



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication



The Truth About Santa

Submitted by
Annemarie Howse

Here is a story that I read a few years ago on social media. It speaks to parents who struggle about

how to tell their children the truth about Santa. The story goes something like this:

I'll never forget the day our youngest sat next to me on the couch watching television. Although what we were watching was relatively kid-friendly, I failed to remember there was a reference to Santa being the parents.

I sat still wondering if my son had paid close attention to the conversation, when all of the sudden, he pipes up and says, "Wait. You're Santa? Santa's not real?"

My husband and older son sat silent, so I chimed in immediately, "Oh my goodness!" With excitement in my voice, I looked at my husband and said, "Do you think he's ready?"

Santa - continued on page 5

In This Issue

- p. 1 - The Truth About Santa & Special Christmas events
- p. 2 - Meet Steve Schultz by Norah Reilly
- p. 3 - Ministerial Miscellany by Annie Kopko,
December Birthdays & Haiku from Dexter
- p. 4 - Volunteer Corner by Annemarie Howse
- p. 5 - Find Your Quiet in the Storm by Etheric Echoes
- p. 6 - Green Guardians by Peggy Lubahn
- p. 7 - December Special Events
- p. 8 - Winter Solstice Special Events

Special Interfaith Christmas Events



Christmas Eve Candle Lighting Service

Tuesday, December 24
7:00 – 8:00pm

Christmas Day Potluck Wednesday, December 25

1:30-4:30 pm

Hosted by the Caring Committee



The Caring Committee will provide a ham. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. Sign up on meal train or at the Interfaith Center.

Burning Bowl



Ceremony

Sunday, December 29

10:45 am-12:15 pm
During the regular
Sunday service.

This is an opportunity to release the past and make space for new beginnings.

World Healing Meditation



Tuesday, December 31

7:00 – 8:00 am
In person or on zoom.

Share in reading prayers of peace and sending love and compassion into the world.

What if I told you the left wing and the right wing belong to the same bird? author unknown



Meet ...

Steve Schultz

by Norah Reilly

Detroit-born Steve Schultz started life with an inquisitive mind and a

drive to continually learn. His innate gifts served him well as he began to explore his interest in photography, audio, and music; these interests led him to work with local bands, first as a photographer and later as a sound engineer. Eventually, Steve earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Electronic Engineering Technology, a field of study that aided him as he continued to explore the evolving fields of both video and sound engineering.

After meeting and marrying his wife, Darlene, the couple relocated to Sterling Heights, Michigan, where they began to raise their family. They joined Church of Today/Renaissance Unity Church in Warren during the time Marianne Williamson was the spiritual leader there. After first designing the television studio, Steve went on to be the audio engineer. His job involved mixing live music for Williamson's complex Sunday services, including a 20-voice choir backed by members of Johnny Trudell's big band. In his professional life, Steve was working as Senior Project Manager/Senior Scrum Master with Consumers Energy in Jackson, Michigan, 100 miles away from Sterling Heights. Staying in a rented room in Chelsea during the work week for the next year and a half, he and Darlene spent every weekend house-hunting, ultimately moving to Ann Arbor to reduce his daily commute.

Like so many, Steve's original spiritual background differed considerably from the path he followed as he grew. Initially raised as a Catholic, he grew disenchanted with religion and walked away from it, losing his faith along the way. In time, as a parent, he felt the need to find faith again; his search eventually brought him to Interfaith.

Once again, his skills and experience as an audio engineer were put to good use when he served on the Tech Team at the Center for a year. Since

then, Steve has volunteered his time at the Kiwanis Thrift Sale in the electronics area and will soon start a new volunteer position repairing bicycles at Common Cycle, a nonprofit that creates opportunities to learn about bike repair, share tools, and build community.

Part of his spiritual practice includes meditation, which he experiences as grounding and centering, although he still feels spirituality to be a mystery that he does not quite understand. Some of his favorite spiritual authors include Deepak Chopra, Thich Nhat Hanh, Dr. Wayne Dyer, and Les Brown. He appreciates the messages brought by spiritual teachers, yet he also believes that part of why we are here is to learn and express the feelings and beliefs that we all have. For Steve, the arts, especially music, provide a powerful means to do that. Steve has always enjoyed the music in the service, yet he also looks forward to hearing the different perspectives of the speakers' messages.

He would like to see Interfaith make an effort to bring families into the community here, perhaps by having activities that appeal to a younger audience, and he thinks that one idea may be to approach the Interfaith Council for its input. Steve still remembers meeting Joy Pendleton the first time he came to the Center and how welcome she made him feel; he would love for us to find another Joy if we could.

Steve's background in photography and audio led to him working with area bands. This led to videography, which led to TV studio design, large-scale virtual reality infrastructure design and implementation, and finally, to implementing cutting-edge cloud-based infrastructure with teams using Agile methodologies. He loves to work with "creatives," people who think differently. He may just be one of those very same people!

*Write it on your heart
that every day is the best day in the year.
He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day
who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety.*
Ralph Waldo Emerson



Ministerial Miscellany

Make Peace Wherever You Are

by Annie Kopko

One of my favorite ideas is PEACE, but I can't remember ever writing about it until now.

I know I think about it a lot, partly because it seems so elusive. All I have to do is look around my house: no peace here (or so I am thinking). I think peace is an attitude and must be a choice we make and a conscious practice for every day. Imagine when many of us begin a practice of peace every day; life will be different.

I have some favorite quotes:

From Mother Theresa: "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." I live alone most of the time and I love being alone; I seem to get a lot done, but I love being with people, too. I feel inspired and stimulated by ordinary exchanges, made more precious because of the contrast with my very quiet alone time. That sounds almost like a new idea, but maybe it is because I forgot how expansive my being really is.

From the Buddha: "Peace comes from within. Do not seek peace without." How can we not know this? We do, but we sometimes forget. Doesn't everything come from within? If not, where? We do know that we have everything within that we need to create a life filled with endless love and joy if we remember to listen and pay attention.

From Esther Hicks and her spiritual voice, Abraham: "Make peace wherever you are." This is quite the challenge because we know it also means no matter what is going on. I am not sure about you, but I encounter difficult or uncomfortable situations almost every day. I do my best to make peace with each one by remembering the peace I can choose.

Never forget we are truly powerful and eternal beings.

Join us at Interfaith for many opportunities for fun in this truly beautiful season. For information and details, check our website: Interfaithspirit.org.

Blessings for ALL, EVERYWHERE, ALL THE TIME!

Annie



December 9 Nancy Biehn

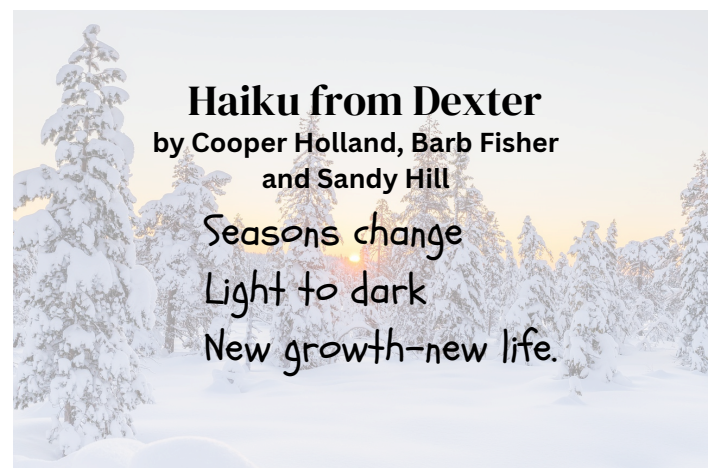
December 12 Lyriel Claire

December 13 Andy Walker

December 15 Rob Fagerlund

December 19 Valoree Sprental

December 27 Adam Salomone



Haiku from Dexter

by Cooper Holland, Barb Fisher
and Sandy Hill

Seasons change
Light to dark
New growth—new life.



Volunteer Corner

by Annemarie Howse

Interfaith has become a thriving spiritual community, largely because volunteers share their talents and time wherever needed. Each Sunday, at the close of the service, the volunteers who have participated in the creation of the service are recognized for their contributions. This includes the tech team, speakers, musicians, greeters, and others who work together, often behind the scenes, to provide encouragement and inspiration for the community each week. Songs, readings, technical skills, and gifts of all kinds sustain us as we forge deeper connections with each other.

This month, I'd like to introduce Norah Reilly as the new readers and meditators coordinator. In addition to being able to sign up to give a reading or lead a meditation via email to Norah directly (nkreilly58gm@gmail.com), there is a sign-up sheet in a binder on the Welcome Table at the Center in which you will find the name of the speaker for each Sunday service, along with the topic of the talk to be presented. If you have any questions, feel free to ask Norah for guidance. She is the newsletter's content manager; you are sure to have seen her at the podium asking you for stories, poems, and comments for inclusion in the Inspirer newsletter. Bethany King is our fabulous editor nonpareil, and I am the layout and design editor. We enjoy working together and meet often to discuss ways to streamline the production of the newsletter while providing quality stories and information for you, the Interfaith community. One of the great perks of volunteering is getting to know each other while enjoying our collaboration.

We appreciate all our volunteers and recognize that everyone does what they can according to their ability. We are grateful to all those who

volunteered and laid the foundation during the early years of Interfaith and for their continued attendance on Sunday mornings and at special events as they provide wisdom to the community through their experience. There are many opportunities to be of service. If you see someone doing something you like to do, ask them what the job entails. If you see a need you can meet or hear of a volunteer opportunity that interests you, please speak to me, Annemarie. As your volunteer coordinator, I am happy to answer any questions or listen to any concerns you might have.

Interacting with others in a volunteer capacity can deepen your relationship with those you meet at Interfaith events. Conversations move easily from the business of Interfaith to more intimate discussions. Rather than encountering familiar faces on Sunday morning, you may develop lifelong friendships along the way.



Bethany King and Norah Reilly

Please submit all content for the January newsletter to Norah Reilly, nkreilly58gm@gmail.com by December 10.

It takes courage to push yourself to places you have never been before... to test your limits... to break through barriers. And the day came when the risk it took to stay tight inside the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. - Anais Nin

Santa continued from p. 1

My youngest asked quickly as he straightened himself up, "Ready for what? I'm ready!"

"I think he's ready," my husband said with a smile.

"Ready for what?! What is happening?!"

"To become a Santa with us, buddy."

What? "I could be a Santa?!" he replied.

Yes son, you see:

There really is Santa but he's not an old man with a beard in a red suit. That's just what loving parents tell their children. You see, children are too young to understand the true nature of Santa Claus, so we explain it to them in a way that they can understand. The truth about Santa Claus is that he's not a person but an idea.

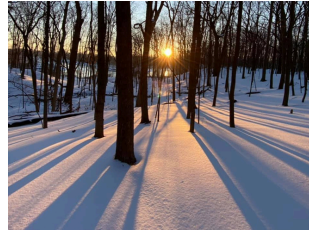
You know all those presents Santa gave you over the years? I actually bought those myself. I watched you open them. And did it bother me that you didn't thank me? Of course not! In fact, it gave me great pleasure. You see, Santa Claus is the idea of giving for the sake of giving, without thought of thanks or acknowledgment.

Remember when I saw that woman collapse on the subway last week and called for help? I knew that she'd never know that it was me that summoned the ambulance. I was being Santa Claus when I did that."

Son: "Oh."

Dad: "So now that you know, you're part of it. You have to be Santa Claus too now. That means you can never tell a young child the secret, and you have to help us select Santa presents for them, and most important, you have to look for opportunities to help people."

There is a bit of Santa in all of us. At some point in our lives, we learn that giving is better than receiving. We learn to give without asking for anything in return. We become a Santa.



Find Your Quiet in the Storm

by Etheric Echoes

Some days, the world feels too sharp,
Too loud, too raw to touch.
Headlines scream, phones ring,
And chaos dances at our doorstep.

But I've learned to find sanctuary
In small moments of grace—
The way sunlight paints shadows on walls,
How wind whispers through leaves,
The steady rhythm of my own breath
When I remember to just... breathe.

I've learned to turn off the noise,
To silence the endless chatter,
To find strength in gentle things—
A cup of coffee at dawn,
A moment of kindness between strangers,
The quiet courage of growing things.

They say the world's gone mad,
But perhaps the secret is knowing
When to step away from the storm,
When to guard your peace like gold,
When to let your heart be still
In a world that never stops spinning.

For in this rush of endless moments,
We must remember to be gentle
With ourselves, with each other,
To find beauty in broken places,
To create spaces of quiet wonder
In corners of our own making.

This is how we stay whole—
Not by hardening our hearts,
But by knowing when to soften,
When to rest, when to breathe,
When to let the world's noise fade
Into the background of our being.

Green Guardians: The Plants of the Women's Health Center



by Peggy Lubahn

Earlier this year, I made my annual mammography visit to Trinity Health's Women's Health Center in Ypsilanti. On that particular morning, the sun beaming in the windows really lit up the healthy, beautiful plants at the entry. Inside the mammography suite, there are several beds of green Pothos plants with



golden highlights, and every plant looks so vibrant and perfect that, at first glance, you might think they are artificial. While I was waiting for my appointment, I realized that these lovely green beings were offering messages. Here are their sharings:

POTHOS says: We embody the healing power expressed by the sacred vibrations of greenness. Our cheerful, soothing energy uplifts, clarifies, purifies, supports, and eases the fear and dread that burden many who come here. In our native habitat, we thrive in the shade of tall trees, so we are comfortable in this setting where we can be of such meaningful service to others in need without demanding complicated care for ourselves.



SILVERLEAF says: We are kindness, gentleness, and compassion. We share our energies generously with those who are weary, exhausted, and in pain. This is all accomplished on a very high level of consciousness, you understand, so most humans are not aware of it. Those who are sensitive to high-frequency energies might see the golden glow of our emanations arising from our physical forms and extending far beyond. Our individual plants are always accompanied by at least one angel who is able to fine-tune our energies to suit different humans and situations.



SANSEVIERIA says: I am strength, especially the unseen power of inner strength. My physical form expresses the value of being strongly grounded. My energetic roots extend far deeper than the apparent limits of my pot, to the very heart of Mother Earth. My leaves stretch up straight and tall, always seeking sunlight and sacred Light. The energy of the Light is capable of healing on all levels. The Light that I have collected and concentrated in my body over the years is offered to every human who sees me or even just passes by me if they choose to accept this gift on a soul level.

Peggy: There are countless other plants inside all these buildings, as well as outside. Do you all work together in any way?

Silverleaf: *We are all aware of each other, we can communicate together very easily. Yes, there are occasions when a human needs a specific sort of energy, and those plants who work with that energy come together for the benefit of that human.*

Peggy: Does Creator ever tell you NOT to try to help a particular human?

Plants: *Yes, since our energy might not be compatible with that person's, or different modalities than ours might be more appropriate.*

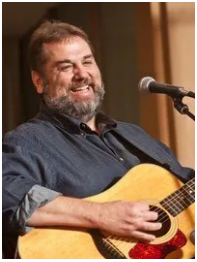
Peggy: Do any of you work with humans during Dream Time?

Sansevieria: *Yes, occasionally Creator asks for this form of communication and healing for selected humans. They may or may not become aware of our work, that detail is Creator's responsibility.*

Peggy: I understand that all plants are cared for by fairies, how does this work for you?

Green Guardians continued on p. 7

December Special Events



Community Sing with Matt Watroba

December 11 - 7:00 pm

Your donations make this event possible.



presents... Dorkestra Saturday, December 14

7:00-9:00 pm

Doors open at
6:30 pm



Featuring the fabulous Dorkettes
and Dorkerians dance troupe!

Tickets are \$10.00 at the door (cash or check).

Attend on zoom by going to <https://interfaithspirit.org>

Zoom link will be sent to the purchasing email address

Holiday Craft Themed Artisan 704

Saturday, December 14 During the Cafe 704.

Sunday, December 15 After the service.

Shop for last minute Christmas gifts and
stocking stuffers!

- Jewelry
- Truffles
- Fiber art
- More



Sunday, December 22

1:00-4:00 pm

\$10.00 admission fee.

\$5.00 Pizza and Drink.

FOOD-GAMES-MUSIC-50/50 RAFFLE
White Elephant Gift Exchange
Bring a mystery gift under \$10 to participate

Glitz, Glam & Rock your Ugly Sweaters!
THE UGLIEST SWEATER WINS A PRIZE!

Green Guardians continued from p. 6

Sansevieria: Indeed, we do have our fae guardians. It is not necessary for them to live here in order to do their work, but they do visit from time to time, usually at night. You will understand that all these buildings are heavy with intense energies, especially during the day, and those energies can be uncomfortable for the fae.

Peggy: How do you feel about your human caretakers? They seem to do a good job of keeping you healthy and happy.

Silverleaf: As you might expect, some of them love their work and offer affectionate care, and some are more focused on getting their work done efficiently. Both approaches are satisfactory as long as our needs are met.

Peggy: I'd like to offer some energy that could help you in your healing mission. Can you feel this...?

Plants: It feels sweet/silky/alive!

Peggy: It's called Reiki. If you want, I can attune you – gently adjust your energies -- so you can give yourselves Reiki any time you'd like to. You might, for example, be feeling dry and uncomfortable one day; Reiki could ease your discomfort until you are watered.

Plants: This would be very welcome.

Peggy: You would also be able to share Reiki with others. By doing this, you would be creating new, fresh frequencies of healing never seen before in this world because they will be unique to each and every one of you. And I'd like to assure you that if you would rather not do this, that's perfectly okay.

Plants: We are in agreement, we accept your offer.

[pause]

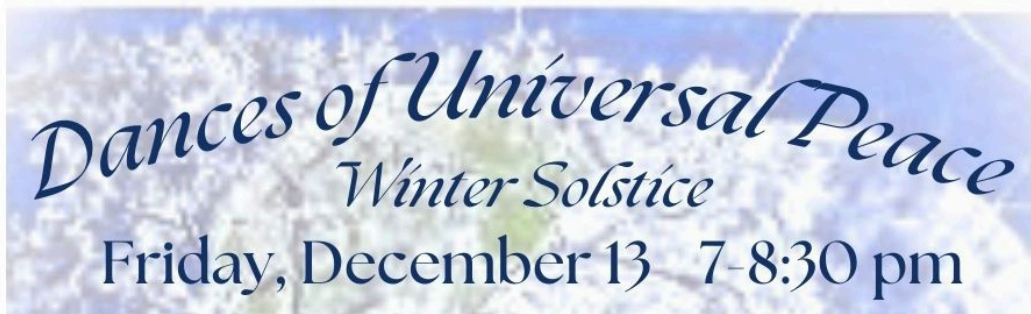
Plants: Our perceptions are sharpening in a new way; we see sparkles of light and we feel invigorated in a new way. May we attune other plants now if they desire it?

Peggy: Yes. You can ask the Reiki energy itself whether an attuning will be appropriate. It has its own awareness and it will be your guide from now on.

Plants: We appreciate the opportunity to express ourselves, and we are delighted with this unexpected gift. For now, this talking is complete.

See page 8 for Winter Solstice Special Events.

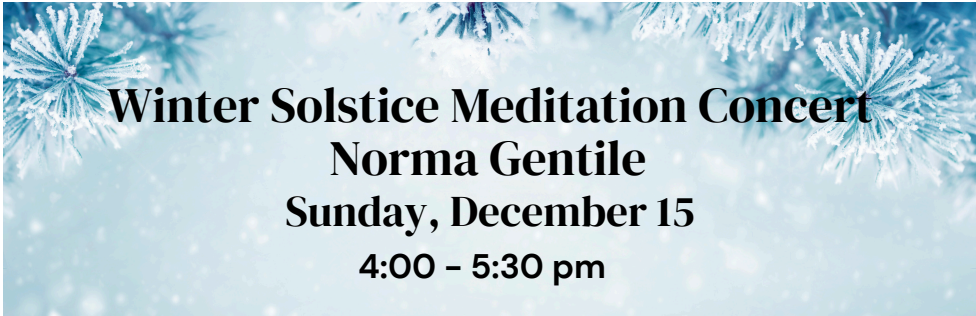
Winter Solstice Special Events



- Folk dance style movements
- Chanting
- Live music
- Drumming

Donations Appreciated

Led by certified Dances of Universal Peace leader Susan Slack with musicians Daniel Dinay and Ken Kozora.



Meditation Concert of Sacred Songs and Healing Chants (in full candlelight) by Norma Gentile, a soprano and sound shaman

Suggested donation is \$20.

Attend in person or on zoom. Register in advance at healingchants.com or pay at the door.

Winter Solstice
PAGAN CHANT SING-ALONG

Monday, December 16 7:30-9:00pm

Scan for a song sheet with lyrics and links to recordings.

Feel free to bring your own instrument!

Donations to Interfaith are appreciated



SOLSTICE Sing-Along

Saturday, December 21 7:00 pm

Song Leaders: Jean Chorazyczewski, Lori Fithian, Eric & Mary Fithian, Laz & San Slomovits, Linda Teeman, and Tom Voiles.

Please submit all content for the January newsletter to Norah Reilly nkreilly58gm@gmail.com by December 10.