



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan September 2021

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM [on Facebook](#) and [Zoom](#)
Meeting ID: 926 5154 8494 Passcode: 286763

September 5: *Are We Spiritual Beings?* with Rev. Gy

Rev. Gy will help us explore what spirituality is, how different religious traditions define it, and why it is important that we spend time toning our spiritual muscles.

September 12: *Oneness* with Rev. Gy

We will celebrate Water Communion and reflect on the oneness of the universe, the planet, all of creation, and each other.

September 19: *Developing Resilience During Uncertainty* with Eric Nelson

Change and uncertainty are growing at an exponential rate and show no sign of slowing. To survive and even thrive during these times requires us to cultivate the inner and outer skills needed to navigate these challenges. Eric will introduce the essential inner and outer skills needed to thrive in these uncertain times including: self-awareness, emotional balance, self/other compassion, and social transformation. Together these skills provide a foundation for meeting the challenges we all face in the coming decades.

September 26: *Life Goes On...So Far* with Mary Jo Ramsey-Smith

Life is a gift and death is a journey across a bridge or through a portal that may well be permeable. Mary Jo will help us explore the nature of each as she references her own experiences with the loss of loved ones, particularly the recent loss of her beloved pet, her little dog Lily, and her experiences as a witness to birth and death, the most powerful experiences of her own life.



Spiritual Theme for September: SPIRITUAL WHOLENES

Wholeness, according to Unitarian Universalist minister, Anya Sammler-Michael, is “a sense of our own fullness, a spiritual realization of our own strength and beauty.” It is a recognition of our own inherent worth. We are, despite all our flaws, enough.

Wholeness requires us to embrace the interconnectedness of our bodies, minds, spirits, and of the community of which we are a part. It requires us to pay attention to the aspects of our lives and of our souls that are out of balance and work to regain our center.

Finding spiritual wholeness cannot be an entirely inward-looking process. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so eloquently reminded us in Letter from the Birmingham Jail, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.” If others are suffering around us, can we really be whole?

Rev. Sammler-Michael writes, “We heal our own aches by healing the aches in others. We put back the pieces of our own souls by helping others redeem their own wholeness.”

As you weave your Tapestry of Life, what role will SPIRITUAL WHOLENES play in your design?

GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

We are excited to welcome members and guests to our virtual pulpit:

Unitarian Universalist Community Church member **Eric Nelson** worked as a Program Officer at the Fetzer Institute for 22 years developing programs in mind-body health, contemplative science, and interfaith dialogue. Eric started practicing mindfulness in 1973 and began teaching in 1986. After retiring from Fetzer he founded [Stress Less Kzoo](#) in 2012, which provides public courses in self-awareness, emotional balance, and self-compassion in the Kalamazoo area.



Mary Jo Ramsey-Smith is an award-winning musician and filmmaker who served as UU Community Church's Artist-in-Resident for four years. She was born to a Southern Baptist Preacher and an experience at the Kennedy Center in DC brought her dream to sing alive. In adulthood, Mary Jo married, birthed two children, and had her own little opera company in Virginia. After the children graduated, she and husband, Gary Smith, started their next grand adventure in New Mexico. Next, they moved to Michigan and she met us. They now live in Arizona and continue the adventure of Life. Mary Jo and Gary have

made movies and won an award for best documentary feature at Moondance International Film Festival for their film *Origin*. Mary Jo was thrilled to receive the message that we wanted to hear more from her and is overjoyed to be zooming in to share her message and music with us.

Join us for a Conversation with Ruth Fishel

Once a month we invite a special guest to join us at one of our virtual Thoughtful Thursday gatherings to tell us more about the work they are doing and answer any questions we might have. Our guest on **Thursday, September 30 at 7:00 PM** will be Ruth Fishel.

Ruth Fishel, M.Ed. is an acclaimed author of inspirational books that have sold over a million copies in many countries around the world. They include *Time for Joy*, *Time for Me*, *Time for Thoughtfulness*, *Living Light as a Feather*, *Change Almost Anything in 21 Days*, *Wrinkles Don't Hurt*, and *The Journey Within*. Her newest book is *TIME FOR PEACE: Peace in our Hearts, Peace in the World*.



Formerly the director of Serenity, Inc., an organization she co-founded, Ruth now spends her time teaching, writing, and presenting workshops and women's spiritual retreats, and helping people become whole and healthy using the tools of meditation, mindfulness, affirmations, and visualizations. You can learn more about Ruth and her work at her website www.ruthfishel.com.

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom login to be part of the conversation with Ruth. Meeting ID: 476 401 695 Passcode: 449120.

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

Welcome back from our summer respite. I hope you are feeling rejuvenated, inspired, ready to move into our new church year.

Your Board and I had a retreat on the 15th of August and we did it in person at the church. It was quite wonderful to be back in our building even if only for a short time, socially distancing, with our masks on.

We understand the compromises we must make to keep our environment safe while still allowing for the possibility to come together in person. During our retreat, we talked at great length about our re-opening plans. There are a few benchmarks we must hit before we can settle on a date and we are working on it. We need to hire a new cleaning crew. The ones we had before the pandemic have no intention to get vaccinated and are not willing to wear a mask while in the building. We love their clarity and now we know to look for a different option.

We also have clarity that we are only welcoming vaccinated people to attend in person. All others can access our Zoom and Facebook Live services and if anyone should decide to watch our services later, they can find us on YouTube. We will require in-person attendees to produce proof of vaccination. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

We revisited our Vision and Mission statements as well and felt that while we all resonate with the Vision statement, the Mission one could use some tweaking. We are going to take that one at a later time.

Next, we took a look at our Strategic Plan that we formulated about a year or so before Covid. We were delighted to see that we accomplished quite a few things on our list while others still remain as goals. It is clear to us that setting intentions is important in focusing our resolve.

It was a good meeting. We have an energetic, inspired Board working on behalf of our congregation.

I have been thinking, though. You might wonder what's on my mind? Church growth is on my mind. I would like to see us grow. Both in-depth and in numbers. The great philosopher, theologian, social activist Howard Thurman put it this way: "Community cannot for long feed on itself; it can only flourish with the coming of others from beyond, their unknown and undiscovered brothers."

It isn't only good for us to grow, it is necessary. It is necessary because it keeps us fresh, energized, makes us alive, challenges us, helps us grow deeper. It is a full circle.

Growth, therefore, must not be left to chance. We must set our intention to grow, then focus our resolve. It will take every single one of us. It should take every single one of us! We ought to be prepared to invite friends to our services and special occasions. We ought to be willing to talk about our beloved community to those who might very well enjoy our philosophy, values, and principles. *(Continued on [page 4](#))*

FROM THE MINISTER

Growth must not be left to chance. We now know that it is possible to put on outstanding programming, classes, services and not grow. I know, it is believed that if you build it they will come, but that's a line from a Hollywood movie after all. It does seem a little bit like chance, doesn't it?

I think we should keep creating inspiring, high-quality programs AND create a practical, implementable plan for growth. And we should all expect to partake in this plan one way or another. I expect we are going to put together a team whose sole purpose will be church growth. Perhaps you'd like to join that team when it forms. You may even want to chair that team! In any case, please think about church growth. Research it, contemplate it, set your intention and let us join minds, hands, hearts in making it happen.

Together we can do what we cannot do alone!

And so it is.



ISAAC Virtual Banquet

Grasping Change at the Root: Growing the Beloved CommUNITY

October 14, 2021 6pm

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, Keynote Speaker



Please plan to join our interfaith partners at ISAAC (Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community) at a Virtual Banquet on Thursday, October 14 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting will feature keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson. Dr. Dyson is a Georgetown University sociology professor, an ordained clergy member, a New York Times contributing opinion writer, and a contributing editor of The New Republic and of ESPN's The Undefeated website. His rise from humble roots in Detroit to his present perch as a world-class intellectual, noted author of 19 books, prominent leader and national media fixture testify to his extraordinary talent. His latest book ***Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*** was an instant New York Times bestseller.

The meeting will also help you learn more about the work ISAAC does in the community.

CARING COMMUNITY



SEPTEMBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

The greatest discovery of all time is that a person can change his future by merely changing his attitude

-Oprah Winfrey

The weather is still hot and sticky but signs of the season's change are beginning to appear. The migrating birds are assembling in noisy flocks. Touches of autumn red and yellow can be seen on bushes and trees. The vegetable gardens are heavy with produce as the growing season comes to a close. Change is occurring for many of our community members and friends too.

For some, the changes will happen at school. **Amanda Nelson** has begun her senior at Loy Norrix High School and **Nick Tasko** has entered Portage Central as an incoming freshman. School for both of them will be in-person (and in masks). After so many months of virtual schooling, it will be a big change to be with so many people again. **David Brozovich** is experiencing a delightful educational change this fall too. He was accepted into WMU's Marching Band as a guest student. Look for him and his mellophone on the field at half-time during the Bronco's home games!

For some, changes are coming in their professional lives. **Regena Nelson** will return to the classroom after retiring from her administrative role at WMU. **Denise Sonier** took a new position at Bronson, moving from the ICU where she has worked for over 20 years to OR Recovery.

Several of our friends are navigating the change of moving house. **Herb Gross** moved to Wisconsin to be closer to his daughter Gail. **Stace Danielson** and **Derrick Green** are relocating to be closer to their aging mothers. Derrick has moved to St. Louis, MO and Stace is heading to Lansing.

Judy Halseth turned in her keys to Herb's house in Portage and moved back to her beloved home on Brownwood Lake in Paw Paw. **Matthew Nelson** will be moving into the dorms at Kalamazoo College for his sophomore year of study. There is a lot of moving happening in the **Brozovich Family** too. Son **Alex** and partner Liz have relocated to Portage from the Detroit area. And son **Ryan** and his partner Tracey recently purchased their first house!

We hold **Stephanie Grathwol** and **Nancy Crowell** in our hearts as they deal with unwelcome changes. Stephanie lost her brother Stephen in August and Nancy is recovering from a bad fall that has left her eye and her hand damaged.

Our friends **Herb Gross**, **Julie Kelemen**, and **John Folz** all will experience the delightful change of growing another year older and wiser as they celebrate their birthdays in September. For both Herb and John September 2021 marks 96 trips around the Sun! Wow! Adding to the joy, **John and Bev Folz** will also celebrate another year of wedded bliss in September.

Speaking of Julie Kelemen, we reached out and asked her to provide us with an update about her life. Here is what she had to say:

Julie Kelemen continues to work as a home health aide for two Kalamazoo area agencies. She sorely misses in-person contact with our congregation and the support we offer one another. To ward off loneliness that Covid has forced on so many of us, she vacationed in Seattle with her son and a friend in June. (Continued on [page 6](#))

CARING COMMUNITY

She helped her son move into his first, solo apartment in Iowa City in early August. Most recently Julie says she's finally tying up ho-hum necessary life tasks like meeting with a financial advisor about retirement, assembling a will, and seeking new living space. She seeks an apartment that has central air and heat as well as a good cell and internet signal. Poor phone and internet service connection have damaged her ability to keep in electronic touch with others in her garden-level apartment during the pandemic. "I will wear red and lots of gaudy jewelry to celebrate the day we can have service all in person again," she insists.

That joyful day may be coming soon because changes are underway at UU Community Church as well. A dedicated cleaning crew that included **Joe and Nancy Calme, Pat Fuehr, Andy Miller, Regena and Eric Nelson, Tami and Kevin Brozovich, and Freya Lake** were recently seen working hard to make things spic and span because plans are underway to re-open our building! We will not be able to gather the way we did before Covid-19 entered our lives but it will be an opportunity for some of us to come together to enjoy the benefits of this spiritual community.

What remains the same amid all this change is that your UU Caring 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, Judy Oliver 353-9397, or Nancy Stob 349-8890. Sharing is Caring!

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 be sure to collect a small sample of water from a place that brings you peace or provides sustenance for your soul.

Then, bring your water to church on **Saturday, September 4 from 11:00 to 2:00 PM** or **Sunday, September 5 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM**, so you can add it to our communal bowl. We will take a video of you pouring water into the bowl. You don't need to say anything at all. The videos will be shared during our Water Communion service on Sunday, September 12.

If you can't make it to church, you can take a video of yourself pouring water into a bowl and send it to uucommunity@gmail.com. Please be sure to indicate where your special water came from so it can be included in the video montage.

If you have any questions or need to arrange another day and time to pour your water in front of the camera, please contact [Miriam](#).



LEADERSHIP



- The board met for the first part of their annual retreat on August 15. They hope to have a follow-up gathering in September.

- They spent time reviewing our Vision/Mission/Strategic Goals. The pandemic has made reaching some of our five-year goals difficult, but there were many things to celebrate including expanded adult enrichment programming, a weekly alternative service

(Thoughtful Thursdays!), an improved AV system and live streaming capabilities, and a church calendar that is nearing 7– day a week activity! Well done, everyone!

- They considered the possibility of re-activating the Strategic Planning Team to update our long-term goals in light of all the changes we have experienced during the pandemic.
- They began working on re-opening plans. Re-opening will require a lot of careful planning and the board recognizes it may be several months before we can re-open the building safely and that is okay.
- The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, September 1** at 6:30 PM. 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](#).

Return to In-Person Services and Programs:

Here are a few things that Rev. Gy and the Board would like you to know about the plans for returning to in-person services and other programs:

- If you feel sick or have any COVID-like symptoms, please stay home and consider getting tested.
- Unvaccinated individuals, including children under 12, will need to stay home and utilize our online programs.
- ***Proof of vaccination (either a vaccination card or a photograph of it on your phone) will be required for everyone entering the building for any of our services, meetings, activities, or programs.*** If you do not have proof of vaccination, you will be invited to return home and utilize our online programs.
- ***Properly worn masks, closely fitted and covering both mouth and nose, will be required at all times.***
- Designated greeters at the door will be checking for proof of vaccination, for properly fitting masks, and offering hand sanitizer if desired. (If you need one, there will also be clean new masks available)
- ***Social distancing should be always maintained as much as possible.***
- Attendance will be recorded and kept in case contact tracing is needed.
- One person (or family unit) at a time will be permitted in the restrooms.
- The sanctuary will be divided into clearly marked and designated seating areas for couples, family pods, and individuals. People are asked to refrain from mingling before the service.
- There will be no congregational singing at this time.
- There will be no in-church beverages or snacks during the social hour.
- ***Online access to services will still be available for those who chose to stay home.***

If you would like to volunteer to be on the greeting team, please contact Darby Fetzer. If you can help re-configure the sanctuary for our socially distant services, please contact Eric Nelson. Working together we can forge our way forward. We can't wait to see some of you soon!

PROGRAM COUNCIL

Program Council—Where TOGETHER—We Get Stuff Done!



Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church on second Sundays at around 11:00 AM. Bring your voice to our next meeting on September 12. We will meet via Zoom following the service.

At our August meeting, we had tons to **CELEBRATE!** We took a Sunday Service Sabbatical to provide REST (our theme for July) for staff and volunteers. We held several in-person events to keep people connected including the Chat and Chill on Kathy's Porch, Backyard Broadway and BBQ FUNdraiser, the Men's Group Breakfast, Lakeside 'Sunrise' Service, and the Youth Group gathering at Portage Kids Peaceful Protest. In addition, the virtual Qigong Group met regularly during July, the new Board of Trustees met and elected officers, and the Building and Grounds Team started updating the upstairs bathrooms, installed new outside lighting, and purchased a new de-humidifier for the basement!

Looking to get involved? **OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND**

- Meet-up for Youth - Select Sundays at 1pm (via Zoom)
- Qigong - Tuesdays at 9am (via Zoom)
- Thoughtful Thursdays (via Zoom) at 7pm
 - 1st Thursday—Discuss spiritual themes with Rev. Gy
 - 2nd Thursday—Moral Decision Making – Lecture and small group discussion
 - 3rd Thursday – Thoughtful Thursday Speakers Series - Invited guests!
 - 4th Thursday—Civil Conversations Group—Practice discussing controversial topics
- 9/18 – OutFront Kalamazoo Rally for Equality – 11am-2pm- Bronson Park
We are a sponsor of this event!
- 9/24 – LifeLine Health Screening at UCC – 8am-4pm
- 9/25 – Gryphon Place Annual Suicide Prevention Walk - 9am-1pm- Bronson Park
- 10/14 – ISAAC Virtual Banquet – 6:30pm
- 10/16 - SAVE THE DATE: UCC Virtual Halloween Service Auction

ON the AGENDA for September's Meeting

- Choose Generosity Sunday Recipients for 21/22 – Please bring your suggestions!
- Update on the 2021-2022 Directory
- Make plans for a 'Welcoming Congregation' Adult Enrichment Activity
- Update about our Re-Opening Plans



See you on Sunday, September 12 at around 11am on Zoom! Darby Fetzer will step in as Program Council leader for the 2021-2022 church year. Thank you, Darby!

And thank YOU for all you do! Stay well!

STEWARDSHIP



UCC SERVICE AUCTION

HALLOWEEN

Costumes Encouraged

October 16th , 6:30 PM

The UCC Halloween service auction and costume party will be held on Zoom on Saturday, October 16 at 6:30 pm. Everyone is looking forward to your auction items that will allow us to have fun together throughout the year. **Please submit your auction items by October 3**

Here are some examples for you all to consider:

- Make a meal that can be delivered and shared together over Zoom.
- Host an outside gathering.
- Purchase tickets for a performance for others to bid on.
- Put together a gift basket with items for a picnic, wine tasting, baking or a spa day.
- Purchase gift cards from a favorite restaurant.
- Offer a gift box with items for a craft.
- Provide a Zoom workshop to teach a new skill or a gift card for an online class.
- Host a game night on Zoom – murder mystery, escape room, euchre, etc.
- Find treasures from your home that others can use and offer it as a mystery box item.
- Volunteer to do a household task or chore for someone
- Offer homemade baked goods or soup.

Please email your auction item information to Joe Calme (joe.calme@gmail.com) by October 3. Your email should include a description of the item, the quantity and the suggested bid amount. Please reach out to the stewardship committee members if you have any questions.
Stewardship Committee: Regena Nelson, Joe Calme, Ron Crowell and Marsha Laya

ONLINE GIVING

Changes are Coming to Online Giving!

Our online giving platform, Vanco (also known as GivePlus), is changing its app. The GivePlus Mobile app (used on a smartphone or tablet) will no longer function after September 30, 2021. **You will not be able to make new donations to UUCC through the GivePlus Mobile App after 9/30/21.** It is being replaced with their new, free Vanco Mobile app.

1. If you have a recurring donation set up through GivePlus, those donations will continue as scheduled.
2. Please download the new Vanco Mobile app from the **Google Play** store or the **Apple App Store**. It is available, set up for UUCC, and functioning. Our church name on Vanco is its full name: **Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan**.
3. Your GivePlus Mobile login credentials (user ID and password) stay the same in Vanco Mobile.
4. If you use a browser on the internet (eg Google Chrome, Edge, Firefox) and access Vanco through our website, www.uucommunitychurch.org, your credentials and recurring donations will remain the same. The look of the page will change by the end of September.

Changing technology can be frustrating, but this change appears to be very easy. If you have any questions or problems, please contact [Kimberly Ridley](#). We sincerely appreciate your donations to UUCC.

Give to UUCC from your smart phone!



Download the free **Vanco Faith** mobile app from Google Play or Apple's App Store and search for **Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan**. Or you can give from the church website at www.uucommunitychurch.org by clicking the yellow **Donate** button.

VANCO
FAITH



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 **September 2 at 7:00 PM** will be an exploration of our spiritual theme for the month. As we weave the Tapestry of Life, the warp threads that make the foundation must be strong and sturdy. The first of these spiritual warps is WHOLENESS. Join Rev. Gy for a discussion about what it means to embrace wholeness in our spiritual lives.

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 **September 9 at 7:00 PM** is **Love and Marriage** (See below for more info.)

Third Thursday— ROSE, THORN, BUD

At our Thoughtful Thursday gathering on **September 16 at 7:00 PM** we will cultivate Mindfulness and Gratitude with the Rose, Thorn, and Bud activity. You can learn more about this on [page 14](#).

Fourth Thursday— CIVIL CONVERSATIONS GROUP

On **September 23 at 7:00 PM** our Civil Conversation Group will reconvene after the summer break to review the techniques and skills we learned last year and make plans to practice engaging in conversation with people who hold different beliefs than us. You can learn more on [page 13](#).

Fifth Thursday - A CONVERSATION WITH....

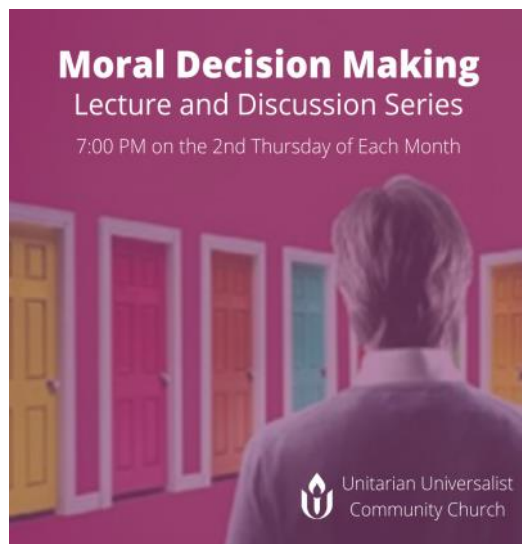
Once a month we invite a special guest to join us to engage in conversation and answer our questions on a variety of topics. We are delighted to welcome author and inspirational speaker, Ruth Fishel, on **Thursday, September 30 at 7:00 PM**. You can learn more about Ruth on [page 2](#).

The Ethics of Love and Marriage

At our next **Moral Decision Making Lecture and Discussion Group** on **Thursday, September 9 at 7:00 PM**, we will consider the stormy and unpredictable ethics of **Love and Marriage** and the question, "Why can't I date a married person?"

This lecture will help us define different kinds of love and navigate the moral norms that govern marriage with a look at the philosophies of the ancient Greeks, Kant, and Nietzsche.

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. Meeting ID: 476 401 695 Passcode: 449120



WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

The Women's Book Group met in August to choose a chairperson and pick their selections for the coming year. Stephanie Grathwol will lead the group again this year. If you ever have any questions about Book Group, please contact her. Below is the schedule for September 2021 – May 2022:



Sep 10, 2021: ***That Time of Year: A Minnesota Life*** by Garrison Keillor
Discussion Leader: Rita Stevens

Oct 8, 2021: ***The Vanishing Half*** by Britt Bennett
Discussion Leader: Denise Hartsough

Nov 12, 2021: ***The Premonition: A Pandemic Story*** by Michael Lewis
Discussion Leader: Judy Halseth

Dec 10, 2021: ***Perestroika in Paris: A Novel*** by Jane Smiley
Discussion Leader: Beverly Folz

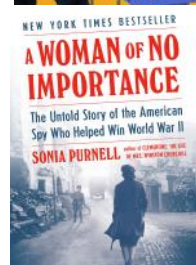
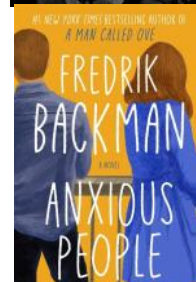
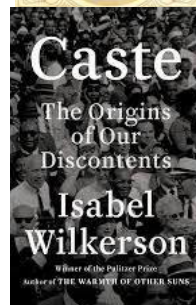
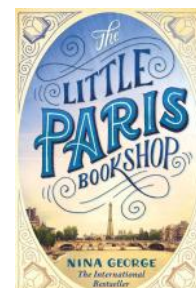
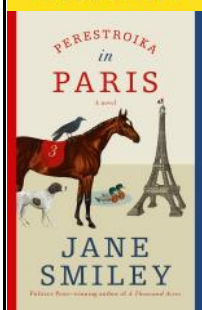
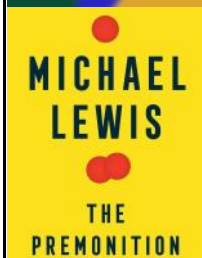
Jan 14, 2022: ***The Little Paris Bookshop*** by Nina George
Discussion Leader: Sally Cowles

Feb 11, 2022: ***Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*** by Isabel Wilkerson
Discussion Leaders: Freya Lake, Marsha Laya, Judy Oliver

March 11, 2022: ***The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir*** by Thi Bui
Discussion Leader: Betty Lee Ongley

Apr 8, 2022: ***A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II*** by Sonia Purnell
Discussion Leader: Stephanie Grathwol

May 13, 2022: ***Anxious People*** by Fredrik Backman
Discussion Leader: Marsha Laya



Here is a list of the other books that were recommended this year:

The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah

Wool by Hugh Howey

In An Instant by Suzanne Redfearn

The Devil & Sherlock Holmes by David Grann

Home: A Memoir of My Early Years by Julie Andrews

Home Work: A Memoir of My Hollywood Years by Julie Andrews

The Particulars of Peter: Dance Lessons, DNA Tests, and Other Excuses to Hang Out with My Perfect Dog by Kelly Conaboy

Making Rounds with Oscar: The Extraordinary Gift of an Ordinary Cat by David Dosa, MD

Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

An Elephant in My Kitchen: What the Herd Taught Me about Love, Courage, and Survival by Françoise Malby-Anthony, Katja Willemsen

Unsettled: What Climate Science Tells Us, What It Doesn't, and Why It Matters by Steven E. Koonin

The September Book Group Meeting will meet via Zoom at 1:00 PM on September 10. Click [HERE](#) for the link. Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Civil Conversations Group Resumes

The Civil Conversations Group is scheduled to resume in September! The group will meet over Zoom once a month, but not necessarily on the same day each month. The schedule through the end of 2021 is as follows:

Thursday, September 23rd at 7:00 PM

Thursday, October 28 at 7:00 PM

Tuesday, November 30 at 7:00 PM

Thursday, December 16 at 7:00 PM



Please mark your calendars accordingly. FYI: We zigged and zagged with dates to accommodate the church calendar, facilitator Darby Fetzer's calendar, and to avoid major holidays.

When the group reconvenes on **Thursday, September 23** we'll review what it means to have a Civil Conversation, we'll take time to share some Civil Conversations we've had over the Summer, and engage in the following topic: "**How to Have A Civil Conversation Around the Topic of Covid Vaccination**". Lastly we'll generate ideas for future Civil Conversation monthly gatherings.

Newcomers are always welcome to join this virtual gathering! If you have any questions contact Darby (269-569-5557 or darbylynnfetzer@gmail.com).

Sustainability Group

Our Sustainability Small Group will begin meeting again on the third Monday of each month to reflect on their personal sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas for promoting sustainable living at UUCU and in the wider community.

Their first meeting for the 2021-2022 church year will be via Zoom on September 20 at 7:00 PM.

Newcomers no matter what stage of the sustainability journey they are on, are always welcome to join this small group.



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

Meeting ID:

960 9812 1445

Passcode:

990641

Contact [Miriam](#) if you have questions or need more information.

CAPable Collectors



Our CAP is off to all of our faithful collectors of plastic bottle caps.

We have reached

a milestone of "collectively" collecting 100 — that's **100 POUNDS!**

These colorful caps of all sizes and dimensions are forwarded to another area to be recycled in Buddy Benches. These benches provide a place for the lonely, tired, or sad to meet up with a friendly person and begin a positive attitude.

Here's to the next hundred - and more - caps that UUCU rescues from land or sea-fill!! Freya Lake is our cap collection agent. Contact her (freyalake@sbcglobal.net or 269-324-3503) for pick-up or delivery arrangements.

CONNECTION

Men's Group Breakfast

The Men's Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, September 18 at 8:30 AM** at Burger Town Grille, 9136 Shaver Rd in Portage.

EVERYONE (regardless of gender identity or expression) is welcome to come to breakfast. Don't miss this opportunity for good food, good company, and good conversation!

If you plan to come, please RSVP to breakfast coordinator, Ken VanEseltine, (269) 342-4793 or vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net by Friday, September 17.



Zoom Training

Even as we begin to make plans to open up our building again, we recognize that we will continue to utilize the Zoom app for meetings, Thoughtful Thursdays, Qigong, and other events. Video conferencing provides a convenient and sustainable way for us to meet and it allows people unable to get to our building a way to connect with us.

To help everyone become more comfortable and proficient in hosting and attending Zoom meetings, we will be offering two *in-person* Zoom training sessions this fall.

Zoom for Beginners—September 19—2:30 PM

Bring your laptop, tablet, or smartphone and learn the basics of Zoom.

Zoom Host Training—September 26—2:30 PM

Are you ready to take charge of a Zoom meeting? Come and learn the ins and outs of hosting.

These trainings will take in the sanctuary at UCC and all our Covid 19 protocols will be followed. Please contact [Miriam](#) to RSVP.

Qigong at UCC

You are invited to join our weekly Qigong sessions, every Tuesday morning at 9:00 AM!



5 Reasons to try Qigong at UCC

- Qigong is low-impact exercise that doesn't require fancy equipment or special clothes.
- Qigong helps to loosen your muscles and relax your body.
- Qigong provides an opportunity for intentional deep breathing that clears your mind.
- Our sessions are on Zoom so you can try it in the privacy of your own home with your camera off.
- Our Qigong 'regulars' are a great bunch of people who will welcome YOU warmly.

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

Rose, Thorn, and Bud

At our Thoughtful Thursday gathering on **September 16 at 7:00 PM**, we will practice Mindfulness with the Rose, Thorn, and Bud activity.

During this meeting, each person will be asked to share something they are grateful for (a Rose), a challenge they are facing (a Thorn), and something they are looking forward to or trying to cultivate in themselves (a Bud).

This easy mindfulness activity helps us cultivate gratitude in our lives and strengthens our relationship with one another. It is the perfect activity for September's theme of Spiritual Wholeness.

Click [HERE](#) to this Thoughtful Thursday:
Meeting ID: 476 401 695
Passcode: 449120



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

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



In our programs for children and youth, September is always about COVENANT. We begin our church year with a discussion about right relations and we write down promises about how we will strive to interact with each other. These promises become our Youth Covenant for the year.

I have always come at this from a 'Golden Rule' perspective, asking the kids to first consider how they want to be treated and then asking them to extrapolate those ideals out to include others.

Our exploration of Anti-Racism last year has caused me to re-think the way we create covenant. By focusing the process inward and on ourselves, we create spaces where we and others like us are comfortable. We require people who are different to adapt to our system. If, as the mission of our congregation states, we want to live our vision of positively transforming ourselves and the world for the betterment of all living things by nurturing a progressive culture of abundant DIVERSITY, we are going to have to begin our covenant process by looking outward.

This year we began by asking the question, *How can we make our programs for children and youth welcoming to people who are different than us?* I defined 'different' for the kids very broadly including class, educational attainment, socioeconomic status, gender identity and expression, race, and culture. This is not an easy question to answer. Perhaps it has you stumped.

As is often the case, I was amazed by how thoughtful and wise our kids can be. They offered these suggestions:

- Be Open to New Ideas
- Celebrate Diversity
- Practice Acceptance and Inclusion
- Pay Attention to Who is Not Participating
- Ask Curious Questions
- Speak Up When People are Being Left Out or Marginalized
- Slow Down Decision Making

This year's Youth Covenant will be much different than it has been in the past. The kids are committed to slowing down, thinking deeply, and revising until they get it right, so their covenant will take several weeks to craft rather than an hour of time on Sunday morning as has been the usual practice. They are, I think, off to a wonderful start and I look forward to learning from our young people as they come up with the finished product.

In addition to Covenant, September is usually the time when I unveil our plans for programming for children and youth for the upcoming year. The rise of the Delta variant and the decision to not allow children under 12 in the church building has unraveled all of the plans I was working on, so I too am slowing down, thinking deeply, and striving to practice acceptance and inclusion. I am in need of a little grace from you all as I work things out. I have faith that things will turn out okay in the end and, if they don't, that we will muddle through anyhow.

May it be so.

FAITH IN ACTION



Join me on
Sat., 09.18.21

11am - 2pm
 Bronson Park
 Kalamazoo, MI

RALLY FOR EQUALITY



STANDING TOGETHER | DEMANDING CHANGE

outfrontkzoo.org/rallyforequality

Unitarian Universalist Community Church is proud to be a co-sponsor of OutFront Kalamazoo's **Rally for Equality** on **Saturday, September 18** from **11:00 AM to 2:00 PM** at **Bronson Park** in downtown Kalamazoo.

YOU should plan to attend...

- To rally the community around the unfinished work of LGBTQ+ equity.
- To affirm and protect our rights and ensure our safety.
- To protest inequality and discriminatory policies in Michigan.
- To raise our visibility and demonstrate the size, strength, and diversity of the LGBTQ+ community and allies.

Speakers will include David Anderson, Mayor of Kalamazoo; Kelly Doyle, Executive Director, CARES; Patrese Griffin, Vice Mayor of Kalamazoo; Amy Hunter, Executive Director, OutFront Kalamazoo; Marshall Kilgore, Director of Advocacy, OutFront Kalamazoo; Dr. Grace Lubwama, CEO, YWCA Kalamazoo; Michigan State Senator Sean McCann; Monteze Morales, Kalamazoo County Commissioner; Michigan State Representative Christine Morse; Nate Nguyen, Director, Office of LGBT Students Services at WMU; Carrie Pickett-Erway, President/CEO, Kalamazoo Community Foundation; Michigan State Representative Julie M. Rogers.

It is time for us to gather together with others in the community to re-energize, reunite and raise our voices to demand change. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP for this important community rally.

FAITH IN ACTION



Afghan Refugees in Kalamazoo

From [Kathy Murphy](#), Kalamazoo Refugee Council

We believe there will be over 120 people coming from Afghanistan to Kalamazoo in the next week or two. So far we don't know when exactly, or how many families groups this will be. We do know that most of them will have nothing but the clothes on their back.

The following is a list of priority needs:

- **Any Household Basics**—sheets, towels, blankets, pillows, kitchen items for cooking, plates, glasses, kitchen towels, flatware, etc.
- **Clothing**—including fall and winter sweaters and coats.
- **Shoes and Winter Boots**
- **Personal Hygiene Products** - shampoo, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc.

These things can be used but clean and in good shape. Please place in bags labeled Kitchen, Bath, Bedding, etc.

- **Gift Cards** - stores like Meijer, Target
- **Places to Live**— information about rentals or space in homes with families.

Donations can be dropped off to:

- ⇒ **Kathy Murphy's** porch at 217 North Gremps in Paw Paw
- ⇒ **Prince of Peace Church**, 1747 Milham, near Oakland Drive in Portage, M-Thurs 9am-3pm (drive around to the back)
- ⇒ **Peoples Church**, 1758 N 10th Street, north of West Main Street in Kalamazoo, Mon-Thurs 1-3pm

Questions can be directed to Kathy Murphy (269-599-2350 or kathymurphypeace2@gmail.com)

Thank you in advance for your support.

[Side with Love](#), the Unitarian Universalist social justice advocacy campaign is launching a virtual Action Center on Sunday, September 12 at 2:00 PM.

The Side with Love Action Center will be a place for folks to come together across differences, issues, and geography to end oppression and build democratic, sustainable, and thriving communities focused on four key issues:

- Climate Justice
- Decriminalization
- Democracy & Voting Rights
- LGBTQ+ & Gender Justice

You can be part of the launch of the Action Center. Click [HERE](#) to find out how.

OPPORTUNITIES



FRIDAY SEPT. 24
12 PM—7:30 PM (CDT)
SATURDAY SEPT. 25
8:30 AM—5 PM (CDT)

We live in a world of painful and destructive polarities. Gather with persons of various faiths, spiritualities, ages, and cultures who are longing to participate in the movement toward unity and the healing of divisions.

PARTICIPANTS will be invited to engage in processes and programs empowering us to grow in deeper listening, understanding, and compassion, and to join in courageous conversations to bridge different views. It is in the gap between two views where dynamic energy and openness are present to discern the newness being born.

This **CONFERENCE** is being held via ZOOM in order to bridge geography!

Click [HERE](#) for more info or to register

PRESENTERS:

Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ is the best-selling author of *Dead Man Walking* and a world-renowned advocate against the death penalty.

Vernice Solimar, PhD, a founding member of Ken Wilber's Integral Institute, is a skilled teacher of transpersonal psychology and spiral dynamics.

Diane Bencoter, a former cult member, and founder of Antidote.ngo, understands the role that psychological manipulation plays in luring people into extremist ideologies.

Maka Akan Najin Black Elk is Executive Director for Truth and Healing at Red Cloud Indian School in Pine Ridge, SD, a former Indian boarding school. Maka brings a passion for interreligious dialogue to his work.

Cheryllyn Branche is President of the GU272 Descendants Association, a non-profit representing over 10,000 living and deceased Descendants of enslaved children, women, and men sold by the Jesuits of Georgetown University in 1838.

Arlie Hochschild, PhD is a UC Berkeley professor of sociology, emerita and the author of nine books, most recently, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, a finalist for the National Book Award.

Katharine Hayhoe, PhD is an atmospheric scientist whose research focuses on understanding what climate change means for people and the places we live. She is a Horn Distinguished Professor at Texas Tech University and was named one of *TIME*'s 100 most influential people.

OPPORTUNITIES



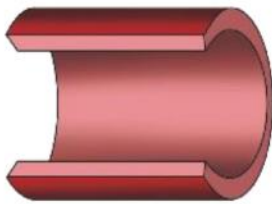
Keep doing the things you love.

Catch health problems before they go too far.

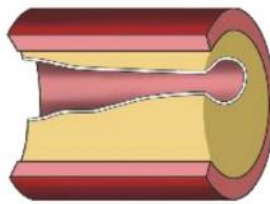
Life Line Screening, recognized with an A+ rating by the Better Business Bureau, offers a 5-test package to thoroughly check you for risk of stroke, cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions. The combination of these tests helps detect problems—**before you have symptoms** and while you and your doctor can still take action...so you can keep doing the things you love.



Plaque buildup in the arteries can lead to heart disease, aneurysm or stroke.



A normal artery allows blood to flow through easily.



Plaque buildup in the arteries reduces your blood flow and can be dangerous if left untreated.

Register now to check the health of your arteries

5 Important Screenings for Only \$149 a Savings of \$181!

- Carotid Artery Screening (Plaque)
- Heart Rhythm Screening (Atrial Fibrillation)
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Peripheral Arterial Disease Screening
- Osteoporosis Risk Assessment

Join the **8 million people** who have been screened. We are coming to your neighborhood.

WHERE: Unitarian Universalist Community Church
10441 Shaver Road, Portage

WHEN: Friday, September 24th 2021

Please call toll-free **888-653-6434** to register for your screening and to receive a \$10 discount or visit www.LifeLineScreening.com/community-partners

Screening results are provided to you in 21 days. We direct all participants with abnormal results to take the report to their physician. Carotid Artery and PAD screenings help identify the presence of Atherosclerosis, and if found, can be an early warning for higher risks of stroke and coronary artery disease. Such early warning information can help you and your doctor take important steps to reduce your risk for more serious health issues. If necessary, steps may include lifestyle and diet, medical therapies, and even more thorough follow-up testing and evaluation of your heart function. Appropriate modification of risk factors (including high blood pressure, smoking, heart disease, diabetes and poor diet) is also necessary for cardiovascular disease prevention. Our screenings cannot detect all forms of stroke risk or cardiovascular disease. All tests are for screening purposes **only**. You should consult with your personal physician regarding your screening results. Insurance Note: Life Line Screening does not participate in the Medicare program and the cost of our screening services is not covered or reimbursable by Medicare. Life Line Screening does not file insurance claims nor provide referrals to any physician's group or hospital. Screenings in California are provided by Life Line Mobile Screening, a physician owned practice. Screenings in Kansas are performed by Life Line Screening of America, Ltd. on behalf of Life Line Screening Physicians, P.A. Screenings in New Hampshire, New Jersey and New York are performed by Life Line Medical Screening, LLC (Dr. Andrew Manganaro, 70 Niagara Street, Buffalo NY, 14202). Life Line Screening does not engage in the practice of medicine in those states. This information is not intended to induce referrals by Life Line Screening to Life Line Medical Screening, LLC for any professional medical service. Texas residents: Physician authorization is required. A Life Line Screening affiliated physician will provide authorization for you if you qualify. Cancellation Policy: A full refund is issued if you call to cancel at least 2 days prior to your appointment. If less than 2 days' notice is given, we will issue a Gift Card for the full amount to be used by you, or anyone you choose, to purchase future screening services.

INSPIRATION

Everything Falls Away **By Parker J. Palmer**

Sooner or later, everything falls away. You, the work you've done, your successes, large and small, your failures, too. Those moments when you were light, alongside the times you became one with the night. The friends, the people you loved, who loved you, those who might have wished you ill, none of this is forever. All of it is soon to go, or going, or long gone.

Everything falls away, except the thread you've followed, unknowing, all along. The thread that strings together all you've been and done, the thread you didn't know you were tracking until, towards the end, you see that the thread is what stays as everything else falls away.

Follow that thread as far as you can and you'll find that it does not end, but weaves into the unimaginable vastness of life. Your life never was the solo turn it seemed to be. It was always part of the great weave of nature and humanity, an immensity we come to know only as we follow our own small threads to the place where they merge with the boundless whole.

Each of our threads runs its course, then joins in life together. This magnificent tapestry—this masterpiece in which we live forever





CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER 2021

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Wednesday	September 1	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	September 2	Stewardship Committee Meeting Thoughtful Thursday	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Saturday	September 4	Water Communion Videos	11:00AM-2:00PM
Sunday	September 5	Are We Spiritual Beings? with Rev. Gy After-Service Coffee Hour LAST CHANCE for Water Communion Videos	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00-5:00 PM
Tuesday	September 7	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 8	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	September 9	Moral Decision Making	7:00 PM
Friday	September 10	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Sunday	September 12	Oneness with Rev. Gy After-Service Coffee Hour Program Council Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 11:00 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	September 14	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	September 16	Rose, Thorn, and Bud	7:00 PM
Saturday	September 18	Men's Group Breakfast OutFront Rally for Equality	8:30 AM 11:00AM
Sunday	September 19	Developing Resilience in Uncertain Times with Eric Nelson After-Service Coffee Hour Zoom for Beginners	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 2:30 PM
Monday	September 20	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	September 21	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 22	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Thursday	September 23	Civil Conversations	7:00 PM
Friday	September 24	LifeLine Health Screenings	8:00 AM-4:00PM
Sunday	September 26	Life Goes On...So Far with Mary Jo Ramsey-Smith After-Service Coffee Hour Zoom Host Training	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 2:30 PM
Tuesday	September 28	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	September 30	A Conversation with Ruth Fishel	7:00 PM



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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Nick Sienkiewicz
Music Director
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, September 22 at NOON**

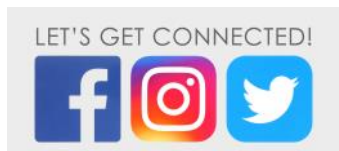
Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
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