



Interfaith Inspirer

An Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth News Publication



The Path Less Traveled

by Bethany King

Beyond the land of the right, the land of the wrong
 There's a field waiting for us
 All the notions of you, the notions of me
 We finally agree, don't mean a thing
 Burn the scorecard, balance out the scales
 We are one wind distracted by our different sails
 Damn those eager protestations on your tongue
 Shut your brain up long enough to hear the lowly hum
 Underneath what's detectable with eyes
 Every particle's vibrating with the same life

—"One," written by Dani Green and Zack Green, performed by Birdtalker

Every time I hear these lyrics from the Birdtalker song based on Rumi's poem, I wonder what it means to be beyond the land of the right, the land of the wrong. Does it mean, even though I'm right, I'll make peace with those who are wrong, and we can hang out together? No—it says *beyond* right and *beyond* wrong—beyond duality. These days, what often comes to mind is beyond the land of the right, the land of the left... It's not lost on me that it still means the same thing whether I use the word "left" or "wrong".

But it's so easy to believe that these "horrible" events we're witnessing are "wrong" and that anyone who doesn't oppose them, well, they must somehow be "horrible" too. How do we not declare these things as "wrong"? How do we not view the people who agree with and support these events as "wrong" also? How can we ever see someone who doesn't believe that what's "right" is "right"? How do we bridge that gap?

In This Issue:

- p. 1 – *The Path Less Traveled* by Bethany King
- p. 2 – *Ernestly Speaking* by Janet Somalinog
- p. 3 – *Ministerial Miscellany* by Annie Kopko
- p. 4 – *Board Communications*
- p. 5 – *Volunteer Corner* by Annemarie Howse
- p. 6 – *The Parable of the Sweet Pea* by Peggy Lubahn
- p. 7 – *Springtime in the Smokies*, painting by Linda Gilchrist
- p. 8 – April Special Events

For me, when I am unable to immediately grant grace to something that is different than what I believe, I seek to understand. I want to know why someone can see the same thing I see and experience it differently. I want to understand what values or fears that person has that outweigh what I think is most important. And while I may still not agree with this person, I know that the only way I'll be in that field is by loving that person as I love myself.

Byron Katie teaches that you meet yourself in the judgment of others, and Carl Jung said, "Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." I know that when I'm able to love and understand someone I disagree with, it means I'm learning to love and understand a new part of myself.

It absolutely boggles my mind that we sign up to be in one camp or the other (for the most part) politically when we know it's a broken system. We self-identify with one of these broken sides and dig our heels into the ground and say, "I'm right, and they are wrong."

If you could put a diverse group of people in the same room and set politics aside, I guarantee we would have much more in common than not. This separation and othering are what prop up a system that people on all sides know is not working for them. And as its foundation cracks and the façade crumbles, the illusion of separation must become even more extreme to keep the system intact.

Let's blaze a path to the field together until it becomes a road others can follow.

Sunday, April 5

Easter Sunday Potluck (after service): Bring a dish to share.

Caring Conversations at 1:00 pm: join the Resolution Committee for an hour of exploration focused on skillful communication.

Open to all.





Ernestly Speaking

A Science of Mind Treatment Prayer for These Times

by Janet Somalinog

As with any Prayer, the following words are to be read as if they are coming from your own voice. Words come from thoughts and ideas. They are more powerful when emotional belief is attached. Energy is inserted and carries the prayer on high to be rained down on the condition(s) we want and need to impact. Please join me in making a huge storm of Love and Healing to be unleashed into our planetary vessel.

1. Realization There is only *One Life*. Feel free to call this complete and infinite essence whatever is good for you. In this *One Life* exists *All There Is*, the good, the bad, and the ugly; the real and the unreal; the animate and the inanimate; the dark and the Light; the visible and the invisible; and the living and the dead. There is no place where the *Love and Power* of this *One Life* is not already present. There is no moment in time when Infinite Love was absent, nor will there ever be a time when Love could ever be absent. It is present right here and right now!

2. Unification Because of this all-pervasive presence of Love and Power and Healing, I know that I must be one with *It*. My heart, mind, soul, and body temple are made up of all that God is. I breathe in this Truth. I am the Love and Intelligence of God, and with this Truth of Oneness, I speak forth these words:

3. Declaration In this place on earth and during these particularly challenging times, there is a shift happening that is like an underground river that is surging and pulsing and pushing *Itself* into action and visibility. *It* is powerful energy and can erode the rock and stone of long-established dark paradigms of hierarchy, domination, and abuse. This river of change is expanding and growing out of its underground caverns and moving *Itself* above ground where *It* wields the Power of Spirit upon the land. *It* moves into the hearts and minds of all people, young and old, like rain clouds releasing the cleansing rain. This rain washes all guilt, shame, pain, and fear into nothingness from whence they

came. No matter how long these dark conditions and systems of control have been plaguing the earth and minds of men, they are now melting away under the powerful rain shower of Love. A Love that has no end. A Healing Power that is infinitely sourced.

4. Release As these words create a picture of a new world, I am deeply grateful for the *Law of Mind* that dispenses this picture into our real, present, linear, human timeline. These words are substantiated by our firm belief that they are already done in the Mind of God and are released into this *Law*.

5. Gratitude I am grateful for this! I give thanks for the Healing, the Peace, and the Love, more than my mere words can conjure. The Infinite Good is upon us right here and right now!

And So It Is!



If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:1-7



Ministerial Miscellany

Practicing Patience

by Rev. Annie Kopko

It felt like it took forever to find my topic for this writing. It seemed like hours sitting in front of my computer. Then I asked myself, "What do I want to think and read and be inspired by?" Three words came to me: Patience, trust, and acceptance, all spiritual qualities that I thought I could always use more of at any point in experiencing day-to-day life.

With patience, a person practices endurance of challenges and delays with a calm and accepting attitude, trusting in a higher purpose, while waiting for resolution without the usual frustration or anger. We endure events and situations by deepening our connection to the divine through prayer and meditation practice. It is this latter part that I usually forget when I feel I am in a tight situation.

It helps to think of part of my meditation practice as that constant, comfortable, confident feeling from which I, and you too, hope to live every part of our lives, day to day, through time. We can continue to find meaning everywhere. Trust that this is part of our practice, and practice is life. The big things, the little things; we need to care about and be aware of them all without judgment. Each has a purpose since we have called every event to us with the words in our own minds, with the voices in our heads, and by the longings in our hearts for more love and connection.

Hopefully, we choose to trust the process. It seems like all events unfold in their own time and for their own purpose. I am sure I plan most of my life fairly unconsciously. That is part of being human; not everything is meant to be conscious. That would spoil the surprise. And I think I like surprises.

Join us at Interfaith for many events and surely a few surprises. Go to <https://interfaithspirit.org/> for more information and opportunities.

Blessings,

Annie



April 01 - Patricia Root

April 01 - Rob Russell

April 09 - Malcolm Shaffner

April 10 - Lori Kempf

April 10 - Steve Orłowski

April 12 - Bill Stobby

April 15 - Scott Alf

April 16 - Norah Reilly

April 18 - Catherine Powers

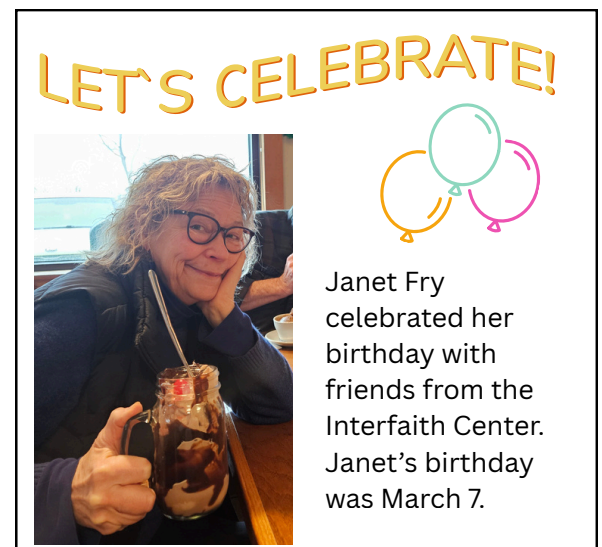
April 22 - Maggie Burkit

April 22 - Fay Sommer

April 22 - Beth Wheland

April 25 - Maeve Truitt

April 27 - Carol Jacobs



Board Communications

March 15 Meeting

The March Board meeting focused on Administrative updates, financial reports, and planning for upcoming board events.

- The Board discussed capacity limitations for events in the sanctuary, agreed to maintain a maximum of 100 people, and addressed concerns about fire safety protocols during concerts and other large events.
- Financial reports showed the Center ended 2025 with a narrow profit margin of \$125. There was a discussion about potential fundraising ideas.
- The Board also reviewed the status of Board member nominations, with three candidates (Dawn Swartz, Ryan O'Reilly, and Lance Clark) nominated for four open positions, and discussed plans for the upcoming annual meeting where community members would be asked for fundraising ideas.
- The group decided to allow Layla to make announcements about the Community Farm and set out promotional materials, and recommended we encourage individual donations rather than making an organizational contribution.



*** New Event ***

Musicians OpenMic

Thursday, May 7 - 7-9 pm

Doors open at 6:30 pm



- Sign up in person the night of the event
- Perform two to three songs, 10-15 minutes total, depending on the number of performers (original songs encouraged)
- Bring your guitar or other instruments (keyboard available)
- Feel free to invite friends to perform or listen
- Suggested donation for performers and audience members is \$5.00
- Performers: After each session, you will receive an MP4 video via Dropbox so you can review your performance or listen again at your convenience

Questions?

Contact Don Digirolamo at dondidge@gmail.com

Tao Te Ching, Verse 25

Something mysteriously formed
 Born before heaven and earth
 In the silence and the void
 Standing alone and unchanging
 Ever present and in motion
 Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things

Being great, it flows
 It slows far away
 Having gone far, it returns

Therefore, "Tao is great;
 Heaven is great;
 Earth is great;
 The human being is also great."
 These are the four great powers of the universe
 And the human being is one of them

The human being follows the earth
 Earth follows heaven
 Heaven follows the Tao
 Tao follows what is natural



Submitted by
 Craig Brann



Volunteer Corner

National Volunteer Week

by Annemarie Howse

National Volunteer Week 2026 will be celebrated from April 19 to 25. The observance of this week offers a meaningful

opportunity to express sincere appreciation for the time, effort, and resources volunteers generously give every day.

The Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth relies on its many volunteers for daily operations and to provide support and services that might not otherwise be available. Some volunteers have official titles or responsibilities, while others simply jump in when they see a need. There are more volunteer roles than we can list here, but here are some positions and ways you can volunteer.

Sunday Service

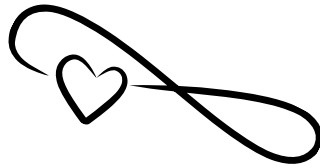
- Service leaders
- Readers and meditators
- Greeters (at the Center and on Zoom)
- Tech Team (sound, camera, and TV support for Zoom attendees)
- Flowers
- Welcome table

Committees and Teams

- Spiritual Support Team
- Board members
- Leadership Team
- Caring Committee
- Webmaster and social media
- Newsletter Team
- Potluck Team
- Birthday greetings
- Bookstore/library Team
- Leaders or facilitators of groups and classes such as A Course in Miracles, Singing for Comfort, Peace Generator, Creative Expressions Group, Tarot Meet-Up, Drummunity, and Café 704

Individuals

Many of our volunteers make valuable contributions behind the scenes and may not receive recognition because they don't have an official job title. Some provide transportation when needed, whether it's to attend Sunday services, a doctor's appointment, or to or from the airport. Others offer support by responding to requests sent through groups.io email. (If you don't receive these emails, be sure to sign up to stay in the know!) And then there are those who help clean and organize on an as-needed basis after potlucks, special events, or during special clean-up days.



Besides supporting our ICSG community, we also help our larger community through outreach efforts. Here's a good example: This winter, Marilyn Alf and Scott Alf spearheaded a project to assemble blessing bags for people experiencing homelessness. Several individuals from our Interfaith Center community contributed socks, gloves, tissues, candy, toothbrushes, and more. Using gallon-sized, resealable plastic bags, Marilyn and Scott filled 20 bags and made them available at the Center for folks to pick up and distribute. Thank you, Scott and Marilyn, for your care and initiative. And thank you to everyone who made tangible donations. Several blessing bags are in a box near the front door. Please take one (or a few) to share with someone who might appreciate a small blessing.

If you would like us to recognize a volunteer or group of volunteers in a future issue of the Interfaith Inspirer, please let me know. You are free to write the article yourself or provide a few lines to let us know why this person or group of people deserves recognition.

Submissions for the newsletter are due on the tenth day of the month preceding publication. For example, submissions for the May newsletter are due April 10. Articles should be sent to newsletter@interfaithspirit.org. A member of the newsletter team will reply to confirm receipt of your submission. If you do not hear back from us, please feel free to follow up.

Snacks for Social

Please consider making a donation to our pantry for our Sunday social time. Some suggestions are:

- cookies
- nuts (no peanuts please)
- chips (individually packaged is best)
- pretzels
- dried fruit



You may also choose to bring a snack to enjoy the same day such as:

- home baked cookies
- homemade or bakery purchased cake
- fresh fruit
- cheese and crackers (please check our pantry as we usually have plenty of crackers on hand)





The Parable of the Sweet Pea

by Peggy River Singer

When I moved into my new apartment in 2014, I was excited to have a small patio and garden space. I'd always wanted to grow

Sweet Pea vines, a vintage classic that would remind me of happy summer days at the lake. And the lovely blooms would please my neighbors and attract hummingbirds. What could be more perfect?

The new baby plants I brought home adjusted quickly, and I crossed my fingers and hoped they would be able to survive the heat and harsh sunlight of summer.

Then came the day when I got home from work and found just a few shreds of mangled stems and leaves. One of the groundskeepers had managed to find the only healthy green plant in sight on that early Spring day, and he decided it must be a weed. (Even though it was inside my patio fence at the base of a trellis for the vines to climb on!)

I complained to the rental office manager and showed her the sad, wilted evidence of atrocity (or at least cruelty to plants). The rental office called the crew chief, who sent Austin (a college student) to apologize to me in person. The poor guy was honestly distressed at MY distress. He confessed he didn't know anything about plants and was just trying to pay the rent. I told him I understood and reassured him I was more unhappy with his crew chief than with him, because he clearly hadn't been given enough useful training for his job.

I went out and bought more Sweet Pea seedlings, as well as an enthusiastic-looking Lavender plant for my front door. A few days later, I was working at my kitchen table, noticed movement outside, and was horrified to see Austin checking out my new Lavender plant in its handsome new pot with a doubtful expression on his face and a weed whacker in his hands! After our memorable first meeting, I could imagine what must be going through his mind.

"To chop, or not to chop, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler to ask that lady first, or to just chop the damn thing down before the boss yells at me, and try to keep going until lunch break..."

Austin and I had another friendly conversation—under the circumstances, I'm quite proud of that—and after that, he left my garden alone. I hope he didn't get in trouble with his supervisor.

Meanwhile, the descendants of the replacement Sweet Peas keep reseeding every year. This will be our twelfth season together, and the first green sprouts are already visible on this early March day. In addition to surviving Austin, these tough comeback heroes have survived 100-degree summers and below-zero winters. One year, the vines grew so exuberantly that they overshadowed their own roots so that most of the vines died. But once again, there was fresh new growth the next spring.

Now, here's the parable: Be like those Sweet Pea vines; grow and flourish and rejoice in who you are. When things go wrong and fate knocks you on your butt, call on your inner strength and keep coming back. Share your personal Light and beauty freely, without expecting praise or thanks.

If you encounter an "Austin," remember they might be completely innocent, with no idea why you're upset with them, and do your best to be kind. And one more thing: don't be surprised if you find hummingbirds coming into your life; they will recognize your Inner Sweet Pea Energy and visit to encourage you.



Peggy River Singer is an all-beings communicator, faery ally, and lifelong writer. She dwells in a funky little apartment on the enchanted shores of Ford Lake in Ypsilanti, where she teaches fae folk how to use and share Reiki to help bring more joy and healing into the world. More of her articles are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a communication session, please call 734-548-0194.

Springtime in the Smokies: The Season of Love

by Linda Gilchrist



I began my artistic journey in 2023 when retirement from a 37-year career in nursing (much needed to financially support and raise my child as a single parent) provided the freedom to pursue my lifelong passion to become a professional artist. I am a self-taught artist working in watercolor, oil, and acrylic painting. I am also a mosaic artist, creating intricate mosaic tables and wall art. In addition, I work to create beautiful, wearable art from cherished, but broken, family china. I love the technical challenges of watercolor and the gorgeous luminous, transparent quality you can produce. I love acrylic for its more forgiving aspects, versatility, and wonderful glazes, and now oil, for the blending and building capabilities. I am still learning and will be for a long time!

As a child I was enthralled by my father's drawing and pastel works, and I still am to this day. Pastel artistry is something I would like to explore in the near future. As an emerging artist today, I am inspired by the incredible landscapes in the many places I have lived, including the Smoky Mountains of NC, the tropical suncoast of Florida, the fantastic desert scenery of New Mexico, and now all the beauty of Michigan! I guess you could say that wherever I go, the awesomeness of nature inspires me. I am interested in the cyclical aspects of life, and my art often reflects this in seasonal landscapes that include summer's vibrancy, fall's fading glory, winter's rest and spring's renewal.

Explore the Depths of Jewish Mysticism



Facilitated by Rabbi Isaac Roussel

May 6, 13, 20, 27
6-7 pm Zoom only

Week 1: Kabbalah
Week 2: Midrash
Week 3: Musar
Week 4: Meditation

Cost \$30-\$40 for all 4 sessions

Register at:
<https://interfaithspirit.org>

Newsletter Submissions

Share your thoughts!

The deadline for newsletter submissions for May is April 10. Articles submitted after that date may be held for a future publication. Ideas for May articles:

- Mothers, mothering, nurturing
- Spring activities—gardening, hiking, nature
- Travel tips

Please submit articles to:
newsletter@interfaithspirit.org



April Special Events

Community Sing with Matt Watroba

Wednesday, April 1 7-8:30 pm
(Also May 13 and June 10)

Many know Matt as the voice of folk music in Michigan for his work with WDET Detroit Public Radio... he is committed to inspiring the world to sing... one town at a time.

\$5.00-\$10.00 suggested donation
Your donations allow us to continue to host this event



Drum and Dance Jam with Curtis Glatter

Saturday, April 4 7-9 pm
(Also May 2, June 6 and August 1)

Curtis has been drumming, recording and performing for over 30 years
*Bring a drum with you or use one provided by the Interfaith Center
*No experience necessary
*Drumming is proven to be good for hand-eye coordination and cognition, stress relief, enhancing spiritual joy and improving musicality in all ages!

\$5.00 donation requested.



Cafe 704 presents ... Love Letter to Mother Earth

Saturday, April 11 7-9 pm

Featuring Vocalists: Marlena Studer, Christina Morales Hemenway, Steve Pierce, Sari Brown, Julie Savoy, Thea Sundergard, and Rose & Joe Hood
Musicians: Brandon Reeves and Steve Ragsdale

Tickets: \$10.00-\$20.00 (sliding scale)

If attending in person—pay at the door (cash or check only)

If attending on Zoom—please purchase tickets at
<https://interfaithspirit.org/cafe-704-coffeehouse/>

Doors open at 6:30 pm - Seating capacity is 100 - Please arrive early



Marlena Studer & Steve Ragsdale

Drummmunity Drum Circle with Lori Fithian

Saturday, April 18 7-8:30 pm
(Every 3rd Saturday, May 16, June 20, etc.)

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

Donations to the Center are appreciated

