



## Blue Hills Bulletin

The Blue Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a multigenerational congregation, guided by the principles and liberal traditions of Unitarian Universalism, that promotes an environment of acceptance, inspiration, and action in order to create a sense of greater community.

March 2018

Next Issue, June 2018



General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. Attendees worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process. Anyone may attend; congregations must certify annually to send voting delegates. The 2018 General Assembly will be June 20-24 in Kansas City, Missouri. Most General Assembly events will be held in the Kansas City Convention Center.

This year's GA theme is "All Are Called." The call to witness and act for justice in our society and in the world is clear. So, too, is the call to examine our structures and practices, dismantling and transforming those which fail to recognize the full humanity of all people and to honor the interdependent web of life. Join us in Kansas City as we dive deeply into questions of mission for our Unitarian Universalist Association, for our congregations and communities, and for each of us as individuals. "How can we faithfully meet the demands of our time?"

A reminder to anyone who might like to attend GA in person, Registration and Housing Reservations open on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Hotel room reservations within walking distance of the Convention Center tend to sell out quickly.

For more information about General Assembly, visit: [www.uua.org/ga](http://www.uua.org/ga)

# Alternative Pathways -- Welcome to Holland

Linda Tollefsrud

When my child was first diagnosed with a disability, people often referred me to this story by Emily Kingsley: When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip – to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum, the Michelangelo David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting. After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!" you say. "What do you mean, Holland?" I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy. But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to some horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place. So you must go out and buy a new guidebook. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met. It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills; Holland has tulips; Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned." The pain of that will never, ever, go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss. But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things about Holland.

So . . . that's the story. Perhaps you like the story. I spent years raging against it. For instance, when I really wanted to do something (go to a movie or a party or whatever) and my son's behaviors made that impossible, I would be frustrated and irritated and upset. I really wanted to have a "normal" life! It took a long time for

me to learn to be more flexible – to always have a backup plan. While Plan A might have been fun, Plan B could also be great. And, if neither Plan A nor Plan B worked out, Plan C could be enjoyable, too. And, yes, while it may literally be exciting to see France or Italy, the Netherlands is also a traveler's paradise. Over time, I learned to treasure my child's quirks rather than resent them.

Even if your children are "normal" or neuro-typical, both you and they will be happier if there is always a Plan B. Want to be a veterinarian or a lawyer? It's wise to have an alternate plan in case the funding for all that education doesn't pan out. Or, perhaps you can just delay Plan A for now and pursue it later. Life is full of all kinds of possibilities. As Alexander Graham Bell said, "When one door closes another door opens, but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us."

## Marsh Languages

By Margaret Atwood

Note: This poem relates to the forum given by Bob Hasman in which we discussed the gender and anthropocentric structure of our language.

The dark soft languages are being silenced:  
Mothertongue Mothertongue Mothertongue  
falling one by one back into the moon.

Language of marshes,  
language of the roots of rushes tangled  
together in the ooze,  
marrow cells twinning themselves  
inside the warm core of the bone:  
pathways of hidden light in the body fade and wink out.

The sibilants and gutturals,  
the cave languages, the half-light  
forming at the back of the throat,  
the mouth's damp velvet moulding

The lost syllable for 'I' that did not mean separate,  
all are becoming sounds no longer  
heard because no longer spoken,  
and everything that could once be said in them has  
ceased to exist.

The languages of the dying suns  
are themselves dying,  
but even the word for this has been forgotten.  
The mouth against skin, vivid and fading,  
Can no longer speak both cherishing and farewell.  
It is now only a mouth, only skin.  
There is no more longing.

Translation was never possible.  
instead there was always only  
conquest, the influx  
of the language of hard nouns,  
the language of metal,  
the language of either/or,  
the one language that has eaten all others.

## Prayers For Peace

By Kent Shifferd

(These are from The Eden Journals, unpublished manuscripts., and remember, you don't have to believe in a traditional view of God in order to benefit from prayer.)

### PRAYER FOR REFUGEES

Abba, my dear beloved God, hear my prayer for I am in distress. Millions of my brothers and sisters are fleeing their homes where men with guns are hunting them, bombs are crushing their cities, where flood and drought have destroyed their crops. With what little they can carry they are taking the hands of their children and walking hundreds of miles to the shore to board overcrowded, leaking boats to cross the cold sea. Thousands have drowned. They cross deserts without water and many die of thirst. I may not speak their language, Lord, or know their customs, but I know what is in their hearts. They want to work and a home safe from violence for their little ones and food and a chance for their children to learn. And here is what I want from You, Lord. I want the gift of empathy so that I know what it is to walk with them. I want the gift of generosity so that I may know the joy of sharing. I want the gift of open arms so that I may know the joy of welcoming and embracing. Hear my prayer, O Lord!

### MY FRIEND, MEL

Pondering how the unthinkable happens, how fanatical paramilitaries could attack UN peace-keeping troops, how "religious leaders" could massacre their own followers, how a man, any man, could abduct, rape and murder, how anyone could harm a child, I asked in self-righteous disgust, "What kind of man could . . . ?"  
And my friend, Mel, said quietly, "A man just like you and me."  
Thank You, God, for my friend Mel.

### A Dangerous Time

We are going into a dangerous time, Father, where too few have too much and too many have too little, and there will be anger and hatred, violence and indifference.

Come to us now, Lord.

Prepare us in time to divert ourselves from such destruction.

Inspire us to live lives that turn our hearts away from this darkness,

To divert the world from its course toward Hell.  
Teach us not to prey on one another but to pray for one another.

### PRAYER FOR PSYCHOPATHIC KILLERS

Compassionate Lord, teach us compassion *in extremis*. Teach us compassion for psychopathic killers. We fear them. Deliver us from their evil. Help us to incarcerate them, but let us have pity and mercy on them. Let us not kill in return, for in so doing we violate Your greatest commandments. Let us have care for their tormented minds, understand the genesis of their fears, hatreds and their total failure of empathy. Let us treat them as mentally ill in need of cure that can only be wrought by love and understanding. Let us recall that You said to forgive not once or twice but seventy times seven. We know that to forgive is not to condone nor is it to free, but it is to demonstrate the empathy they so pitifully lack. Let us recall that you are the ultimate Judge, and that they will have to stand before You. Our work is to do Your work of love and compassion, even for such as these, that we may also stand before You.

## A Crack in A Crack in Creation

By Bob Hasman

In her co-authored book, A Crack in Creation, Jennifer Doudna finds insightful a comment made during a conference she organized on germline editing: “Someday we may consider it unethical not to use germline editing to alleviate human suffering.”

I think the real issue is this: we need to alleviate suffering, all suffering. The suffering of our oceans, our plants, our non-human animals—you know the story—it’s the story of climate change—caused in large part by human activity. I hope, as we discuss the book A Crack in Creation, such suffering enters the discussion.

### POEM FOR MYSELF AND MEI: Concerning Abortion

Chinle to Fort Defiance, April 1973

The morning sun  
coming unstuffed with yellow light  
butterflies tumbling loose  
and blowing across the Earth.  
They fill the sky  
with shimmering yellow wind  
and I see them with the clarity of ice  
shattered in mountain streams  
where each pebble is  
speckled and marbled  
alive beneath the water.

All winter it snowed  
mustard gas  
and springtime rained it.

Wide fancy meadows  
warm green  
and butterflies are yellow mustard flowers  
spilling out of the mountain.

There were horses  
near the highway  
at Ganado.  
And the white one

scratching his ass on a tree.

They die softly  
against the windshield  
and the iridescent wings  
flutter and cling  
all the way home.  
By Leslie Marmon Silko

## What It Means, To Me, To Be A UU Colton Schmidt

To me, what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist is to have spirituality without labels, dogma, or preformed beliefs that I’m expected to accept as truth. As a UU, I enjoy the freedom of being accepted and encouraged with my own spiritual pathway and search for truth and meaning. I enjoy giving that same acceptance and encouragement to other people to follow their truth, joy, and that which brings them peace and meaning in their lives. I’m not out on my own in search of beliefs, philosophies, practices, etc. that work for me because I’m a part of group of people who are all traveling a somewhat similar path together.

On our paths, with our own unique life experiences, we don’t always agree on matters of spirituality, philosophy, politics, and so forth, because those matters are personal, and I think it’s of great value that we can hold different opinions and beliefs and still be together to give social support on our individual life journeys. Being a UU is being part of a community of truth seekers who are working on the best versions of themselves and trying to make the larger world the best version of itself.

I feel like at the BHUU, we all work really hard, as well as effortlessly, to be the best version of ourselves. To be a UU means to be around a lot of creative, intelligent, eclectic, scientific, spiritual, progressive, and kind hearted people. The fact that these people will do forums and services on various topics helps me grow intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and so forth. To be a UU means that I am always learning and am always inspired by other people who make the BHUU a wonderful and rewarding place to be. I love this place, the BHUU, and I love the people who make it what it is ☺

# What Does Being a UU Mean To Me?

Dana Lind

What does being a UU mean to me? Although I am a millennial in a congregation of mostly older adults, I feel that the community found here at our little UU has helped me grow in so many ways. When I first stepped into the Blue Hills Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, I was welcomed and sat down for my first service. I remember clearly how the reading of the Seven UU Principles, which is done every Sunday before services, resonated so deeply within me. I felt a mixture of relief, surprise, and excitement that here I was, surrounded by this small group of people that wanted to follow these values for no other reason to be better people in a better world.

After a year and a half of attending BHUU, I still feel this sense of awe when I read and hear the UU Principles. I welcome them into my life. Their philosophy make sense to me and offer reminders of what I want to embody. They encourage me to be conscious of my interactions with other people, as well as to feel a right and a responsibility to educate myself and engage others in intellectual dialogue. However, UU's are known to not agree on much, even within themselves. Amongst these diverse viewpoints, there is always more to learn and more opinions to consider. For me, the UU is one of very few places where disagreements evolve into the most worthwhile and stimulating conversations.

Maybe one reason for this is the 5th principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large. As a UU, my opinion has always been valued. Sometimes I feel too young, too uninformed, or even just too shy to speak up. But it's unavoidable in such an environment that thrives off different perspectives and encourages personal growth. Through this welcomed struggle, I have become more confident in my words and speaking to groups of people. I have seen this in my college classes, with family, and in casual encounters outside of the UU.

Despite the variety of disagreements, our UU is united in its goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all, as well as respecting the interdependent web of all existence, which we are reminded that humans are only a small part of. Social justice issues, environmental issues, technology of the future, and so

many other topics are discussed in extremely engaging forums and services, rather than the traditional and redundant messages that people usually associate with their Sunday mornings. My sense of the world I'm living in has expanded and I feel driven to make change, in my own way.

There are amazing people at the UU that can be valued for their open minds, their intellect, their kindness, and their experiences. The youth at the UU are curious, active, fun, and valued for who they choose to be. The UU is a community in which I have grown more confident, learned, and let's not forget, had a lot of delicious food and fair-trade coffee at our 3rd Sunday potlucks.

## Winter impressions

From our service of Jan 28, 18 by Linda Thompson

Cozy - the warmth of wood stoves;  
entering a chute of solitude;  
shutting down, losing activity, function - a metaphor  
for life;  
the Joie d'Vivre of SUN in winter -diamonds glinting  
on snow. Jude Genereaux

Clothes come out of storage as others are put away  
No tornadoes but often snowstorms or blizzard  
Snow shoveling exercise  
Try not to slip and fall Valerie Rude

-crystals hanging from bent limbs  
- longer daylight, noticeable daily late January  
- the many sounds of snow  
- the fox and the rabbit

- Fox crosses lake  
- snowmobiles shatter quiet  
- Long quiet mornings - coffee, news, reflections  
- Dark at both ends of the day

Curling inward  
Fluffy feathers  
Waiting it out  
Lowering expectations  
But each even letting the storm door slam shut behind  
you  
Looking up  
Feeling the needles of the stars Judy Barisonzi

P.O. Box 614  
Rice Lake, WI 54868  
715-234-6337  
Meeting at 230 W. Messenger Street  
Rice Lake, WI



The sunrise on brisk winter mornings is a red fire  
through the bare trees that you can't see through the  
greens of summer and spring.  
Soggy kids with red cheeks and noses need hot  
chocolate.

Sitting in my favorite chair in the basement. Reading,  
throwing an occasional log on the fire, dozing,  
dreaming. Rick Wilhelm

I work until 11 pm listening to voices from across our  
nation. They all want someone to hear them. They all  
want me to listen.  
Little problems. Big problems.  
"Where are you?" they ask.  
"I'm up in Wisconsin."  
"Oh, you really get winter up there." Ken Hood

### March calendar

|          |         |  |                     |
|----------|---------|--|---------------------|
| March 4  | 9:15    | Forum: Korea   | Dave Hart           |
|          | 10:30   | Service: UUA's Commitment to Social justice            | April Nielsen       |
|          | 12:00   | Board Meeting: All Invited                             |                     |
| March 11 | 9:15    | Discussion #1: A Crack in Creation                     | CRISPR group        |
|          | 10:30   | Service: Our Wild Rivers                               | Pat Shifferd        |
| March 14 | 6:00 pm | Living by the Law in Judaism                           | Judy Barisonzi      |
| March 18 | 9:15    | Forum: Daring Democracy: UUA common read               | All                 |
|          | 10:30   | Service: Emerging Human Capabilities                   | Sondra Lewis        |
|          |         | Religious Education:                                   |                     |
|          | 11:30   | Third Sunday Potluck: all invited                      |                     |
| March 20 | 11:15   | Vernal Equinox   |                     |
| March 25 | 9:15    | Forum CRISPR Critters                                  |                     |
|          | 10:30   | Service: The Lamp beside the Golden Door: February Sky |                     |
|          |         | Welcoming Immigrants to America                        |                     |
| March 28 | 6:00 pm | Our Whole Lives  | NadineWetzel-Curtis |