



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

VOL. XIX, NO. 09 September 2023



## BALANCE: The Autumn Equinox is Upon Us

by Susan Slack

Buddha talked about the middle path. The middle of what one could ask? During this turn toward the Autumn Equinox, when day and night are equal, when dark and light are in balance, we can notice how Creation has given us this opportunity to ponder the notion of balance. We experience daylight then night, one and then the other in perfect balance; another cycle, a mirror.

When the Buddha spoke of the middle way, some who follow that path interpret it as witnessing the extremes of either strict asceticism and denial, or as excessive desires and consumption. Neither of those paths did much for the Buddha. It was the balance between the two that brought him enlightenment - in between the extremes of indulgence and self denial, between suffering and bliss, that he found a way of peace and liberation in his life.

When we study the yin/yang symbol from the Chinese Taoist tradition, we notice that within the dark part of the circle there is a small white dot. And within the white section, a small black dot, wrapped like entwined lovers, asleep and awake. Breathing in and breathing out. Where does our Fall Equinox fit into this? It is the differentiation between the black and white, the undrawn line, the point of balance, like in the playground on a seesaw with your best friend across from you, both feet dangling, in complete trust and harmony.

But because duality is a part of earthly life, the seesaw's gotta move again. We earth folk have many stories about this continuous withdrawal and emergence.

Take for instance the Greek story of Persephone, her mom Demeter (Zeus's wife) and her Uncle Hades. The story goes that there were no seasons until that one fateful day when lovely Persephone found herself in a flowered meadow. The ground opened and out popped Hades, god of the underworld, of the dark, who took her below into the depths. Mother Demeter was so distraught at Persephone's disappearance that the beautiful seasonless existence became desolate and without greenery. See, Demeter was in charge of all that, but she quit her job to search. A deal was made with the sun god, Helios, that Persephone could return to the living every spring as a sweet young lady to reunite with her mom and help the flowers grow, but then had to return back into the deep. Spoiler alert: This will happen every year. Remember that during this winter. Remember the white dot in the black yin/yang symbol.

Another myth is of Osiris, one of the Royal Four in the upper echelons of ancient Egyptian hierarchies. Unfortunately, he was assassinated by his brother, Set. Isis, Osiris's wife and also his sister (don't judge) searched the world for his remains. But, alas, Osiris now rules the underworld - the dark.

Horus, his son with Isis, has over the centuries morphed into the Sun God Ra. Dark and light became a family business.

This turning of seasons has intrigued us for millennia. Even though the old stories are more dramatic and entertaining, no one could explain that during the equinox, the sun stands directly above the equator making day and night equal in time. We are in a time of balance, for now.

This time of year is a good opportunity to let our eyes wander as we walk in nature, and witness the summer fade back into the Earth, inhaling the sun's energy from plants as they wither, with the promise of new life yet to be. We notice furry neighbors collecting nuts for storage, and feathered kin leaving us until Persephone calls them back. And we humans pull in the harvest from our gardens and trees and endeavor to find our mittens and boots. Maybe we begin to consider which books we will read as the light withdraws, or which projects we will finally get to.

As we walk in the woods, maybe we notice how we place our feet on the earth, feeling the weight on one foot as we step, then feeling the weight transfer onto the other, and then the next step and the next. Are our bodies in balance? Weight on one foot, then weight on the other. That's a basic principle in Tai Chi. It helps strengthen balance within oneself.

We can feel grateful for this gift of the annual rhythm, the mysteries of the breath of the Earth rotating in space. Noticing this beauty placed before us, awareness of those who came before and who will follow, is a step into the middle way.

*Susan Slack, author, musician, leader of  
Dances of Universal  
Peace*

*[susanslack.net](http://susanslack.net)*

*<https://slacksusan.wixsite.com/susan-j-slack>*



## Ministerial Miscellany

*By Annie Kopko*

When I was in Chicago 2 weeks ago for the Parliament of World Religions, one thing that surprised me was the huge number of spiritual groups and communities, including many seminaries, that almost seemed like separate Religions on their own, and yet were obviously part of larger groups as well. Some examples of these which I would like to find out more about are ProSocial Spirituality (with Wayne Teasdale's work), Greenfaith, a movement for climate justice, and Passageways to Elderhood Alliance. To me there was an acknowledgement that we are all part of one human family expressing our spirituality in different ways, getting together to share ideas that may not ever be shared as directly-face to face- at any other time. People were very welcoming to one another, openly sharing what beliefs and expressions were working for their spiritual and physical lives. It was especially interesting to meet people from all over the world.

I was glad that the sharing was in the spirit of Interfaith, and that this word was used widely, along with Interspiritual. The program book states that the "Parliament seeks to promote interreligious harmony, rather than unity". This approach respects each tradition as it is. I felt this was very much in line with our belief here at the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth.

The first Parliament in 1893 in Chicago is considered to be the founding event of the movement toward Interfaith, gathering people of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. It took another 100 years for the second Parliament to convene in 1993. This 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament of the World's Religions held in Chicago welcomed 7000+ attendees from 95 countries, representing 210 traditions. The theme of this meeting was "A Call to Conscience, A Call to Action". The vision of the Parliament of the World's Religions is a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. I will share much more about the parliament later.

There are some really great events coming up for our spiritual community. You will find more details on our website: <https://interfaithspirit.org>.

**September 9<sup>th</sup>**, 7-9 pm, Cafe 704 features the Celtic group Nutshell, featuring 6 voices with many instruments, including Linda Teaman, Tom Voiles, Glenn Simon, Susie Lorand, Josh Burdick and John Lloyd.

**September 10<sup>th</sup>**, Marianne Williamson will deliver a message entitled "The Spirit of America" at our Sunday Service. Come early for a good seat.

Sending Blessings for a great month,

*Annie*



*Happy  
Birthday*



## Happy Birthday to Our September Celebrants

September-04 Linda Rykwald

September-05 Connie Snow

September-06 Amy Advey

September-09 Nicholas DePaul

September-09 Michael O'Shea

September-11 Laurel Beyer

September-18 Steve Lyskawa

September-21 Sue Booker

September-23 John Lang

September-23 Mary Seibert

September-27 Darlene MacLeod

Adding another  
candle doesn't make  
you older, it makes  
your life brighter!



## September Volunteer Corner

*Submitted by Annemarie Howse*

Have you wondered over the past few months how you can better connect with the Interfaith Community? Joining us in social hall after the service to enjoy a cup of coffee is one way. But if you want to REALLY engage, there are many volunteer opportunities designed to do just that.

If you are new, the best way to get to know others is to become a **greeter**. You will quickly learn peoples names and they will remember who you are.

Sign up to **do a reading or lead a meditation** during the service. I've been told that the two greatest fears people have are death and public speaking. This is a great opportunity to get over that fear. It is only 3-5 minutes and you are reading something you have chosen to share. If it is a meditation, most people will have their eyes closed so they won't even see if your hands are shaking.

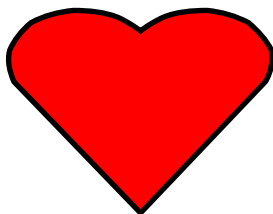
Bring a **snack** to share during our social time after the service. Please consider that some people are gluten free. Fresh fruit or cheese and crackers can be a nice change from our usual chips and cookies. No peanut or peanut products however, as some people have peanut allergies.

**Help organize, paint, or do small repairs** around the building. You've probably noticed that there has been a few changes/improvements made lately. The bulk of the work was done by a small hand full of people. And though we've enjoyed the camaraderie, with a few more hands, the projects could be completed in less time. Even one hour of your time would be greatly appreciated and it would allow you to get to know a few people much better and for us to get to know you.

Contribute to the Interfaith Inspirer. Our monthly newsletter not only keeps you informed of what is happening in our Interfaith Community, but has some engaging articles to read as well (though it could have more).

These are just a few of the ways to get involved. You can also join a committee (most meet once a month on Zoom) or run for the board. Visit our website at <https://interfaithspirit.org/community/volunteers/> to learn more or contact Annemarie at [ahowse21@gmail.com](mailto:ahowse21@gmail.com) or 818-667-2815. If you choose to call, please leave a message or follow up with a text or email.

Namaste,  
Annemarie



## Caring Committee August Report

*respectfully submitted by Annemarie Howse*

The mission of the Caring Committee is to assist individuals or families primarily within the community of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, and selectively support outreach groups or people that aren't part of our Interfaith Community but we know about them through our members and affiliations.

Since the Caring Committee may not always be able to provide the services that are requested, we may reach out to the Interfaith Community for help. For example: if someone is moving or needs a ride, we might make an announcement or send an email with their request. We would then ask that you contact a member of the Caring Committee to let them know you are able to help.

During the month of August the Caring Committee provided the following services:

Cards sent on behalf of the Caring Committee-3

Texts/emails-2

Phone calls-5

Home or hospital visits-1

Outreach-5

These supports and services were provided to 6 different individuals or families in our Interfaith Community and 5 individuals through outreach during the month of August.

(A total of 42 filled backpacks were distributed to preschool through grade 12 students in the greater community (Ann Arbor, Milan, and Tecumseh) thanks to the generosity of donations of backpacks and supplies to fill them with.)

Financial Report-Our balance at the end of August was \$2873.00

Donations received this month were \$349. The amount spent was \$0.

We thank you for your generosity and are grateful for our ability to be of service.





## Cleanup and Painting Party at the Center



Vicki Davinich



Annie Kopko and  
Don Digirolamo



Connie Snow and Norah Reilly



Heide Kaminski



Delyth Balmer



Den & Phill Carbonell



Dave Bell

Not Pictured:

Randall Counts  
Carol Bardenstein  
Diane Gledhill  
Cathy & Apurva



Annie Kopko



Annemarie, Don, and Judy



Norah, Annie, Craig Harvey, and  
Annemarie Howse

**Mark your calendars!**

### CAFE 704 CONCERT SERIES

Saturdays, 7 p.m.—9 p.m.

In person and on Zoom

**Sep. 9:** Nutshell

**Oct. 14:** Vornhagen and Kaufman

**Nov. 11:** Jean Wilson and Friends

**Dec. 9:** Emily Slomovits and Billy King

**Interested in performing at Cafe 704?**

Send an inquiry to Al Carter at

[cafe704@gmail.com](mailto:cafe704@gmail.com)

### PEACE GENERATOR

7—9 pm

With Craig Harvey

Every 3rd Friday

### Leadership Team Meeting 2nd Sunday

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Bob Hopkins (734) 985-5572

### Board of Trustees Meeting 3rd Sunday

1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Marice Clark & Claire Groshans,

Co-Chairs

[board@interfaithspirit.org](mailto:board@interfaithspirit.org)

### Caring Committee Meeting

1st Thursday

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on **zoom** Marilyn Alf,

Chair

[sdtoaa@gmail.com](mailto:sdtoaa@gmail.com)

### Singing for Comfort

with Layla Ananda

7-8:30 pm

every 2nd Thursday

## THE SUFI WAY

**By Bob Hopkins**

### THE SUFI WAY IN BITS AND PIECES.

It has grown harder to focus upon this column as I continue week upon week in the SUFI class. As I have noted before, it is held on Zoom on Tuesday nights from 7 until 8 and is accessible through our Interfaithspirit.org website. I find myself thinking what I want to write about and get lost from the central message of the evening. That said, I will try to communicate various disparate thoughts from a variety of classes. Many of these thoughts arise some my classmates and many of them arise from Kamau. Perhaps you will want to attend one of the next classes for yourself and see where your thoughts lead you. Disparate thoughts:

- "Compassion seems to bring peace to me – even delight." "Compassion as a doorway." "Still it is hard to show compassion when I feel overwhelmed."
- "Open heart and equanimity."
- "Intention leads to tension and Intensity."
- "Mercy and compassion are intimately tied to reality." "Every cell of the body is a receptor and collector."
- We were reminded the yellow, red, white, green and black represent chambers within the heart. Red reminds one of the blood in our veins. Green reminds us of a garden. Black is a reminder of the healing essence.
- "Look in the mirror and see beauty, not what is wrong." "Building capacity for Light, Compassion, Fulfillment, Nurturing, Caring."

Want to find a way to weave these disparate thoughts together. Come and join us some Tuesday night and learn for yourself how this can be done.

**"The Divine IS the water of life"**

**~ Kamau Ayubbi**



## SCIENCE OF MIND

**By Janet Somalinog**

*Spiritual counselor in the Religious Science tradition*

The familiar start of the school year that has all of us transitioning into it, whether we attend a school or not. This is a time of New Beginnings, another opportunity to see anew and still continue our lively march through the year. We also have this wonderful ritual of connecting a recent past event with our Gathering of the Waters. Wherever we are in time or age we always have the Spirit empowering our thoughts, our loving energies, and our creative impulses. With this prayer, hold in your mind a new event or a recent phenomenon or a special relationship, or a dream that is just beginning to unfurl into reality. With it close to your heart, let us surround it with the Spiritual Truth of perfect timing, ease, Grace, and Universal Collaboration.

God is the only thing there is. The Infinite Essence of Love pervades all of creation. IT is everywhere at all times in form and the formless, seen and unseen. There is no place I can go and not be imbued with Spirit and all that Spirit is. I am Spirit in action. IT flows into all that I AM. IT forms ITSELF into events, results and phenomenon according to my thoughts.

My Life is a path that is turned over to this Infinite Wealth. I need do nothing, but breathe God throughout my body temple. I need say nothing, but surrender my words to the Loving harmonies of Spirit that flow effortlessly through my throat and voice. I need pray nothing, but turn my trust over to the LAW of Spirit which is always conspiring to fulfill ITSELF as I have declared. There is only ONE MIND actively colluding with all the right people, all the right energies, all the right conditions, and all the right timing to bring forth my highest GOOD. I embrace each new idea or new vision and I KNOW that God is already on it and in it. Even before my thoughts are spoken, The Universe is aligning ITSELF to bring forth the experience in me and in my world.

I dispense with any doubts and worries and replace them with the Truth of my Being as Spirit, the Abundant Wellspring of ALL THERE IS. All that I need and desire is activated and set into motion because of the Unification of Me and Spirit. During times of lack, I simply stop to feel God present in my body, to feel the air of Spirit filling my lungs, to hear God beating my heart drum and pulsing through my bloodstream. I let God in and I let my smallness out. I let God do the work and I let my human limitation vanish.

I turn these words over to the Law of Mind and release any doubt for the Law is infallible. IT responds to my thinking, so I watch and listen to my thoughts *and invite the highest and best, most loving and inclusive ones to prevail within me. This will be done!! This is unfolding into reality right here and right now!!*

*I live with a deep gratitude every day, every moment and fill my thoughts with joyous expectation and sweet surrender at the same time. I practice Loving self-care because I am caring for God with my name!!*

And so it is!!

Ahhh...September....

# WHEN SPIRIT SINGS: A CONVERSATION WITH THE CICADA QUEEN by Peggy River Singer

A few years ago during a major cicada emergence, I was visiting a friend who lived out of town. As I said my goodbyes and walked to my car, I thought I could hear singing off in the distance. But, there were no buildings within a mile, no vehicles blasting music, and it wasn't coming from my phone. I pulled my car over to the side of the road and turned off the engine so I could listen.

The voices were ethereal, pure, angelic, faultlessly intertwined, filled with Light and Love. And they were coming from a grove of trees.

The singers were cicadas. But what I was hearing was the opposite end of the spectrum from the whining drone I was accustomed to on hot summer days. This was the voice of Spirit, expressed by insects.

For the past week, I've been hearing cicadas around my neighborhood, and it has reminded me of that breathtakingly beautiful song. The Cicada Queen graciously agreed to help me understand this experience.

**Queen:** *Those humans who are able to hear us are experiencing a rare gift indeed. We are aware of your kindness toward our people; on several occasions you have moved dying and injured cicadas to safe locations, and left them with a blessing. This is part of the reason why you were allowed to hear our higher selves singing on that day.*

*We are indeed a voice of the Earth itself, a single **strand** in the chorus of all that is. A human writer has rightly described us as "tiny violins with wings". We are born, we live, we mate, we die, solely to sing our songs.*

*The frequencies we sing sharpen, clarify and enhance the purity of the energies of a place.*

**Peggy:** Do you create the songs yourself, the way a human writes a song?

**Queen:** *No, Creator sends the songs through us, and we express them.*

**Peggy:** Do you sometimes sing for your own pleasure, as we do?

**Queen:** *Not in the way you are thinking of it. Our existence, our task, our songs are our pleasure and our reason for being.*

**Peggy:** What happens on cooler days, when your people are less active? Do the songs continue?

**Queen:** *Yes, on a different level. We are well able to*

*attune our bodies and the sound waves to accommodate those conditions.*

**Peggy:** Do your people form friendships? Do you recognize familial relationships?

**Queen:** *Each of us is aware of all the individuals in our group. We do not experience animosity, love, impatience, joy, or other human-style emotions among ourselves. We exist in a state of Grace. We exist to sing.*

**Peggy:** Cicadas provide important food and nutrition for many kinds of animals, as well as humans. Do your people grieve for those who are eaten?

**Queen:** *We care not what happens to the physical form we inhabit. We are aware of that aspect of our life cycle, but it does not detract our attention from our sacred task. Creator has arranged for our bodies to "run themselves" while our spirit sings on.*

*Understand that most of our songs cannot be heard by human ears. If this were not so, humans would not be able to focus on their own lives and doings; they would be overwhelmed by the beauty and power of our songs.*

**Peggy:** Is there anything else you'd like to share with us today?

**Queen:** *All things sing, each in their own way: a flower, a butterfly, a star, a stone, a mighty whale, all sing and contribute to the Great Song that rings through the Universe from this planet. There are no limitations, no restrictions, no rules, only the expression of Love and Light. Every being who reads these words is capable of hearing, and joining, the Great Song. It will be a different experience for each, unique to that being. It is time for me to return to The Song. Blessings.*



## AUTHOR BIO

Peggy River Singer is a Lightworker, all-beings channel and communicator, faerie ally, Reiki practitioner, and life-long writer who combines her gifts to help create harmonious relationships among all who share the Earth. Connect by phone at 734-548-0194, or by email at [newbluecanoe@aol.com](mailto:newbluecanoe@aol.com) or [peggytalkstoanimals.wordpress.com](http://peggytalkstoanimals.wordpress.com). More articles and columns are posted on [angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com](http://angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com).



## Miscellaneous

### A New Safety Team is Forming

The Board of Trustees would like to invite anyone interested to join our new Interfaith Center **Safety Team**. *We will be planning a first meeting soon - date to be announced.*

The development of a safety team was encouraged by Pittsfield Police Officer, Ritchie Coleman, who recently met with Delyth to complete a security assessment of our property.

The Board of Trustees believes that an emergency plan is essential to ensure the safety and well-being of our members and our staff in various unexpected situations. It helps to address potential risks such as fires, natural disasters, medical emergencies, or security threats.

Having a well-defined plan in place will allow us to respond effectively, minimize panic, and provide clear guidance to individuals on what to do in an emergency. This can include evacuation procedures, communication protocols, and coordination with local authorities to ensure everyone's safety.

If you would like to be a part of this team, please let the Board know. Just write to us at [Board@InterfaithSpirit.org](mailto:Board@InterfaithSpirit.org)

-- **Linda Claire Groshans**

## Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth The 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration CONTINUES!!!

### SPECTACULAR 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY PICNIC

**at the NEW Montibeller Park Pavilion  
4305 Ellsworth Rd. Ypsilanti, MI 48197**



**Saturday, October 7, 2023**

**1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

See [interfaithspirit.org](http://interfaithspirit.org) for details

**Precious Persephone And Humiliated Hades**  
**An alternative story about what happened**  
**By Heide AW Kaminski**

"Here, boys, here!" Hades threw three sticks in the air. Midair the sticks took different directions confusing Cerberus. His legs were not able to follow the commands of his three brains.

A dog's brain has the capacity of a 2-year-old human. Therefore, three toddlers were now having a temper tantrum.

They started biting each other, which meant, of course, that the middle head got the most of the massacre. Finally, exhausted and yelping, Cerberus' masticated body slumped into the ground.

Hades rolled in the dirt with roaring laughter.

"Oh, my heart and soul, how can you be so cruel?" a woman's voice shrieked.

Persephone rushed to the dog, squatted down, and patted his three heads. "Calm down, puppy...uhm, puppies, calm down." she soothingly murmured.

Cerberus rolled over on his back, his tail meekly wagging.

"And who might you be, speaking so boldly to a man of my valor?" Hades stood tall, dark, and furious, but with a hint of a smirk on his lips. "Come here boys!" he then demanded.

Cerberus stood up wobbly and hesitated, his tail between his legs. His three heads yelped and quipped at each other. He finally slowly backed away and hid behind Persephone. She, in turn, flashed an ear to ear grin at Hades.

Hades fell immediately head over heels for her. He loved the spunkiness, the glow on her smiling face, her golden curls framing her face and descending down her back like a golden waterfall.

"Come live with me!" he pleaded.

"Hell, no!" she retorted.

"Pretty please?"

"No! N-O!!!"

He shrugged his shoulders and whistled for Cerberus. But Cerberus wouldn't budge.

"Will you at least coax my dog back home? He's supposed to guard my kingdom, you know? He's never this friendly with anyone."

Always being a helpful person, Persephone agreed. Cerberus reluctantly followed her back to the gates of the Underworld. Hades dangled a chunk of meat in front of the heads. The two outer heads were dripping saliva, while the middle head viciously growled at them. He lost... Cerberus walked back into the Underworld.

Hades held out his hand. "Thank you." As Persephone reciprocated, he forcefully pulled her into the Underworld.

Persephone screamed for help and Demeter heard her daughter's distressed call. She rushed to the scene but only to be faced with the gates slamming shut. She banged on the gates like a lunatic, but to no avail.

In the Underworld, Persephone fought back the tears. "DO NOT CRY!" she told herself. "Do not let him think he can subdue you!" Despite her mantra, a few tears gently made their way down her cheeks.

Defeated for the moment, she let Hades guide her to a bare room and he left her.

Having no chair available, Persephone sat on the ground, pulled her knees up to her chin to rest her pounding head on

them, and closed her eyes. Thoughts and images racing through her mind, she became so emotionally drained that she drifted off...

Suddenly she was awakened by three tongues softly licking the salt from her tears off her face. She knew right then and there that Cerberus would eventually be her ticket out of hell.

Demeter pleaded with her brother, Zeus, to convince Hades to let Persephone go.

Zeus scratched the back of his head, "Hmmm." then lovingly stroked his long beard, "Hmmm.", and finally smacked a mosquito which had managed to find a juicy spot on his biceps while he was preoccupied with himself. "Damn you!" Turning to Demeter he frowned, "You know as well as I do, that brat would never ever listen to me!"

After several heated negotiation sessions (including statements, such as, "C'mon, man, she's your NIECE for cripes sake!") Hades agreed to think about working out a custody agreement between him and Demeter.

During all this time behind the scenes, Persephone made sure that she gave Cerberus a whole lotta lovin'.

One day, she boldly walked up to the gates while Hades was busy torturing some unlucky soul. Cerberus' tail wildly swayed left to right and back and repeat, repeat, repeat...

"Wanna go for a walk, boys?" she sweetly baited.

Cerberus' tail went even more batshit crazy and he moved aside and Persephone walked out, just like that! Deeply inhaling the fresh air (not infested with the smell of burning flesh) and soaking up the sunlight (50 degrees cooler than the inside of the underworld which did not have the luxury of an a/c). "Let's go, boys!" and both of them skipped and hopped joyfully across the wide-open meadow filled with blooming Narcissus flowers.

Hades had no choice. He could not keep her captured. His counselor had advised him that, "If you love someone, set them free. They will come back to you if it was meant to be."

Persephone actually went to visit Hades quite frequently. Sometimes, she even spent the night, but on her terms not his. Cerberus decided to permanently live with Persephone. As child support, Hades hunted for and brought all the meat. Those boys were endless pits when it came to eating.

Persephone never ate pomegranate seeds in order to be lured back to Hades. And the change of seasons attributed to her... well THAT is another story...

Excerpt from

