

Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication



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Opening Mind and Hearts to the LGBTQIA Community By Rev. Annie Kopko

We want to be a community that will Welcome the strange, not someone who appears to be just the stranger.

Rev. Delyth Balmer and I attended a workshop in Brighton in September organized for faith communities to come together to learn about how we can become a more inclusive and welcoming community for LGBTQIA individuals. Our local organization is called Inclusive Justice, which you will find at www.inclusivejustice.org.

On January 15th we will welcome **Rev. Dr. Julie Nemecek to speak** at Interfaith.

The truth is that many individuals have been rejected by their own conservative religious communities for being Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual. We believe that every person deserves to find acceptance in spiritual and religious communities no matter how they express their individual sexual preferences.

I am especially conscious that due to the results of our National election in November, that voices of fear and hate have been given more permission to be unleashed upon vulnerable individuals in the LGBTOIA communities (not just our immigrant communities) I have resolved to become more open minded and actively suppor-

for acceptance and love.

One of my spiritual teachers always used to ask of her students: "Are you willing to be disturbed?"

Are we willing to be welcoming despite our discomfort around strange?

This feeling of discomfort is a normal human reaction, and we can choose to explore our feelings, rather than react negatively **Obviously we have more comfort** around people like ourselves. Not everyone is like us and we can be welcoming nonetheless.

We are not alone. There is a movement in Michigan and elsewhere for faith communities to be more welcoming.

Here is a unique example of an inclusive community: the Denver church of Nadia Boltz Weber "House for all sinners and saints" She started this welcoming community in 2008. Her book is called: Accidental saints, finding God in the wrong people"

She is a recovering alcoholic and although a Lutheran pastor by training she was called to start a church that she would want to show up to. She recognized that everyone needs to be loved and accepted and made it happen at her church. I think we make it happen at our spiritual community as well. And as we explore our conscious ability to be more loving, we can make it happen more often.

Communities like ours who are



tive of individual rights and needs spiritual but not religious have a unique opportunity, because so many LGBTQIA people do not identify with any religion. They may not even believe in God. I hope people don't think they have to believe in God to be part of our community.

> For our community, it is an opportunity to grow spiritually in ways we may never have imagined, to open our minds and hearts to other people and new ideas, to expand our minds and consciousness enough to feel comfort where we never did before.

When you feel discomfort around another person: make a choice to focus on what you have in common with this other person. I guarantee you have more in common than not.

Thích Nhất Hanh offers a unique Buddhist meditation that goes like this:

Step 1: "Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in his/her life."

Step 2: "Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/ her life."

Step 3: "Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness and despair."

Step 4: "Just like me, this person is seeking to fill his/her needs." Step 5"Just like me, this person is learning about life."





Ministerial Miscellany

By Dave Bell

Dear Friends,

It is amazing to realize another year is about to unfold. There are quite a number of things that we would change about the year of 2016. Perhaps we should enlarge the flash paper for the Burning Bowl service. Even as we feel resistance to what is occurring in the world, our true mission is to be the bringers of light. As bringers of light, it does not serve us to grumble and complain, to shake our heads in disbelief, or to express anger and frustration. Every being, including those whom we might see as misguided or even evil, are expressions of divinity. As such, we cannot spend our time finding fault or criticizing them. The difficult task is to hold them in light, while finding ways to ensure that harm does not befall those who may be the subject of prejudice, if not out right hatred. This will not be easy. Whatever actions we choose to take, anger should be left behind. As Jeshua said on Christmas morning, anger is never justified. He specifically said that his actions in driving the money changers from the Temple were not a result of anger. There is no way that I or anyone can anticipate what situations will arise in the next year, or the next four years. What can be said, emphatically, is that guidance is available. When faced with the opportunity to take some action, always pause a moment and ask for guidance. Jeshua, the Holy Spirit, or your guardian angels, will absolutely respond. Pausing a moment before acting is also a wonderful way to allow momentary anger to dissipate. So let us remember that we are the Bringers of Light as we ring the New Year.

The Ministerial Search Committee has been doing yeoman duty in attracting our next spiritual leader. They have established a working protocol that has served them well and they are sticking to it. I am optimistic that we will have a difficult choice to make amongst the excellent candidates. We will see how it unfolds.

Judy and I are heading for Florida toward the end of January. We are leaving a few days early so that we can scout out a new place to hang out. Our beloved Anna Maria Island has become too crowded and way too expensive. We still plan to be snow birds after I retire, but not Florida residents. I will be flying home for the month of March and we will be home mid April.

Blessings

Davíd

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By Jeanne Adwani

Our Community member for the month of January, is Ester Reilly.

Ester is our very own Chanteuse; with her beautiful voice, she invites us every Sunday to sing a welcome song for the day's celebration of the wisdom message and experience.

She always is dressed colorfully and elegantly, and is one of those special members in our community that walks her walk all the time. There is no pretense with Ester. What you see is what you get. She WILL tell you her opinion and you can disagree, agree, or remain neutral. What you can be sure of, is that Ester's heart is Big and she cares deeply for the Center and all of us who come to presence ourselves here.

She holds the title of the oldest member of our community, and she gets to be all of herself, all the time. You can count on Ester to 'show up'. She shows up to be present with us and accountable every Sunday. She helps in every way that she can to support the community with love and care. She stays attuned to what's going on within and around the Center, often participating in the many events and classes that are held here. And, when you have a birthday and receive a card from the Center, that is Ester sending that card to honor your Solar Return.

Additionally, for countless years, Esther has been the main editor of the newsletter, going through submissions with a keen eye.

Thank you Ester for all you do and bring to our beloved community. You are cherished and loved here and I can't image a Sunday without you.





Photo submitted by Randy Custer, "Nancy and I now have a tradition of reminding ourselves of the real gifts of Christmas. So Joy, Forgiveness, Peace, and Love are set under the tree every Christmas. The "Love" gift is larger as a reminder that the greatest Gift is Love (to paraphrase the verse from first Corinthians)."

An Ode to the Winter Solstice

By Lauren Tatarsky

You took me with you this year Into the darkness I was a willing traveler Most days

You comforted me in your tranquility In slow, steady, quiet energy But you did not spare me Of the depths

Though there were distractions I kept returning to you Grateful for your honesty

Sometimes you scared me And other times I got impatient But each time I returned to your arms That held me in the darkness I was home

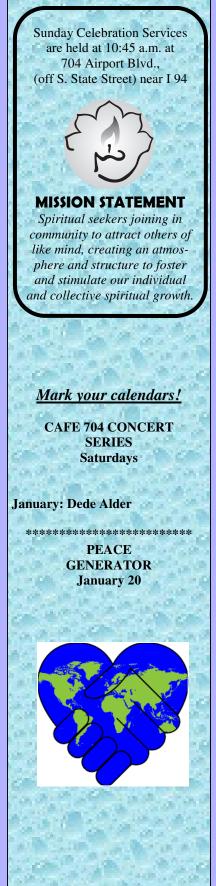
I will not be ready for spring soon You and I, we need more time together So I implore you to move slowly with the coming light

There is more being to be done here There is deep tenderness that wants for quiet That needs an excuse to stay away from conversation and noise It takes comfort in the shortness of your days And the incessant snowfall that en-

courages the hermit I will follow your lead

Take me with you I am a weary traveler Your depth is my healer





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Make a Friend at Interfaith!

Meaningful connections increase our quality of community and engage us more deeply in life. Get to know someone at Interfaith a little better and deepen your sense

of belonging by joining a Dyad!

In sociology, a Dyad (Sanskrit "Dayadaha") is (loosely) two people of similar kind or nature interacting face-to-face around mutual ideals, queries, and curiosities concerning life and living. Participation in an Interfaith Dyad is voluntary, rewarding, and super simple.

Each month, two members will be randomly

paired and put in touch with one another (email or phone). At your convenience, set up a day (Dyads, Duos, Partners, Pairs) and time for the two of you to meet that month (a coffee, a walk, a beverage, a meal, an event you don't want to go to alone). A monthly talking topic will be selected among suggestions and announced at Sunday service. When you meet, talk briefly or at length using guiding "soul quest-ions," or abandon them completely and be with whatever comes up!

> Look for a sign-up sheet at the Sunday table or get in touch for more information! This will be fun.

Your friend, Sarah Matteo alternateacher@yahoo.com

P.S. – Wear your nametag.



My Most Humbling Experience in the Year 2016

By Heide AW Kaminski

The year 2016 held lots of challenges for me, but those of you who know me well, don't need to be

told, that I am a pretty tough cookie and generally cheerful despite rocks on my path.

On December 24, I decided to practice what I preach. Our annual Youthful Spirits Christmas presentation, written by yours truly, was about a family deciding to spent Christmas Eve serving homeless people in a soup kitchen. One of the last lines in the play was, "That was a humbling experience." I wrote that line without realizing just HOW true it was. After I left a homeless shelter in Adrian on Christmas Eve, following two hours of helping with dinner, I drove home in shock and awe. When I arrived at my house, I walked around all the rooms and expressed thanks for every room and its contents, including the dust bunnies and the cat hair. Then I went outside again and expressed thanks for the snow in my yard as well.

Two hours in a shelter, uncomfortable as it was for me, REALLY opened my eyes which I thought were already pretty open.

Next time you feel the urge to complain about a rock in your path, stop and think, because it's probably just a tiny pebble compared to many others' rocks. I know I will!

Have a blissful New Year!



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CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

We would love to have your input in the newsletter: spiritual moments, movie/book reviews, exciting announcements, poems, etc.

We try to have the newsletter ready for final editing by the third Sunday of each month. Please send contributions to Heide at mommyk@tc3net.com with "Interfaith submission" in the subject line. If you do not mention Interfaith, your email might get kicked right into the recycle bin by my spam filter.

If you cannot email your contribution, you may give it to Heide on Sunday.

To receive the online newsletter, go to http://lists.interfaithspirit.org/listinfo.cgi/interfaithinspirerinterfaithinspirer.org to subscribe.

Want to hear from us throughout the week? Receive or send email through Interfaith Yahoo by going to

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/InterfaithSpirit/

Namaste from your newsletter team: Heide, Esther, Deane and Lindsay.

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December 2016 OCC and Board Highlights By Pat Root, Board Chair

SUMMARY OF DECEMBER 4 QUARTERLY CONVER-SATION IN COMMUNITY: Those in attendance, as always, created the agenda.

The ministerial search committee is checking the backgrounds of applicants they expect to interview in January. In March there will be "candidate weekends" at which the finalists will present a workshop and give a Sunday talk. the enthusiasm regarding Holly Makimaa's talk on the Sunday after the presidential election, representatives of the search committee met with her and learned she is not interested in "leading a flock" at this time but is greatly interested in working with small groups.

We had \$6200 in the building fund at the time of this QCC. People who desire to contribute to this fund are encouraged to earmark those donations to the building fund because those funds are held separately from other income. Dave reported the possibility of purchasing our building is not promising. He said we need \$30-50,000 in the fund to be prepared for whatever comes next regarding our physical location and we need a group of individuals to spearhead the fundraising.

Membership growth received QCC attention. Delyth pointed out the need to make new people feel comfortable without being intrusive, and it's helpful to know things like how to get name tags (purple papers on the welcome table and in the rolling cart near the large bulletin board). As attracting and keeping young families is important to our growth, it was mentioned perhaps our child-oriented area needs to be rearranged, perhaps the children's program needs to be more robust and perhaps parents might be more comfortable using the services if they volunteered once a month. It was brought up the Unitarian Universalist congregation in Ann Arbor had a "religious education committee" made up of parents, the people who benefit from the program, with commitments to assist and fundraise. This kind of group might be helpful and supportive to Heide and Kellie as we grow in this area. Neither of them were at this QCC, so Delyth will communicate with them.

According to the Bylaws identifying potential board members is handled by a committee made up of the senior minister, board chair, and one member of the community. If you are interested in being that community member, please talk with Dave or me right away.

I added one last agenda item called "Not Dave". To acknowledge Dave's unique combination of skills and experience — and as a reminder we cannot expect the same from our next minister — I invited the group to make a list, and this is the way it turned out: lawyer, CPA, builder, lifelong UM fan, wonderful & supportive wife devoted to the Center,

open availability, flexible income needs, charisma, business "hat", good intonation, "founder energy" (his passion ingrained in everything he says and does), and has a good support structure in place.

The next QCC is actually our Annual Meeting which is scheduled for Sunday, March 12,

HIGHLIGHTS OF DECEMBER 20 BOARD MEETING

Three community members were present: Anna Marie [Dave's retirement starts May 31st this year.] In response to Henrich, Jack Koepfgen, and Kevin Gilson (leadership team chair & volunteer board consultant). Referring back to the QCC conversation about young families, Jack mentioned his belief there are multiple sects in our community, including people who are looking for values to be supported, and it is important to create an energy that is supportive and conducive to helping people feel safe and welcome to honor their inner voice. Anna Marie said she feels we could cover more of our principles and deeper work in our offerings by inviting community members who are teachers and discussion leaders to help fill the gaps.

> Without objection the board approved the 2017 spending plan/budget which was developed and finalized by the finance committee. It calls for a 2 percent increase in income. As expenses are already bare-boned, they will not be cut. The projection-oriented financial tools generated by board members this year are being used by the finance committee - and they will let us know if there is a change in projected trends. Kevin Gilson said this budget/spending plan is a challenge to the board to develop a strategic plan. This topic will be on the agenda for the January board meeting.

> Under consideration is the possibility of inviting the Michigan Peace Team to give a Sunday talk and perhaps provide a training on how to de-escalate situations in group settings.

There will be 3-4 vacancies on the board this year. The election will be at the Annual Meeting scheduled for March 12.

On Saturday January 21, to coincide with the Women's March on Washington, Barbara Brodsky of Deep Spring Center will be offering a special event at the Center.

Board secretary Danielle Cassetta drafted charters for a volunteer coordinator and for committees to address membership growth and fundraising. The board committed to review these charters, submit comments (so Danielle can make edits), and be prepared to discuss the charters at the next meeting.

The next board meeting will be January 15. You are very welcome to attend!!!



Café 70g

Café 704: Dede Alder

Saturday, January 14 8:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. 704 Airport Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI 48108 Suggested donation: \$8/person or \$15 for two



Earthwork artist, Dede Alder, is a unique singer songwriter. She performs songs on the vibraphone and sings with a soulful aire. Dede fills out her unique musical vision with looping, synthesizers, and percussion instruments.

> Coffee, tea and vegetarian stew provided. http://interfaithspirit.org/cafe-704-coffeehouse/



December was delightful and we are so pleased with our year of service. We want to thank you all for your help in reaching our goals. We worked hard this month preparing for our holiday presentation. Thank you to Heide for writing the script and to Dawn for helping us with the music. We had a great time when Santa visited. Check out the pictures below...

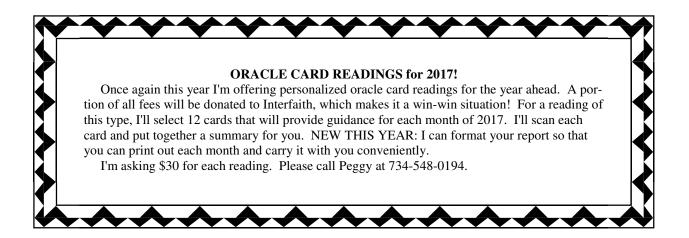
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We are looking forward to an exciting 2017! Please join us for fun times and exploration. Our theme for 2017 is Peaceful Coexistence, which leaves huge opportunities for activities. If you have any talents or ideas to share for this theme, please feel free to always let Kellie or Heide know!





Heide, Kellie, Tommy, and the Youthful Spirits



2017 ORACLE CARD CALENDAR FOR THE INTERFAITH CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
	Silve Sur From		
Dragon: The beauty of the power of inner knowledge; the strength to be independent and self-contained.	Follow Your Heart: St. Francis. Trust your heart's true desires. You already know what to do; trust your intuition and take action accordingly.	Magnolia: Empowered Prayer. It's time to work more closely with your Angelic Response Team, to further open your heart to divine assistance.	Shasta Daisy: Unity. Strength- en your partnerships with oth- ers. Collaborate and cooper- ate; be open and honest. Come together to accelerate spiritual growth.
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Choose Choose Peace: Yogananda. As you think about your options and possible outcomes, choose	Transition: The energy of tran- sition radiates trust and pre- pares you for new times. Every challenge dissolves old ideas,	Joy: As you practice the ability to find joy in every moment, you pull to you more reasons	Unicom: The Unicom teaches purity and gentleness, and guardianship for all creatures. It replaces the lost enchant-
the one that brings the greatest peace to your body and mind.	and simultaneously creates new possibilities.	to be joyful.	ment in the world through our hearts.
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
A New Dawn: The worst is now	Y - Digit Discussor Televisioner Televisio		
behind you, and positive new experiences are on the horizon. Let go of anything from the past that can weigh you down.	<u>The High Priestess:</u> Allow the world to show you its inten- tions. Go beyond the ordinary, and trust your inner vision to guide you on your path.	The Faerie of Youth: Approach things with youthful enthusiasm and a child's assumption of limitless ability, and you may find you can do things you never imagined possible!	Passion: You can turn your dream into reality when you act from passion, without fear and, most of all, from the heart.

This reading has been lovingly prepared by Peggy River Singer, 734-548-0194.

THE CARD DECKS:

January, Beasts of Albion / February: Ascended Masters / March: Ascension Oracle / April: Ascension Oracle / May: Ascended Masters / June: Sacred Geometry / July: Mary, Queen of Angels / August: Beasts of Albion / September: Magical Mermaids and Dolphins / October: Wisdom of Avalon / November: The Heart of Faerie / December: Sacred Geometry



of Washtenaw County

2017 FACES OF FAITH

Sunday, January 15, 4-6 pm

(along with other national Religious Freedom Day observances)

Come hear the stories of local clergy & other designated religious leaders from 6 traditions. This year each will speak to the whole group and follow-up conversations will be probing and engaging.

IslamJudaismChristianity(Imam Yahya Luqman)(Rabbi Robert Dobrusin)(Rev. Marie Duquette)SikhismUnitarian UniversalismBaha'

(Jaspreet Singh)

Unitarian Universalism (Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich) (Er

M Bana² (Eric Bell & Amy Whitebell)

Zíon Lutheran Church (Host) 1501 W. Líberty, AA

(\$5 suggested donation)

Dance for Standing Rock Fundraiser for the Water Protectors Saturday January 28th, 8:00pm - 11:00pm at the Pittsfield Grange Hall, Ann Arbor We hold the Water Protectors in our hearts as we dance! We gather to raise money to supply those who will winter over in the camp in North Dakota. Suggested donation \$15 -\$30 DJ Malik - DJ Baksheesh -DJ Synchroblissity live music by The Clone Box Project



Marilyn, Chair

The Caring Committee





Heide and Kellie, **Co-chairs**



Jommy, Youth Ed rep



Mike



Khristian



Annie



Delyth, Liaison



Idgie



Jan



Jack



Beth



Judy

If you have a service to offer, please contact Marilyn





Michael

Interfaith Caring Committee Survey

We are looking for your participation and support of fellow Interfaith members <u>in crisis</u> in any way that is appropriate for you. If you are called on by a caring committee member to support a particular need, you always have the opportunity to decline if it doesn't work for you at that time. Please fill out this survey as completely as you are able. All gifts, skills, and talents are appreciated. Thank you for taking the time!

Name:City/Part of town you live or work in:
Phone:e-mail:
Best way to contact you: Best times to contact you:
Check all areas that you are willing to participate in and specify any limitations
Driver (Interfaith/appointments)Craft Teaching (type)Counseling (type)
Medical Equipment loan (type)Meal PrepConsulting (type)
Child CareErrandsCleaningYardworkSnow Shoveling
Healing/energy workHousehold DonationsClothing Donations
Caregiver BreakSend CardsComputer HelpHealing Music
Fun CompanionshipPet CareMassageMoney Donation
ListeningPrayersRespite CareJoin Caring Committee
Other
Limitations and additional information:

I currently have need of (be specific):







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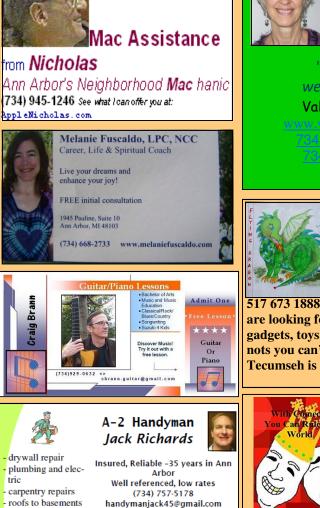
SHOP HERE FIRST! Flying Dragon Thrift Store **Owners: Heide and Tommy** Look us up on FaceBook, or call/text Heide at

517 673 1888 to find out if we have what you are looking for. We have clothes, furniture, gadgets, toys, books, cool crafts, and whatnots you can't resist. MUST SEE! Trip to Tecumseh is worth it!



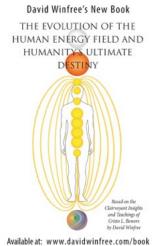
Written by our very own formerly Youthful Spirit, now adult member of the Center, as well as the nursery worker for two years, this book is a hoot to read!

Available on Amazon: amazon.com/Comedy-Rule-World-Fantasy Or you can get a signed copy at the Center!

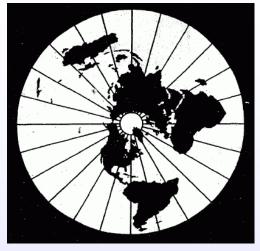


JACK OF ALL TRADES





Peace in Our Lifetime "The Peace Clock"



Swedish: FREDSKLOCKAN Wherever you are, perform a silent meditation for world peace EVERY DAY AT 12 NOON FOR ONE FULL MINUTE

THE GOAL: To have EVERY PERSON ON EARTH performing this event

Synchronized Intention is the Key

- With an alarm, a bell, a note or any other method that works for you remind yourself when it is noon in your time zone.
 - Acquire the active participation of your company, your school, community, city, state and nation.
- Involve radio and television have them broadcast the PEACE CLOCK name, slogan and logo accompanied by one minute of silence every day.
 - Above all approach all interactions with others in peaceful, constructive and creative ways.
 - Copy and share this information with as many people as you can.

PDF Fliers:

- Arabic: Chinese: 和 平 默 禱 Dutch: VREDESKLOK
- English: PEACE CLOCK French: UNE HORLOGE POUR LA PAIX
- German: FRIEDENS UHR Hebrew: שעון השלום
- Hungarian: BÉKEÓRA Italian: OROLOGIO DI PACE
- Japanese: **ピース クロック** Korean: 우리의 삶에 평화가 깃들길
- Pharsee: زمان نمای صلح <u>ZEGAR POKOJU</u>
- Portuguese: Hora da Paz Romanian: CEASUL PĂCII
- Russian: ЧАСЫ МИРА Spanish: UN RELOJ POR LA PAZ
- Swahili: SAA YA AMANI http://peaceclock.org/

