



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

May 2021

MAY SERVICES

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

May 2: *In Hope...* with Rev. Gy

In order to build a sustainable world, in order for us to thrive, there are a few things we need to work on. At the top of the list for Rev. Gy is inequality. We are going to have to fix that in order to keep hope alive.

May 9: *Nurturing the Future* with Rev. Gy

We are in a constant state of creation whether it is conscious or unconscious. We birth opportunities. We birth circumstances. We birth struggles. What if we increased the level of consciousness around our choices and actions. What kind of world could we create?

May 16: *Thriving with Nutrition and the 4th UU Principle* with Guy Johnson

Proper nutrition can have a big impact on our health and sense of well-being as well as the health and well-being of the planet. Yet the science of nutrition is inexact, and the available data (as well as their interpretation) continue to evolve. This situation is ideal for Unitarian Universalists as they pursue their own free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

May 23: *Defund the Police* with Rev. Gy and Rev. Harold Beu

We will mark the anniversary of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of the police and the massive worldwide protests that followed with a dialog between Rev. Gy and Rev. Harold about the need to find methods of providing safety and security to our communities that do not include the murder and brutalization of black and brown bodies.

May 30: *In Grief..* with Rev. Gy

Grief is a normal human reaction to loss or anticipated loss. The last year has left some of us in grief overload as we try to process countless lives lost to an uncontrolled pandemic, to police violence, to natural disaster; the dread of financial insecurity; the despair for a culture in crisis, and a planet on fire. We know the most equitable and compassionate way of living is to work to alleviate suffering, but where to start?



Our Spiritual Theme for May is:

THRIVE

Thrive (verb: to progress toward or realize a goal despite or because of circumstances; to prosper; flourish)

We know the pandemic has been a much more harrowing and dangerous situation for some of us than for others. As the columnist Damien Barr put it, “We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some only have one oar.”

Covid-19 didn't create this situation. Inequity has been a growing problem in the United States for decades. It has just laid it bare.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith asks us to build a world where all living things have an opportunity not only to survive but to thrive.

This month, let us wonder together what it might take to get beyond our hopelessness, frustration, and cynicism to work together .. to recognize the inherent worth and dignity of all... to bend the arc of the universe towards justice...to transform opponents into friends to dismantle the structures that divide us from each other.

This is our work. We are the ones we have been waiting for. What a blessing we can do it together!

GUEST IN OUR PULPIT

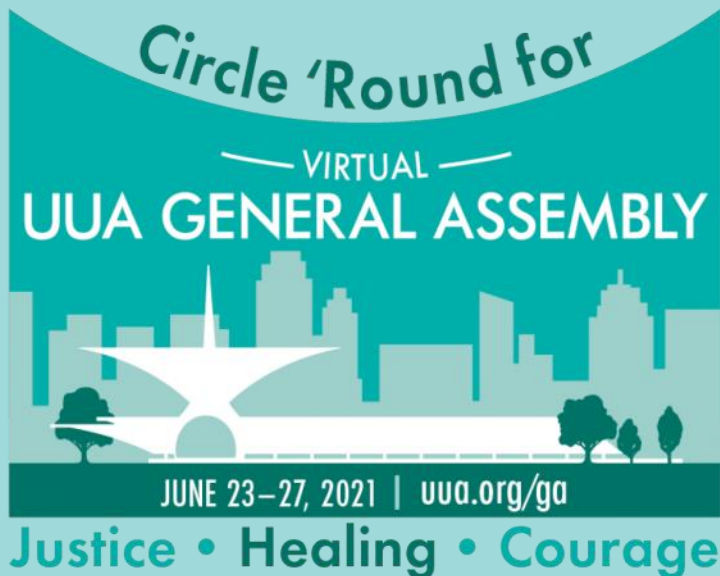
We are excited to welcome Guy Johnson to our virtual pulpit in May!



Dr. Guy H. Johnson is the principal of Johnson Nutrition Solutions LLC, a nutrition-oriented consulting firm that provides industry and professional organizations with comprehensive support for nutrition-related communications, scientific and regulatory initiatives. He is also Senior Advisor to the McCormick Science Institute (MSI), which is dedicated to advancing scientific knowledge on the health benefits of culinary spices and herbs.

Prior to founding JNS, Guy was vice president of nutrition for Kellogg USA. Dr. Johnson's background also includes extensive experience in applied nutrition science. From 1989 to 1998 he was director of nutrition and labeling services for The Pillsbury Company and before that he was director of infant nutrition for Gerber Products Company. He is also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Johnson, a fellow of the American Society of Nutrition and the Institute of Food Technologists, earned a B.S. in food science and a Ph.D. in nutritional sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

When they were based in Portage, Guy and his family were active members of UU Community Church. We remember them each year at our *Guy and Jean Johnson Memorial Chili Supper*.



**STACEY
ABRAMS**

&

**DESMOND
MEADE**



2021 Ware Lecture
UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic processes. Anyone may attend. Registration is now open for [GA 2021– Circle 'Round for Justice, Healing, Courage](https://uua.org/ga). This GA will be 100% virtual. Financial support for registration is available through the UUA on a first come first serve basis. UUCC may have funds available to help offset the cost as well. Reach out to a board member for more information.

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister [Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

*I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the **arc** is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it **bends** towards **justice**.* ~Theodore Parker

We've been living in tumultuous times and this past week was no different. The nation held its breath as it was awaiting the verdict in the George Floyd case. Deliberation was relatively short, the pundits tried to make sense of it, some tried to predict the outcome, the pulse of our nation was tense. When finally the verdict was read and the perpetrator was found guilty on all three counts, we all could finally breathe. We could do the very thing George Floyd was denied.

There are those who give little credit to this victory. They say it was long overdue, in so many other cases the cops were acquitted, this is just one incident and things will go back to how they used to be. Maybe.

I cannot tell the future, I'm much better at predicting the past. Still, I think that this verdict was important and if we are to move forward to a more just society, it was a necessary one. Yes, it was long overdue and I am glad that the jurors decided the way they did.

I understand the indignation of those who have waited for so long to be seen, heard, and believed. I understand that justice shouldn't be so difficult to come by. Yet, in this reality that we live in, this is how deep a hole we have to dig out of. So, we better start shoveling.

I prefer reality over wishful thinking. I prefer to see life for what it is and not for what I would like it to be. When in touch with reality I can make sensible decisions, followed up with sensible actions. When I am out of touch with reality, I get indignant, confused and who knows what else and my decisions and actions reflect the crazy.

If I had a religion, I'd like it to be that of Sensibility. Do that which is sensible. Stay in touch with reality, see it for what it is and act, speak sensibly.

I believe that our generation faces three major challenges, all of them global: global warming, nuclear weapons, and artificial intelligence.

All of these challenges are urgent and require global actions and serious thinking outside the box. If global warming isn't controlled, the other two issues may not matter much. If we should engage in nuclear warfare, it would definitely solve global warming and artificial intelligence wouldn't be much of a problem either. Short of that, though we have to put on our thinking caps and engage as if our lives depended on it.

Recently we watched a documentary together on global warming ***This Changes Everything***. If you haven't seen it yet, I highly recommend it. It is available for free on YouTube. Afterward, a few of us engaged in scintillating conversation and inevitably we started brainstorming on what our church community could do to meaningfully address the issue of global warming?

(Continued on page 4)

FROM THE MINISTER

It turns out we already have a Sustainability Group and we will ask for their help in recommending sound plans of action. We considered planting trees, installing solar panels, installing an electric car charging station, etc. Ultimately, we look forward to receiving the recommendations from the Sustainability Group.

When we finally implement a recommendation, it'll be a victory. It may be small, it may be significant, but either way, it'll be a step in the right direction. And that matters. Just like the verdict in the George Floyd case matters. Even if it was a long time coming. It matters because it gives us all hope that we are moving in the right direction. It affirms that living on principle does pay off. It gives us hope that human beings can do the right thing. Every step in the right direction is a bit of hope restored.

Now we just have to resolve to steadfastly do the next sensible thing. Life and the times will show us what it is. There is an African saying that if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

Here's to us going together, growing together – always aspiring to do the next sensible, kind, compassionate thing.

And so it is.

From the Sunday Services Committee [Joe Calme](#), [Regena Nelson](#), and [Kimberly Ridley](#)

As we approach the end of the 2020/2021 church year, the Sunday Services committee has been looking back on all that the congregation has accomplished. We recognize that our staff have been essential workers helping us not only to survive but thrive during this difficult time. We would especially like to acknowledge the important role that Rev. Gy has played. They have worked under extremely difficult circumstances, with serious health issues, and still managed to exceed our expectations.

- *Rev Gy met with the Sunday Services committee every month to help ensure our services were of the highest quality, whether they were scheduled to speak or not.*
- *Rev. Gy recruited several of our guest ministers and speakers this year using their connections in both the ministry and entertainment communities.*
- *During a global pandemic, Rev. Gy took the initiative to continue our ministry in a virtual environment. In fact, we have met more often than prior to the pandemic! They created "Coffee with Gy" on Tuesdays and the 'Happy Hour' on Thursdays. These events have been well attended and received.*
- *Rev. Gy has helped in recruiting thoughtful speakers for our Thursday gatherings. Consistent with their professional ethics they have insisted that guest speakers are compensated for sharing their wisdom with our congregation.*
- *Rev. Gy has participated in many special congregational events. Recently this included a Program Council-sponsored event to renew UUC's Welcoming Congregation status by having a discussion of the film **Pay It No Mind – The Life and Times of Marsha P. Johnson**. They also hosted another discussion group for the film **This Changes Everything** about climate change, as an Earth Day activity.*
- *Rev. Gy regularly attends district meetings for ministers from small congregations to keep up-to-date with trends in the wider UU community. Through these meetings, Rev. Gy learned that UUC is far and above more active during the pandemic than other small congregations. Conducting weekly worship services, coffee hours, music during services, happy hours and other such meetings is unusual, if not non-existent, at other congregations our size.*

We are grateful for Rev. Gy's innovations and leadership and are looking forward to another amazing year at UUC! Thank you for all you do, Rev. Gy!

CARING COMMUNITY



MAY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

From the Caring Community Team:

Nancy Crowell, Judy Oliver, Rita Stevens, and Nancy Stob



Hooray! It is May! Happy Birthday wishes go out to **Zoe Granberg, Nick Tasko, Andy Miller, Denise Sonier, David Brozovich, and Larry Higgins**. And a very Happy Anniversary to **Denise Sonier** and **Steve Tasko** too! We hope all the celebrations this month are joyful.

It wasn't easy, but **Marcia Adams** has decided: after being a part of the Kalamazoo community since 1953, she will move to the Boston area and the home of her daughter Sally and Sally's husband Paul. Marcia will have not only a room, but rooms — paint colors being chosen as we write. Marcia is pleased with her decision. She notes that the area is home to many UU churches. The move is planned for early July and Marcia will provide us with the mailing address before she leaves.

John Folz continues to struggle with heart disease and dementia, complicated by chronic lymphocytic leukemia. He was recently re-certified for hospice care. Beverly says John sleeps most of the time but has moments of being alert and engaged. Their home at the Fountains is currently closed to visitors due to COVID.

Judy Halseth and **Herb Gross** report that they continue to receive help from his daughters, Nan and Gail. At the end of April, Herb completed 20 radiation treatments on his face, for recurrence of basal cell carcinoma. They are grateful for support from the UUCS community.

His first year of grad school behind him, our music director **Nick Sienkiewicz** has been offered a summer position at French Woods Festival for the Arts in upstate New York. It is a great opportunity, and he looks forward to the adventure.

June 19 is the big day for **Kathryn Ragains** and her fiancé **Michael Wilson**. The wedding will take place up north at the Rifle River property of her parents, Barb and Dick Bott. Plans are in the works for an additional reception in August at Gourdneck Lake's lakeside pavilion in Portage. More information to follow. In more good news, Kathryn's son, 15-year-old **Marcus**, has recovered from a mild case of COVID that appeared in late March.

Even more good news: Continued physical therapy and pool exercises are part of **Freya Lake's** activity package and she is making good progress in her recovery from hip replacement.

Bob McWhorter's stroke of several weeks ago left him with weakness on his left side. Since it still hasn't improved sufficiently, he and **Barb** have traveled to Cleveland Clinic for evaluation. Bob wants us all to know that his lovely wife has done a wonderful job caring for him, which won't surprise anyone who knows Barb.

Snowbird **Kathy Hays** gave us a head start in getting acquainted by ZOOMing in from Florida for UUCS's Qi Gong sessions and other activities. She has set the target date of May 19 for her return to Michigan, at which time we'll be able to meet her in person.

Our long-time snowbird **Marsha Laya** is back in Michigan, fully vaccinated as one of Florida's very first group to receive the vaccine. She is happy to be here and looks forward to seeing everyone. Marsha's long and complicated return drive involved two dogs, a lengthy detour, some Canadian friends, and the Blue Water Bridge. Ask her sometime and she'll tell you all about it!

CARING COMMUNITY

We keep seeing small signs that life is edging toward “normal,” while continually reassessing the risk/reward of activities. **Judy Oliver**, post-vaccines, was able to host her son Miles and his family on a visit from Chicago at Easter. After passing it up last year, they decided to resume the backyard egg hunt with another family (a matter of mental health for the kids and the adults). Likewise, Judy’s son Bruce and family chose to boost their own spirits, including those of the two teens in the family, by spending Easter weekend at a Jersey shore Airbnb. On the other hand, Judy has decided not to chance carrying Kalamazoo COVID to New Jersey. Judy’s wise words on the subject: *“It is a dance we do — all of us — trying to meet conflicting needs.”*

Our hearts go out to **Denise Sonier** and her family. In her own words, *“My beloved Dad passed away this morning, slipped away quietly without fanfare, and without his family.”* Because Denise’s father was located in Sault Ste Marie, Canada, the pandemic’s border closing between the two countries made the situation even more painful for everyone. *“He didn’t deserve to be alone or die alone,”* she wrote. *“My father was a resourceful, hard-working, productive, loving, sentimental man with a ‘can-do’ spirit, and though he was faced with many struggles and losses throughout his life, he always held it together and did what he had to do, providing for his family and being the stable rock... yes, he deserved so much more than the last few months gave him, but I’m thankful for small blessings: acts of compassion, kindness, humor, patience, love.... Alexandre Sonier: August 1, 1931— April 19, 2021”* And we are thankful for his daughter Denise.

After a year of hardly catching sight of one another (except now and then on ZOOM) will we all need to be reintroduced when we’re really back to “normal”? To help us out, Tami Brozovich provides an update on her family’s past year in a report we’ll call **“Catching up with the Brozoviches”**:

Our home has become central to all of our daily activities. Kevin set up a home office when things shut down last year and continues to work remotely for Rose Street Advisors. David set up his computer to deal with the demands of online school and is just finishing his first year of college at KVCC, all done virtually. He also started playing the French horn and takes virtual music lessons. He has taught himself how to use a marching band drill writing program and is going to help his high school band director write drill for the opener of the marching band show for next fall.

Our two older boys are also faring well. Alex and his partner, Liz, live in Hazel Park with their dog, Luna. Alex works as a technical consultant for a company that keeps clients’ websites and apps running and has been working from home since the pandemic began. This opened the possibility that working remotely can be a permanent thing for him, and they are considering a move back to Kalamazoo this summer.

Ryan and his partner, Tracey, live in West Bloomfield. Ryan recently started a new job at GM as an electrical engineer. The process of interviewing and starting a new job during a pandemic was interesting to see, as it was all virtual. He continues to work remotely. Tracey is also an engineer working at GM. They are currently house hunting.

As for me, Tami, life has become a lot less hectic without the daily busyness of a high schooler. Now that we are all home all the time, I’ve been keeping things running smoothly to support David and Kevin in their work. I have never cooked so much in my life! This endeavor has been helped by the farm share we purchased from Joe and Nancy Calme through the church auction. Their wonderful auction item has provided us with lots of good food this year. As we have not gone to a restaurant for this whole year and have rarely gotten takeout, Kevin and David gifted me with a whole weekend of their cooking for my birthday in December. It was wonderful!

LEADERSHIP



Board President's Corner

From [Nancy Calme](#)

The UUA (Unitarian Universalist Association) and its MidAmerica Region staff have really come through in this pandemic year with all kinds of useful remote offerings. They have provided forums with other small congregations to talk about how we are surviving in this socially-distanced environment. Our Covid Response Task Force attended meetings about how to approach restarting in-person services.

Our minister, office administrator, and I all attended one on April 24 called the "Future Change Framework".

What better time than after a big shake-up to stop and reevaluate? We have had to stop some old practices and learn how to start new ones in order to keep in business. This is today, but what about the Great Unknown to which we are headed? What have we lost that we want to rebuild? What new ideas were we forced into that we wouldn't want to lose now that we have gotten used to them?

We all dream of "getting back to normal" as soon as possible. I would sure appreciate regaining the things we've lost such as seeing and touching one another, making music together, and reengaging with children and their parents. We have been in what the workshop leaders call the "liminal space", a temporary, somewhat icky space where the normal rules are gone. The one saving grace of this in-between time is that it can lead to transformation.

While we need the nuts-and-bolts people to focus on how to recover, we also need the dreamers to look at innovation and capturing the novel and emergent practices that we never would have noticed without a jolt to the system. I'm not sure yet how we will do this, but between the board, church staff, and other congregational leaders, I'm sure we can come up with a way forward. Please think about how you can help, make suggestions, and answer the call if you are asked to participate in our "future change framework."

- 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 (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)



SHARED MINISTRY



Committee on Ministry (COM) is Coming Back in 2021-22!

The Committee on Ministry may be the most misunderstood committee that a congregation has. Is it an advocate for the minister—a kind of ministerial cheerleading squad? Or does it represent the congregation’s interests? Beyond that, does it just respond to crises or is it supposed to meet regularly? Is it responsible only for the ministry provided by the called ministers or for the whole ministry of the congregation?

In her book, *Churchworks: A Well-Body Book for Congregations* (Skinner House, 1999), Rev. Anne Heller, district executive of the Pacific Northwest District, writes: “Committees on Ministry are designed to track the heartbeat of ministry within a congregation; how the members...take care of themselves and each other, how the lay ministerial leadership serves a congregation; and how the called minister serves the congregation. It seeks to understand, assess, support, and advocate for robust ministry throughout the context of congregational life.”

One of COM’s goals is to both enhance and protect mission/ministry consciousness. However, when possible, it avoids stating its opinions in favor of creating processes and providing information that empower the party involved to arrive at perceived outcomes that are in the best interest of the congregation’s mission and ministry.

Successful Meeting Necessities for COM:

- Absolute confidentiality by all members.
- Commitment to group wisdom.
- Attendance of non-members by invitation only.
- Always meets at a venue which ensures privacy of conversation, typically not the congregation’s meeting site.
- Not publicized except as to date and contact person for communication of suggestions or concerns.

A small congregation may have a three-member committee. Finding the right people is important – people with vision, who have the confidence of the congregation, who can leave personal biases at the door, who can work in a confidential but not secretive manner. Terms should be staggered, and the committee should meet monthly with a regular agenda so that each aspect of the ministerial-congregational relationship is reviewed. This committee is carefully chosen by the Board and the Minister.

If you have an interest in learning more, go to <https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/forming-committee-ministry>

ANNUAL MEETING

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

In order for the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan to conduct its annual congregational meeting and votes, it will conduct the meeting using the ZOOM video-conferencing application. Zoom allows audio conferencing for those who cannot join with video.

All Members are encouraged to attend this meeting. Members are those who have pledged financial support and have signed the membership book no later than April 23rd, 2021. Per our By-laws, there is no proxy or absentee voting. Members must be present to vote.

Voting and verification that each vote is cast by a member in good standing will be done by hand-raising for those with video or verbally by those connecting by phone.

If you have any questions or concerns about the virtual annual meeting, please feel free to contact Nancy Calme, President, Unitarian Universalist Community Church Board of Trustees.

THE PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET

A first draft of the Annual Budget was prepared by the Finance Committee, reviewed by the Board of Trustees, and presented to the Congregation at a Budget Forum which was held on April 18, 2021.

A final draft of the proposed budget will be distributed to the membership via email in advance of the Annual Meeting but following the May meeting of the Board of Trustees scheduled for May 5, 2021. If you would like a paper copy of the proposed budget mailed to you, please contact the office at uu-community@gmail.com or 269-993-8758.

The final draft will be presented for approval at the **Annual Meeting on May 23, 2021.**

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for your Board of Trustees, please feel free to discuss them with any member. Members include: Nancy Calme, Erin Michael, Darby Fetzer, Freya Lake, and Larry Higgins.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA May 23, 2021 at 11:30 AM

1. Call to Order and Lighting of the Chalice
2. Quorum Confirmed
3. Welcome - Opening Statement
(Board President)
4. Reading and Approval of the Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting (Board Secretary)
5. Presentation of the Annual Budget and Congregational Vote
6. Presentation of Nominees to the Board of Trustees and Congregational Vote Nominees:
Eric Nelson (2-year term)
Judy Pigg-Behrendt (2-year term)
Andrew Miller (2-year term)
7. Presentation of the Nominee to the Nominating Committee and Congregational Vote
Nominee: Nancy Calme (2-year term)
8. Remembering those lost this year:
Elizabeth Fernandez and Jim King
9. Other Business
10. Closing - Extinguish the Chalice

NOMINEES TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At this time the nominees are:

Eric Nelson
Judy Pigg-Behrendt
Andrew Miller

Per our Bylaws, a member of UCC or a group of members may nominate members to the Board of Trustees. A member may also nominate himself/herself. These nominations must be published in the weekly email and posted at the church at least 2 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. You may submit your nominee directly to our Office Administrator for publication. Please post your nominee on our Bulletin Board in the Community Room.

Click [HERE](#) to review a complete copy of the UCC Bylaws.

PROGRAM COUNCIL



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

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

Program Council is YOU! Everyone is invited to create programming and TRANSFORM at UUCU via Zoom, second Sundays around 11am.

We are celebrating! Air filtration and HVAC upgrades! Youth peacefully protesting! Successful generosity celebration with people in the building! Congregation joined MI UU Social Justice Network! New Covid Response Task Force! And much, much more! Bring your voice to our next meeting on **Sunday, May 16**.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND!

- **2020-21 Church Strategic Goal updates:**

#1 Technology: Nancy reported the Generosity Celebration allowed for real-life testing of a hybrid in-person/virtual event and all went well.

#2 Landscape/Building: Eric – air filtration and HVAC are in; bids for electrical are in progress (Community room AC wiring, outdoor lighting); Eric and Rev. Gy will be choosing vanities for upstairs baths. Spring Clean-up not yet identified. Andy shared Crown Vetch as a very low maintenance planting for the Shaver Rd planting area to be done late summer. He will also investigate similar native plantings and buying local. Want to help? Contact Andy or Eric/Kevin.

#3 Adult Enrichment: **NEW** on Fridays, 7pm – All are invited to join Rev. Gy 4/16 thru 5/21 for discussion on the UU book, *A Chosen Faith!* Check website, emails, and newsletter for dates/times for all events on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays!

- **Mushroom Foraging:** This Service Auction item is open to all. See details on page 11. Contact Andy Miller with your questions. Attendees are asked to give a donation for these events.
- **Annual Meeting, 5/23!** Join us to vote on our nominees for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Team, and the 2021-22 church year budget.
- **Program Council Budget:** ISAAC dues (\$400) will be invoiced soon; approved \$100 to be spent on a Thursday speaker in either May or June.
- **Summer FUNdraiser:** Stewardship and Rev. Gy are working to plan for a Covid-safe and fun summer backyard event (at Rev. Gy's home) as a fundraiser. Watch for details!
- **Annual Reports:** If you are a lead of a committee or group, please get your report in to Nancy Calme as soon as possible.
- **Buddy Benches:** Keep collecting plastic caps and contact Freya to get them to her!
- **Covid-19 Guidelines:** **NEW** Covid Response Task Force is created and will monitor changing recommendations to provide guidelines for the weekly email. Watch for updates. Stay well!
- **Community Events – get involved!**
 - Sustainability: 2nd & 4th Fridays, Noon – Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition's *Fridays for the Future* and check out <https://www.goingzerowaste.com/> for tips to live greener. Join the Portage Kids Peaceful Protest in support of Black Lives Matters on Sundays at 12:00 PM by Portage City Hall. Check out links in weekly emails to learn about LGBTQ+ issues and how we can help.

See you at our next meeting on Sunday, May 16, 11:00 AM on Zoom!

Thank you for all you do! Stay well!

FUNDRAISERS



UCC Morel Foray

Saturday May 8

Noon to 4:00 PM

Meet at Milham Park Main Parking Lot

(Rain Date May 15)

Join us for a fun afternoon learning about and hunting for the elusive Morel mushroom. The foray will be guided by MI State Certified Wild Mushroom Expert Andy Miller. We will meet at the main pavilion at Milham Park for some outdoor "classroom" instruction, followed by a trek through the Blanch Hull nature area. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear a good pair of hiking shoes. Walking sticks optional

Additional recommendations on what to bring:

- ◆ *Wear long sleeve shirt and pants*
- ◆ *Bug repellent for mosquitos*
- ◆ *Highly recommended to spray clothing in advance with Permethrin tick repellent (found at most camping and sporting goods stores)*
- ◆ *Bring water and a snack*
- ◆ *Mesh bag or wicker basket*
- ◆ *Folding pocket knife*
- ◆ *Audubon Field Guides to North American Mushrooms and North American Trees highly recommended!*



Questions and additional event information can be directed to Andy Miller at (269) 267-8483. RSVP is appreciated if you plan to attend. The Morel Foray is a FUNdraiser for UCC. A donation by check mailed to UCC or via Give + will be greatly appreciated! See you there!



Freya's Fabulous Jams

Our premiere preserve preparer, Freya Lake, wants you to know that jamming season is coming up shortly, usually by the end of May.

Keep your eye on your inbox and be ready to order your favorite flavors as each comes on the market this year. Every delicious 8-ounce jar of homemade, small-batch jam benefits your pallet and the church coffers.

Freya will again be producing most kinds with 25% less sugar. In previous years she has offered a wide variety of flavors including strawberry, cherry, and peach. If you are new to UCC and unfamiliar with Freya's jams, take our word for it, they are FABULOUS!

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Thoughtful Thursdays

Each Thursday evening we offer opportunities to gather with UU Community Church members and friends for programs and discussions about some of the big questions in life. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunities for learning and growth these programs offer.

First Thursday—A CONVERSATION WITH....

Once a month we invite special guests to join us to engage in conversation and answer our questions on a variety of topics. On **May 6 at 7:00 PM** we are excited to welcome Denise Keele, chair of the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition. Read more about Denise on page 13.

Second Thursday—MORAL DECISION MAKING

The second Thursday of the month will feature a short lecture and a group discussion of thorny ethical questions. The topic for exploration on **May 13 at 7:00 PM** is **Wealth and Money**. (See below.)

Third Thursday—THEMATIC THURSDAY

As Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services Team begin planning for next year, they welcome your feedback on the themes we covered this year and your input on what we might explore next year. To prepare for this meeting, they invite you to reflect on the Sunday services you attended since July 2020 and consider the following questions:

What ideas inspired you? What brought you comfort?

What ideas challenged you?

What ideas were missing?

Where do you think we should go from here?

REVOLUTION

Fourth Thursday — THEATRICAL THURSDAY

Back by popular demand! We will be holding an Open Mike Night at **7:00 PM** on **May 27**. Learn more about Theatrical Thursday and how you can take part on page 15!

Ethics and Money

At our next **Moral Decision Making Lecture and Discussion Group** on **Thursday, May 11 at 7:00 PM** we will consider wealth, society, and the role of money and work in the pursuit of a good life.

During Professor Clancy Martin's lecture, we will have an opportunity to unpack Aristotle's philosophy of moderation, study the surprising origins of the Protestant work ethic, and reflect on the dangers of pursuing money at the expense of society at large.

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! Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom link.



LEARNING AND GROWTH



A Conversation with Denise Keele

Once a month we invite special guests to join us at a Thoughtful Thursday gathering to tell us more about the work they are doing and answer any questions we might have. Our guest on **Thursday, May 6 at 7:00 PM** will be Western Michigan University professor **Denise Keele**.

Denise Keele received her PhD in Environmental Politics from SUNY-ESF, Syracuse, and is currently an Associate Professor of Political Science, jointly appointed with the Institute of the Environment & Sustainability, at Western. Her research and teaching focus on environmental

policy and law, in particular the use of the courts to influence public policy. She has successfully led several student teams in effective civic engagement with state legislators on a range of environmental policies. Since 2014, she has chaired the interdisciplinary WMU Climate Change Working Group. In 2018, she became the faculty co-chair of WeVote, WMU's non-partisan committee focused on voter registration, education, and turnout. Since 2019, she has led the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition. She is a board member of the Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC), serving on the executive committee. She co-chairs the WMU and KNC Carbon Neutrality Committee and is a member of the Kalamazoo Township Climate Action Planning Committee.

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom login to join in the conversation with Denise Keele.

Qigong at UCC

The 9 o'clock Tuesday morning QIGONG (chee-gong) group of UCCers is gradually growing in number as folks give it a try. The consensus is that the activity definitely builds a general sense of health and well-being. Each person is finding a comfort level in bending, stretching, and breathing exercises that suits their personal needs. The professional instructor, Ed Kehoe, demonstrates clearly what will be done.

The same routine is done by everyone each week so with a little time, we know what to expect and become more comfortable in following directions and trying out the exercises. There is no pressure to "keep up" since each procedure is done 3 to 4 times. Ed is very careful to remind everyone repeatedly to take it easy and do only those things that feel alright for each individual.

And what may be most important to newcomers to know is that this 27-minute practice is done in the privacy of your own home and no one sees you! Your zoom speaker and video are OFF.

As that old cereal commercial use to say, "Try it, Mikey—you'll like it!" UCC gentlemen are here-with welcomed and encouraged to try it— "you'll like it, Mikey!"

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom link. If you have any questions about the group, contact [Freya Lake](#).



LEARNING AND GROWTH



Unbreakable Solidarity is an online course that focuses on how we build collective power on the bedrock of interdependence and use this power to get free. As an organization that specializes in holistic, anti-racist education for white people, White Awake has designed this course as a political primer for people of all backgrounds who are seeking a deeper analysis of the roots of today's problems and effective strategies for social and political change.

Join this virtual class on May 2, May 16, May 23, and June 6 from 4:00—6:30 PM* for study, embodied learning, and group discussion. Click [HERE](#) to register.

Suggested registration fee: \$80-280 / any amount accepted. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. *Sessions will be recorded. Live attendance is not mandatory.*



Civil Conversations Group

On the second Tuesday of each month, the UUC Civil Conversations Group gathers with curious and loving hearts to learn how to engage in Civil Conversations with family, friends and others to authentically build a more Beloved Community.

Last month the group continued its exploration of the factors that influence the formation of our opinions. The group brainstormed and collected many influencers on a virtual whiteboard. These included: news, media, family, personal experiences, work environment, religious beliefs, group affiliation, childhood trauma, and more.

The group also talked about how to practice Emotional Self Care/Choosing Peace in the midst of challenging conversations. They learned that before we even have conscious awareness of the emotional trigger, our amygdala can signal a cascade of neurochemicals flooding our systems. This is when we're most likely to be reactive. Some examples of Self Care/Choosing Peace in the moment when things get heated for us include taking a deep breath and asking ourselves a question like, "What part of their story am I missing?"

The topic for Civil Discussion was Poverty. The 10 people in attendance answered the following questions and collectively provided a myriad of responses: "To what extent do you believe healthy US adult citizens have agency/control over their financial situations? Why?" An interesting but civil conversation ensued.

Next month, the group will discuss "The Ladder of Inference and How to Avoid Jumping to Conclusions" [Click HERE](#) for an article with more information. May's topic of Civil Conversation will be Immigration - both state-sanctioned and undocumented. Our group suggested we take the opportunity this month to talk with others about Immigration and bring those thoughts back to the group when we meet again on **Tuesday, May 11 at 7:00 PM.**

Newcomers are always welcome this small group. You don't need to have attended the previous meetings. If you have any questions about this small group, contact [Darby Fetzer.](#)

CONNECTION

Women's Book Group

[Stephanie Grathwol](#), Chair

May Selection:

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI

by David Grann

Friday, May 14 at 1:00 PM

From Goodreads.com:!

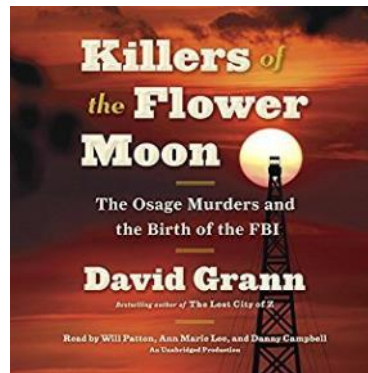
In the 1920s, the richest people per capita in the world were members of the Osage Indian Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, the Osage rode in chauffeured automobiles, built mansions, and sent their children to study in Europe.

Then, one by one, they began to be killed off. One Osage woman, Mollie Burkhart, watched as her family was murdered. Her older sister was shot. Her mother was then slowly poisoned. And it was just the beginning, as more Osage began to die under mysterious circumstances.

The Killers of Flower Moon is a true-life murder mystery about one of the most monstrous crimes in American history.

Click [HERE](#) to join the book discussion via Zoom.

The Women's Book Club starts with a short business meeting followed by the book discussion led, this month, by Bev Folz. All are welcome!



Men's Group Virtual Breakfast

**Saturday, May 15
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.

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom meeting login.



Theatrical Thursday

Our Thoughtful Thursday gathering on **May 27 at 7:00 PM** will be an 'open mike' night. UUCC members and friends are welcome to step up on the virtual Zoom stage to share poetry, readings, monologues, jokes, a dance number, or even sing a song. If you are not sure about performing live, you can submit a video recording instead.

Our last open night mike night featured a monologue by Freya Lake, a scene from 'On Golden Pond' with Kimberly Ridley and Joe and Nancy Calme, and an energetic song and dance number featuring members of the Youth Group assisted by Miriam Epskamp, Steve Tasko, and Denise Sonier. We can't wait to see what talents will be shared this time!

To be a success, our Open Mike Night will need a few willing performers and supportive audience members too! If you are planning to perform, please let Miriam know ahead of time, if possible. All others are encouraged to join this Theatrical Thursday for fun, fellowship, and heartfelt entertainment. Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom login for Theatrical Thursday.

SUSTAINABILITY



Finding More Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Footprint

Each month the UUCS Sustainability Small Group meets to reflect on their sustainability journeys, to share successes and failures, and explore ideas about how to live more gently on the Earth.

In April they helped special guest Erin Augustine present a Sunday Service about Sustainability. If you missed this fantastic and inspiring presentation you can watch it on YouTube by clicking [HERE](#).

Many members of the Sustainability Group attended the Earth Day discussion of Naomi Klein's film ***The Changes Everything***. Group member Eric Nelson recommends watching Episode #3 of ***Let's Talk It Over*** featuring Naomi Klein, economists Stephanie Kelton and Yanis Varoufakis, human rights activist Brian Eno, and artist Frank Barat for a greater understanding of the connection between economics, social justice, the environment, and a growing global people's movement that may turn the world toward a more equitable form of capitalism. Click [HERE](#) to watch the video on YouTube.

At the next meeting of the Sustainability Group, we will be exploring a group project we can sponsor at UU Community Church to help demonstrate our congregation's commitment to sustainability. We have invited Steve Bertman from Hope for Creation to join us. Steve is leading their project to install electric vehicle charging stations at interfaith communities. We will also be brainstorming other ideas for a project from planting trees to installing solar panels. Come be part of the conversation!

The Sustainability group will meet on **Monday, May 17 at 7:00 PM**. Newcomers are always welcome. Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom link.

For more information about the UUCS Sustainability Small Group, contact [Miriam](#).

Virtual Flower Communion 2021

Each year, usually in June, our UU Community Church celebrates Flower Communion, the uniquely Unitarian Universalist celebration of beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and community. Flower Communion was created by Rev. Norbert Capek and first held in Prague in 1923. You can learn more about the ritual and its originator [HERE](#).



Last year, we put together a slide show with photos of flowers from our yards and smiling UUCS people to celebrate the Flower Communion. This year for our virtual celebration we are going to try something a little more ambitious. We want everyone to submit a video of themselves holding a flower. The video only needs to be a few seconds long and it will show you 'receiving' a flower from one side of the screen and passing it along to the other. You will not need to say anything.

If you have the equipment and the know-how to film your own video, you can find detailed instructions on what to do [HERE](#).

If all this sounds too complicated to figure out, you can sign up to be filmed after church on Sunday, May 2, May 23, or May 30. It will take about 5 minutes of your time. Filming will take place on Zoom. All you need to do is find a beautiful flower and log on to Zoom. We will take care of the rest. If you have any questions about our virtual Flower Communion, please contact [Miriam](#)!

SOCIAL JUSTICE

#BLM STANDS WITH THE AAPI COMMUNITY: #NOMOREHATE RALLY!

JOIN US! MAY 16TH, 2021 @ 3:00PM! **BRONSON PARK, 200 W SOUTH ST KALAMAZOO, MI 49007 UNITED STATES**

Fmr. State Rep. Democratic Nominee for the 72 district
Lily Cheng-Schulting

Community Advocate
Marshall Kilgore



Help a KPS student take the NEXT STEP!

Greetings Everyone!

The UUCC Youth Group has chosen to use some of the money from its Youth Fund to support Next Step, an organization that donates dorm supplies to low-income Kalamazoo Public School graduating seniors as they prepare for college.

Next Step partners with the principals and counselors at Loy Norrix and K-Central and to identify students that need help purchasing the things they will need for a successful start at college and then recruits individuals and volunteers to donate supplies.

The Youth Group will be donating specific supplies for the high school graduates. These may include storage bins, a twin sheet set, pillows, a comforter, a desk lamp/organizer, alarm clock, backpack, laundry basket/detergent/pop-up hamper, hangers, towels, throw rug, window fan, notebook/pens, etc.

The Youth Group's goal is to help at least one student but, with your help, we will be able to help more. Please consider adding your donation to ours so we can help kids in our community overcome barriers to higher education. You can donate by writing a check to UUCC with "Next Step" in the memo line or by giving "Youth Gifts and Donations" in Give + app and online giving menu.

Thanks!

Amanda, Matthew, Grayson, and Nick

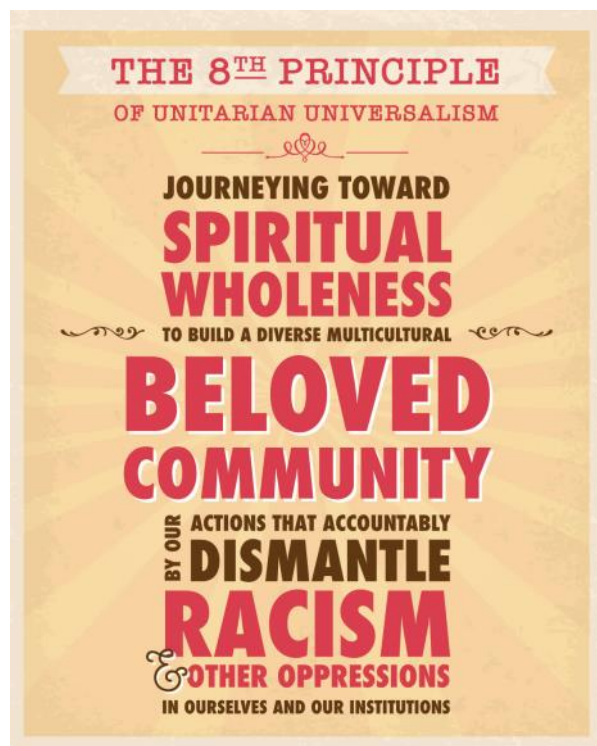


RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

During our Coming of Age classes for graduating seniors, we ask the kids and their mentors to complete a Life Values Survey. It is a series of questions that help the user better understand some of their core values and guiding principles. The survey we use gives scores in several areas—Creativity, Belonging, Independence, Privacy, Spirituality, Concern for Others, and Concern for the Environment—to name a few.

I completed the survey last year when I was a mentor for David Brozovich and I had a chance to do it again last month as a mentor for Grayson Tasko. When I compared the results I found that my scores had shifted in a couple of areas. The most noticeable jump was in 'Concern for the Environment'. This value had become markedly more important in my decision-making than it had been twelve months earlier. I believe that participating in the Sustainability Group at UUC is the reason for this jump. Participating in the group has helped me to be intentional and set achievable 'green' goals while also providing a supportive community that has helped keep me accountable. It has helped train my brain to focus on sustainable choices. It has changed me. I had been concerned about environmental issues before the Sustainability Group, but the clear intention, support, and accountability it offers have transformed my vague concerns into more concrete action.



I think I have experienced something similar working with the Youth Group on anti-racism. Exploring this topic for a whole year, discussing it with the kids, and helping them brainstorm ways to take action has shifted my thinking and made dismantling white supremacy culture in myself and our institutions a greater priority.

Intention. Support. Accountability. This roadmap for change is apparent in the proposed 8th UU Principle that will come up to a vote at General Assembly in 2022. Developed by Paula Cole Jones, through her work as a UUA district Racial and Social Justice Director, it recognizes that an explicit commitment to racial justice is missing from our current UU principles. It is possible, argues Cole Jones, for a person to believe they are being a "good UU" and following the 7 Principles without thinking about or dealing with racism and other oppressions at the systemic level. The 8th Principle came from a feeling that we as a community need to be intentional in our commitment to anti-racism and hold ourselves accountable for that work.

The Youth Group had an opportunity recently to participate in a Zoom 'escape room' that helped them learn more about the 8th Principle and some of the painful episodes in Unitarian Universalist history that make adopting it so important. They plan to share what they have learned this year about becoming anti-racist and the 8th Principle with you during our annual Religious Education Sunday celebration on June 13. It will be a good way for us to start a conversation about how our congregation can bring intention, support, and accountability to our commitment to racial justice. May it be so.



CALENDAR



MAY 2021

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Sunday	May 2	In Hope...with Rev. Gy After Service Coffee Hour Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	May 4	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	May 5	Board of Trustees Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	May 6	Stewardship Committee Meeting A Conversation with Denise Keele	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Friday	May 7	A Chosen Faith Discussion Group	7:00 PM
Saturday	May 8	Mushroom Foray in Milham Park	12:00 PM
Sunday	May 9	Nurturing the Future with Rev. Gy After Service Coffee Hour Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	May 11	Qigong Civil Conversations Group	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
Wednesday	May 12	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	May 13	Moral Decision Making Group	7:00 PM
Friday	May 14	Women's Book Group A Chosen Faith Discussion Group	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Saturday	May 15	Men's Group Virtual Breakfast	8:30 AM
Sunday	May 16	Nutrition and the 4th Principle with Guy Johnson Program Council Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 11:00 AM 1:00 PM
Monday	May 17	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	May 18	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	May 20	Thoughtful Thursday—Thematic Discussion	7:00 PM
Friday	May 21	A Chosen Faith Discussion Group	7:00 PM
Sunday	May 23	Defund the Police with Rev. Gy and Rev. Harold Annual Meeting Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 11:30 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	May 25	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	May 26	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Thursday	May 27	Theatrical Thursday—Open Mike Night	7:00 PM
Sunday	May 30	In Grief...with Rev Gy After Service Coffee Hour Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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2020-2021 Board of Trustees

Nancy Calme

Erin Michael

Darby Fetzer

Larry Higgins

Freya Lake

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, May 26 at NOON**

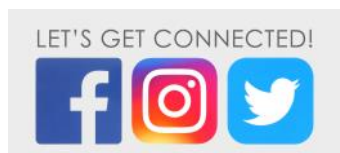
Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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**SPIRITUALITY FOR
DIVERSE PATHS**

BLACK LIVES MATTER