



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

August 2020

We All Want to Change the World.....

One evening last month Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services Committee met in a Zoom room to make plans for the upcoming church year. They came to consider three questions:

What do you think the congregation wants to hear about during Sunday Services?

What do you think the congregation needs to hear about during Sunday Services?

What do you think should be the church's overarching focus for the next church year?

The group brainstormed round-robin style with each person taking a turn throwing out ideas to answer first the 'want' question and then the 'need'. The ideas came slowly and hesitantly at first but then grew in speed and enthusiasm as everyone began to warm to the topic and be inspired by each other's words.

A common theme began to develop. In this time of great upheaval, finding ways to shake up the status quo, to transform ourselves and the world seems more important than ever. The quote by poet and social justice activist, Sonya Renee Taylor, comes to mind, "We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all humanity and nature."

When someone in the group, thinking of the Beatles song about changing the world, called out 'Revolution' it was as if a light switched on in everyone's mind and the overarching focus of the new church year was evident.

rev·o·lu·tion, *noun*. 1) a progressive motion of a body around an axis 2) a complete and fundamental change 3) a paradigm shift 4) activity or movement designed to effect fundamental changes 5) a changeover in use or preference

UU minister Rev. Jan Taddeo has described Sunday Services as "an ongoing conversation with a thread that ties each service to the next." Having an overarching theme for the year will provide Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services team with a clear direction as they plan services and recruit guest speakers. It will also allow ideas to be explored more deeply from varying viewpoints over the course of several weeks. Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services team envision this theme as providing a base of creativity and curiosity for other activities of the church including our religious education classes, our social justice work, our generosity Sundays, and even events like our auction and canvass campaign. They invite everyone to be a part of imaging how ideas about shifting the paradigm, making fundamental changes, and stitching a new garment that fits all humanity and nature can be a part of our church activities. Together, let us be the change we wish to see in the world!

REVO.UTION

INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY

AUGUST SERVICES

Spiritual Theme of the Month: PREPARATION.

What skills, discernment, and spiritual practices do we need to navigate this time of change?

August 2: *Rule of St. Benedict: A Revolution for God*
with Rev. Canon William Spaid

We will explore the question ‘How can a 6th-century guide to living in community apply to our modern lives?’ with Episcopal priest, Bill Spaid. He serves as the chief pastoral assistant to the Bishop in southwestern Michigan. He is a consultant to clergy and congregations in times of transition or challenges. Bill was introduced to St. Benedict in seminary and has maintained an interest in the Rule throughout his career. He is partnered with Greg Fitzgerald, has two children and four grandchildren all who bring him joy.

August 9: *Willingness*
with Rev. Gy

An important aspect of navigating change is an open mind. Cultivating the commitment to stay engaged and the stamina to overcome uncertainty and anxiety will help us prepare for the inevitable changes that come at a time of great upheaval.

August 16: *We Are the Revolution We’ve Been Looking For*
with Adel and Tess Johnson

UUCU alumni on two continents will discuss how the pandemic and our governments’ responses affect areas close to us, from nonprofits and major cities to higher education and veterinary medicine, to protesting in a mask and beyond. As things reopen and society begins to return “back to normal,” we’ll look at how we can learn from what we’ve experienced to build a more equitable “normal.” And when all else fails: try a virtual dance party.

August 23: *Inspiration*
with Rev. Gy

In each generation there are people who have disrupted the norm and influenced the course of history. What are the lessons we can learn from these changemakers as we seek to positively transform ourselves and the world?

August 30: *Courage*
with Rev. Gy

Maya Angelou once said, “Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency.” As we imagine and work to build the Beloved Community, we must learn how to cultivate the courage to be able to let go of the old and choose love over fear.

Services will be held via Zoom and live-streamed on [Facebook](#) , Sundays at 10:00 AM.

FROM THE MINISTER

From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

The stories we tell...

“There is something terribly wrong with me,” was the opening line of a person I met today for the first time. She then told me how she wasn’t able to stop a cyst from forming on her ovary. She told me in so many ways how she’s failed her body, her mind, her life. She’s never been able to be in a long-term relationship because, “There is something terribly wrong with me”.

The stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, about others, about situations, about leaders, about parents, about life, about everything – matter! They matter because they shape our reality. They inform every decision and indecision we take. They inform every choice we make. They inform the words we say, the ones we withhold. They inform our power or lack of it. The stories we tell matter.

Our stories become her/history.

I am not at peace about the reality we have created based on the story we told ourselves about race, ethnicity, gender, gender roles, equality, sexuality, environment. Somewhere our story went wrong. We told ourselves that blacks are less than whites. We told ourselves that we can take other people’s land and do horrific things to them, because they are like wild animals anyway. We told ourselves that the planet is here to serve us at all cost and we can do as we please without consequences.

It is time for a new story.

In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., “Change does not come on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle I believe these days are the days are such days. Struggle filled days with pain, with beauty, all very necessary.

I think a perfect storm is brewing that has the potential to bring about healing, reconciliation, redemption. It is my hope and wish anyway. Something is definitely stirring and just as the lotus flower emerges from murky depths, perhaps we, too, will birth a new, more beautiful story. A kind one. A just one. One that honors all of life, one that allows for life to expand in possibility, dignity, and glorious love. One that will become a much better history.

Gandhi said, “The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.”

May we believe that we are capable of changing. Changing all that needs changing. Ourselves, our politics, our behaviors, our destiny. And then may we act to solve real problems. May we tell the story that it is possible to solve big problems. Even if at first we are few who tell such a story. To quote again Martin Luther King Jr, “almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better.”

Here’s to a new story! And so it is.



GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

Our Upcoming Guest Speakers:

Bill Spaid earned his Masters of Divinity from Nashotah House in 1986 and served as rector of St. Martin's in Kalamazoo prior to joining the staff of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. He served as Canon to the Ordinary for over fifteen years before shifting into the role of Canon Missioner. He plans to retire from the Diocese in 2020.



After a decade of learning and growing within the UUCC family, **Tess Johnson** graduated from high school (Portage Central and KAMSC) and college (Grinnell College in Iowa). After spending a year working in a veterinary clinic near Seattle, she hopped over the pond to study veterinary medicine at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. She plans to graduate in 2021 and likely move back to the US to work with small animals. She enjoys hiking and reading about hiking and, at any given point, would rather be in the woods.

Since graduating from the Coming of Age program at UUCC, **Adel Johnson** has also finished high school (Portage Central), college (Columbia College Chicago), and enough adventure stories to develop an overabundance of idealism. Adel works in communications at Metropolitan Family Services, a social services nonprofit empowering families and communities across Chicago. She enjoys swimming and sports of almost any kind, and never goes anywhere without a book.



Although we wish it was not the case, it looks like our church services will be virtual for quite a long time. Now that we have become some what comfortable with the nuts and bolts of presenting services on Zoom and Facebook, we are turning our attention to the content and structure of the services themselves. Starting in September, look for us to start switching things up a little and trying out new things.

We invite you to let us know how we might help you to feel more engaged during Sunday services and more fully connected to your church community. What would bring you more inspiration? What would leave you feeling more energized? What do you need from church on Sunday to help you face the hardships of the coming week?

Share your thoughts with [Rev. Gy](#), [Miriam](#), or a member of the Sunday Services Committee: [Joe Calme](#), [Regena Nelson](#), and [Kimberly Ridley](#) and help us to build a meaningful sacred space in cyberspace.

CARING COMMUNITY



AUGUST CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*One of the most important things you can do on this earth
is to let people know they are not alone
~Shannon L. Adler*

Wedding bells rang for four couples at UUCC in the summer of 1963 to 1994. Jim and Mary King, August 23, 1963; Tim and Erin Michael, August 18, 1980; Kevin and Tami Brozovich, August 23, 1989; Eric and Regena Nelson, August 6, 1994. Happy anniversary and let the champagne flow!

Happy birthday wishes go out to Lauren Ritter, Kimberly Ridley, Miriam Epskamp and Jacquis Robertson this month.

Twenty years ago in August, UUCC said a final goodbye to Jean Batts, 1921 -2000. We fondly remember her each time the grand piano is played. It was her generous gift to us.

Last year we hosted a memorial at UUCC for Lin Foote, who with his wife, Alice, was one of our founders. There is a small pine tree planted near the front window of UUCC in Lin and Alice's memory. Lin was responsible for bringing many members to UUCC and was involved in various committees and activities, including being President of the Board. He remains a strong influence on many UUCCs. 1928-2019.

John Folz's health continues to fail. Beverly is grateful for the visiting nurses who help with his care. A postcard or note to John might be a way to say hello and let him know you are thinking of him. On July 28th Beverly had eye surgery in Grand Rapids. Eyelids on both eyes were involved and she is hoping for much stronger eyesight in the near future. John and Bev's son and daughter-in-law came from Colorado to help.

Rev Gy is finally getting some relief as her leg injury is beginning to heal after several weeks of pain from her worksite injury which required seventeen stitches!

Nancy and Ron Crowell have made the difficult decision to sell their cottage at Fine Lake. Many "fine" times were enjoyed by UUCCs who purchased auction events at their cottage.

UUCC sends good wishes to all members and friends who are celebrating events this August and encouragement to those who need it. If you know of someone who we have missed, please contact the UUCC Caring Community Contact Persons: [Nancy Crowell](#), [Judy Oliver](#), or [Judy Pigg-Behrendt](#). Sharing is Caring!



***YOU are needed.
YOU are valuable.
YOU are central to the process of making
a Unitarian Universalist Community.
There is nothing unless YOU make it.***

~ From 'Widening the Circle of Concern'

LEADERSHIP

From the Board President

[Nancy Calme](#)

I have been part of this church for 24 years and have shared a lot of strange and exciting times with the UUCC family. For example, there was the year that we decided to purchase our own building and just as we began moving in, our minister decided to resign. How about the year we lost a minister and decided to try a year without having one at all? There were risky decisions about taking on new professional staff, sponsoring big public events, trying new programs such as the Program Council, or asking people to dig deep to pay off the mortgage.



In every instance of such excitement, the people elected to the Board of Trustees have been at the center, shouldering the worry, making the tough decisions, keeping people informed, and cheerleading. They have had to lead the way with congregational campaigns to set new vision and strategic plans, and forums to share feelings and work through difficult transitions. It is a serious responsibility, not one that can be taken lightly.

As the church year begins in July, new board members must quickly get up to speed and jump on the moving train because the issues do not take a few months off while they get settled in. The way we do this at UUCC is by having a board retreat.

Recently, the new board held a retreat to provide that short break to find our seats. Rev. Gy helped us build some trust with exercises in vulnerable sharing of fears and supporting each other with appreciation for our individual gifts. With that foundation, we began talking about how we will work together. We affirmed a covenant for board behavior and discussed the guidelines for how we will make decisions.

You might think that decisions are cut and dried; you get a question, take a vote, and move on. There is so much more to it than that! First, we must evaluate whether the issue really belongs to the board or if we are bleeding into the boundaries of other church committees or teams. It is easy to slide into discussions of every issue and worry that comes up if we do not follow that discipline. Then there is the issue of timing - which issues need to be addressed quickly and which require more research and time to marinate before moving forward. We need to attend to the bylaws to make sure we follow formal parliamentary voting rules when appropriate, to keep the congregation informed in a timely manner, and to mind legal and liability concerns.

In these days of public health crisis, we have held several special board meetings about things that just could not wait. Still, we must carefully determine if an issue is time-critical enough to require a special meeting, should wait for the monthly meeting, or could be decided informally in an email discussion. The goal is to do the right thing without over-reacting and burning out from constant vigilance. I'd love to hear input from those of you who have learned from experience and have advice to offer. I can show you the guidelines we have written for ourselves and you can give me your two cents.

STEWARDSHIP



AUCTIONS Service

Submit Your Auction Items by October 1

This year we will hold a virtual silent and service auction. The silent auction items will be available for online bidding October 11 - 17. The service auction be held on Zoom on Saturday, October 17 at 6:30 pm. The bidding instructions and links will be shared later.

In the past, the service auction items have been social gatherings that have allowed us to get to know each other and build community. We are aware that we will not be able to offer in-person dinners and outings as service auction items this year. Therefore, we will need to modify those offerings so they can be enjoyed virtually. Here are some examples for you all to consider:

- Make a meal for six that can be delivered and shared together over Zoom.
- Purchase tickets for an online performance for others to bid on.
- Put together a gift basket with items for a picnic, wine tasting, baking or a spa day.
- Purchase gift cards from a favorite restaurant that a bidder can use to order a take-out dinner.
- Offer a gift box with items for a craft.
- Provide a Zoom workshop to teach a new skill or a gift membership for Osher Life Learning institute (OLLI) for online classes.
- Host a game night on Zoom – murder mystery, escape room, euchre, etc. Google games to play on Zoom for more ideas.

For the silent auction, we can still accept the treasures you found during your pandemic decluttering. Consider bundling items together for a theme box such as sewing items, board games or a mystery box.

Please email your auction item information to Joe Calme (joenancycalme@gmail.com) by October 1. Your email should include a description of the item, the quantity and the suggested bid amount.

To simplify the bidding on Zoom, we will offer all items at the starting bid price. The first bidder(s) will receive the item.

Please reach out to the stewardship committee members if you have any questions.

Stewardship Committee: Chair, [Regena Nelson](#), [Joe Calme](#), and [Ron Crowell](#)

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Dr. Charlae Davis

Dr. Charlae Davis at Virtual Happy Hour

Once a month we invite special guests to join us at a Virtual Happy Hour to engage in casual conversation and answer our questions on a variety of topics.

In August we are excited to be joined by **Dr. Charlae Davis**, Executive Director of Interfaith Strategies for Action and Advocacy in the Community (ISAAC). Dr. Davis will be with us for virtual Happy Hour on **Thursday, August 27th at 7:00 PM.**

ISAAC is part of the Gamaliel Network, founded in 1986 to train community and faith leaders in building political power and creating positive change in their communities. Learning more about ISAAC's philosophy and strategies and hearing about Dr. Davis's first-hand experiences as a change-maker will help us as we embark on our year of 'revolution'! Be sure to join us and be part of the conversation.

If you have any suggestions for future guests in the series or an engaging topic you would like to explore with UU Community members and friends during a virtual Happy Hour, please contact [Rev. Gy](#) and share your ideas.

Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group plans to hold its Annual Meeting via Zoom on **Friday, August 14, at 1:00 PM.**

The agenda will include a business meeting, election of the 2020-2021 Chair, and votes for the books to experience between this September and next May.

All UUCW Women are welcome; please contact Stephanie Grathwol for advice: (269.342.0874 or sargg.64@gmail.com)



Widening the Circle of Concern

The Unitarian Universalist Association recently sent us a bound copy of *Widening the Circle of Concern*, a nearly 200-page report from its Commission Institutional Change. The Commission has spent the last three years analyzing structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism. The report provides history, insight, and suggested actions for the association, its affinity groups, and its congregations to advance long-term change.

UUCW members and friends at all levels of leadership are encouraged to read this report and join in the conversation as Unitarian Universalism works to address the bias and oppression within our systems and build a more vibrant, responsive, and resilient spiritual movement.

The report can be found online in PDF form on the [UUA website](#).

Contact [the office](#) if you would like to be put on the waiting list for the church's hard copy.

FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

Virtual Gatherings Help Us Connect

Even though our doors are closed, there are many opportunities to meet each and to be together in community. Please consider joining one of the following virtual gatherings. *Your presence may be a gift to someone feeling isolated and alone.*



Tuesdays at 11:00 AM Join Rev. Gy for coffee and conversation via ZOOM

Thursdays at 7:00 PM Mingle with friends at our weekly Happy Hour via ZOOM

Wednesdays at 5:00 PM Join Eric Nelson for Guided Wellness Meditation

Sundays at 10:00 AM Join Rev. Gy on Facebook for a live-streamed Sunday Message

Sundays at 10:45 AM Following Rev. Gy's talk, we will gather for a virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM

How to Connect: Login information for these gatherings are sent by email either the day before or the morning of the activity. If you would like to be added to that email list. Please contact [the office](#).

If you are having trouble connecting Zoom, please contact [the office](#). We are always ready to brainstorm solutions and offer one-on-one assistance.

Service Recordings: Videos of Sunday Services can be found on our [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#). You can find us on Facebook and YouTube by searching for UU Community Church of SW Michigan.

Men's Group Breakfast

Saturday, August 17th at 8:30 AM



Last month's Men's Group Breakfast was the largest gathering since the pandemic began and featured lively conversation and conviviality!

All are welcome to join the Men's Group via ZOOM on the third Saturday of each month to enjoy virtual breakfast, companionship, and conversation. Contact [Ken VanEseltine](#) if you have any questions.

<https://zoom.us/j/97856246726?pwd=WTIQaG1qZ3liZERFQmpkdXhqYVhoZz09>

Meeting ID: 978 5624 6726 Password: 749176

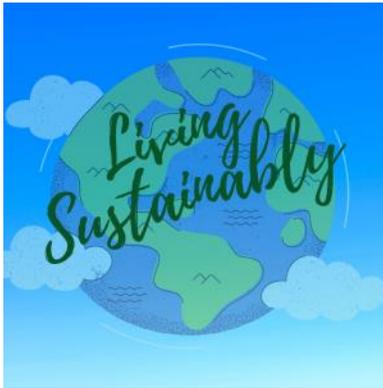
Full log in info can be found on the [UUC calendar](#).

Water Communion 2020

Don't forget to send a photo of a source of water that sustains your soul to the office by noon on August 31! These photos will be included in our annual water sharing service in September!

Thanks!

SUSTAINABILITY



Finding More Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Footprint

On July 20th, the UCC Sustainability Small Group met to share our successes and failures as we work towards a more simple and sustainable lifestyle. Here are some of the highlights from our meeting:

Andy Miller joined us to share some Transportation insights both as an urban planner and as a bike commuter.

We also joined by sustainability advocate Erin Augustine whose visit to UCC in April 2020 led to the formation of our group. She added her insights to a great discussion about alternatives to flying and the ins and out of owning a fully electric vehicle.

And as usual, we reviewed the goals we had set for ourselves in five different areas: Food, Housing, Transportation, Goods, and Services.

Some of our goals around Transportation included:

- Bike more
- Seek alternatives to flying
- Take the train
- Sell excess vehicles
- Reduce gasoline consumption to one tank a month
- Plan shopping/errands more carefully to take fewer trips



We shared lots of sustainability tips and resources:

[Bee Joyful - Zero Waste Market:](#) 243 S Kalamazoo Mall, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 - alternatives to common single-use plastic items. Package free shopping (bring your own jars) with refill stations for soaps, shampoo, body wash, powder toothpastes, clays, salts, water, and more!

[Shady Side Farms](#) in Holland sells grass-fed lamb and beef, certified organic heirloom dried beans, polenta and grits, and wool products including dryer balls.

[The Dutch Reach Project](#) A safer far-hand technique for getting out of a car that helps prevent dooring accidents and other crashes that can injure & kill bicyclists.

[E-Bike Conversion Kits](#) are an affordable way to make biking easier. You can convert an existing bike by using a bolt-on kit that works pretty well at about 1/2 to 1/3 the cost of a new bike.

[Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story](#) An estimated 1.3 billion tons of food (40% of all food grown and 1/3 of all food produced for human consumption) is wasted globally each year according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. This heartwarming film follows a couple who decides to see if they can sustain themselves on foraged food for 6 months in an attempt to waste less. It may inspire you to reduce the food waste in your life. (Continued on [Page 12](#))

SUSTAINABILITY



Climate Change: Should you fly, drive or take the train? An exploration by the BBC about the most planet-friendly options for travel. (Spoiler Alert: Take the train!)

The Sustainability Small Group is open to anyone interested in joining us on our sustainability journey. Our next meeting is on **Monday, August 21st at 7:00 PM** via Zoom. Our discussion will focus on activism and we will watch and discuss a short film: *Joanna Macy and the Great Turning*.

To join the Sustainability Small Group Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/94705183271?pwd= SXAwMGdSZjMzdWJ2SENScWlkSTlZdz09>

Meeting ID: 947 0518 3271

Password: 394963

If you would like more information about the UUCS Sustainability Small Group, contact [Miriam](#).

**Kalamazoo
Climate
Crisis
Coalition**



FRIDAYS FOR THE FUTURE

In collaboration with the international movement inspired by Greta Thunberg, the [Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition](#) began organizing weekly meetings to inform and network the local community for action on the climate crisis. The global pandemic caused these events to pause. Starting in September, their actions will resume. Starting September 29, every Friday

at noon there will be quality and engaging sessions from a range of experts and advocacy groups on the causes, consequences, and actions for a carbon-neutral future. Make a commitment to participate in these actions and help bring about a Green Revolution before it is too late!

September 27 – "The Scientific Case for Urgent Action on Climate Change" - David Karowe

October 4 – "Institutions and Politics of the Climate Crisis" - Paul Clements

October 11 – "Climate Refugees, Migrants and Displaced People" - Deirdre Courtney, Casey Schotter and Allen Webb

October 18 – "Empowering Youth to Act" – Kalamazoo Central High School

October 25 – "Meet the KCCC" – Arcus Center

November 1 – "Climate Action Planning in Higher Education" - Jeff Spoelstra and Sara Stockwood

November 8 – "Day of Student Action-TBA" - Kalamazoo Central High School students

November 15 – "Low Carbon Cooking" Chefs: Hristina Petrovska and Lauren Johnson

November 22 – "Gathering and Gifts: How to Holiday Differently" - Jenny Doezema

December 6 – "Michigan Climate Policy" - Denise Keele

December 13 – "Eating for Climate Resilience" - Jenny Doezema and Hristina Petrovska

SOCIAL JUSTICE



The November Election is mere weeks away. Remember, *“Engaging people in the political process may be the single most important thing we can do right now as people of faith.”* What are you doing to UU the Vote?

The ‘gold standard’ of voter engagement is a personal request. The easiest and most impactful thing you can do this election season is to encourage your friends, your loved ones, your co-workers, everyone you meet to get registered, get informed, and get an absentee ballot. Don’t be afraid to share the ways your UU principles inform your vote!

A hand-written note, even from someone you do not know, has been shown to be another powerful way to get infrequent voters to the polls. An easy way to do this is to sign up to get a packet of postcards from Moms Rising. This non-partisan progressive group is targeting women with children who are registered but vote infrequently. They will send you everything you need to fill out ten postcards (or more if you are feeling ambitious). You return the postcards to Moms Rising in a postage-paid envelope that they provide and they will make sure the postcards get to the voter before the general election. Visit www.momsrising.org to sign up.

Be sure to come to our next **Program Council Meeting on Sunday, August 9 at 11:00 AM** to share what you have been doing to UU the Vote and help us to brainstorm other ways we can engage voters. If you are interested in organizing a covid19-safe, non-partisan, congregational activity around voting, talk to Program Council Chair, [Erin Michael](#).

To connect with other UUs from around the state doing UU the Vote work, consider joining the [Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network’s](#) weekly GOTV (Get Out the Vote) Action Group Zoom call on **Tuesday evenings at 7:00 PM**. Contact Miriam in the office for login information.

The Unitarian Universalist Association would also like to hear how our Unitarian Universalist faith provides you a source of spiritual nourishment and discernment that as you work to engage voters. How do you fill your cup as you work for justice? Share your stories, quotes, or message about how your faith is supporting you at the [UU the Vote website](#). Submissions will be shared on social media to give us all the inspiration and strength for the struggle that lies ahead.



The next election day is on **August 4, 2020**.

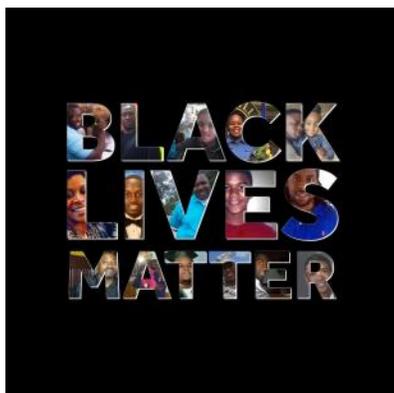
Polls are open from **7:00 AM—8:00 PM**

The last day to request an absentee ballot in-person from your clerk’s office: **August 3, 2020 at 4:00 PM**

The deadline to return a completed absentee ballot: **August 4, 2020 8:00 PM**

This info and all the other voting information you need can be found at www.Vote411.org

SOCIAL JUSTICE



One of the observations in *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the recently released report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change that analyzes structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism, is that there is a 'lack of common commitment to anti-oppression and multi-cultural work' in our congregations. Too often black people, indigenous people, and people of color face ignorance and unintentional aggression from white Unitarian Universalists as they engage with our congregations and organizations. The report suggests that failure to take part in regular and

on-going anti-racist work is preventing Unitarian Universalism from becoming the diverse and inclusive faith communities we aspire to be. The more white people in our congregations who participate in anti-racist workshops and trainings, the better equipped we will be to build a truly Beloved Community that benefits us all.

We are fortunate to have organizations in our community dedicated to providing these kinds of trainings. One of these, **ERACCE (Eliminating Racism & Creating/Celebrating Equity)**, provides organizing, training, and consulting to institutions interested in dismantling racism. Due to COVID-19, ERACCE is not meeting in person right now but are offering their training online.

They will be offering Introduction to Systemic Racism Workshop is September 23 –24, 1–4 PM. Participation on both days is required. The purpose of this workshop is to provide an opportunity for the participants to develop shared language for talking effectively about systemic racism, explore an introductory analysis of systemic racism, and examine basic strategies for dismantling racism There is a sliding scale fee. For more information check out the [ERACCE website](#).



Thank you to Rev. Gy, Nancy and Joe Calme, Darby Fetzer, Kimberly Ridley, and Steve, Grayson, and Nick Tasko for representing UCC at the Black Lives Matter support rally held in Schoolcraft on July 8, 2020. Some handed out water, anti-racism resources, and voting info to participants and others joined in and marched and chanted. All answered the call to show up, to bear witness, and side with Love.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

R.E.flections

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



I have been spending time during the July break from regular religious education offerings sitting with some of the things I read in ***Widening the Circle of Concern***, the report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change which spent the last three years studying structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism.

Here is what I have been thinking about (these are all quotes from the report):

A higher percentage of children in our nation than ever are of color or multi-racial

Youth and young adults are already more expert than older members of our community on what it means to live in an increasingly diverse and multicultural world and their leadership is essential to our continued work.

Despite periodic and episodic attempts to address this [the legacy of white supremacy and oppression] and to address personal bias, we [Unitarian Universalism] have not sustained these efforts and now find many of our congregational practices lacking in the standards of cultural competency found in many workplaces.

We witness a growing and cavernous gap between generations exacerbated by a lack of investment in technologies and methodologies that can help us understand and better comprehend generational differences.

Increasingly younger generations are the ones exiting religious institutions

What is at stake [as we attempt to dismantle white supremacy and oppression in Unitarian Universalism] is nothing less than the future of our faith.

It is a lot to think about. Figuring what to do with the information has been challenging as well. I am grateful that we are embarking on a year of exploring 'Revolution' at the same time that Commission on Institutional Change is challenging us to be changemakers not only in our own little church but as part to the wider Unitarian Universalist movement. To be the change we wish to see in the world we will need to be intentional. We will need to prepare. Change can be difficult. For a small church and an even smaller Religious Education program, our efforts seem can seem meaningless.

The words of social activist and Catholic anarchist, Dorothy Day, inspire me as we begin this intentionally transformative year. "People say, what is the sense of our small effort. They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words, and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do." May it be so.

Online Religious Education

Until regular services resume, our Religious Education classes will meet on Sundays at 1:00 PM via ZOOM video-conferencing. Please contact [Miriam](#) for login information.



CALENDAR



AUGUST 2020

Sunday, August 2

10:00 am - Rule of Benedict with Bill Spaid
 11:00 am— Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM
 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids

Tuesday August 4, 11, 18, 25

11:00 am—Virtual Coffee with Rev.Gy via ZOOM

Sunday, August 9

10:00 am—Willingness with Rev. Gy
 11:00 am—Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM
 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids

Wednesday, August 5, 12, 19, 26

5:00 pm —Guided Wellness Meditation via ZOOM

Wednesday, August 26

12:00 pm—NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sunday, August 16

10:00 am - We Are the Revolution with Adel and Tess Johnson
 11:00 am— Program Council via ZOOM
 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids

Thursday, August 6, 13, 20, 27

7:00 pm —Virtual Happy Hour via ZOOM

Sunday, August 23

10:00 am - Inspiration with Rev. Gy
 11:00 am—Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM
 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids

Friday, August 14

1:00 pm—Women’s Book Group via ZOOM

Monday, August 17

7:00 pm—Sustainability Small Group

Sunday, August 30

10:00 am - Courage with Rev. Gy
 11:00 am—Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM
 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids

Saturday, August 22

8:30 am—Virtual Men’s Group Breakfast via ZOOM

Important Meeting Dates:

Board of Trustees: Wednesday, August 5 at 4:30 PM

Sunday Services: Wednesday, August 12 at 5:30 PM

Stewardship: Thursday, August 13 at 1:00 PM

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



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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

Miriam Epskamp
Office Administrator and
Director of Religious Education
uucommunity@gmail.com
Church office: 269-324-7262
Cell phone: 269-993-8758

Nick Sienkiewicz
Music Director
nicholas.d.sienkiewicz@wmich.edu

2019-2020 Board of Trustees

Nancy Calme
Erin Michael
Darby Fetzer
Larry Higgins
Freya Lake

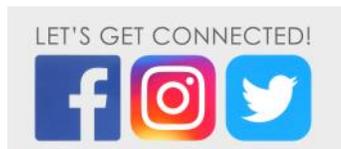
**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, August 26th at NOON**

Please send submissions to:
uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

10441 Shaver Rd.
Portage, MI 49024
269-324-7262



uucommunity@gmail.com
www.uucommunitychurch.org
www.facebook.com/uuccswmi
twitter.com/uuccswmi
www.instagram.com/uuccswmi/



**SPIRITUALITY FOR
DIVERSE PATHS**

BLACK LIVES MATTER