



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

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## FAITH IN MYSTERY

***"Faith is a place of mystery, where we find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of uncertainty,"***

**Brene Brown**

This spring has brought transitions into our community like a whirlwind of air on a spring day. It ushered in change that will soon bring about flowers of life, songs of spirituality, and community growth. On April 1st 2018, the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth senior minister unexpectedly departed from our community. Following a grieving and regrouping period of two weeks the ICSG Board hosted a weekend of peace circles at ICSG. Two talented and trained mediators guided community members in attendance to speak earnestly and openly about their human experiences, hopes, and dreams for the ICSG community.

Our community spoke of the trust they invested in creating a space of emotional safety over the previous ten months. They spoke of the painful challenge of the previous three weeks of seeking the opportunity in disguise for ICSG to become more than it had been before.

The idea for the community convening developed on April 3rd. Comfort and clarity became priorities for the board when the pleasant

and jovial norms of Sunday Service announcements were broken on the second and third Sundays.

Synchronistically Khristian Speelman and Layla Ananda – professional conflict resolution facilitators – reached out separately to offer their skills of holding safe space for our community to share the experience of participatory healing. Layla created an altar of rose quartz and a single candle in the center of the circles. Khristian opened the first circle with a prayer for open heartedness, intentional presence allowing healing and moving forward.

Our wireless microphone became our spiritual talking stick. Each person had the mic for three minutes to explain what they were processing, what was most important moving forward, and what they need or want to offer for our community to heal. Between the forty humans on Saturday and the sixty humans on Sunday exquisite care and respect for the integrity of ICSG became apparent. Two specific themes stood out: our spiritual family and home and spiritual activism.

Spiritual Family and Spiritual Home is a feeling of the power of the collective and the individual. It includes everyone's point of view where we learn and grow together while sharing spiritual presence. It is a feeling of full hearts no matter how things go in the outside world. It is a mirror of the divinity within each of us. It holds space for studies, celebrations, spiritual experiences, and fellowship.

Spiritual Activism at ICSG needs continued support and acknowledgment. Activism takes many forms and looks different for each person. We are called to activism. We are challenged to surrender unto Love by all of our exchanges with one another. Being present in this community is a tremendously profound

amount of work. The world needs more love and at ICSG we are able to expand our ability to be more loving. Internal activism is healing our own inner pollution by asking ourselves such questions as what is my opportunity for change today? We hope to inspire and draw many more people with energy to do what it takes to heal this world. To walk in the mystery, extending Love to All That Is, and having faith that we are not alone in this world.

Thank you Khristian Speelman and Layla Ananda for creating the peace circles with intention of engaging our spiritual community.

***"And while I stood there, I saw more than I can tell and I understand more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being"***

**Black Elk, Wichasha Wakan  
Oglala Lakota.**

I've written about my spiritual community's emotive and intellectual processing regarding the ministerial transition at Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth Ann Arbor. Shared experiences of participatory individual and collective growth are very important to me. I am honored to share space with those committed to the existence of a spiritual organization that encourages the cultivation of spiritual knowingness and does not command that anyone must do anything to feel the presence of divinity in their lives.

-Mary Alice Truitt, ICSG Board Chair

**Ministerial Miscellany**  
**By Rev. Annie Kopko**

*Happy July to Everyone, Besides July 4<sup>th</sup>, Happy Birthday USA, there are a couple of important events coming up that you will want to know about:*

*Sunday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, after service, is our annual potluck party at Murray Lake. Details will be announced at Sunday Service July 1, and coming soon to your Yahoo group email. It is important to let Dawn Swartz know you want to come, since she is our "member host"*

*The other event is our annual yard sale, (our biggest fund raiser of the year!) It will be at Interfaith starting Wednesday for set up July 26, July, 27, and July 28. (Details on the bulletin board near the*

*water fountain and coming to your Yahoo group email) Please sign up to help out. Many Thanks!*

*Every day in my inbox I find a Quote from Aaron, sent to me by Deep Spring Center, which also meets and holds classes at Interfaith. These messages are always practical and thought provoking. For yesterday:*

*"Find that which is fearless in you, that which is all powerful, that which is good, and trust it, for this is what you truly are. The rest is simply conditioned and will fall away. Meanwhile, you must continue to work to not enact that negativity. But trust yourself also to do that. "*

*As we join together in community, we remember what we truly are!!*

***Blessings, Annie***

**Wake Up, Every Day**

Instead of shutting yourself up in an ashram, university, or convent, this path demands that you throw open the gates and welcome in your stinky, quirky, workaday life. This path says that even your lust, wrath, and greed can help you to awaken. This path asks that you intermingle the sacred and mundane so that the ordinary becomes extraordinary. As author Mirabai Starr says, "Our greatest sages do not bail out of this world, they embrace it. Enlightened beings become more human not less. They, too, crave chocolate, they wake up in bad moods, they flirt at parties. They are *us*."

**Opportunity available!**

**Job description: interview the CMM and write about 350 words about your interview once a month.**

**Hours: one, maybe two, you set your own!**

**Pay: intrinsic**

- gratification felt when you see your words published
- Contributing to the Center with your talents
- Meeting people you might otherwise not have a conversation with :-)

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Sunday Celebration Services  
are held at 10:45 a.m. at  
704 Airport Blvd.,  
(off S. State Street) near I 94



### MISSION STATEMENT

*Spiritual seekers joining in  
community to attract others of  
like mind, creating an atmos-  
phere and structure to foster  
and stimulate our individual  
and collective spiritual growth.*

Board  
meeting this  
month is on  
July 22

The newslet-  
ter submis-  
sion  
deadline is  
July 22

### July Talks

July 1: Rev. Cynthia D'Agostino  
McNabb, "Love and Relation-  
ships"

July 8: Rev. Dave Bell,  
"Awakening the Species"

July 15: Craig Brann, "No Self"

July 22: Rev. Annie Kopko,  
"Exploring the Gifts of our Emo-  
tions"

July 29: Rev. John Mundy, "Word  
Fasting: The Miracle Diet"

### Mark your calendars!

**CAFE 704 CONCERT  
SERIES**  
Saturdays

**July 14: no café**

**August 11: Dorkestra**

**September 8: PATH with  
Scott McWinney**

**October 13: Benefit Concert**

**November 10: Lisa Pappas  
and Michael Weiss**

**December 8: Billy King**

**PEACE  
GENERATOR**  
July 20

### Volunteer Coordinator Corner

By Bob Hopkins

This space will be used to identify volunteer needs  
and appreciation as of March 11, 2018

We regularly need to add to our pool of people who help  
to set-up and clean-up for potlucks – See Ted

We want to build a committee that will help develop  
Abundance for our Center -- See Mary Alice Truit

We need a permanent transportation coordinator – See  
Marilyn Alf

We are getting low on greeters and need an infusion of  
new committed people – See Randall Counts

### APPRECIATION

**THANKS TO:** Janet Fry and Gretchen Leonhardt who  
have volunteered to help with the yard sale

**THANKS TO:** Mark Charles who has volunteered to  
help with the pot luck set up

**THANKS TO:** Marilyn Alf, Marice Clark and Darlene  
who have agreed to help with the altar flowers

**July**  
**Birthday Babies**  
*Happy Birthday!*

**July 9: Diane McPharlin**

**July 11: Randall Counts**

**July 22: Scott McWhinney**

**July 25: Maureen McMa-  
hon**

**July 30: Laura Roberts**

**July 31: Margie Hough**

### July Music

**July 1: Mike Fedel**

**July 8: Curtis Glatter**

**July 15: TBA**

**July 22: Spirit Singing  
Band**

**July 29: Tom Voiles**

**Board Meeting Highlights: June 17,  
2018**

- **Communications**

Organization structure needs to be established for successful communication. A Communications Team/Committee would be the perfect for establishing a communications plan. A plan for our several communications avenues.

**Motion** made to create a Communications Team of Volunteers - all in favor -

- **Policy/ies Check-in**

*Board members submitted their signed Conflict of Interest Statements*  
*Conflict of Interest, Grievance, Safe Church, Sex Offender Policies and Whistleblower Policies - we have good drafts of all right now; located on the google drive. Goal is to have these policies reviewed by a lawyer to ensure there aren't any statements that contradict, are redundant, or unnecessary.*

- **Associate Ministers Independent Contractor Agreement**

**Motion** made to pay Annie and Delyth for the month of June - all in favor passed

Draft contract with the payment schedule and additional legal language for the principle of internal controls. The draft will be brought to the July board meeting for a vote.

Protocol and language needed to address the stipulations in the by-laws in regards to contingencies for absence of Senior Minister/CEO and for the Associate Ministers to fill these responsibilities in the interim.

**Administrator's Report**

- **Yard Sale:** schedule: July 26 - 28. Bring stuff starting on the 25th. Volunteers needed to help set up, manage, and take down the yard sale. Volunteering for the yard sale is an opportunity to give to the Center by offering time to help with the set up and running of the sale. Time and talent to be offered is just as valuable as donations or money

- **Sunday Welcome table:** needs help

- **Sunday Greeters:** are needed- **Kickshaw** will rent again later this year/in the fall

- **Meta Peace Team** looking for a Sunday to do a talk and schedule a workshop.

- **Other scheduled Events:**

John Mundy doing a talk in July  
Murray Lake Picnic will be July 8

- **Threshold Choir** wants to use space once a month to open a Community Singing Event called Singing for Comfort - one Thursday per month starting in the fall

Delyth will be here on Mondays and Thursdays now.

**Finances**

- Offering: noticed that people are leaving before offering - perhaps having a basket at the door for those who walk out. Or a general donations box could be put in a more visible spot.

There are two links to Donate on the Website, and we could ask Craig to add a link.

**QCC June 25, 2018**

### **Opening of Meetings**

It was suggested that QCC's and Board meetings open with meditation. Attendees then meditated before moving ahead with the agenda.

### **Newsletter Frequency and other Communications:**

The Inspirer is the ICSG newsletter. It reflects who we are and shows people outside of ICSG that we are a community of actively engaged spiritual seekers. The newsletter is printed, put into welcome packets, and is available online. It contains inspirational items, Board minutes, a calendar of activities, Community Member of the month, etc. Heide has been putting the Inspirer together for many years and volunteers her time to do so. When Heide asks for submissions and it would be helpful if community members would submit items to be published. How can we encourage and inspire members to contribute? Community members are encouraged to write and share any articles on spiritual topics, short blogs, favorite songs, poems, quotes, etc. The Communication team will look at if once a month is too frequent and if not, how best to get the information needed for the newsletter so that we can get it out at the beginning of each month.

The Inspirer will always be the inspirational document that represents the center. We still need someone to help with the Community Member of the Month article. Is this too big a job for one person to do on a monthly basis? Perhaps regular monthly items and big updates on a quarterly basis? It might be helpful to have 2 people alternate months. This is important as a way to acknowledge community members and to show that ICSG relies on and appreciates their volunteers.

The Board has identified a need for an official Communication team to coordinate all the formats and avenues used to inform our membership and visitors about our spiritual center, events, and classes. A need to be addressed is how to ensure that information about the internal functions is available to the community membership in a timely and easy-to-access manner.

The Communication team and the board will explore the most efficient way for Board communication to get out to the community. Currently using the website and mailchimp/online newsletter.

### **50 Children, Social Justice and Spiritual Activism**

Discussion about the 50 children that have been sent to Michigan after being separated from their parents at the southern border. Discussion focused on what we could do as a congregation and if we should get involved; prayer circles, participation in demonstrations, collection of relief donations. One of ICSG's guiding principles is that individuals are encouraged to think, say, and do whatever they want. Organizing for spiritual action and social justice is something that many QCC attendees want to participate in. A Social Justice committee will form to explore ways that the ICSG community can help; This committee will also include the coordination work of the Washtenaw Sanctuary Congregation partnership with Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, as well as the Uncomfortable Conversations on Race.

### **Board Updates**

Becky Rowe has resigned from both, the ICSG Board and as the ICSG Web Administrator. She's done a tremendous job in both realms and we will miss her. The Board is currently evaluating what skills and talents are needed for a new board member. When a board member leaves mid-term, the vacancy is filled by discernment of current Board members. This has been the process since the center opened. When a Board member completes their two-year commitment, the vacancy is voted on by general membership at the respective annual meeting. Becky had filled a vacant board seat mid-term, and so the new member chosen will finish the term of that seat as of March of 2019. Layla Anda will fill the vacancy of Web Administrator.

The Board is in the process of finishing a Conflict and Grievance policy, Safe Church policy, and Whistleblower policy. The Board is working to secure pro bono legal assistance so to verify legality of each policy.

The Finance team is updating their charter to acknowledge the internal controls utilized in the first three days of April following the unexpected resignation of the former senior minister. Updated treasurer job description reflects the interim oversight needed in the absence of Senior Minister/CEO. Both policies expected to be voted on at July Board meeting.

*Continued on page 6*

*Continued from page 5*

### **Ministerial Transition:**

Delyth and Annie have both picked up additional responsibilities. They are both receiving compensation for this although it's not much for everything that they are doing. They have a contract to be reviewed for renewal every three months, so that their pay and responsibilities can be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure fair compensation.

Both Annie and Delyth will be available for spiritual guidance. Dave Bell has said that he's be available as needed.

### **CoCreation Team**

Several Board members are active on the Co-Creation team. New members joined in May to help guide the community of ICSG through this ministerial transition and continue with the visioning and planning of our future as a spiritual center. This work will also allow the ministers to stay focused on engagement of spiritual seekers and allow the board to stay focused on policy and current needs of the center as a whole.

### **Ministerial Transition workshop- Facilitated by Layla Ananda and Craig Harvey of the CoCreation team**

Community members were given three questions. Below are the questions and thoughts that were captured from this activity.

**Question 1:** Do you need more processing time about the departure of the senior minister in April?

#### **Thoughts from community members regarding Question 1:**

- Layers of contexts for which processing is necessary and layers of contexts when it is time to move on
- Want to keep the doors open
- Want to continue moving on to be a functioning congregation
- Ready now to be done
- Betrayal perceived by some, personal healing still needed
- Spiritual and leadership guides wanted/top down leadership not wanted
- Let's stay focused on our potential not the

criticisms

- Lessons learned are helpful even if moving on

**Question 2:** How long is it OK to keep going as we are with guest speakers and associate ministers?

#### **Thoughts from community members regarding Question 2:**

Need a person who will attract new and returning members

- It takes as long as it takes
- Resolve what feels healthy, to congregation/church hierarchy
- Right now, success is important
- Need to chew and walk at the same time
- Love how it is but not forever
- Are we ready? They will arrive when we are.
- We need time to get ourselves directed towards our future
- Let's use this time to be contemplative of what we want
- Need a plan to raise funds to compensate the leadership skills wanted
- Person will have agenda for their career, need to be open to what that potential could be

**Question 3:** Is it important to you to find a new senior minister?

#### **Thoughts from community members regarding Question 3:**

- First need to know what we want to be, then the person will take us there
- Want a spiritual presence as a senior minister
- *A spiritual leader will keep us challenged*
- Need a professional experienced in absorbing negative energy to help us move on
- *A person to bring the energy*
- I don't know and I'm ok with that
- Speakers and relevance are key right now
- Management vs. Leadership



## THE SLUGS OF SUMMER

*By Peggy Lubahn*

A year ago I wrote about ticks; I wanted to bring some balance to the media hysteria about how evil ticks are. Today I'm writing about another creature who is very unpopular this time of year, especially with gardeners! And I'd like to start out by telling you that I'm quite fond of slugs and snails and similar animals that many people never really think about. I like their energy and cheerful nature, and their cute little faces. I've even kept them as "pets". All this background info will make sense as you continue to read.

My apartment complex was built in a strip of forest on the edge of Ford Lake. As a result we have a LOT of wild-life living here and passing through, which is usually a wonderful thing. This is my third summer here and I'm growing marigolds for the first time. Problem is, it turns out that slugs REALLY love marigolds and the poor plants are being stripped, from the ground up. I would have thought a spicy plant like that would be immune to slime-trailing snackers, but that's not so.

A brief conversation with a slug representative was unproductive: I got a flat NOPE when I asked about a truce or a compromise. (I'm sure it would have helped if I had waited until dark to connect, instead of trying to negotiate during the day when the slugs are sleeping!)

Meanwhile, my Sage plants were also getting chewed on, and I asked what I could do to help. To my surprise, the answer was: "Nothing. We can handle this."

That evening, my Sage plant had more to say:

"I do not mind a nibble here or a nibble there. Sometimes the slugs come to us for healing substances we can provide. Only the weak and sick plants are harmed by slug dining.

"Yes, marigolds are medicinal for the slugs. There is so much poison used here and it makes the slugs sick. [Referring to insecticides.] The marigold essence helps them.

"Yes they do LIKE the taste of marigolds [aside from illness]; that is part of the scenario. They are not mindless, they have awareness of the consequences of their actions; as in, if they eat every bit of a plant it might not grow anymore and they must seek elsewhere.

"Their mind processes are quite basic/simple and they live in the day, the Now. Focused on their little bit of the big world. Big matters are not part of their awareness. They experience bliss, joy, fear, affection in a limited way. They would tell you that life is good, until it is not, then it becomes good once again. What else is there? What else would they possibly need?"

Well, Sage gave me a lot to think about, and as a result I've come back to my sacred center; I've let go of this whole situation to let Nature take its course. I'll continue to send loving Reiki energy to everyone involved.

At this point you might be expecting me to share advice about how to cope with slug damage on YOUR plants. Nope. You'll find plenty of ideas online. You'll also find a LOT of articles about the spiritual aspects of slugs and what we can learn from them.

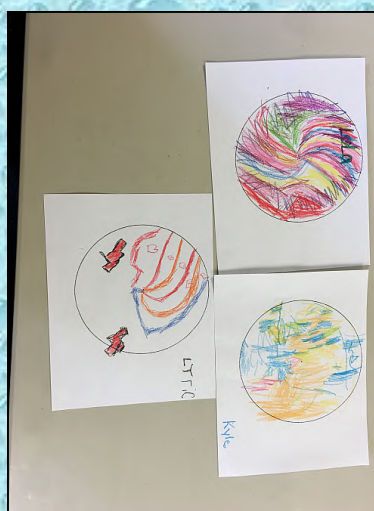
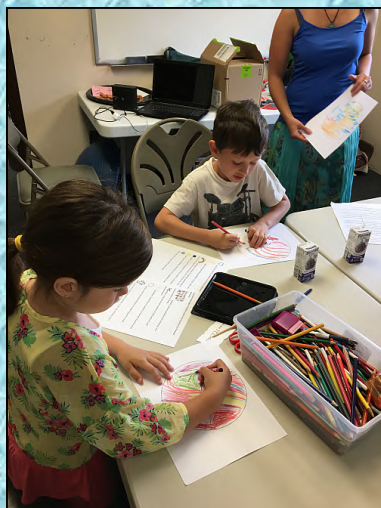
The rest, I leave up to you!

# Youthful Spirits

Trusting activities



**Birthday Boxes: we need shoeboxes, birthday wrapping paper, and “ingredients” to make an instant birthday party packet for children at the Alpha House :-)**



*Love, Light, and Laughter  
Heide, Kellie, Tommy, Dawn,, and the Youthful Spirits*