



# Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication



## The Solace of Autumn by Norah Reilly



With the autumn equinox newly past, we can set our eyes on the coming months, and the

preparations to be made for the journey into winter. Right now, we are still in the realm of half-day, half-night living, so we are not anxious to consider, much less prepare for, the quieter, slower-paced life of winter. Nonetheless, it beckons to us and offers us time to ready ourselves for its arrival. Whether we see this transition time as nothing more than the advent of the coming dark and cold months, or as a welcome chance to explore the distinctive beauty of this season of rest and reflection depends on how we view life in general.

One of the reasons that autumn so strongly appeals to me is that I am a "half-and-half", or as an acquaintance recently expressed it, "a middle-of-the-pool" kind of person; I tend to see things as potentially being both positive and negative. When I can cultivate a cheerful outlook toward forthcoming change, it can help me recognize the opportunities I have to adapt to those changes

and grow from them. At the same time, having a clear idea of potential adversity motivates me to work to keep myself feeling warm and cozy (at least figuratively) when winter arrives.

As October, a time of connection and transition, presents itself, we can do ourselves an immeasurable service by making the most of it, using the opportunity to begin marshaling our strength and courage to embrace the shift from daylight into darkness and to prepare adequately for it. Using this time for introspection can inspire a greater appreciation for the solitude that is a part of winter. I firmly believe this introspection is most fruitful when it is liberally seasoned with the joy of sharing connection with others. By readying ourselves for what we might fear will be months of cold and inclement weather, long nights, snow, and ice, we are sure to find that we have also prepared for skiing, sledding, winter solstice celebrations, and warm laughter shared by good friends.

This is where the real solace of autumn can be seen and felt, in a willingness to prepare for difficult change while remaining keenly appreciative of the beauty of the world around us. Challenging ourselves to remain fully open to the demands of the next season assures that we will be open and receptive to the joy that comes with the changes.

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**Meet....**  
**Lisa Teets**  
 by Norah Reilly

Growing up in Sandusky, Michigan (not Ohio), the seat of Sanilac County, gave Lisa Teets a small-town

upbringing, a questing mind, and in her words, “absolutely nothing” in the way of a spiritual path. At the close of her teen years, she headed off to the University of Michigan to study mathematics and received her bachelor's degree. It was during this time she met her future husband, Dan. After her undergraduate studies, she attended Eastern Michigan University where she earned her master's degree in educational psychology. During graduate school, she went to work in the Livonia Public Schools school district where she taught trigonometry, algebra, and calculus for the next twenty-seven years at Churchill High School.

While in her 30s, Lisa began a new way of life when she started to question why she felt depressed and unhealthy. She consulted with a holistic medical doctor who recommended that she follow an elimination diet in which she would exclude most food items from her diet. This first phase of the diet was six months long. It was followed by a second phase in which the same food items were gradually added back into her diet until problem foods were identified. This enabled Lisa to craft a healthier diet for herself and allowed her to finally remain pregnant. A few years later, a friend suggested she visit a shamanic healer. The experience was so life-changing that Lisa took several shamanic healing classes, which served as a springboard for what has become an intriguing journey of self-discovery and spiritual awareness.

Over the following years, she explored the Chinese practices of tai chi and qigong (pronounced “CHEE gong”), which both involve gentle movements intended to optimize energy within the body.

The philosophy and practice of qigong serve as a foundation for her practice of the martial art of tai chi, which focuses on the physical form of energy and is more complex. Although Lisa has found meditation to be a struggle, her practice of tai chi in combination with her awareness of that struggle, has allowed her to foster mindfulness, a key ingredient in both physical and spiritual development. Her mindfulness practice has brought her into moments of spiritual satisfaction where she is able to touch into a deep spiritual awareness/essence.

In 2017, Lisa first came to the Center because Lauren Tatarsky was hired as the senior minister and decided to stay even after Lauren's departure because of the sense of connection and shared spirituality she feels at the Center. She loves the singing, the food (Yay Potlucks!), and, most importantly, the sense of connection. Expanding our community by attracting young/younger people is one thing that Lisa would like to see change here at Interfaith; happily, that is also a focus of the Center's leadership.

Unique things about Lisa – She and her husband unschooled their son and practiced attachment parenting. In addition to teaching mathematics, tai chi, and yoga, she is a highly trained practitioner of Bowenwork®, a hands-on gentle healing modality for pain and misalignments that also affects the sympathetic nervous system.

## Board Communications

The board met on Sunday, September 22. Some of the topics discussed were:

- Purchasing a lock and crashbar for the newly exposed doors leading from the sanctuary.
- Tech team progress (purchase and roll out of new equipment)
- Ways to make it easier to make donations to the center
- Google drive tutorials for board members
- Photo release forms



## Ministerial Miscellany

October, 2024

by Annie Kopko

How is it, why is it, that life seems so challenging these days? Why is life so much more complicated than

ever before? Or that, as we expand in consciousness, there are many more challenges that confront us. Does it not seem there should be less?

There are two things that fascinate me these days: spirituality and politics. I hardly ever watch TV, but I will listen to political commentary (including the comedians) or my favorite spiritual teachers like Eckhart Tolle, Esther Hicks, Barbara Brodsky, and Jack Kornfield every day. I notice "that never the twain shall meet." That being said, I see that Marianne Williamson has brought spirituality and politics together better than anyone.

It is fascinating to me that the more we open consciously to our own abilities to be aware of what is out there in the world, the more we need to be aware of what we have inside. We really do have choices. Are we going to fight, or are we going to surrender? If I decide to fight, I am more likely to suffer. If I say: "this is wrong, and that is horrifying," I may be right, but I may lose my balance in the process and despair of it ever getting better.

I choose to understand this: it is getting worse and it is also getting better. To reach our own "peaceful presence," we need to accept the challenges of the world and of our own lives. Growing and opening to consciousness is also accepting what is without judgment and then doing our best to be loving in any and every situation in small ways to change the world. Being the love that we are is the way through the mess we have created and the only way I know that works.

Whether we remember it or not, we are loved beyond our own understanding of love, beyond belief that we are deserving, beyond our ability to accept that we are divine beings. So today, I practice acceptance!

Welcome to all the amazing activities and opportunities at Interfaith. You will find information on our website, [interfaithspirit.org](http://interfaithspirit.org), and elsewhere in the newsletter. We will not do it alone; together, we change the world.

Blessings for your journey,

*Annie*

HAPPY  
Birthday



October-05 Patricia Ramsay

October-13 Marius Nowakowski

October-15 Judy Bell

October-18 Eric Engel



October-21 Lorri Coburn

October-22 Jill Crane

October-23 Richard Durham

October-29 Craig Harvey

## Haiku from Dexter

by Cooper Holland, Barb Fisher  
and Sandy Hill



Please submit articles and content for the November Interfaith Inspirer to Norah Reilly, content manager, by October 10. The theme for November is gratitude. If you have questions please speak to Norah, Bethany or Annemarie.



### Volunteer Corner October 2024 by Annemarie Howse

#### Our Tech Team in Action & Benefit Concert Success

Our Interfaith tech team has been busy laying the groundwork to update our current sound and camera equipment. The goal is to add a new console, tracking camera, and cordless microphones to our current system. Those who were available, met on September 9, to discuss the implementation and time span for the roll out.



*Don Digirolamo (sound), Dave Snyder (camera), Craig Harvey (camera), Tom Bray (consultant), and Craig Brann (sound)*



*Don Digirolamo, Steve Schultz, and Craig Brann*

Layla Ananda (camera) and Diane Gledhill (sound) were not able to attend on September 9 but have contributed to this endeavor.

A special thank you goes to Don Digirolamo for taking the lead on this.

### Many thanks to all who contributed to the Interfaith Center Benefit Concert on September 14



*PATH musicians Chris Hedly and Scott McWhinney*



*Griff 'n Shek's band (left to right), Eric Fithian, Shekinah Errington, Marc Hubbel, Griff Griffin, John Donabedian and Paul Girard*

There were a number of people who dressed for the occasion (60's style), baked or brought refreshments for intermission or worked behind the scene to make this fundraiser a success. Thank you to all who contributed and participated in the festivities of the evening. We made \$500 in tickets sales and \$68 from refreshments.

A Special thank you to Scott McWhinney for arranging and organizing the fundraiser, and to Al Carter, the master mind, and host of our monthly Cafe 704.



*Al Carter aka Al-vis*



*Randall Counts and Rev. Delyth Balmer*



## Living With Grief

by Marian Orihel

We all know of the 23rd Psalm that starts, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want....."

I have been thinking of writing a sacred prayer of my own after the past two weeks. I might start it, "Grief is my companion; I shall not complain." I neither asked for the visit nor wanted it, but there I was, in a trifecta of the swirling, disconcerting, chaotic mess of grief.

I relived yet again, for the 16th year, that one of my twin daughters is no longer in this world. It always feels like a gut punch to remember that sorrowful day. Then, a loving and companionable relationship of four years ended because it became obvious it needed to. Yet the pain of that has awakened the sadness of earlier losses. As if that wasn't enough, a very dear man, the husband of a good friend, died suddenly, leaving the family and those who knew him reeling. Grieving the loss of a man so engaged with life, connected to so many people by his presence, his knowledge, his generosity, his mentorship, his incredible kindness, his spirituality, well, that felt like I was tipping over the edge.

Like many others, I experienced loss as a child. But my first time experiencing crushing grief was when my father suddenly and violently died the day after Christmas when I was 35 years old. Such was the sensation of drowning in sorrow that I remember wondering if I would ever feel happy again. I did not drown in my sorrow, but I now know this: once grief comes into your life, it never really leaves. You understand in a profound way that grief's devastation can strike anywhere at any time and that it now lives on the periphery of your life and becomes the backdrop of your days. You cannot prevent it. You cannot bargain with it. You cannot make it wait until you are strong enough to cope with it. You sense that life is incredibly vulnerable, almost as if you are waiting for the other shoe to drop.

And so, there I was again, searching my memory for how I had coped with grief in the past. I recalled Rumi's guidance on welcoming our emotions, including grief, in the poem "The Guest House."

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.



I remembered that as the hard and bitter edges of grief started to slowly subside after my father died, I noticed some things that might even be called "gifts" left behind in grief's wake. I started to notice people more, and I especially noticed how many of those people I deeply loved. Grief reminded me that it is imperative we honor, value, and care for those in our lives because we never know when they will be gone.

Grief encouraged me to pay attention to the essential things in life – presence, support, empathy, love, kindness, generosity – because most everything else is non-essential.

Grief compelled me to help carry other people's burdens, to become lights in each other's darkness. Even knowing that in the throes of horrific suffering, there will be moments and times of grace and the realization that life can still be worth living can be a gift.

Though it is doubtful that I will ever welcome grief with open arms, I have learned to accept it when it comes, remembering that new lessons and gifts will also arrive. Most of all, I remember something best said by Frederich Buechner, "...even the saddest things can become, once we have made peace with them, a source of wisdom and strength for the journey that still lies ahead."



## Guardian Angels

By Dick Durham

Do you believe in guardian angels? I never truly believed, even though when I was in

grade school, the nuns would talk about them. I guess I thought of them as more like Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. But as I look back on my 81 years on this earth and some of the close calls that I've had, the more I think maybe they do exist.

When I was around 11 (I was small for my age, so I looked about 9), it was the beginning of a school year at the parochial school I was attending and one of the first things we had to do was obtain an empty cigar box to keep in our desk for our pencils, crayons, etc. I had gone to a local cigar store in town and gotten said box. Back then, they gave them away; now, you would probably have to pay for them. The day I got the cigar box, I was sitting on the step outside the local newspaper office, waiting for my brother, Don, who had a paper route and was picking up his papers for delivery. I had the empty cigar box sitting next to me. A man was passing by and noticed my cigar box and asked me if I collected them. I told him it was for school. He told me he had some in his car and asked if I would like to go with him and take a look. Normally, I was trusting of adults, but something made me hesitate. So, I told him that I had to wait for my brother. He didn't pursue it any further and it didn't really occur to me then what his intentions might have been. Later I learned that several years earlier, a young boy was kidnapped and his body was found a couple of days later within blocks of that newspaper office.

Flash forward about 20 years; I was working summers for U of M Building and Grounds, driving a lawn tractor. I would drive all over campus looking for areas that needed mowing. One day, as I was nearing the end of my shift and heading back to the base, I was driving my tractor along Hoover Street in Ann Arbor. I was approaching a railroad crossing;

it was not generally busy, so there were no gates or signals. My mower engine was quite loud as I was crossing the tracks and drowned out the noise of a slow-moving train, which, when I looked to my right, was only about a hundred feet from me. Anybody who has driven riding mowers knows that their top speed at best is maybe about ten miles an hour, and that's with a good tailwind! I made it safely across with just a little to spare. The engineer was looking at me with what seemed a mixture of anger and relief. I think maybe I had a little help with those last few feet.

Another flash forward, about 30 years; it's the early 2000s on a Sunday evening, and I was driving home from my maintenance job at the Ann Arbor District Library. It was late fall, and a light rain was falling. I was driving along Packard Road, listening to the Lions game. I was rounding the curve heading for the Platt Road intersection, and I was in the inside lane. Suddenly, there was a pair of headlights directly in front of me; another car had made a left turn off a side street. I had little or no time to react; the impact propelled my car across the two westbound lanes, coming to rest on a traffic extension about half a block up. By good fortune or divine intervention, there was no oncoming traffic because the traffic light at Packard and Platt was red. Had there been oncoming traffic, I probably would not be here to relate this story.

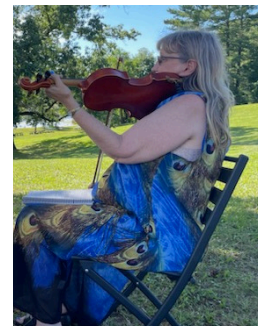
I believe guardian angels are real. I think they are assigned to watch over you until your mission here on earth is complete. I also believe that I have had a new guardian angel who made her transition last September and who volunteered to watch over me the rest of the way. I'll try not to keep her as busy as I did the last one.



## Murray Lake Final Summer Hurrah Saturday, August 31

Hosted by Dawn Swartz and Jim Windak

Thank you, Dawn and Jim for hosting (what has come to be) the annual summer picnic at Murry Lake. Dawn and her husband are members of the Murry Lake Club and we reap the benefits with her invitation to join them for a picnic, swimming, music and social gathering. Here are some of the highlights from that event.



Don (on guitar) and Dawn (on violin) provided music for a sing-along



Pictured left to right: Don Digirolamo, Steve Schultz, Judy Sauer, Delyth Balmer and Dawn Swartz



Craig Harvey



Bethany King



Annemarie Howse and Darlene MacLeod



Dave Snyder



### The Peace Generator Friday, October 18 7:00 - 9:00 pm Facilitated by Craig Harvey

Craig Harvey has been facilitating peace generator meditations for over 20 years, holding the space for others to attend when and how they feel led to. You may attend in person, at the Interfaith Center, or on Zoom.

Stay for a few minutes or for the entire time of inner and outer harmony. In the first few minutes we will introduce ourselves and invite each person to say something about their intentions. In the closing, you can share anything about your experience of silence.

Some ways to cultivate peace:

- Meditate on Loving Kindness among all people.
- Pray for world peace.
- Offer healing energy to anyone open to it.
- Create inner space for forgiveness to grow.
- Envision miracles across the globe.
- Hold our planet in the light.

The Peace Generator is a monthly meditation that takes place on the 3rd Friday of the month.

Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/2137425638>

Donations to the center are appreciated.

## October Special Events



### Community Sing with Matt Watroba

Wednesday, October 9  
7:00 - 8:15 pm

Your donations make this event possible.



### Cafe 704 presents ... Nutshell

Saturday, October 12

7:00 - 9:00 pm (doors open at 6:30 pm)

Tickets: \$10.00-in person or on zoom.  
<https://interfaithspirit.org/cafe-704-coffeehouse/>



### Drumcommunity Drum Circle Saturday, October 19

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Facilitated by Lori Fithian  
Donations are appreciated



### Aging with Grace

Facilitated by Nancy Ogilvie

ICSG Focus Group Conversation  
Sunday, October 27 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Our mainstream culture is so youth-focused that aging is often seen solely as a process of decline, loss, and diminished capacity. Certainly, there are losses and challenges as we grow older, but is that the whole picture? What about the gifts we bring to our older years from a lifetime of experience? What new opportunities can we create for ourselves? What is possible for us as we age?

In this focus group conversation, we will share our experiences with the gifts and challenges of aging and then explore how our spirituality can be a resource for harvesting the wisdom of our years, finding a renewed sense of meaning and purpose, and making a difference in the world.

These conversations will fulfill three purposes:

- Clarify your own concerns and desires as you age.
- Reveal new possibilities for you as you grow older based on sharing experiences with a group of peers.
- Identify your wishes for ongoing learning or support as you age.

The feedback from these groups will be used to develop programming that addresses the hopes and concerns that arise in the conversation.

This conversation will be facilitated by Nancy Ogilvie, a past member of ICSG and a lifelong learner and spiritual seeker with a passion for transforming consciousness and being of service. I am a retired organizational change consultant and coach, so my gifts include leading, facilitating groups, and building community. This initiative is part of my vision for how I want to "live with grace" and give back in the world.