and music.

Active Hope--our new RE offering

In a time of great upheaval, we need to find resilience and creative power. We're in a mess. What Joanna Macy would call the great unraveling.

Macy and Chris Johnstone have put together a book to help us deal with these changes, including those connected to climate change. *Active Hope--How to Face the Mess We're in with Unexpected Resilience and Creative Power* will guide our learning experiences.

Join Rev. Alice Diebel on the [fourth Thursday](#) of the month for six months on Zoom. Use the [Petoskey Zoom link](#). Sessions begin on [March 27th](#) at 7:00 pm and will last an hour and a half.



Musings from the Minister, Rev. Alice Diebel

Most of us are distraught about the direction our country is heading. It makes it really hard to express our theology of "Love at the Center" when we're feeling squeezed in by the actions of the administration and the hateful voices around us. We don't want a squeezed-in, teeny, tiny love, we want big love! A love that holds us all and won't let go. We want a love that radiates out into the world.

Even though we, and people we know, are afraid and not feelin' the love, now is not the time for shrinking. Imagine being a federal employee, an immigrant, transgender, or anyone else at whom the administrations takes aim. It's easy to feel overwhelmed, lost, helpless and angry at a time when

we need a big bold love. It is a time to reach out and put our love to work in the world. What spaces are around you that need a little help?

We need one another to navigate these difficult feelings and situations. We need strong collaboration with organizations that care about the oppression occurring before us. While our congregation may be small and widely disbursed, we will accomplish nothing if we only despair on how few we are. Even a small committed few can make a difference – an idea attributed to Margaret Mead.

In the midst of these hard feelings and this important work, it can help just to be in community with others who also have love at the center. If you've been away for a while, come on back, invite your friends. Renew yourself, recharge, so you can – with strong resolve - make that next phone call to Congress or sit at the table with a community coalition. Let love radiate out!

What's Up with the Book Group?

The UUCOP Book Group is a good 20 yrs old. For some time we met 3 times/yr. As of a few months ago, we now meet every 5 wks! "Why," you might ask. Two reasons: (1) meetings were getting smaller (as few as - of some 35 members); (2) i (tom), current coordinator, have been involved in several book groups, none of which met less than monthly.

So, with active support from member Gary Sydow, asked all members to share why they attended less often and what improvements would appeal to them. About 12-14 members shared concerns &/or ideas. After studying these, Gary & i proposed several changes, again requesting input. As coordinator I informed the membership about how we'd modify procedures for a 6-month trial. The trial period ends this coming May.

Besides the accelerated schedule, for the 1st time ever, suggesting works of fiction (for subsequent meetings) is now allowed. Members who nominate specific books are expected – no longer just requested – to do so in a specific format.

So far several novels have been proposed, although not yet selected. Most – but not all –nominations are offered in the standard format. As is also required, attendees arrive with points about the work to be discussed, which usually stimulates a smoother flow in the discussion. I should note that the person who recommended the book usually leads the discussion.

While not part of the of the changes on trial, we've begun to select more than 1 work in the event of a close vote between 2 or more nominees. Thus at our Dec '24 meeting we chose books for both the Jan & Feb '25 meetings. I should note that persons not attending the meeting may send their votes (to me) in advance. Overall, participation in Book Group has improved since the trial began, % feedback has been quite positive.

Note that anyone may join the UUCOP Book Group. Just contact me as shown below, & I'll explain procedures, etc. OR just show up a meeting - **1:30 p.m. every 5th Sunday**. Here's more re the next 3 meetings:

Meeting Date	Location	Title/Author
March 30	Zoom only	<u>Masters of Empire</u> by Michael McDonnell
May 4	Petoskey Library/Zoom	<u>Braiding Sweetgrass</u> by Robin Wall Kimmerer
June 8	Petoskey Library/Zoom	<u>Stolen Pride</u> by Arlie Russell Hochschild

If you're interested, looking forward to hearing from you, or just seeing you at a meeting.

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Book Group Coordinator

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Quarterly Giving makes a difference

By Barbara Sugden

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
nothing is going to get better. It's not.*

Dr. Seuss

UUCOP members care a "whole awful lot," if their quarterly giving donations are any indication.

Each quarter of the fiscal year, a separate collection is taken as a donation to a charitable organization. The goal is to have one international, one national, one Michigan, and one local organization during the year. This year, our national organization was UU the Vote. \$1825 was donated to help motivate people to go to the polls. Our international charity was

UNICEF's fund for the Children of Gaza and the West Bank, and it raised a whopping \$3,430. This quarter's donations are on track to equal or exceed even that! These funds will go to our local area, the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation for support of the Lofts at Lumber Square--safe, affordable housing for the community's workforce of teachers, health care workers, retail and hospitality employees, and more.

We have one more quarter to go--dedicated to a worthy Michigan organization. If you have a proposal that you'd like the board to consider for this quarter or any other, please let us know. Our goal is to use this as one way we can make a difference. Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."