



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

April 2022

## APRIL SUNDAY SERVICES

**Sundays at 10:00 AM**

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

Zoom Meeting ID: 926 5154 8494 Passcode: 286763

### **April 3: *To Recycle or Not to Recycle?* with Rev. Gy**

To recycle or not to recycle.. is that the question? As we kick off Earth month at UUCC, Rev. Gy will help us consider if the small and personal ways we try to slow climate change are addressing the problem in a meaningful way or merely creating a false sense of comfort.

### **April 10: *A Fair Share for ALL* with Joannée DeBruhl**

Ms. DeBruhl, Farm Manager at One World Center in Dowagiac, MI, will share how permaculture applies to people, the planet, and equity. She will also discuss how One World Center has been applying permaculture principles with the community work they have been doing around the world. 2022 will be a transformative year for One World Center's property as they start transforming their 9 acres of grass into a self-sustainable edible landscape.

### **April 17: *Re-imagining Easter* with Rev. Gy**

Easter is a difficult topic for Rev. Gy to explore. The story of Jesus's resurrection no longer resonates as it once did. Finding something new and interesting to say about Easter becomes harder each year.

"What if," Rev. Gy asks, "we re-imagined Easter as a time to celebrate the healing and renewal of Earth?" The planet's healthy resurrection should be something we can all embrace!

### **April 24: *The Poetic Alternative To Consumer Culture* with Ronald L. Banks**

Our guest speaker Ronald Banks will reflect on how consumerism is both healthy and harmful to our planet, our society, and even our communities.



## **Spiritual Theme for April: A HEALTHY PLANET**

Caring for planet Earth is one of the core spiritual practices of Unitarian Universalism. Our 7th Principle calls on us to respect "the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." We count "spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature" as a source of our faith. And, as a denomination, we have passed more than three dozen social witness statements related to the environment and environmental justice, dating back to the early 1960s.

Caring for the planet as a spiritual practice can take many different forms. It can be intentionally engaging in sustainability practices. It can be becoming aware and engaged in political and social issues relating to the environment. It can mean regularly connecting with the natural world or simply choosing to live life at a pace that allows time for joy, relaxation, spiritual growth, and celebration of all creation.

What will steps will you take to help weave A HEALTHY PLANET into your Tapestry of Life?

# GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

***We are excited to welcome these special guests to our pulpit in April:***

**Joannée DeBruhl's** journey to farming has been an unusual one. In 2009, after being laid off from a 21-year career in the insurance industry, she became involved in starting the first community garden project for Gleaner's Emergency Food Bank in Livingston County and realized her passion and calling was growing healthy food for everyone.

She attended MSU's Organic Farmer Training Program in 2010 and then owned and managed a certified organic vegetable farm for 9 years. She now works as the Farm Manager for One World Center. She is excited to be part of One World Center's vision and mission to farm with people shoulder to shoulder. Her goal is to create spaces where they can teach people how to sustainably grow food use permaculture to produce long-term abundance. She also works with MSU as a Farm Mentor for Aspiring and Beginning Farmers.



**Ronald L. Banks**, also known as the minimalist poet, is a speaker, writer, and coach based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Being a traditional guy who broke free from traditional thinking, Ronald's philosophy is about more than minimalism. It's about thinking differently and regaining control of your life. He has helped thousands of people enjoy the luxury of life through living with less. His mission is to help 1,000,000 people make a radical life change, by making simple shifts in their thinking. His work and unique style of presenting uses creative language, bold expressions, and messages of optimism. You can find his most recent work on YouTube, his Podcast, and at [www.ronaldlbanks.com](http://www.ronaldlbanks.com).

## April Generosity Sunday

The recipient of our April Generosity Sunday collection will be the [Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition](#) (KCCC) whose mission is to mobilize collective action to achieve immediate and drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and rapid adoption of renewable energy through a transition grounded in social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

During the Sunday service on April 3, we will be joined by KCCC founder and chair, **Dr. Denise Keele**, who will tell us more about the coalition's recent achievements, current goals, and how we can get involved.

If you would like to make a donation to our collection for KCCC you may mail a check to our building, you may give electronically through our church website, or you can give using the Vanco Mobile app on a smartphone or tablet. Please be sure to put 'Generosity Sunday' in the memo line of your check or choose 'Generosity Sunday' in the menu when giving electronically. Thank you for your support!



# FROM THE MINISTER

## From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

Now, I don't know about you, but lately, I've been feeling a bit shaky, a bit overwhelmed with all that is going on around in the world, not in the least in Ukraine. I've noticed that it is seeping into my everyday encounters with people, even with Patti. I am just a bit more on edge, short on patience, juiced up on anxiety. Not exactly what one wants to be juiced up on...



I think I have good reasons for concern. It appears that the world order as we know it is in jeopardy. Throughout history, it was customary for countries to overtake other countries, for the powerful to conquer the vulnerable, but that changed after the second World War. A new world order was established and that new order honored the boundaries of countries.

You may say, but wait Gy, what about all the warring in other parts of the world? What about Yemen, Ethiopia, and the likes? Yes, there are definitely wars in other parts of the world, but those are mostly about regime change, not about denying another country its sovereignty, it's very right to exist. Those are civil wars and it appears that this world order has accepted that sort of struggle as par for the course (not that we shouldn't strive to end civil wars as well). Overtaking and wiping countries off the face of the earth, though, are not acceptable in this modern era. This is what is different about the war on Ukraine. This feels like going back in time, a time we thought we left behind.

If Russia succeeds, who knows what other nations might do to also expand the borders of their land. I don't imagine Russia would have attacked Ukraine if Ukraine had nuclear weapons. If Russia wins, will other nations race to nuclearize their weapons systems? What kind of world would that lead to?

If you want to see peace in action, don't look for it in poetry, prose, or art. Look for it in a country's defense budget. Back in the day when peace was nothing more than the absence of war, kings, warlords, and emperors spent most of their budget on defense. Today the average defense budget around the world is around six percent, while in Europe it was more like three percent. Overnight, Germany and most European countries doubled their defense budget. This has many implications. There's less to spend on health care, education, regulating AI, and combating global warming.

I see silver linings as well. I've never seen the world as united as it is today. Just a month ago the European alliance seemed to be nothing but crumbling and now they couldn't stand stronger and more united. Even Switzerland isn't neutral on this one! It is as if new life has been breathed into a united western world. The proof, of course, is in the pudding.

I wonder if a long-term outcome of this violent struggle might result in establishing a "Green Manhattan Project" where a united world figures out how to rid itself of oil and rely on renewable energy and an end to the culture wars in the West. Suddenly we realize that there are greater issues and far greater dangers in the world than who gets to enter which bathroom.

*(More on page 4)*

# 8TH PRINCIPLE

(Continued from page 3) The one very important thing that was injured by this invasion is trust. Without trust, civilizations cannot exist.

As I mentioned in my opening words at our Canvas Celebration, we find ourselves in consequential times. It seems that we have to find a way back to trust and new ways to build it. We have to do it on scales both big and small. We have to help institutions such as journalism, medical science, government, and the like regain trust. We won't win over everyone. History teaches us that winning over everyone is impossible. We just have to win over enough people to turn the tide.

I don't know how to do it. I reckon you don't either. I hope, though, that if enough of us put our heads and hearts together we might just find a way. Here's to that! Because together we can do what we cannot do alone.

And so it is.

## An 8th Principle Update

During the Sunday Service on March 6, we learned more about the proposed 8th Principle of Unitarian Universalism and heard why some of us believe we should adopt it as our own. The 8th Principle reads:

***We covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.***

On Sunday, **April 10**, during our Program Council meeting following the service, we will take time to explore the 8th Principle a little further, identify areas of concern, and imagine what it would mean for our congregation to adopt this principle as our own. Please plan to be a part of this important conversation.

At the denominational level, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has established an **Article 2 Study Commission** to review Article II of the UUA Bylaws and propose any revisions that will enable our UUA, our member congregations, and our covenanted communities to be a relevant and powerful force for spiritual and moral growth, healing, and justice. Article 2 is the part of the Bylaws where our 7 UU Principles reside and consideration of the proposed 8th Principle falls under the charge of the Study Commission.

The **Article 2 Study Commission** is currently collecting input from all Unitarian Universalists to inform the reimagining of Article 2 of the UUA Bylaws. They have identified four areas of inquiry: Shared Values, Inspirations, Purpose, and Covenant. The survey includes questions for each of these areas. This survey will remain open until April 30, 2022. To learn more about the work of the Article 2 Study Commission, visit <http://uua.org/a2sc>. Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.



BUILD a  
diverse  
BELOVED  
COMMUNITY

# CARING COMMUNITY



## APRIL CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*Come out, come out, O flowers, come out!  
 Wild March is gone with rush and shout,  
 And April's eager now to play,  
 Come out, for March rode far away,  
 And Spring is dancing all around!  
 Come up, dear seeds, above the ground!  
 ~Annette Wynne*

### Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

The war in Ukraine and the suffering of the people there have been on many people's minds. Both **Rita Stevens** and **Miriam Epskamp** have family in Ukraine who trying to stay safe.

In happier news, **Judy Oliver** sold her house in just three days and will move to New Jersey in the coming months. We hate to lose her from the local community, but hope she will remain active in our virtual one. Also, **Judy Halseth** is seeing much more clearly now following successful cataract surgery. Hooray for modern medicine!

We are grateful our snowbirds are beginning to return. **Harold Beu** returned from Alabama in time to step in for Rev. Gy while they recovered from knee replacement surgery. **Mary King**, who was out in California visiting her brother, has been seen at UUCG recently. We can't wait until our Florida friends can join us for in-person gatherings!

**Nick Sienkiewicz** traveled to California to present on Creating a Choral Culture of Connectedness at the Western Region American Choral Directors Association Conference. We are all so proud of your professional success, Nick!

**Denise Sonier** shares this update about our Congolese friends: The family car is all fixed after the insurance company came through with money to repair the cosmetic damage that occurred after **Jean** slipped off an icy off-ramp and crashed into a sign earlier this winter. **Amelia** continues to do well at pre-school and is all set to go to kindergarten in the fall. Denise treated **James, Teddy**, and Amelia to lunch and an outing to Airway Fun Center to celebrate James(12) and Teddy's (7) March birthdays. Denise forgot to take photos so you will just have to imagine the big smiles this brought to everyone's faces.

### Birthdays

Let's wish a "Happy Birthday!" to our members and friends born in April:

**Barbara Bott, Stace Danielson, Kayle Rice, Ryan Brozovich, Nancy Crowell, Patti Ludvig-McCartney, Kelin Michael, and Freya Lake.** If your birthday was not on the list, pass it on to the church office so you get included next year.

### New Visitors

We were delighted to see new visitors at our church building and in our virtual spaces last month.

Welcome **Glenn Mistrey, Deryl Garland, Kathleen Guiles, Christine Scheller, and Maureen Gilliland!**

*Everyone in the church is part of our Caring Community, and caring for one another is a key feature of the congregation. If you have a need that we can help with or some news that you would like to share with us all, pass it on to the coordinators through the UUCG office: 269-324-7262 or [uugcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uugcommunity@gmail.com)*

# LEADERSHIP



Here are a few things our Board of Trustees accomplished at their March meeting:

- *Adopted a Covid-19 Policy and Waiver form for renters and outside groups*
- *Set a tentative schedule for the budget process and a date for the annual meeting*
- *Made a plan to discontinue renting a safety deposit box at First National Bank*
- *Made plans to research an internet based phone system for the church building*
- *Appointed Marsha Laya to complete Betty Lee Ongley's term on the Nominating Committee*

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

The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on Wednesday, **April 6 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](#).

## 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!

We had a terrific turnout, both in-person and over Zoom, for our Program Council Meeting on Sunday, March 13. Here are some highlights:

- By overwhelming consensus, our congregation authorized the payment of ISAAC Dues in the amount of \$250 from the PC budget.
- Sponsoring a vendor table for June in-person Pride Event also received overwhelming support. The cost is \$200 out of the PC budget.
- The Congolese Family has saved money and is ready to purchase a home. Please contact the [office](#) if you like to be on the team to help them secure a mortgage. This will be a very helpful, short-term commitment.
- Rapid Response Email List: Click [HERE](#) to add your name to our Rapid Response Email List so you can receive timely info about calls to action from our Social Justice partners.
- Open House Theatre Company: Mary Roscoe shared that they are looking for more people to audition for this reader's theatre production of "Slipping" with local author, Daniel Smith. Please contact Mary Roscoe ([lizoflynn@gmail.com](mailto:lizoflynn@gmail.com)) if interested.
- MidAmerica UUA Regional Assembly 22 is online on Saturday, April 30 featuring Keynote CB Beal.
- General Assembly: June 22-26 in Portland, OR, over Zoom. Would be great to have 1 or 2 delegates to vote in support of anti-racism initiatives Marsha Laya and Nancy Calme are exploring to see if delegates can participate virtually.

Please refer to the newsletters and UUCC emails for all the latest information. The next PC meeting is Sunday, **April 10 at 11 AM**. Please send agenda items to [Darby Fetzer](#) by Friday, April 8.

**Thank you for all you do!**

# STEWARDSHIP

Thank you to all who helped **Celebrate Our Beloved Community** on March 17 with special musical guests, [The Sweetbriar Sisters](#) - Ginny Shilliday, Rachele Secson, and Jackie Stilger. Strumming ukuleles of three different sizes, the “sisters” got everyone’s toes tapping by singing some well-loved tunes in beautiful harmony. We sang along to *Paper Moon*, *We’ll Meet Again*, *Crazy Little Thing Called Love*, and more! It was good to have live music playing in our sanctuary again but it was also wonderful to see how our investment in hybrid technology made it possible for so many friends to join via Zoom.

The stewardship committee is pleased to announce the 2022-2023 pledge total of **\$94,568**. The committee expects to receive more pledges in the coming days and will announce the final results soon. They are continually amazed by YOUR ongoing generosity and support for the mission of this church. If you have not pledged yet and would like to do so, you can submit your pledge information to Ron Crowell ([ronald.crowell@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) or 269-599-1242)

Please know that everyone’s contributions to our church, in all forms, are valued! Thanks to each of you for all you do and give to our beloved Unitarian Universalist Community Church!!



## STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATING OUR BELOVED COMMUNITY MARCH 2022



# 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— THEMATIC THURSDAY

Join Rev. Gy on **April 7 at 7:00 PM** for a discussion about our spiritual theme for April—**A HEALTHY PLANET**. Rev. Gy is interested to know how engaged we are in combating climate change and how we are processing our feelings around this global existential crisis.

### Second Thursday—MORAL DECISION MAKING

Our gathering on **April 10 at 7:00 PM** will feature a short lecture and a group discussion of the thorny ethical question: *Is it always wrong to fight back?* (See below for more info.)

### Third Thursday— AMERICA TALKS

In April 2022, thousands of Americans will match with those who have different backgrounds and beliefs from all corners of the country to connect face-to-face on video. Each conversation will provide a repairing stitch to America's frayed social fabric, as participants shift perspective from "us versus them" to "you and me." We encourage UU Community Church members and friends to take advantage of the **America Talks** program on Thursday, **April 21 at 8:00 PM** (or on Saturday, April 23 at 1:00 PM) as a way to help build Beloved Community. Visit <https://americatalks.us/> to register for this event. You can choose a one-on-one conversation or engage with a small group and you will be invited to fill out a short survey to help organizers identify your political views. Closer to the date you will be sent a link for the live-streamed event that will start with a presentation to provide some guidance for having a great conversation before you enter a virtual breakout room with a partner or a small group chosen for you by organizers. America Talks will be an opportunity for us to celebrate the inherent worth and dignity of everyone by reaching beyond labels and biases to engage with people who think differently than we do. Be brave and give it a try!

### Fourth Thursday— CIVIL CONVERSATIONS

Our Civil Conversations group will meet on **April 28 at 7:00 PM** for a discussion about the pros and the cons of **Nuclear Energy**. Get the all details about this gathering on page 9.

## The Ethics of Nonviolence

At the next meeting of our **Moral Decision- Making Lecture and Discussion Group** on **March 14 at 7:00 PM**, we will consider the question, *Is It Always Wrong to Fight Back?*



In this lecture, three emotional responses: anger, revenge, and forgiveness will be examined. Is it possible for these three emotions to contribute to living a good life? Some philosophers believe that they can be usefully incorporated into the larger structure of our morality. Thoughts from Christ, Buddha, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, Solomon, Nietzsche, Plato, Kohlberg, and Gilligan, cited by Professor Clancy Martin, will help us puzzle out our own answers.

All are welcome to attend this adult enrichment opportunity. 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

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH

## Yoga Nidra with Erica Guthaus

**April 24**

**7:00 PM via Zoom**

Dare to Rest facilitator Erica Guthaus will join us again on Sunday, **April 24** at **7:00 PM** to lead a 45-minute Yoga Nidra session!

Yoga Nidra is a guided relaxation practice that allows you to slow down and recover from the stressors in your life.

To help Erica receive fair compensation for her work, donations are appreciated. To give online:

Venmo: @erica-guthaus

CashApp: \$EricaGuthaus

PayPal: @Guthaus

Or, send a check directly to Erica  
3115 Ellen Ave. Lansing, MI 48910

Donations are NOT required to attend but as a special **BONUS**, Erica will provide everyone who makes a donation in April the link to a recording of the session so they can continue their practice until she joins us again in May.

Yoga Nidra is another great UU Community Church event that you should invite a friend to!

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 922 4471 7815 Passcode: 457428



## The History of Antisemitism



Rabbi Simone Schicker, from Temple B'nai Israel in Kalamazoo, will give a presentation on the history of antisemitism on Tuesday, **April 12** at

**7:00 PM**. The ISAAC (Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community) Leadership Board is making this important presentation available to the entire ISAAC family and their guests.

Antisemitism is on the rise worldwide. The Anti-Defamation League reported a 27% increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2021. The wide circulation of false information on the internet and the increased time people spend online due to Covid-19 may be contributing factors. It is important for us to educate ourselves about the root causes of antisemitism so we can help counter this trend.

Registration is required for this Zoom event:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMod-ihpjlUhtbISAJohNkU-7V4F8UdSWww>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

## Mindfulness Practice with Eric

**April 20**

**7:00 PM via Zoom**



Join Eric Nelson on Wednesday, **April 20** at **7:00 PM** as he guides us through practices designed to help reduce stress and anxiety and improve emotional balance and overall sense of well-being.

Eric's Mindfulness Practice session are 45-minutes long, begin and end with readings for reflection, and leave you feeling renewed and refreshed.



All are welcome! Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom Link Meeting ID: 976 5549 1883 Passcode: 617949

# 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.



These are some of the resources that were shared at their last meeting:

- The city of Kalamazoo has extended its **Styrofoam Recycling** pilot program for another year. The next collection day is Saturday, **April 30**, 10 AM to 1 PM at the Mayors' Riverfront Park. City residents can drop off any amount of EPS foam labeled with the 6 symbol. To encourage Styrofoam recycling, the Sustainability Group will be sponsoring a **Collection Box** at UCC for church members and friends. Bring your clean, dry Styrofoam to church and we will make sure it gets recycled! Look for a collection box at the back of the sanctuary.
- Shupan Asset Management is sponsoring an **Electronics Recycling Day** on **April 30**, from 10 AM to 1 PM at Mayors' Riverfront Park. They will accept most consumer electronics including computers, laptops, tablets, phones, servers, printers, modems, scanners, etc. There is a \$10 processing fee for TVs and monitors.

The next meeting of the Sustainability Group is on **Monday, April 18 at 7:00 PM**. Newcomers are always welcome to join this small group. Questions? Contact Miriam ([uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com))

## Building the Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time



Civil Conversations is a dynamic gathering where we glean a deeper understanding of today's hotly contested topics and engage our individual perspectives in discussion. Every month we're intentionally set the stage for informed and safe engagement.

April is an especially exciting month as we have **two** ways to participate!

- 1) Thursday, **April 21**—Participants have an opportunity to put their Civil Conversation skills to the test through a program called, **America Talks!**

What is America Talks? In April 2022, thousands of Americans will match with those who have different backgrounds and beliefs from all corners of the country to connect face-to-face on video. Each conversation will provide a repairing stitch to America's frayed social fabric, as participants shift perspective from "us versus them" to "you and me." See page 7 for registration information.

- 2) Thursday, **April 28**—Shawn Connors, former owner of Hope Health, will be sharing with us his highly educated perspective on the advantages of **Nuclear Energy** for our planet's future. As April is Earth Month at UCC, this is a timely topic. Shawn has written a 40 page document on this topic. That information will be available in April prior to his talk.

Please join us for these expansive programs . . . and bring a friend! 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 CHALLENGE

Explore ways to live more gently on the Earth!

## UCC 30-DAY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

Begins on April 22. !



The UCC Sustainability Group challenges YOU to explore some ways that you can live more gently on planet Earth with their first-ever **30-Day Sustainability Challenge!**

Each Friday between April 22 and May 20, regular subscribers to our newsletter will receive an email with things to read, watch, and do that will help inspire them to practice more healthy and sustainable habits. (Not a subscriber? Use your smartphone to access the QRC code above and sign up for the challenge today!) Whether you are new to the idea of sustainability or a green living veteran, the UCC Sustainability Challenge will provide you with food for thought and ideas for action! The Sustainability Challenge is not just for UCC members and friends. Feel free to share info about the challenge with everyone you know.

We will end the challenge with a **Vegetarian Feast** prepared by the Sustainability Group and served under a pavilion by the shores of Gourneck Lake in Portage on Saturday, May 21 at 6:30 PM. (If you purchased a ticket to the feast at the service auction last October, you are all set. Additional tickets may be purchased for \$10 per person. Contact the office at [ucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:ucommunity@gmail.com) for more information.)

We hope you take this opportunity to take personal action and join the global movement to fight climate change. Together, we can make a positive impact on our precious planet!

If you have any questions about the Sustainability Challenge, contact [Miriam](#).

## FRIDAYS for the FUTURE

Join the [Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition](#) on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at noon for an informative session focused on combatting Climate Change!

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

All are welcome!

**Kalamazoo  
Climate  
Crisis  
Coalition**



Yahoo! Our cap collector, Freya Lake, reports that the **UCC Cap Collection** has topped 200 pounds! Thank you for your faithful participation! Freya says to keep those hard plastic caps and lids of any color coming! These CAPITAL GAINS can grow and grow! They won't be taxed this April or any other month!

Drop your caps into the collection box in at UCC and Freya will make sure they get donated to the Buddy Bench program and be turned into benches for schools in our community.

# CONNECTION

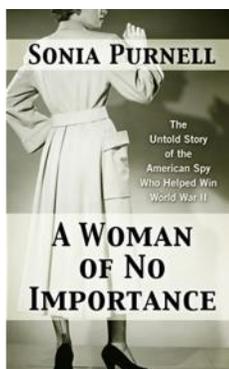
## Women's Book Group

**Friday, April 8**

**1:00 PM via Zoom**

April Selection:

***A Woman of No Importance*** by Sonia Purnell



From Goodreads: *In 1942, the Gestapo sent out an urgent transmission: "She is the most dangerous of all Allied spies. We must find and destroy her."*

*This spy was Virginia Hall, a young American woman--rejected from the foreign service because of her gender and her prosthetic leg--who talked her*

*way into the spy organization deemed Churchill's "ministry of ungentlemanly warfare," and, before the United States had even entered the war, became the first woman to deploy to occupied France.*

*Virginia Hall was one of the greatest spies in American history, yet her story remains untold. Sonia Purnell uncovers the captivating story of a powerful, influential, yet shockingly overlooked heroine of the Second World War. At a time when sending female secret agents into enemy territory was still strictly forbidden, Virginia Hall came to be known as the "Madonna of the Resistance," coordinating a network of spies to blow up bridges, report on German troop movements, arrange equipment drops for Resistance agents, and recruit and train guerilla fighters. Told with Purnell's signature insight and novelistic flair, the book is the breath-taking story of how one woman's fierce persistence helped win the war.*

The Book Group will meet at 1:00 PM on April 8 via Zoom for a short business meeting followed by a discussion led by Stephanie Grathwol

Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom

Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981

## Qigong at UUC



It has been good to see a few new faces drop in to give Qigong a try lately. What are you waiting for?

All are welcome. No previous experience with Qigong is required. Our Zoom classes are a great, judgment-free way to try this ancient Chinese practice in the comfort of your home (with your video and mic turned off). Deep breathing, body stretching, and self-massage help center the mind, body, and spirit and prepare you for the coming day.

Click [HERE](#) for the TUESDAY Qigong Zoom link.  
Meeting ID: 697 338 090 Passcode: 138550.

Click [HERE](#) for the SATURDAY Qigong Zoom link.  
Meeting ID: 977 5286 6838 Passcode: 383810

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

## Men's Group Breakfast

The Men's Group is shifting the time for their monthly breakfast meeting by a half hour. From now on they will meet at **9:00 AM** on the third Saturday of the month.

This month their meeting will be on Saturday, April 16 at Burger Town Grille, 9136 Shaver Rd in Portage (just south of Meijer).

Inspired by guest speaker Kevin Fischer's suggestion that men need spaces where they can talk freely about their struggles and feelings with other men, breakfast coordinator, Ken VanEseltine, would like to limit this gathering to those who identify as male. He would also like to explore the idea of holding a UUC Men's Retreat.

If you plan to come and be part of the conversation, please contact Ken by April 15 at noon to RSVP, You can contact Ken at (269) 342-4793 or [vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net](mailto:vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net)

# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

It’s Springtime and Easter is almost here! It seems like a good time to think about miraculous transformation. I know that many Unitarian Universalists reject the idea of miracles and a few are a bit suspicious about the idea of transformation too. But me? I am a believer. What’s more, I think UU communities are meant to be places of miraculous transformation. This is what church is for.

When I was young and impressionable, I had the opportunity to be part of a church community that worked very hard doing outreach to the LGBTQ+ community. If issues of importance to the LGBTQ+ community were on the agenda of government boards and commissions, the minister was first in line to speak up during public comment. Although this was decades before marriage equality, the minister would gladly marry any same-sex couple who asked lending her moral authority to the union even though legal status was denied. Everywhere the minister went she told people that ours was a Welcoming congregation. LGBTQ+ people noticed and they started to come. There were lots of kids with two moms in the RE program. I was invited to numerous gay weddings. There were LGBTQ+ identifying people serving on the church board and leading up committees. This was pretty unusual in Michigan in the late 80s at the height of the AIDS epidemic. I thought it was pretty cool. A diverse group of people, looking past differences, to work together. Then one Sunday, something happened that made me realize it was something more.

I had just had a baby and brought him to church for the very first time. I held him all through the service and afterward I made my way to the basement for coffee hour. A gay couple I knew from choir approached me to coo over the baby and I saw it as a golden opportunity. I said to one of them, “Do you want to hold him?” and then deftly shifted the baby into his arms and skipped away to grab a coffee before he had a chance to protest.

When I came back, I was shocked to see tears pouring down the man’s face. When I asked him what was wrong he said, “I can’t believe you trusted me with this baby.” I was stunned. I had no idea what he was talking about. Why wouldn’t I? We were friends! He went on to explain that when he came out as a gay man, he was disowned by his family and forced to leave his church. He had come to believe that being gay meant that he would never, ever be fully accepted by “normal” people. Even though he had been attending this “cool” UU church for many months, he was holding back part of himself, waiting for rejection. Until that moment I don’t think he felt as if he truly belonged.

As he told his story, I too began to weep and we stood there for a moment in silence, tear-stained face to tear-stained face, with my infant son sleeping between us. It felt like a miracle. He glimpsed a future where he might be accepted and cherished for the completeness of who he was. And I came to understand the healing power of genuine acceptance and inclusion. We both, I think, were transformed by the experience. I know it made me want to try harder, be better, trust more completely, and love the Hell out of the world.

I wonder what this UU Community Church could achieve if we truly believed that our purpose was miraculous transformation, not brought about by some fickle supernatural force, but by our honesty, trust, acceptance, and love? What might we achieve? It is something to think about. Happy Easter!

APRIL R.E. SCHEDULE		
DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
April 3	Transgender Day of Action	UUCC
April 10	No RE	N/A
April 17	Happy Easter—No RE	N/A
April 24	Earth Day Action	UUCC

# OPPORTUNITIES

Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity is bringing back **Women Build**

Save the dates: May 17, 18, 19, and 21

Women Build is an opportunity for all genders to come together to build stronger, safer communities. Spend the day—or week!—working alongside other volunteers, our homeowner partners, and Habitat staff as you build a home that will be purchased with an affordable mortgage by a woman-led family.



Women's Build 2022

No experience necessary!

Interested in volunteering at Women Build or recruiting a volunteer team? Register online at [www.habitatkalamazoo.org](http://www.habitatkalamazoo.org) or contact Volunteer Coordinator Eddie DeGraw: (269) 344-2443 or [edegraw@habitatkalamazoo.org](mailto:edegraw@habitatkalamazoo.org).



The Kalamazoo Earth Day Committee is highlighting all sorts of activities that can help you become more involved in living sustainability this April and all year round. Check out their website:

[www.kalamazooearthday.com](http://www.kalamazooearthday.com)



Presenting  
A readers theater production  
of the NEW PLAY

**Slipping**

by Dan Smith

**SUNDAY, APRIL 24**

UU Community Church  
10441 Shaver Road  
Portage, Michigan

Open House Theatre, the company that calls UU Community Church home, is excited to be coming out of hibernation to collaborate with local author Daniel Smith to produce a readers' theatre production of his new play *Slipping*. The play is about working-class people responding to the challenges of life as they get caught up in a battle for a union at a local factory, and how their lives take unexpected turns. *Slipping's* message of unity and solidarity is more important now than ever and is sure to resonate with audiences

The production is scheduled to take place on Sunday, April 24 at UU Community Church. Times and ticket information will be coming soon! Please watch the weekly email and our website for more information.

There is still time for YOU (or someone you know who loves theatre) to audition for a role in this production. Experience is not necessary, just a commitment to the project. Rehearsals will take place on Sunday afternoons starting on April 3.

If you are interested, please send your name, email, and phone number to:

[openhousetheatrecompany@gmail.com](mailto:openhousetheatrecompany@gmail.com)

Please put *Slipping* Reader in the subject line.

Open House Theatre is committed to providing an accessible, educational, and inclusive theatrical experience regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, or economic status.



# APRIL 2022



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday	April 2	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	April 3	To Recycle or Not to Recycle with Rev. Gy Religious Exploration for Children and Youth After Service Social Hour	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Tuesday	April 5	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	April 6	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	April 7	Stewardship Committee Meeting Thoughtful Thursday—Thematic Exploration	11:30 AM 7:00 PM
Friday	April 8	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	April 9	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	April 10	A Fair Share for All with guest Joannee DeBruhl After Service Social Hour Program Council	10:00 AM 10:45 AM 11:45 AM
Tuesday	April 12	Qigong The History of Antisemitism with Rabbi Simone Schicker	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
Thursday	April 14	Moral Decision Making	7:00 PM
Saturday	April 16	Qigong Men's Group Breakfast	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	April 17	Re-Imagining EASTER with Rev. Gy After Service Social Hour	10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Monday	April 18	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	April 19	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	April 20	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Sunday Service Committee Meeting Mindfulness Practice with Eric	12:00 PM 5:30 PM 7:00 PM
Thursday	April 21	America Talks	8:00 PM
Friday	April 22	EARTH DAY UCC Sustainability Challenge Begins	Always 5:00 PM
Saturday	April 23	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	April 24	The Alternative to Consumer Culture with guest Ronald L. Banks Religious Exploration for Children and Youth After Service Social Hour Open House Theatre Presents Slipping by Dan Smith Yoga Nidra with Erica Guthaus	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:45 AM TBD 7:00 PM
Tuesday	April 26	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	April 28	Civil Conversations Group	7:00 PM



**UU Community Church  
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**2021-2022 Board of Trustees**

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Darby Fetzer

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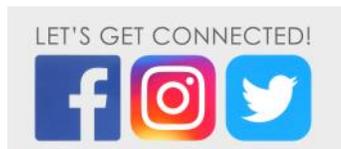
**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, April 20 at NOON**

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

*CommUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
of Southwest Michigan**

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**SPIRITUALITY FOR  
DIVERSE PATHS**

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**