



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

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## *New Beginnings*

*By Heide AW Kaminski*

*First off, I want to apologize for the missing January newsletter...*

*After discussion with several people, we decided to just leave it be.*

*There is a good reason, why I just couldn't produce a January newsletter:*

*My oldest child, Sarah, was expecting a baby - her first child and my first grandbaby. Due to complication, the baby was given steroid shots for faster lung development, as the doctors wanted him to come early (original due date was first week of February).*

*So, after my teaching job stopped for a winter break, I dropped everything and flew to Long Island to support my daughter.*

*Alas, when I returned to go back to work, the little bugger was still baking... However, an induction date had been set, January 15.*

*This threw me a curveball, as my other daughter, Angela - formerly a nursery worker at Interfaith - had her wedding set for January 23. In Karachi, Pakistan!*

*There is a 10 hour time difference between New York and Karachi and it takes about two days one way with overlays to travel between the two.*

*I was heartbroken that I had to make a choice between my girls' huge life events. I decided, with the*

*help of family support, that I would stay with Sarah, while the girls' father and Tommy went to the wedding.*

*So, after working in the new semester for a few days, I headed back to Long Island.*

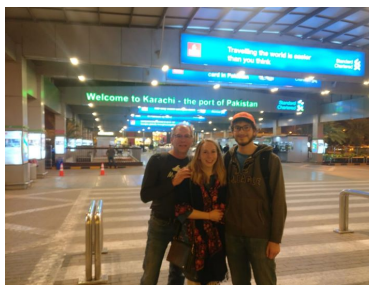
*During the few days back home, I really did not think about the newsletter... And I certainly did not think about the newsletter while I was in Long Island...*

*I know you're all loving, understanding, and forgiving.*

*Just look at this face...*



*Meanwhile on the other side of the globe...*



*It was one heck of a whirlwind in my family's life.*

*I became an abuelita (granny in Spanish, as my grandbaby is half El Salvadorian) for the first time.*

*Sarah became a mommy for the first time.*

*Angela became a fairy-tale bride.*

*And Tommy... I have taken this gem of a son all around the globe. He's seen more of the world than many Americans will ever see of the USA in their lifetimes. Well, the trip to his sister's wedding was the first ever without me!*

*Anyhow, that's why I am grateful for all of you and your patience—especially when I show you all of the baby and wedding pics and videos!*

## *January's Community Members of the Month*



*Thank you for presenting a celebration of music and stories that brought light and beauty to your winter world.*

*Alaura Massaro and Layla Ananda shared original songs and covers, accompanying themselves on guitar, piano and dulcimer.*

*Jill Halpern brought her magical stories to delight and move us.*

**Ministerial Miscellany**  
By Rev. Annie Kopko

Welcome to February! Or as I think of it: One month closer to Spring!

This is the month to remind ourselves how important love is in our lives, and loving ourselves is probably the most important place to start. This month let's remind ourselves how much we are deeply loved by our spiritual selves. Simply appreciating the miracle of our own being is so powerful. When we love ourselves, we do not hurt ourselves or others. We remember that our presence and our words make a big difference. When we love ourselves, we open our hearts and change the world. We never know who needs love and who may come into and out of our lives, and be touched by our love.

Here are some wonderful events where you can meet and get to know fellow community members and practice being spiritually human:

Sat. Feb 1st. and March 7th, Drum and Dance jam. Don Allen will be leading for these two Saturdays. Donations welcome.

Tues. Feb. 4th. Class with Imam Kamau Ayubbi, Sufi movement and meditation. This Feb series of classes every Tuesday are about Love, include lively group discussion. 6:30PM to 8PM. \$5.00 to \$10.00 donation.

Tues. Feb. 4th Death Cafe. Confidential conversations about any and all aspects of death. 6:30 to 8PM Free. Lead by Annie Kopko and Susan Thompson.

Thursday, Feb. 6. CONCERT With JAMES TWYMAN! Don't miss this one! 7pm and tickets are \$25.00. Music from the movie of the Life of St. Francis of Assisi.

Sat. Feb. 8th Katie Geddes appearing at Cafe 704. 8PM and \$8, \$15 per couple. Come early for Artisan 704, handmade crafts for sale, (also a fundraiser for Interfaith)

Sat. Feb. 15th Game night. It's lots of fun learning new games to play with your old and new friends. Hosted by Donald Prevost-Hart and Tracy Worcester. 6:30PM

Our inspiring Sufi friends will be speaking on two Sundays coming up: Ali Hussain will speak on Sunday Feb. 23rd.

Kamau Ayubbi will be speaking on Sunday March 1st.

We love having you as part of our community, whether or not you attend many events. For more information about these events, and our ongoing classes and discussion groups, please check out our website at [Interfaithspirit.org](http://Interfaithspirit.org).

*Many Blessings, Annie*

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**Community Members  
of the Months**

**Kool Khristian  
Kool Khristian**

**By Jaclyn Morrow**

We are so thrilled to take the time this month to give thanks to Khristian Smith Speelman. Khristian is a sturdy rock on which one can lean- and we have! He is a calm, strengthening presence. And when you ask him about his favorite book, you'll find out how open-minded he is..."I love anything that is inspirational, enlightening and healing."

Khristian became part of the Interfaith Community only 5 years ago, but it seems like we've always known each other. His support is meaningful to this organization of spiritual beings having a human experience. Khristian has served on the Caring Committee and volunteers to prepare meals at Alpha House Shelter for homeless families 3 times a year.

Khristian is an Interfaith Chaplain that specializes in Critical Incident Stress Management and End of Life Issues. He is very passionate about compassion. And if this isn't enough he also has another day job! Yes, during the day this superhero transforms to the Manager at Ronald McDonald House in Ann Arbor. I know, I know- Khristian is an incredibly humble and supportive person and maybe he thinks superhero is too much. But I'm sticking by it. Heroes come in all sorts of packages and by giving thanks to him this month we like to think we are filling his cup with our words so he can continue to fill the cups of so many others!

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth is so grateful he moved back to Ann Arbor after a short fling with Detroit. Khristian was a dedicated member of Renaissance Unity which at the time was led by Marianne Williamson and enjoyed the Detroit River-front lifestyle. But he has made it home to Ann Arbor once again.

Who knows what the future holds? But for today we have each other and can take a moment to recognize each other. So whether you want to ask him about books or anything else- maybe next time you see Khristian, share an extra special Namaste.

## Volunteer Coordinator Corner

By Bob Hopkins

This space will be used to identify volunteer needs and appreciation as of as of December 19, 2020

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

We want responsible people to set up and tidy up the sanctuary before or after the service – See Annie

We can always use treats for after Service – See Ted or just bring them in

We would like testimonials from people who have gained from their volunteer experience -- see Bob

We need people to help with transportation –see Donald, the Transportation Coordinator.

### APPRECIATION

THANKS TO: Layla Anaconda for facilitating the conversation after the two showings of Becoming Nobody in December.

THANKS TO: Marilyn Alf, Scott Alf, Delyth Balmer. Randall Counts, for Vicki Davinich and Malcolm Schaffner for the work to pull off and clean up after the Christmas Day potluck.

THANKS TO: Judy Bell and Annmarie Howse for laundry of the Center's table cloths.

THANKS TO: Don Allen, Janet Fry, Bob Hopkins. Lindsay Passmore and Idgie Patterson for participating on the mother drum at the Burning Bowl Service.

THANKS TO: Delyth Balmer, Randall Counts, Bob Hopkins and Gretchen Leonhardt for their roles in the New Year's party.

THANKS TO: Don Allen for bringing his drumming circle back to Interfaith on January 4.

### Blessings - E.S. Nowakowski

Good tidings and blessings come forth for this year.

A year, that we hope may move us beyond fear,

Beyond fear into love and creation's embrace.

Embracing, not running, there is nothing to chase.

In chasing whatever, our attention is drawn

Drawn into a frame, our freedom is gone.

For gone is the past. The present is now.

Now is the moment we experience "Wow!"

This "Wow" is the feeling that springs from the garden.

The garden that is planted with seeds of pardon.

Pardon the sentence you've given yourself.

Your Self is the trophy that rests on the shelf.

A selfish desire dissolves upon knowing.

Knowing Love never left, in fact it's ongoing.

Ongoing through them and through you and through me.

Meeting in us, or though so it seems.

Seams appear in the fabric of time.

Timeless creation is waiting behind.

Behind you is last year, and hour, and minute

Minute, insignificant, they're no longer in it.

Knit us together in purpose and presence

Cleansing the lens, joining luminescence.

Illuminating rays so bright and so clear.

Clarify our path as we move through this year.

## February Music

2: Katie Geddes and David Vaughn (Café 704  
Promo)

9: Curtis Glatter

16: Laz Slomovits-Song Sermon  
23: Don Allen

### February Birthdays

6 Stephanie Shelter

8 Janis Beatd

10 Angela Wyse

11 Delyth Balmer

16 Carol Barenstein

20 Curtis Glatter

21 Don Cody

28 Melissa Whitney

### February Talks

2 Cynthia McNabb "Compassion & Forgiveness"

9 Tracy Worcester "Sanity is a Lie"

16 Song Sermon with Laz Slomovits

23 Dr. Ali Hussain "Our Ancestors Were Skywalkers:

The Spirituality of Star Wars"



## A CONVERSATION WITH THE SPIRIT OF PEACE

By Peggy River Singer

**Peggy:** May I speak to the spirit of peace, please?

**Peace:** *Granted. I hear you.*

**Peggy:** Thank you! Some of our people call you a goddess, others a spirit or an angel. How do you describe yourself?

**Peace:** *I rather like the title Spirit. It is more complex in meaning, and better suited to my role than the other words you mention.*

**Peggy:** Have you always existed, or only since humans developed?

**Peace:** *I have always existed; my role is in a constant state of change, and I never lack for things to do.*

**Peggy:** Is your mission confined to Earth?

**Peace:** *Not at all. I am present wherever I am needed. Distance makes no difference in my functioning.*

**Peggy:** Do you work with not-humans?

**Peace:** *Yes, indeed I do! You already understand that most not-human beings have their own customs for resolving disagreements; even the Stone Folk and Plant Folk. But there are times when an impartial observer, such as myself, is called upon to mediate.*

**Peggy:** But if you are the spirit of peace, how can you be impartial?

**Peace:** *Because, my friend, I cannot force or oblige anyone to do what I suggest. I hear the representatives present their cases, and reply with ideas that will help lead to a peaceful resolution. Whether the beings involved choose to follow any of my suggestions, is up to them.*

**Peggy:** Do you spread more than the usual amount of peaceful energies to parts of the world, and to people, that are in crisis?

**Peace:** *Yes. I am in constant contact with Creator, and follow his/her guidelines.*

**Peggy:** Do you ever disagree with Creator?

**Peace:** *It does happen; usually in situations where soul contracts are in play. Creator naturally has access to all*

*soul contracts, but they are not part of my Knowing. We do not argue, but we might have a stimulating discussion now and then!*

**Peggy:** Do you have any assistants to help you in your work?

**Peace:** No. I was designed with full capacity to do whatever is required.

**Peggy:** What about family and friends?

**Peace:** *Since I am a unique being, I have no family in the human sense. There are many others with whom I enjoy occasional visits.*

**Peggy:** Do you have to be on duty at all times, or are you allowed to take breaks?

**Peace:** *I am able to function in all timelines on all levels, if necessary. You can think of it as a background function. So yes, I can choose to 'take a break' and visit with acquaintances, without affecting my workings.*

**Peggy:** The spirit of peace is such a widespread concept in human cultures, that we might think we know all there is to know about you. Will you share with us something about you, which we do NOT know?

**Peace:** *[amused] I've been waiting for you to ask! I am, by my very nature, a creation of love. Love and peace are natural partners. I am much encouraged by the rising energies of love and peace on Planet Earth. I never feel discouraged or angry at those who choose not to follow a peaceful path; I am simply not designed for that kind of emotional response. Will that suffice?*

**Peggy:** Yes, thank you so much!

**Peace:** *I've enjoyed this talk. Good life to you.*



# Youthful Spirits



## Christmas Play



**Directors and playwright**



**Santa passing out presents**



**Our Music director**



**"Hey, Santa, I was a better girl than that!"**

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



## CONSTRUCTION OF A PRAYER – PART SIX

By Bob Hopkins

### CONSTRUCTION OF A PRAYER – PART SIX

**O Creator of the Universe  
Who was manifested in Jesus  
Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Gan-  
dhi, Quimby, Moses, Muham-  
mad, Bahá'u'lláh and Rumi.**

Muhammed (Peace be Upon HIM) is widely known as The Arab religious, social and political leader. He is known throughout the world as the founder of Islam. According to Islamic doctrine, he was a prophet, sent to present and confirm the monotheistic teachings preached previously by Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets; He is viewed as the final prophet of God in all the main branches of Islam. Muhammad united Arabia into a single Muslim polity, with the Quran as well as his teachings and practices forming the basis of Islamic religious belief..

Born approximately 570 CE in the Arabian city of Mecca, Muhammad was orphaned at the age of six. In later years he would periodically seclude himself in a mountain cave named Hira for several nights of prayer. When he was 40, Muhammad reported being visited by Gabriel in the cave, and receiving his first revelation from God. Three years

later, in 610, Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "submission" (islām) to God[12] is the right way of life, and that he was a prophet and messenger of God.

The followers of Muhammad were initially few in number, and experienced hostility from Meccan polytheists. He sent some of his followers to Abyssinia in 615 to shield them from prosecution, before he and his followers migrated from Mecca to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, also known as the Hijri Calendar. In Medina, Muhammad united the tribes under the Constitution of Medina. In December 629, after eight years of intermittent fighting with Meccan tribes, Muhammad gathered an army of 10,000 Muslim converts and marched on the city of Mecca. The conquest went largely uncontested and Muhammad seized the city with little bloodshed. In 632, a few months after returning from the Farewell Pilgrimage, he fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam.

The revelations (each known as Ayah — literally,

"Sign [of God]") that Muhammad reported receiving until his death, form the verses of the Quran, regarded by Muslims as the verbatim "Word of God" on which the religion is based. Besides the Quran, Muhammad's teachings and practices (sunnah), found in the Hadith and sira (biography) literature, are also upheld and used as sources of Islamic law.

Muhammad was unlike Moses, who had the time (while wandering Sinai for 40 years) to write the first five chapters of the Jewish Bible. Muhammad spoke the Quran as he led his people throughout his lifetime. His chief role was as a leader of the Arabian people, a sage conversing with God and speaking what he had learned from the words of God so that others might put it into a written form after his death. The net result is that he gave rise to the religion that has grown to be the second largest one in the world and deeply influenced the other two of the personages who are identified in my daily prayers.

These two deeply religious men will be discussed in great detail in the next installment. They are Bahá'u'lláh and Rumi. There is much to be said about each and how Islam influenced them and how they influenced religious thought.

## Grocery Card Fundraiser ("Scrip" program) Update

### Background:

This is a way for local food stores to contribute to Interfaith about 3-5% of whatever you spend at these stores. It costs you nothing more, and it really does help the Center. The only place that still requires actually buying cards at the Center is Peoples Food Co-op. For questions or to buy cards you can find Craig Harvey in the social hall after service, or phone Craig at 734-971-8576. And here are the details about each store's program (Kroger, Busch's, Arbor Farms, and People's Food Co-op).

### Kroger shoppers:

Please look at the bottom of your Kroger receipt and verify that it includes the following notice. If it doesn't, then please sign yourself up!

\*\*\*\*Kroger Community Rewards\*\*\*\*  
At your request, Kroger is donating to  
INTERFAITH CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

To link your Kroger-Plus account to Interfaith just go to:

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow/>

Look at the "Community Rewards" section of your account info and edit it as needed to make the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (#82808) your preferred organization. Whenever you go shopping, just do your usual swiping your Kroger-Plus card or entering your phone number to identify yourself to the system. It may take a couple weeks for you to be fully in the system, after which the bottom of your receipts will always mention Interfaith.

### Busch's:

If you don't have a Busch's MyWay account, you first need to do that at <http://buschs.com>. Then connect your MyWay account to the Interfaith Center using their "Cash for Education" feature.

- To enroll in Cash for Education log into your MYWAY\* account and select Cash for Education from the dropdown menu underneath your name.

- Choose up to four organizations that you would like to support per quarter.

- Be sure to use your phone number at checkout.

Reminder: You must have a valid email address and opt-in to receive emails to participate in this program. Please also note that participants will need to re-enroll on an annual basis (easier after you have your MyWay account).

### Arbor Farms:

No cards or phone number to worry about! All you need to do is tell the cashier that you want to credit the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (or just say "Interfaith Church" which they recognize more easily). You just have to remember to **mention it every time you shop**.

### Peoples Food Co-op:

Buy \$50 or \$100 card(s) from Craig at Interfaith. When you use them up, buy more of them at the Center. You can pay with cash or check made out to the Interfaith Center (or just "ICSG").