

From Your Minister

Dear Quincy UUs,

These past 2 months have been a growth experience for me. I have never been a solo minister before and there's so much to learn about your congregation and how to be "present" from 5 hours away.

November was a month to try new things and I have found real joy and satisfaction in these new things, such as "Meet The Minister" and the "Source-A-Palooza" gatherings.

There is agreement among your leadership that we have done well at learning new things in this pandemic crisis, new ways of being the Unitarian Church of Quincy. And we still need to learn how to expand our reach, especially to the many members and friends of UCQ who haven't connected via the new technologies.

Some of us are regrouping to focus on these valued persons. I invite each of you to be thinking of those who you haven't heard from in a while, and reach out to them, and let myself or Lisa Wigoda know how those folks would like to be contacted.

We are working on ideas to share the Sunday services more widely as well. All of these challenges have been addressed by our wider UU Association and I'm discussing with my colleagues what they have found works.

Take care of yourselves, your family, your friends, and your neighbors. Only human compassion, patience, and hope can see us all through the next stage of the pandemic. We are in this together and we shall make it through together.

Respectfully,

Charley Earp, Evanston IL

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Are we overloading folks with “Notices?”

You may have noticed, it's been a horrible year. We haven't been able to have church services – IN THE CHURCH – since last March! We have been trying our best to compensate, but Zoom Services are the best solution we've found, so far.

We have been doing our best to keep everybody informed about our church happenings. We've put notices in the Newsletter; they show up on Facebook (make that a link), too. There is our new and much more attractive Website (make that a link), and then Taylor has been sending out her UU Quincy eNews every Thursday and I try to send out a notice before each Church Zoom event. We've been trying to make sure that everyone has everything they need to participate, and we hope that we're succeeding.

We just have two questions: 1) Is everybody getting all the information that they need? And on the other hand: 2) are we overdoing it; are we bombarding people with SPAM?

There are those of us who seldom visit the website. When I point out something that was in the newsletter, I have received the response, “Oh, I never read that.” Personally, I won't visit FaceBook. And I'm sure that there are people that we regularly send e-mail messages to who have their SPAM filters set to reject everything we send. No single thing we do will please everybody. So, 1) What else can we do to get our message out? And 2) is there any way to reduce the overload?

Please, feel free to offer your opinions, suggestions, criticisms; (maybe even praise?). Send an e-mail to contact@uuquincy.org (make that a link). We want to hear your thoughts.

Mike Flanagan

President's Message

Happy December!

As we start a new month, thankfully the final of 2020, we do so with a cautious optimism. We acknowledge with relief that the year of the pandemic will be ending. There is so much hope in the upcoming new year.

November began with a historic election. The outcome has most of us looking optimistically forward to the future. With Kamala Harris as Vice President, this is a huge progressive step in the right direction. I am sure many of us thoroughly enjoyed watching fellow citizens celebrating and dancing in the streets across the country after the election results were announced. It was a brief, happy respite during the month with the highest and the most rapidly spreading Coronavirus cases.

Our congregation has not gathered in person since March. Many of us have struggled this year with physical illnesses, as well as with mental health challenges. As we are more alone and isolated, we are also more stressed out as uncertainties are touching all aspects of our lives. However, with the promise of the vaccine on the way, the hope of a new year, and the relief about new leadership for the nation, we are reminded of early humanity. Early Stone Age people held rituals when the days started to lengthen and the Romans in 200 BC celebrated with gusto during the Winter Solstice. They faced dark and difficult days also, but saw the light, and therefore hope, slowly returning.

Not surprisingly, Christmas Eve service will look and feel very different this month. The usual joyful musical gathering in our warm, little beautiful church building on a cold winter night will be greatly missed. Nevertheless, there will be a terrific virtual, spiritual, and emotional gathering. Members and friends will see each other, reflect and support each other, and communicate and connect with each other. This safe way will insure all of us can be together again, in person, in 2021.

The Board and minister continue to meet monthly to work on church business, follow procedures and policies, and make the best, most informed decisions for the congregation. The Board is committed to the church's best interests. The Board also communicates as needed via emails, texts, and phone calls.

Finally, the new website is up and going. Thank you to all involved in its development, especially to Taylor Wood. Thanks for the consistent church emails with the upcoming events and happenings and for the up-to-date Facebook posts. Informing church members and friends is key to keep everyone connected.

With best wishes for a safe, happy, and healthy holiday month,
Jennifer Harvey, Quincy Unitarian Church Board President

UUANI

The Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois is offering weekly actions to help guide us in our desire to Stand on the Side of Love. The weekly actions include phone calls, letters, and direct action with our elected representatives. The actions address state and national issues that we are passionate about. There is something for everyone. UUANI offers a wide variety of ways to make your voice heard on the issues that you care about. To receive the weekly actions, contact <http://bit.ly/UUANIActionofWeek> or go to their website at <http://www.uuani.org/>. You can also "like" UUANI on Facebook.

Quincy Unitarian Church Activities Calendar

Thursday, December 3:

7:30 pm, *Source-A-Palooza.* Zoom discussion of one of the six sources of Unitarian Universalist Principles

Sunday, December 6:

10:30 am, *Kindness & Justice.* Speaker: Charley Earp. Kindness is often thought of merely as politeness and we do need more civility and respect. But is there a connection between kindness and other values, especially Justice?

Tuesday, December 8:

7:30 pm, *Check in with the Minister.* Meet with our minister, Charley Earp.

Sunday, December 13:

10:30 am, *Killing Me Softly... With Kindness.* Speaker: Patricia Garey. What does kindness look like in a deeply divided America? What are our obligations to neighbors and family who have championed the worst sort of lies and conspiracies? How far does kindness travel in a hateful space?

Tuesday, December 15:

7:30 pm, *Check in with the Minister.* Meet with our minister, Charley Earp.

Thursday, December 17:

7:30 pm, *Source-A-Palooza.* Zoom discussion of one of the six sources of Unitarian Universalist Principles

Sunday, December 20:

10:30 am, *Leaning into the Light,* Speakers: Mary Ann Freeman and Deborah Lee. Let's lean into the light and celebrate the Winter Solstice by taking a look at traditions from the Pagan and Native American cultures. We will partake in a ritual to rid ourselves of something that no longer serves us by burning it. To join, please have the following items gathered: candle in a holder, matches/lighter, bowl of water, small pieces of paper, and a pen.

Monday, December 21:

7 pm, *Blue Christmas,* Everyone is welcome to a special opportunity to explore feelings that often are not acknowledged. "...this season brings forth many feelings. May we find comfort in naming these feelings; we find some peace in being together."

Thursday, December 24:

6:30 pm, *Christmas Eve Service: #12ReflectionsOnChristmasKindness,* Led by Worship Committee Members. Mirroring The 12 Days of Christmas, let's explore the Unitarian's December theme of kindness. Through poetry, prose and song, we'll reflect on our affirmation of kindness to one another, to live together in peace, and to celebrate the season.

Sunday, December 27:

10:30 am, *Poetry and Prose Invitational,* You're invited! Come one, come all. This end-of-the-year service is an opportunity to perform, partake, and ponder as we wind down 2020. Despite the unforeseen nature of the past year, let's come together in gratitude, to share gratitude in poetry and prose. Find a selection that's personal to you and let's welcome 2021 with resilience and joy!

Kenna Armstrong will be reading the Wisdom Story on December 13th. The theme is Kindness.

E-mail messages to the church are preferred over messages being left on our telephone answering machine. Our Church office is staffed irregularly. We appreciate your patience when you send us e-mail and especially when you leave us telephone messages