

The Gathering at Northern Hills, A Unitarian Universalist Community



The Harbinger

The Gathering at Northern Hills is a congregation of free people

As such, we celebrate diversity and welcome to our services all persons, irrespective of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or faith.

We invite and welcome to our membership those in agreement with our purposes and principles.

Website:

<http://www.gnhuu.org>

For current calendar information, visit the website and click on the calendar link at the bottom of the webpage.

**Rev. Doug Slagle, Minister
Sunday Services & Religious
Education:**

Sunday at 10:45

Nursery Care Provided



SOME LATE NIGHT WRITING"

Corry Booker



We can't touch
But we still reach out

We hunker down
But we still rise up

Our bodies are attacked
But our spirits fight back

The enemy is invisible
But so many of our heroes are now seen

Weeks and weeks of isolation
But still Infinite and invincible determination

We are distant
But we stand together

And together
We shall overcome

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE, Sunday, May 17, 2020, "Let's Watch the Same Movie: 'I Am Not Your Negro' James Baldwin and Michelle Obama's Becoming. »

I plan for us to consider two documentaries in my message this Sunday, May 17th: **Michelle Obama's "Becoming"** now showing on Netflix, and **James Baldwin's "I Am Not Your Negro"** playing on Amazon Prime (or renting for \$3.99 on Amazon.)

I hope you will take the opportunity to watch one or both of the documentaries this upcoming week.

While Obama's documentary is intended for mass appeal - with an important message, and Baldwin's documentary is intended to enlighten and discomfort, I believe they have the same underlying theme. That theme is one of questioning and, yes, one of "becoming." Will America become a nation that overcomes its 400 year old sin - one that solving will create a truly great America, or one that, if ignored, will destroy us all?

Both documentaries speak to that question. Michelle Obama's message is uplifting, inspiring, and even joyous - with an undercurrent of sadness in the discriminations she and Barack have faced.

Baldwin's message is equally upsetting for many of the same reasons.

The issue of racism in our nation is not one I should ignore. I believe our congregation believes it shouldn't either. In that regard, we as thinking, reasonable, and loving people must regularly be reminded of the problem - in order for us not to become apathetic, but to instead be and become a spiritual community that is a part of the solution.

I look forward to meeting with you online this coming Sunday, May 17th. Just as with the last two films we've considered on Sunday mornings, there will be a Talkback time for your thoughts about the film and / or my message.

**Next Week's Message: May 24, 2020 - Michael Tacy,
Topic TBA**

Zoom Video Conference Service, LIVE this Sunday, May 17th, opening at 10:30 AM, service begins at 10:45.

Join the Zoom GNH Sunday Service with one of FOUR methods:

1) Click below link on your computer or mobile device for live video and audio. If your computer or mobile device has a camera, you will be seen by others attending the service. If your computer does not have a camera, you will not be seen, but should be able to view and hear the service. After clicking on the link, you will be placed in a “waiting room” to allow for approval to enter the online service.

A link, meeting ID, and password will be sent to you Thursday.

2) Call on your smart mobile device to hear the service. Use a below number for your time zone.

+13126266799, 819618368# US (Chicago)
+16465588656, 819618368# US (New York)

3) Call by a regular land line phone to listen to live audio of the service. Dial by your location and then enter the meeting ID#. You will only be able to hear the service.

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)
+1 253 215 8782 US
+1 301 715 8592 US
+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

A meeting ID and password will be sent to you on Thursday.

4) You can watch a recording of the service on our website. It will be posted sometime Sunday afternoon or evening. **www.gnhuu.org**

Mid-Year Congregation Meeting - to be held via Zoom video conferencing - Sunday, June 7, 2020.

- At the meeting members will be briefly updated on the GNH 2020 Budget and then asked to vote on an **Amendment to GNH Bylaws - to allow for absentee or proxy voting for all future congregation meetings.** This is an important Bylaw change and all members are encouraged to “attend” the meeting and vote. There will be voting provisions for those who cannot access the Zoom meeting. Details will be sent to all members. A Bylaw to allow for absentee voting has been requested by many members in the past. The Board voted unanimously at its meeting last Saturday to place the change before members at the upcoming mid-year meeting. A Quorum of 29 members will be needed at the mid-year meeting for a Bylaw change vote to take place. 75% of those attending will then be needed to approve the new Bylaw. **The Board will hold an informational presentation and discussion on the change after an upcoming Zoom Sunday service.**

New Locks and Front Entry Keypad to be Installed Soon!

After a lengthy bid process that was delayed by the Covid crisis, the Board has approved a locksmith plan to install an electronic front door entry keypad - and change all locks to entrance doors to our building. This new update was paid for from funds generously given to GNH by the late Victor Soukup - and the expense was approved by the Board in 2019. Once installed, all existing door keys will no longer work. All members and groups renting space from GNH will choose their own 4 digit code to use for entry into the building. Key access to the office will be limited to staff and the Board President. Thank you to Sallie Ann Killian, Rev. Doug, David Hester, and Board President Sue Cline for managing the bid and installation process. **Our building security will soon be greatly improved - and made easier for all members**

Proposed Bylaws Change to Enable Absentee Voting

A Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, June 7 immediately following the service to consider the question of whether the congregation wants to enable voting by members who cannot be physically present at a congregational meeting.

Our current Bylaws, adopted in 2016 when The Gathering at Northern Hills was formed, require members to be present to vote.

In the past four years, there have been two extraordinary situations in which the congregation agreed to suspend that Bylaw and allow absentee ballots to be created and counted. There has been at least one vote recently where the Board did not allow an exception. We are now in another extraordinary situation of unknown duration which requires that the meeting at which we consider this question will have *no* members physically present in a single place. Many members have asked that we remove the requirement on physical presence. The Board has considered the issue in depth and will propose, at the first virtual Congregational Meeting of GNH, wording to revise the Bylaw that requires “presence.”

The wording that the Board proposes has yet to be decided. We offer in this space several alternatives that achieve the goal of removing that provision, but which have various meanings and consequences. We ask members to consider the alternatives and communicate with Board members to let us know your thoughts and preferences. A meeting to present and discuss the alternatives will be held this coming Sunday, May 17 immediately after the service. We urge you to “Zoom” in and participate by listening to others and speaking your own thoughts. Our goal is to get a sense of what the congregation wants so we can craft the appropriate language to achieve what is wanted. Please read on to consider some of the alternatives.

First, here [in Article Five] is what our current Bylaws say about voting:

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30 days after signing a written declaration to be a Member. **Members must be present in order to vote at a congregational meeting.**

The sentence in bold is what we are considering. Elsewhere in the article on Congregational Meetings, it says that “Decisions shall be made after a time of listening, discussion and dialogue.”

HERE ARE SOME OPTIONS FOR AMENDING THE BYLAW

Option 1

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30 days after signing a written declaration to be a Member. ~~Members must be present in order to vote at a congregational meeting.~~

Simply removes the mention of physical presence

Provides no guidance about voting (as opposed to voter) requirements

Presumably leaves voting requirements and procedures to Policy established by Board

Option 2

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30

Establishes “presence” as a requirement for voting

May preserve “listening, discussion and dialogue” capabilities for all “present”

Allows for various forms of electronic presence (Zoom-type conferencing, telephone, text?, email?)

Requires more resources to run a physical and teleconferencing meeting simultaneously

Considers “virtually” vs. “electronically”

Option 3

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30 days after signing a written declaration to be a Member. Members must be present **or cast an authorized absentee ballot** in order to vote at a congregational meeting.

Requires preparation, delivery and return of official ballots on question(s)

Becomes problematic if a question changes while under consideration at the meeting

Option 4

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30 days after signing a written declaration to be a Member. Members must be present **or represented by proxy** in order to vote at a congregational meeting.

Puts burden on Members to find a proxy who will represent their views

Reserves some degree of “listening, discussion and dialogue” (by proxy)

Requires creation and use of a standard, official proxy authorization process

Option 5

Eligibility for Voting – A Member shall be eligible to vote in annual or special meetings 30 days after signing a written declaration to be a Member. ~~Members must be present in order to vote at a congregational meeting.~~ **A Member who is unable to be present at an annual or special meeting may arrange to vote according to the GNH Policy currently in place.**

Policy can be changed more readily than Bylaw (by majority vote of Board)

Policy still needs to be written

Option 6 ...

ONE MORE CONSIDERATION

Our Bylaws state:

Quorum – Unless otherwise stated in these by-laws, 30% of the Membership shall constitute a quorum at a congregational meeting.

Should members not physically present be included as part of the quorum?

Should members not physically present but connected electronically be included in the quorum?

Should all members certified to vote (via whatever means authorized) be counted in the quorum?

Please attend the information and discussion meeting following the service next Sunday, May 17 to present your views on these and other alternatives. When you have thoughts about this issue, you are encouraged to share them with any board member

Please join our new Facebook private group page called “GNH Connections”.

Go to your personal Facebook page, search for “GNH Connections” and on the page, click the button asking to join. One of the page administrators will approve you as soon as possible. With this page you can stay current on what’s going on with GNH and our members. Add your own posts or general interest articles, movies, books or other media you recommend. Light-hearted and funny posts are also welcome. Thank you to Michael Tacy and Anthony (Khoa) Lewis for putting together the page!!!

GNH’s Zoom Video Conference License has been activated for use by GNH teams, groups and members for GNH related purposes.

Please contact Rev. Doug if you would like to schedule a Zoom meeting for your team, group or other GNH related matter. The hosting process is relatively easy and Rev. Doug will provide instruction.

WE ARE NO LONGER LISTING UPCOMING MEETING OR EVENT DATES DUE TO UNCERTAINTY ABOUT WHEN GNH WILL REOPEN. THE BOARD AND REV. DOUG WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED

Board President Sue Cline has been extensively working on establishing a safe and cost effective way for people to donate to GNH online. The Board will inform all members once this has been established.

Please Continue Your Generous Pledges and Donations.

GNH continues to have expenses - water, minimal heat, electricity, and staff salaries. Adrienne, Michael Tacy and Rev. Doug continue to serve the congregation. They have their own expenses. **Please mail your pledge and donation checks to the church at 460 Fleming Road, Cincinnati, OH 45231.** We hope to soon implement an online giving platform for credit card pledging and donations.

GNH Application for Federal Relief Dollars (for Small Businesses and Non-Profits) is in a Waiting Mode. The program ran out of funds before our application was approved. Congress is set to appropriate additional funds which will hopefully be applied to GNH.

GNH “Hawaiian Luau” Auction Postponed to September 12

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the temporary closing of our church building, GNH’s “Hawaiian Luau” Auction has been postponed tentatively to Saturday, September 12. Dates for some social events up for bid at the auction will have to be changed. To accommodate gift certificates that expire before September and some social events scheduled during the summer, a mini auction may be held late in spring or early summer, perhaps after a Sunday service.

Since we cannot be sure when social distancing will no longer be in effect, it’s impossible to plan for a mini auction at this time. In the meantime, while you’re isolated at home, why not put your crafting skills to use and make some items you can donate to the auction in the fall. Be sure to check future Harbingers and your email for any updates on our auction plans. Thanks for your patience!

Auction Donations Needed Now More Than Ever!

Proceeds from our annual auction meets approximately 10% of GNH’s yearly budget. With a tight budget and having closed for several weeks, your auction donations for the September auction will help a lot! Plan a creative and fun event to donate. Solicit or purchase a gift certificate to donate. Or, save up to purchase items to enjoy. Plan to invite family and friends. If you will miss the auction, begin planning for proxy bidding. Contact Betsy Anderson!

Food and Money Donations Needed at VICRC

Because there is a huge need in our community during this period of isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Valley Interfaith Community Resource Center has mobilized to help us help others.

Every Tuesday, until further notice, VICRC will accept donations of canned food or other non-perishable items at its location, 420 W. Wyoming Avenue, Lockland, from 9 to 11 AM. Drive to their parking lot and place your donated items in bins they will have outside their doors. **Please note: VICRC staff, volunteers, and/or other donors may be present in the parking lot. If you wish to avoid possible proximity with others, stay in your car until others depart. VICRC staff and volunteers are supposed to maintain social distance from others.**

To help VICRC with monetary donations to achieve their goals, please go to <https://vicrc.networkforgood.com/projects/38231-helping-neighbors-in-need>

Thanks for your support!

The Ministry Transition Will Likely be Postponed to Either August 1st or September 1st Depending on When GNH “Re-Opens”. GNH’s Board and Rev. Doug will keep you informed.

ALL GNH volunteer charity activities are cancelled until further notice. These include Lighthouse meals, Freestore Food Bank Saturdays, and Valley InterFaith Resource Center Meals.

Please Register with Kroger as a Member of The Gathering at Northern Hills. If you need instructions on how to do this, please contact Rev. Doug. Your shopping at Kroger, once registered with them as a member of GNH, helps put “free” money into our account! Thank you to all who are registered and who shop at Kroger.

Cheryl Leskan is offering homemade face masks to GNH members. Color-ful designer fabrics she has used for the masks will make you the envy of all! If you are able, she is accepting donations for each face mask so she can continue to make more. Please contact Cheryl if interested!

Cheryl Leksan has also volunteered her knowledge and training as a triage nurse to GNH members for Covid-19 illness concerns. If you have questions, she is very willing to speak with you and offer advice by phone.

GNH’s Laminator, a new piece of office equipment purchased last fall, has “disappeared.” This is upsetting. If you did borrow it, please drop it off outside the office on a Tuesday or Thursday morning before 11 am. You will be unseen and thus remain anonymous.

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS:

1. **Ginny Patterson** is in the hospital recovering from another major health challenge. She is getting better but is still in much pain. She hopes to return home by tomorrow. Pete will care for during home recovery. Emails and cards welcomed.
2. **Mary Lou Aufman** is dealing with another significant health challenge at home. She is in very good spirits and her son is wonderfully assisting her. She welcomes phone calls at appropriate times.
3. **Mary Ann MacLeod**, wife of member John MacLeod, recently fell and broke her hip. She underwent surgery and is now recovering. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.
4. **John Courter**, husband of GNH member **Harriet Courter**, underwent vital, non-elective throat surgery three weeks ago. He is recovering at home.
5. **Adrienne Campbell** has injured her shoulder. She is still able to work, with adjustments. But she is experiencing considerable pain.
6. **Rev. Doug's son-in-law Matthew** has been deployed to California with his medical Army Reserves unit. He and his team will establish an Army Field Hospital to treat those sick from Covid-19.
7. **The niece of Paul Miles** was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and will soon be undergoing treatment. Please keep her and Paul's family in your thoughts and prayers.
8. **Carole Levrant** is isolated in a skilled nursing center and cannot see Mel or hear him on the phone.
9. **Tom Lottman's daughter** was recently very sick, perhaps with the Covid 19 virus. She is recovering.
10. **Andy Rotterman's daughter-in-law** is expecting a child due in May. Please keep Andy, Jerry and family in your thoughts and prayers.
11. **Phyllis Berenson** awaits a delayed surgery. She is courageously dealing with her challenges with an upbeat attitude.
12. **MJ Pierson** is healing at home with a foot wound - which improves daily. She is in good spirits.
13. **All medical and healthcare professionals** around the world who are working on the "front lines" of this pandemic by treating those sick with Covid-19. Under challenging circumstances, they place their own health and safety in jeopardy - for the greater good of all.
14. **Dottie Tabor, Sue Woodruff, Mary Lou Aufman, Marti Spiess, Arlene Thorwarth, Andrew Ketterer, Mel Levrant, Nada Huron, Keith Murrell, Bob Freer, Rev. Doug, Julie Rose, Alan Garrison, Marcia Friedhoff, Sallie Ann Killian, Shelley Nelson, Adrienne Campbell** and a few others (?) all live alone. Please remember them with their extra isolation during this time.
15. Thoughts of gratitude to all members who have helped and served other members this past week.
16. **ALL GNH MEMBERS AND FRIENDS** are likely feeling extra anxiety during this time. Please keep one another in mind and heart. Reach out to any member - not just your immediate church friends. May one and all stay safe, healthy and at peace.

Please communicate with Rev. Doug or members of the Care Team (Patti Wiers, Jack Brennan, Arlene Thorwarth, Phyllis Berenson) if you know of a prayer concern or need.

If you are sick...please let Rev. Doug or our Care Team know how we can help. **Also, PLEASE isolate from all other persons if you are ill. Everyone should wash hands regularly and frequently disinfect your living areas.**

Adrienne Campbell is working alone while maintaining normal office hours at the church on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 AM to 4 PM. BUT, PLEASE DO NOT VISIT HER AT THE OFFICE. Like everyone else, she is isolating to prevent the virus spread. If you have a need, please call her at the office.

We Love Our Volunteers Who Tend GNH Grounds!!

Once again, even in the midst of a pandemic, GNH has a wonderful group of volunteers working (safely and at appropriate social distancing) to keep our grounds looking extraordinary! Thank you to Ann Bobonick, Sallie Ann Killian, Ann McCracken, and Lindsey Johnson for their work to weed and beautify beds around the building. They will also help manage a local Boy Scout troop spreading mulch in the beds later in May.

Thank you also to Ralph Whaley, Katie Whaley, Keith Israel, Seth and Clayton Israel, Khoa Lewis and Bill Palmisano for volunteering to keep our lawns mowed. Extra thanks to Ralph, Katie and Keith for already mowing and to Keith for heroic work to replace a bad tire on our mower.

If you would like to volunteer your time to the grounds team, please contact Rev. Doug or no sign-up is necessary to stop by for 15 minutes to pull some weeds!

What We Must All Do During These Uncertain Times: **Isolate!!**

The loving action we should all do now is to SELF-ISOLATE, or ISOLATE WITH JUST IMMEDIATE FAMILY. Isolating as much as possible must continue for as long as recommended by health authorities and experts. Isolation, no matter one's age, will limit or even stop the spread of the virus. This is the moral imperative of our time. We trust that all agree!

Until further notice, please do not enter the GNH office or use its equipment. This is to insure the health and safety of Adrienne Campbell, our administrator and of Mark Mueller, our Treasurer. If you have church related copying needs, please arrange to email the document to Adrienne and she will make the copies.

In addition, to secure essential GNH computer files and documents, the computer on Adrienne's desk may not be used by others. The Guest Account on it has been disabled.

When GNH reopens, members may use the desktop computer on the desk opposite from Adrienne's desk. Please first ask for permission.

NEWSLETTER POLICY (September 2008)

All items that appear in the Harbinger should be of general interest to the members and friends of GNH and be consistent with GNH's mission, purposes, and policies.

Newsletter submission should be as brief as possible, with a 500 word maximum. The editor has the right and responsibility to edit as needed to ensure conciseness and readability. The editor also has the right to delay publishing non-time-critical articles as available space may require.

The newsletter editor may refuse publication if a submission is considered inappropriate.

The editor shall consult with the minister and the Trustee who holds the communication portfolio for guidance in what shall be published.

Members of GNH shall have the choice to receive the Harbinger electronically or via paper mail. The newsletter shall be posted on the website. Do not submit names or contact information without the consent of other persons.

The Harbinger mailing list shall not be used for business purposes or for any type of mailings

The Gathering at Northern Hills, A Unitarian Universalist Community

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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm



NEXT Harbinger

**Our Next Harbinger will be
Tuesday, May 26, 2020**

Please have all articles to the office by 10 a.m. by the deadline, Monday, May 25, 2020 before the Harbinger is published. Space can be reserved on the rare occasion an article needs to be late.