

# *The Open Door Newsletter*

## *December 2023*



**The fellowship services on Dec. 3 and Dec. 17**

### **Sunday, Dec. 3—*Opening to Mystery***

**Speaker:** Rev. Stacy Craig **Service Lay Reader:** Tracey Snyder

**Musicians:** Alan Craig and Linda Calhan

In-person and online on Zoom at 10 a.m.

*And whatever that wild cry was*

*It will always remain a mystery  
you have to go home now and live with,  
sometimes with the ease of music, and sometimes in silence,  
for the rest of your life.*

—Mary Oliver, “You are Standing at the Edge of Woods”

German Philosopher and Mystic Rudolph Otto writes that throughout time, and across cultures, religion has existed with sacred stories, ritual, and a way of being in relation to forces beyond a rational explanation. Otto uses the Latin phrase *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* to describe the experience of the holy: an encounter so full of mystery and awe it induces trembling. Is mystery another way of knowing the holy, or *numinous*, and if so, what can spiritual or religious experience reveal about mystery? As we journey into the season of longest night, let us explore together that which is just beyond our knowing.

### **Sunday, Dec. 17—*CUUF Holiday Service***

**Musician:** Joni Chapman

In-person and online on Zoom at 4 p.m. with potluck to follow

Featuring Religious Education’s Annual Pageant

The annual CUUF Holiday Service will include holiday carols, an invitation to walk the contemplative solstice spiral, and a first-ever Religious Education pageant of “The Race of the Birkebeiners”. Please bring a dish to share for a potluck meal following the service.

#### **Zoom access information for the Sunday service on Dec. 3 and Holiday Service on Dec. 17**

Join Zoom Meeting by Video:

<https://zoom.us/j/91687042498?pwd=TGpQWWl6bk0vM2ZHMVA4U0wrbnYwQT09>

Meeting ID: 916 8704 2498—Passcode: CUUF

Or, join us by phone: 312-626-6799—Meeting ID: 916 8704 2498—Passcode: 324633

**The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship welcomes people of any age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion, or cultural background.**

## “Spirit of Life” Hand Signs Workshop - Dec. 3 at 9:30 a.m.

When Ed and Linda Calhan attended the Fox Valley UU Fellowship in Appleton, they learned the hand signs for Hymn # 123 - “Spirit of Life”. At Sunday’s service on Dec. 3, the congregation will review the signs taught in October and then learn the rest of the signs.

For interested persons, Linda will hold a preview hand sign workshop at 9:30 a.m. in the Ponzio Student Union. Now we’ll be able to put both our heart and hands into these wonderful lyrics. Open to all ages.

## CUUF Caring Connections

Do you need a ride to CUUF services? Need a short-term meal train (meals delivered to your home)? Just need some assistance or have a resource need for any reason? If so, please contact Minister Stacy Craig at 715-765-4214. Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship cares.

Caring Connections is the heartbeat of finding community resources in the Northland area.

The holidays can put a strain on our regular budget.

The Brick, our local food bank, serves everyone regardless of income. Call 715-685-7425 for information. They also offer an emergency financial assistance program. Call 715-685-7425 for details on that program.

In the Northern Bayfield County area CORE offers community resources. Call 715-779-3457 and talk to Jenise Swartley about their programs. My favorite is the Encore Resale Shop run by CORE. A great place to shop for recycled Christmas gifts.

Both The Brick and CORE welcome volunteers and donations. However, there is never a charge for most program.

CUUF Caring Connections wishes you, your neighbor and everyone a healthy body, mind and spirit in the new year of 2024!!

## Access information on Zoom for board meeting in December

*Please note: The Zoom link for board meetings will stay the same each month.*

### **CUUF Board Meeting, Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 6:00 p.m.**

In-person at the CUUF office or on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting by video:

<https://zoom.us/j/98533490376?pwd=cTErZEF6R0tNVmVZWfPaURadHh2dz09>

Meeting ID: 985 3349 0376 —Passcode: CUUF

Or, join by phone: 312-626-6799—Meeting ID: 985 3349 0376 —Passcode: 095767

## From the Minister's Desk

### December is for Reflective Practice

While there was no official tally, when I was in seminary, I believe the words “energy” and “mystery” were used most often to describe the notion of the holy. It did not matter if the student believed in God or what faith they identified with. When pressed to define what we meant by these words—*does mystery have a consciousness? Can energy intervene in our lives?* Most of us tried to explain through examples—often referred to as religious and spiritual experiences (RSE)—to describe that which we knew to be true, but could not define. For one, it was a miraculous recovery of a child. For another, a biochemist, it was the awe of emergence. Emergence describes phenomena, like how molecules of hydrogen and oxygen combine to make a substance, water, with properties neither individual contains. It was an opportunity to reflect not on what you believe, but on what you wonder about. As the season of longest night descends upon the Northwoods, I hope you find time to reflect on the wonder that you’ve encountered over the past year. I look forward to exploring the numinous, the ineffable, mystery and energy in services and small groups throughout the month.

In community,  
—Rev. Stacy

### CUUF launches Faithify campaign for RE

The CUUF board is thankful for our growing congregation, youth and educators. We are dedicated to supporting the RE and OWL program because of what it brings to each child and the community. Given that, we have launched a Faithify campaign titled “Help expand our RE program for the youth of rural Wisconsin” with the goal of raising \$5,000. We hope members consider this fundraiser as a gift option through the holidays. We also hope others outside our organization will consider our cause during the giving season. Please follow this link or scan the QR code included here for more information:

<https://www.faithify.org/campaign/295/help-expand-our-re-program-for-the-youth-of-rural-wisconsin>



Also, if you'd like to support the campaign, but prefer not to give online, you may donate by check and mail to CUUF, PO Box 641, Ashland, WI 54806, or drop your check in the offertory basket at a service. Please write "Faithify" in the memo. Your donation will count towards the \$5,000 goal of the campaign. Your donation will also help us garner the \$2,000 match from the MidAmerica Region UUA.

With 15 donations, we are already 35% of the way to our goal! The campaign deadline is Jan. 5, 2024.

### Consider making a future gift to CUUF in your will

Please consider joining others who have named CUUF as a beneficiary in their will or retirement or investment accounts. You'll need our EIN#30-0248893 and our address: CUUF, P.O. Box 641, Ashland, WI 54806. Here's a link to more information: <https://www.chequamegonuuf.org/donate-2/>

## Caring Corner

The Caring Committee, on behalf of the fellowship, sends well wishes to...

**Donn Christensen** as he continues rehabilitation for a broken hip from a bike riding accident

**Sandy Brue** as she heals from knee surgery

**Joni Chapman** as she heals from knee surgery

**Melodie Phipps** as she recovers from a broken collar bone

**Marina Lachecki** as she continues to heal after surgery

Send hugs and care to all those who are going through the holidays without a loved one for the first time this year. There are many kinds of loss, and one is not more or less of a loss than another, but we are especially lifting up the friends and families of those who have died this past year from our fellowship:

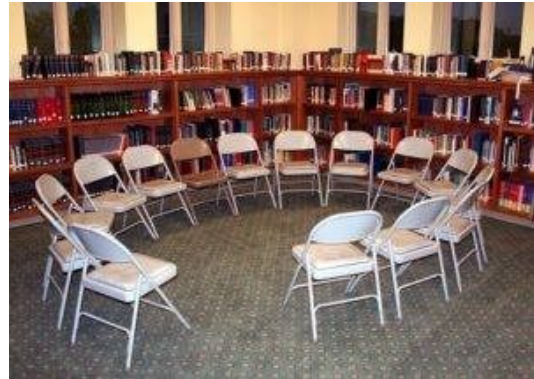
**Steve Lewis** (partner of Elisa Voss)

**Mike Bailey** (partner of Jo Bailey)

The Caring Committee is there for you or someone you might know in the fellowship who is experiencing a life-changing event, whether joyful or full of sorrow. If you have a need, please contact Rev. Stacy Craig at [stacy@chequamegonuuf.org](mailto:stacy@chequamegonuuf.org)

## UU Women

UU Women is a group that meets once a month for conversation and support. Our next meeting is Dec. 10 at 10 a.m. in the basement of the Washburn Public Library. Use the side entrance. We welcome anyone who identifies as a woman in a way that is meaningful to them. Come check us out! More info: Jill @ 715-292-9163.



## Being a member of CUUF

We joined CUUF about 12 years ago. We were initially invited by Jan Wise and many inspirations later, we have continued to value and share the group of liberal-minded people with passions and positive growth within CUUF. Each member gives their own gifts that are not bound in traditions of dogma and power structures that so often accompanies other religions. Learning and growing never stops, whether members are 4 or 84. Leadership of our wonderful minister, board members and committees serve to keep traditions and lessons in living by the covenant to earth and nature. The opportunities in small groups of choice, bi-monthly services and inspirations continue to make a life of joys and concerns and growth. We have had the pleasure to share our passions, gifts and skills to the group as a whole. Friendships of such a wonderful community of diversity, love and support has our life rich and worthwhile. —Deb and Bob Aaron

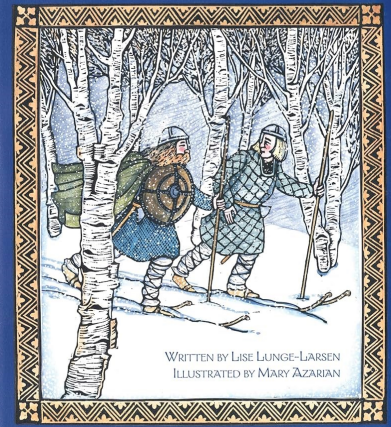


## Men's group to meet at Coco's

There is a men's group that has recently formed that will be meeting on the same date and time every month that the UU Women's group meets. Given that, the next meeting will be on Sunday, Dec. 10 at 10 a.m. at Coco's restaurant in Washburn. At this meeting, the group will discuss Einstein's "spooky action at a distance." For more information, please contact Mike Bunch at 715-209-5383.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

### THE RACE OF THE BIRKEBEINERS



### **New Pre-K Class Beginning in January!**

We are excited to be able to offer a new RE group on Sundays for 3- and 4-year-olds beginning at the first January service after the holiday break. All pre-kindergarten children who will be three years old by January 2024 are welcome to join us upstairs for cooperative play and learning in the UU's Chalice Children curriculum during RE time. If you know any families with children in this age group who might be interested, please pass along the information!

### **Holiday pageant**

The pageant is coming up in just a few weeks. Families, please continue to help your children memorize their lines and work on projecting their voices. They have been doing an amazing job through our first few rehearsals. We can't wait for you all to see the show!

- December 3: Rehearsal (Grade 4 and up rehearse for full service)
- December 10 at 10 a.m.: Rehearsal in the Alvord **\*\*Not a regular service Sunday\*\***
- December 16 (SATURDAY) at 1 p.m.: Rehearsal in the Alvord
- December 17: Dress rehearsal (before the service) and pageant performance (afternoon/evening service)

### **Building Bridges**

Students in grades 8-12 are invited to participate in Building Bridges, an inclusive course in world religions that meets outside of regular RE time, taught by Stacy Craig and Doug Liphart. Building Bridges provides a unique opportunity to engage the world's diversity of faiths in a safe, affirming atmosphere. **We meet in the Washburn Library basement from 6:15 - 7:45 p.m. on alternating Tuesdays.** We are looking to grow our group—please spread the word if you know a teen (inside or outside the fellowship) who might like to join us!

Upcoming sessions:

- December 5: Norse Mythology-exploring holiday pageant stories
- December 19: Group-requested "Western Religions": Mormonism, Scientology, Humanism, VooDoo, Sikhism

### **Our Whole Lives (OWL)**

Our Whole Lives is taking a break during December. Looking forward to meeting with you again in January.

## Small group gatherings for December

### **Soul Matters Discussion Groups**

Soul Matters is a monthly gathering for adult theological discussion. A different spiritual theme is introduced each month with a packet of information, songs, quotes, practices, and videos that participants can engage with before gathering together to discuss, share ideas and listen to one another about the theme. There are two group options:

**CUUF In-Person Group:** Tuesday, Dec. 5 at the Washburn Library basement room 4 - 5:30 p.m. CST

**CUUF and KUUF Online Group:** Monday, Dec. 11, on Zoom at 7 p.m. EST/6 p.m. CST

There is still room to register for these groups by emailing Stacy Craig at [minister@chequamegonuuf.org](mailto:minister@chequamegonuuf.org)

### **Join the Tradition: Making the Evergreen Solstice Spiral**

**Saturday, Dec. 16 from 10 - 11 a.m.**

**Northland College: Hallway adjacent to Alvord Theater in the Ponzio Campus Center**

Each year, boughs are gathered, long tables are set, and we gather to tie spiral greens together to create the solstice spiral for the CUUF Holiday Service. Many hands make for light work! All ages and abilities are welcome. Please bring leather gloves and hand pruners if you have them, all other materials will be provided. Please contact Worship Committee Chair Jenise Swartley or Minister Stacy Craig with questions. We hope to see you there!

## A candle of concern for the Palestinians

*I would light a candle of concern for the Palestinians.*

When Israel was formed after World War 2 and after the Jews lost some 6 million people, it was only fitting that they be given a permanent home. However, when they moved into Palestine, they took not only the homes, but all the possessions of many Palestinians. I know this from a Palestinian friend at the UU fellowship in Sauk City, Wisconsin. He said that he was lucky, Israel only took all his possessions and left his house.

The Palestinians were given both Gaza and the West Bank. In Gaza, the Palestinians were allowed only subsistence living. Israel controlled all goods shipped into Gaza and monitored births and deaths to accurately control this subsistence living.

Although the West Bank was given to the Palestinians, Israel allowed Jewish settlements there until they controlled and lived in about three quarters of the West Bank. They controlled the road system in the West Bank and didn't let the Palestinians use it unless they were given permission by a guard before 8 p.m. In one famous case, a pregnant woman, who was having difficulty and contractions, was denied access to the roads and a hospital. Both she and her baby died.

When allowing the settlements, Israel even gave settlers weapons to defend themselves. But they also took valuable agricultural land used by the Palestinians. Settlers and Israeli forces uprooted olive, grape and fig trees, destroying vital Palestinian agricultural land. Recent reports claim that Israeli settlers have burned down 1,000 year old olive trees.

It has been estimated that Israel has 700,000 to 900,000 settlers in the West Bank. In a cruel irony, extremist settlers are now screaming for more violence.

Had not Netanyahu been barely elected Premier, he would have been convicted of breach of trust, accepting bribes and fraud. As premier, he excused himself. We're actually supporting a criminal.

Israel has created it's own problems and they're solving it by killing more Palestinians.

Peace is always the best answer and we should support peace for Palestinians and Israelis. The recent violence and anti-semitism on college campuses is wrong. We are supporting violence by siding with Israel and Netanyahu.

—Mike Bunch

## IN OUR COMMUNITY

### Chequamegon Symphony Orchestra to perform on Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

The Chequamegon Symphony Orchestra will perform its winter concert on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m. in Northland College's Alvord Theatre. Look for familiar faces in the violin, viola, cello, bass, and horn sections. Find more info at [www.chequamegonsymphony.org](http://www.chequamegonsymphony.org)

### Indigenous art show to be held at Washburn Cultural Center

Rabbit Bird & Bear and the Washburn Cultural Center are excited to co-curate a brand new art exhibition. This art show will help launch our future partnership as our gallery store is moving in the antique shop space next summer. This show will feature original art works by both Red Cliff artist **Rabbett Before Horses Strickland** and Metis heritage artist **Leah Yellowbird**.

This is the first show this pair of artists have done together and their mediums will balance the space nicely with Leah's traditional-contemporary style of Ojibwe florals and a large array of mediums including painting, beadwork and quillwork. Complimenting Leah's work in another gallery room will be Rabbett Strickland's work with his vibrant indigenous-inspired large oil paintings. His work has been influenced by European Renaissance and Baroque masters, including Botticelli, Michelangelo, Titian, Velasquez, Rubens and Leonardo, as well as by Ojibwe mythology oral history.

This exhibition will remain up until Dec. 30. We hope you will come to the Washburn Cultural Center to experience this once in a lifetime art show! All are welcome. If you have any questions, please call 715-373 5591.

It is with a heavy heart that I must announce the departure of our longtime Executive Director, Kate Stolp, from the Washburn Chequamegon Bay PFLAG chapter.



The PFLAG board wants to thank Kate for her time serving as volunteer executive director. She also serves as secretary for the Chequamegon Democrats, and with the 2024 election year on the horizon, she needs to re-prioritize her activities. PFLAG is nonpartisan and Kate's intensifying Dems advocacy could result in conflicts of interest. However, her passion and dedication for WCB PFLAG and LGBTQ+ advocacy remain unchanged and you are certain to see her volunteering in other ways into the future.

There is good news though. Members of our board of directors have shouldered the burden of Kate's many tasks. We are especially grateful to Acting Secretary Brian Heeringa and Former President Nancy Hanson. As our board continues to restructure and begins the search for a successor to Kate, I rejoice in the spirit of service which fills my comrades on the boards.

Please thank Kate for her years of service to our chapter the next time you see her!

—Elise Kehle, WCB PFLAG president

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