



# The Candle Flame



## Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Midland

*A liberal religious haven that cherishes the exploring mind and welcomes all souls*

Phone (989) 631-1162

6220 Jefferson Avenue, Midland

[www.uufom.org](http://www.uufom.org)

January 2015 (Volume LXVII No. 1)

### Sunday Morning Services at 10:30 AM

#### **January 4 Discerning Our Gifts Rev. Jeff Liebmann**

More than 200 years since her birth, writer, literary critic, journalist, and Transcendentalist Margaret Fuller remains an amazing role model for us today. A renowned public intellectual, Fuller was one of the most well-known women of her day. Her spiritual path offers us a unique view on our lives as we begin a new year.

#### **January 11 Credo Service Worship Ministry Team**

At least once each year, we set aside a service for members to share their Credo statements – expressions of their beliefs, and how they got to where they are on their spiritual journeys. Please join us for this popular service and get to know some folks on a deeper level.

#### **January 18 Martin Luther King Day - Seven Deadly Unitarian Universalist Sins: Hate Rev. Jeff Liebmann**

As we continue our yearlong exploration of the relevance of the theological concept of sin, we take time to look at a widely used term. What exactly constitutes the act of hating? Is hate really as prevalent as our social discourse suggests, or are we surrounded by so much hate that our minds cannot bear the burden?

#### **January 25 The "Church" Question Rev. Jeff Liebmann**

Why should I go to church? Why should I join a church? Why should a church want me to become a member? We will explore the return on investment equation -- what do I get out of my participation in a religious community, and what does the church get from my attendance and participation.

*We will also recognize recent new members to the Fellowship during the service.*

### Pastoral Care Contact

**Evelyn Lipowitz**  
**(989) 631-0119**

"We must meet hate with love. We must meet physical force with soul force."

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Look for us on  
[Facebook!](#)

#### Office Hours:

Usually, every weekday  
9:00 AM--Noon

#### Rev. Jeff's Hours:

Monday and Saturday,  
by appt. only  
Tuesday and Thursday  
1:00–6:00 PM  
Wednesday  
9:00 AM–1:00 PM  
Sunday  
8:30 AM–2:00 PM

To make an appointment, please email Rev. Jeff directly at  
[uurevjeff@gmail.com](mailto:uurevjeff@gmail.com)

## Pastoral Care Notes

**Pastoral Care Contact for December: Evelyn Lipowitz (989) 631-0119**

### **Our Joys:**

- Gisela Bailey reported that the Lopez family is doing well in Germany.
- Kim and Mike Palka recently celebrated their 28<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.
- Shannon Sonoras thanked all who helped her move to her new apartment in Midland.
- Melanie Willison reported that "Sweets and Song" evening was a success and a significant amount of money was raised for the Minister's Discretionary Fund.
- Andy Salogar and daughter Maia are planning a trip to California.
- The pasty-making weekend was a successful and over 200 pasties were made.
- Darla and Jim Iaquina's daughter, Krista, recently had her first child – Bennet
- Andy Salogar was recently promoted at work.
- Zollie Davis-Huntley and friend sang a duet in competition and did well.
- The children presented their wonderful pageant on December 21.

### **Our Concerns:**

- Heather Cleland-Host's father.
- Beth Davis's grandfather recently passed away.
- Marlene Hickman's brother recently passed away.
- Several people expressed concern about recent automobile accidents that involved friends.
- Tommy Bodrie's friend.
- Tim Kenyon's step-father.



### **Pastoral Care Notes**

The Pastoral Care Team extends their thanks to Margaret Wilson for her long term dedication to helping the members of this congregation. She has resigned from the team but will continue her involvement in the Fellowship through other activities.

Beginning in the New Year, the Pastoral Care Team will provide news about the congregation in the *Candle Flame Midweek Update* rather than in the monthly newsletter. This will provide information in a more timely manner.

### **Pastoral Care Ministry Team**

Are you new to our Fellowship? Or just discovered that you might need more help with an issue than you had counted on? Our Pastoral Care Ministry Team is here for you. We can provide a meal, a ride, some respite or a supportive ear and a cup of coffee. This month our contact person is Mary Johnson. She can be reached at home (989) 859-1490 or you can leave a message at the Fellowship and we will get in touch with you ASAP. Don't be shy – we are a covenant family!



## Religious Education for Children and Youth

**Holiday Pageant:** This year's production of "A New UU Christmas Carol" was outstanding, despite some last minute substitutions. Monica Hughes directed the kids through their practices—doing a great job, according to reports—and Jon Cleland-Host stepped in when her son became sick and pulled the production through to the end. Kudos to all who were involved!

**RE Registrations:** If you did not filled out a registration form for your child(ren) in 2014, please pick up a form from the RE rack by the stairs, fill it out, and turn it in to Vicki Wiltse.

**New Year, New Class Names!** Since the RE Team decided to implement the Spirit Play methodology with the Tweens class beginning in January, we realized that we needed new names to distinguish between our two Spirit Play groups. So, the younger Spirit Play class will now be known as the Glowworms, and the older Spirit Play class will be known as the Fireflies!

**Our Whole Lives (OWL)** class for 8<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders at UUFCM in Mt. Pleasant, Sundays from January 11-March 1, 2-6 p.m. The Our Whole Lives curriculum helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behaviors. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. The parent meeting for this class will be Sunday, January 4, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at UUFCM. If you are interested and/or desire more information, please contact Vicki Wiltse or Norma Bailey at (989) 560-3952 or baile1nj@cmich.edu.

**Con Artist High School Youth Fun Conference** in Bloomfield Hills, MI, January 9, 4:00 PM to January 11, 5:00 PM at Birmingham Unitarian Church, \$40 if you register by January 3. Join us for this art-themed high school youth CON. It will include assorted visual, musical, and literary workshops, plus meals, worship, super-secret surprise, and coffee house. The contact person is Kimery Campbell, kimery.campbell@bucmi.org. The event is limited to 50 participants, so register soon! Let Vicki Wiltse know if you plan to go. More information at:

[www.midamericauua.org/events/calendar2/eventdetail/431/-/con-artist-hs-youth-fun-conference-in-se-michigan](http://www.midamericauua.org/events/calendar2/eventdetail/431/-/con-artist-hs-youth-fun-conference-in-se-michigan)

**Spirit Play Training:** We will have another training on January 24th from 1:00-4:00 for anyone who would like to volunteer with either the younger or older Spirit Play classes. It would be helpful if people interested in being trained visited and observed a SP class before the training, either on January 4 or 18. People who attended a "training" for the first time this past September are encouraged to attend, since that session turned out to be more refresher than training and some basics were not discussed.

### January Classes

Date	Glowworms	Fireflies
4	"Promises General Lesson": Promises 1-7	"Orientation to the Spirit Play Center" and "Sources General Lesson"
11	Children's Chapel: "An Infinity of Questions: The Story of Maria Mitchell"	Orientation to the art materials and work time
18	4th Promise (green) story: "The Dream Machine"	"The Flaming Chalice" with earth extension
25	5th Promise (blue) story: "All People Need a Vote"	1st Promise (red) story: "William's Doll"



## **Pulpit Ponderings by Rev. Jeff**

Recently, one of you expressed a concern I have heard before – that it sometimes seems in my sermons that I am asking you to be perfect. I responded that I am certainly not perfect, to which this member replied that they didn't feel that they could even be like me.

I do understand the concern. Jody and I are, well, let's be kind and say that we are strident. We think a great weekend is getting up in the middle of the night, driving two hours to sit on the world's most uncomfortable bus for 10 hours so we can walk with a few thousand people for half a mile to our nation's Capitol, get back on the same bus and pull into the driveway at 7:00 a.m. Sunday morning.

As your minister, I cannot ask that you be anything but who you are. All I can do is be who I am and act the way I am called to act. And I was lucky enough to find a partner who is equally driven by a similar call. By being the most authentic "me" that I can be, whether I am in the pulpit, at my computer, in your home, or at a public meeting giving testimony for some cause, I encourage you to live a more authentic life as well.

And right now, I am called to express the feelings I sense of those around me – not just in the Fellowship, but in the nation. Feelings of immense sorrow; feelings of grating frustration; feelings of deep hopelessness; feelings of roaring rage. We are surrounded by events that make us sad, confused, depressed, and angry. My task is to be the prophetic voice of those emotions and offer a way to put that emotional energy to good use.

That is my task. Sometimes that voice is insistent and demanding. Sometimes that voice pleads and evokes sympathy. But always behind my prophetic voice is the Spirit of Love that guides our faith. The second verse of "Love Will Guide Us" (Number 131 in *Singing the Living Tradition*) reads, "If you cannot sing like angels, if you cannot speak before thousands, you can give from deep within you. You can change the world with your love."

That is my task. By speaking a prophetic voice of Love, I want to help you do the same. I want to help you deal constructively with the sorrow and frustration, the hopelessness and rage.



## **Small Group Ministries**

### **Men's Group**

**Tuesday, January 6 and 20, 7:00 to 9:00 PM**

Join us for fellowship, conversation and fun (along with a slice of pie) at the UU FoM Men's Group Meetings. We meet the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Grand Traverse Pie Company on Saginaw Road in Midland.

### **Women's Group**

**Thursday, January 8, 7:00 to 9:00 PM**

The Women's Group Meeting is the first Thursday of every month at Grand Traverse Pie Company on Saginaw Road in Midland. Amber Toner is coordinating.

## **Ancient Shores Covenant of UU Pagans**

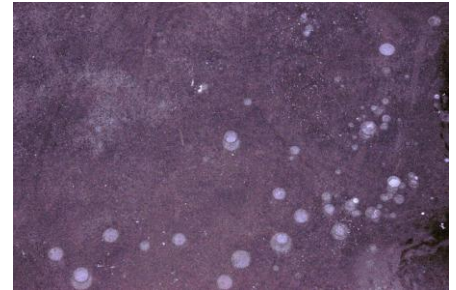
**Sunday, January 18, 12:15-2:00 PM**



The CUUPS meeting this month will discuss the future directions of the group after all of the hard work assembling the Choosing a Culture of Understanding program and presenting our group to the general community. This important ministry of our Fellowship invites seekers and questioners, leaders and dreamers. Plan to attend and bring a snack or some lunch so you can stay for the whole meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

### **Sacred Grove Pagan Column**

Just after seeing the Winter Solstice sunrise the other day, our family took a little while to enjoy playing on the frozen ponds near where we had watched the Sun rise, beginning its return toward summer days. The ponds were only a foot or two deep, and the new, hard ice allowed the pond bottom to be seen easily. We looked at the strange bubble formations frozen in the ice – often in groups of stacked bubbles, making miniature alien cities – or wide, misty clouds reminiscent of galaxies. Like the sunrise itself, photos fail to capture their grandeur. Unraveling the history that likely made a given set of formations, along with marveling at their splendor, reinforces the realization that understanding strengthens wonder and beauty. Lying prone, with one's face inches from the ice can open up a world of shapes that could otherwise be missed underfoot. Sliding around the ice brought back many childhood memories of similar times spent on the ice with my dad and sisters. We had been shown early on that the early ice often present in December, if thick enough to be safe, can be as clear as glass – and can open up a world of winter glory.



Blessed be – Jon Cleland Host

## **Three Jewels UU Sangha**

**Every Monday, 6:15 to 7:15 PM**

Three Jewels Sangha meets Mondays at 6:15 PM for meditation and discussion. Three Jewels Sangha is an open group that welcomes all within reach of the Tri-City area who are interested in gathering in community with others practicing Buddhism or Buddhist meditation, or those just exploring different meditation practices. For more information, check the Sangha out on Facebook: Three Jewels Sangha of Midland (UUFoM)

<https://www.facebook.com/ThreeJewelsSanghaOfMidlanduufom>



## **Interweave**

**Thursday, January 22, 7:00 to 8:00 PM**



Interweave UUFoM values and affirms the lives and experiences of all Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) individuals and their allies. Grounded in Unitarian Universalist Principles, we provide leadership, support and awareness for LGBTQ issues in the Great Lakes Bay Region. In collaboration with other organizations of similar vision, we actively nurture and support all LGBTQ individuals, communities, groups and their allies. We meet monthly on the fourth Thursday.

# Seekers Practicing Addiction Recovery in Community (SPARC)

**Mondays, January 5 and 19, 7:30 to 8:30 PM**

SPARC reaches out to those searching for personal spiritual and religious belief in life while living with addiction. SPARC acknowledges that the spiritual growth and search for truth outlined in our Unitarian Universalist Sources and Seven Principles can help us meet the challenge of addictions. The group offers resources and information to support reflection and personal honesty, and to help those with addictions and the important people in their lives reconnect in healthy openness. We offer support, an open environment, and strict confidentiality. Society often places shame and guilt on those suffering from addiction. We offer a safe space to question, learn, and heal.



---

## Other Announcements

### **Book Table**

Our Fellowship book table is open for business again. You are invited to browse the selection and purchase books printed by Beacon Press and Skinner House, the two UU publishers after the service.

### **Library**

Many of you may be unaware, but we have a wonderful library downstairs in the religious education wing. If you go downstairs, turn right, then left, you will find hundreds of books on all manners of topics. We have special collections on Buddhism, Paganism, Addiction Recovery, Unitarian Universalism, and the considerable collection from the local Occupy the Tri movement. Feel free to browse and borrow books.

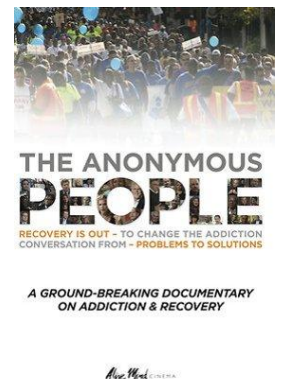
---

## Upcoming Events

### ***The Anonymous People* Film Night**

**Saturday, January 10 at 7:00 PM**

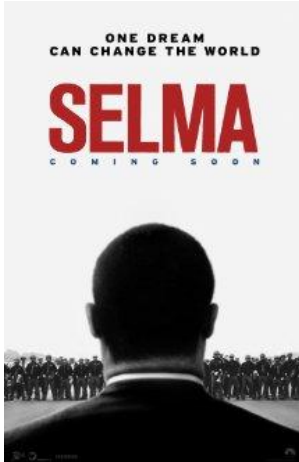
Seekers Practicing Addiction Recovery in Community (SPARC) invites you to a showing of the film *The Anonymous People*. Deeply entrenched social stigma have kept recovery voices silent and faces hidden for decades. The vacuum created by this silence has been filled by sensational mass media depictions of addiction that perpetuate a lurid public fascination with the dysfunctional side of what is a preventable and treatable health condition. The group will also meet at its regular times on the first and third Monday nights at 7:30 PM.



Just like women with breast cancer, or people with HIV/AIDS, a grass roots social justice movement is emerging. Courageous addiction recovery advocates are organizing to end discrimination and move toward recovery-based solutions. The story is told through the faces and voices of the citizens, leaders, volunteers, corporate executives, and public figures who are laying it all on the line to save the lives of others just like them. This passionate new public recovery movement is fueling a changing conversation that aims to transform public opinion, and finally shift problematic policy toward lasting solutions.

## **Fellowship Movie Night – *Selma***

**Friday, January 16 evening (approximately 6:30 – 7:00 depending on movie times)**



This new film chronicles the tumultuous three-month period in 1965, when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led a dangerous campaign to secure equal voting rights in the face of violent opposition. The epic march from Selma to Montgomery culminated in President Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most significant victories for the civil rights movement. Director Ava DuVernay's "Selma" tells the story of how the revered leader and visionary Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and his brothers and sisters in the movement (including Unitarian Universalists Viola Liuzzo and Rev. James Reeb) prompted change that forever altered history.

We will see the film at the Midland Cinemas and then invite people to gather to discuss it either at the Fellowship or another location to be determined.

## **Karaoke and Game Night**

**Friday, January 30, 6:30 to 9:30 PM**

Get ready for some relaxing and stress-free fun! We are having a night of fun at the Fellowship and would love to see you there! There will be karaoke, board games, and fun stuff for the kids. There may even be a game or two of Euchre thrown into the mix! This family friendly event will be non-alcoholic. Snacks will be provided, along with a karaoke machine and karaoke music. All we ask is that you show up, ready to get your GROOVE ON (and bring a donation of \$1 per person to offset the refreshment costs)! Don't forget to invite your family and friends, bring your favorite games, and get ready to PARTY!

## **Winter Womanspirit 2015**

### **Healing Words: A Call to Consciousness**

**February 6-8, Lake Country UU Church, Hartland, WI**

Mary Pierce Brosmer is a writer, a feminist and a believer that women can provide healing to and for one another and ourselves. She is also a Unitarian Universalist. All her gifts were brought together when she created Women Writing for Change in Cincinnati, Ohio. By creating listening groups for women where we could share our deepest hurts and struggles healing, resolution and wholeness happened; healing from death, divorce, rape, abuse, self-doubt, childhood pain – think of whatever has hurt you most and fill in the blank. Mary has created safe spiritual spaces where women could be healed and understand our power and our understanding of justice could be reborn. Find more information on registering at [www.womenandreligion.org](http://www.womenandreligion.org)

## **MidAmerica Regional Assembly 2015**

**April 17-19, in Naperville, Illinois (a western suburb of Chicago)**

It will be a great chance to be together as one region to explore The New in a New Era of Unitarian Universalism with presentations by two major speakers: the Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt and the Reverend Dr. Marlin Lavanhar. You can benefit from workshops designed to strengthen your congregation, deepen your social justice work, and enrich you on a personal level. Come and experience the Regional Business Meeting, good food, and time for meeting new friends and old from congregations across our great Region, culminating with the joy of shared worship and musical celebration on Sunday morning.

See <http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>

## Adult Enrichment Program

***Enriching Lives at the Fellowship!***  
**Contact Heather Cleland-Host if you are interested.**



**Sunday, January 5 and 12, 12:00 noon**

Topics to be announced.

### **UUFoM Parents' Circle**

*(The Parents' Circle is made up of families with children through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. We have a private Facebook group for safe sharing. Contact: Heather Cleland-Host or Sarah Schulz to join the group)*



**Parents' Circle Potluck**  
**UUFoM Parents' Circle Breakfast Club**  
***(Special invitation to parents of young children)***  
**9:30 AM Sunday, January 18, 8:30 AM**

The Breakfast group part of UUFoM Parents' Circle is a discussion group started especially for the parents of young children, but all are welcome! The group meets at 9:30 AM for pastries, fruit, and discussion on the **third Sunday** of each month. **Childcare will be available starting at 9:15 AM.**

### **Volunteers Needed**

We are looking for facilitators for various programs: UUFoM Three Jewels Sangha, Table Talk, Adult discussion circles/classes, etc. Contact Heather Cleland-Host if you are interested.

**Unity in Diversity: A Study of Religious Identity, Diversity, and Tolerance for Indonesians in Bali**  
**Wednesday, January 7 at 6:00 PM**

Lisa Drottar's daughter Amanda Drottar recently spent a semester studying abroad in Indonesia where she had the chance to live with local families of various faiths and carry out fieldwork on a topic of her choice: religious freedoms. Come listen as she presents her findings and explores a diverse religious and cultural perspective on the meanings of religion and freedom.



# January Treasurer Report

Through the end of November, pledges were under budget by 6%. With the pledge reminder sent out on December 10, we hope pledges will meet or exceed budget by year-end. If not, the 2015 budget may need to be updated to reflect the shortfall. Expenses are in line with budget through the end of November. Thank you to everyone who continues to support our Fellowship with your time and/or money. It makes a difference!

This will be my last newsletter article as Treasurer. I want you to know how honored I am to have had the chance to serve you in this capacity. I am handing this position over to Janelle Dombek, an intelligent, capable person who will do an excellent job.

Amber Toner – Outgoing Treasurer      Janelle Dombek - Treasurer  
[altoner79@gmail.com](mailto:altoner79@gmail.com)                      [wagnerdombek@gmail.com](mailto:wagnerdombek@gmail.com)

## Ministry Teams

### **Facilities**

*Kitchen*

**Gisela Bailey**

*Aesthetics*

**Michaele Malecki**

### **Prophetic Outreach**

*Publicity*

**open**

*Social Justice*

**open**

### **Member Services**

*Library*

**Amy Rogers**

*Membership*

**Amber Toner**

*Pastoral Care*

**Gisela Bailey**

*Social*

**open**

### **Lifespan Learning**

*Adult Enrichment*

**Heather Cleland-Host**

*Children's Religious Ed*

**Jes Cruickshank**

### **Worship**

*Worship*

**Maxine Guettler, Amy**

**Rogers, Co-Chairs**

*Choir*

**Darla Iaquina**

*Sound System*

**R.G. Converse**

## Standing Governance

### Committees

#### **Building and Grounds**

**Tim Wagner**

#### **Endowment**

**Tom Bailey**

#### **Financial Affairs**

*Stewardship*

**Peter Carlson**

*Finance*

**Vicki Rothhaar**

#### **Nominating**

**Jerry Rowley, Peter Carlson,**

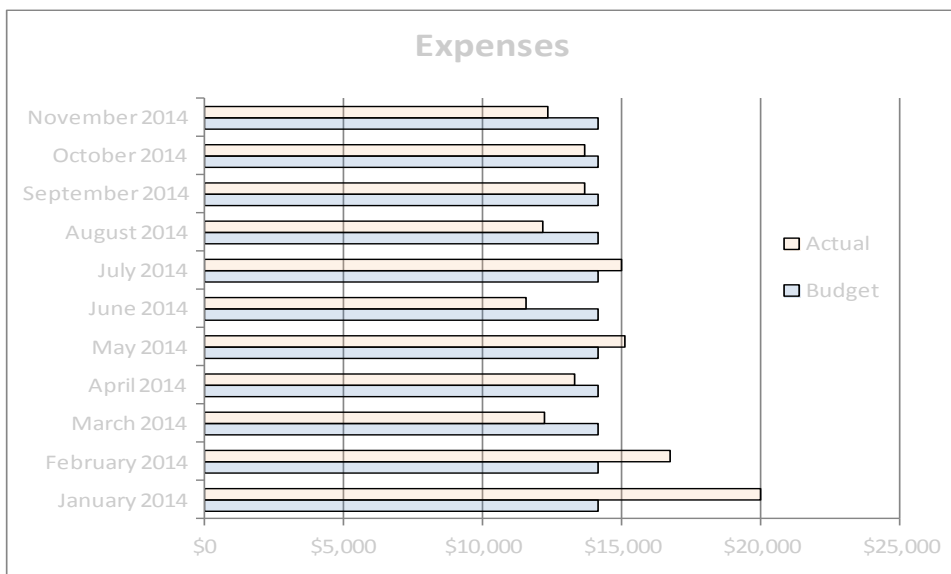
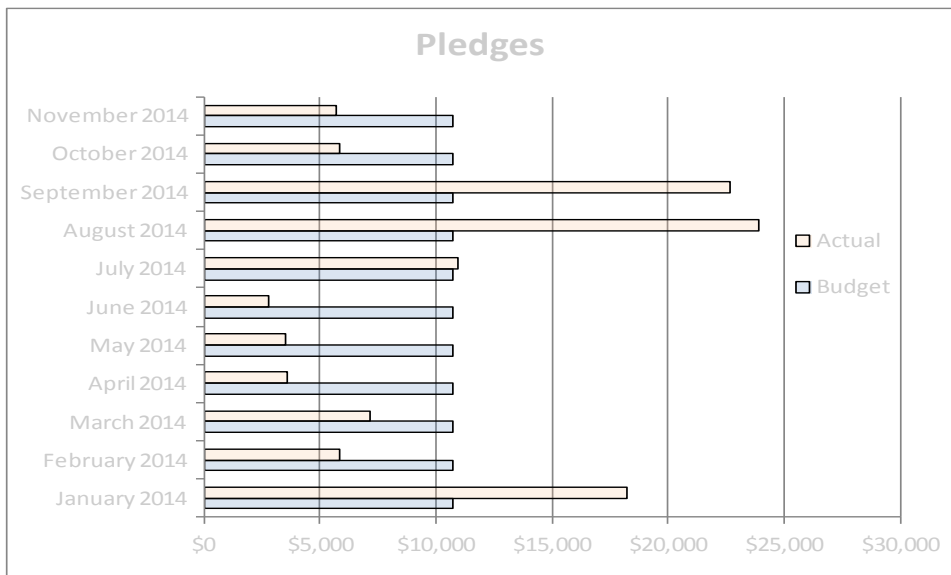
**Karen Treadway**

#### Committee on Ministry

**Trena Winans, Donna King,**

**Linda Rector, Kim Palka,**

**Marlene Hickman**



**Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Midland**  
6220 Jefferson Avenue  
Midland MI 48640-2934

**Board of Directors**

*President*

**Shannon Sonoras**  
708-5348

*President-Elect*

**Tom Bailey**  
835-2029

*Treasurer*

**Janelle Dombek**  
839-0912

*Secretary*

**Amy Davis-Comstock**  
992-6841

*Member-at-Large*

**Sara Clavez**

687-7003

*Member-at-Large*

**Kathy French**

(508) 265-6923

**Staff**

*Minister*

**Rev. Jeff Liebmann**  
[uurevjeff@gmail.com](mailto:uurevjeff@gmail.com)

(412) 760-6588

*Choir Director*

**Darla Iaquina**

835-2325

*Director, Religious Education*

**Dr. Vicki Wiltse**

[vicki.wiltse@gmail.com](mailto:vicki.wiltse@gmail.com)

*Accompanist*

**Melanie Willison**

832-7985

*Fellowship Secretary*

**Elaine Parsons**

**Office Hours**

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM Monday,  
Tuesday, Thursday, and  
Friday

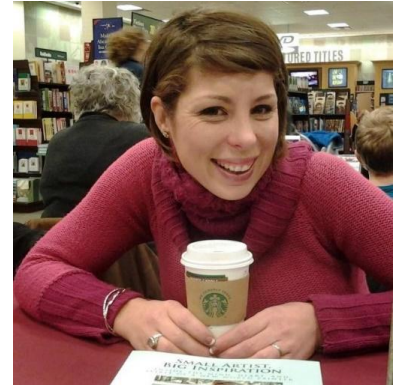
*The Unitarian Universalist  
Fellowship of Midland  
welcomes, affirms,  
promotes, and celebrates  
the full participation of all  
persons in all of its  
activities without regard  
to age, gender, sexual  
orientation, race, or any  
other such category of  
exclusion.*

## **Soulful Sundown Returns!**

**Tuesday, January 13 and 27, 7:00 PM**

Our Soulful Sundown gatherings return this month with new leadership and direction. Rev. Jeff and the Worship Ministry Team will be working with Hannah Tiffin to bring new purpose and content to the services.

Hannah has committed her life to becoming a leader in creativity and forward thinking through the balance of mind, body and spirit. Her Legacy Coalition grew into a space of creativity and healing as she assisted others with their own healing processes through art. She became a master of Usui and Tibetan Reiki healing, and began openly sharing her gifts of intuition, coaching, and balance with her clients. She has spent the past four years assisting others with a wide variety of needs, and issues, such as spiritual crisis, grief, psychic/healing crisis, ADD, Alzheimer's, Dementia and many more. In 2013, Hannah met her beloved husband Earl and incorporated his love of music and a greater feeling of core values to the business she had built.



Hannah's art is distributed nationally (she created our beautiful new Ancient Shores CUUPS piece) and she is most proud of her work at the Midland Juvenile Correctional Facility, where she offers art each week to help children with cognitive restructuring. In her attempt to be a helper, Hannah has begun formal certification procedures to be an "At Risk Youth Coach" and mentor for this population to help the young strive for their brightest destinies. At our Fellowship, Hannah and Earl hope to bring all of their training and skill sets together to share sacred space and offer information to feed and balance the mind, body and spirit!

### **January 13 Gathering**

#### **Topic: *Personal Kindness/Return to our Authentic Self***

What is self-kindness and why is it important to practice? Allowing ourselves to say no. Putting down the crazy...you can always pick it back up.

### **January 27 Gathering**

#### **Topic: *Empathy, We are All Empathic Beings***

Opening Ideas. What exactly is empathy? How do we store emotion and where? Is it our feeling or someone else's? The negativity attraction. How do we connect with others?

# Membership

## Path to Membership

- 1) **Attend!** The best place to start is by getting to know your fellow seekers on Sunday mornings, in small groups, or during social gatherings.
- 2) **Explore!** Pamphlets can be found on the left wall near the front entrance. Borrow a book from our library or purchase one from our book table. Visit the UUA's FAQs at <http://www.uua.org/beliefs/faq/index.shtml>. Either way, get to know UU!
- 3) **Get Involved!** Be present in congregational life and participate as a volunteer where you receive fulfillment.
- 4) **Question!** We are a Faith about Questions. Explore yours with our Minister, Membership Team, or your fellow travelers on the journey.
- 5) **Learn!** Attend a New UU Class, held in the Spring and Fall. Class dates will be announced.
- 6) **Join!** Sign a membership card with our Minister, familiarize yourself with our By-Laws, and fill out a Membership Form.

Keep in touch with us via our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UUFoM>) and group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UUFoM/>).

## Overcoming this Optical Delusion of Consciousness

Albert Einstein has referred to a human being as a part of the Universe, even though they tend to experience their life, their thoughts and feelings as "something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of consciousness." He refers to this delusion as "a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us." Einstein continues to say that "Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty." As a Unitarian Universalist, I believe Einstein touches on our 7th principle here, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." Part of respecting this "web" is by reaching out to those around you, by acknowledging that they share this "web" with you, by connecting.

I would like to propose an ongoing, monthly challenge to our members, friends, and occasional passersby. Spend time with someone outside of your circle, whether that circle is within the Fellowship or within your day-to-day life. Invite them over, go out to lunch, have a conversation, whatever it is that you do to let someone into your circle. Just make sure to do it. You might just make a new friend and make someone else's day.

## Member Spotlight – Scott and Monica Hughes

Since June 2014, Scott and Monica Hughes have been attending the Fellowship with their three children, William (8), Adrianna (6), and Rosalinn (4). Scott and Monica were married in May 2006, shortly before he was deployed overseas for a year and a half with the Army National Guard, serving for eight years. Scott was born and raised in Midland and is currently a Shift Leader for Midland Compounding and Consulting, having worked there for five years. His sister, Jennifer, and her husband Mark Norris, are also members. Monica was born in Florida and moved to Michigan when she was young. She is currently a stay-at-home mom, but is looking at options for work outside the home, now that her children are getting older.

They first began attending the Fellowship to find community. They wanted their children to learn about all religions, so they can choose for themselves. Monica believes in love and acceptance and Scott attends for the science and evolution aspects.

Scott and Monica enjoy attending Renaissance Festivals, gaming (both video and board), reading, camping, travel, and caring for their two dogs (Boone and Summer), three cats (Morgan, Link, and Bagheera), two doves (Coco and Budding), and goldfish. Monica also enjoys amateur photography and amusement parks.

Next time you see them, be sure to say hello!

