



CommUnity Matters

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

DECEMBER SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM via Zoom and [Facebook](#)



December 6: *The Gift of Belonging* with Rev. Gy

Humans are social animals hardwired with a deep need for belonging. When this need goes unmet it can leave us emotionally scarred. What does it take to belong to a group, an organization, or a community? How do we create a culture of acceptance and inclusion?

December 13: *The Gift of Diversity* with Rev. Gy

The human quest for belonging can sometimes lead us to 'ideological bunkers' where we start dividing the world into 'us' versus 'them'. This dichotomy destroys our empathy and honesty. Learning to look past labels with an open heart and an open mind will help us embrace otherness and difference.

December 20: *The Winter Solstice* with UUCC Members and Friends



We will pause for a moment during the hectic holiday season to celebrate the Darkness and the Light with stories, meditations, and songs gleaned from A Winter Solstice Singing Ritual written by Julie Forest Middleton and Stasa Morgan-Appel.

December 27: *Virtual Burning Bowl* with Rev. Gy

At the dusk of the old year, it is our tradition to release all the emotional ties and bonds that no longer serve us by feeding them to the flames of the Burning Bowl. Like so many other holiday traditions this pandemic year, we will have to re-imagine this ritual, but we will still provide you an opportunity to hit the spiritual reset button and reflect on making a fresh start.

Our spiritual theme for December:



Consider these thoughts on WELCOME from Rev. Peter Morales: Think of a time when you have felt truly welcomed. Feel that warmth again; see those smiles and feel those arms embracing you. What a gift it is to be welcomed.

Hospitality, true hospitality, is emotionally powerful. It touches something very deep in us—our profound human longing to feel accepted, to belong, to be loved, to feel safe, to be valued and respected.

True hospitality is a spiritual practice. Like meditation or prayer, hospitality connects us with a deep truth and compassion that transcend our selves. Our sense of isolation and individualism is an illusion that cuts us off from what is real, true, loving, and sacred in life.

Our practice must extend to opening our hearts to strangers throughout our lives. We need to practice openness to people who make us uncomfortable: people who come from different ethnic groups; people older or younger; people who are gay, straight, or conservative; people who struggle with mental illness. When we welcome what is uncomfortable, we grow.

INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY

CHALICA

Chalica is a week-long celebration of our Unitarian Universalist Principles that begins on the first Monday in December and lasts seven days. Each day of Chalica is dedicated to one principle.

1st Principle: *The inherent worth and dignity of every person;*

2nd Principle: *Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;*

3rd Principle: *Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth;*

4th Principle: *A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;*

5th Principle: *The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process;*

6th Principle: *The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;*

7th Principle: *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

Consider observing Chalica this year by lighting a chalice, spending some time reflecting on the meaning of each day's principle, and then acting on it as a way to ground yourself in your Unitarian Universalist values as we head into the holiday season and the New Year.

A complete Chalica guide with readings, meditations, and suggestions for putting your principles into action can be found [HERE](#).



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Winter Solstice Service



Readers are needed to help with the Winter Solstice service on **Sunday, December 20 at 10:00 AM**. We will be using parts of the *Winter Solstice Singing Ritual* by Julie Forest Middleton and Stasa Morgan-Appel during the service and will need several people willing and able to read parts live on Zoom on Sunday morning. To be a reader you will need a reliable internet signal and be able to access Zoom on a device that has a web camera. You will also need to attend a couple of rehearsals the week before. If you would be interested in being a reader for our Solstice service, please contact Miriam (uucommunity@gmail.com or 269-993-8758)

QiGong at UUCC

As the winter weather turns frigid and our Covid quarantine drags on, having a way to get together *and* stay healthy together seems like a wonderful idea. If there are enough people interested we will start offering weekly QiGong exercises via Zoom in January.

QiGong is an ancient Chinese form of 'moving meditation' based on controlled breathing, and gentle movements. Regular practice can help improve flexibility and balance and reduce stress.

Our QiGong session will start with 15 - 20 minutes for check-in and chat time and followed by a 30 minutes streamed recording of the QiGong movements led by certified instructor Ed Kehoe.

If you would be interested in attending QiGong at UUCC, please contact [Freya Lake](#) or the [office](#). If there are enough people interested, we will schedule a day and time and get started.



Jury Duty Experiences by [Kimberly Ridley](#)

Have you ever served on a jury?

I have a deep interest in this important service within our justice system and know it is just as important to democracy, liberty, and justice as voting. I would like to talk with you about your experience.

If you are willing, I would appreciate it if you reached out to me for a conversation. Call, text, or send me an email and we can schedule a time to talk on the phone about it. Contact Information: 269-569-3658 or ridleyk@hotmail.com

CARING COMMUNITY



DECEMBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

It is a serious thing just to be alive on this fresh morning in this broken world.

~Mary Oliver

It seemed that November continued the shifting sands of our national predicaments. As soon as the election was completed, the rising degree of Covid19 risk faced us with difficult decisions to make for ourselves, friends, and families about gathering for Thanksgiving. Now we wait for the possible fall-out from those decisions and consider the same need for decisions regarding the December holidays.

The times call for creativity and a nimble spirit so that we can be safe and joyful in different ways. The times, as we go into winter, also call for greater attention to how we are coping, and call for loving consideration of how we can support our UUCG friends. Please be aware that some in our community who have fared well during the early months may find, as separation continues, that they need more contact with others and help to get into the community for other needs.

Judy O. is thankful, in a way, to Covid19 for the opportunity in America for a re-set. The news that many stores were closed on Thanksgiving, for the first time in years, shows us that we can change the focus back to family for that day. The rapid improvement in air quality (needing only a camera to measure) after only weeks of reduced emissions shows us that we can reverse some of the damage to our environment if we have the will. Some have liked the simpler pace and policies, leaving space for self-discovery.

As the pages of the calendar turn, the birthdays just keep rolling around. In December we have NINE friends blowing out those candles! Celebrating are Harold Beu, Matthew Nelson, David Bott, Tami Brozovich, Rev. Gy, Nancy Calme, Mary Roscoe, Steve Tasko, and Marcus Ragains. So many candles – so many joys. Blessings to all!

Happy Anniversary to friends Denise Hartsough and Mark Wheeler, marking 30 years.

Those of us who knew founder Herb Tompkins will enjoy remembering him. He left us in December 2001, just one week shy of age 85. When we return to the sanctuary, you can see photos of Herb playing music for special services and read some of his haikus in the albums we keep. Herb was multi-talented and always willing to tell a story, sing a ditty, or wear a funny hat.

Our community has rallied around Rev. Gy and Patti as they face again the challenge of obtaining effective treatment for the cerebrospinal fluid leak which has returned. Members have responded with food and other personal kindnesses. The community is on alert for news about the next steps and how we may further support.

Especially in challenging times, sharing our burdens lightens our hearts and being able to share our joy with a friend and hear their joys gives us new energy. If you want to know how to help, or if you or yours have a need, please reach out to your contact persons: Nancy Crowell, Judy Oliver, and Rita Stevens.

LEADERSHIP

Board President's Corner

From Nancy Calme

I've been dreaming the most vivid stories every night, waking up to a gradual awareness of the shift from fiction to reality. I strain to hold onto the dream for just a few more minutes to marvel at the strange stories my mind wove and to ponder over their meaning. One common theme is being out among people and the sudden panic when I realize I had forgotten to put on my mask. I have heard that this dream is a common one in 2020.



This year has been a one for the record books in so many ways: the politics, the pandemic, and the awakening of so many of us to the social injustice around us. I think we are all just about exhausted. I keep plodding forward from day to day, filling my time with what I can while I wait for things to begin to resolve themselves. They will. We will eventually get vaccines for the virus, the government will begin to function rationally again, and hopefully, enough people will have woken up to problems that need to be fixed so that we will start on some real repairs.

Can you see the day when we can all gather in one room and smile at one another with more than just our eyes? I would just love to read what the historians write about this amazing period. I want to flip ahead to the last chapter and see how it all comes out. I keep crossing my fingers, hoping that all those I love will be spared from serious illness. If only we can hold out long enough, keeping the infection rates low around us.

Unfortunately, that is not how it is going right now, and people are so tired of being cautious. It disheartens me to see people express their frustration as anger with the people in charge trying to impose controls to hold back the virus. It is creating so much chaos and crisis in health, education, and people's economic stability, but only by working together will we manage to slow it down and get things on the road to "normal."

As I write this, it is Thanksgiving Day. We are looking forward to a visit from our well-quarantined daughter and her two little dogs. We will attempt a Zoom-enabled visit with our extended family over dessert. I am grateful that technology has made this difficult period just a little more bearable and that there are ways to still connect face-to-face even if it is on a screen. I hope for all my church friends that you, too, will have time with your families in some way, to stop and give thanks and smile.

- ◆ President Nancy Calme, Vice-President Erin Michael, Secretary Darby Fetzer, and Trustees Larry Higgins and Freya Lake serve on the UCC Board of Trustees.
- ◆ The Board meets on the **first Wednesday of the month at 5:30 PM** via Zoom (login information is on the [UCC Calendar](#))
- ◆ The minutes from their last meeting can be found [HERE](#).
- ◆ Any questions? Contact Nancy Calme (nancy.calme@gmail.com or 269- 271-8851)

PROGRAM COUNCIL

Program Council—Where, together and Apart, We Get Stuff Done!

From [Erin Michael](#), Program Council Chairperson

Program Council is YOU! Everyone is invited to create programming at UUCG via Zoom, second Sundays around 11 AM.

At our last meeting we celebrated what we got done! Phenomenal services by Kathleen River Artz-Iffland, Rev. Ferris and Darby Fetzer, Happy Hour speaker Dr. B Jo Ann Mundy, Freya's jam fundraiser (\$1500!), Rev. Beu's Arab-Palestine Conflict classes, updated Covid-19 guidelines, Rita Stevens joined the Caring Community point persons, a hugely successful Service Auction (\$4000+) and so much more!

Bring your voice to our next meeting **on Sunday, December 13**. See you there!

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

- ◆ **Congolese Family:** Donations are needed for our sponsored family for the holidays and to help them through the death of Jean's (father) brother.
- ◆ **Caring Community:** Huge THANK YOU to Judy Pigg Behrendt as she steps away from her role as a Caring Community point person to care for her partner, Bev.
- ◆ **2020-21 Church Strategic Goal updates:**
 - #1 Technology: current equipment is being tested to determine a "needs" list for live-streaming services now and into the future – may need to apply for Chalice Lighter grant. We would need 10% of our congregants to be Chalice Light givers – if you wish to know more, check with Nancy Calme.
 - #2 Landscape/Building: work on the building and landscaping was completed in October. Andy Miller is planning updates to our front garden. Bids are being collected for ductwork, air filters and roof repair. Spring clean-up day are in the works.
- ◆ **Adult Enrichment:** Multiple opportunities are available. Check the website and newsletter for dates/times for ongoing Moral Decision-Making series and a one-time class on Hiroshima, History, Consequences and Implications. More planned for 2021!
- ◆ **Guest at Your Table:** This annual UU Service Committee program is in progress. Donations can be mailed into the church or paid via Give Plus online, notate "GAYT" so our finance team knows where to send the donation.
- ◆ **Marketing Team:** Ron, Mary R and Darby are asking for creative ideas on how to get the word out to the public about Sunday services and our Adult Enrichment opportunities. The BEST way is to personally invite people!
- ◆ **Covid-19 Guidelines:** The Board is monitoring and updating these guidelines weekly and posting the weekly email. No one is using the building currently.
- ◆ **Christmas Eve Service:** We are doing our own virtual Christmas Eve service on Thursday, 12/24. UUCG's virtual Holiday Card needs you to share photos of traditions, both new and old to the church office.
- ◆ **UU the Vote:** Get out the vote opportunities for Georgia's Jan. 5 run-off senatorial races! Write postcards, make calls or donate to get out the vote!

STEWARDSHIP



Guest at Your Table, our annual collection for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), started on November 29 and will continue until December 31.

You can lend your support to the UUSC and their partner organizations by learning more about the work they do. You learn more with the UUSC Message of the Day calendar (contact the [office](#) if you would like one), by reading the Guest at Your Table articles in our Weekly Email, and by clicking [HERE](#).



Another important way you can help is by donating to UUSC's *Guest at Your Table* campaign. Your donations will help to provide Chief Shirell, Mark, Suja, Adela, and others the resources they need to do their important work.

You can mail a check with 'Guest at Your Table' in the memo line to the church building at 10441 Shaver Rd, Portage, MI 49024

Or, use the Give Plus app or the [DONATE](#) button on our website to electronically. Please make sure to choose 'Guest at Your Table' in the menu.

With your help, we can build a fairer and more peaceful world for everyone.

Thank you for your generous support! The UUC Youth Group



February FUNraiser

Please save the date for the

BINGO NIGHT

Saturday, February 13, 2021

6:30 PM

There will be prizes to celebrate Valentine's Day

CONNECTION

Virtual Gatherings Help Us Connect

Even though our doors are closed, there are many opportunities to meet each other virtually 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 Guest presentations and guided discussions on a variety of subjects to help us learn and grow via ZOOM

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

Sundays at 10:45 AM Following the Sunday Service enjoy a virtual Social Hour via ZOOM

How to Connect: Login information for these gatherings are on the UCC Calendar. 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.



JOIN US ON

December 24
5:00 PM
via Zoom

**Enjoy songs, stories, a time for sharing, and a reading of
'Twas the Night before Christmas from Betty Lee Ongley**

CHRISTMAS EVE

CONNECTION

Women's Book Group

[Stephanie Grathwol](#), Chair

December Selection:

The Dutch House by Ann Pratchet

Friday, December 11 at 1:00 PM

Book discussion via Zoom

[https://zoom.us/j/99607835644?](https://zoom.us/j/99607835644?pwd=b2V0QkM4MC9lMDQwR0pldVFkdWlvUT09)

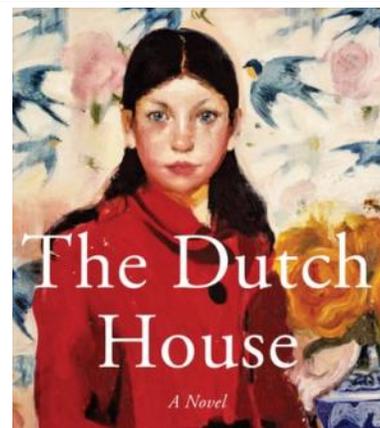
[pwd=b2V0QkM4MC9lMDQwR0pldVFkdWlvUT09](https://zoom.us/j/99607835644?pwd=b2V0QkM4MC9lMDQwR0pldVFkdWlvUT09)

From Goodreads:

*At the end of the Second World War, Cyril Conroy combines luck and a single canny investment to begin an enormous real estate empire, propelling his family from poverty to enormous wealth. His first order of business is to buy the Dutch House, a lavish estate in the suburbs outside of Philadelphia. Meant as a surprise for his wife, the house sets in motion the undoing of everyone he loves. Set over the course of five decades, *The Dutch House* is a dark fairy tale about smart people who cannot overcome their past*

The Women's Book Club starts with a short business meeting followed by the book discussion led, this month, by Christiene Bartley & Rita Stevens. All are welcome!

Please contact Stephanie (sargg.64@gmail.com) for more information.



Men's Group Breakfast

Saturday, December 21 at 8:30 AM

All are welcome to join the Men's Group for their monthly gathering via ZOOM to enjoy virtual breakfast, companionship, and conversation.

Please contact [Ken VanEseltine](#) with your questions or to let him know you are coming.

[https://zoom.us/j/97856246726?](https://zoom.us/j/97856246726?pwd=WTlQaG1qZ3liZERFQmpkdXhqYVhoZz09)

[pwd=WTlQaG1qZ3liZERFQmpkdXhqYVhoZz09](https://zoom.us/j/97856246726?pwd=WTlQaG1qZ3liZERFQmpkdXhqYVhoZz09)

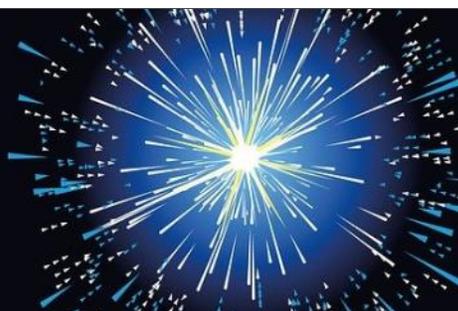
Meeting ID: 978 5624 6726

Password: 749176



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

Happy
New Year



New Year's Eve Happy Hour

Come and start your New Year's Eve celebrations with a **Happy Hour and Trivia Contest** at UUC.

Thursday, December 31

7:00-8:30 PM

To join in the fun:

[https://zoom.us/j/476401695?](https://zoom.us/j/476401695?pwd=ejNCNW5scGU4b1ZwMkloKzVBd0VVQT09)

[pwd=ejNCNW5scGU4b1ZwMkloKzVBd0VVQT09](https://zoom.us/j/476401695?pwd=ejNCNW5scGU4b1ZwMkloKzVBd0VVQT09)

Meeting ID: 476 401 695

Passcode: 449120

Contact Miriam if you have any questions.

LEARNING AND GROWTH

Thoughtful Thursdays

We have made a few changes to our regular gathering on Thursday evenings to help better meet the needs of our community as we enter the 9th month of the pandemic. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunities for learning and growth these programs will offer.



First Thursdays—THEMATIC EXPLORATION

Happy Hour on the first Thursday of each month will be dedicated to an exploration of the current spiritual theme. On **December 3 at 7:00 PM**, we will think about November's themes of:

WELCOME, BELONGING, and RADICAL HOSPITALITY. Consider the following questions:

What does it take for you to accept yourself, just the way you are?

What does it take for you to feel as if you belong to a group?

Have you ever been hurt by an unmet need for belonging?

How, if at all, did you find a healing path forward?

How do you prevent yourself from demonizing those you disagree with?

What are the ways that you intentionally strive to embrace those who are different from you?

Second Thursdays—MORAL DECISION MAKING

Happy Hour on the second Thursday of the month will feature a lively group discussion of thorny ethical questions. The topic for exploration on **December 10 at 7:00 PM—*Is It Ever Permissible to Lie?***

Third Thursday —A CONVERSATION WITH....

Once a month we continue to invite special guests to join us to engage in conversation and answer our questions on a variety of topics. In December we are excited to be joined by Marcel 'Fable the Poet' Price on **Thursday, December 17**. Save the date and plan to join in the conversation.

Other Thursdays—HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve fall on Thursdays this year and we have events planned. Learn more about these gatherings on pages 8 and 9.



A Conversation with Fable the Poet

Our Happy Hour guest on **Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 PM** will be **Marcel Price**, also known as Fable the Poet.

Mr. Price, author of [Adrift in a Sea of M&Ms](#) from NeuroQueer Press, was the Poet Laureate of Grand Rapids from 2017-2020. He is a Bi-racial North American writer, teacher, community activist, performer, motivational speaker, and award-winning poet. Fable The Poet is noted for his work with youth; spreading Mental Health Awareness using his own stories to share a

much-needed message:

"At times, we all feel fragile. We are all paper boats entertaining the waves of life."

Marcel Price is also an official partner of Mental Health America and has sat on panels across the country discussing the importance of discussing Mental Health awareness with our youth.

He is looking forward to joining us and advises, "Buckle up, prepare to make a new friend, and enjoy the ride."

LEARNING AND GROWTH

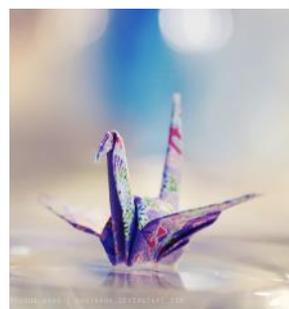
Civil Conversations Small Group

Following the success of the Civil Conversations Workshop led by Darby Fetzer in November, we are starting a Civil Conversations Small Group that will meet once a month on the second Tuesday and provide opportunities for participants to practice and grow proficient at engaging in conversations that are respectful, truth-seeking, and focused on understanding rather than changing minds. As time goes on, the group may also explore how to use the skills they have developed to foster civil conversations in the wider community.



The first meeting of the Civil Conversations Small Group will be on **Tuesday, January 12 at 7:00 PM**. Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom login.

Anyone interested in intentionally working to build bridges towards greater understanding in the world is welcome to join this small group. It is not necessary for you to have attended the previous workshop. If you have any questions about this small group, contact [Darby Fetzer](#).



Hiroshima: History, Consequences, and Implications with Rev. Harold Beu December 4 at 4:00 PM

During the holiday season when our minds turn to thoughts of 'peace on earth, goodwill towards all' take a moment to join Rev. Harold Beu to explore the history of the creation, implementation, and continued global implications of the atomic bomb and the ways we can solve our disputes not with the war option but with negotiation, diplomacy, and compromise. This class will meet for one day. Please contact the [office](#) to reserve your spot.



Apple Classes in 2021

From Marsha Laya - 123easy.apple@gmail.com

Mark your calendars and pass along this information to your friends and family in Michigan, in the U.S., and around the world!

Apple Sessions will begin again on January 4 and run through March 29 on Monday evenings from 6:30 PM until about 7:30 PM.

Because of Covid19, all sessions will be held via Zoom. Registration is free and there is no limit to the class size. A donation of \$5.00 is requested for each session attended. All donations will be collected after the last session on March 29.

Interested? Have a friend or family that may be interested? Need help with Zoom? We got you covered.

Click [HERE](#) for a schedule of the sessions to be held. Registration is required to receive the Zoom invitation. To register email Marsha at 123easy.apple@gmail.com.

Is It Ever Permissible to Lie?

We've all told lies and can think of reasons to justify them, but philosophers are surprisingly divided on whether deceit is ever ethical.

At our next Moral Decision Making Thoughtful Thursday on **December 10 at 7:00 PM**, we will hear what Plato, Kant, Machiavelli, Bonhoeffer, and others have said on the subject of why we lie and we will discuss together the relationship between truth and freedom, trust and intimacy, and more.

All are welcome to attend this adult enrichment opportunity. There is no need to register. Each session is a stand alone program. You can even bring a friend!



SUSTAINABILITY



Finding More Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Footprint

On November 16, the UUCS Sustainability Small Group met to share our successes and failures as we work towards a more simple and sustainable lifestyle. We also continued to learn more about Socially Responsible Investing (SRI).

Here are some of the resources that were shared during the meeting:

- ◆ **Green America:** www.greenamerica.org. This 501(3)c has a mission of creating a socially just and environmentally sustainable society by focusing on climate change and clean energy, sustainable food and agriculture, responsible investing, and fair labor practices. Their website is packed with useful information.
- ◆ **I.P.C.C.:** www.ipcc.ch This United Nations working group provides scientific reports to policy-makers which thanks to the internet you can read too.
- ◆ **Center for Sustainable Energy:** www.energycenter.org This is another resource for policymakers that provides articles on clean energy for those interested in learning more.
- ◆ **Planet of the Humans:** This is controversial film from Michael Moore about Climate Change and renewable energy. The film has been criticized for spreading incorrect information. You can read a critique from The Guardian [HERE](#).
- ◆ **Biodegradable Garbage Bags:** There are a wide variety of biodegradable trash bags available for purchase online. Earthtechling.com provides reviews of several products that include links to where you can buy them.



The Sustainability Small Group is open to anyone interested in joining us on our sustainability journey. Our next meeting is on **Monday, December 21 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom. We will be discussing sustainable holidays and gift-giving.

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](#).

FAITH IN ACTION

Holiday Giving Tree

A Giving Tree to benefit the Congolese Family is going virtual this year. To keep face-to-face contact to a minimum and keep everyone as safe as possible, shopping for holiday gifts for Jean, Françoise, Kwizera, James, Teddy, and Amelia will be done by a small group of people. Gifts will be delivered to the family just before Christmas. The Congolese Family Team welcomes donations to help them buy toys, clothes, and small household items that will help make the holidays merry and bright for our refugee friends.

You can donate in one of two ways:

Mail a check with 'Congolese Family' in the memo line to the church building at 10441 Shaver Road, Portage, Michigan 49024



Or, use the Give Plus app or the DONATE button on our website to electronically. Please be sure to choose 'Congolese Family Fund in the menu.

Holiday Card

Please be sure to send a holiday photo of yourself (with or without your and your family) to the office by **Monday,**



December 21 at 5:00 PM so it can be included in our 2020 Virtual Holiday Card.

The card will feature pictures and music and will be shared with everyone via email on Christmas morning.

If you need technical help taking a photo or sending one you already have to the office, there are volunteers available to give you hand. We would like to have everyone's beautiful smile included in the holiday card.

If you have any questions or need any help, please contact the [office](#).

UU the VOTE



The 2020 Election season is over but our commitment to bringing Unitarian Universalist values to the ballot box has just begun! We must continue to mobilize voters, counter voter suppression, and engage in spiritually grounded, values-based issue conversations with voters in the coming days. We must do all we can to move forward towards our collective liberation!

Here are some actions you can take in December:

Phone Bank: Contact voters about run-off elections in Georgia! Visit <https://www.uuthevote.org/phone-banking/> to find out the details.

Write Letters: Vote Forward is looking for volunteers to write letters to voters in Georgia to help increase voter turnout. You can sign up to write here: <https://votefwd.org/>

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



R.E.flections From [Miriam Epskamp](#), Director of Religious Education

One of the ways many people in the congregation decided to UU the Vote this election season was to write postcards and letters to voters all over the country to encourage them to go to the polls. I personally wrote a few. It felt good to be part of a proactive collective effort.

That good feeling waned a bit after I had an opportunity to talk to a friend whose child had received one of these handwritten notes. Their response was not what I hoped. They dismissed it with derision. The reason? *It had been written in cursive!* Cursive education has been on the decline in America for decades. It is not uncommon for younger people to be unable to read it. Even though I know this, it was not something that crossed my mind as I was doing voter outreach. I envisioned my postcards as a gift of inspiration and encouragement, but, because of my failure to consider *who* I was reaching out to and what *their* needs were, I may have missed the mark.

And so it goes. The work of building an inclusive and welcoming Beloved Community is challenging. Each time I think I have a good understanding of what is required, I get a reminder of how little I know. Even though I have worked hard to increase my knowledge, I still have times when I stumble over unfamiliar pronouns, mispronounce non-European names, engage in unintentional microaggressions, fail to see the obvious, hurt people's feelings, and otherwise behave in ways that are just not very welcoming.

It is tempting to feel discouraged, but as Dorothy Day reminds us, "No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There's too much work to do." So, I take a deep breath, acknowledge the harm I may have caused, forgive myself, and begin again in love. It is the only way to move forward.

A new month with new spiritual themes of Welcome, Belonging, and Hospitality provides me with an opportunity to consider how I can better interact with people, meet them where they are, and recognize their needs as valid as my own. It is almost certain that I will miss the mark again, but that is ok. I can always begin again in love.

May it be so.



ONLINE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Until regular services resume, our children and youth will meet on Sundays at 1:00 PM via ZOOM video-conferencing. Please contact [Miriam](#) for login information.

Handyman/Mechanic Services

The pandemic has negatively affected our friend David Bott's automotive field service business and he is seeking odd jobs to help ends meet.

In addition to mechanic services, he is an skilled handyman and can manage a variety of indoor and outdoor household jobs.

You can contact David at: truckerdave1214@gmail.com or 269-447-4295.

Your support at this difficult time is appreciated!





CALENDAR



DECEMBER 2020

<p>Sunday, December 6 10:00 am—The Gift of Belonging 10:45 am—After Service Coffee Hour 1:00 pm—Meet-Up for Youth</p>	<p>Tuesday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 11:00 am—Coffee with Rev. Gy</p>
<p>Sunday, December 13 10:00 am— The Gift of Diversity 10:45 am—After Service Coffee Hour 11:00 am—Program Council Meeting 1:00 pm—Meet-Up for Youth</p>	<p>Wednesday, December 2 5:30 pm—Board of Trustees Meeting Wednesday, December 9 5:30 pm—Sunday Services Meeting Wednesday, December 16 12:00 pm—NEWSLETTER DEADLINE</p>
<p>Sunday, December 20 10:00 am—The Winter Solstice 10:45 am—After Service Coffee Hour 1:00 pm—Meet-Up for Youth</p> <p>Sunday, December 27 10:00 am—Virtual Burning Bowl 10:45 am—After Service Coffee Hour</p>	<p>Thursday, December 3 3:00 pm—Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00 pm—Thematic Exploration Thursday Thursday, December 10 7:00 pm—Moral Decision Making Small Group Thursday, December 17 7:00 pm—A Conversation with Fable the Poet Thursday, December 24 5:00 pm—Christmas Eve at UCC Thursday, December 31 7:00 pm—New Years Eve Trivia Night</p>
<p>Monday, December 21 7:00 pm—Sustainability Small Group</p>	<p>Friday, December 4 4:00 pm—Hiroshima with Rev. Harold Beu Friday, December 11 1:00 pm—Women’s Book Group</p>
<p>For the latest, up-to-date information about our activities and events visit our website or online</p>	<p>Saturday, December 19 8:30 am—Men’s Group Virtual Breakfast</p>



**Come, come
 whoever
 you are!**

★
 SUNDAYS
 AT 10:00 AM

★
 Unitarian Universalist
 Community Church



**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
nsienki@iu.edu

2019-2020 Board of Trustees

Nancy Calme

Erin Michael

Darby Fetzer

Larry Higgins

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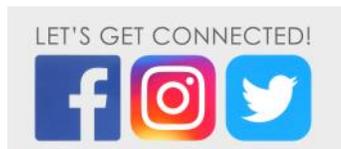
**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, December 16 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:
uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

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269-324-7262



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**SPIRITUALITY FOR
DIVERSE PATHS**

BLACK LIVES MATTER