

News of Hope



New Hope, A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

April 2020

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Pandemic

What if we thought of it
as the Jews consider the Sabbath—
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now,

on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those
to whom we commit our lives.

Center down.

And when our bodies have become still,
reach out with our hearts.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(We could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives
are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has become clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils
of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your love—
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

—Lynn Ungar 3/11/20



This is the poem I shared during our first on-line service on Sunday morning, 3/29/20. The poet is a long time religious educator who is the Minister of Religious Education for the Church of the Larger Fellowship. For years, I have been reading her columns and benefiting from her wisdom. I think that this piece is perfect. It appeals to our minds and our senses and our emotions.

Since we are cloistered in our homes these days, it is good for our minds, our senses and our emotions to be exercised in positive ways. You know what I mean? Instead of wringing our hands, and crying out in loneliness and boredom, and losing sleep because of anxiety and fears, maybe we should be reading beautiful poetry that offers the world love and compassion, and creating amazing art with our hands.

On our **New Hope members and friends google group**, I have been trying to share up-lifting and meaningful items each day. I am so glad to see that some of you are responding in kind with messages of your own. Please feel free to use this group to connect to your church friends, to send an update on how you are feeling and what you are doing. Take a picture of the puzzle you finished like Gloria did. Tell us about what is happening in your garden or what TV shows and books are entertaining you, during this homebound era.

This is a unique time in our lives that, hopefully, we will not experience again too soon, but I am sure there are things that we can learn about our selves and our families, if we take the time to be thoughtful. We are also being challenged to be creative in our procurement and use of resources. Never in my life have I had to worry about toilet paper before. I realize this is first world problem, but it is a problem, nevertheless.



I hope that you are all finding what you need, and feeling safe in your homes, and secure in your communities. Our Unitarian Universalist Association President, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, has shared the following thoughts with us.

I am so grateful for your ministry. Each day brings more difficult news of the impacts of coronavirus on our communities, our health systems, our economy, and our congregations. I am heartbroken to share with you that a few Unitarian Universalists have died from COVID-19 and a number of congregations are experiencing multiple cases of the virus among their members. We at the UUA also have staff members in quarantine. Together, we are all learning how to best support and care for one another.

This pandemic is a powerful reminder of our fundamental interdependence – that we are all connected and mutually dependent on each other for our well-being.

As Unitarian Universalists, we know this truth – but in response to

this pandemic, it is ever more important that we live the practices of interdependence and community care. We are bound to one another - locally and globally - and each person's health and wholeness rests in keeping the web of community strong.

As much as we are able – and ability will vary – it matters that we respond to this moment with greater generosity, being more generous with our time, attention, resources and compassion. It is disappointing to see responses to this pandemic that are rooted in fear, racism, scarcity, and individualism. To center community care in our response means living out of the knowledge of our interdependence, that we are only as strong as our neighbors.

I am planning on making a trip to New Hope to change our Wayside Pulpit sign. On one side, I am going to put “WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER”. On the other side will be “SPREAD COMPASSION AND GENEROSITY”. As I have read in several different places lately, we cannot control what life throws at us, we can only control how we respond.

May it be so!

See you online!

Love, Kathy

Environmental Justice Reading Group

Here's a safe environmental activity you and you family can enjoy. Go to [google.com](https://www.google.com), click on google arts & culture, search for The Hidden Worlds of the National Parks and dream.

-Deb

SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECTS



- March was World Water Month and we are donating funds to the “We The People Of Detroit” to purchase water for households who have had their water shut off. You can send your check made out to the group to our treasurer, Mike Kelleher, and he will see that the group gets the donations.
- For years, New Hope has been donating peanut butter and jelly weekly to Active Faith in South Lyon. If you would like to send them money to purchase PB and J, since we cannot collect it, their address is 401 Washington Street, South Lyon, 48178.
- There is Charity Poker in May which is a fundraising event for New Hope. If you are able to work a shift, please let Dennis Strasser know.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING AND CARING!!

THE CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

By Margaret Weis

The church is not a place; it is a people.
The church is not only a steeple above the treeline, streets, and cars.
Rather, it is a people proclaiming to the world that we are here for the work of healing and of justice.
The church is not walls built stone upon stone, held together by mortar but rather person, linked with person, linked with person:
all ages and genders and abilities—
a community built on the foundation of reason, faith, and love.
The church is not just a set of doors open on Sunday morning, but the commitment day after day, and moment after moment, of our hearts creaking open the doors of welcome to the possibility of new experience and radical welcome.
The church is not simply a building, a steeple, a pew.
The church is the gathering together of all the people, and experiences, and fear, and love, and hope in our resilient hearts;
gathering, however we can, to say to the world:
welcome, come in, lay down your heartache, and pick up hope and love.
For the church is us—each and every one of us—together,
a beacon of hope to this world that so sorely needs it.

