



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

## Meet our New Board Members



**Cristo Bowers** has recently become a more familiar face at Interfaith. He first came in 2011 and presented several workshops at the Center through 2012. In 2023 he and his fiancé Parina Kamdar attended several events and Sunday Services and now join us as often as they can. Cristo recently volunteered his professional photography services to take photos of some of us for use on our website. Cristo has studied psychology, human behavior, communication, developmental psychology, sexuality, religion and spirituality, including meditation, and psychoanalysis for over three decades. Since 2007, Cristo has held a private consulting practice where he has helped his clients identify and work through unconscious patterns, childhood conditioning, and defenses to solve the problems of living.



**Lance Clark** is a founding member of the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (1998). Early on he was one of the key members of the "Healing Group" that met each Sunday morning before the regular service, sharing his knowledge and practice of healing modalities with others in the group. Lance is devoted to his family, including his wife Marice, their daughter and grandkids (who 'grew up' here at Interfaith), and their beautiful Saluki's. There are cats in the mix as well. Now that Lance has retired from his day job, he is offering his time and skill for projects at Interfaith.

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Our new board members join continuing board members:

**Brett Koon, Peggy Lubahn, Darlene MacLeod, and Janet Somalinog.**

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Board Meetings are held on the 3rd Sunday of each month from 12:30-2:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend these meetings.



**Dawn Swartz** has been a member of the Center since January 2010. Two things come to mind when one thinks of Dawn...Music and Murray Lake Picnics! Dawn has served as our Choir Director since 2015 and also performed with her husband Jim Windak at Christmas Eve services. She is also a proficient fiddle player and teacher of the violin. As a Contra Dance enthusiast, she helped host a "barn dance" in our sanctuary and is a supporter of our Community Sings with Matt Watroba. Dawn has also hosted several summer picnics for Interfaith at Murray Lake. Dawn's son Max has grown up, but was a frequent member of our youth ed program and is also an accomplished pianist who has graced us with his talents several times during Sunday services. Dawn is also an ordained minister and has offered many Sunday messages, meditations and readings over the years.



**Retreat Facilitators: Holly Makimaa, Jennifer Lenders, Brett Koon, Carol Bardenstein**

## April Meditation Retreat a Huge Success!

Thank you to Brett Koon, Carol Bardenstein, Holly Makimaa, and Jennifer Lenders for facilitating this two-day meditation retreat and fundraiser. The event raised \$1,740 for Interfaith Center.

## My Mother's Hands



Written in my mother's hands  
are the stories of her life  
A kind and caring mother  
through happiness or strife.

Faith and love and righteousness,  
Are written in her hands  
Charity and service  
As she follows "Father's" plan.

Sturdy through the storms of life,  
And humble as she prays.  
My mother's hands are hard at work,  
But they find time to play.

Her hands rocked my cradle,  
Showed me direction in my youth.  
Encouraged me when I've been wrong,  
And pointed me to truth.

Wrinkled now as time moves on,  
These gentle hands I hold.  
I'm grateful for my Mother's hands,  
And the stories that they've told.



**Meditation Retreat Participants - Triple Crane Retreat Center**

**Back Row-Layla Ananda, Holly Makimaa, Barb Fisher, Den Carbonell, Bob Hopkins, Cooper Holland, Randall Counts, Carol Bardenstein, Bethany Fisher, Janet Fry, Brett Koon, Delyth Balmer, Todd Johnson, Annie Kopko and Craig Harvey. Front Row-Kathy Dyer, Mark Charles, Marice Clark, Jennifer Lenders, Master Zhong Hai (Winnie), Don Digirolamo and Annemarie Howse**

## MINISTERIAL MISCELLANY MAY 2024

by Annie Kopko

By the time you read this, the eclipse of the sun will be over, but I want to talk about the sun, the moon, and the stars, and what an extraordinary gift to all of our lives on earth and what an extraordinary gift to our conscious imagination.

When my sisters, my brother, and I were young, our Dad would take us out on moonless nights when we could see the whole Milky Way stretched across the sky and look at the stars. I remember feeling so tiny and insignificant, yet I wondered how I could be so large to be conscious of the vastness of the whole sky, seeing millions of stars all at once. In those days, we did not pay much attention to the constellations, but the planets were clearly visible. It was good practice for the expansion of consciousness and awareness of a loving Universe full of ancient and eternal beings.

I have always talked a lot about the importance of Nature, getting out in Nature just to experience whatever thoughts and feelings come up. Often, I overlook the night sky because it is so light around here in Southeast Michigan that you cannot see the Milky Way or many constellations. So..... when you can get off to a place with a truly dark sky it will blow your mind.

Please join us at Interfaith for our many groups and classes. I will mention a few special ones. See much more information on our website:  
<https://interfaithspirit.org>.

- Sat. May 4th, Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter. 7:30-9 pm Suggested donation \$5.
- Wed. May 8th, Community Sing with Matt Watroba. 7-8:30 pm, Donations are encouraged to offset costs.
- Sat. May 11th, Café 704 with Spirit Singing Band-Kath Weider, Sam Clark, Dan Bilich, Lori Fithian & Friends. We will all be invited to sing! Doors open at 6:30, concert 7-9pm. In-person or Zoom tickets \$10.
- Sat. May 18th, Drummunity-Drum Circle with Lori Fithian. 7-9pm.
- Sat. May 25th, Sound Journey Gong Meditation with Dana Piper and Shannon Harris. 7-8:30pm (No admittance after the event begins). \$20.

Blessings and Love,

*Annie*



## May Celebrants

May 01 Kellie Love

May 08 Cooper Holland

May 08 Lindsay Passmore

May 10 Cayla Tchalo

May 15 Craig Brann

May 15 Rob Michalowski

May 15 Judith Sauer

May 16 Joy Williams

May 18 JT Ramelis

May 19 Dave Bell

May 21 Marilyn Alf

May 24 Phill Carbonell

May 25 Idgie Patterson

May 26 Karen Jones

May 26 Tommy Kaminski

May 26 Steve Ragsdale

May 30 Todd Johnson

May 31 Marian Orihel







## MAY VOLUNTEER CORNER

by Annemarie Howse

**Newsletter** – The *Interfaith Inspirer* has resumed its monthly publications! Let's give thanks to our newly expanded newsletter team: Norah Reilly, Bethany King, Annemarie Howse, and Delyth Balmer.

However, **we still need writers!**

- This can be a one-time submission, or you may choose to be one of our regular writers. We especially need topical content for the front page relating to the month in question. Examples are June – *Father's Day* or *Summer Solstice*, August – *Back to School* and September – *Labor Day* or *Fall Equinox*. Perhaps you have some ideas of your own.
- We need someone(s) to interview members of our Interfaith Community and write an article to introduce them. This can be someone who has just started attending, recently returned or has been a member for a long time.

Remember! This newsletter is for those who are new to our community as well as those who have been with us since the beginning. Other ideas we are considering are book reviews, movie reviews, or your ideas.

Please email Norah Reilly if you want to contribute something or if you have any questions.

nkreilly58gm@gmail.com

**Cleaning Crew** – The cleaning crew will continue to sort, organize, and get rid of items that have been accumulating. If you have donated an item that you still value and hoped it would be safe in the attic, it may be a good idea to make plans to retrieve it. We have no idea who donated what and when. Also, please ask before you bring in a donation to see if it is something we need and want. Looking for something? Check out our *Purple Pages* binder. Ask Gretchen Leonhardt about this. Her contact info is [isleonhardt@usa.com](mailto:isleonhardt@usa.com). It's all part of our clearing process!

**Potluck** – The first Sunday of every month is potluck. Please bring a dish to share so there is plenty of food for everyone. Sometimes we may forget or are too busy. Not every offering has to be home-cooked; packaged and ready-made items are also gratefully appreciated.

**Sunday Volunteers** – Please remember to sign up if you want to lead a meditation or provide a reading during the service. Several people have asked if it is necessary that the reading and meditation complement the speaker's message. The answer is "yes, when possible." You may also volunteer to sit at our welcome table after the service. Sign-up books are on the table on the right-hand side as you enter the center. Thank you to those who jump in at a moment's notice when you see a vacant spot that needs to be filled. For example: helping to set up for the potluck, sweeping or vacuuming the entranceway when mud has been tracked in, providing snacks for our after-service social time, offering to take notes at a meeting, or providing transportation to someone in our Interfaith community.

Your kindness does not go unnoticed!  
We appreciate you!

For these and other volunteer opportunities contact Annemarie at [ahowse21@gmail.com](mailto:ahowse21@gmail.com) or, call or text 818-667- 2815 (leave a message).

### VOLUNTEERS

We give our time, our energy too,  
A smile, a hug, can mean so much to you.  
The joy we feel in our hearts,  
Is the greatest gift, from the start.



## CARING COMMITTEE

### March 2024 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 requested services, 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 can help.

During the month of March, the Caring Committee provided the following services:

- Cards & Flowers sent on behalf of the Caring Committee - 1
- Cards sent by individuals within the Caring Committee - 3
- Texts/emails - 4
- Phone calls - 9

These supports and services were provided to 11 different individuals or families in our Interfaith Community during March.

Financial Report: There were no expenses during the month of March. We received a donation of \$415.00, giving us a balance of \$3,058.74.

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



## RAISE THE BAR

By Bethany King

Shout, scream, and raise your fist in righteous indignation!

Who is listening?

We have two ears and one mouth.

If you don't listen, who will?

For yourself, RAISE THE BAR!

The mainstream media, social media, politicians, and artificial intelligence "rise" to OUR expectations.

Why do they stoke fear in the heart of our homes?

Demand a higher level of conversation!

For social construct, RAISE THE BAR!

Painting others with the broad stroke of "us" and "them" is like blowing out someone else's candle to make yours burn brighter.

We are ALWAYS more alike than different.

Vote! Not out of revenge, but to participate in "This Great Experiment", made by the PEOPLE for the PEOPLE.

For this country, RAISE THE BAR!

Who benefits from polarizing the people against each other?

The mom with two small children? The small business owner? The grade-school teacher? The factory worker? The server at the local restaurant? The retiree?

Answer this for yourself and then please..... RAISE THE BAR!

## Meet Your Community

Starting this month, the Interfaith Inspirer contains a new “getting to know you” section where we interview an Interfaith Community Member as a way for us to get to know each other better.

In this issue, you’ll notice we didn’t just interview one person, we interviewed three! If you haven’t already met them, we’re pleased to introduce you to the trio of ladies who can’t decide if they should call themselves the Three Musketeers or the Three Stooges!

We’re sure you’ll enjoy getting to know them a little better just as we have.



**Barb Fisher:** I’m a lifelong Michigander and love Michigan. I grew up in Dearborn. I was raised Catholic. My mom was Catholic, my dad was not. He never attended church. I no longer associate myself with the Catholic religion at all. I had long been looking for a nondenominational church with which I felt comfortable and a sense of belonging. I tried many different churches. Many years ago I attended the Interfaith Center for a while. I enjoyed it but continued trying other places. I was still looking for somewhere that would nourish me and help me grow spiritually when Cooper came to town. She was also looking for the same thing. We were all set to try a different place when I told her that I thought she would enjoy Interfaith and she agreed. We invited our friend Sandy to join us and we have happily been attending for about a year now. There are so many things I enjoy about the Center, I always feel better after a service than I do before the service. So uplifted. I like the friendliness and acceptance of the other members. I love that every service brings something different. Love the variety and I am so impressed with how it all comes together; I know there is a lot of work that goes into it. I also like how we are allowed to be ourselves. In my free time I enjoy reading, walking, and yoga and I practice reflexology. Barb also sends out birthday greetings on behalf of Interfaith.



**Cooper Holland:** I’m from Miami, FL but have moved a lot (Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia). My husband and I lived for 30 years in downtown Atlanta. When I retired we traveled for several years in an RV. In 2020, I was living in the beautiful north Georgia mountains when my husband passed. My son’s family had moved to Michigan for college and they really wanted me to be closer...so now Dexter is home. I was raised Catholic; coming from an Irish Catholic family it was the only choice. I even traveled through Europe with a friend who was a Catholic priest. Like many, I began a search for a true spiritual path that resonated with me. I tried many options and when I was living in the mountains, found a UU church that felt right. Moving here I wasn’t sure where to begin.....cue Barb Fisher!!! From my first visit to ICSG just over a year ago, it felt like I was in the right place at the right time. Interfaith felt right from the start and no matter what the topic of the weekly service is, I always feel lighter but often challenged to expand my version, to look beyond. An open and inclusive community that not only “talks the talk, but walks the talk.” An interesting fact about myself! Well, when I was 50 I legally changed my name, from Mary Kathleen to Cooper Kathleen. “Kathy” never felt like who I was and I have been trying out names since I was in high school. “Brooke,” “Cat,” and even “Tequila Sunrise” in the 70’s. A neighbor had a dog named Cooper and somehow that felt like a name I could live with so...Cooper it is.



**Sandra Hill:** I am a Michigan native and grew up in Birmingham Michigan. I came to Ann Arbor when I was 18 for school and have lived in this area ever since except for fairly short times in Wyoming and New Mexico. I live in Dexter now after living in Ann Arbor for many years. I was brought up in the Episcopal Church. But even though I believe in much of the message of Christianity and tried to be a follower, I don't think I truly accepted all of the tenets of Christianity in my heart, never felt that I had real faith. At some points in life, I was an atheist or an agnostic. I tried attending different churches over the years but nothing really felt right. I had never heard of ICSG and was not looking for a new spiritual path because of being pretty overwhelmed by some life circumstances lately. But Barb and Cooper suggested visiting Interfaith and I was happy to give it a try. It immediately seemed like the right place to be.

I like the meditations and talks by members and others. I have learned so much. Each member is on her/his own spiritual path. They are eager to share their paths and encourage others to join them. But no one tries to push others to follow the same path. When I attended traditional churches, I usually felt sad or guilty about failing to do so many things that I "should" be doing. When I leave Interfaith, I always feel uplifted.

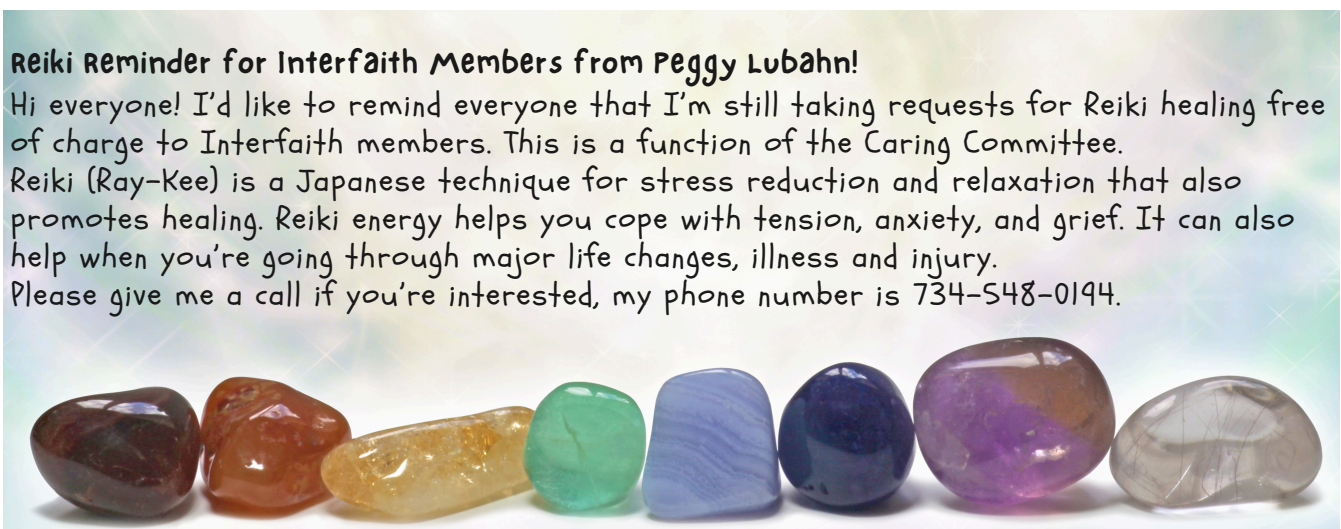
I also like that there seem to be many at ICSG who are interested in Dr. Joe Dispenza's work. In recent years, I have been studying Dr. Joe's books and meditations and am very interested in his emphasis on quantum physics, concepts of nonlinear time and dimension, and the eternal present moment. Currently, I've had the opportunity to take part in a study Dr. Joe is doing on Coherence Healing. It's been very helpful to me and I hope to be able to use what I am learning to help family members with serious medical conditions. I am very ordinary so it is hard to think of something unique. I love crows. I feed a pack that lives behind my house every day. Guess you would call them a murder of crows. They like hard-boiled eggs and hamburgers, but most of all peanuts in the shell. They are very spiritual creatures—I speak to them and believe that they speak back.

### **Reiki Reminder for Interfaith Members from Peggy Lubahn!**

Hi everyone! I'd like to remind everyone that I'm still taking requests for Reiki healing free of charge to Interfaith members. This is a function of the Caring Committee.

Reiki (Ray-Kee) is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. Reiki energy helps you cope with tension, anxiety, and grief. It can also help when you're going through major life changes, illness and injury.

Please give me a call if you're interested, my phone number is 734-548-0194.





## THE SUFI WAY and the End of this Column

By Robert Hopkins

As I concluded my last Sufi Way entry, I had no idea that it would be the next to last of these presentations about what I have gained from the more than four years of regular attendance at the Tuesday night Sufi class hosted by the Center. I had intended to extol the virtues of the various reading materials with which our Imam Kamau Ayubbi has acquainted us. As surprising as it may seem, he has drawn freely from The Quran, but never used it extensively as the center of our study. The first book that he used and read from regularly was Angels Unveiled: A Sufi Perspective by Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani. We were each encouraged to buy the book and he read extensively from it and encouraged discussion on the pages he read. He also encouraged us to read on our own and bring questions based on our reading to the class.

Another book he cited extensively was The 99 Names of God by Daniel Thomas Dyer. In that case, he made frequent reference to the Arabic citations of these 99 names and their corresponding English translation. I was so inspired by these citations that I purchased and read the book cover to cover – as I had also done with The Quran.

There have been no other books he has encouraged us to purchase, but he has read and/or interpreted passages from Classic Islam and the Naqshbandi Tradition. He has done the same with Muhammad the Messenger and Liberating the Soul by Sheik Nazim Al Haqqani. I am sorry that I didn't get the authors' names on the first two of the books I just cited, but I know a sure-fire way that you can learn of them. Come to the Tuesday evening Sufi class in my stead. You may want to peruse any of the books cited on your own and determine if the class is for you.

This brings me to the confession about why this will be the last column in this series. I have been increasingly hard-pressed to cite new and interesting insights from my attendance. I blame my age and my restless mind for my tendency to let my mind wander and the difficulty in focusing on Kamau's teachings and simultaneously conjuring what I intend to write about. In addition, I am expecting to reduce my regular attendance. There has been a resurrection of my AA Home Group which has come back from online to a regular in-flesh meeting. There has always been a time conflict and the only way I can serve both masters is to alternate attendance at each. In addition, outdoor dancing is just around the corner, and I intend to take advantage of some Tuesday evening opportunities. All in all, I will become sporadic in my attendance at the Sufi class for the foreseeable future. Please treat yourself, check it out, and become prepared to take my place as a regular attendee.



## MUSINGS OF A SERIAL SEEKER

By Steve Wyse

stevewyse@facebook/

Hello soul friends!

My common name is Steve. My Christian name is Steven. At the Zen Buddhist Temple, I'm known as Cha'gil which I'm told means happy and auspicious. When I pray to Wakan Tanka (Lakota for Great Mystery), I'm known as Tacha Ishakib Ashtima which means Sleeps by Deer. I recently started working with a shamanic mentor learning the ways of Awakened Heart Shamanism in the tradition of the Chinchero people from the Andes mountains of Peru. I haven't been given a name from this tradition yet. For now, I suspect that they just call me Gringo Tonto, which I think means white guy always messing up. Phew...that's a lot of names! A lot of identities. Do I ever suffer from "spiritual identity disorder" (yes, I did just make that up)? Absolutely. But how fun it is to have so many names to describe my spiritual journey!

Why do we have spirit names? In our European-based Western culture, a name is just a name. But in other cultures, a name would define a person's path in life. My last name, Wyse, reminds me to honor my ancestors. Ch'agil reminds me to be joyful and to keep my thoughts positive and full of hope. Sleeps by Deer reminds me to stay alert, focused, and mindful. White Guy Messing Up reminds me that I'm learning and that it's okay to make mistakes.

If you don't have a spirit name, I encourage you to get one. Meditate on it. Ask Spirit, or a friend to help you. Choose a name that defines who you are, or who you want to be. Create sacred space and hold a ceremony to introduce your new identity to Spirit. Use your name when you pray. Spirit loves to hear our voices.

Love yourself. You're amazing!  
Steven sometimes Wyse

## THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING OTHER

By Peggy River Singer

January is a month when I do a lot of thinking about my life, as I add another knot to my string of years. It's taken me 65 of those years to figure out, step by step, who I am and what I'm capable of, and what I'm here to accomplish.

Like me, many of you have experienced what it's like to be different. Maybe you're psychic, or an Indigo; one of the many "clairs" such as clairtactile or clairsentient, a telepath, an empath; or you have what the Irish call Second Sight. Maybe you never talk about your special abilities, or you hide what you can do because you're afraid of what people will think if they find out you're "not normal." But of course, these abilities are perfectly normal for humans; they've just been distrusted and demonized for a very long time.

### The Patterns of History

Throughout history, members of tribal and traditional cultures who have special gifts have been trained to serve as priests, shamans, healers, seers, or herbalists. And throughout history, when governments or religious institutions decide that traditional beliefs and suspicious abilities are unacceptable or even criminal, practitioners and their followers face a discouraging array of options. Forced conversion, faux conversion while hiding one's true beliefs and skills, banishment, and voluntarily moving to remote locations beyond the reach of the authorities mean major upheavals; but all are preferable to persecution or worse. It's no surprise that many people -- past and present -- choose to go into hiding, one way or another.

### Evolution of an Inspired Soul

During my first fifty years or so, I never had any dramatic special abilities that I might have wanted to conceal. But I've always had symptoms that have complicated getting through each day:

- Very sensitive to light, noise, temperature, energy
- Absorbed other people's emotions without realizing it.
- Preferred the company of animals, who were so much easier to understand than humans
- Spent most of my time out of body, because real life was too difficult and confusing
- Difficulty reading social cues and body language of others.

These symptoms felt more like burdens than indications of gifts, and they added up to life as a perpetual outsider, unable to understand why I never fit in anywhere.

Today, special abilities are becoming more acceptable, and symptoms like those in my own list are more likely to be recognized. Millions of people who have grown up with *Lost in Space*, *Star Trek*, and *Jedi* are inclined to be more open-minded about possibilities that previous generations would have found difficult to understand. A sci-fi fan from childhood, I've never had any problem believing that just about everything is possible. But it's only in the last fifteen years that this concept has begun to describe my own life.

In 2005, I stepped into a whole new world by calling Betsy Adams, an animal communicator, to find out whether my very sick cat was ready to depart. I began taking classes with Betsy, and one thing led to another: my new interests included studying empathy, telepathy, guardian angels, nature spirits, crystals, power animals, oracle cards, pendulums, gods and goddesses, shamanism, Reiki, and the list keeps getting longer. Who knows what I'll be inspired to do next?

Meanwhile, I now consider myself an observer instead of an outsider; and I've come to appreciate the insights and understanding of human nature that I've collected while the rest of the world has gone about its business around me. Oddly enough, this has proved to be great preparation for being a writer!

### What About Your Own Gifts?

I opened this article talking about finally recognizing and celebrating my gifts after a lifetime of preparation. If you think (or know) that you have special abilities, I encourage you with all my heart to explore those abilities and make the most of them. They truly can be gifts, waiting to be opened; and southeast Michigan abounds with people who can help you find your way. A good place to start would be the *Crazy Wisdom Community Journal*, which is packed with resources for just about any skill, craft, talent or ability you wish to know more about. Personal growth and empowerment are only two of the rewards you can look forward to. Happy learning, and happy BECOMING! Peggy River Singer

### AUTHOR BIO

Peggy River Singer is a Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, Reiki practitioner, and lifelong writer who combines her gifts to help create harmonious relationships among all who share the Earth. Previous columns and articles about her experiences and insights are posted on [angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com](http://angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com). To request a reading, please call 734-548-0194.

## Highlights of the 2024 Annual Meeting

- Our 2024 Annual Meeting began with an Indra's Net Ceremony for adding new jewels selected by community members since last year's initial installation. See Lyriel Claire's article (p.10).
- We participated in the meditation blessing led by Janet Somalinog.
- Brett Koon opened the business phase of our meeting and each of the board nominees introduced themselves, including Cristo Bowers, Lance Clark, and Dawn Swartz. Electronic voting ended at 2:00 pm and each of the three candidates was approved.
- Outgoing Board members Marice Clark and Claire Groshans were thanked for their service.
- Committee Reports were presented as follows:
  - Leadership Team: Bob Hopkins, Chair, explained, that the purpose of the leadership team is for committee heads to keep each other informed of their work and seek support from the group.
  - Greeters: Randall Counts, Coordinator reported he has expanded the number of Sunday Greeters from 2 to 3 now that we are having greater in-person attendance.
  - Volunteer Coordinator: Annemarie Howse, shared a written review of 2023 in which she reminded us of the importance of our volunteers to carry out so much of the work at the Center. She created a beautiful Volunteer Appreciation Book for 2023 which we were encouraged to look at to see all that was accomplished and how many people helped!
  - Communications/Tech Team Coordinator: Layla Ananda, provided a written review, highlighting website communications and Facebook event "boosting" as a means of spreading the word. The welcome table has been reinstated with welcome packets available for newcomers.
  - Caring Committee: Peggy Lubahn shared a summary of the activities, services provided, and income and expenses by the Caring Committee in 2023.
  - Spiritual Support Team: Rev. Annie Kopko reported the team meets once a month to support each other and reminded us they are available to offer spiritual support to the community. They are also the Sunday Service Leaders.
  - Administration/Financial Report for 2023 was provided by Rev. Delyth Balmer. We ended the year with income exceeding expenses!
- **Review of the Past Year/Notable Events during 2023:**
  - The 25th Anniversary Silver Ball and Picnic; potlucks and after-service social time resumed; a bulletin board was upgraded; Indra's Net, first placement in April; Drum Circles and Cafe 704 had increased attendance; cleaned, organized and painted the Social Hall Kitchen & Restrooms; a new "Interfaith Billboard" created by Don Digirolamo entitled "We are Interfaith" was installed; and the youth education program was suspended after exhaustive attempts to resume in-person classes. Appreciation was expressed for the Sound and Camera Team, especially for making our Sunday Services available on Zoom and Facebook, and for Craig Harvey's posts of our services. We have an amazing library of talks, music, etc. on our YouTube channel.

*Minutes of the Annual Meeting and Financial Reports are available at the Interfaith Center.*



## INDRA'S JEWEL NET – Version 2.0

### An Update on the Evolution of the Design from Rev. Lyriel Claire

Since last summer, several of us have been working on the fishing net that is hanging on the back wall of the sanctuary. In early 2023, we began the project by asking Interfaith members and friends to choose a jewel (crystal) to hang on the net. At that time the net was splayed across the newly painted wall, and during a ceremony in April of that year, the jewels were hung on it. Over the summer we began to feel that something else was needed on that wall and investigated painting a galaxy on it.

However, for various reasons that did not pan out although we liked the idea of incorporating the Universe. Then I found a wall hanging online that was perfect as a backdrop. Since we had to take down the net to install the wall hanging, we realized we could perhaps come up with a different way to display the jewels that would better show that we are individuals but all connected, and thus the three-dimensional idea was proposed. Now the net is more artistically arranged and the jewels hanging down from the net are free to sparkle and interact. The last step was to add lights. After exhaustive research, we finally settled on LED strip lights. Rather than shine directly on the jewels (and possibly the eyes of people sitting beneath the net), they provide a subtle glow to the area. As of this April, nearly twice the number of jewels (another 70) were added, and a different type of jewel will eventually commemorate those among us who have passed into the Spirit realm.



All this has required the massive physical support of many people. I would like to thank them:

**Darlene MacLeod** – Designed the new look of the Jewels; creative ideas

**Rev. Annie Kopko** – Attaching crystals to all jewels  
**Layla Ananda** – Jewels and website (keeping all the people and their jewels straight)

**Craig Harvey** – Lighting installation (with grace, good humor, patience, and adding his expertise whenever I had something in mind that might be done differently, ie better!) Also, a great deal of good-natured ladder hauling.

**Gretchen Leonhardt** – Physical labor (especially climbing on top of the closet), ideas (offering alternative and better solutions to what I was convinced would be best :-), general support wherever she could find the opportunity, unfailing good humor

**Lance Clark** – Donation (and delivery) of risers to enable the initial re-hanging

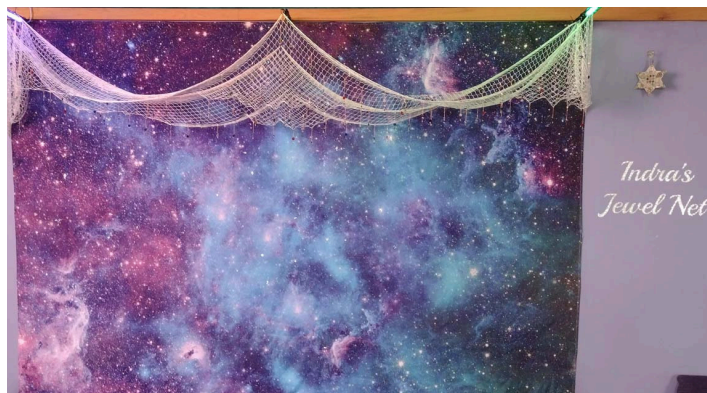
**Mark Charles** – Assistance in the creation of the Indra wall sign

**Janet Somalinog** – Service creation and leading

**Rev. Delyth Balmer** – Support (every which way) and encouragement

**Randall Counts** – Jewels and organizing at the outset of the project

**Rev. Lyriel Claire** – Organizing, researching and shopping for lights and supplies, jewels, putting it all together... In other words, everything, everywhere, all at once. (:~D)





## SOUND JOURNEY GONG MEDITATION

Saturday May 25, 2024

Cost-\$20.00

Doors open 6:30 pm

Event starts at 7:00 pm

No admission after event begins.

Please arrive early.

Light refreshments following  
a 1-hour meditation

Moderators Dana Piper and Sharon Harris will guide you on a 1-hour sonic journey using gongs and other instrumentation. Simply let go and allow the sound of the gongs to do the work. The experience is effortless, and the results are profound. Lie flat on the floor or sit comfortably in a chair. We recommend you bring a yoga mat or pad, pillow and light blanket for your comfort.

**To purchase tickets go to <https://interfaithspirit.org> or pay cash at the door.**



### **Interfaith Center's Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to explore universal truths underlying all paths of spiritual growth by providing weekly fellowship, learning and service opportunities, and social events to create and inspire a vibrant and diverse spiritual community.

Gong baths help to:

- Reduce stress
- Release blocked emotion
- Promote vitality
- Foster healing
- Support calmness
- Energize and uplift

### **Happy Mother's Day!**

Please join us after the service, on Sunday May 12, to celebrate the Mothers in our lives! The Caring Committee will be providing sweets and snacks, coffee, tea and camaraderie. Share stories of Mothers, Grandmothers and those who have stepped up to fill the role when we most needed them.