



CommUnity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan September 2020

September Services

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

September 6: *Curiosity with Rev. Gy*

Very challenging times such as these invite us to question everything, even our most deeply held beliefs. Looking at ourselves and the world with renewed curiosity can be uncomfortable, but a shift in perspective is often necessary for growth and change.

September 13: *Unity with Rev. Gy*

In years past, we have often celebrated Water Communion on the second Sunday in September by bringing water from places of importance and combining them in a communal bowl to symbolize the connectedness of our community. This year we will celebrate water communion in a new way, but the message of unity remains the same for our congregation, our community, our country, and our world.

September 20: *The Revolution Starts With You: A Talk About Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation with Stacey Ledbetter and Sholanna Lewis*

Learn about the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Kalamazoo's Law Design Team and current efforts towards healing our community. Stacey Ledbetter and Sholanna Lewis will explore the history of policing, impact of mass incarceration, and discuss what we can all do to challenge and transform the criminal justice system.

September 27: *Stowegood*

Karen Taylor *Good* (Grammy-nominated singer songwriter) and *Stowe* Daily (singer songwriter and bestselling author) came together a few years back to create inspiring music. They more than achieved their goal. They are also gifted speakers and will provide a time of beautiful music and a meaningful message for us.

For the latest, up-to-date information about our Sunday Services visit our website: www.uucommunitychurch.org



Spiritual Theme for September SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE

Futurist Willis Harmon once wrote, 'a paradigm is the basic way of perceiving, thinking, valuing, and doing associated with a particular vision of reality.' The ongoing racial, environmental, economic, and health crises have opened our eyes to the inadequacies of our old ways of thinking, valuing, and doing. We need a paradigm shift.

This month's spiritual theme invites us to think deeply about the change we would like to bring about in the world. It invites us to consider:

How does today's period of crisis represent an opportunity for transformation?

What new experiences or information do we need to be able to create change?

How can we cultivate the curiosity and flexibility required to dismantle old systems and create new ways of doing things?

What do we need to start doing, keep doing, or stop doing to transform ourselves and the world?

Join us each Sunday as we consider these questions & more in a month of Shifting Perspective.

FROM THE MINISTER

From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

"Come here," [Goliath] said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" - I Samuel 17:44

I imagine that most of us have heard of the battle between David and Goliath. It is the epitome of the underdog story.

Goliath was a giant, believed to be about 6 feet 11 inches. He was a seasoned warrior, feared by many. Certainly, his appearance alone had to have been intimidating. He was not only towering over everyone he came in contact with, but he was also heavily armed and armored, skillful with the sword and spear. It is believed that his armor alone weighed one hundred pounds and protected him from head to toe. Well almost from head to toe.

Goliath was a Philistine and they were skillful soldiers and sailors. They came ashore in Palestine to overtake Bethlehem and divide Israel in two.

When King Saul learned of the approaching enemy and their intention, he immediately summoned his army. The Philistines set up camp on the southern ridge of the Elah while the Israelites hunkered down on the northern ridge with the valley standing between them. To attack, either side would have had to descend into the valley and then climb to their death on the other side. Neither party seemed to want to stomach that.

Eventually the Philistines sent forth Goliath who challenged the Israelites to a one-on-one fight with the promise that if the Israelite won, the Philistines would disarm and serve the Israelites as slaves. If Goliath won, well, you guessed it, the Israelites would instantly become slaves to the Philistines.

No Israelite seemed to want to engage in this epic battle. Day after day Goliath came forth, taunting the Israelites, humiliating them with vile insults. The impasse remained until one day David, a small boy, a shepherd by occupation, visited the troops to bring food for his soldier brothers. Just about the time of his arrival Goliath came down into the valley and the name-calling began. David took it to heart. He decided to fight the giant warrior.

Goliath wasn't impressed by the young boy who wore only his shepherd's clothes and carried no visible weapons. The Israelites were equally unimpressed by the boy's enthusiasm.

Goliath expected the boy to come directly to him to fight, but David had other plans. He never intended to engage in a one-on-one deadly struggle. He was going to play by his *own* rules, not the ones established by Goliath.

So he went to a stream and picked up five smooth stones. He placed one in his sling and in seconds the battle had ended. He aimed his rock at the giant's forehead, the only exposed part of his body. The shock was enough to cause Goliath to either die or lose consciousness. David cut off Goliath's head, as was the custom of the day, and with that the battle was settled to everyone's astonishment. (Continues on [Page 3](#))



FROM THE MINISTER

Why am I telling you this story? For two reasons. On the one hand, I want you to remember that underdogs do win. On the other hand, don't forget that the strong aren't without vulnerabilities.

It seems to me that today we are also engaged in an epic battle. Racism and White Supremacy have been woven into the fabric of our collective story for centuries. There have been many struggles throughout history to rid ourselves of these ills with little to no avail. It appears that our current days will go down in history as one such struggle. Perhaps it will be remembered as one of the last ones, where the underdog came out on top. I say it is about time.

The struggle engages the powers to be and they appear mighty and well-armed with money and resources. The other side has the rightness of principles and values and are armed with nothing more than our bodies and voices. It appears to be one of those David and Goliath struggles.

The Goliath of our days is not without vulnerabilities. They may appear to be invincible, but this is just a smoke screen. The values they espouse are of yesterday. The only way they can prevail is if we give up, if we stop putting our bodies on the line and giving our voice power. We are called to be resilient. We are called to spot the chink in the giant's armor and take advantage. We are called to "play the game" by rules established by us.

I have hope that we will bring about systemic change. The time has come; the time is now.

Here's to the underdog!



We Light this Chalice....

The Sunday Service committee is seeking videos of YOU lighting and extinguishing a chalice to be used during an upcoming service. Sunday Services hopes that being able to see different faces and hear different voices will help make our Sunday mornings even better than they are now.

In the videos, please say aloud our usual lighting and extinguishing words:

In the light of truth, in the warmth of love, we gather to seek, to sustain, and to share.

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

If you would like, you can preface the lighting and extinguishing with words from our [Lay Leader Script](#), your own thoughts, a short reading, or nothing at all. It is up to you.

You can record the videos on your laptop, your phone, or whatever device you have handy. Please make sure there is a separate video for the lighting and extinguishing to make it easier for the Zoom Tech to share them during the service. Send your recordings to the office at your convenience.

If you have any questions or need guidance on creating videos, contact [the office](#) or a member of the Sunday Services Team: [Rev. Gy](#), [Joe Calme](#), [Kimberly Ridley](#), and [Regena Nelson](#).

GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

Our Upcoming Guest Speakers

Captain Stacey R. Ledbetter (retired) served over 25 years at the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety. Her expertise is in Community Policing and Cultural Awareness Training, through which she built strong and trusting relationships with many in the Kalamazoo community. She rose through the ranks from line officer to Captain; and was the creator of many successful initiatives, including, but not limited to: The KDPS Diversity and Community Engagement Speed Networking Dialogue events which focused on bridging the gap between law enforcement and Black/African American males. Capt. Ledbetter is committed to doing volunteer work, presentations, speaking engagements, trainings, and special projects through her company, Black & Blue Networking & Consulting, LLC. She is also on the leadership team for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Kalamazoo. She is a native of Detroit, MI, and earned both her Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and Master's Degree in Public Administration from Western Michigan University (WMU).



Sholanna Lewis has helped establish and lead the Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation (KZCF) and is now the TRHT Director. Prior to leading TRHT, she was a member of the grantmaking team at KZCF and has also served as the center manager at Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership at Kalamazoo College. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science and psychology from the University of Southern California and a master's in public administration from WMU.

Karen Taylor Good is the Grammy-nominated songwriter of *How Can I Help You Say Goodbye* and other radio hits by Patty Loveless, Al Jarreau, Melissa Manchester, and many others. She has recorded albums with Willie Nelson, Al Green, and Dolly Parton. Her songs have been used by organizations including *ChildHelp USA* and the *National Hospice Foundation*.



Stowe Dailey is a singer-songwriter, best-selling author, and recent cancer survivor. She co-wrote the hit song *Long Time Comin'* for the group Shenandoah. Her album *Angel Chants* was the soundtrack for *Angel Stories*, featured on the Learning Channel. She has co-authored five books including *Flying High* which was included in the 'I Can Do It' conference in Toronto.

Based in Nashville, Tennessee these presenters have shared their musical keynotes, workshops, and concerts across the US, Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. **Stowe Dailey** and **Karen Taylor Good**—Together, they are **StoweGood!**

CARING COMMUNITY

SEPTEMBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

As long as the candle is still burning, it is still possible to accomplish and to mend. – Rabbi Yisrael Salanter

As this pandemic experience continues, our UUCC community has continually found new ways to meet needs and care for each other. That process continues, and the Caring Team asks for your input regarding evolving ways to communicate more immediately about our members' challenges and successes.

As was announced recently, a time of sharing Joys and Concerns will open the coffee hour after Sunday Service. You may notice some repetition and up-dating of news in the weekly email and the newsletter, so that those who miss a Zoom opportunity will still get important information. Please observe and offer your comments in the next weeks. And as always, please be sure to alert the Caring Community contact team or Rev. Gy if you are aware of an individual or issue that has been overlooked.

Andy Miller is all about water recently. He has entered the water for exercise and fun, then found that water returned the favor by entering his home (plenty of exercise for Andy, fun- not so much). Tree roots clogged his sewer system and, mysteriously, 3" of non-sewer water appeared in the basement. Andy is looking at the bright side – a head start on clearing accumulated "stuff" from his home.

Judy Pigg- Behrendt shared the glad news that her partner, Bev, will be moving back to Michigan!

Marsha Laya has taken on a warp-speed project making masks for all the students at a local school in time for the start of classes. She has accomplished this one-handed after dislocating her elbow in a fall.

Nancy and Ron Crowell shared the bittersweet news that they sold their cottage on Fine Lake .

Stephanie Grathwol has faithfully seen her cousin through another round in her battle against cancer. We continue to hold her and her cousin, Cindy, in our thoughts and prayers.

Darby Fetzer has reached out for referrals to someone who can serve as another assistant to her mother. Contact Darby for details if you know of such a compassionate and skilled person.

Our Rev. Gy had an early August visit to the ER, this time for a work injury that required eleven sutures. Gy and Patti are finding great joy in their new home.

September celebrations: Herb Gross will celebrate 95 years on 9/5. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, Herb!!!

Julie Keleman will be blowing out birthday candles on 9/17 – we hope she gets her wish! Bev and John Folz enjoyed wonderful days "away" at a cottage with daughter, Carla, and others. That was the August build-up for a big September, beginning with their anniversary (married 9/14/63) and ending with John's 95th birthday on the 29th.

In memoriam: We remember Alice Foote 9/24/12. Alice and Lin, whom we remembered in last month's article, were founding members of UUCC, and Alice's contribution was felt often behind the scenes. She strengthened many committees by "encouraging" members to assume leadership. It was almost impossible to say "No" to the force called Alice, because she herself worked harder than she asked you to. Their interest in the health of the church continued long after their move to Indiana. They were much beloved.



Contributed to the newsletter on behalf of the Caring Community by [Judy Oliver](#). Sharing is Caring!

STEWARDSHIP



Save the Date for the Auction: October 17

We will not let the pandemic stop us from holding our annual goods and services auction! This year we will hold a *virtual* silent and service auction. The silent auction items will be available for online bidding from October 11 - 17. The live service auction will be held via 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. Turn your imagination loose as you explore the virtual/covid19 safe donation possibilities that will make our online auction a bigger success than ever before!!

This year's annual operating budget charges the Stewardship Committee (and all of us) to raise \$8,000 to help cover expenses. The Auction is our biggest fundraiser, and we count on your enthusiastic support.

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

End-of-Year Finance Report

From [Tami Brozovich](#), Finance Team Chair

We ended the 2019/2020 fiscal year (July – June) with a \$13,285 surplus in the General Fund; which brings our General Fund Balance to \$47,916 (this total is the culmination of all surpluses and deficits since our church began). This is great news as the budget we passed in the spring of 2019 was for a (\$8,658) deficit.

This surplus is due to the fact that we received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan from the government for \$17,417. We expect that we will not have to repay the loan. Without the loan we would have ended the year with a (\$4,132) deficit, which is less than the deficit we had budgeted for the year. This was due to the fact that our expenses for the year came in under budget in almost all categories. It takes all of us to make the church fiscally healthy and I think this shows that we are all doing a great job. Thanks to the Board, Kimberly Ridley and Joe Calme (my fellow Finance Team members), and the whole congregation for helping to keep the church financially healthy!

Summary for the fiscal year 2019/2020 General Fund

	Income	Expenses	Surplus/(Deficit)
Actual	\$119,752	\$106,467	\$13,285
Budget	\$102,574	\$111,232	(\$8,658)

STEWARDSHIP



After much research, discussion, and debate the Board of Trustees decided to authorize the use of the building for a LifeLine Health Screening on Wednesday, September 23.

LifeLine has assured us that this event will be very different than the events we have hosted in the past. They will have no more than ten people in the room at any one time and everyone will be required

to wear a mask. They have also instituted new protocols and procedures (in accordance with the CDC) to keep everyone safe and healthy.

In addition, the Board requested and LifeLine agreed to add UU Community Church to the Covid19 liability waiver that all patients are required to sign. The Board also put together the following plan to make sure the building is clean and virus-free for the event:

- ◆ The cleaning staff will clean the building on September 18 taking extra special care to sanitize the tables and chairs LifeLine will use in addition to the high use areas, the bathrooms, and the kitchen.
- ◆ The building will be **closed to everyone** from **September 18—September 22**. If no one enters the building, it will reduce the risk of someone inadvertently spreading Covid19. If you are a keyholder we ask that you do not enter the building for any reason during that time.
- ◆ Following the Health Screenings on September 23, we will again close the building to everyone until the cleaning staff comes the following week to sanitize everything again. We anticipate the building will be open for use again by September 28. Guidance will be posted on the front door.

Your help with these safety protocols is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions about the Life-Line Health Screenings or the plans put in place to keep everyone safe, please contact Board President, [Nancy Calme](#).

Mask Fundraiser for UCC

Thanks to the efforts of member Marsha Laya, we have beautiful hand-sewn face masks available for a donation to UCC.

Having an extra mask or two can come in handy to make sure you have enough while one is being washed or to keep in your car. Contact the Nelsons (nelsonr@wmich.edu or 269-553-6621) to purchase your mask today! They can arrange delivery or you can pick them up at their house anytime.

A happy customer writes, *"I like being able to tighten the mask securely to my face so it does not move around. Marsha Laya has done a wonderful job of making comfortable, multi-layered face masks in a variety of colors."*



Limited Supplies! Get your mask today!

LEADERSHIP

Board President's Corner

[Nancy Calme](#)

Recently my Sapphire Gem hen, "Gemma", turned up lame and was unable to walk or stand without falling over. In a flock of chickens, anyone with a wound tends to be set upon by her sisters and it is not a pretty situation. To save Gemma, I pulled her out of the coop and set her up in a box by herself. She squawked and flapped her wings in a panic over being handled and I saw that besides the hurt leg she had lost a lot of feathers from the abuse she had suffered.



Over the past couple of weeks, Gemma and I have developed a little bit of a bond. In the morning, I take the screen off the top of her box and she hops out to wander the stall for the day. She squats down submissively to be picked up and I can examine her hurt leg and stroke her new sprouting feathers without any complaints. She has regained her appetite, her strength, and her curiosity. Soon she will rejoin the flock and we'll see if she can hold her own once again. I don't know if her little bird brain can understand what a gift this experience was for her. It exposed her to a different way of living that did her a lot of good and probably saved her life.

This is not just a farm story, of course. Our country has also been forced, squawking and flapping, into a new confinement due to the Coronavirus. Social distancing constraints have turned everything on its head. The fact that the safety rules have evolved as scientists learn more about what is needed to fight the virus is infuriating to many people. We Americans like feeling that we have more control.

I am trying to look at this in a different way, much like my chicken did. Being forced to change is hard, but it opens our eyes to possibilities that we never would have considered if other doors had not closed. Things that once seemed essential can be let go and replaced by other ways of

doing things. Things we once took for granted are looking more precious and we crave ways to get them back.



As a church community, we are only half-way through this journey. We must keep finding ways to maintain our relationships and not leave anyone behind. We need to think creatively about how to take leaps forward that we would never have been able to do without this forced pause. As we sit tight to wait out the danger, I hope we can get stronger and more resilient like Gemma did and come out the other side with new tools and perspectives.

PROGRAM COUNCIL

Program Council—Where, Together and Apart, We Get Stuff Done

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

Do you know what is missing from Program Council? YOU! Programming at UCC happens by, for, and because of YOU! Everyone who tunes in to one or many of our virtual offerings is a vital part of our community and is welcome and belongs to Program Council. Currently, we meet virtually via Zoom on the second Sunday of the month shortly after our church service.

At our last gathering we celebrated EIGHT successes from our first speaker in our Happy Hour Speakers Series to our Youth Group's reading/discussion of the book *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewel, to the kick-off service of this year's theme REVOLUTION, and much more!

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, **September 13**. Looking forward to being with you!

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND!

- **Get Out the Vote!:** Many opportunities are available no matter your comfort level for involvement. UU the Vote: <https://www.uuthevote.org/> Check out this link to sign up for calling banks and email campaigns. The League of Women Voters' site www.vote411.org allows you to register to vote, check your voter registration, find your polling place, see your ballot, discover upcoming debates, and more. The NAACP has information about its programs [at www.naacpkalamazoo.org](http://www.naacpkalamazoo.org)
- **Join in ISAAC's Virtual Journey from Kalamazoo to D.C. for Racial Justice:** Our church community is a member of ISAAC. We are hoping to get 25 individuals signed up to participate to get us to D.C. to march for racial justice. Go to walk.isaackalamazoo.org and click on the "register" button to sign up. This event runs from August 15 to September 20! Log your steps or miles, share a photo (optional) and get updates on progress. Added bonus is getting that exercise!
- **Welcoming Congregation Renewal:** The UUA is asking Welcoming Congregations – congregations which have completed a program focused on intentionally creating space which welcomes all people as they are, focusing on LGBTQ persons – to renew their intentions for this program. Program Council has agreed to take on Step 4 (of 5). This step invites the congregation as a whole to attend a webinar, watch a movie, read a book or other activity, then discuss meaning and takeaways. Details are included in our weekly emails. We need one or two people to work with Rev. Gy to choose the topic piece and dates for the webinar/seminar, leading the discussion and sending the after survey (already created). Interested? Contact Erin Michael.
- **Generosity Sundays:** Our first Generosity Sunday is September 13. We will have a recorded message from ISAAC speaking to their Virtual Journey event (see details above) and upcoming plans for racial justice action. In June, OutFront Kalamazoo will be our recipient. Please bring your ideas for our two open slots to the Sept. 13 meeting.

See you on **Sunday, September 13 at 11:00 AM!**

Thank you for all you do! Stay well!

Frank and Ernest



CONNECTIONS

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, enjoy a virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM

How to Connect: Login information for these gatherings are on the UUCalendar. Reminders are sent by email either the day before or the morning of the activity. If you would like to be added to (or removed from) the Reminder 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 uccswmi or UU Community Church of SW Michigan.



Chris Praedel

A Conversation with Chris Praedel

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 September, we will be joined by Kalamazoo City Commissioner, Chris Praedel. Commissioner Praedel will be with us for virtual Happy Hour on **Thursday, September 24th at 7:00 PM.**

Elected in 2019, Chris Praedel's first term as commissioner has been eventful. The City of Kalamazoo has been dealing with a wide range of serious issues from a housing crisis, gun violence, and the Covid19 pandemic, to sharp public criticism over the actions of the police department. We look forward to hearing his perspective on things and learning more about how the city is approaching these many crises.

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.

FELLOWSHIP AND FUN

Women's Book Group

[Stephanie Grathwol](#), Chair

September Selection:

American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins

Friday, September 11th at 1:00 PM

Book discussion via Zoom

Login information can be found on the [UUCC Calendar](#)

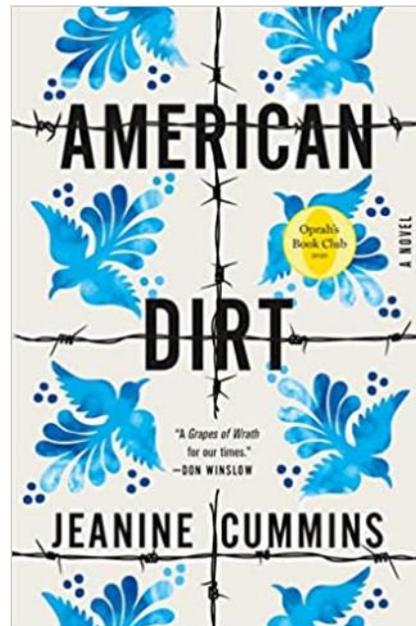
From Goodreads:

Lydia Quixano Pérez lives in the Mexican city of Acapulco. She runs a bookstore. She has a son, Luca, the love of her life, and a wonderful husband who is a journalist. And while there are cracks beginning to show in Acapulco because of the drug cartels, her life is, by and large, fairly comfortable. When Lydia's husband publishes a tell-all profile of Javier, the jefe of the newest drug cartel that has gruesomely taken over the city, none of their lives will ever be the same.

Forced to flee, Lydia and eight-year-old Luca soon find themselves miles and worlds away from their comfortable middle-class existence. Instantly transformed into migrants, Lydia and Luca ride la bestia—trains that make their way north toward the United States, which is the only place Javier's reach doesn't extend. As they join the countless people trying to reach el norte, Lydia soon sees that everyone is running from something. But what exactly are they running to?

The Women's Book Club starts with a short business meeting followed by the book discussion led, this month, by Marsha Laya.

All are welcome! Please contact Stephanie (sargg.64@gmail.com) for more information.



Men's Group Breakfast

Saturday, September at 8:30 AM

The monthly gathering of the Men's Group via ZOOM continues to be an important source of community and companionship for many in the congregation. Newcomers are always welcome.

Please contact Ken VanEselstine 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 [UUCC Calendar](#).

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Learn About the Arab-Palestine Conflict with Rev. Harold Beu

Given that Israel has been a client state of our government and given the seemingly intractability of the conflict in that tragically and ironically named The Holy Land, it behooves us American citizens to understand the history of Israel/Palestine.

In this course, Rev. Harold Beu will lead you on an exploration of the origins of Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, the British Mandate of Palestine, the U.N. Partition, the War of Independence (for Israelis) or the Nakba (or the Catastrophe for Palestinians) and the Six Day War (1967) among other topics including the current conditions of the people there.

Rev. Harold W. Beu is a retired Unitarian Universalist Minister and high school teacher of history, civics, math and psychology. As a student of religion and of Jewish heritage, he has been driven him to understand the importance of Judaism and Islam to the world and to have concern how the conflict affects people's understanding of those religions.

The class will begin in September and is tentatively scheduled to meet on Fridays at 4:00 PM. Contact Harold (haroldbeu@gmail.com or 266-381-6439) for more information and to reserve your spot. A free-will offering for the class to benefit UU Community Church will gratefully be accepted.

One More Month of Guided Wellness Meditation!

Great news! Eric Nelson, UUCC member and experienced meditation coach with [Stress Less Kzoo](https://www.stresslesskzoo.com), has agreed to continue his weekly **Guided Wellness Meditation** sessions via Zoom on **Wednesdays at 5:00 PM** through the end of September. (Visit the [UUCC Calendar](#) for login info.)

Eric has over 30 years experience in training and research in contemplative and meditative science and served over 20 years as Program Developer for the Fetzer Institute of Kalamazoo. We are grateful for his willingness to share his time and expertise with us.

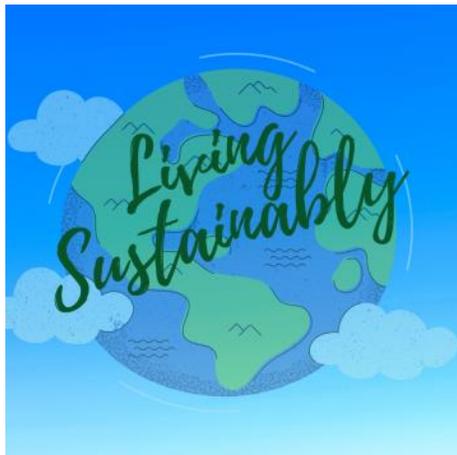
It is never too late to start your mindfulness practice. Eric provides background information and answers questions at each meditation session making it a great experience for both beginners and veteran practitioners. You can drop in occasionally or choose to make mindfulness practice a regular part of your week. Either way, we hope you will take advantage of the wonderful gift Eric is offering to us.

If you have any questions or would like more information you can contact Eric at:

StressLessKzoo@gmail.com or 269-553-6621.



SUSTAINABILITY



Finding More Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Footprint

On August 17th, the UUCC 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:

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

Services include the energy and resources expended on our behalf by businesses and government. The only way we can impact this is through advocacy and action.

Some of our goals around Services included:

- ◆ Support this small group
- ◆ Publish a Sustainability page in the monthly newsletter
- ◆ Write one letter a month to lawmakers about sustainability issues
- ◆ Donate to conservancy groups
- ◆ Write letters in support of Amtrak
- ◆ Publish a UUCC Vegetarian Cookbook
- ◆ Engage in Environmental Justice issues
- ◆ 'Be Our Own Oprah' and share our experiences and ideas with everyone we can



We watched the short film *Joanna Macy and the Great Turning* and talked about her ideas about action as well the opposing view articulated in *Lockdowns Highlight the Climate Challenge*, an article in the Wall Street Journal by Bjorn Lomborg. We found things in both that we agreed and disagreed with. We ended our time together by brainstorming sustainability actions our church community might take.

Our ideas included:

- ◆ Taking action to encourage the decommissioning of the Line 5 oil pipeline in the Straights of Mackinaw
- ◆ Investing in solar panels and other sustainable technology for our church building
- ◆ Providing space for a CSA distribution
- ◆ Joining and working with Hope for Creation, an interfaith climate change group
- ◆ Planning activities that make action easy such as a letter-writing or phone-banking party
- ◆ Effortless Mindfulness Classes to encourage a Shift in Consciousness



(Sustainability News continues on [Page 14](#))

SUSTAINABILITY

We shared our latest sustainability tips and resources:

[Plastic Free July](#) – ideas and resources to help you reduce the amount of single-use plastic in your life

[The Story of Stuff: How Our Obsession with Stuff is Trashing the Planet, Our Communities, and our Health—and a Vision for Change](#)

a book by Annie Leonard

[Slow Death by Rubber Duck: How the Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Life Affects Our Health](#) a book by Rick Smith and Bruce Lourie

[The Story of Stuff](#) – A 20-minute video based on the book and narrated by Annie Leonard



The Sustainability Small Group is open to anyone interested in joining in us on our sustainability journey. Our next meeting is on **Monday, September 21 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom.

To join the Sustainability Small Group Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/94705183271?pwd=SXAwmGdSZjMzdWJ2SENScWlkSTIZdz09>

Meeting ID: 947 0518 3271

Password: 394963

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



Practice Composting

Take the items out of the waste stream where they don't belong!

What is composting? Composting breaks down organic matter which includes anything that was once living. This means you are recycling nutrients and returning them to the earth so you can use the end product to improve the quality of your soil.

What can you compost? Vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells, lawn clippings, wood ash from your fireplace, natural fibers, & more.

Benefits of Composting:

- ◆ Diverts organic matter from landfills, helping to reduce methane emissions
- ◆ Increases carbon in the soil and keeps it out of the atmosphere
- ◆ Recycles nutrients and improves soil quality
- ◆ Saves water—healthy soil needs less added moisture
- ◆ Saves you money—less need to purchase fertilizers
- ◆ Raises awareness—about food waste in your life

Source: Sierra Club

Ready to get started? Visit the MSU Extension website for [Great Compost in 5 Easy Steps](#) or if you don't have space for an outdoor bin start a Worm Compost Bin with [Vermicomposting 101](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE



It has become apparent that the attacks on our democracy will not end. It is up to us to do everything we can to build power and take action to mobilize voters in 2020.

You can help by joining other UUs from around the country to UU the Vote! Here are some things you can do:

Try Phone-banking! Visit the [UU the Vote Phone-banking Hub](#) to get started. You'll find upcoming dates for national phone-banking days of action and links to the various states to get to their locally specific scripts.

Phone-banking is done as a group via Zoom. You will receive orientation and training then make calls together for camaraderie and support. There is even a debriefing/celebration at the end of the session to help make the work fun, faithful, and fulfilling.

Come to a Postcard Party! If you signed up for a packet of postcards through Momsrising.org and would like to gather with others in the congregation via Zoom for a postcard writing party sometime in September, please contact [the office](#).

Encourage Others to Vote! Please continue to encourage friends, neighbors, and family members to vote. Here the important dates:

*Election day is Tuesday, November 3, 2020.
The deadline to register online or by mail is Oct 19.
The deadline to register in-person to vote is Nov 30.
The deadline to request a ballot by mail is Oct 30.
The early voting period runs from Sept 21 to Nov 2.*

For more information about voting, to see what is on your ballot, for non-partisan candidate information, and more, visit www.Vote411.org.

Interfaith
Strategies for
Action and Advocacy
In the Community



SAVE THESE DATES:

Sunday, September 13– Generosity Sunday

We will have a Generosity Sunday Collection to benefit ISAAC. We are a member of this local organization which is a collaboration of many faith traditions working to solve local issues.

One such event is their current [Virtual Journey from Kalamazoo to D.C. for Racial Justice](#) for which 18 of us are already participants. During the Sunday Service on September 13, we will share a video recording from an ISAAC representative to learn more about what ISAAC is actively doing to improve the quality of life in our community and how you can support their efforts and be a part of the change!

We offer two ways for you to make tax-deductible Generosity Sunday donations through our church. You can mail a check payable to UUCS with 'Generosity Sunday' in the memo line to 10441 Shaver Road, Portage, MI 49024 OR give electronically using Give Plus + app on your smartphone or the [Donate](#) page on our website and selecting 'Generosity Sunday Donation.'

Thursday, October 22—Public Meeting

Please plan to attend the virtual ISAAC 2020 Public Meeting: [Building the Beloved Community](#) on October 22. (Time and access information will be announced closer to the date.) There will be presentations on new policy changes, the current areas of action – Anti-Racism, Affordable Housing, Gun Violence Prevention – and commitments of support from public officials and civic leaders.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

R.E.flections

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



The kids and I have been reading and discussing [This Book is Anti-Racist](#) by Tiffany Jewel for several weeks now. In one of our first sessions, I asked the kids if they had ever felt silenced when talking about race or racism. Were they ever hesitant or afraid to speak out?

Most of them answered no—some because they were brave enough to confront their peers, others because they believed that had never heard anything that required them to speak out.

I confessed to the kids that there had been times when I heard things that were racist, but chose not to speak out. I told them that I had experienced times like that at UU Community Church. This surprised the kids very much. They did not believe that things like that would happen at our church. It did not occur to them that people they knew at UUCC would say racist things. Are you surprised?

In last month's newsletter, I wrote about *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the final report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change, which examines structural and systemic racism and white supremacy culture within Unitarian Universalism. (It is available to read online [HERE](#) if you are interested. I highly recommend it.)

In the course of their work, the Commission conducted over 1100 interviews of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color in our congregations and organizations. The vast majority of those interviewed reported experiencing "discriminatory and oppressive incidents or cultures within Unitarian Universalist circles." This is a hard truth to hear.

We believe ourselves to be thoughtful and intelligent people. We believe ourselves to be committed to justice, equity, and inclusion. We also must remember, to quote an anonymous internet sage, "No matter how open-minded, socially conscious, anti-racist we think we are, we still have old, learned, hidden biases that we need to examine. It is our responsibility to check ourselves daily for our stereotypes, prejudice, and ultimately, discrimination."

I am fortunate that, for the next few months anyway, I will be engaging in some honest and transparent conversations about race and racism every week with some pretty amazing young people. They motivate me to try to do better and live up to our highest Unitarian Universalist ideals.

So, if you hear me speaking up and calling out when I hear things that I feel are racist, you will know why. I hope you will call me out when I miss the mark. Let us commit to learn, grow, and dismantle white supremacy together. 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



SEPTEMBER 2020

<p>Sunday, September 6 10:00 am - Curiosity with Rev. Gy 11:00 am— Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM</p>	<p>Tuesday September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 11:00 am—Virtual Coffee with Rev. Gy via ZOOM</p>
<p>Sunday, September 13 <i>Generosity Sunday</i> 10:00 am—Unity with Rev. Gy 10:45 am—Virtual Coffee Hour via Zoom 11:00 am—Program Council 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids</p>	<p>Wednesday, September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 5:00 pm —Guided Wellness Meditation via ZOOM</p> <p>Wednesday, September 23 9:00 am—4:00 pm LifeLine Health Screening 12:00 pm—NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p>
<p>Sunday, September 20 10:00 am - The Revolution Starts with You with Capt. Ledbetter & Shoshanna Lewis 11:00 am— Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids</p>	<p>Thursday, September 3, 10, 17 7:00 pm —Virtual Happy Hour via ZOOM</p> <p>Thursday, September 24 7:00 pm —A Conversation with Chris Praedel</p>
<p>Sunday, September 27 10:00 am - StoweGood 11:00 am—Virtual Coffee Hour via ZOOM 1:00 pm—ZOOM Meet-Up for Kids</p>	<p>Friday, September 11 1:00 pm—Women’s Book Group</p>
<p>Monday, September 21 7:00 pm—Sustainability Small Group</p>	<p>Saturday, September 19 8:30 am—Virtual Men’s Group Breakfast via ZOOM</p>

Important Meeting Dates:

Board of Trustees: Wednesday, September 2 at 4:30 PM
Sunday Services: Wednesday, September 9 at 5:30 PM
Stewardship: Thursday, September 10 at 1:00 PM

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



Unitarian Universalist
Community Church

JOIN US FOR A
Fresh Perspective

SUNDAYS AT 10:00 AM
FACEBOOK LIVE



**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

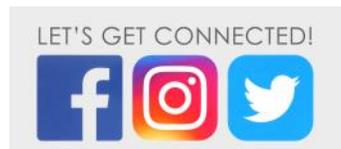
**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, September 23 at NOON**

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/

