



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication

Interfaith Annual Picnic at Murray Lake Sunday, July 27 1:00-5:00 pm

Hosted by Dawn Swartz and Jim Windak



So what's the lake picnic all about? It has been an annual Interfaith gathering since at least 2012, except for 2020, when the lake closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It takes place at the Murray Lake Club, located at 7994 Plymouth Road in Ann Arbor. The property is a working farm whose owners have converted part of it into a private recreational area. It features two lakes for swimming and fishing, as well as numerous open areas for picnicking and lounging. This family-owned and operated property sells memberships for the season, Memorial Day through Labor Day, and charges non-members \$10 per visit. My husband and I have a family membership, which allows us to host the event each year. It is important to us to support naturalized spaces at a time when new housing developments and strip malls seem to be popping up at an increasing rate.

This year, the picnic is scheduled for Sunday, July 27 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$10 per person, and we kindly request that you sign up to bring a dish that can be shared at the potluck. We usually picnic right across the road from the main parking area on a beautiful, shady section of the property overlooking the lake. If you don't want to sit on a picnic table bench, we recommend bringing your favorite lawn chair. In addition to exploring the property, this is an opportunity to socialize with other attendees. The picnic will include optional group singing and some outdoor games. We encourage you to bring any musical instruments, song choices, or lawn games that you enjoy, such as cornhole, horseshoes, croquet, or frisbee. And if it's a hot day, you'll probably want to jump in the water, so be sure to bring your bathing suit, towel, and sunscreen. There are changing rooms and flush toilets onsite; that's the extent of any creature comforts at the lake. For me, just looking at the sky or watching the lake does wonders for my mind.

To be admitted to the property that day, your name must be on the list I provide for use at the entrance area. Therefore, it is essential to sign up in advance. The sign-up sheet is in the social hall at the Center and includes a section for you to indicate the dish you will be bringing. On the day of the event, if possible, please include a list of ingredients in your potluck dish to inform those with special dietary restrictions or other concerns.

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Jim Windak



Dawn Swartz



Meet...

Lyriel Claire

by Norah Reilly

Lyriel grew up in LaGrange, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The journey that led her to her time

here at Interfaith has been an incredible one, beginning with her attendance at Northwestern University, where she earned a teaching degree in Russian (a subject she chose because both her parents are of Russian descent). After graduation, she began looking for a foreign language teaching position and quickly discovered that schools required teaching applicants to have at least two languages to be considered. With that in mind, Lyriel decided that Spanish would be the easiest language to learn and to receive teaching certification. She was accepted into a program in Madrid, Spain, where she lived for the next year, learning Spanish while bopping around Europe with friends in her downtime.

During her senior year at Northwestern, she began singing in a choir, and while living in Evanston, Illinois, she joined a choir back in LaGrange and traveled to sing in a Methodist church choir every week. At one point, the choir director urged Lyriel to study with an experienced organist whom he knew at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. There, she took private lessons and would drive down from her home in Evanston every week to practice for an hour or so on the organ at Moody. Eventually, she realized that she wanted training and education in classical and church organ music and knowing that two of the foremost organ teachers were in France, she wrote letters asking to be taken on as a pupil and was accepted which led her to the next part of her journey. Since she did not speak French, she also had to attend a French school to learn enough of the language to communicate with her teacher while concurrently studying the organ. After six weeks, Lyriel returned to the United States, where she resumed teaching at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois. Meanwhile, she continued her studies with her organ teacher at Moody Bible Institute, who persuaded her to give a recital there.

Late in her fourth year teaching at New Trier, the principal called her into his office to say, "You don't have a master's degree. You probably should get one if you want to continue being a teacher because you'll get many more benefits with a master's degree." When Lyriel asked the

principal whether the degree had to be in Russian, he said it did not matter; what mattered was the addition of "master's degree" after her name. She knew she did not want to be a Russian scholar, nor did she want to learn more Spanish. What she wanted was to study music, which had been important to her since she was a little girl in kindergarten and heard a piano for the first time. Disappointed with what she regarded as the school system's hypocritical attitude regarding master's degrees, Lyriel resigned and began applying overseas for an accredited master's program, ultimately being accepted into the Rosary College Graduate School of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy.

As before in France, she found that she needed to learn to speak the language; this time, though, she fell in love with the language as well as the country and its people. She earned a Master of Music degree in Pipe Organ Performance during her first year in Italy. Since she didn't want to leave, she applied for a performer's certificate, which required two years of studying and performing. The first year was devoted solely to study and during the second year, she was to perform two major recitals of pieces chosen by the head of the school. After receiving her performer's certificate, and with the assistance of a priest she came to know well, she got into the organist circuit and began to perform in many of the historic churches in Florence, perhaps most memorably in the Duomo Florence aka the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. After four glorious years of study and sheer hard work, Lyriel returned again to the United States, spending the next year living with her parents in Newport, Michigan, before taking a position as organist at a Baptist church in Buffalo, New York.

Just a year and a half later, she received a call from the rector at the American church in Florence who asked her to come back to replace their organist who was leaving. After giving the offer considerable thought, she accepted and returned to Italy, where she stayed for another year and a half. On return to America, she moved to Silver Spring, Maryland, where she found work in a music store selling choral music. It was a great place for Lyriel to cross paths with the choral directors and organists in the area, who all seemed to come to the music shop at some point. Through one of these people, she obtained a position as an organist with Grace Episcopal Church in Alexandria, Virginia, where she remained for the next 21 years, again performing

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Whether you've been every year, a few times, or just once or twice, we look forward to

seeing you again on the 27th! And if you've never been, please come. The more the merrier! You can call or text me if you have questions. 313-204-0060.

I hope to see you soon at Murray Lake!
Dawn Swartz

NOTE: Scholarships are available for the park admissions fee. Contact Delyth at 734-657-5384.



Ministerial Miscellany Words of Wisdom

by Rev. Annie Kopko

As I am cutting up old calendars, I see these words: "Deep at the center of my being, there is a well of inner wisdom. All the answers to all the questions I shall ever ask reside there". These are wonderful words to find at the beginning of my day and the beginning of my week. My heart feels lifted, and I have a remarkable sense of well-being in my mind and in my body.

Last week, the week from hell, ended with a meditation retreat that I really needed. Now I have to deal with all the repercussions of the car accident last Tuesday. I imagine everything will be easier for me having read these words this morning. I have read them before, but they have never been this important, and I have never felt so strongly their truth.

One key to access this well of inner wisdom is, of course, a quiet atmosphere, a peaceful presence, and some mindfulness. We are great talkers; however, we may not be great listeners, especially in regard to listening to our spirit within, which is always communicating with us, always. Our spirit communicates through conscious breathing, quieting our minds, through communicating with nature and all of her creatures, through our friends and neighbors, and even the weather.

It seems in every serious or casual communication; there is a deeper message. Is it a message of hope? Is it a message of peace? I always experience, even in a casual exchange in the parking lot at Walmart, a message of underlying joy and love. As our days go, it is always helpful to communicate and to receive these messages. And there are also messages of fear we can choose to notice and then let go. We have choices!

Today and every day, I take time to choose hope and peace and joy! Join me, won't you?

 Annie



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extensively around the area, including recitals at the Kennedy Center and Washington National Cathedral until her soul called for her to move on. She resigned from her position with the church and found a job at the Library of Congress, which proved to be a difficult and ultimately unworkable situation, and in 2001, Lyriel resigned.

Around the time that she began work at the Library of Congress, she had taken a few courses at a church called the Institute for Spiritual Development. It was there that she began to learn about manifestation and New Age philosophy and taught classes. The head minister started urging Lyriel to give psychic readings, for which she felt unready. Despite her misgivings, she forged ahead and became an on-staff psychic in a New Age store. Eventually, she reached a point where she wanted to deepen her own spiritual development and entered the Institute's seminary, where she became an ordained minister. After Lyriel's ordination, her brother and sister visited her in Alexandria and urged her to consider moving back to Michigan to be near family. After a year or so of visiting and looking at properties in Michigan, she decided to move back.

Shortly thereafter, Lyriel discovered Interfaith and began attending services. About a year later, Delyth asked her to become a service leader. Lyriel was happy to accept this role and continues to lead services, as well as being a regular speaker on Sundays here at Interfaith. If you've had the pleasure of hearing one of her talks, you know they are the kind that stay with you long after you've heard them.

Fun Fact: Lyriel speaks Russian, Italian, Spanish, and French! (And English!)



Share Your THOUGHTS!

The Interfaith Inspirer is a publication of the Interfaith community. The team that puts it together, Annemarie Howse, Bethany King, and Norah Reilly, relies on members of the community to provide content and they'd love to include your thoughts and ideas in an upcoming issue. You are welcome to write about anything that feels relevant and important to you. Here are the guidelines and suggestions to help you get started.

- If an article is time-sensitive, i.e., intended for a specific month, it must be submitted to Norah by the 10th of the preceding month. If submitted past the deadline, no guarantee can be made regarding timely publication. If an article is NOT time-sensitive and is submitted after the deadline, it may be held over to another month.
- Half-page article = 300 words, Full-page article = 600 words. Varying lengths of an article are welcome and can generally be accommodated in the newsletter. In case of submissions that exceed the maximum full-page count, acceptance for publication will be at the discretion of the newsletter team.
- A recent photo of the author should be submitted along with the article copy.

What to write about? Here are some suggestions for topics in the coming months.

- August-harvest, end of summer
- September-water, return to community, fall equinox
- October-autumn, community service
- November-gratitude, remembrance, "wintering" preparations
- December-winter solstice, celebrations from various traditions

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Volunteer Corner

Highlight Volunteers Craig Harvey & Marice Clark by Annemare Howse

At the start of each week, you may receive an email (if you are on groups.io) from Craig Harvey with a link to selected portions of the Sunday service, which can be viewed on YouTube, as well as a link to the entire service, which can be viewed on Facebook for a week or two.

Craig Harvey, Dave Snyder, and Layla Ananda are the team that alternately record the Sunday services. Craig additionally edits the recording, breaking it into sections so people can easily find what they are looking for.

If you miss Craig's emails, you can bookmark (or subscribe to) our YouTube channel to find the saved Sunday messages, readings, music, and meditations: <https://www.youtube.com/user/interfaith704/videos>. If there was a particular song, reading, meditation, or featured speaker that resonated with you and you'd like to hear more, you can also search for videos from previous Sunday services on our website.



Craig Harvey

Simply go to the drop-down menu that says "About ICSG" and click on "watch selected Sunday service messages."

Thank you, Craig, for providing this valuable service!

Marice Clark provides us with lovely flowers for our Sunday service every Sunday. She has been taking flower arrangement and ikebana classes for over two years and graciously shares her weekly creations with us. She often provides readings and meditations during the Sunday service and sits at the welcome table on the third Sunday of the month.

Marice recently started a craft group called the Interfaith Creative Expressions Group. They meet every Friday at the center from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Folks are free to bring whatever project they wish to



**Marice Clark &
Janet Fry**

work on during this time, from knitting to watercolors, sculpting, or jewelry making and may come and go as they wish.

On June 20, Marice taught a card-making class from 2:30 to 4:30 pm. Eight people attended. She has ideas for offering other classes in the future. Look for her email announcements on groups.io



**Annie Kopko, Marice Clark, Janet Fry, Vicki Davinich &
Connie Snow**

Interfaith Center has very few paid staff and relies on the generosity and expertise of the many volunteers who donate their time and talent, some regularly, others on a one-time basis. If you would like to see a specific volunteer recognized in the Volunteer Corner section of our newsletter, please contact Annemarie at ahowse21@gmail.com or text 818-667-2815.



A Conversation about Sasquatch-type Beings by Peggy River Singer

Peggy: Today, I am joined by two representatives of these secretive peoples. Will you introduce yourselves, please?

Velo: I am here to speak for the usually large and hairy type of humanoids who live in remote areas – or formerly remote areas.

Parah: I speak for the thousands of species of humanoid beings who have not yet been seen by humans.

Peggy: Velo, all my life, I've heard stories from all over the world about the beings you represent, including those who live in my home state of Michigan (https://www.bfro.net/GDB/state_listing.asp?state=mi). I feel like these races must be very old indeed. Perhaps they existed even before humans developed?

Velo: That's a good guess, yes. In some cases, the species developed side by side, each in their own territories. Over the millennia, there have been periods of acceptance of each other as well as periods of enmity. The situation at this time is the most polarized it has ever been. It is exceedingly rare today for both species to live in harmony and cooperation.

Peggy: Some people think those kinds of beings are simple animals; others think that they must have advanced brains to be able to elude humans so effectively.

Velo: We are talking about many kinds of beings, so there's quite a bit of variety in intellectual capacity.

Peggy: Do these beings have the ability to shapeshift or slip into alternate realities to escape notice?

Velo: Each kind of being has defense mechanisms, yes.

Peggy: Do they have what we call "souls", meaning a connection to Creator and a spiritual life?

Velo: Some do. Others are simpler beings who live in the moment and operate mostly on instincts.

Peggy: Thank you! Parah, how are the unknown beings you represent like these others and unlike them?

Parah: They embody a higher frequency, so exposure to human energies can be uncomfortable and even painful. They can adjust their frequency to be visible to humans if they wish to; I know of a few cases where injured or lost humans have been assisted by shadowy figures they could not identify after rescue.

Peggy: Does this group of beings inhabit the deep Earth?

Parah: Yes, there is protection there from human energies and activities.

Peggy: Of all these beings we've talked about so far, are any of them a danger to humans?

Velo: Such things are not common, but they do happen when an individual is pursued or pushed beyond their limits of tolerance.

Peggy: Do your people have a relationship with what we call nature spirits, such as fairies, elves, and gnomes?

Velo: Certainly, we have much in common, including our relationships with humans.

Peggy: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about today?

Velo: [grinning] Humans describe us as hunters and shapeshifters and full-moon-howlers and teachers of Indigenous shamans and star walkers and balancers of creation and more. There are so many humanoid species here on Earth that I expect just about anything people think we do is probably accurate!

Peggy: Thank you; this has been a lot of fun

AUTHOR BIO: Peggy River Singer is a Pleiadian Starseed, Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, and lifelong writer. More of her articles and channelings are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a reading, please call 734-548-0194.



Memories of our Second Annual Meditation Retreat at Triple Crane Retreat Center June 6 and 7



Presenters: Brett Koon - meditations and spiritual discussions, Carol Bardenstein - songs into our hearts, and Jennifer Lenders - body movement and Yoga.



Brett Koon, Don Digirolamo & Annemarie Howse



Morning begins with gentle stretching and yoga movements led by Jennifer Lenders.



Craig Harvey, Bethany King, Norah Reilly, Marian Orihel & Cooper Holland



The day progresses with (slightly) more vigorous activities.



Dan Ramsey, Craig Harvey & Lance Clark



Back Row: Dan Ramsey, Bob Hopkins, Craig Harvey, Carol Bardenstein, Jennifer Lenders, Cooper Holland, Lance Clark & Delyth Balmer. Middle Row: Den Carbonelle, Lisa Teets, Darby Moreno, Marian Orihel, Marice Clark, Norah Reilly & Annie Kopko. Front Row: Don Digirolamo, Bethany King, Brett Koon, Annemarie Howse & Randall Counts.

July Special Events



Cheryl Chaffee - An Evening of Kirtan

Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 7:00-8:30 PM

Immerse yourself in the transformative power of Kirtan, where soulful music, sacred mantras, and heartfelt community unite to create a blissful experience!

Love Donation

www.BODYMINDHEARTYOGA.COM

Cafe 704 Presents... Relics of the Future Saturday, July 12, 2025, 7:00-9:00 PM

The members have played in a variety of bands through the decades and have developed a sound unlike anyone else. They include: Charles Dayringer—congas, clarinet, lap steel, percussion, Jim Cooney—guitar, Paul Bairley—keyboards, Paul Girard—flute, saxophone, percussion, and Tim Berla—bass

Tickets: \$10.00—in person – pay at the door/via zoom – purchase online at <https://interfaithspirit.org/cafe-704-coffeehouse/>



Paul Bairley, Tim Berla, Paul Girard, Charles Dayringer & Jim Cooney



Drummmunity Drum Circle with Lori Fithian

Saturday, July 19 - 7:00-8:30 pm

Lori brings her collection of hand drums and percussion toys so everyone has something to choose from. Children of all ages, including those well into their 90's, enjoy the energy that is produced when they join the drummmunity experience.

Donations are appreciated

August Special Event

14th Annual Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter

Sunday, August 3 - 7:30-9:00 pm

\$5 Suggested Donation

Bring your own drum or use one provided by the Interfaith Center. Drummer and educator, Curtis Glatter has been drumming, recording and performing for over 30 years. Drumming is proven to be good for hand-eye coordination and cognition, stress relief, enhancing spiritual joy and improving musicality in all ages! Join him for a relaxing, fun filled evening.



This will be Curtis's last drum and dance jam of the year. He will return the first Saturday in April 2026.