



January 2023 Newsletter

HARBOR Unitarian Universalist CONGREGATION

Muskegon, MI 49441-1719
1296 Montgomery Ave. at McGraft

231-755-2932
www.harboruu.org

HUUC Mission Statement:

Harbor Unitarian Universalist Congregation is a safe haven inspiring people to seek their own spiritual truths through worship and learning in community as we build a better world together.

HUUC Vision Statement:

The people of Harbor Unitarian Universalist Congregation envision a community where connections are strengthened and deepened, where families are supported, and where diversity is celebrated.

Sue McIntire, *Music Director*

HUUC Board of Trustees

Poppy Sias Hernandez, *President*
Robin Dennany, *Vice President*
Kurt Troutman, *Treasurer*
Jones Barton, *Secretary*

Members at Large:

Carolyn Holmes • Rebecca St. Clair • Jim Stier

Sunday Worship Services

*Virtual!
or In Person!*

**Begin at
10:30am**

January 1st

"Nobody Say 2023's Going to be Your Year!"

Anna L. EldenBrady

I mean it - just... keep that thought to yourself. Or better yet, just don't have it at all. Somebody said it about 2020, even posted it on their social media, and you see where that got us? Join Anna as she kicks off 2023 with some thoughts on entering the year with no real expectations, a lack of resolutions, and the power of Just Not Thinking Too Hard About It.

January 8th

"The Darker Side of Light "

Jim Stier

Do we need more light in our lives or do we need more darkness? What would we do if we had better control of either or both?

January 15

"In the Shadow of King "

Rev. Matthew Cockrum

- On this Sunday we explore the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior, including the concept of Beloved Community. R

January 22

"Question Box Sermon"

Rev. Matthew Cockrum

What burning questions would you like addressed from the pulpit? Here is your chance to take a more active role in shaping the sermon! Email your questions (preferably pertinent to Unitarian Universalism but others will be considered) to Consulting Minister, Rev. Matthew Cockrum, at mscockrum@gmail.com. Let's see what we can create together. Deadline for questions: Wednesday, January 18.

January 29

"Free Will"

Rev. Marie Cisneros

Free will as it relates to a spiritual context well as a general idea of what some of the sages, spiritual leaders and philosophers have said about it

Zoom With Us at <https://zoom.us/j/91447658076>



Greetings from the Board of Trustees

Greetings family!

On behalf of the board, we wish you the happiest of New Year's! As our congregational community closes on 2022, I can't help but feel incredibly grateful for each of you. The sanctuary feels like old times with many familiar and new faces. Our virtual option for services is being used by several members and friends. Sue's leadership of the choir continues to lift our spirits while Matthew's sermons are a balm as we find our way forward in COVID recovery.

The board will continue with Matthew in the consulting process, and we welcome any members who are curious or interested in being more involved in the work. Matthew participates in the board meeting each month so feel free to join us or contact any of the board members with questions, concerns, or feedback. We are happily encouraged by the congregation's engagement in the monthly workshops. Each month during our board meeting we reflect on engagement (attendance and participation), the topic, and how we feel about our progress, and thus far we agree that the work has been purposeful and has resulted in us growing together in community.

For the month of January, we will be spending the time that we have been using as a workshop for a board retreat that includes the Leadership Development committee to work on "mapping out" our next steps in the consulting process with Matthew for our congregation. This means all of you have January "off" regarding the workshop. We plan to spend the time thinking about and building consensus using the information you have shared with us at the workshops thus far and we look forward to gathering with you all again in February of 2023.

Again, thank you all for creating a community that is just, loving and committed to service. Our church and the people in it have become the home I wish I grew up in. I look forward to growing with you all in 2023.

In Service & With Love,
Poppy
HUUC Trustee

Next HUUC Board Meeting: Monday January 16th • 6:30 pm
All are welcome!



from the Consulting Minister, Rev. Matthew Cockrum



Happy New Year! In our most recent workshop in December I gave attendees some homework, namely: sing "Spirit of Life" at least five minutes each week outside of Sunday service. Have you been doing it? If so, what have you noticed? If not, it's not too late to start!

The reasoning behind this was that the workshop focused on spiritual growth and membership. One of the critical concepts I had hoped to impart is that "growth" as a concept in congregational life is not only numerical. As a matter of fact, that is among the least interesting types of growth. While numerical growth is a reasonable goal in terms of institutional stability and impact, the idea of growth as maturation and development is even more interesting to me.

Choosing a spiritual practice such as singing a song repeatedly can be a way to seek maturation and development. Singing the same song over and over (such as when we sing rounds together in worship) is a practice in cultivating centeredness and learning to listen to what is happening beneath the surface of our lives. Where is the yearning and ache? Where is the richness and strength? Where do you come alive? Where are you in need of release and relinquishment?

For some folks the answers to these questions can create profound challenges and shifts. For some of us it may give reason to set new goals, create dream boards or vision boards, make resolutions.

My intention is that these types of questions will shape this second half of our consulting time together. We have spent the past few months looking back at the history and current condition of this congregation.

Beginning in January with a Board retreat and then continuing in February with another congregational workshop, we will begin creating a plan for deepening and energizing the ministries of HUUC. Ideally this will result in a "trial run" of programming or working groups March through May. These groups (whose areas of focus are to be determined) will be operating from a renewed sense of aliveness, richness and strength. At least that's the goal. All of this will culminate in a celebration in June of what we have accomplished and a recommitment of HUUC to its future ministry - with whatever leadership makes the most sense at this time.

So...keep singing "Spirit of Life." Carve out a few minutes during your week to reflect on your life, noticing "where is there ache and yearning? Where is there richness and strength? Where do you come alive?"

And if questions come up for you in this process please send them my way! At the end of January I will be offering a "Question Box Sermon" crafted in response to questions submitted in advance from the congregation. Please email them to me (mscockrum@gmail.com) by Wednesday January 18.

Here's to The Work, Friends!

Peace, Faith & Passion,
Matthew

Rev. Matthew Cockrum (he/him/his)
Consulting Minister
mscockrum@gmail.com
206.849.9171 (cell - text or call as needed)





December Workshop Review

On December 11, 2022, about twenty HUUC members and friends participated in a monthly Consulting Ministry workshop with Rev. Matthew Cockrum. This month the focus was on Spiritual Growth and Membership. We began the workshop by singing Spirit of Life in a contemplative fashion and then with folks checking in, sharing their names and pronouns and completing the phrases: "I was ___, I am ___, and I am becoming ___." Participants were then invited to draw a timeline of their lives, noting significant religious and spiritual events or turning points (mystical experiences, initiations, transitions) and then noting events in their surrounding environments that impacted them (political, personal, developmental, etc.). Discussion at the tables focused on similarities and differences as well as themes, which included trauma and social justice issues.

The conversation and exploration continued with a presentation of a few models of spirituality and spiritual growth, one of which came from the UUA and outlined 8 different spheres of spiritual growth Handout 2: Eight Spheres of Spiritual Growth | Spirit in Practice | Tapestry of Faith | UUA.org, and the other of which was a model by Corrine Ware which illuminates our preferences for thinking, feeling, doing and being and how those inform our practices and religious lives: The Spirituality Wheel© A Spiritual Type Selector by Corinne D. Ware, D. Min. The purpose of this exercise is to DRAW A PICTURE.

We spent a bit of time talking about how HUUC handles conflict and communicates about expectations and norms. The example given had to do with the use of Joys and Concerns, how long individuals speak and what they speak about. Rev. Matthew offered the framing of thinking of Joys and Concerns in two ways: 1. Prayer requests, and 2. Tweets rather than texts. A new HUUC member who comes with years of experience in other UU settings noted that Unitarian Universalists tend to take themselves quite seriously. Another attendee voiced the opinion (which seemed echoed by many) that stretching to listen to someone whom you might otherwise not hear is a practice of HUUC embodying its mission and vision and is a rare gift in the world.

Our time wrapped up with a brainstorming session about what the surrounding community needs from HUUC, considering that "growth" is not just about gaining more members but is also about clarifying purpose, becoming more focused and honoring limitations. Rev. Matthew encouraged folks to consider the question, "Whose lives would be changed how?"

We concluded with singing Spirit of Life again and Rev. Matthew invited folks to sing this five minutes each week between this and our next workshop as a way to cultivate spiritual practice and to notice how their mind, body and spirit respond to the images and words of the song.

Stay tuned! Next Congregational Workshop: Sunday February 26 (12-3).



Welcome New Members!

Ange Barnes, Chad Axe, and Blake Daugherty



On December 11, 2022, we welcomed three new members into our HUUC family—
If you haven't met them yet, please introduce yourself to these wonderful people!



Ange

Born on the west coast, raised in the midwest, matured back in Chicago, Greece, and the western mountains of Colorado, and now am evidently going to grow old in Michigan with friends, family, and loved ones not too far away. I have found nature's beauty in each place that has nurtured me and now am learning to love what Michigan has to offer: plenty of water, lots of forests with wild mushrooms and maple syrup and an off-grid cabin in the UP with my partner. Covid put a quick end to my working life which for the last 22 years has been massage therapy (with a year off to teach English in China). I believe that time has kept me healthy as much as it did my clients! And I still love to give massages whenever I get the chance. But also for me I need community and a means to feel that I can help better the world around me. I have found that Unitarians generally help me do both and so I am looking forward to making friends and being of service to Harbor UU and the Muskegon community.

Chad

I'm a now five-year resident of Muskegon and Michigan. I currently work for Trinity Health Arena and the City of Muskegon, my fourth year doing so. I am a graduate of Purdue University, West Lafayette; BA in Sociology and Philosophy. I am happy to reaffirm my long-time commitment to Liberal Religion by joining Harbor Unitarian Universalist. I stepped into a UU church over thirty years ago and have attended and joined congregations in several states. I have been greatly nourished, sustained, and frankly empowered by the Church and the amazing folks I have met along my way. So it's a great joy to do so here now with Harbor!

Blake

I came to HUUC in the beginning of Summer '22, not knowing what to expect, looking for community of openness willing to confront the difficult questions of life. I found a group of unique minds and hearts and thought I might just like it here. I appreciate the growth mindset environment, where we can all learn to grow into our beings, rather than being moulded by another.

Music, nature / farming, and the physical arts such as yoga are my passions. Finally having community where I can feel free to explore / express myself has rejuvenated my soul, helping reconnect with my passions. Finding my place in a bundle of sticks, I feel as an empowered child at the door of mystery and opportunity, ready to discover, learn, and take care of Mother Earth.

Lately I have been entertaining the idea that everything is a fairy tale. I hold loosely to very few beliefs or labels. Peace lovin' flower child works, haha! I do believe, however, that we live in a world of infinite possibility, and just about anything could be possible in this world of magic.





Many thanks to
Arionna Huffman
who led a team of merry
elves in decorating our
worship space for
the winter holidays.



**Anyone interested in becoming a
member of HUUC or learning more
about Unitarian Universalism**

contact Carolyn Holmes. She can arrange
an information session to get answers to
questions you may have.

Holmesland58@gmail.com or 231-744-4099.

Please submit information for the
February Newsletter by Monday, January 30th
to Jessica at
gingermajick@hotmail.com
text or call 231.206.4947



The past two years have been fraught with worry, confusion, and exhaustion. As we strive to become the best we can be as people and as a congregation, it is important to remember that which was good pre-pandemic. Some positive things fell to the wayside and are being revived. To that end the caring committee, an important element for any congregation as it is a sacred pillar of what it means to be a loving and thoughtful body, has been brought to life. We are here to help you carry those difficulties that make knots in our lives—a hand, a shoulder, an ear for those times.

Condolences to **Janet Perreault** on the loss of her stepsister and stepmother.

Condolences to **Jeffrey Ochsner** on the loss of his father.

Several people attended all of HUUC services in December (either in person or on Zoom). Out of those with perfect attendance we drew a name to win a prize. **Congratulations to Kurt Troutman!** We appreciate you continuing to show up at HUUC.

We have three members: Sue McIntire, Mary Van Slooten, and Christine Cleary.

(If you would like to be involved in any way, please let one of us know.)

Contact: Sue McIntire (231) 563-3988

