



CommUnity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

April 2019

April Services

Services and Children's Religious Education Classes begin at 10:00 am
Nursery Care is available

Please visit our UUCC website at uucommunitychurch.org where you will find updated sermon topics as we have more information. You can also sign up for our Friday emails, which will include updated service and event information.

Sunday, April 7th, 14th, and 21st - Rev. Gy will be sharing with us these mornings

We welcome you with us, as always, and for tea, coffee, and conversation after the service.

Sunday, April 21st - Rev. Gy will be sharing about the tradition of Easter

We welcome you with us, as always, and for tea, coffee, and conversation after the service.

Sunday, April 28th - "John E. Fetzer: Entrepreneur and Student of America's Shifting Spiritual Landscape" with Brian Wilson

Please invite friends to attend an informative and inspirational presentation about John E. Fetzer, one of Kalamazoo's leading business entrepreneurs and philanthropists. Brian Wilson is a Professor of Religion at Western Michigan University. John E. Fetzer is well remembered in Kalamazoo as the pioneer broadcaster who helped bring radio to southwest Michigan in the late 1920s, and as the owner of the Detroit Tigers for almost thirty years beginning in 1956. Less well known about Fetzer was his life-long spiritual search, which led him from traditional Christianity to an exploration of a variety of metaphysical religions culminating in the New Age. In this talk, based on his book, *John E. Fetzer and the Freedom of the Quest for the New Age*, Professor Wilson will discuss what motivated Fetzer to undertake this search and how it resulted in his most important legacy, the Fetzer Institute.

Participants will receive a free biography signed by author Brian Wilson.



From the Minister

Rev. Gy Ludvig Mc-Cartney

It is often said that God is love. I do not know that with absolute certainty. I have seen evidence of love in people and I have definitely seen evidence of

unconditional love in dogs. In fact, I do believe that if you want unconditional love, get a dog and you'll be set for 10-12 years. As for God, the jury is still out.

I have just returned from a visit home with my parents. They live in Budapest, Hungary. It was wonderful to spend time with them, especially my mom who's been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She is still doing well, taking care of the household, doing most of the cooking, all of the cleaning. She will, however, not remember what we talked about a minute ago. She's also entered a phase of childish innocence. I feel so protective of her!

We shared love. It was pure, from the heart. It was life giving, so comfortable to settle into.

Then I had a difficult conversation with my oldest sister, who's never accepted my homosexuality, although we've never actually talked about it. Now we did. Openly, honestly.

Was it good? Who knows.

"Marriage is between a man and woman" she said. "God said so."

I challenged her, but there was no opening. God is in her corner, she needn't bend.

(Continued on page 2)

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I am sure you've heard me say that I am weary of people who put the "god-stamp" on their beliefs. It is dangerous, because it requires no further thinking or engagement of the heart.

I experienced it first hand with my own sister. It was an unyielding hardness that caused pain in both of us. Her god-approved values and principles will not allow her to accept me and my wife.

Beliefs, values, and principles, my friends, are dangerous company if left unchecked. They can tear people apart, ruin marriages and friendships, and can cause wars and so much destruction, dysfunction.

We are well advised to identify our beliefs and check them. Are they really so? Are they life giving? Do they allow expansion of the mind and soul? Can we be absolutely sure that they are true? And if they are not, why should we hold on to them?

I dream of a world of maximum inclusivity, kindness, and love. I dream of complete acceptance of one another. I dream of a world where we help each others' dreams come true. I dream of a world where all can feel safe and loved just as we are. I dream of a world where all are willing to make another's passage through this life just a little easier, kinder, lighter.

Long ago I decided to devote my entire life to trying to make this dream come true. I came to understand that if my dream is so good, I might as well be the first one to live by it. So, I live with a wide open heart, I help where I can.

I am grateful to have been able to return to you all. You have become my home, a safe place I have come to count on. The checked values and principles espoused by UUs are indeed life giving, inclusive, kind, and loving.

Is God love? I don't know. I do know that we can be.

And so it is.



Canvass Update

Our Fellowship Dinner, celebrating UCC's annual fund drive for supporting next year's budget, was held on the next-to-last day of March. That means there was not sufficient time to gather up the loose ends and inform you of the results in this issue. See next month's ComUUnity News to learn about the party and the people who made it happen and for the final tally of our generosity.

UCC Women’s Book Group

***White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo (Beacon Press)**

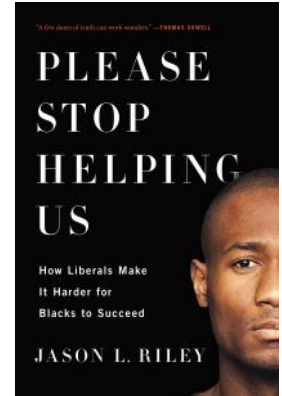
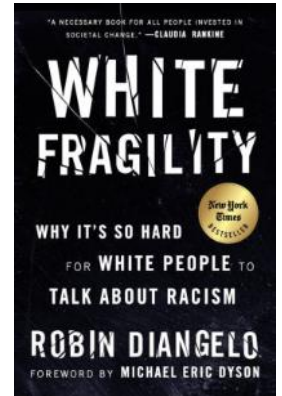
***Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Blacks to Succeed* by Jason L. Riley**

11:30 am - Lunch at [Fieldstone Grille](#), 3970 West Centre Ave, Portage

1:00 pm - Book discussion in the UCC Community Room

The UCC Women’s Book Group will be discussing two books this month, both so very importantly focused on how white people can look deeply into our systemic roots of racism and do our best to be the change we wish to see in the world. [Click on the book images to read more about each book.]

All UCC women are welcome to join the Women's Book group for lunch and discussion about this award winning work of truth-full fiction. Discussion leaders are Denise Hartsough and Judy Halseth, and hostess is Rita Stevens. Please contact [Betty Lee](#) to let her know you’ll be joining them for lunch at Fieldstone Grill in Portage before heading to the church to discuss and share.



April Calendar

Thursday, April 4th 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Apple iPhone/iPad Class	Sunday, April 7th 10:00 am - Service with Rev. Gy 11:30 am - Potluck hosted by Caring Community
Wednesday, April 10th 12:15 pm - Stewardship Meeting 2:00 pm - Board Meeting 5:30 pm - Sunday Services Committee Meeting	Thursday, April 11th 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Apple iPhone/iPad Class
Friday, April 12th 11:30 am - Women’s Book Club Group Lunch @ Fieldstone Grille 1:00 pm - Book Discussion @ UCC	Sunday, April 14th 10:00 am - Service with Rev. Gy 11:30 am - Faith in Action Meeting
Wednesday, April 17th May Newsletter Deadline - submissions to uccnewsletter@gmail.com	Thursday, April 18th 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Apple iPhone/iPad Class
Saturday, April 20th 8:30 am - Men’s Breakfast @ Burger Town Grille	Sunday, April 21st 10:00 am - Easter Service with Rev. Gy 11:30 am - Program Council Meeting
Thursday, April 18th 1:00 - 3:00 pm - Apple iPhone/iPad Class	Sunday, April 28th Generosity Sunday - YWCA 10:00 am - Guest Speaker TBA 11:30 am - First Review of Annual Budget 11:30 am - R.E. Committee Meeting

R.E.flections

Jacquis Robertson
Director of
Religious Education



"Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same." - Flavia Weedn

I can't believe this is my last article, it's so hard to believe. I started at UUCC in 2014. Two years out of college and fresh out of working with a few youth center organizations, I found myself in UUCC (honestly by the skin of my teeth given my 'request for an interview' e-mail somehow got sent to my spam, so I didn't see it till days later, yet Kevin still gave me a chance). I would attend a few services before starting my role just to get acclimated with the community. Those first services will be something I always remember, given it illustrated the love the community possessed.

What I learned when I started is that the children of this community are amazing. In my short time on this Earth I have worked with hundreds of children, but none like the children of this community! They are so bright, insightful, boisterous, funny, intelligent and so much more! I would have to say it's the children that have taught me the most in my time here. They have taught me to first and foremost not take myself too seriously and not sweat the small stuff. They have shown me that our principles are something to be lived and that surprisingly

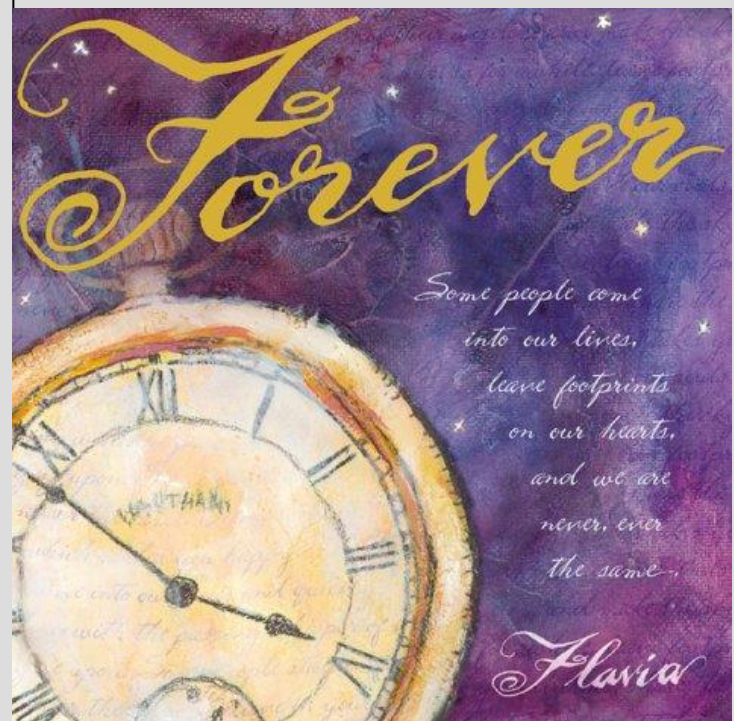
enough we're living them every day. They taught me that this place (UUCC) is something sacred, something to be cherished, just because it's a place where people who genuinely care about each other and the community at large gather to be with one another and grow with one another.

I'm thankful to have spent time in this space, to get to know and learn from all of you. All of you I will carry with me. Thank you, thank you for letting me into your community and thank you for all that you do and bring to the community!

With Appreciation,

Jacquis

R.E. Sleepover: The R.E. Sleepover will be held from 6 P.M. on Friday April 26 to 11 a.m. on April 27. More information will be available in the R.E. Weekly E-mails.



April R.E. Schedule

Nursery Volunteers

Please contact Jacquis at jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer to hang out with our littlest UCC people.

Dates	Lesson	Teacher
4/7	<i>Gardening</i>	Jacquis Robertson
4/14	<i>Who Do YHou Want to Be?</i>	Jacquis Robertson
4/21	<i>R.E. Celebration</i>	Jacquis Robertson
4/28	<i>Gardening</i>	Jacquis Robertson

UCC's **Religious Education Curriculum** is available in digital format. If you would like to have a digital copy of the lessons, please e-mail me at jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com. Your participation, your questions, and your suggestions are most welcome.

For those in our congregation who are new to volunteering as a Religious Education teacher, a **R.E. Teacher Check List** is available. This list provides the appropriate details and will give you an understanding of the routine.

For our best communication, please talk with me on Sunday, and also send an e-mail to me at jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com .

Our children need the participation of our adults, so thank you for considering this vital role.



Happy New Year! Rejoice, for He has Risen

by Marsha Laya, President

This month most Christians will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, Easter, which is considered to be their most important religious holiday. On the other hand, most Unitarians use this holiday to celebrate the resurrection of life that has been lying dormant beneath the snow and cold for, oh, so many months. This is our spring equinox holiday. And this year, it is long overdue!

I was once invited to attend an Easter brunch in a group home for people with severe and persistent mental illness. The home manager was a “wannabe Christian minister”. Before we sat to enjoy a well prepared meal, he indicated he wanted to lead us in a prayer. While others bowed their heads, I respectfully stood in silence to listen. I expected a long sermon about Jesus and for the food to get cold. As with most Unitarian Universalist, I didn’t have much use for Easter other than to rejoice over the end of winter and the promise of spring.

In our part of the Northern Hemisphere, we can easily cozy up to stories of the earth coming alive. But could there be another message to take from the story of the resurrection of Jesus? The “wannabe minister” suggested that HOPE was that message.

We can live 30-40 days without food, 3-5 days without water, 3-5 minutes without air. But we can barely survive a moment without hope. Without hope, couples get divorced. Without hope, healthy emotions are replaced with confusion, shame, worry and disappointment. Without hope we lose the ability to dream. Joy is replaced by despair. Peace is replaced with anxiety. Safety is replaced with insecurity and fear. Confidence is replaced with uncertainty and even paralysis. Without hope, our very existence is in peril. A person can survive when faith or love are lost. But our very life depends on having hope that “this too shall pass”.

So, back to the Group Home. Our “wannabe minister” and manager of the home looked over the group of six men and women who were living a life of confusion, shame, disappointment and discouragement. Most were without joy in their daily lives. What did life offer them other than medications with side effects, more loneliness, and unrelenting emotional pain. These were people he cared for deeply and he understood their pain.

Our “wannabe minister” talked to them about hope. He said that Jesus wanted his followers to know that even in the face of death, there is hope. Death. So final and so painful. Yet, there was hope. Resurrection was possible. A new life was possible if we can hold on to hope and our dreams for a better life. For these men and women, that meant a life of wellness.

He went on to highlight the positives in each person’s life, and some of the small but real successes they had achieved. He lit a fire of hope in their hearts. It was joyful to hear those stories and to see their faces turn from the darkness of despair to small glimmers of hope.

Hope is the greatest gift parents can give to their children.
 Hope is the greatest gift coaches can give to their athletes.
 Hope is the greatest gift teachers can give to their students.
 Hope is the greatest gift leaders can give to their people.

I would like to believe that this fine “wannabe minister” and leader gave hope that morning to those residents struggling with a serious, debilitating illness. He certainly taught me the importance of hope and provided a new perspective on the message of Easter, which I’ve carried for the past 25 or 30 years.

May you always find hope even the darkest of times. Happy Easter!



Generosity Sunday, April 28th

YWCA USA, of which YWCA Kalamazoo is a member Association, is the oldest, largest autonomous women’s membership organization in the world. Its mission is eliminating racism and empowering women. YWCA Kalamazoo, the oldest Association in Michigan, was founded in 1885 and began as a residence service provider to young women who gravitated to the city to work in its factories. Today, YWCA provides the only shelter and other services specifically designed and operating for victims of domestic violence; the only services of our kind for adult sexual assault survivors, including medical forensic exams in a non-hospital setting and supportive volunteers and counseling; one of very few licensed and nationally accredited child care centers that both offers scholarships and accepts government subsidies; a unique and volunteer-intensive mentoring program for adult and teen women seeking economic self-sufficiency; and services to the community-at-large, focusing on racial justice and women’s economic empowerment.

**eliminating racism
 empowering women
 ywca**



Caring Community News

from Nancy Crowell

"Spring is made of solid, fourteen-karat gratitude, the reward for the long wait. Every religious tradition from the northern hemisphere honors some form of April Hallelujah, for this is the season of exquisite redemption, a slam-bang return to joy after a season of cold."

-- Barbara Kingsolver

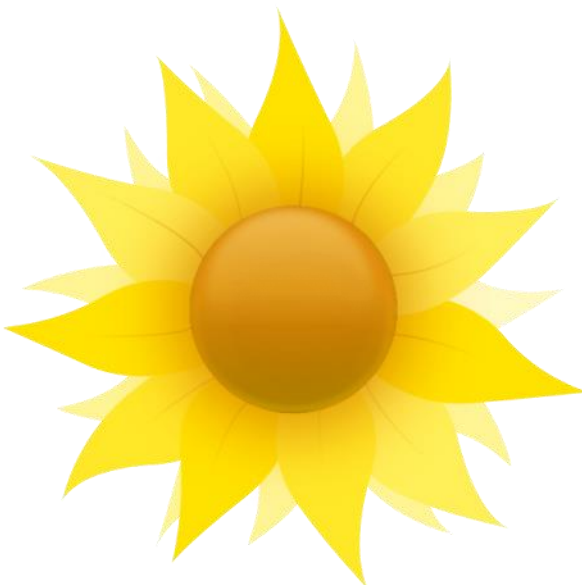
Let's send out some slam-bang wishes to all the April birthdays at UCC! Barbara Bott, Ryan Brozovich, Kayle Rice, Nancy Crowell, Kelin Michael, and Freya Lake, Happy Celebrations!

UCC has recently welcomed back Pat Fuehr from Arizona and Freya Lake from California. We are glad they have returned, and we have already noticed the many ways in which they are providing help at UCC!

Stephanie Grathwol will be traveling to the west coast to help her son and his wife move to a new area in the state of Washington. Her son and his wife are both nurses and are in a program of traveling every three months or so to a place where they are needed. This is providing Stephanie with some unexpected new points of exploring our country as she offers family help! On this adventure she will be adding an afternoon with Brian Leekley, our former member at UCC. Brian moved to Bainbridge Island, Washington, last October, so we look forward to Stephanie's news of Brian.

Judy Oliver is traveling to the other coast this month, as she goes to New Jersey to help her daughter-in-law and family. We are urging all folks at UCC to send along good energy thoughts for Esther, Judy's daughter-in-law, as she goes through treatment for aggressive breast cancer.

Nancy Crowell is still traveling to Ann Arbor Eye Clinic every three months as she continues the slow healing of her cornea transplant. She has had four of the sixteen stitches removed, and there is good acceptance of the transplant.



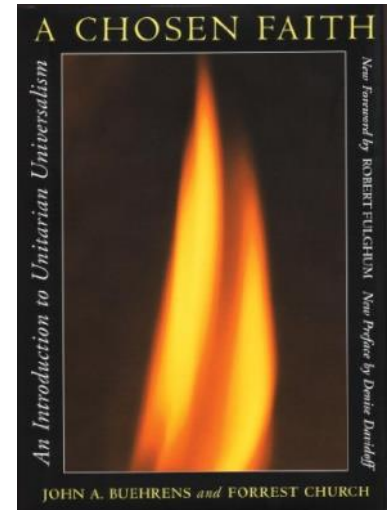
Your Caring Community contact persons are: Nancy Crowell, Judy Pigg-Behrendt, and Judy Oliver. Please reach out if you have (or know of) a need. Sharing is caring.

Whatever celebration you anticipate or travel you encounter in April, may the yellow of sunshine and daffodils make the party brighter and the burden lighter.

Church Orientation Classes

Interested in learning more about Unitarian Universalism or the UU Community Church? The Connections Team is hosting a 5-week Orientation class on Mondays from April 1 through May 6. There will be afternoon and evening sessions available, but you must [reserve your spot](#) now.

The course will be based on the book, "A Chosen Faith" and will be led by Rev. Gy. It is mandatory for those who plan to join the church membership. Copies of the book are available in the church library or through the [UUA bookstore](#).



Board Briefs

March 13, 2019

All Board members and two guests were present. Highlights include the following:

- Tami Brozovich presented a draft 2019-20 annual budget. The date for the congregational first review of the annual budget was set for April 28.
- Nick Sienkiewicz presented plans for the production of "Our Town". He requested and received approval to use funds from the Music budget to pay for the license for this production and also to make necessary purchases of supplies.
- Several items on the tickler file were reviewed. The tasks were also updated for future reference.
- Five new quarterly goals were identified. They will be posted in the community room.
- The date for the annual meeting was set for May 19th. The agenda for this meeting was roughly set.
- The HR Committee is to be charged with recruiting a Director of Religious Education to replace Jacquie whose resignation is effective May 1st.
- Due to the illness of our minister, the semi-annual review was postponed until it is now logical to hold just an annual review. This review, as well as preparation of the consulting minister's contract will be completed so it can be executed for the following fiscal year.
- It was confirmed there will be no services in the month of July.
- The Building & Grounds spread sheet of major projects was distributed. Plans for the newly renovated storage room were shared.



Marsha Laya
marshalaya@gmail.com

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

April 1 - 30, 2019

Teal Ribbon Campaign

The teal ribbon has come to represent awareness about sexual assault and support for its victims/ survivors. The display of teal ribbons throughout a community conveys a powerful message that there's no place for assault here.

Throughout the month, teal ribbons are available at no cost at the YWCA Kalamazoo.

A Cup of Prevention

Water Street Coffee Joint will be supporting victims & survivors with a sexual assault awareness campaign throughout the month of April. All five Water Street locations will be using promotional SAAM stickers and offering teal ribbons to customers. A percentage of April sales will benefit YWCA's Sexual Assault Program.

The Clothesline Project

This visual display bears witness to the devastating impact of sexual assault. A collection of t-shirts decorated by survivors, friends, family, and the community will be on display at the YWCA Kalamazoo.

April 13, 2019

Kalamazoo Poetry Festival

YWCA Kalamazoo 1:30pm-3:00pm

In collaboration with YWCA Sexual Assault Advocate Mallory Krueger, Kalamazoo Poetry Festival is hosting a writing workshop on the theme of consent.

For additional information and to register, please visit their website at kalamazoopoetryfestival.com. *Space is limited.*

April 16, 2019

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

YWCA Kalamazoo
353 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Business Line (269) 345-5595
Crisis Line (269) 385-2869
www.ywcakalamazoo.org

WMU Take Back the Night

"I ask. I listen. I support."

Kanley Chapel, WMU

Pre-Event, 6:30pm-7:30pm

Take Back The Night, 7:30pm-9:00pm

Take Back the Night aims to empower survivors of sexual assault through keynote speakers, a march through campus, and a speak-out from survivors, supporters, and advocates. These events are hosted by WMU FIRE! Sexual Assault Peer Educators.

April 18, 2019

YWCA Men's Breakfast

YWCA Kalamazoo 7:30am-9:00am Cost \$20

Every 2 minutes someone becomes a victim of sexual assault. Enough is Enough! This breakfast will bring together men from Kalamazoo for a practical discussion about sexual assault in our community and how you can use your voice to prevent it. *Registration required, space is limited.*

Contact Kellie at kswikoski@ywcakalamazoo.org for registration information.

April 24, 2019

Denim Day

Denim Day has been internationally celebrated since 1999 in protest of an Italian High Court Ruling that overturned a rape conviction because the victim was wearing jeans. Enraged by the verdict, women of the Italian Legislation protested the decision by wearing jeans to work. As news of the decision spread, so did the protest. Wear your jeans to show support!

For more information, visit denimdayinfo.org.

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SPACE **LGBTQIA**

APPLE CLASSES RETURNING TO UCC

Due to very popular demand, we are again offering the 4-week iPhone/iPad class from 1:00 - 3:00 PM on the Thursdays May (2, 9, 16, 23) at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church located at 10441 Shaver Rd., Portage. Be sure to tell your friends and family!

These classes cover the basics, are free of techie jargon, and include a 40 page note book covering everything that is taught in the classes. Registration is limited to 15 so that individual attention can be provided. Cost of the 8 hour course is just \$40. To reserve your place, send an email to classes.uucc@gmail.com, and your registration will be confirmed with instructions on how to pay for the course. For more detailed information about the course, please visit <https://uucommunitychurch.org>.

If you have specific questions, please email classes.uucc@gmail.com.



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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2018-2019 Board of Trustees

Marsha Laya

Betty Lee Ongley

Mary Roscoe

Nancy Calme

Denise Sonier

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, April 17th at 5:00 pm**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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