

New Hope

A Unitarian
Universalist

Congregation

JANUARY 2010



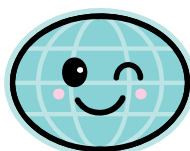
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

New Hope- A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
57885 Grand River, New Hudson, MI
www.newhopeuu.org (248) 474-9108

Religious Education



The children had many hopes and dreams during this holiday season and some of them were realized, I am sure. The most poignant conversation we had was about their wishes for our world. Even the very youngest among us recognize that the world is sorely in need of good care and love.

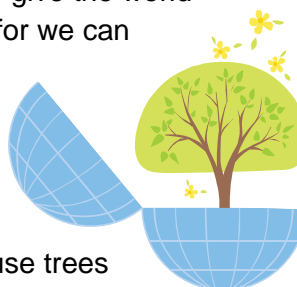


Big Dayna and Anais both decided that PEACE would be their gift to the world this

year. They came to this conclusion independently, on separate Sundays, when the other was not present.

Aiden wants to give the world HAPPINESS, for we can always use more of that.

Karina thinks that the world needs more TREES, because trees help everyone to live healthier lives. Little Dana wants to give more CARE to the animals.



Nate wishes for the world to have more HOLIDAYS, because holidays bring people together to have a good time. SHELTER was little Will's gift.

We all need a place to get out of the storm. Josh wants to give the world LOVE. You can never get enough of that. There are a couple more gifts that I just can't remember as I sit down to write this. Unfortunately, I didn't take notes home with me.

You get the point. Our young people have giving hearts and thinking minds. They have opinions about how to improve the world and they are doing their best to live their values. Each Sunday in RE we are having a short discussion of the ways in which we have lived our Unitarian Universalist Principles during the previous week. We are finding that we do more good than we thought.

As we begin 2010, I wish that all of the world's children could live in a world of peace and prosperity. This is the start of an exciting new year at New Hope. May we continue to take care of each other with love and kindness. May we find ways to join with others in our wider community to create a better place for everyone.

A Happy, Joyous New Year
To All!

Love, Kathy

****Minister Writes**
will return next
month.

Sunday Celebration of Life Schedule for January 2010



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

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 2010 10:30 AM
MR. TERENCE MADDEN, HUMANIST CELEBRANT

"NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS"

Let's take a look together at New Year's resolutions. Did you know that it takes less than a week for people to break 90% of their resolutions? Let's dream about hopeful resolutions we can keep for the New Hope community and for the world. Come to New Hope on January 3 and dream.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2010 10:30 AM
MR. TERENCE MADDEN, HUMANIST CELEBRANT



"THE PATH TO HELL: DOUBTING ONE'S RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING"

Most UUs have doubted their family's traditional religious beliefs and have sought an alternative denomination. What unites UUs is our freedom to "doubt" in order to follow our own spiritual quests. A visit to New Hope on Sunday, January 10 will be a worthwhile, reflective rest stop on our life's journey.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 2010 10:30 AM
MR. TERENCE MADDEN, HUMANIST CELEBRANT

"TO LEAD AN ETHICAL LIFE"

Theists and non-theists can lead ethical lives. What does it mean to be ethical? How could individuals locked up in jail for breaking the law be our moral leaders? Come on Sunday, January 17 to New Hope as we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. for his emphasis on deeds and not creeds.



SUNDAY, JANUARY 24, 2010 10:30 AM
MR. TERENCE MADDEN, HUMANIST CELEBRANT

"WHY I AM A HUMANIST"

For his personal creed, 19th century humanist, free-thinker, Robert Ingersoll, said, "This creed is somewhat short but it is long enough for this life. If there is another world, when we get there, we can make another creed." Come to New Hope on Sunday, January 24 to better understand humanism.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2010 10:30 AM
MR. TERENCE MADDEN, HUMANIST CELEBRANT

"ETHICAL EATING"



Delegates at the 2008 General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida selected "Ethical Eating" to be the 2008-2012 Congregational Study/Action issue of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Come on Sunday and find out how and why you should be involved as well.

KATHY SILVER, DIRECTOR OF
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
DEBBY TYLER, MUSIC/CHOIR DIRECTOR

*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.



Women of Hope

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born." Anais Nin

Women of Hope is an organization of women who attend New Hope. Women of Hope are dedicated to

the well-being of ourselves, each other and our community. We meet to enjoy each other's company, to participate in discussions of mutual interest, and to contribute to our community. Our regular monthly meetings are held the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at New Hope. Announcements of up-coming events are sent monthly.

January 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 Service 10:30 AM	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Service 10:30AM	11 Board Meeting 7:00 pm	12	13	14	15	16
17 Service 10:30 AM	18	19	20 Women of Hope 6:30pm	21	22	23
24 Service 10:30 AM	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 Service 10:30 AM						



President's Message

Congratulations to the 2K10 board of trustees elected by the voting members of New Hope. We look forward to serving the congregation by running the business of New Hope. For those of you who were not able to attend December's congregational meeting, the budget for 2K10 was presented to the voting members and voted in unanimously. We should note, however, that we are still at the same salary levels as last year for our staff.

Thanks to Sara Bowman for volunteering to head the Financial Committee, and to Bill Strable for volunteering to assist on the Financial Committee. Congratulations to Sara for her idea of having the Holiday Bazaar. It was a great success, and we are looking forward to having more of this event in the near future.

Pledge sheets will be coming out at the beginning of the year, so make sure you complete your sheet and

turn it in as soon as you can. These pledges are what support our new budget for 2K10.

I'd like to wish a "bon voyage" to Charlie and Suzanne as they head south for January. We hope they have a great time and know that we will miss them!

Our board meets faithfully every month to conduct the "business" of New Hope, and to address actions required for our future. I would like to welcome all of you to attend a board meeting and see what and how decisions are being made. Our next meeting is on Monday, **January 11 at 7:00pm**, at New Hope. We welcome any suggestions and support that any of you might be able to offer. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,
Brian Tyler

Try a Love Song to Our Country?

In my iPod collection of music, I've noticed lately that popular music seems to be occupying more and more space. In addition to Ravel and Rachmaninov, there are songs by the Carpenters and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. Something reminds me of a song I used to like (or it enters my head out of nowhere, sitting there playing over and over, all by itself). Soon, I log into iTunes and add it to my collection. But why would "We've Only Just Begun" insinuate itself into my consciousness at this point in my life?

Why love songs? While I'm not immune to the warm feelings (even at eighty), I usually go for the slightly more cerebral compositions of Rodrigo. Maybe there's something about hearing Karen Carpenter or Roberta Flack or Whitney Houston singing sweetly *to me* that affects me. Maybe it's a phase I'm going through.

In his latest book, *The World in Six Songs*, neuroscientist Daniel Levitin traces the development of music in the evolution of humanity. Music and language, he says, evolved pretty much together in improving the chances for survival of homo sapiens. The six "songs" he lists as instrumental to this process are those that promote friendship, joy, comfort, knowledge, religion and love. As primitive humans learned how to use music in the service of these necessities, they gained the neurological wiring that has enabled us to become *us*.

The expression of romantic love facilitates long-term bonding, necessary for the survival of infants through an extraordinarily long dependence. Even though life-long marital commitment has become increasingly rare in modern culture, it remains an ideal, reinforced by popular love songs. Love songs *feel good* to us, stimulating the release of hormones and neurotransmitters such as oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin. These, in turn, encourage the kinds of behavior that ensure the continuation of the species.



Mature love focuses more on the *other* than on the *self*, and this helps to ensure care for the young. Commitment to a relationship, the determination to retain and protect a connection perhaps forged in passion, goes hand-in-hand with mature love. (This is not to deny that one may commit prior to maturity. Often, however, that has more to do with the self than with the other, as in "*That's the kind of person I am!*")

It struck me as I read his book that a mature love of country also lends itself to a different kind of commitment. I lived through World War Two as an adolescent—the very age we are most susceptible to love songs. It was a romantic time, not only for the young but for the mature as well. The constant specter of imminent death, if not for us, for those we loved—fathers, husbands, lovers—was a shadow over the sun. Most Americans swallowed pride and ambition and cooperated with others "for the war effort."

The music then was about surviving, about encouraging, about being reunited with those we loved, and about sorrow when reunion became impossible. Some of the music was patriotic, about standing tall against seemingly overwhelming odds, of temporary relief when the news "gave proof through the night that our flag was still there." The bulk of popular music was about love.

More recent wars haven't been so universally romanticized. But the personal connections in the face of uncertainty were expressed in anti-war songs such as Joan Baez's "Where have all the Flowers Gone?" and Holly Near's "Foolish Notion," questioning the logic of war. They were about *caring*.

"At the level of *society*," Levitin writes, "love has become more than looking after one's offspring, but society itself looking after everyone's offspring—hence schools, soccer clubs, welfare, Medicare, and courts. In other words, love for one's partner and children evolved, culturally (and perhaps biologically) into capacity to love life and fairness, goodness, and equality, and all the ideals we associate with society."

He reminds us that our words are not always trustworthy. We may proclaim our highest values while seeking lesser objectives. Language allows us to attempt manipulation of others in the name of justice and goodness. Music, on the other hand, is more likely to be an “honest signal,” a term used by cognitive scientist David Huron to indicate that emotions are harder to fake in the performance of music than in the spoken word. Music conveys emotion more convincingly.

“The honest signal hypothesis,” Levitin says, “is particularly relevant for love, and may explain why loves songs move us so. When someone tells us they love us, we may have our doubts. When they sing it, all our doubts seem to melt away. This may be an evolutionary and biological inheritance, something that is beyond our powers of rational control or conscious influence—singing matters. This could account for why people become *furious* when they find that singers are lip-syncing... The connection between truth and love is obvious—when we love, we make ourselves vulnerable (and there are many songs that reflect this naked emotional state). Real love requires an almost irrational trust and faith in another person.”

Political discourse has become so infused with dishonesty and hidden agendas that the citizenry is understandably cynical. Almost nobody trusts anybody, and the result is that we despair of the possibility of a better world. Maybe we need to learn to *sing* of what we care about, compose love songs for our ideals.

“Love in all its various forms is ultimately about caring—caring so deeply about another person, group, idea, or place that we would be willing to sacrifice our own health, comfort, and even life for it.”

“But,” you might insist, “there are hundreds of songs of love for our country, and they’re not all of the type of ‘The Ballad of the Green Berets.’ Think of ‘America the Beautiful!’”

Exactly. But how many songs devoted to romantic love do you know? Songs that span the range of feelings one can have about another person? For every “We Are the World” kind of song, how many

love songs do you know that lament the loss of thousands of jobs in the United States in the past couple of years? For every “This Land is Your Land,” how many songs tell of the quiet comfort that comes each month when the Social Security check arrives in the mail? How many songs are there about being able to sit peacefully with your family in a crowded park, enjoying a summer day in comfortable security? How many songs mourn the loss of a favorite view of the mountains obscured by an office building?

Would we think such songs peculiar? If *Mister Smith Goes to Washington* were a love song instead of a movie, would it have affected us as a culture even more?

I don’t know how to write such love songs. I just wish someone would.

Don Skiff

Musically Speaking...

The fact remains that traditional services do not have to be brushed off as boring or mechanical, and contemporary services do not have to be viewed as frenetic or disorganized. Each style of worship offers believers an opportunity to learn more about their faith and grow spiritually.
<http://www.howtodothings.com/religion-spirituality/how-to-choose-between-contemporary-and-traditional-church-services>

Did you know there is a web site called "howtodothings.com" that tells you how to do everything, including how to cut your own hair, how to maintain teak furniture, how to become a cantor or a canal boat operator, or even how to use talismans! The article that interested me, however, was the article that tells you "how to choose between contemporary and traditional church services." You would think that one wouldn't need to be told "how" to do that. You would simply choose the service that pleases you the most.

I have been interested in the latest trend for churches to offer "contemporary" services. Usually what this means is that the music is different. Instead of traditional hymns and choirs, there is a "praise" band and rock-n-roll music. Often, these contemporary services will be offered as an earlier service, so that those who prefer the traditional service can continue to attend that service as always. The contemporary service will often be more open-ended, unscripted and spontaneous as opposed to the predictable familiarity of a traditional service. Those who favor traditional services usually claim that the contemporary service is too boisterous and frenetic and not focused enough on the religion. Those who prefer contemporary services usually feel that traditional services are too staid and mechanical. Both sides will claim that the opposing side is less "religious" than they are.

It seems that some churches have experienced schisms among their people over the idea of contemporary services, primarily polarizing the older congregants against the young congregants. It is maybe reminiscent of when our elders opposed the Beatles and Elvis as a threat to the moral decency of children everywhere. Each had a valid point of view, but couldn't "Come Together" as the Beatles' song says.

Take my parents' church, for example. It is a traditional Lutheran church with a primarily older congregation. Some of the elders saw the need to attract younger families, and started a contemporary service to do so. They retained much of the structure of a traditional service, but changed the music to include a "praise" band and rock-n-roll. As a result, some of the church's members left the church in protest. It may be too soon yet to see if the influx of younger families will outweigh the loss of older members.

On it's face, it seems silly that having this music over that music should even make a difference to the church or service one chooses. What should matter the most, it seems, is the fellowship of the other members, and the ministry of the clergy. But let's face it, it can be difficult to accept change, to accept something that's different, and to move out of our comfort zone. Especially when it comes to our spiritual community, we want it to be the way we want it!



Perhaps since we're a "non-traditional" religion anyway, it is easier for us UU's to try new things and accept change. As we're continuing to search for our own truth and meaning, we can see how exploring new things - new music - can help us on that journey. As long as we remember to guide ourselves with our UU seven principles, we can, together, find much to celebrate and learn through music:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

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.

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