



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

November 2021

## DECEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM

Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required

Also [on Facebook](#) and [Zoom](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 926 5154 8494

Passcode: 286763

### December 5: *Peacemakers* with Rev. Gy

In Europe, December 5 is widely celebrated as St. Nicholas Day. It is fitting on this day for us to hear about Nicholas, the patron saint of peacemakers, and other stories of exceptional kindness that have helped shape human history.

### December 12: *For Unto Us a Child is Born* with Rev. Gy

With a kind yet critical eye, will explore the story of the birth of Jesus, as told in the Bible, and reflect on the promise of Peace on Earth.

### December 19: *A Winter Solstice Ritual* with UUCM Members and Friends

We will pause for a moment of peace and reflection during the hectic holiday season and celebrate the Darkness and the Light with stories, meditations, and songs.

### December 26: *The Burning Bowl* with Rev. Gy

At the dusk of the old year, it is our tradition to release all the emotional ties and bonds that no longer serve us by feeding them to the flames of the Burning Bowl. Join us to hit the spiritual reset button and reflect on making a fresh start.



### Spiritual Theme for December: **PEACE**

*I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*, hymn #240 in our grey hymnal, is based on words penned by Unitarian poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It includes this verse:

*I heard the bells on Christmas day  
Their old familiar carols play  
And wild and sweet, the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, to all good will.*

Peace seems like an appropriate theme for December. It goes hand-in-hand with the Holiday season with its messages of Peace on Earth, Good Will to All.

The ideal of 'Peace on Earth' is also part of the fabric of Unitarian Universalism. Our UU Principles call on us to help build a world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all. Our Principles remind us of the interwoven nature of Peace. Peace and injustice cannot coexist. Justice requires an inner-revolution of more loving-kindness towards ourselves and others. It is as Lao-Tse said, *If there is to be peace in the world... there must be peace in the heart.*

Peace requires work—work to find peace within and to build peace and justice in our families, communities, and the world. As you weave your Tapestry of Life, what role will PEACE play in your design?

# CHALICA

1  
each person  
is important

2  
BE KIND IN  
all YOU DO

3  
we're free  
to learn  
together

4  
and search  
for what  
is true

**Chalica** is a celebration of our Unitarian Universalist Principles that begins on the first Monday in December and ends on the following Monday. Each day of Chalica is dedicated to one principle.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**8th Principle:** Build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.



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

Our Chalica guide with readings, meditations, and suggestions for putting your principles into action can be found [HERE](#). It has everything you need to help you have a happy little Chalica!

5  
all  
people  
need a  
voice

6  
BUILD a fair  
and peaceful  
world

7  
we take  
care of  
the earth

8  
BUILD a  
diverse  
BELOVED  
COMMUNITY

# TIS THE SEASON

## A Zoom Christmas Eve



Without the option of singing carols together and enjoying cookies and other refreshments afterward, the prospect of an in-person Christmas Eve service didn't seem very appealing to the group that met at the November Program Council Meeting. The decision was made to offer a Zoom Christmas Eve again this year.

Rev. Gy will host the gathering at **5:00 PM on Friday, December 24.**

The theme for our shared time will be Peace. We will read poems, meditate on peace, and sing our favorite Christmas Carols.

May indeed peace, reason, and love be the strongest voices for the years to come.

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom Login.

Meeting ID: 987 9802 5387 Passcode: 234598



## The Winter Solstice

Winter solstice is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. Traditionally, it is a time of both foreboding and expectancy, as the longest night leads to the return of the sun.

The Winter Solstice has become important to Unitarian Universalists as a time during the holiday season when people on different spiritual paths can share a common celebration.

Join us either in-person or online on Sunday, **December 19 at 10:00 AM** to celebrate the darkness and the light with a **Winter Solstice Ritual** presented by UUCC members and friends.

## The Burning Bowl

The Burning Bowl, a Unitarian Universalist ceremony traditionally held at the cusp of the new year will take place at UUCC and online on Sunday, **December 26 at 10:00 AM.**

The Burning Bowl is a ritual of letting go, cleansing, intention, and hope. During the ritual, you will be invited to write down words or a phrase on a small piece of flash paper as a way to sum up what you wish to leave behind before entering the new year.

Those attending the service in person will have an opportunity to feed their piece of paper to the flames as a way to symbolically unburden yourself of that which no longer serves you. People at home, can burn their papers or rip and shred them if that is a safer choice.

Either way, the destruction of the paper symbolizes releasing the old and making way for the new.

Visit the [UUA Website](#) to learn more about the Burning Bowl.



# FROM THE MINISTER

## From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

*Our history has shown that we keep repeating ourselves. We keep acting in the same ways, doing the same things, telling and believing the same stories about God, about life, about everything. Indeed, it has been said that “the sins of the father shall be visited upon the sons, even unto the seventh generation.*

-Neal Donald Walsh



We always have the opportunity to disrupt the cycle and so often we don't. I wonder why?

There are those among us who do disrupt the cycle and we esteem them highly and conclude that somehow they are greater than us, better than us, smarter than us, more talented than us, and that's why. And we can't because we are none of those things.

Is that true?

What if we could be the ***eighth generation***? The ones who give future generations a vision of humanity so grand that they may be inspired beyond anything humanity has ever known!

What if we changed the story about who we are and are not? How would that affect the ways we show up in the world? How would that impact the younger generations who look at us for guidance and model example?

Let us present our children with a new idea of what human beings are. A new potential. A new purpose!

We can interrupt the cycle. Others have done it. So can we. We can do it as a community. We can do it as individuals.

We can support one another along the way. In fact, we would. We are.

Now notice your thoughts.... You may be thinking, oh, this is pie in the sky. It is so far-fetched, it's hardly worth entertaining it.

Is it?

What if we don't succeed 100%? What if we succeed 30%, 50%, 70%??? Wouldn't that make it worth it? Wouldn't that lead to a significantly changed world??

Let us be the ***eighth generation!***

It takes an awakening, awareness, and a willingness to be who we really are. And we do not have to wait till the rest of the world catches up to us, or wait till the rest of the world is willing to make the first move. We can disrupt the cycle now. Leave behind that which no longer serves us, embrace all that honors life and expansion.

Here's to the ***eighth generation!***

Peace, Love, and Joy! Rev. Gy

PEACE  
LOVE  
& JOY



# CARING COMMUNITY



## DECEMBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*Happy December!*

*May you have gloves to warm your hands,  
And boots to warm your feet,  
And friends and family to warm your heart.*

*~ Author Unknown*

The past month provided us with many opportunities to cheer on the accomplishments of the young people in our lives. We were proud to have the **UCC Youth Group** lead us in making our values real by organizing a Post Card party and making it easy for us to connect with our elected officials. They also put on an excellent Sunday Service to kick off our annual Guest at Your Table program. **David Brozovich** completed an awesome season with the WMU Bronco Marching Band, and **Matthew Nelson** was awarded the Cooper Prize in Physics at the annual Honors Day Convocation for excellence in academics and leadership at Kalamazoo College! We also shared in **John and Beverly Folz's** pride that their **grandchild Sam** ran in the Boston Marathon.

**Miriam** was grateful for the opportunity to travel to visit family in South Carolina. A rare treat, nowadays! **Judy Millsbaugh** has been struggling with health issues following hip replacement surgery. Please keep her in your thoughts. **Marsha Laya** asked for prayers for a rider who tragically passed away after being hit by a truck during a Biking Tour that she was on down South.

Many people shared their gratitude about UCC re-opening and providing an opportunity to participate via Zoom for those who can't be there in person. While it is hard to be separated, we are grateful that **the Board** and our **Tech Team** have worked so hard to make it possible to stay safely connected.

### ***December Birthdays***

There are so many UCC birthdays to celebrate in December! Share your good wishes with **Ken VanEselte, Harold Beu, Matthew Nelson, David Bott, Tami Brozovich, Rev. Gy, Nancy Calme, Mary Roscoe, Steve Tasko, and Marcus Ragains.**

### ***Remembering Friends Who Have Passed On***

In December, we remember **Herbert Tompkins**, an energetic, musical 85-year-old when he passed away in 2001. Herb delighted us all by frequently strumming his guitar and singing old favorites at church. We still have a binder at the back of the sanctuary full of Herb's hand-drawn cartoons.

### ***Welcome Visitors***

Since re-opening the church, we have been delighted to host new visitors. Please look for continued attendance from **Rev. Drew Frantz, Kathryn Timm, Christina Minor, and Michael Reed.** We are so happy to share our community with new people who can add ideas, interests, and inspiration to UCC.

*Everyone in the church is part of our Caring Community, and caring for one another is a key feature of this congregation. If you have a care or celebration that you would like to share with us all, please pass it on to the coordinators through the UCC office: 269-324-7262 or [uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)*

# 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 UUCC - members, friends, and visitors - is welcome to take part!

There was a lot to **CELEBRATE** at our first dual-platform meeting in November that allowed people to participate whether they were in the sanctuary or zooming in from elsewhere. Celebrations included successfully reopening the church building for services; an amazing Halloween Auction that raised over \$6400!; a full calendar of small group meetings that are keeping us connected and engaged; Roddy Biggs from the UU Mental Health Network whose visit to a Thoughtful Thursday inspires us to be more inclusive; and a small but active Youth Group that attended a WMU game and hosted a wonderful Post Card Party to help us connect with elected officials. You can read the full notes from the meeting [HERE](#).

Looking to get more involved with UU Community Church?

Check out these **OPPORTUNITIES!**

- Meet-up for Youth - Select Sundays at 1:00 PM (via Zoom)
- Qigong - Tuesdays at 9:00 AM (via Zoom)
- December Thoughtful Thursdays (via Zoom) at 7:00 PM—Details on [page 8](#)
  - 1st Thursday—Moral Decision Making—Lecture and small group discussion
  - 2nd Thursday— A Conversation with peace activist, Luana Van Dam
  - 3rd Thursday – Civil Conversations Group
  - 4th and 5th Thursdays— Holiday Break—No Gatherings
- Sustainability Group—Monday, December 13 at 7:00 PM—Details on [page 9](#)
- Zoom Christmas Eve—Friday, December 24 at 5:00 PM—Details on [page 3](#)
- Volunteer!
  - FAITH IN ACTION: If you are interested in joining the Congolese Family Team and helping our friends continue to thrive, please contact Denise at [Dlsonier@Hotmail.com](mailto:Dlsonier@Hotmail.com)
  - TECH TEAM: If you are interested in joining the tech team, please contact Steve Tasko at [stevetasko@gmail.com](mailto:stevetasko@gmail.com)
  - SUNDAY MORNING FACEBOOK HOSTS are needed to interface with FB participants on Sunday mornings. If you prefer to watch the Sunday message from the comfort of your home, this could be a great opportunity for you. Please contact Miriam at [uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)



### IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- Show up for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Portage Kids Peaceful Protests Every Thursday and Sunday —12:00 PM in front of Portage City Hall.
- Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition—Fridays for the Future— December 10 at 12 PM. Details on page 9.

On the **AGENDA** for December's Meeting: 8th UU Principle and a Strategic Planning Update

We hope to see you at the next Program Council Meeting on **Sunday, December 12** at around 11:00 AM. We will meet in-person and via Zoom following a brief social hour. Send your agenda items and celebrations to Program Council chair, [Darby Fetzer](#). And as always Thank YOU for all you do! Stay well!

# LEADERSHIP



Here are a few things the board did at their November meeting:

- Put plans in place to begin an appreciative inquiry process to update our Strategic Plan.
- Put plans in place to begin a Membership Growth Initiative.
- Discussed whether Board Policy 1001: Gifts/Donations to UUCC should be updated.
- Considered the possibility of applying for a Chalice Lighter Grant
- Agreed to explore the possibility of sending Rev. Gy to the Leadership Kalamazoo Program.

The minutes of the November meeting can be found [HERE](#).

The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, December 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.

## Michigan UU Social Justice Network

In November, our congregation set aside funds to pay for our annual membership dues to Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network (MUUSJN) and, our Director of Religious Education, Miriam Epskamp, was elected to their Board of Directors. Supporting MUUSJN with our time, talent, and treasure is one of the ways UUCC puts our faith in action!

Established in 2002, MUUSJN's statewide social justice network of over 3000 people includes allies, activists, and clergy from 26 Michigan Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations. The network promotes legislative change by working in coalitions; organizing action alerts, conferences, and webinars; and publishing e-newsletters, a lively Facebook page, and a dynamic website.

The network's Board of Directors represents all parts of Michigan and its Advisory Council is linked to every UU Congregation in the state.

MUUSJN has a solid record of achievement. It mobilizes our UU faith values to impact public policy through advocacy, education, and public witness on a wide range of issues including racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, immigration reform, economic justice, environment, water rights, access to reproductive health, healthcare reform, gun violence prevention, and prison reform.

MUUSJN relies on our financial support from congregations and individuals to sustain its justice movement. Individuals can become members for as little as \$25 a year. Visit MUUSJN at [www.uujustice.org](http://www.uujustice.org) to learn more and to sign up for their e-newsletter. Follow MUUSJN on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/MUUSJN/](https://www.facebook.com/MUUSJN/) for all the latest news.



# 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.

Click [HERE](#) for the Thoughtful Thursday Zoom link. Meeting ID: 476 401 695 Passcode: 449120

### First Thursday—MORAL DECISION MAKING

Our gathering on **December 2 at 7:00 PM** will feature a short lecture and a group discussion of the thorny ethical question: What do I owe my aging parents? (See below for more info.)

### Second 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 have local peace activist Luana VanDam join us on Thursday, **December 9 at 7:00 PM**. You can learn more about Luana below.

### Third Thursday— CIVIL CONVERSATIONS GROUP

On **December 16 at 7:00 PM** our Civil Conversation Group will meet to help participants learn the skills that will help them engage in meaningful conversations with family, friends, and others.

### Other Thursdays—BREAK

We will take a Holiday Break from Thoughtful Thursdays the last two weeks in December. Our next gathering will be on Thursday, **January 6 at 7:00 PM** for what we hope will be the first of several congregational discussions about the proposed Unitarian Universalist **8th Principle**. Please plan to join us!

## The Ethics of Care

At the next meeting of our **Moral Decision Making Lecture and Discussion Group** on **Thursday, December 2 at 7:00 PM**, we will explore some of the ethics concerning family relationships.

Many of us have (or will one day) been in the position of caring for an aging parent. What ethical obligations do we have? What is the best way to take care of the elderly in our society? We will hear what philosophers ranging from Confucius to Plato to William James have to say about filial piety and the ethics of care.

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



The special guest for our Thoughtful Thursday gathering on **December 9** will be longtime Kalamazoo resident and peace activist, **Luana Van Dam**. Luana earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees

from Western Michigan University. Special Education and 2nd grade occupied most of her 34-year teaching career with Portage Public Schools though she spent one year at the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona. She became fully engaged in peace activities after retirement more than 15 years ago. The Campaign for a Department of Peace was the organization from which her other peace activities grew. These include Peace Jam, Non-Violent Communication, Peace Pizzazz, working with refugees, helping to start a social justice committee at Unity Church, and a monthly political group called Citizen Giant.

# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

## Finding Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Foot Print

Each month the **Sustainability Group** meets to reflect on their personal sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas for promoting sustainable living at UCC and in the wider community.

At their last meeting they shared the following resources:

- ◆ 101 Ways to Go Zero Waste by Kathryn Kellogg, excellent suggestions for ways to embrace the Four Rs: Refuse (to buy), Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle
- ◆ [The Future Is Still in Our Hands](#), an On Being interview with climate scientist, Katherine Hayhoe. For more from Katherine Hayhoe check out her TED Talk: [The Most Important Thing You Can Do To Fight Climate Change](#)
- ◆ For ideas for living your values [Wallet Activism Podcast and Book](#)



And the following Calls-to-Action were shared:

- ◆ Submit a Comment to the Michigan Public Service Commission about Consumers Power's Integrated Resource Plan. Michigan Future/Michigan Power has a form email that you can submit along with your personal comments. <https://mifuturemipower.good.do/consumers/comment/>
- ◆ Submit a comment to WMU's strategic plan urging them to aggressively combat climate change: <https://wmich.edu/strategic>

At their next meeting on **Monday, December 13 at 7:00 PM**, the group will watch a brief video about global strategies for achieving a net-zero carbon emission by 2050 and discuss the struggle to remain optimistic in the face of so much negative news about the planet.

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

Meeting ID: 960 9812 1445 Passcode: 990641

Newcomers are always welcome to join this small group. If you have any questions about the Sustainability Group, contact [Miriam](#).

## Building the Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time

The UCC **Civil Conversations Group** will meet via Zoom on Thursday, December 16 at 7:00 PM to help participants learn the skills that will help them engage in more meaningful conversations with family, friends, and others to authentically build a more Beloved Community.

On the agenda this month:

- Watching and discussing a poignant video about a Red/Blue community having Civil Conversations over hotly contested topics.
- Exploring the following question with the group: While most of us attending the Civil Conversation Group tow a particular party line, what are political issues where you hold a more moderate or differing viewpoint? Said another way, what are issues you perceive as gray, vs. black or white?



Please feel free to invite friends with varying perspectives to this gathering. We work to intentionally create a safe space by following our Civil Conversation's guidelines and intervening if necessary.

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

If you have any questions about this group please contact Darby Fetzer at 269-569-5557

# SUSTAINABILITY

## 52 CLUTTER-FREE GIFTS

### Experiences

- Concert Tickets
- Sporting Tickets
- Movie Passes
- Theater Tickets
- Golf Passes
- Escape Room
- Symphony
- Community Theater
- Restaurant Gift Card
- Indoor Rock Climbing
- Bowling Passes
- Daddy-Daughter Date
- Summer Camp
- Hot Air Balloon Ride

### Classes

- Cooking
- Dance
- Sports
- Swimming
- Music
- Internet Master Class
- Coding
- Painting/Art
- Home Brewing
- Scuba Diving
- Private Coaching
- Physical Trainer

### Time

- Babysitter
- House Cleaner
- Professional Organizer
- Car Wash
- Massage
- Manicure/Pedicure
- Yard Service
- Date Night Out
- Oil Change

### Memberships

- Children's Museum
- Zoo
- Theme Park
- Trampoline Park
- Art Museum
- Science Museum
- State Parks
- National Parks

### Consumables

- Fruit Basket
- Flowers
- Chocolates
- Coffee Beans
- Coffee Gift Card
- Local Foods
- Wine
- Desserts
- Meat/Cheeses



# CONNECTION

## Women's Book Group

**Friday, December 10**  
**1:00 PM via Zoom**

December Selection:  
***Perestroika in Paris***  
by Jane Smiley

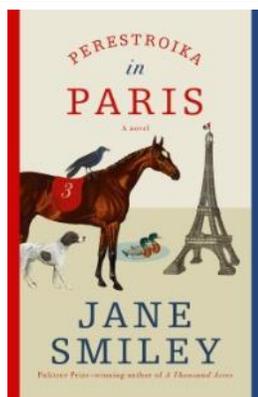
From Goodreads:

*Paras, short for "Perestroika," is a spirited racehorse at a racetrack west of Paris. One afternoon at dusk, she finds the door of her stall open and--she's a curious filly--wanders all the way to the City of Light. She's dazzled and often mystified by the sights, sounds, and smells around her, but she isn't afraid. Soon she meets an elegant dog, a German short-haired pointer named Frida, who knows how to get by without attracting the attention of suspicious Parisians. Paras and Frida coexist for a time in the city's lush green spaces, nourished by Frida's strategic trips to the vegetable market. They keep company with two irrepressible ducks and an opinionated raven. But then Paras meets a human boy, Etienne, and discovers a new, otherworldly part of Paris: the ivy-walled house where the boy and his nearly-one-hundred-year-old great-grandmother live in seclusion. As the cold weather and Christmas near, the unlikelyst of friendships bloom. But how long can a runaway of all creatures for true love and freedom. horse stay undiscovered in Paris? How long can a boy keep her hidden and all to himself? Jane Smiley's beguiling new novel is itself an adventure that celebrates curiosity, ingenuity, and the desire of all creatures for true love and freedom.*

The Book Group will meet at 1:00 PM on December 10 via Zoom for a short business meeting followed by a discussion led by Bev Folz.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981

If you are interested in joining Book Group, please contact chairperson, [Stephanie Grathwol](#).



## Qigong at UCC

Looking for ways to bring more peace into your life? Give Qigong a try! Tuesday mornings at 9:00 AM via Zoom.



Qigong is a series of mindful movements that can help make people feel more present, more easeful, less stressed, and can result in people feeling more peaceful and relaxed when they are done.

Our Qigong sessions begin with a brief check-in followed by 30 minutes of exercise led by an experienced instructor.

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

Meeting ID: 697 338 090 Passcode: 138550

If you have any questions about the Qigong group, please contact [Freya Lake](#).

## Men's Group Breakfast

The Men's Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, December 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, RSVP to breakfast coordinator, Ken VanEseltine, at (269) 342-4793 or [vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net), by noon on Friday, December 17.

# OPPORTUNITIES



Ministry with Community (MWC) is holding its annual collection of warm clothing items at its facility at 500 N. Edwards Street in Kalamazoo from **December 6-10**. Their goal is to help keep everyone in our community safe and warm this winter, and throughout the year.

### Underwear Party Wish List:

- Men's Boxers or Boxer Briefs
- Women's Underwear
- Thermal Undergarments
- Sweatshirts and Sweatpants
- Insulated Gloves
- Winter Hats
- Hand Warmers

*Men's and women's adult sizes M - 4XL. New items only. Plain colors preferred. No open-knit or crocheted items, please. Socks and scarves are not needed at this time.*

During Underwear Party Week, MWC will accept your donations at their back door from **9 AM– 4 PM daily**. Please ring the doorbell (the door will be clearly marked) and they will assist you with your donations. If you need assistance when you drop off your donation, please call (269) 343-6073 x133 and someone will come out to collect your gifts.

Other ways to provide support:

Purchase items from their [Amazon Wish List](#) and have them delivered.

Or make a financial contribution to support the Underwear Party at the [MWC website](#).

## Spreading Peace Meditation

Every **Wednesday** at **10 AM** via Zoom, **Ruth Fishel**, leads a half-hour meditation practice with a goal of spreading the energy of Peace throughout the world. All are welcome to join!

We were delighted to meet Ruth at our Thoughtful Thursday gathering in September. Her life story and commitment to mindfulness practice are inspirational!

To join the meditation, open zoom, enter Meeting Code: 409 810 027, then enter Password: 679 916.



If you would like to be added to the mailing list for Ruth's daily message providing daily inspirational thoughts and ideas email her at [ruth1973@aol.com](mailto:ruth1973@aol.com) and ask to be signed up for Spiritlifters.

## Promote Peace with K.N.O.W.

### Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War

**Monthly meetings:** 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM

Third Wednesday of the month via Zoom

### **Sunday KNOW Vigil for Peace:**

at the Federal Building

Corner of Park and Michigan

Downtown Kalamazoo

12:10 PM until 1:00 PM every Sunday

Mask up and maintain Social Distancing

### **KNOW Leadership Collective:**

Co-chairpersons - Daniel Smith, Ron Kramer

Secretary - Randy La Prairie

Treasurer - Bob Kildea

Media Relations Coordinator - Harold Beu

Communications Coordinator - Ashley Glass

Contact [Harold](#) if you would like to know more about KNOW or visit their website:

[kzoo4peace.org](http://kzoo4peace.org)

# OPPORTUNITIES



## Advent Concert Series

First United Methodist Church at 212 Park Street in Kalamazoo will host an Advent Concert Series in December.

Each of these free concerts will take place on Thursdays at noon.

**December 2**— Kalamazoo Guitar and Mandolin Orchestra

**December 9**—The Sweet Briar Sisters (ukuleles and sweet harmonies)

**December 16**—Bill Cessna Jazz Piano Trio

Attendees are asked to stay masked and distanced to ensure hospitality and protection for all the vulnerable populations.



## Caps for Peace

The Buddy Bench is a simple idea. A bench is added to school grounds as a way to eliminate loneliness and foster friendship on the playground. If a child is feeling lonely or left out, they sit on the bench. Children are instructed to keep an eye on the bench and to offer whoever sits down there an invitation to talk or to play. It is a way for kids to deal with their feelings of isolation and alienation in a constructive way. It is a way to cultivate compassion, a critical component of peacemaking.

We can be part of this effort to promote more inclusion, kindness, and peace in the world by helping to collect the raw materials needed to make affordable Buddy Benches—hard plastic caps from milk jugs, water bottles, juice, shampoo, and other containers.

Bring your caps to church and place them in the collection box in the Community Room or contact our Collection 'Cap'tain, Freya Lake, and she will find a way to get them from you. Thank you for your support!

## Fridays for the Future

Join the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition on Friday, December 10 at noon for an informative session focused on combatting Climate Change!

On the agenda for December 10  
Kalamazoo Township's Sustainability Plan  
The League of Conservation Voters  
KCCC Action Campaign

All are welcome!

Click [HERE](#) to join the Fridays for the Future Zoom Meeting.



## Virtual Holiday Card

If you would like to be included in our virtual greeting card this year, please be sure to send a holiday photo of yourself (with or without your extended family) to the office by **Monday, December 20 at 5:00 PM.**

The virtual card will feature pictures and music and will be shared during our Christmas Eve gathering and via email to everyone on Christmas morning. Click [HERE](#) to see last year's card.

If you need technical help taking a photo or sending one you already have to the office, there are volunteers available to give you hand. We would like to have as many beautiful UCC smiles included in the holiday card as possible.



If you have any questions or need any help, please contact the office: [ucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:ucommunity@gmail.com)

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

I have been thinking a lot about Jesus lately. This is not, as you might assume, because it is December and the time when many people await his arrival and celebrate his birth. It is because I added 'Director of Religious Education at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan' to my profile on Facebook.

I did this in hopes of getting more traffic on the church's Facebook page. I guess it has worked in some fashion because I have started getting questions about 'my church' from all sorts of far-flung acquaintances and distant relatives. I recently have been exchanging texts with a 'once-removed' cousin who has been grilling me on the finer points of Unitarian Universalist theology. She has been asking questions about my relationship with Jesus.

After covering that there isn't one answer that sums what Unitarian Universalists believe about Jesus, or the Bible, or God, or the afterlife, I explained that I view Jesus as a radical revolutionary who flipped over tables in the temple, whipped the moneylenders, shared meals with the 'deplorables' of his day, welcomed with love the outcast and the ostracized, and died because he threatened the status quo that profited the rich and powerful in Judea.

This answer made her pause. "I'm going to have to think about that," she texted.

I am not sure if she has been actually thinking about this but I have especially in the context of Peace, our spiritual theme for December. December's Jesus is a calm, bright, sleeping-in-heavenly-peace babe in the manger who lives on sweetly in our favorite carols and Christmas Eve nativity plays. His rebellious, rabble-rousing alter-ego is forgotten or tucked away, especially in humanist leaning Unitarian Universalist congregations who have a tendency to ignore Jesus after the Holiday season is over.

The stories told about Jesus's ministry have inspired many, including our Unitarian and Universalist forbears, to work for justice and equity by helping the oppressed, defending the marginalized, and loving the hell out of the world. This month as we reflect on Peace and determine for ourselves how we are called to bring about peace in the world, we should remember subversive Jesus who seems to be telling us that shaking up the status quo is required to achieve the peace-filled Kingdom of Heaven right here, right now.

And, may you and all who you hold dear have a blessed, peace-filled December.

May it be so.

## DECEMBER R.E. SCHEDULE

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
December 5	Herstory	Zoom
December 12	UU Herstory	Zoom
December 19	Attend the Solstice Service	In-person at UUC or via Zoom
December 26	Day Off	N/A



## CALENDAR



## DECEMBER 2021

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Wednesday	December 1	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	December 2	Moral Decision Making No Stewardship Meeting This Month	7:00 PM
Sunday	December 5	Peacemakers with Rev. Gy After-Service Social Hour Meet Up for Youth Bronco Marching Band at Miller Auditorium	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 1:00 PM 3:00 PM
Monday	December 6	CHALICA Begins Last Night of HANUKKAH	All Day Sunset
Tuesday	December 7	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	December 8	No Sunday Services Committee Meeting This Month	
Thursday	December 9	A Conversation with Luana VanDam	7:00 PM
Friday	December 10	KCCC Fridays for the Future Women's Book Group	12:00 PM 1:00 PM
Sunday	December 12	For Unto Us a Child is Born with Rev. Gy After-Service Social Hour Program Council Meeting Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 11:00 AM 1:00 PM
Monday	December 13	Last Day of CHALICA Sustainability Group	All Day 7:00 PM
Tuesday	December 14	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	December 16	Civil Conversations Group	7:00 PM
Saturday	December 18	Men's Breakfast Group	8:30 AM
Sunday	December 19	A Winter Solstice Ritual with UUCM Members and Friends After-Service Social Hour No Meet-Up Youth Guest at Your Table Program Ends	10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Tuesday	December 21	Qigong WINTER SOLSTICE	9:00 AM All Day
Wednesday	December 22	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Friday	December 24	A Zoom Christmas Eve	5:00 PM
Saturday	December 25	CHRISTMAS DAY	All Day
Sunday	December 26	A Burning Bowl with Rev. Gy After-Service Social Hour No Meet-Up for Youth	10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Tuesday	December 28	Qigong	9:00 AM
Friday	December 31	HAPPY NEW YEAR!	11:59 PM

**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)

<p><b>2021-2022 Board of Trustees</b></p> <p>Eric Nelson</p> <p>Darby Fetzer</p> <p>Judy Pigg-Behrendt</p> <p>Freya Lake</p> <p>Andy Miller</p>
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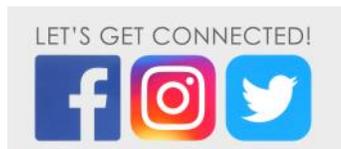
**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, December 22 at NOON**

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)  
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**SPIRITUALITY FOR  
DIVERSE PATHS**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**