



# CommUnity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

February 2020



## **February Services**

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



Please visit our UCC website at [ucommunitychurch.org](http://ucommunitychurch.org) where you can find up-to-date information. You can also [sign up for our Friday emails](#), which will include updated service and event information.

### **Sunday, February 2- "When the Helper Needs Help" with Rev. Terry Tessari**

Retired UCC minister Terry Tessari purchased the topic for today's talk at our annual Service Auction. He will help us learn more about the personal challenges of spiritual leadership.

### **Sunday, February 9- "Slaying the Gorgon" with special guest Joe McHugh**

Joe McHugh is a traditional oral storyteller, an award-winning public radio journalist, and a cultural historian with thirty-five years of experience helping organizations and communities discover and more effectively tell their own authentic stories. He will help us explore why humans need stories by recounting the Greek myth of Perseus and Medusa and from there look at the role storytelling technologies play in shaping how we think and act. (*You can learn more about Mr. McHugh on [page 2](#).*) The children and youth will remain in the service today.

### **Sunday, February 16 "No Racial Justice without Economic Justice" with Rev. Gy**

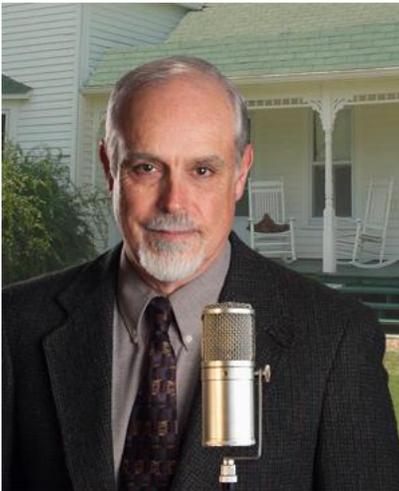
Rev. Gy will explore Dr. Martin Luther King's often overlooked legacy of fighting for economic justice and the empowerment of poor and working-class people and his conviction that there can be no genuine equality without addressing economic disparity.

### **Sunday, February 23 - 'QS the G ReBel' with special guest Quinten Sampson**

Hip-Hop and Rap artist, Quinten Sampson, will be joining us again! He will use his lyrical prowess and music to talk about real issues. We are excited to welcome him back! (*You can read more about Mr. Sampson on [page 2](#)*)



# INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY



## Guest Speaker: Joe McHugh

Mr. McHugh is a storyteller in the tradition of Mark Twain and Will Rogers. He has authored three collections of folktales and humor from the mountains of Appalachia, produced multicultural festivals, founded a museum, designed a literature camp for children, pioneered the use of radio dramas in the classroom, and produced and hosted programs for public television and radio. He has presented at numerous national and regional conferences and served as a project consultant for the California Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, National Council of Family and Juvenile Court Judges, National Legal Aid and Defenders Association, and other organizations. He is the author of *Kilowatt*, a novel about the energy industry and the nature of time, [Coins in the Ashes, a Family Story of Grief, Gratitude, and Grace](#), that chronicles his twelve-year quest to find the family of an African-American woman named Helen who cared for him as a child, and [Slaying the Gorgon, the Rise of the Storytelling Industrial Complex](#).

He was host and producer of the radio series [The Telling Takes Us Home, a Celebration of American Family Stories](#). He is currently working on [Rosin the Bow](#), a podcast and oral history project for the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History exploring the many roles the violin family of instruments play in the world today.

Mr. McHugh lives in Olympia, Washington, with his wife Paula Blasius-McHugh, a painter, graphic designer, and musician. They will be performing together at [Kalamazoo Valley Museum's 8th Annual Storytelling Festival](#) on February 7 at 7:00 PM.

## Guest Speaker: QS the G ReBel

Quinten Sampson, Jr., performing under the name QS the G ReBeL, is a Grand Rapids based Hip-Hop artist who has been writing, recording, and performing live at venues all over West Michigan since 2010. With a variety of flows, clever metaphors and ingenious word play, QS is an energetic performer who lights up any stage he is on. A lifelong fan of rap and hip hop QS recalls being “glued to the music video channels and always kept a pair of headphones on” even as a small child. His love of the art form drives him to produce the highest quality and creative music he possibly can.

“I feel that as a fan of music first, I have no choice but to put out quality material. I feel that one of the reasons rap is so unique is because of the metaphors and flow of your lyrics along with creativity. So, that's what you will see in everything I put out. “



# CARING COMMUNITY



## FEBRUARY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

There is no substitute for a great Love who says, *'No matter what's wrong with you, you're welcome at this table!'* ~Tom Hanks

~ Japanese Proverb

In February, and every month at UCC, LOVE is a theme for our community. A few weeks ago, a friend of UCC, Stace Danielson, movingly shared her joys and concerns about her three sons. She asked our community to hold them in our hearts as they navigate transitions in their lives and relationships.

Rev. Gy was deeply touched by the love and support she received from UCC members and friends during her recent hospital stay. We have once again exceeded her expectations and she is grateful for our care.

Love enters the happy birthday wishes that go out to Marsha Laya; Hunter Ridley; Beverly Folz; Regina Nelson and Joe Calme in this month of February.

We fondly remember, with love, Barbara Cousins, who died on February 11, 2009. Our church library came into being with Barbara's initiative and organizational skills. She was a great lover of books and shared her love with UCC.

Nancy Crowell is loving her renewed ability to drive! After falling, in late summer, she hurt her right shoulder and was unable to drive. Upon many months of PT and other exercises, Nancy is back on the road in her Ford C-Max.

We will be missing Freya Lake in the coming weeks. She will be with her California daughter, Roberta. Marsha Laya and Lee Smittendorf are still enjoying the sun and having fun in Florida.

Our community values sharing both in our joys and times of concern. Please contact Nancy Crowell, Judy Pigg-Behrendt, and /or Judy Oliver when you would like to share one of your joys or concerns. Sharing is caring.

There is  
*no question*  
for which  
compassion  
*is not the*  
**ANSWER**



—Judith Hanson Lasater  
UUA.ORG/WORSHIP

# LEADERSHIP

## Board President's Corner

by [Nancy Calme](#), Board President



Welcome to the frigid months of Michigan winter!

As I write this, the grasses in our field are white with frost and the thermometer is hovering in the low teens. This is the time in the fickle Michigan weather in which one day is a still, gray cold, but mid-week may be a sunny spring in the 40's, and by the end of the week we may be buried in a blizzard or an ice storm.

The Board of Trustees has a large agenda of church business even in the Michigan winter slow down. You might be surprised at the array of issues being fine-tuned and debated in a typical board meeting. Let me give you a few examples:

With help from Tami Brozovich, we monitor the church's financial performance against the current budget and insure we are within expectations. This is the time of year we begin considering changes to the annual budget for the next year and gathering input from committees. We look over our wish list and begin thinking how a tweak to a line item here or there might make new things possible next year.

We are working with the HR Team to begin the search for a new Music Director to replace Nick when he graduates this spring. He will be a hard act to follow and waiting until the change is imminent would put us in a real bind. In December, board members and staff met with Kevin Brozovich to lay out the parameters and timeline for the search.

In September, the Board sponsored an open meeting to talk about the committee structure of the church and what exciting programs could emerge if we changed a few things. Erin Michael has led the Program Council in continuing this discussion and now the Board is starting the next phase. We have called a "Church Vitality Checkup" meeting of committee chairs to encourage collaboration and find opportunities that we've been missing. On top of that, we are offering leadership training webinars from the UUA and generating good discussion.

Another area we are examining is the church's "social media presence." Technology and society are changing so fast that keeping information about UCC visible to the world is an elusive goal. There is the website, Facebook, Instagram, and who knows yet what else we need to consider and how we might stay on top of it.

Your Board is doing its best to guide the church through these issues and more. It is an exciting ride and an honor to be in the middle of it. When the time comes for new members to be nominated to join in this board adventure next year, I hope all members will consider where they may help.

# STEWARDSHIP

## Program Council- Where We Get Stuff Done- TOGETHER!

by [Erin Michael](#), Board Vice-President

While Mother Nature kept us from our January Program Council gathering, we continue to hold events, collaborate and get the work done! We meet next on **Sunday, February 9th** after coffee time. Bring your successes to share. Looking forward to being with you!

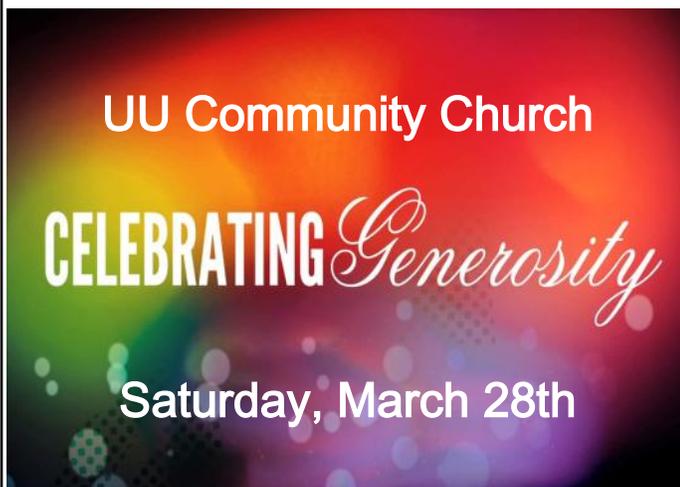
**Vitality Check-up:** A meeting with committee and group leaders/representatives to discover what is foundationally needed for us to function. What is essential to have a great Sunday service and community experience? Then, we will build up from this foundation focused on priority (using The Sweet Spot). Goal is to minimize over commitment and burn out. Nancy Calme is leading this effort. More information about this will be coming soon!

**The Sweet Spot:** a tool for clever prioritizing of our focus. There is only one secret ingredient to make this tool work – honesty. This tool came from the November UUA's Small Numbers/ Infinite Possibilities webinar. Groups and individuals can use this tool when confronted with multiple great ideas. Click [HERE](#) to see the details.



**UUC's Face to the World:** Website team is forming; first meeting was on Mon, Jan. 20. We looked at simplifying our website to (1) share our message clearly for those looking for a spiritual community, (2) provide up-to-date, accurate information for events/opportunities for current congregants and newcomers, and (3) minimize the oversight to keep the website current. Wish to join in this vital effort? Contact the [church office](#).

## Annual Fellowship Dinner



The time is fast approaching for your opportunity to support our Church in the coming year.

This place is the safe haven where we restore ourselves from the troubles of the outside world as well as work to make things better. We need it more than ever, and even spiritual retreats run on dollars.

On **Saturday, March 28th**, you are invited to savor a catered dinner in the company of like-minded UUs, enjoy some entertainment, and commit to what your heart tells you to give to support our beloved community.

# LEARNING

## Women's Book Group

by [Stephanie Grathwol](#), Chair

For **Friday, February 14th**, the Women's Book Group selection will be:

***Becoming*** by Michelle Obama

[From Goodreads:](#)

In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address.

11:30 AM - Lunch at the [Fieldstone Grill](#) in Portage.

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

Discussion Leader: Stephanie Grathwol Hostess: Judy Halseth

All UCC women--members and friends--are invited to participate.



## ISAAC- Culturally Competent Local Leadership Training

Our partners at Interfaith Strategies for Action and Advocacy in the Community ([ISAAC](#)) are offering a Community Organizing Leadership Training led by Rev. Catoya Roberts. This is the same Gamaliel Network Leadership Training that Former President Barack Obama participated in when he was a Community Organizer! ISAAC is an affiliate of the Gamaliel Network, a faith-based community organizing network that seeks to build power and establish the 'beloved community.

The program will present the concepts and tools an effective leader needs. It affords a person the opportunity to reflect on participant's present and future potential roles in the public arena and community to bring about systemic change.

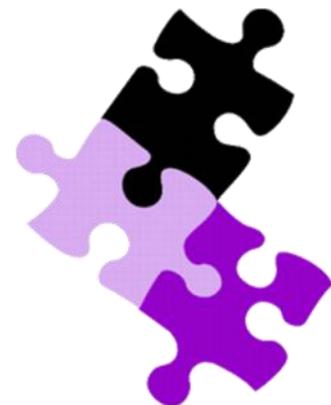
Two sessions are being offered. Lunch is included with both.

Saturday, February 8th  
9:30 AM - 3:00 PM  
UU Community Church

OR

Sunday, February 9th  
1:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
Location TBD

SPACE IS LIMITED so [RSVP](#) soon!



# GROWTH



## Small but Mighty

Over the last few months, members of the congregation have gathered in the church office to watch **Small Numbers, Infinite Possibilities** webinars conducted by Unitarian Universalist Association staff and

focused on the needs and challenges of small congregations like ours. The webinars have offered interesting information, food for thought, and sparked some good conversations.

You can see what you have missed by following the links below to watch recordings of the webinars that have already taken place.

October: [Smalls Making a Big Difference](#)

November: [Right-Sizing Your Congregation's Operations](#)

January: [Stewardship and Sustainability](#)

The final webinar in the series **Being the Beloved Community** will take on February 12th.

Please consider joining the viewing party. The webinar will air at 7:00 PM and runs for 90 minutes. Discussion among viewers will take place afterward for about 30 minutes.

If you have any questions about **Small Numbers, Infinite Possibilities**, contact [Miriam](#).

## Social Media and UU



We know that increasingly visitors and potential new members are searching for our online presence on a wide variety of platforms long before they show up to visit in person. It is because of this that one Board of Trustee's goals for this year is to 'enhance UUCC's social media presence'. Now thanks to their hard work, you can connect with this UU Community Church on Facebook and Instagram (search for uccswmi). On Twitter, our handle is @uu\_church

Having these accounts is only start. We need to be consistently posting interesting content that will help seekers engage with this community and learn more about Unitarian Universalism. We need to create online spaces that are alive and vibrant. You can help us in efforts in two ways:

**Take Photos:** As the saying goes, 'a picture is worth a thousand words' and our web and social media sites need more photos of our UU Community in action. Anytime you attend an event or meeting, take a picture or two and send them to the office. We may not use everything you send but it will help us to have a wide range of images to choose from when creating content.

**Attend a Facebook Tutorial:** If you have a Facebook account, bring your charged laptop or smartphone to church on **Sunday, February 9th!** After service, grab your coffee and meet in the sanctuary for a 15-minute lesson on how you can easily use Facebook to share our profound and life-changing message with the world! [Miriam](#) will be leading us and answering questions.

# FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

## Leap with Love Community Dance

### Get Out Your Dancing Shoes!

Four years will pass before February 29th comes around again, so let's make this one memorable.

Big Trouble and their lively mix blues, rock, and soul music will join us again for our sec-

ond annual Valentine's Dance (combined with our first-ever Leap Year celebration.)

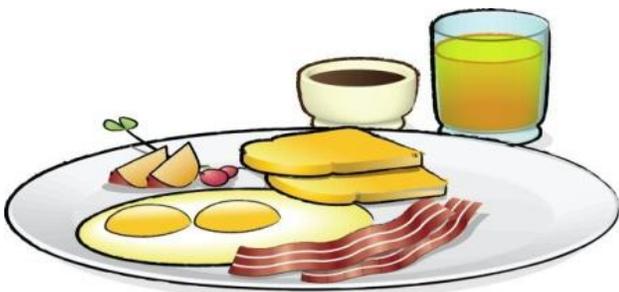
Doors open at UCC at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 29. Music begins at 8:00. Come early and enjoy good company, complimentary snacks, and drinks from a beer and wine cash bar. Stay late for music and dancing. Admission is \$5.00.

### Men's Group Breakfast

Feel free to join the Men's Group for breakfast on Saturday, February 15th at 8:30 AM at Burger Town Grille on Shaver Rd in Portage.

All are invited to come enjoy a good meal, meet with new or old friends, and share great thoughts, stories, and conversation. Bring a friend who might like to know more about UCC!

Please RSVP to [Ken VanEselte](#) if you plan to attend.



### Potluck Sunday

The potluck schedule for 2020 is as follows:



Date	Hosts
February 2	Board of Trustees
March 1	NO POTLUCK
April 5	Caring Community and Religious Education
May 3	Sunday Services and Sunday Celebrations
June 7	Men's and Women's Groups

Potluck Sunday is a great day to invite a friend to share a meal with us and get to know us better! Please plan to bring a dish to pass and place settings from home to help us reduce the amount of trash we put in the landfill.

### General Assembly

General Assembly is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Attendees witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process. Anyone may attend. Early registration is going on now! If you are interested in learning more about General Assembly visit the [UUA website](#) or talk to a member of the Board.



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## R.E.flections

From [Miriam Epskamp](#), Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Rev. Gy's health struggles last month made it necessary for me to fill in for her at the Kalamazoo Women's March on January 18th. She was to be one of the women faith leaders, representing ISAAC, helping to give the opening prayer. All I needed to do to fill in was read a few sentences and then I could slip away. As it was barely going to take fifteen minutes, I readily agreed to help out. I thought I might even make time to join the March around Bronson Park and down Michigan Avenue before I was scheduled to speak because it seemed like it would be fun.

But then Michigan decided to do her wintertime thing. We got a bit quite a bit of snow the night before. The roads were treacherous. The sidewalks were a mess.

And to make things worse, a light rain had begun to fall. It was far from the ideal conditions for a protest. Slogging through the slushy mess did not appeal to me so I decided to skip the March and head straight for the Congregational Church where I could stay dry and warm waiting for the rally to begin.

I arrived at Bronson Park after the March was supposed to start. My plan was give everyone an encouraging wave on my way out of the nasty weather. But things were running a bit behind schedule and people were still milling about waiting for instructions. As I made my way through the crowd, who should I run into but our very own Nancy Crowell sporting a bright pink hat, overflowing with enthusiasm, and ready to rally! How could I chicken out now?

So, I stayed out in the freezing drizzle and listened to an elder from the Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi remind us on whose land we stood. I marched through icy puddles and slippery piles of snow with humans of all shapes, sizes, colors, ages, and gender identities from different backgrounds, religions, and walks of life. We shouted 'Women Building Power Together'! It was good.

Chilled and a bit soggy, I made my way into the church and met up with the other faith leaders. We too were all shapes, and sizes, colors, and ages from different backgrounds, religions, and walks of life. We stood together and we prayed together. We were 'Women Building Power Together.' It was good.

As the speakers began to share their stories, my plan to slip away as soon as I could no longer seemed like a good one. The planning committee for this year's March was made up entirely of women of color and their goal was to highlight women in our community that are marginalized-poor women, women of color, Muslim women, undocumented women, trans women, and more. As someone who enjoys privilege based



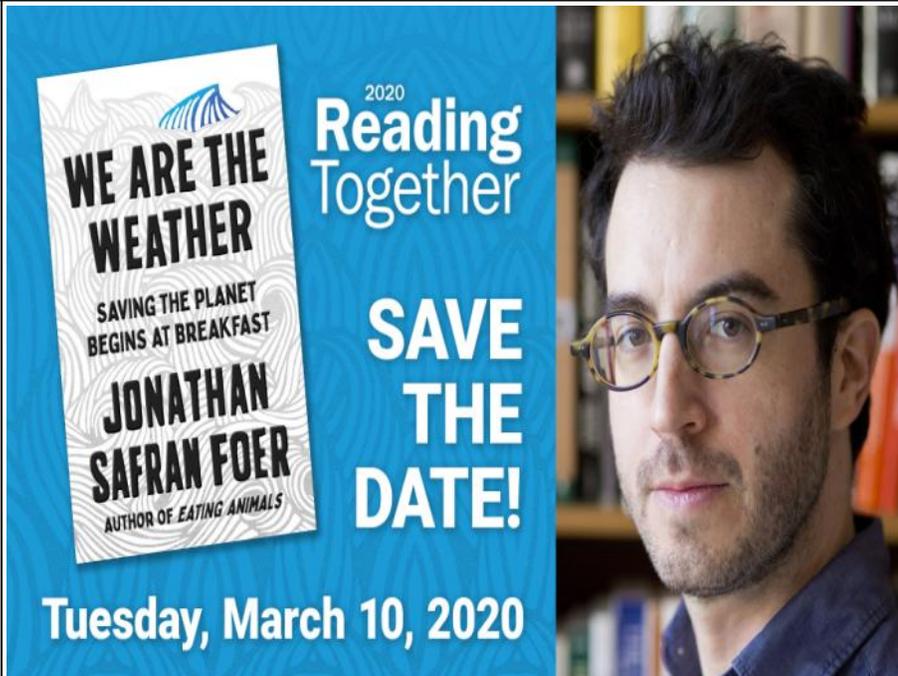
on my age, my race, and my class, it was important that I stay and listen and commit myself to work towards real equity and inclusion. How could I exercise the privilege of slipping away when so many suffer from injustice?

So, I stayed for nearly three hours and listened to every speech. The speakers were humans of all shapes, sizes, colors, ages, and gender identities, religions, and walks of life. They were 'Women Building Power Together'. And it was good.

### February Religious Education

Date	Session	Teacher
2/2	Thematic RE- Courage	Miriam
2/9	Multi-gen Service	N/A
2/16	Mindful Sunday - Art	Mary Roscoe
2/23	Social Justice Sunday	Miriam

# SOCIAL JUSTICE



Please plan to read and discuss Jonathan Safran Foer's ***We Are the Weather: Saving the Planet Begins at Breakfast*** in February as part of the Kalamazoo Public Library's annual Reading Together program. Safran weaves together his family's Jewish traditions, his quest to understand how belief begets action, and a passionate plea for individuals and communities to engage in actions that mitigate the life-threatening impacts of climate change. The author will give a presentation at Chenery Auditorium on Tuesday, March 10 at 7:00pm.

## Fridays for the Future

Join the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition every Friday at noon for a FREE talk .

Experience high quality and engaging sessions from a range of experts and advocacy groups on the causes, consequences and actions for a carbon neutral future.

All events will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 PM and are free and open to the public.

February 7- "***Climate Impacts on the Great Lakes***"

- Fetzer Center, WMU

February 14- "***Climate Policies & Politics***"

- Fetzer Center, WMU

February 21- "***Your Climate Vote***"

- Fetzer Center, WMU

February 28- "***Rights to Land, Water and Seed***"



Sunday, February 16, 2020

Galilee Baptist Church

1216 N. Westnedge Ave.

Kalamazoo, MI

Starts at 4:00 pm

## **THE 6TH ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE FOR VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE**

A service & gathering to remember lives taken, especially in Kalamazoo, to pray for peace & to call on representatives to enact reform. You are invited to bring a photo of your loved one who died as a result of a firearm to be part of the remembrance.

SPONSORED BY

Coalition for Common Ground Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense  
ISAAC Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP



# CALENDAR

## FEBRUARY 2020

### Choir Rehearsals

All rehearsals will run from 6:45 - 8:00 PM on Tuesday, February 4, 11, 18, and 25

Please contact [Nick](#) for more information

#### **Sunday, February 2**

10:00 am - Service with Terry Tessari  
 11:30 am - POTLUCK  
 12:00 pm - Noble Goal Workshop

#### **Monday, February 3**

4:00 pm - Board of Trustees Meeting

#### **Sunday, February 9**

10:00 am - Service with Joe McHugh  
 11:15 am - Facebook Tutorial  
 11:30 am - Program Council

#### **Saturday, February 8**

9:30 am - 3:00 pm ISAAC Leadership Training

#### **Sunday, February 16**

10:00 am - Service with Rev. Gy  
 4:00 pm - Gun Violence Service at Galilee Baptist

#### **Wednesday, February 12**

7:00 pm - Small Numbers, Infinite Possibilities Webinar

#### **Sunday, February 23**

10:00 am - Service with  
 11:30 am - Investment Management Workshop

#### **Friday, February 14**

*Valentines Day*  
 1:00 pm - Women's Book Group

#### **Saturday, February 29**

6:00 pm - Leap with Love Community Dance

#### **Saturday, February 15**

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

For the latest, up-to-date information about our activities and events visit our [website](#) and our [online calendar](#).

#### Committee Meetings

**Sunday Services:** Wednesday, February 12 at 5:30 pm

**Stewardship:** Thursday, February 13 at 12:15 pm

#### Loving What Is Classes

February 5, 12, 19, 26  
 12:00 - 2:00 pm and 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Please contact Rev. Gy for more information



### **Weather Emergencies:**



In the event of severe weather please check your email, our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#), [WWMT's Closing Alerts](#), or tune into WKZO 590 AM, WKFR 103.3 FM, or WOOD TV 8 for information about our closing before you head out to church. **The Board will no longer call congregants to inform them of service cancellations.**

**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney M.Div., M.A.  
Consulting Minister  
By Appointment Only  
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Cell: 269-352-2412

Miriam Epskamp  
Office Administrator and  
Director of Religious Education  
Hours: Tues 10 -2 Wed 10-2 and Fri 12-5  
[uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)  
Church office: 269-324-7262  
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Nick Sienkiewicz  
Music Director  
[nicholas.sienkiewicz@outlook.com](mailto:nicholas.sienkiewicz@outlook.com)

**2019-2020 Board of Trustees**

**Nancy Calme**

**Erin Michael**

**Denise Sonier**

**Betty Lee Ongley**

**Larry Higgins**

**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, February 19th at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

**[uuccnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uuccnewsletter@gmail.com)**

*CommUUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
of Southwest Michigan**

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**SPIRITUALITY FOR  
DIVERSE PATHS**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**