



2017 ~ December

The Bellnote Mini-News

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EAST LIBERTY
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Minister's Column

"Hope is the thing with feathers" writes the poet Emily Dickinson, "That perches in the soul." Poet Lisel Mueller says, "It is the singular gift we cannot destroy in ourselves, the argument that refutes death, the genius that invents the future, all we know of God." Hope is one of the four themes of advent, the others being peace, joy, and love, but often Hope gets the least attention. This year we'll give it more, making it our theme for the whole month.

My favorite Christmas Carol speaks of hope in the face of despair: Then pealed the bells more loud and deep, "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep. The wrong shall fail; the right prevails, With peace on earth, good will to all."

What this hymn says to me every year when we sing it (and I try to include it every year), is the same thing I hear when I hear Martin Luther King, Jr.'s immortal words (based on a sentiment from Theodore Parker) about the arc of the universe bending towards justice. What it says is that even though "hate is strong," that good ultimately triumphs.

That's an important message this year, this holiday, when so many of our values are under attack. One example is our current U.S. administration's restrictions on immigration. This affects us at a local level in many ways. You may be aware refugee policies vary by state, and that Michigan is one of the friendliest states for refugees. A Washington post article, "Where Refugees Go in America" said that between October 2014 and August 2015, California took 128 Syrian refugees and Michigan took 139!

While most refugees go to the cities where there are programs for them, like Lansing and the Detroit area, there is a house for refugee children in Jackson. There are 12

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Calendar

- 3 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 6 Wed. Board Meeting ~ 6:30 pm
- 7 Thurs. AUUW Meeting ~ 12:00 pm
- 10 Sunday Holiday Gift Baskets Auction ~Ends
- 10 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ UUCEL Children ~ 11:00 am
- 10 Sunday Santa's Workshop After the Service
- 10 Sunday Caring Committee Meeting ~ After the Service
- 14 Thurs JXN Community Forum ~ "I'll Be Me" Documentary ~ 6:30 pm @ JDL
- 17 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum ~ 11:00 am
- 21 Thurs. Personal Care Ministry ~ @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 24 Sunday ~~~~ 11:00 am Christmas Eve Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
- 24 Sunday ~~~~ 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service ~ Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum
- 26 Sunday The Bellnote Newsletter ~ Submissions Due
- 31 Sunday ~~~~ Service ~ Lynn Hightower: Lay Leader ~ 11:00 am

Upcoming Events

January 7 The Service will be "Favorite Things" with Elissa Alden as Lay Leader

Sunday Services at 11:00 am

December's Theme is: Hope

Dec 3 - "Hope Part 1: Sources of Hope" — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - Where does our hope come from? How do we cultivate hope? From what sources do we draw hope? This service will explore some answers.

Dec 10 - "The Last Straw" — UUCEL Children — Our children will read and act out the story of "The Last Straw" by Fredrick H. Thury and Vlasta van Kampen, about a camel's journey to Bethlehem with gifts for the newborn Jesus. Children and youth participating in the service should arrive for a run-through at 10:00. This service will have a special collection for the Jackson Personal Care Ministry.

Dec 17 - "Hope Part 2: Inspirations for Hope" — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - At times our hope dwindles, & stories of hope can inspire our flickering flame of hope to grow again. We'll share stories that grow hope. Bring your own story of something that gave you hope in the darkness.

Dec 24 - "Christmas Eve Services" — Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Landrum - 11:00 a.m. — "Christmas Eve in the Morning!" - Join us for Christmas Eve in the morning! This service will be our traditional intergenerational Christmas Eve service with gospel readings and hymns, and will include children's stories and small gifts bags for the children and a piñata after the service. Despite the daylight, we'll still light candles and sing "Silent Night" at the end. - **7:00 p.m.**

"Candlelight Christmas Eve" - If a more solemn Christmas Eve service is your ideal, join us in the evening for our candlelight service. This service will again tell the gospel story and sing traditional hymns, but without some of the child-centered elements of stories, and instead will include more quiet and solemn readings and music.

Dec 31 - "Endings/Beginnings" — Lay Leader: Lynn Hightower.

Rev. Cindy's Column Continued...

youth from Guatemala, Central America, Togo, and Rwanda, with an additional 6 in foster care homes. I recently learned that the children in that house, as they turn 18, are likely not to be given legal status immediately, and will still be pursuing legal status. Five of the youth will be turning 18 early in the New Year. They are at risk for deportation at any time. The organizations that helped them until they are 18 are often barred from offering services after they age out, so they can become homeless, with no prospects of school or work.

The good news is that Samaritas, the organization that runs the house and programs for these youth, wants to work with churches to find solutions for these youth, and that homes willing to take the boys in have been found. They will reside with area residents while they work with immigration lawyers to obtain legal status. There's no funding assistance for these youth over 18, and they have no work permits, so individuals and churches will be need to be the primary support for them. So far, the leadership in this community is coming from First Presbyterian and the Lutheran churches (Samaritas was formerly Lutheran Social Services). But there is an opportunity for others, such as ourselves, to step forward and be a faith partner.

Perhaps this is what Lisel Mueller meant in calling hope "the genius that invents the future." I do have hope that Jackson can find the genius to support these youth.

Peace,

Rev. Cindy

Holiday Gift Baskets Auction

Began on **Sunday Nov 19** ~ Ends **Sunday Dec 10** Start bidding on our special items for our annual Holiday Gifts Basket Auction now through December 10th. See Nena Obits for more information.

Santa's Workshop

Children are invited to join us in the social hall after the service on December 10th for "Santa's Workshop," a time to make holiday crafts, including some to give away to members of the congregation.

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