

EAST BREEZE



Newsletter of the James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Madison, Wisconsin
Volume 26, Number 12 — December 2017

December Theme: What does it mean to be a people of hope?

“What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?” -- Valerie Kaur

Connections

In December, we move into the time of the longest night, and then back out into growing light. Many of us feel this change in our bodies and our spirits, and become sad or tired. At the same time, we're bombarded by messages of blatant consumerism couched in the value of generosity, as if gifts to our loved ones were the most important thing we could be doing in this dark time. Our values are being continually challenged until even the most grounded of us might wonder whether they are true. And at the same time, the veil that has covered so many of the awful things we humans do keeps getting pulled back, further and further, baring the hurts we cause each other.

I propose an antidote. Let's spend the month telling each other our stories of hope. Because hearing tales of others finding their way through the dark helps us trust that light is waiting at the end of our own tunnels. Listening to others talk about their sources of hope helps us notice the many resources available to us. We all have stories. Some of us will talk about that person whose belief in us helped us believe in ourselves. Others will talk about how we held on through depression for the sake of loved ones. More than one of us will name that moment when we realized that the darkness was not our enemy but actually contained a gift. At least one of us will likely talk about the magic of “faking it until we made it.” Still others may share their experience of stumbling upon one of those beautiful “It Gets Better” videos. In the end, the details of the stories are less important than the act of bringing them into our community. Surrounded by each other's stories, our circle can't help but become lit up. Let us bring each other hope, when hope is hard to find.

In faith and love, Karen

10 AM Sunday Services

12/3 "Let It Be"

The Rev. Karen Armina

Today is the first Sunday of the season of Advent, a time deliberately spent in anticipation and waiting. These are hopeful acts for Christians, and in today's multigenerational service, we'll explore how the patience needed for this waiting can help prepare us to move toward hope.

12/10 “Suspended in Hope”

Patricia Schneider

Surrendering to a crisis and hanging on to Hope when it passes

This season of diminishing light offers us the metaphorical challenge of finding our way when our lodestar falters. Reeb member Pat Schneider reflects on how chemotherapy required a surrender to hope and the challenge of embracing it in daily life.

12/17 “Being Peace”

The Rev. Karen Armina

In the midst of the swirling and busy—that often dominates this holiday season, we sometimes wonder about the seeming disparity between this way of being, and the Advent season's call to wait. This morning, we'll explore whether we might bring peace, rather than expect it to be brought to us.

12/24 “Dangerous Love”

The Rev. Karen Armina

Jesus of Nazareth brought a message of a life-giving, life-saving love – a message that threatened the order of the day. (Cont'd.)

In this morning's multigenerational service, on the fourth Sunday in Advent, just before we mark the event of Jesus' birth, we'll explore love as a grounding force, and one to be reckoned with.

**12/31 "Meditations on the Old and New"
Stephani Pescitelli and Mary Wagner**

Join us on the final day of 2017 for a meditative service centered around reflection, healing, and letting go to make space for hope and intentions for the new year.

Check-in question: Please share a story of how you have been saved by hope.

**Wednesday Evening Vespers Service
December 13th at 6 pm**

Join Rev. Karen for a time of stillness, song, and reflection.

Holiday Services

Winter Solstice Celebration

Saturday, December 16th at 5 pm

Join us for our annual celebration marking the Longest Night and the Return of the Light, with songs, silence, stories, and candlelight, featuring Heather Yonker and the JRUUC Choir, with Rev. Karen Quinlan.



*Christmas Eve
Candle Light Service*

Sunday, December 24th at 5 pm

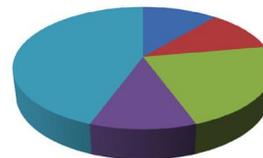
Join us for an all-ages worship, featuring hymns, stories, and candles, to celebrate the story of Jesus' birth. Rev. Karen will lead this service, and Rachel Avery will provide the music.



Minister's Availability and Office Hours in December

In the weeks before Christmas, Rev. Karen is in the office Wednesdays between noon and 2 pm. She can also be found at Café Zoma Thursdays between 1 and 3 pm. And she's more than happy to meet with you for a cup of coffee/tea or a walk at any other mutually agreed-upon time – just call to set it up!

Rev. Karen will be off from Monday, December 25th through Wednesday, January 3rd. Please contact Marla McFadden (608-279-0785) or Cindy Rudd (608-469-5269) if you have a pastoral emergency during this time, and they will contact the minister on call.



Financial Update

In October we had an income of \$14,490 and expenses of \$13,436. The resulting surplus is reassuring in view of our monthly shortfalls since the fiscal year started on July 1st. I'm not worried because November 28th, Elizabeth Barrett notified me that our November income will be about \$33,674, thanks to Reeb Rave and a few families paying their entire pledges now.

We are projecting a shortfall for this fiscal year, but can maintain our cash reserves to cover it. I am confident that we all will continue to be generous in supporting our beloved community.

With very best wishes,
John Mathis, Treasurer

holiday Craft Fair

Holiday Craft and Bake Sale

Sunday, December 17th

Before and after service,

*It's a time to buy those last-minute
gifts and baked goods.*

New items for sale this year!

*If you are a crafter or baker,
Please consider donating items
to be sold. For more information
contact Cindy at 608-469-5269
or clrudd47@gmail.com*

Membership

New Members who attended the
recent Joining Sunday:



Welcome new JRUUC members from left to right:
Laurie Buchholz, Virginia (Ginny) Scholtz,
Tom Boswell, and Rebecca Cuningham. New
member Matt Finesilver is not pictured.
[That's Board President Charlie McNulty lurking in
the background.]

Justice at JRUUC

REEBERS VOTE 53-1 TO BECOME A SANCTUARY CONGREGATION

At a special congregational meeting November 19th after the Sunday service, our congregation voted 53-1 to become a sanctuary host site. Three members abstained. This means that out of 112 members, 50 percent participated in the vote, double the number needed for a quorum. We are the first East Side congregation to vote to become a sanctuary host. As you may know, this will require us to raise outside funding through grants and individual donations to pay for the installation of a shower in one of our bathrooms and to convert part of the large multipurpose room at the back of the church into a guest room where an immigrant might sleep. So we won't be ready to accept an immigrant into sanctuary for at least a year.

The JRUUC Sanctuary Leadership Team has also recruited 38 volunteers to work at three other sanctuary host sites on Madison's West Side until we are able to find outside funding. Outside funding for building improvements will be sought by grants, crowd-source campaigns, community fundraisers and individual donations (with checks made out to JRUUC) for necessary improvements to our building to offer sanctuary to an immigrant contesting their deportation order. If you have experience in grant research or grant writing, please contact Jeanne Lydon at jeanne_lydon@yahoo.com.



Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity

JRUUC is a congregational member of Moses – an interfaith coalition working to increase justice in our state as part of WISDOM. Current newsletter: <http://mosesmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/MOSES-December-2017-Newsletter-1.pdf>

Attend the MOSES Annual Banquet
Saturday, December 9th, 5:30 - 8:30 PM
Christ Presbyterian Church, 944 E. Gorham
For tickets or more information, contact Bev
at bevobuhr@gmail.com.



Choir Matters

“We are a circle, within a circle, with no beginning and never ending.”

Gather with us for the Winter Solstice Tradition
Saturday, December 16th at 5 pm.
Kindle hope for each other and “Keep the Flame!”
Invite your community.

Our Hymn of the month for December’s theme of Hope:

#344, A Promise Through the Ages Rings
*That always, always, something sings
Not just in May, in finch-filled bower
But in December’s coldest hour
A note of hope sustains us all*

December 3rd, the choir will introduce the hymn of the month in four part, and will also present “**The Light of You,**” along with an advent candle-lighting melody that will be threaded through the next four weeks.

December 17th service will include “**In the Silence**” by composer Jacob Naverud and poet Robert Bode.

Favored music links from Soul Matters this month:
“**Rise Up**” by Andra Day

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwgr_IMeEgA

and one of my favorite singers as a child,
Mahalia Jackson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTyKJjj2oC0>

Peace, Paz, Pace, Vrede, Baris, Salam, dohiyi,
Heather Yonker, music director



Administrator Thoughts

This congregation year has been all about hope as far as our financial state is concerned. Every month since July, I’ve hoped for better numbers, never doubting that by December, our “income” would exceed our expenses. If you read the financial update on page two, you know that last month we were saved by hope and this generous congregation. Thank you!

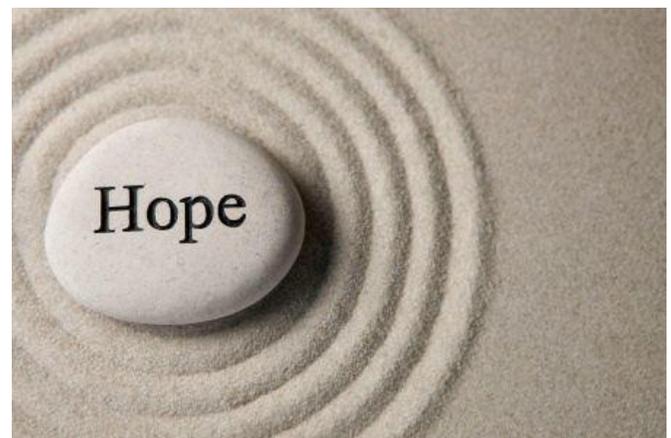
I feel the most hopeful when I am connected with others, especially my Unitarian Universalist friends. And especially when we sing uplifting music. Perhaps you are familiar with the musical *Once Upon this Island*. The chorus I’m in has sung an anthem from this musical several times. It’s called “The Human Heart”:

The hopes that make us happy
The hopes that don't come true
And all the love there ever was
I see this all in you.

You are part, part of the human heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk2UBr-k5SM>

Yours in growing faith,
Elizabeth J. Barrett, Congregational Administrator





Chalice Lighter grants are funded by small donations from individuals like you — donations that are pooled together to help congregations from across our large MidAmerica Region of the UUA with specific growth projects. For the 2017 Fall Call, the MidAmerica Regional Chalice Lighter Committee received three applications. We are pleased to announce that all three have been chosen for this Chalice Lighter call. To donate, visit <https://www.midamericauua.org/programs/chalice-lighters/2719-2017-fall-call>

UU Society of Iowa City, Iowa Raise awareness of their new growth-oriented home through an integrated media campaign that will allow them to reach many different audiences over an extended time.

First UU Congregation of Terre Haute, Indiana Increase visibility in the community by updating the sign in front of their church and incorporating a Roadside Pulpit into its base.

Minnesota Valley UU Fellowship, Bloomington, Minnesota Better serve their congregation and community by creating an Office & Communications Manager position to help fully capitalize on their potential for growth.



An Adequate Christmas

By [Jake Morrill](#) November 29, 2017

“On a busy day twenty-two thousand people come to visit Santa, and I was told that it is an elf’s lot to remain merry in the face of torment and adversity. I promised to keep that in mind.”

—David Sedaris, “[SantaLand Diaries](#)”

You ever read those magazine articles about how to “survive Christmas”? As if Christmas were some kind of endurance event? To me, that all seems just a little extreme.

Then again, it can come from the other side, too— all those jangling jingle bells, with people wanting to put a wildly ugly Christmas sweater on you, and all of the forced merriment. Maybe that’s not where you’re at, either.

What if it wasn’t only a choice between misery or merry? What about a third option: an *adequate* Christmas. An adequate Christmas would have you calm and open, taking it in, accepting whatever is.

Pique your interest? Here are three things that could help:

1. Notice those behaviors that you tend to do when you’re wound up too tight. Could be overeating, could be drinking too much, could be picking fights with family members — just choose one behavior you know you’ve got in you. Don’t need to change it. Just try to notice, and see what happens.
2. Say out loud what you want. Nobody can read your mind, right? People aren’t magic. So if you’ve got particular expectations for the holiday season? Say them out loud. *Say I’d like to do this, I’d like to go there, or I really don’t want to do this.* With what you want on the table, it’s easier for everybody to figure out what to do. (I got that idea from my friend Carrie Contey.)
3. This last one’s a doozy. Ready? Treat the holidays as sacred time. Turn your attention toward tradition, toward spiritual practice, toward encountering and welcoming God like you haven’t before. Slow it all down like you might be, in some way, attuned to the pace of the Eternal. If you need, you can fake it at first.

Can I promise these things would bring a wonderful Christmas? Well, no. But maybe this year it could be adequate.

[Jake Morrill is nuts about Jesus and, for fourteen years now, has ministered to a pack of wild-eyed Humanists, Pagans, and Otherwise at the Oak Ridge UU Church in East Tennessee.]

Winter WomanSpirit February 2 – 4, 2018



Holly Near

Women & Religion is proud to present

I AM WILLING with Holly Near

For 40 years Holly Near has been a shining light, combining her music and activism, sharing her joy and passion; She accesses all of these to celebrate the human spirit.

Holly will present a workshop on Saturday morning and sing a concert that evening. On Sunday Holly will participate in the worship service. We expect this conference to fill up so register early!

Entry to the concert is not included in the conference price; concert tickets will be made available to conference registrants first.

WWS2018 will be held at the Unitarian Church of Evanston: 1330 Ridge Avenue, Evanston IL 60201

The Women & Religion Committee, and all Committee sponsored events, are open and welcoming to all those who identify as female.

<http://www.womenandreligion.org/>



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East Breeze is published monthly by James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation. To subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your mailing address, contact the newsletter editor (Elizabeth Barrett).

Newsletter submissions may be emailed to office@jruuc.org. The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month at 5 pm. Please put the word "newsletter" into the subject line of your message and limit articles to 200 words. Please be careful not to include sensitive information.