



CommUnity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

May 2019

May 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, May 5th - "7 Generations" with Rev. Gy
She will be sharing about how with every decision we make we have to consider 7 generations and their well-being. **POTLUCK** after the service, hosted by Sunday Services and Celebrations Committee.

Sunday, May 12th - "Habits" with Rev. Gy
She will be sharing with us about taking a look at the way we live and considering even small changes that may have huge impact on the environment, society, earth, animals, and all of us.

Sunday, May 19th - Guest Speaker Larry Farris
In keeping with this month's focus on the arts, Larry will be talking about the relationship between aesthetics and ethics, and why the absence of the former makes the later virtually impossible. While this may sound a bit abstract and esoteric, the topic has practical relevance to our times and our own lives.

Sunday, May 26th - TBA
This was originally meant to be an R.E. Sunday and intergenerational service, but with recent changes to our R.E. leadership... watch your Friday email.



[Green Man ~ Beltane Blessings](#)



From the Minister

Rev. Gy Ludvig Mc-Cartney

Our dear Rev. Gy needs to take a break from article-writing this month, due to her health issues. Please continue to send prayers, peace, and easing energy her way

as she navigates through this huge struggle in her life. She will continue to do the best for you all that she can, as she always does... as we all do our best in each of our own lives.

Changes within UUCC

In the meantime, just as the weather changes often, especially here in Michigan, yet the sky is it's own constant and never-ending sky, so too the spirit and energy of UUCC is constant in it's deep love in community, even amidst external changes.

Most of you already know that Jacquis is moving on from UUCC into her life of work and family and creating change in the world in her own beautiful way. We wish her the very best and are so grateful for ALL she has brought to UUCC in so very many ways. There will be a slight gap between Jacquis leaving and our new DRE starting up, so there is no R.E. article in this month's newsletter. However, we will keep you posted in the Friday emails with R.E. news to come, so please keep an eye out!



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Another upcoming transformation is that I, Kristi, have finally realized that working a 40-hour-a-week job AND putting in my time and energy as the Office Administrator on my nights and weekends has become too much for me (as I thought it might). So I will be letting go of my position here at UCC in the next few weeks or so. No worries, though, as I plan to stay on for as long as it takes for the “new” person to transition into the position. I will most likely visit now and then, as I’ve grown a few short roots here in the year I’ve been here. So we’ll see if or how those roots develop.



And finally, and perhaps most exciting of all of this news, many of you already know her... Miriam Epskamp is coming back to UCC!! And she will be taking on the roles of both Director of Religious Education AND Office Administrator! I am meeting with her this week to talk shop about what’s been going on behind the office scene with PowerPoints and Publisher and Friday emails and such, and she will start chiming in with you all when she’s ready to take everything over, and as I ease out of the office and more into my own life. She will also hopefully be more available during the weekdays for you all, depending on how she chooses to create her schedule. Welcome (back) to Miriam!



So as the seasons change and spring moves forward and flowers finally begin to flourish, UCC remains the deep, endless, blue sky... everything else, it’s just the weather.



UCC Women's Book Group

Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer

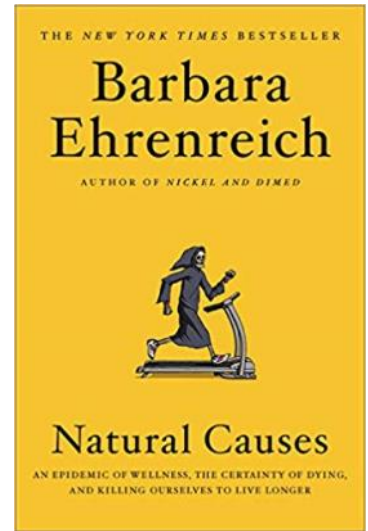
by Barbara Ehrenreich

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

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

"A razor-sharp polemic which offers an entirely new understanding of our bodies, ourselves, and our place in the universe, *Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer* describes how we over-prepare and worry way too much about what is inevitable...." [\[read more\]](#)

If you plan on joining in for lunch at Fieldstone Grill, please contact [Betty Lee Ongley](#) for reservations. After lunch, we will head to the church Community Room for book discussion. All UCC women are welcome.



May Calendar

Choir Rehearsals

All rehearsals will run from 6:30 - 7:45 on Tuesdays, May 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th with a possible rehearsal on Thursday the 23rd. Please contact [Nick](#) for more information.

Sunday, May 5th

10:00 am - Service with Rev. Gy
11:30 - UCC Budget Review
Potluck hosted by Sunday Services & Celebrations

Wednesday, May 8th

12:15 pm - Stewardship Meeting
2:00 pm - Board Meeting
5:30 pm - Sunday Services Committee Meeting

Friday, May 10th

11:30 am - Women's Book Club Group Lunch @
Fieldstone Grille
1:00 pm - Book Discussion @ UCC

Saturday, May 11th

9:30 am - Mindfulness Meditation Retreat for
Renewal and Well-being with Eric Nelson

Sunday, May 12th

Mother's Day & Generosity Sunday - YWCA
10:00 am - Service with Rev. Gy
11:30 am - Faith in Action Meeting

Saturday, May 18th

8:30 am - Men's Breakfast @ Burger Town Grille

Sunday, May 19th

10:00 am - Service with Larry Farris
11:30 am - Annual Members Meeting

Wednesday, May 22nd

May Newsletter Deadline - send submissions to
uccnewsletter@gmail.com

Sunday, May 26th

10:00 am - Service TBA (watch Friday emails)
11:30 am - R.E. Committee Meeting





Faith

by Marsha Laya, President

In last month's newsletter Gy wrote about love. I submitted an article about hope. So what about Faith? And is faith the same as belief or are they different? Are they connected?

A bit of "google search" gave this definition of belief: "An opinion or judgement in which a person is fully persuaded." This definition assumes the person reads, studies, listens to others and basically gathers enough evidence to be "fully persuaded." One would at least hope that is true.

So what is faith? One definition is that faith is a firm belief in something for which there is no proof. While belief assumes there is at least some empirical evidence, that definition of faith suggests there needs to be no evidence whatsoever. I found this explanation of faith to be unsatisfactory.

A further google search suggested that faith is composed of three critical elements. One of those elements is belief. Now this was beginning to making a bit more sense.

Additional reading and "google searching" suggested that belief is just the beginning of faith which has additional elements. Faith begins with a belief but then it must be rooted in absolute confidence. Then if that absolute confidence is very strong, it will result in action. When a belief takes action, only then is it considered faith. In other words, Faith is a strong Belief where Confidence in that belief brings about an Action.

So, faith and belief are interrelated. Faith begins with a belief. The more confident we are in that belief, the more likely there is to be action.

If faith begins with a belief, then it becomes necessary to challenge our minds to find the truth. The more firmly we are convinced of a truth, the more confident we become. If you want your actions to reflect your faith, then it becomes necessary to be confident in what you believe. Confidence in what you believe comes from knowledge. It comes from reading, studying and listening to diverse points of view.

Our faith is rooted in [seven Principles](#). This is a faith where open mindedness is foundational. We seek the truth. We seek it in books. We seek it in open dialog. We not only seek the truth, but we are prepared to change our belief and our actions based on the truths we uncover as we move along on our path of searching.

How fortunate we are to have discovered and to walk with other seekers. How fortunate we are to know we don't have the answers to life's questions. How fortunate we are to find joy in asking the questions and being comfortable with not knowing the answers. How fortunate we are to continually share our thoughts, explore our diversity, study the great thoughts of writers and profound leaders who have given us works, words, and examples for life. How fortunate we are that our faith is one that leads us to act with confidence.

This is our Faith. And I am proud to be among those who inspire me to learn more, study more, read more, be more so I can give more of myself to others. This is a faith I hold with absolute confidence.



Mindfulness Meditation Retreat for Renewal and Well-being **Saturday, May 11, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm at UCC**

Whether you're a beginning meditator wanting to learn the fundamentals, or a seasoned meditator wanting to tune-up your practice, please plan on attending this retreat which will focus on practices that are scientifically shown to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, helping to move you beyond fear, uncertainty, and attachment.

Registration is \$30, and scholarships are available. For information call Eric Nelson at 269-553-6621 or email StressManagementKazoo@gmail.com. Click here for more details and registration information: stressmanagementsolutions.us/retreats/

Generosity Sunday, May 12th (rescheduled)

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.

YWCA Kalamazoo recently released an [amazing video](#) on their [Facebook Page](#) which shares so beautifully the many faces of and reasons for their organization.

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

Caring Community News

from Nancy Crowell

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud." -- Maya Angelou

Calling out to all UCC members and friends to be rainbows in the clouds that are hanging over numerous members and friends from our church.

Mary and Jim King have had the viral bronchitis that keeps folks very sick and tired for weeks. Wishing them brighter and healthier days in May with no more coughing! In spite of her illness Mary King reported that Ellouise Barnette called from Alabama to tell us that Jim (Heveran) had been very ill with pneumonia and also had fallen and now was spending most of his time in a wheelchair. Jim and Ellouise usually return to Michigan in April, and now they are not sure when they might be back. Please send some of our positive, hopeful words to Jim and Ellouise in Alabama!

Travelling to help family members includes Judy Oliver, helping her son and family in New Jersey; Marsha Laya to Florida to be with her sister who suffered a stroke; and Stephanie Grathwol who now is in Chicago helping her brother following his knee replacement. The subject of replacements brings us to the news of Pat Fuehr's new right hip. She is exercising and healing. Please send along some encouraging words to Pat!

Freya Lake is soon to have a new hip on May 3rd, but first her doctor will be removing the rod in that leg. That rod was inserted after Freya fell on the ice and broke her leg several years ago. She might go to Rehab following her operation, but we will inform all of you by email as soon as we are contacted. Wishing Freya the very best outcome for her new hip!

Hugs, also, around Freya for having to put down her horse after many years of ownership.

In May, beside rainbows, we need cakes with sparkling candles to help celebrate birthdays of Nick Tasko, Chloe Najar, Denise Sonier, David Brozovich, Brian Leekley, and Jim King. Happy Celebrations in a special way to all!!

We remember three of our members who were so much a part of church life during their years with us. Harold Oliver (2012) for his warm acceptance of anyone he met, his good humor, and his quietly being there when something needed to be done. Joan Wallace (2015) as a founder who kept our archives and memory books, served on many committees, led the Writers' Covenant Group, and left us with her wonderful poetry. And Marge Snow (2016), known for generously sharing her professional knowledge and personal wisdom, opening her home to hostess the annual holiday meeting of the Women's Book Group, and inspiring us all to grow into senior citizens with style, courage, and activism.

It is important that we hear each other in community so that we can double the fun and lessen the stress – we are not alone.

If you have, or are aware of someone else with a need, please contact Nancy Crowell, Judy Oliver, or Judy Pigg-Behrendt



Board Briefs

April 10, 2019

Four Board members were present. One member was absent due to illness. Rev. Gy was also in attendance. The following are highlights of this meeting:



- Proposed annual budget was approved for presentation to the congregation. The budget will be presented on May 5th (note change of date) for discussion and on May 19th at the annual meeting for approval by voting members.
- The Board's annual report was briefly reviewed with suggestions offered. Other Committees have been asked to submit their annual reports. All annual committee reports will be gathered, collated and copied. Each member household will receive one copy of these reports at the annual meeting. In the past, these reports have been filed with no distribution or posting. It is the sentiment of the Board that this is an opportunity for the congregation to recognize the accomplishments of each committee.
- A revision to the By-laws reducing the number of members to the Nominating Committee from 3 members to two members was reviewed and approved for presentation and approval by the members at the annual meeting.
- Nancy Calme and Betty Lee Ongley were appointed to serve on a Special Nominating Committee. Their role will be to identify an individual to fill a vacant position on the Nominating Committee for FY 2019-20.
- It was approved by the Board to offer the position of DRE to Miriam Epscamp. Contract negotiations will be completed by the HR Committee. Miriam will begin on the 2nd Sunday in May.
- The proposal to replace our copier with one that is more efficient and less costly was approved. The current copier contact ends June 30th. Kimberly Ridley was recognized for her excellent research and clearly documented proposal.
- The request to approve the application for a 24 hour liquor license for a dance to be held on Friday, May 31st was approved.
- An updated policy and fee structure for renting our facility was approved.
- Denise Sonier was recognized for coordinating the volunteers helping our refugee family.
- The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on May 8th at 2:00 at the Church.

PLEASE NOTE: The proposed annual budget, revision to the ByLaws and the nominees to the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee will be posted/distributed for the congregation's review prior to the Annual Meeting according to our bylaws. UUCM members are invited to be informed and prepared to participate fully at the Annual Meeting scheduled for May 19th after Sunday Services. Your Board of Trustees is working diligently to assure communication is open, timely and complete.

Marsha Laya
marshalaya@gmail.com

Annual Fellowship Dinner

Hearts and tulips transformed our sanctuary into a festive party scene on March 30 for UUCC's annual Fellowship Dinner. The hearts emphasized our celebration of the heart of UUCC, while tulips welcomed spring. After a period of mingling, we sat down to a catered dinner of chicken breast, grilled pork loin, and sides, enhanced by salads from UUCC cooks.



After dinner, a lively "Broadway Cabaret" entertained us. It featured our pianist, Nick Sienkiewicz, and four of his colleagues from WMU's School of Music. Mary Roscoe spoke of what UUCC means to her. Then we filled in our pledge cards, and dessert followed.

We celebrated our generosity when the evening's total surpassed \$81,000. Additional pledges received from members and friends who missed the dinner have brought the sum to nearly \$88,000. The efforts of many of you contributed to the event's success. Mary King arranged the decorations. Ron Crowell purchased beverages and set up the bar. Nancy Calme made the seating chart, while Joe Calme prepared slides of the program. Nancy Crowell and Beverly Folz set the tables. Herb Gross served as bartender. Darby Fetzer, Erin Michael, and Eric Nelson made salads. Beverly Folz provided a vegetarian entree. Ron and Nancy Crowell and Pat Fuehr bought and served the desserts. Denise Sonier made and served coffee.

2019 ISAAC Banquet

You are cordially invited to the **ISAAC 2019 Banquet on Saturday evening, May 18, "Hold fast to love and justice"** (Hosea 12:6.) Keynote speaker **Mee Moua** is a TRHT Racial Healing practitioner, a law & policy expert for the WK Kellogg Foundation, a former State Senator in Minnesota, an attorney, and a civil rights leader who is warm and engaging. Performers are El Concilio's **Baile Folklorico** (youth performing Mexican Traditional Dances) and the duo of Nick The Drummer and Jesselyn (inspiring Live Music and Poetry.) Our 2019 awardees are:

- Albert Dixon
- Elizabeth Upjohn Mason
- Dr. Regena Nelson
- Innovation Grant Work Group
- Open Doors Kalamazoo
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church



The program and pasta buffet begin at 6:00 pm on May 18 at WMU Bernhard Center. Tickets are available from our ISAAC Leadership Board members (for \$35 each if we have tables of 8) or online at isaackalamazoo.org, and you can choose to sit with another ISAAC congregation or organization to help build 'The Beloved Community.'

Get your tickets by May 6, before the price goes up!



ISAAC 2019 Banquet

Hold fast to love and justice

Hosea 12:6

Saturday, May 18

WMU Bernhard Center

5:30 pm - Seating

6 pm - Program

Pasta Buffet

KEYNOTE MEE MOUA



Former Minnesota State Senator
Civil Rights Leader
Attorney
TRHT Racial Healing Practitioner
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Law & Policy Expert

Jesselyn &



Nick the Drummer



2019 AWARDEES

Albert Dixon
Dr. Regena Nelson
Elizabeth Upjohn Mason
Innovation Grant Work Group
Open Doors Kalamazoo
St. Luke's Episcopal Church

El Concilio's Baile Folklorico

Child care available-RSVP required

GET TICKETS from an ISAAC leader, or at isaackalamazoo.org. or 269-341-4213

Reserve by May 8: \$40 each or \$280 for Table of 8

If available after May 8: \$10 more for each ticket

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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Music Director
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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, May 22nd at 5:00 pm**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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