



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

August 2021



## Weaving the World We Dream About....

Last summer, as Covid19 cases across the world multiplied exponentially, and millions of acres of land burned out west, with the protests over the killing of George Floyd still fresh in everyone's minds, and the prospect of a caustic election season ahead, Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services team chose 'Revolution' as the over-arching theme for the year. And so, we embarked on a year focused on transformation and change.

As Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services Team gathered this spring to make plans for the 2021-2022 church year the question arose, "*What should follow a Revolution?*" As Joseph Campbell reminds us, "Revolution doesn't have to do with smashing something, it has to do with bringing something forth." How could we take the disparate strands of last year's learning and use them to bring forth something meaningful? A newly purchased loom at the Calme's farm inspired the perfect metaphor, TAPESTRY.

According to Wikipedia, a tapestry is a form of textile art traditionally woven by hand on a loom. During the heyday of the artform in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, weavers produced massive, richly-hued, intricately designed tapestries in which every figure, color, and symbol told a story. What better way to incorporate all we learned during our revolutionary year—from anti-racism and sustainability to self-care and resilience—than to weave it all together to create a Beloved Community which benefits us all?

Strong cords known as WARP give a tapestry its strength. The warp provides the framework that determines the fabric's integrity. Although almost completely hidden from view, the warp is essential to the fabric's wholeness. The beautiful strands that meander in and out of the warp are called the WEFT. The weft provides color, texture, luminosity, and interest to the cloth.

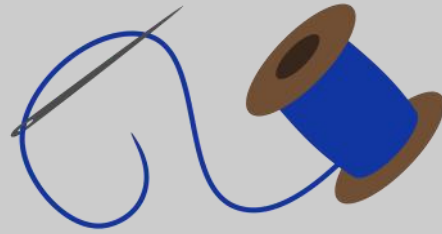
Rev. Gy and the Sunday Services Team have dreamed up an amazing [Calendar of Themes for 2021-2022](#). They hope these themes will provide ample warp and weft to help you do the work of transforming yourself and the world as together we weave a beautiful and strong Tapestry of Life.

# INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY

## **AUGUST SUNDAY SERVICES**

***Spiritual Theme of the Month: PREPARATION.***

***What skills, discernment, and practices do we need to help us create the world we dream about?***



### **August 1: *Weaving the Tapestry of Life* with Rev. Gy**

Rev. Gy will share their thoughts about the over-arching spiritual theme for the coming church year: Tapestry.

### **August 8: *Got Them Post-Covid Lockdown Blues* with Rev. Larry Farris**

Life after Covid is turning out to be life with Covid. This makes our relationship to our pandemic experience crucial to understand as we seek to fashion a faithful and meaningful way to live in this “brave new world” that will ask of us new and deepened patterns of living.

### **August 15: *A Sunday Celebration* with Greg Tamblyn, NCW**

Often referred to as a contemporary Mark Twain, singer/songwriter and humorist Greg Tamblyn will join us from Kansas City for some conscious and comical stress release. With funny inspirational songs and hilarious-to-poignant true stories he will help us see the best in ourselves, and laugh at the rest of ourselves.

### **August 22: *Honest Talk* with Rev. Gy**

The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church will meet on August 15 for their yearly retreat. Rev. Gy will share some of insights the group gained and some of their goals for the coming year.

### **August 29: *Weaving a Tapestry...in Real Life* with Nancy Calme**

Helping us to kick off the theme for this year's Sunday Services, Unitarian Universalist Community Church (UUCC) member Nancy Calme will demonstrate the steps and structures that work together to create a unique work of art on her loom. The finished product will be a keepsake altar cloth for UUCC.

Services in August will be held via Zoom and live-streamed on Facebook, Sundays at 10:00 AM.  
For up-to-date information about all church events, visit our website: [www.uucommunitychurch.org](http://www.uucommunitychurch.org)

# GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

***We are excited to welcome the following guests to our virtual pulpit:***

**Rev. Larry Farris** is a pastor, preacher, teacher (theology, biblical interpretation, world religions, and composition), spiritual director-pastoral coach, and writer. He has served several Presbyterian churches prior to retirement. Larry and his wife, Pat, moved from Southwest Michigan to Minneapolis, Minnesota in early 2020 to be near their daughter's family. They love the city, have good neighbors, and enjoy taking care of their seven-year-old granddaughter two days each week.



**Greg Tamblyn**, NCW (No Credentials Whatsoever), has been a successful singer, songwriter, speaker, and humorist for over 25 years. He combines outstanding audience rapport with an irreverent sense of humor and has a special interest in the relationship of music, laughter, and lifestyle to physical and emotional well-being. Greg's humorous musings on cultural absurdities, as well as his messages of effectiveness, optimism, and service, have garnered him a large international following.

A Kansas City native, Nashville also serves as a second home where this talented singer-songwriter continues to write and record songs that celebrate the passion and humor of life at work and beyond. He has released seven CDs since 1992, and his songs have been recorded internationally by other artists.

## **A Conversation with Shane Barrera (Miss Moscato)**

Once a month we invite special guests to join us at a virtual Thoughtful Thursday gathering to tell us more about the work they are doing and answer any questions we might have. Our guest on Thursday, **August 19 at 7:00 PM** will be Arizona-based drag performer, **Shane Barrera**. Shane describes their drag persona, Miss Moscato, as just like the wine: bubbly and sweet.



Originally from South Haven, Shane is a graduate of Portage Northern Highschool. They work for Southwest Center for HIV/AIDS in Phoenix but consider drag as their second job. Before the pandemic, they performed regularly in live shows at various venues. They were crowned Miss AM Kalamazoo 2019, Miss AM Red Ribbon 2019, and Queen of Hearts 2020. They began hosting virtual shows featuring queens from all over the country when Covid19 made performing in person impossible.

Shane believes that drag "brings self-confidence, especially to people in the LGBTQ community" and is a unique way to advocate for issues. They use the platform to help fight the stigma of HIV/AIDS and to support women's rights and Black lives. They are looking forward to speaking with us. Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom login to be part of the conversation with Shane Barrera.

# FROM THE MINISTER



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

I find myself in a very peculiar state of mind. After my return from surgery, I felt nothing but anxiety and depression. For the life of me, I could not figure out why. So, I did what I always do, settled into myself and began peeling away the layers of feelings till I got to the root of the problem. You're never gonna guess: change! Change is at the root of it all.

The last couple of years have been tumultuous. Uncertainty has become the name of the game and there's still no end in sight. On the collective level we've all been affected by this virus and on top of that most of us have also had to deal with very personal issues. Grief, changed life circumstances, health issues, anxiety from prolonged separation, anxiety from coming back together, our experiences run the gambit.

Life has changed. More change is to come and as I write these words I feel a wash of deep tiredness rush over me. I want the world to stop. I want to acclimate to something new before I move on to the next thing. But, I don't get to vote.

So, I've been thinking: when did I stop welcoming change? I remember, when I was a child all I ever wanted is change. I wanted to change my height (always taller, never shorter), change my age, my school, the town I lived in, the country I lived in, and the list goes on and on.

When I was young I was not looking for comfort. I was looking for life. Now that I am older, I am not looking for life. I am looking for comfort.

When I was younger I wasn't looking for safety, I was looking for adventure and experiences. Now that I am older, all I want is safety.

When I was young I had wild dreams for my life. Now that I'm older, I've become "practical", "sensible". The more "practical" I became, the more safety-oriented I became. The more safety-oriented I became, the more I lost my inner peace. The more I lost my inner peace, the more uncomfortable I became.

Wait, what? All along I was looking for comfort and found discomfort instead? How is that possible?

Here's the rub: the essence of physical existence is change. Everything in existence is changing. I don't know of anything that isn't. This morning while having coffee, Patti looked at me and said "I can't believe it's almost August", meaning, I can't believe summer is almost over. It feels like it hasn't even begun and it is just about to change into Fall. Life is dynamic. Life is change.

As long as we are part of the physical process, we are part of changing and change. There just is no other way. So, when we resist change, we resist life. How can we experience such resistance without stress? Even breathing is about change. One moment we inhale, the next moment we exhale. If we don't want change, well, we should just stop it. Luckily the body is smarter than the mind.

When we resist change we resist the very fundamental processes of life. Invariably this invites all kinds of unnecessary suffering into our experience. (Continued on page 5)



# FROM THE MINISTER

*(Continued from page 4)* Resisting change leads to frustration, frustration lays the foundation for depression. My recent story in a nutshell.

There seems a built-in source of conflict within all of us. The desire for safety and permanence and the reality of constant change. It is crazy making, isn't it? What then?

I think the secret to a balanced, sane life is building resilience. The American Psychological Association defines resilience as the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events. Ideally, we wouldn't just bounce back, but up the ante and even grow in the face of adversity.

Building resilience takes time. It requires patience, a willingness to face whatever we are dealing with (face pain and suffering without the use of numbing agents), it requires strength and help from other people. It does not mean that we wouldn't face setbacks or stress along the way. In fact, we almost certainly would. Yet, we'd find a way to stay connected with self and others and pick back up, put one foot in front of the other until one day we can look back and appreciate the distance we've covered while maintaining our humanity, zest for life, and staying rooted in gratitude.

I understand fatigue. I understand the never-ending task of building resilience, coping with life-altering events, dealing with social injustices, and so on. I know how at times it can feel all too overwhelming and we just want a break. Sure, we can take a break every now and then. Just long enough to muster up enough energy to begin again.

And so, we begin again.

Namaste.



# CARING COMMUNITY



## AUGUST CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*The greatness of a community is most accurately measured  
by the compassionate actions of its members.*

*~Coretta Scott King*

July was noteworthy this year, not because we took a break from regular Sunday services but for the many opportunities that arose for us to meet in person. For many of us, this was the first time since March 2020 we had seen each other in the flesh. It felt good to be together again.

A small but joyful group including **Marsha Laya, Joe and Nancy Calme, Miriam Epskamp, Regena Nelson, Freya Lake, and Ken VanEseltine** gathered on Kathy Hays's porch overlooking Eagle Lake to enjoy refreshments, a beautiful view, and the warmth of each other's smiles.



There was a good showing of UUCC people at **Rev. Harold Beu's** house for his wife **Julie Mack's** retirement party. **Betty Lee Ongley, Bob and Barb McWhorter, Denise Sonier, Steve Tasko, Judy Halseth, Nancy and Ron Crowell, Ken VanEseltine, Miriam Epskamp, and Denise Hartsough** enjoyed a delicious potluck lunch, some scrumptious desserts, and hearing two of our elected officials, **State Senator Sean McCann** and **State Representative Julie Rogers**, read an official proclamation from **Governor Gretchen Whitmer** that highlighted some of Julie Mack's accomplishments as a journalist. Congratulations Julie!

Over forty UUCC members, friends, and invited guests came out to the Backyard Broadway and BBQ FUNdraiser at **Rev. Gy and Patti's** house. The food was delicious. The conversation was delightful. The live music from the talented folks from Farmers Alley Theatre was amazing. But perhaps the best part of the evening was all the smiles, the hugs, and the LOVE! It was a blessing just to be together. The Stewardship Committee (**Regena Nelson, Joe Calme, Ron Crowell, and Marsha Laya**) who organized the evening deserve a round of applause! We collected over \$800 in gate receipts and an extra \$525 in tips for the young musicians. If the Covid situation allows for it next year, everyone agreed we should do it again. *(Continued on page 7)*





# CARING COMMUNITY

(Continued from page 6) The early risers among us were treated to a beautiful in-person Sunday service by the shores of Gourneck Lake and a tasty potluck brunch hosted by **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson** and **Michael Wilson**.

The Youth Group also took the opportunity to meet in person in July. They joined the Portage Kids Peaceful Protest one very hot and humid Sunday afternoon. Their continued commitment to anti-racist action is inspiring!



The joy we have experienced being together outside in July has been dampened a bit by the news of the Delta variant of Covid 19 spreading and hospitalizations in parts of the country rising. The pandemic, it seems, is not over. We will need to cherish this summer's respite from masks and social distancing in order to be ready to face whatever the autumn brings. At least we know we will face it together.

Belated birthday greetings go out to friends **Jim Heveran, Tim and Brinna Michael, John Mais, Alex Brozovich, and Eric Nelson** who all blew out their candles in July. Celebrating their special day in August are **Lauren Ritter, Kimberly Ridley, Miriam Epskamp, and Peggy Clausing!**

Love has been withstanding the test of time for **Tim and Erin Michael, Kevin and Tami Brozovich, and Eric and Regena Nelson**. They all have wedding anniversaries in August and we wish them much joy!

We hold all who struggle with health concerns in our hearts. Healing love and light go to **Stace Danielson** who continues to struggle with health issues and may require surgery again; to **Bob McWhorter** who continues to suffer from the after-effects of a stroke; to **John Folz**, who has moved into the memory unit at the Fountains and continues to receive hospice care; to **Herb Gross** who is being evaluated for a place in an assisted living facility in Wisconsin so he can be closer his daughter; and to **Rev. Gy** who is working hard to get better following surgery on her spine.

We pause to remember dear friends who are no longer with us. We miss **David Adams**, who passed away in July of 2009, and his wicked sense of humor. We remember **Faye Clifton**, who died in the summer of 2019. Faye was an ardent champion of recycling and an avid reader. The last thing she was reading before she passed was the Mueller Report! We lost **Jean Batts** in August of 2000. The beautiful piano in the sanctuary was her lasting gift to us. We remember **Lin Foote**, who passed away in August of 2019. He played an important role in starting the Portage Unitarian Universalist congregation and there are members among us today who are part of the church because Lin invited them to come.

Our thoughts are also with **Marcia Adams** who moved away from Kalamazoo in July. Her daughter Sally reports that Marcia is settling in very nicely to her new home and is a joy to have around! Marcia would love to hear from her UUCF friends often. For now, she can be reached at the same home and cell phone numbers and email address as always. Her new mailing address is 60 Ridgewood Road, Milton, MA 02186.

Always remember that your Caring UUCF Community is here for you! If you, or someone you know, requires support of any kind, please contact one of our point persons: Nancy Crowell 599-1235, Rita Stevens 330-0376, Judy Oliver 353-9397, or Nancy Stob 349-8890. Sharing is Caring!

# LEADERSHIP

- The Board of Trustees for the 2021/2022 Church year met for the first time on July 15.



- The executive committee was nominated and elected.
- Eric Nelson will serve as President. Darby Fetzer will serve as Vice-President. Judy Pigg-Behrendt will serve as secretary. They will be assisted by Trustees at Large, Freya Lake and Andy Miller.
- A Board Retreat will take place at UU Community Church on Sunday, August 15 from 1-4 PM to give members a chance to get to know each other better and formulate some shared goals for the coming year.
- The Board will meet on the first Wednesday of each month from 6:30—8:30 PM. The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on Wednesday, September 1.
- Board meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. A link to the Zoom meeting can be found on the [UU Community Church online calendar](#).

# PROGRAM COUNCIL



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

Program Council is the place where YOU can be a part of planning programming for the church community. EVERYONE at UCC - members, friends, and visitors - is welcome to take part.

Our first Program Council meeting for the church year will take place via Zoom following Coffee Hour on Sunday, August 8 (usually around 11:00 AM).

We are looking forward to having Board of Trustees Vice-President, Darby Fetzer, chair Program Council this year but she will not be able to start until September. Our Office Administrator, Miriam Epskamp, will lead the meeting in her absence.

On the agenda for the August Program Council will be:

- an update from the Covid Task Force about re-opening plans
- a funding request for Thoughtful Thursdays
- a discussion about Generosity Sundays for the upcoming church year.

We will also celebrate our successes and share many opportunities for YOU to get involved.

Please plan to join us!



# STEWARDSHIP

## MONEY MATTERS



### Finance Report

From [Tami Brozovich](#), Finance Chair

We ended the 2020/2021 fiscal year (July – June) with a \$4,692 surplus in the General Fund; which brings our General Fund Balance to \$52,609 (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 2020 was for a (\$11,219) deficit.

This surplus is due to the fact that we received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan from the government for \$16,940 and that many budget areas and committee line items came in under budget. This past year has been challenging for all of us and I appreciate all of the people who work to make our church the vibrant community that it is.

Thanks to Kimberly Ridley and Joe Calme (my fellow Finance Team members), the Board, and the whole congregation for helping to keep the church financially healthy!

#### Summary for the Fiscal Year 2020/2021 General Fund:

	Income	Expenses	Surplus/(Deficit)
<b>Actual</b>	<b>\$123,481</b>	<b>\$118,789</b>	<b>\$4,692</b>
Budget	\$108,288	\$119,507	(\$11,219)

### Church Clean-Up Day

Get on your gloves because it is time for another Church Clean-Up Day! After so many months standing empty, our building on Shaver Road could use a little work!

If you are willing and able please plan to join the Building and Ground Team on Saturday, **August 28** from **1:00 AM to 1:30 PM**.

The team hopes to tackle both indoor and outdoor tasks. These may include:

- Weeding
- Weed Whacking and Removal
- Window Washing
- Sweeping Cobwebs
- Dusting
- Vacuuming
- Cleaning Bathrooms and Kitchen
- Re-arranging Furniture

Current UCC Covid19 protocols will be observed during Clean-Up Day. Watch the Weekly Email for details. Please contact [Eric Nelson](#) with your questions.



# 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—THEMATIC THURSDAY

Our gathering on **August 5 at 7:00 PM** will be an exploration of our spiritual themes of the month. We will consider the skills we need to be “weavers of our lives’ designs.” We will discuss WILLINGNESS, PERSEVERANCE, EXPERIMENTATION, and COMMUNICATION as well as YOUR IDEAS on the subject.

### 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 **August 12 at 7:00 PM** is **The Golden Rule**. (See below for more info.)

### Third 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 **August 19 at 7:00 PM**, we are excited to welcome Arizona-based drag queen, **Shane Barrera** to Thoughtful Thursday. He performs as Miss Moscato. You can learn more about Shane on [page 3](#).

### Fourth Thursday— ADULT ENRICHMENT CLASS

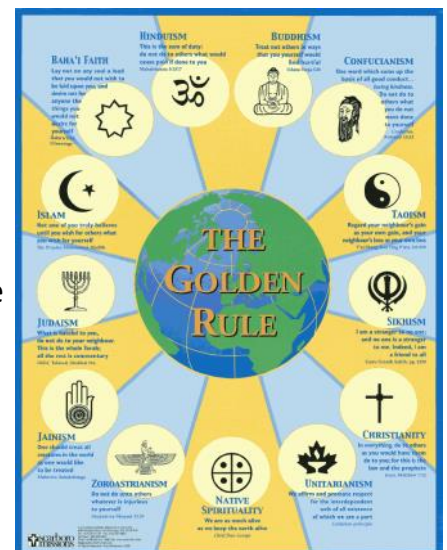
On August 26 at 7:00 PM Rev. Harold Beu will lead a one-day class exploring **Militarism in America**. Learn more about this class on [page 11](#).

## Can We Do Better Than the Golden Rule?

At our next **Moral Decision Making Lecture and Discussion Group** on **Thursday, August 12 at 7:00 PM**, we will consider the ethical obligations we have to others.

How should we treat those around us? How can we resolve the tension between moral obligations to others with our personal freedom? Most of the world’s religions answer these questions with some iteration of ‘The Golden Rule’ found in the Christian Bible in Matthew 7:12: *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”* However, the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant felt that the Golden Rule needed improvement. During this lecture, we will take an in-depth look at Kant’s categorical imperative and the idea that all humans are “ends in themselves.”

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



## Militarism in America

Since World War II, the United States has become a “garrison state” that acts as a police force for the world. The U.S. operates a global network of military installations with bases located in dozens of nations and on every continent and has been engaged in armed conflict almost continuously since 1945. Indeed, since World War II, most of the military operations across the globe have been launched by the U.S. In 2019, the militarized

budget amounted to 64.5 percent of discretionary spending. That amounts to a military budget that is greater than the next ten countries combined.

The path our country is on drains it of both blood and treasure, but one wonders if it had made us any safer? Rev. Harold Beu invites you to join him as he ponders this question and more during **Militarism in America**, a virtual adult enrichment class on **Thursday, August 26 at 7:00 PM.**

Drawing on the wisdom of Eisenhower’s 1961 Farewell Address, this class will explore the roots of the military-industrial complex, the difference between being prepared and being in the business of war, and what we are called to do as Unitarian Universalists to affirm and promote “the goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all” and to resist the seemingly endless wars our country is engaged in.

Rev. Harold W. Beu is a retired Unitarian Universalist Minister, a former high school teacher of history, civics, math, and psychology, and an active member of Kalamazoo Interfaith Coalition for Peace and Justice.

## Got Caps?

It’s a Capital Idea to invest in this kind of stock!! Save all kinds of bottle caps to help make Buddy Benches for kids and other folks to sit on and make friends. The dividends from this are many fold. Contact [Freya](#) to arrange pick up or delivery of caps!



## Water Communion 2021

Water Communion is a unique Unitarian Universalist ritual traditionally held at the beginning of the church year that serves to remind us of our interconnectedness and celebrate our gathering together as a community.

To be a part of this year’s communion in September, be sure to collect a small sample of water from a place that brings you peace or provides sustenance for your soul.

We aren’t exactly sure what our Water Communion ritual will look like this year but we will find some way to make it happen!



# CONNECTION

## Men's Group Breakfast

The Men's Group plans to meet in-person for a breakfast on **Saturday, August 21 at 8:30 AM.**

*The location is yet to be determined.* Watch the Weekly Email for the more information.

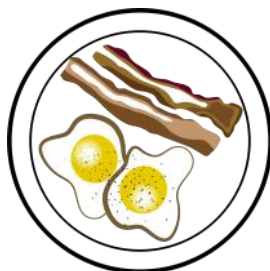
Men's Group Breakfast is a wonderful opportunity for conversation and connection and is open to all UCC members and friends.

As no one wants to have breakfast alone, it is **very important to RSVP** and let breakfast coordinator, Ken VanEseltine, know you are coming. Please call (269) 342-4793 or email

[vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net) by Friday, August 20. You can also contact Ken if you have any questions.

If there are no RSVPs by the Friday afternoon before, the gathering will be canceled. An email will be sent out to let everyone know.

As Covid19 safety is still a serious concern, it is strongly recommended that only fully vaccinated persons participate in this indoor event.



## Women's Book Group Annual Meeting

**Friday August 13, at 1:00 PM**

The annual meeting of the Women's Book is on the calendar, and everyone is invited to come!

We will be electing the new Chair and selecting the books that we will discuss at our monthly meetings from September through May.

Due to the continuing uncertainty of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Book Group will hold its meeting via ZOOM.

As with the 2020 annual meeting, participants are requested to email their recommendations to the Group before the meeting. (Chair Stephanie Grathwol has provided information about how to do that to each current Book Group Member.)

If you are not already a member and are interested in joining, please contact Stephanie Grathwol: [sargg.64@gmail.com](mailto:sargg.64@gmail.com) or telephone 269-342-0874.



## Qigong at UCC

Our Qigong session are still going strong every Tuesday morning at 9:00 AM!

Often described as a mind-body-spirit practice, Qigong can help improve your mental and physical health by integrating posture, stretching, movement, breathing, self-massage, and focused intent. Each session lasts about 30 minutes

Practicing Qigong on Zoom means you don't have to drive anywhere or even change out of your jammies to attend the class. Once the exercises start, everyone turns off their mics and video so you practice in private. The group is a supportive community that chats a bit at the beginning and end of the exercise routine.

The Qigong group welcomes newcomers at any time. If you aren't busy on Tuesday mornings, you should give it a try!

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

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

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



Welcome back from the July sabbatical! I hope you are rested, refreshed, and ready for another fabulous year at UU Community Church.

I did not accomplish very much of what I had hoped to during the break. There are still piles of papers to be organized in the office and downstairs. There are still over 4000 emails in my inbox and the desktop in the office still isn't working as well as it should be. Que sera sera!

I did spend a lot of time during the break thinking about Unitarian Universalism, our little congregation, and the things I heard at General Assembly. Thanks to your generosity, I was able to take part in the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists from all over the world. I attended interesting workshops and inspiring worship services, participated in fascinating small group discussions, and listened to an amazing Ware Lecture given by Stacey Abrams and Desmond Meade. But, the part of General Assembly that is sticking with me this year is the plenary sessions I attended.

I have gone to General Assembly before, but I usually skip the business meetings. They tend to be a bit confusing and kind of boring if you are merely an observer. (Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) rules prevent me from being a voting delegate.) But this year there were some items up for discussion that I am very interested in and I wanted to hear the debate for myself.

One of those items is what is referred to as the "Article II Study Commission". Article II is the portion of the UUA By-Laws that contains our seven guiding Principles and the six Sources that provide context and grounding for the Principles. In addition, Article II contains a statement of purpose for the UUA. It also commits us to being inclusive and to replacing barriers that have kept some people and groups from full participation in our faith. The Article ends by ensuring freedom of conscience and prohibiting creedal tests. (Click [HERE](#) to read the whole thing) It is not an exaggeration to say that the core values of Unitarian Universalism lie in Article II of the By-Laws.

Now if you think that this part of the By-Laws is sacrosanct or set in stone, you would be mistaken. Rev. Gy likes to remind us that Unitarian Universalists are truth-seekers who are constantly examining and questioning the world. As we learn new things and grow in understanding, it only stands to reason that our guiding principles will grow and change too.

The original language of Article II was a hard-fought compromise between the Unitarians and the Universalists in 1960, hammered out during a parliamentary session that stretched long into the night as the two groups prepared to merge and become Unitarian Universalists. The Women's Movement sparked a revision that was voted on in the 1980s. Sexist language such as 'brotherhood' and 'mankind' was removed and a seventh Principle focused on the interdependent web of all existence was added.

The Seven Principles as most of us know them have been in place for well over thirty years. There have been many suggestions for changes floated during that time most notably the proposed 8th Principle that would add explicit anti-racist, anti-oppression language to our core values.

*(Continued on page 14)*

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

*(Continued from page 13)* (Some of you may remember the Youth Group advocating the adoption of the 8th principle at their annual service last June.)

Recognizing that we must continuously examine our Principles and Purposes to stay relevant and meet the needs of future generations, the UUA Board of Trustees created a Commission in 2017 charged with studying and suggesting changes to Article II to make sure our Principles and Purposes aren't missing any pieces of our core values or clinging to ideas that no longer serves us.

During the final plenary session of General Assembly 2021, a resolution was proposed that if passed would give direction to the Article II Commission to "include a clear and direct statement that accountable systemic anti-racist and anti-oppressive actions to build Beloved Community are part of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist" in any new draft of our Principles. The debate on this was robust with about an equal number of delegates speaking in favor and against. Those who were opposed did not speak out directly against anti-racism but spoke instead of not wanting to tie the hands of the commission or wanting more time to gather input from congregations before committing. In the end, the assembly voted strongly in favor of the resolution.

So what does this mean for our little Unitarian Universalist congregation? First of all, our Seven Principles are most certainly going to change in the next couple of years. We need to prepare ourselves for this reality and commit to studying the new Principles in depth and finding ways to live them. Second, a continued commitment to anti-racist work in ourselves, in our church, and in the wider world is essential, especially if we want to stay relevant to young people. Some of the most enthusiastic and outspoken proponents of anti-racist work at General Assembly were the Youth and Young Adult caucuses. We have taken some good first steps including our Black Lives Matter banner, our engagement with ISAAC, our commitment to welcoming BIPOC guest speakers to our pulpit, and the inclusion of racial justice in our Religious Education program, but there is still work to be done.

One of the speakers at General Assembly said, "Ours is not a learned but a learning community, not grown but ever-growing, not perfect but ever in progress." Our time rest is over. Let us begin again, to learn, to grow, and to progress. May it be so!



## ISAAC Virtual Banquet

**Grasping Change at the Root:  
Growing the Beloved CommUNITY**

October 14, 2021 6pm

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Keynote Speaker







# CALENDAR



## AUGUST 2021

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Sunday	August 1	Weaving the Tapestry of Life with Rev. Gy After-Service Coffee Hour Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	August 3	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	August 5	Stewardship Committee Thoughtful Thursday	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Sunday	August 8	Got Them Post-Covid Lockdown Blues with Larry Farris After-Service Coffee Hour Program Council Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 11:00 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	August 10	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	August 11	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	August 12	Moral Decision Making	7:00 PM
Friday	August 13	Women's Book Group Annual Meeting	1:00 PM
Saturday	August 14	Sustainability Group	5:00 PM
Sunday	August 15	A Sunday Celebration with Greg Tamblyn After-Service Coffee Hour Board Retreat NO Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	August 17	Qigong	7:00 PM
Wednesday	August 18	Sunday Services Committee	5:30 PM
Thursday	August 19	A Conversation with Shane Barrera	7:00 PM
Saturday	August 21	Men's Group Breakfast	8:30 AM
Sunday	August 22	Honest Talk with Rev. Gy After-Service Coffee Hour NO Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Tuesday	August 24	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	August 25	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Thursday	August 26	Militarism in America with Rev. Harold Beu	7:00 PM
Saturday	August 28	Church Clean-Up Day	11:00 AM
Sunday	August 29	Weaving a Tapestry.....In Real Life with Nancy Calme After-Service Coffee Hour NO Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM



**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

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

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

Nick Sienkiewicz  
Music Director  
[nsienki@iu.edu](mailto:nsienki@iu.edu)

**2021-2022 Board of Trustees**

Eric Nelson

Darby Fetzer

Judy Pigg-Behrendt

Freya Lake

Andy Miller

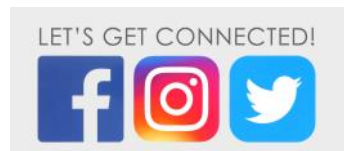
**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, August 25 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:  
**[uuccnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uuccnewsletter@gmail.com)**

*CommUUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
of Southwest Michigan**

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



[uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)  
[www.uucommunitychurch.org](http://www.uucommunitychurch.org)  
[www.facebook.com/uuccswmi](https://www.facebook.com/uuccswmi)  
[twitter.com/uuccswmi](https://twitter.com/uuccswmi)  
[www.instagram.com/uuccswmi/](https://www.instagram.com/uuccswmi/)



**SPIRITUALITY FOR  
DIVERSE PATHS**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**