

# New Hope

A Unitarian  
Universalist

Congregation

MAY 2010



## Minister Writes



New Hope- A Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
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### ***“Great hopes make great people”***

**Thomas Fuller**

Yes, yes and yes. *Great hopes* certainly do *make great people* – and there are no greater than the people of New Hope. At our Special Congregational Meeting held on Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, the people of New Hope hoped big and voted unanimously to make an offer to our landlord to purchase our current church home. After a very heartfelt discussion by all, it was apparent that we were united in our belief that we should make every effort to stay where we are. That New Hope has had more than two years to put down roots in the South Lyon area and that we are committed to “bloom where we’re planted.”

Board president, Brian Tyler, did a masterful job of presenting all the facts of our situation and answering everyone’s questions and concerns with patience and respect. No one has been on the “front lines” for New Hope more than Brian. We all owe him a great debt of gratitude for his diligence and persistence in New Hope’s pursuit of becoming a chartered congregation and with negotiations with our landlord. The entire New Hope Board of Trustees had shown enormous leadership skills. We are blessed to have people like Mary McGrath, Joan Finken, Sue Myers and Dennis Strasser working on our behalf. They are truly people



with *great hopes* and they don’t rest until our hopes become a reality. So, thank you, thank you, one and all.

And, I think we would be really ungrateful people if we didn’t give a “shout out” to Mother Nature. April in Michigan 2010, could not have been nicer. My ferns are 3 feet high already and the hostas are popping up before my very eyes. This past month has been extraordinary. Once again, Michigan has avoided all the weather disasters that have plagued the rest of the country. So, in spite of high unemployment and other serious maladies, we cannot add bad weather to the mix. These beautiful days have to lift our spirits and give us reason to feel joyful.

May will be a busy and wonderful month at New Hope. There are five Sundays in May, and each Sunday service throughout the month will, in some way, celebrate this most hopeful season of the year. Please join us.

In love & peace,

Rev. Suzanne

## Sunday Celebration of Life Schedule for May 2010

Religious Education for Children and Child Care available for Pre-schoolers  
Kathy Silver, Director of Religious Education



**SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2010** 10:30 AM  
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

### “IT AIN’T NECESSARILY SO”

Please join as we explore some “facts of life” that just might not be true.

All are welcome.

**SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2010** 10:30 AM  
MR. PAUL BAILEY, GUEST SPEAKER

### “A MOTHER’S DAY CELEBRATION”

New Hope again welcomes Paul Bailey to our pulpit. Mr. Bailey will present a sermon on Caroline Bartlett Crane, one of Unitarian Universalist’s most celebrated ministers. Rev. Crane served People’s Church in Kalamazoo, MI in the late 1800’s, was a civic reformer and became known as America’s Housekeeper. Please join us.

*The Men of Hope will provide a brunch following the service to thank all the women who care for us.*

**SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2010** 10:30 AM  
REV. SUZANNE PAUL



### “SIGNING THE BOOK”

It is generally the tradition in Unitarian Universalist churches for people to “sign a book” signifying their intent to

become members of the church. At New Hope we have taken a different approach – but membership is still regarded as a sacred covenant. Please join us as we explore what it means to “join.”

**SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2010** 10:30 AM

### TO BE ANNOUNCED

**SUNDAY, MAY 30, 2010** 10:30 AM  
REV. SUZANNE PAUL

### “A SERVICE OF MEMORY”

Please join us for New Hope’s annual Memorial Weekend Service. At this service we will honor and remember those we have lost. All are welcome to join us.



\*Our Services are held on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. Services last until 11:30 a.m. All are welcome to attend regardless of faith, race, age and sexual orientation.

We hope that you'll stay for coffee and conversation after the Services.



## Joys & Sorrows - May, 2010

Thank you to the Members and Friends of New Hope who gave so generously to our Capital Campaign Fund. After a unanimous vote of approval at the Special Congregational Meeting on April 18, the members of New Hope asked the Board to proceed on making an offer to purchase the building we are currently occupying. A special thank you to the New Hope Board of Trustees and most especially to Brian Tyler and Dennis Strasser.

May Birthday & Anniversaries: Nolan Preis, Alan Preis, Dayna McGrath, Kathleen Zaenger, Pat & Jeff Hatfied, and Jonathan Dixon. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to you all.

Congratulations to Monica Silver, who will receive her master’s degree from the University of Michigan on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup>. Monica is the daughter of Kathy & Ed Silver and she has accepted a position with the EPA. Location

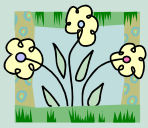

to be determined. Kudos to Monica on a job well done  
Thank you to everyone who contributed to “peanut butter & jelly month” for Active Faith.

New Hope wishes to welcome Mary & Bruce O’Neill to New Hope membership. Mary & Bruce were married by Rev. Suzanne on August 29, 2009. They were New Hope’s first wedding ceremony. Mary & Bruce spend half the year at their home in Arizona and reside in Wixom the other six months. They found New Hope through our newspaper ad in the South Lyon Herald – and we are glad they did! Welcome, Mary & Bruce.

**Standing on the Side of Love** bumper stickers are available in the Hospitality Room at New Hope. They are \$2.00.

(Email Rev. Paul with any Joy or Sorrow you would like included on this page)

# May 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1 Spring Bazaar 9-2pm
2 Service 10:30 AM	3 Board Meeting 7:00 PM	4	5	6	7	8
9 Choir 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM Mother's Day B-fast 11:30	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Choir 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM Membership Mtg 11:45	17	18	19 Women of Hope 6:30 PM	20	21	22
23 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM	24	25	26	27 Armchair Philosopher's Group: "Lives to Envy, Lives to Admire" 3-4:30 PM Men's Group 7 PM	28	29
30 Choir Practice 9:45 AM Service 10:30 AM	31 Memorial Day Observed					



## President's Message

Many thanks to Jack McMahon and Shane Clary for volunteering to cut the grass at New Hope again this year. This is a big commitment which we all really appreciate.

The Men's Group has been off and running, and has scheduled a "Mother's Day Breakfast" for May 9, where the men will cook pancakes, sausage and more to be served right after service that day. I hope all the moms in our congregation will be there to enjoy this special treat.

I personally want to thank everyone for their support, contributions and participation at our last Congregational Meeting we held on April 18. It was a good meeting, and lots of questions were addressed. I enjoyed working with everybody. I'll keep you informed of any new developments.

Our next board meeting is Monday, May 3 at 7:00pm. All are welcome to attend while we conduct the business of New Hope.

Respectfully,  
Brian Tyler

## NEW HOPE DINNER PARTY/FUNDRAISER

New Hope's monthly *Dinner Party Auction* started in May, 2008. Over the past months we have had several people host meals at their home. The fun is that, you the host, decide the date of your party, number of guests you can accommodate, and what type of a meal you will serve. If you wish to "show off" your gourmet skills or just order in pizza and salad, it doesn't matter. What matters is that we make a little money for New Hope and people get the opportunity to enjoy a meal with friends. So whether you are Julia Childs or Cuisine Challenged – no worries. Join in the fun. The Dinner Party Auction is generally held on the last Sunday of the month.

## Musically Speaking

**“The best way to get to knowing any bunch of people is to go and listen to their music.”**

---Woody Guthrie

I recently signed on to a list-serve for the UU Musicians Network, a blog for UU musicians around the country to share information, advice and ideas. I thought it would be interesting to see what other UU churches around the country are doing with their music programs. I thought it might be a good resource if I ever had a question or needed advice about our music program at New Hope. I didn't anticipate what a rich source of information, camaraderie, and encouragement it would turn out to be!

I've learned so many interesting things over the last few weeks that I've been on this list-serve. I've enjoyed new ideas and sources from fellow musicians in states all over the country, from Hawaii, Maine, California, Virginia and Montana to name just a few. I learned how many UU churches around the country are celebrating a "Margaret Fuller" Sunday with music all composed by UU women composers. Margaret Fuller, Transcendentalist and raised a Unitarian, is widely being celebrated this bicentennial year of her birth. Here's what I learned about her:

**Today we consider Margaret Fuller one of the guiding lights of the first-wave of feminism. She helped educate the women of her day by leading a series of Conversations in which women were empowered to read, think and discuss important issues of the day. She empowered generations to follow through her groundbreaking writings, especially her landmark book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Among her accomplishments: ([www.margaretfuller.org/](http://www.margaretfuller.org/))**



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

- **First American to write a book about equality for women**
- **First woman foreign correspondent and war correspondent to serve under combat conditions**
- **First woman journalist on Horace Greeley's New York Daily Tribune**
- **First editor of *The Dial*, foremost Transcendentalist journal, appointed by Ralph Waldo Emerson**
- **First woman literary critic who also set literary standards**
- **First woman to enter Harvard Library to pursue research**



I also learned that there are many more UU composers

than I ever realized. Among them are Kay Gardener (1941-2002), Mimi Bornstein, Joyce Poley, Jeannie Gagne, Ken Herman, Elizabeth Norton, and Carolyn McDade, all contemporary composers writing music that speaks to our UU principals. I feel so fortunate to have found this list-serve so I can access this new, rich source of music and ideas, and bring some of it to New Hope.

At New Hope, all music - whether it be gospel, traditional, spiritual, contemporary - is integral to the celebration of life service we have each Sunday morning. In the hymns and special music that are chosen for each service, much thought is given to choosing those songs that support the sermon and the time of year - whether it is a holiday, a change of seasons, the start of school, or a presidential election. It is hoped that you "feel the thought" with the help of music at New Hope each Sunday morning.

The choir is open to anyone who has an ability and desire to sing and to participate in the ministry that is both given and received by their participation in choir. You don't have to have singing experience or any particular level of singing ability. Just the ability to carry a tune and have fun!

I hope that any of you who have suggestions, ideas, or comments will feel free to share them with me. It's always so helpful to be given fresh ideas or perspectives!

In harmony,

Deb Tyler

## Religious Education

We've done it again!! In Religious Education class at the end of April, we set another attendance record - 15 children. There were so many of us we could barely fit around our table, but singing with the choir that day was awesome. I was proud as we all stood up and joined in song. I'm so pleased to be a part of such a vibrant multigenerational community!

It also brought me joy to see a contingent of New Hope members attend the Heartland Unitarian Universalist District Annual Meeting in Ann Arbor on April 9-10. There were about 150 delegates representing about 30 of the 53 UU churches in the Heartland. The District, like our national Association and our individual churches, is governed by the democratic process. Each church sends delegates to the annual meeting where we vote on accepting the budget, installing new members for the Board of Trustees, revising the bylaws and other important business.

Each church contributes a fair share donation to the running of the district and the UU Association contributes as well. The Executive Director of the District, the Rev. Dr. Lisa Presley, the Lifespan Faith Development Director, Nancy Combs Morgan, and Board of Trustees lead the district to work toward the following goals.

- *The Heartland is a District of leaders that are equipped to enrich and deepen members' spiritual, covenantal, and religious lives.*

- *The Heartland is a District of healthy and growing congregations.*
- *The Heartland is a District of congregations that support and interact with one another and work together to share Unitarian Universalism with the world.*

Churches also contribute to the work of the district by participating in district programs and supporting their members and staff who volunteer on the district level. This work reminds us all that Unitarian Universalism is larger than our own individual churches. We are part of a movement that encompasses over one thousand churches all around the world. Our message of love, kindness, acceptance of differences, world peace and caring for the earth is one that the world desperately needs.

As we grow, hopefully our influence in our community will expand. New Hope will become a leader for good will and a model for free thought and open dialogue. Our permanent presence in this area will broaden the life experience of all who come in contact with us. In New Hudson, MI we come together to change the world, one person at a time.



See you in church!  
Love, Kathy

## Community Meeting—a Personal Observation

On April 18 following the regular service, the New Hope U-U Congregation met to discuss and decide about trying to purchase our building. The official results of that meeting are no doubt described somewhere else in this newsletter.

As I took my seat in that meeting, I felt little, besides a vague hope that the meeting wouldn't take too long. I'd already pretty much decided that for me the need to begin negotiations with the property owner outweighed my natural tendency to procrastinate when faced with difficult decisions. I had enough trust in the New Hope Board and the congregation that I was prepared to accept whatever we collectively decided.

Most of the time, I think I live in my head (and that's probably too much). It's a comfortable habit, but it often deprives me of experiences that would be much more valuable to me as a human being. As I listened to Brian explaining our situation regarding the building, I recognized that it was the same as we have been considering for some weeks. But as the minutes went by I noticed a tension growing in my gut. Feelings crowded thinking.

Difficult decisions always involve the emotions. That's what makes them difficult. Being on the horns of a dilemma means confronting the threat of some kind of pain whichever choice is made.

Several members pointed out that our staff (Suzanne, Kathy and Deb) have been serving with little compensation for the four years of our existence, and if we commit money for the purchase of the building, some insisted, it's not fair to these dedicated members of our community. On the other hand, circumstances beyond our control have left us in a precarious position that could even force us to find another place to meet.

The more this dilemma imposed itself on my thoughts, the more the tension inside me grew. And I sensed the same tension throughout the congregation.

The phenomenon of community—the collecting of people into a dynamic almost-organism, where the mutual relationships create something greater than the sum of its parts—has interested to me for many years. One of the main things that are stressed in the organizational development field is the importance of what Scott Peck called “extraordinary respect” maintained among the members of a group.

As the New Hope congregational meeting went on, I felt that quality among those who spoke. In spite of the

emotional tension, and even though the issues were (and are) personally important to most of us, speakers kept the doors open between us. Everyone seemed to be able to voice their concerns without judging or blaming. And Brian, our chairperson, allowed the discussion to run its course, answering questions but never hurrying or limiting anyone's participation.

I came away from that meeting feeling even more affection and commitment to this group of people. While “pride” is not a feeling I like to admit to (isn't it one of the seven deadly sins?), I can't deny just a touch of that, as well, regarding the New Hope congregation.

We are a small group, and it matters if even one or two members feel left out of things that concern us all. The most frequent cause of feelings like that in any group is the sensing that one's voice is not heard. Even if most of the participants are satisfied that the issues and concerns are all addressed, someone could feel that their particular point of view is misunderstood, ignored or dismissed. It's a very subjective thing, and in the heat of a debate or discussion, it's quite easy for misunderstandings to occur.

I was looking for that during the meeting, and while I may have missed it, I didn't hear it. I hope it didn't happen. I did hear opinions expressed with passion. Each speaker seemed intent upon clarity and respect for other points of view. By the end of the discussion, it seemed to me that the issues were all presented clearly.

Now, don't misunderstand me: I don't usually sit in group discussions analyzing everything that goes on. And I wasn't doing that in that meeting. I was simply aware of the tension inside me and its release by the end. When we finished I felt comfortable that we had dealt with something important with caring and open hearts. That, to me, means *family, in the best sense*.

However the property problem works out in the near future, it seemed to me that we came through the congregational meeting with continued cohesion among the participants and, for me, great hope for the future of New Hope.

Don Skiff

## View from the Bleachers



### Time to Calm Down

I'm increasingly concerned by the mushrooming level of heated actions and diatribe which has coincided roughly with the inauguration of President Obama. Most recently, at least as of when this was written, the state of Arizona passed new legislation giving police virtually unlimited authority to hassle Hispanic people, an appalling anti-immigrant bill enthusiastically signed by Governor Jan Brewer. The law pretty much gives local police the same authority as Soviet-era KGB agents. This came hard on the heels of Virginia's Republican Governor Bob McDonnell declaring April "Confederate History Month" in an effort to promote tourism and praise the sacrifices of Confederate soldiers, without any notion that slavery had anything to do with why the war was fought in the first place. He explained later that slavery wasn't "significant" enough to merit a mention. Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour seconded the motion saying that "it didn't mean diddley."

All of this resonates with the bloviating media powerhouses of Rush and Glenn, two frothing-at-the-mouth commentators who have earned *first name only* needed recognition. Add to that Sarah Palin who has championed her winking brand of ignorance into \$12 million and counting, not including her best-selling book profits. There's John McCain who is working as hard as he can to squander a lifetime reservoir of integrity by becoming an angry old man right in front of our eyes. At the top of the heap is what used to be called the Grand Old Party but has devolved into the Party of No, a political platform that boils down to "whatever Obama wants we're opposed to it, regardless."

I don't pretend to be a social or political scientist. I do, however, read several newspapers daily and believe I have at least a reasonable understanding of what's going on in the world. What I know for sure is that during the eight years of George W. Bush's administration the national budget went from a surplus handed over by Bill Clinton into the worst deficit in history. We were driven into an "off-budget" two-front war based on false information. Funding for scientific research into critical new life-saving efforts like stem cells was replaced with an anti-science fundamentalism. And many of our civil rights were pretty much overridden by what can only be called a fiat.

Since Obama's inauguration the stock market has surged, unemployment has slowed, people have once

again started to buy houses and cars, tens of millions of people can now look forward to health insurance, a new treaty to drastically reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. and in our old foe, Russia, has been signed, our largest lender, China, has a revived relationship with us, and so on.

For all of these accomplishments, Arizona, responds with a law based on the "birthers" notion that Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. Republicans in Washington and state legislatures stand, or rather sit, shoulder-to-shoulder following some misguided notion that trying to stymie any positive results initiated by Democrats is a good thing. Reveling in the outcome of the Bush administration's lax oversight of Wall Street, the Republican party leaders maneuver to prevent even a debate about regulating concepts like "synthetic collateralized debt obligations", one of the Goldman Sachs' "shitty" (that's their word, not mine) inventions that contributed to this Great Recession most of us are suffering through.

We've got gun-toting Tea Baggers parading around with posters in one hand showing Obama's picture defaced with a Hitler mustache, while in the other hand they clutch their Medicare and Social Security checks while screaming about "socialism." At least they've stopped their "drill baby drill" chants out of respect, one supposes, for the off-shore oil platform workers in Louisiana who died while their drilling rig spews out uncounted gallons of crude oil into the ocean.

Well, I just don't get it. Are we reaping the rewards of the "dumbing down" of America, anti-intellectual movement that's been spreading for at least two decades? Is this a reaction to the growth of the influential Religious Right which is more focused on mystical faith than scientific facts? Or are we going through a cultural transition driven by exploding technologies that give us immediate communication with everyone, everywhere?

I tend to believe it's this last reason that's responsible for all these nattering nabobs of negativity. I think a vast majority of us struggle with the constant change imposed on us by the modern world. Trying to cope with the flood of information that constantly demands our attention is a heavy burden. Looking around and seeing new neighbors who don't look like us or sound like us can be very upsetting to our sense of safety and community. Watching our nest eggs turned into omelets by bankers who do little other than press computer keys is nothing less than demoralizing. It's no wonder many people have become irrational.

What's the solution? I don't really know. But I do think that all of us need to simply calm down, take a deep breath, and find some common grounds we can agree on. We will, of course, get through this era. There's really no alternative.

C.R.P.