

WEAVING A TAPESTRY OF LIFE

As we approach the end of the church year, the Sunday Services Committee shares this reflection of the past year.

During August of last year, we had a month of services focused on Preparation for our Tapestry theme. Nancy Calme showed us how weaving an actual tapestry mirrored how our lives are touched in many ways by those around us and the ideas we share. Rev. Gy kicked off the Tapestry theme and then we enjoyed “Rest” with Rev. Larry Farris and “Humor” with Greg Tamblyn.

The following month we celebrated Spiritual Wholeness with our traditional homecoming Water Communion. Although, with the pandemic still limiting our ability to be together, the communion was cleverly done virtually. We also enjoyed a meditation service with Eric Nelson and thoughts on Life and Death with Mary Jo Ramsey.

During Wellness month we heard about physical health from Dr. Tim Michael, mental health from Dr. Karen Horneffer-Ginter, and taking time for rest with Erika Guthaus. Rev. Gy explored the connection between physical and psychological well-being and the role of personal responsibility versus the role of society in matters of health.

November focused on Harmony with Rev. Gy considering balance in our lives and the natural world as well as harmony within our personal relationships. Musician David Roth used music to tell us harmony is often easier sung than done. And, we listened to an inspiring service led by the Youth that included a pre-recorded message from the UU Service Committee to introduce Guest At Your Table.

During the holiday month, we explored the theme of peace, including stories of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of peacemakers. Then a critical review of the birth of Jesus and the promise of Peace on Earth. Again, we enjoy and lovely winter solstice service from UUCC members and friends. And to start the New Year and reprise of the Burning Bowl service from Rev. Gy.

January started the New Year with the promise of a Beloved Community. Rev. Gy, Dr. Charlae Davis, and our former Director of RE, Jacquis Robertson, all helped us envision a healthy community.

In February we looked at aspects of a Moral Economy. Rev. Gy asked the question, *Is poverty really a virtue?* Tristan Henry helped us look at ourselves through the eyes of an immigrant. And finally, Chris Crowell inspired us with a look at the Running Industry Diversity Coalition and its work to dismantle systemic racism.

With the theme of a Just Society in March, Rev. Gy, Miriam, and the youth introduced the UUA’s proposed 8th Principle with “The Time is Now”. Kevin Fischer, Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Health in Michigan, explored the dangers of toxic masculinity. And Rev. Gy reminded us of the special days of awareness for Women’s History Month and Transgender Day of Visibility.

With Earth Day falling in April, the theme was A Healthy Planet. Rev. Gy talked about recycling, and we were joined by members of Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition. Farm manager Joannée DeBruhl shared inspirational stories of young people working at the One World Farm in Dowagiac. And Ronald L. Banks added a poetic view of the health and harm of consumerism on our planet.

A Life-Affirming Home was our theme in May and we heard from musician Jami Lula to discover our own higher selves. roddy bell-shelton biggs helped us see the importance of the UUA’s 8th principle in transforming our congregations and the larger world into a beloved community.

June will be a month of Celebration. Flower communion, new members, ([more on page 3](#))

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

the dedication of a altar tapestry, and Coming of Age will be highlighted.

The Sunday Services Committee is proud of the diversity of services we were once again able to provide during a pandemic. With the Board's direction, we were able to provide hybrid services and welcome people back into our sanctuary while continuing a virtual presence for others.

Finally, we would like to welcome our newest member, David Senecal. David will be joining the committee for the coming year. We hope to introduce a new member each year, allowing for knowledge transfer and a well-deserved rest for retiring members in the future.

Regards, Joe Calme, Regena Nelson, and Kimberly Ridley



Registration for the dual-platform Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (GA)2022: Meet the Moment is open and there is still time to commit to taking part in what is sure to be the largest gathering of UUs this year. Registration info and a listing of available workshops can be found at:

<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>.

There are also opportunities for non-registrants to participate in GA at no cost. Several worship services and all general sessions are open to the public and can be watched from the Unitarian Universalist Association website: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/2022>

General Sessions -June 23-26: Watch as the business of the Association is conducted in real-time.

Service of the Living Tradition— Thursday, June 23, 2022 at 7 PM: Led by the Ministries and Faith Development Staff Group, this service honors fellowshiped and credentialed religious leaders; remembering those who have died, recognizing those who have completed active service, and welcoming those who have received fellowship or credentialed status in the past year. The service includes a collection to benefit the Living Tradition Fund.

Synergy Bridging Worship—Friday, June 24 at 7 PM: This will be a transformative, multigenerational worship. Be inspired and illuminated at a celebration of treasured worship elements, rites of passage, and brilliant contemporary music. This service includes a collection to benefit the Katie Tyson Fund for Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

Sunday Morning Worship— Sunday, June 26 at 12:30: The largest annual gathering of UUs joining in worship. This year's service will be led by Rev. Gretchen Haley, Senior Minister of the Foothills Unitarian Universalist Church in Fort Collins, CO, and will include a collection for a Portland-based service organization East County Rising Community Projects.

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

This is the last article of the church year. I was going to write a lovely summary of all the things we've done, the topics we've explored, the guest speakers we invited, the community we built, the online presence, the love, the caring, and so on. Then, nineteen children were gunned down in a Texas school and my original idea felt trite and wrong somehow.

Two years ago George Floyd died at the hands of Minneapolis cops. The country responded with countless large protests, in fact, the world broke out in protest. People were marching around the world! What a movement! And it made a difference. The cop who knelt for nearly ten minutes on Mr. Floyd's chest got arrested, charged, and convicted. Justice was served. Marching worldwide made a difference. Sure, much more change needs to happen, but this was a huge move in the right direction.

This year alone, and it is only the end of May, there have been 27 school shootings in our country. How come we are not in the streets? These are our children who are getting gunned down in the house of learning. We MUST pass gun reform! It won't happen without maximum involvement. It won't happen unless we shake the earth under our politicians. And it has to be an earthquake they cannot ignore. It has to last until they pass significant gun control laws, and it has to keep building in power and depth and width until they finally choose the love of our children over the love of money.

I don't ever want to hear again about "thoughts and prayers"! What a perverted way to keep things as they are!

I know that I am preaching to the choir. I know that this little article will likely never be read by anyone other than those who attend our little church and we are on the same page here. So, it is good to know that we are not alone and now we have to find like-minded people in the larger community and organize, organize, organize!

"Those who love peace must learn to organize as effectively as those who love war," said Martin Luther King Jr. Those who love our children must learn to organize as effectively as those who are bought by the gun industry.

Our cup overfloweth with tears and sorrow. May our tears not be shed in vain. May they run together and build a tsunami so big that no politician, no gun lobbyist can ignore. The time for change has come. The world we've created so far isn't safe for our children, for that matter isn't safe for anyone. Now we can create a new world that rights yesterday's wrongs.

CARING COMMUNITY



JUNE CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*Tell you what I like the best --
Long about knee-deep in June,
Bout the time strawberries melts
On the vine, -- some afternoon
Like to jes' git out and rest,
And not work at nothin' else!*

James Whitcomb Riley, from "Knee-Deep in June"

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

We are halfway through 2022 and Covid-19 continues to upend our lives. **Amanda Nelson** and **Herb Gross** both came down with the virus in May. **Patti** and **Rev. Gy** spent time in quarantine after being exposed.

Also under medical care are former UUCC member **Brian Leekley** who underwent an emergency total colectomy on May 17 and **Freya Lake's grandson Asa** who broke his leg on Mother's Day.

Despite the Covid uncertainties, UUCC folks have been on the move lately. **Darby Fetzer's Mom** moved into a senior community and is settling in nicely. **Kathy Hays** and **Marsha Laya** are back in Michigan for the summer and we look forward to seeing them in person at UUCC more often. A family wedding took **Stephanie Grathwol** to Orlando, Florida for two weeks. **Pat Fuehr** enjoyed an Aegean cruise. And, after briefly considering moving out of state, **Julie Keleman** has decided to stay in the Kalamazoo area. She closed on a condo the last week in May.

Our young folks continue to do great things. **Amanda Nelson** was the highest goal scorer overall on her Lacrosse team during her final season playing for the Kalamazoo United team. Parents, Eric and Regena have enjoyed seeing Amanda continuing to improve her game over the course of the year. **Nick Sienkiewicz** received his Master's degree from Indiana University and is off to NYC for a summer musical theatre program at NYU. He hopes to find a teaching job for the fall. We were grateful to Nick for driving 5 hours from Bloomington to come and see us one last time and say goodbye. And **Matthew Nelson** was honored by the Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor Society at Kalamazoo College for outstanding scholarship and is looking forward to some exciting internships this summer.

Our final bit of news is that **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson** is celebrating her first wedding anniversary with **Michael Wilson**. Happy anniversary, newlyweds!

Birthdays

Let's sing "Happy Birthday!" to our members and friends born in June:

Rita Stevens, Judy Pigg-Behrendt, Darby Fetzer, Brent Ridley, and Bob McWhorter

And as the Caring Column will be on vacation next month, we send early birthday wishes to our friends born in July: **John Mais, Alex Brozovich, Eric Nelson, and Brinna Michael.**

If your birthday was not on the list, pass it on to the church office so you get included next year.

(More Caring News on [page 6](#))

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Remembering Friends

Give some thought to our friends **Marge Hallam** who passed on June 1, 2014 and **David Adams** who passed away on July 22, 2009.

New Visitors

Welcome to all those who visited us in May: **Laura Wilkie, Elizabeth Strain, and Arlen Becker.**

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 UCC office: 269-324-7262 or

uucommunity@gmail.com

Spiritual Practice via Zoom

Our online opportunities to engage in spiritual practice will continue throughout the summer. Newcomers are always welcome to join any of these sessions. A large body of scientific research suggests that adopting a consistent spiritual practice can help to reduce stress and anxiety and increase life satisfaction, mental clarity, and general wellbeing. Now is a great time to join in one of our offerings.



Every Tuesday and Saturday at 9:00 AM via Zoom you can enjoy a Qigong session with supportive UCC members and friends. Qigong is an ancient Chinese practice that combines gentle stretching, self-massage, and deep breathing.

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



On the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM you can join Eric Nelson, UCC member and lead facilitator at Stress Less Kalamazoo, for drop-in guided Mindfulness Practice.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Mindfulness with Eric Zoom Meeting . ID: 833 5090 0441



On the 4th Sunday of each month at 7:00 PM, Daring to Rest™ facilitator, Erica Guthaus, will lead Yoga Nidra practice. Yoga Nidra is a deeply relaxing form of guided meditation that anyone can do.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Yoga Nidra Zoom Meeting ID: 922 4471 7815 Passcode: 457428

Climate Change as Spiritual Practice

Join Joanna Macy, author of Active Hope and Jonathan Gustin, founder of Purpose Guides Institute live on Zoom on Tuesday, **June 14** from **3-5 PM** for a free webinar exploring how we can transform our anxiety and fear around Climate Change into empowerment. Visit <https://www.purposeguides.org/ccspwithjoanna> to learn more and register for this event.



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 EXPLORATION

Join Rev. Gy on **June 2** at **7:00 PM** for some end-of-year reflection. Rev. Gy would like to know what you loved about our Sunday and Thursday programs? What would have made them even better? What topics do you think we should explore next year? Your feedback is important to us!

Second Thursday—MORAL DECISION MAKING

Our gathering on **June 9** at **7:00 PM** will feature a short lecture and a group discussion of the question: *Is torture ever acceptable?* (See below for more info.)

Third Thursday— GRATITUDE PRACTICE

CELEBRATION, our spiritual theme for June, is an expression of gratitude and appreciation. Join us on **June 16** at **7:00 PM** to practice gratitude so that we can fully embrace celebration. We will each have an opportunity to share the things we are grateful for, concerned about, and looking forward to in the coming months.

Fourth Thursday— A CONVERSATION WITH JON HOADLEY

For our final Thoughtful Thursday of the church year on **June 23** at **7:00 PM**, we are delighted to be joined by special guest **Jon Hoadley**, former 60th District State Representative and current strategist designing long-term change, civic engagement, and planning, to find out what he has been up to since leaving the legislature, to hear his thoughts about the current pushback on gay and transgender rights in Lansing, and all about the Hate Won't Win campaign he is working on now.



The Ethics of Torture

In the month of June folks of the church will be gathering, virtually for the 20th and final lecture (for UUC) in the series known as **Moral Decision Making: How to Approach Everyday Ethics**.

We will gather together on Thursday, **June 9** at **7 PM** as lecturer Professor Clancy Martin leads us through some "razor-sharp" issues around the topic of torture. Join in for a thought-provoking hour! Learn about the 1984 UN Convention on Torture, religious approaches, Kantian objections, and more as we consider if torture is ever acceptable.

This will be your last opportunity to enjoy Moral Decision Making! All are welcome to attend. 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

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.



Two of the projects they have been working on to raise awareness about sustainability and Climate Change finished in May. The group is grateful to everyone who took part in the **30-Day Sustainability Challenge** and hopes that it inspired a few more people on planet Earth to incorporate sustainable practices into their lives. If you want to go back and revisit any of the emails, you can find them by clicking [HERE](#).

The **Vegetarian Feast** hosted by the Sustainability Group on May 21 was forced indoors due to bad weather, but that didn't stop nearly 30 of us from having a wonderful evening. Plans are in the works to produce an online cookbook with recipes of the great meat-free dishes that were served and to help you incorporate a few vegetarian and vegan meals into your diet. You can see a few pictures from the 30-Day Sustainability Challenge and the Vegetarian Feast on [page 10](#).

The other project the group is working on is a **Rain Garden** on church property. Group member Kathryn Ragains took a trip to [Hidden Savannah Nursery](#) and was able to get some professional guidance from owner Chad and garden designer Mike. On their advice, the group will wait until fall to plant the garden so that it will not be necessary to water extensively during the summer. If all goes as planned, excavators will prep the beds and add some topsoil sometime in June and a cover crop will be planted to prevent erosion and weeds as we wait for autumn.

At the May meeting, group member Regena Nelson shared information about the program **Environmental Justice and Housing Stock in Kalamazoo County** presented by the Kalamazoo Area League of Women Voters and the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition. You can view this very informative program [HERE](#).

The next meeting of the Sustainability Group is on **Monday, June 20 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom. Newcomers are always welcome to join this small group. Questions? Contact Miriam (uucommunity@gmail.com)

Building the Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time



The Civil Conversations Group 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 intentionally set the stage for informed and safe engagement to help us learn the skills we need to have authentic and meaningful conversations with friends, family, and others who might think differently than we do.

During the 2021-2022 church year, the group explored a wide variety of topics including Covid-19 vaccines, universal income, gun ownership, non-binary pronouns, nuclear energy, critical race theory, and cancel culture. We welcomed guests from the wider community to share their diverse perspectives with us. The Civil Conversations Group always provides rich food for thought. One regular participant commented, "I love these sessions! I always learn something new."

The group will take a break in June and July but plans to return in August for more civil conversations in the new church year. If you have any ideas for topics of discussion, please contact Darby Fetzer at 269-569-5557.

SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE



LEADERSHIP



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

- *Approved expenditure for going away gift for Nick Sienkiewicz*
- *Discussed allowing congregational singing with masks in the sanctuary.*
- *Made arrangements to conduct the annual review of the Minister.*
- *Finalized the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 church year.*
- *Made plans for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on June 5 following the Sunday Service.*

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

The next Board meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday, **June 21** 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](#).

UU Community Church of Southwest Michigan
Annual Meeting of the Congregation
June 5, 2022 at 11:15 AM
In person and on Zoom



Pledges and Receipts

The 2021/2022 programming and fiscal year is almost complete. If you need reimbursement from the church, please get all receipts turned in to Joe Calme by June 15.

If you made a financial pledge for the year spanning July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, you will receive an email from Kimberly Ridley by June 7, 2022 with your giving statement to date attached. If you do not receive the email, please contact Kimberly at ridleyk@hotmail.com or 269-569-3658 .

To match pledges and church income in the same financial year, it would be helpful if you can remit all pledge dollars by the end of June. If you make a payment after June 30 for the 2021/2022 year please note "21/22" in the memo line of your check.

If you are prepaying (before July 1) on your 2022/2023 pledge, please note "prepay 22/23" in the memo line. As always, please review your records and let Kimberly know if you find any discrepancies which require correction.

Your contributions and donations are sincerely appreciated.

OPPORTUNITIES

Jam Season Has Begun!



This will be the 16th year that our very own Jam Lady, Freya Lake, will offer homemade fruit jams for sale as a fundraiser for the UUC church! Where has the time gone?

The 8-ounce jars are \$6 this year. The price has gone up due to the prices of everything going up in the world. It's still the best jam around, according to the many faithful supporters of Freya's jam products. Even if you personally do not consume jam, know that all jams make GREAT GIFTS for friends and relatives for any occasion.

Please contact Freya if you would like to be added to her Jam mailing list. She sends out an email order form as different varieties become available. Arrangements will be made with you for delivery: pick-up at church or pick-up from Freya's home.

Thank you all for your continuing support of this important UUC fundraiser.

Generosity Sunday

Our Generosity Sunday organization in June is Face Off Theatre Company (FOTC). Join our service, Sunday, June 19th to learn more about FOTC.



Face Off Theatre Company was founded by six Black women who were all graduates of Western Michigan University's Theatre and Creative Writing programs. The original intent of the

company was to provide acting, directing, and producing opportunities to artists of color in Kalamazoo. Face Off Theatre Company and the Black Arts and Cultural Center created a partnership in 2015 to provide the Kalamazoo community with innovative and diverse theatre all year round, as well as, quality community events and workshops.

Since then, Face Off Theatre has evolved into the mission of creating meaningful work that inspires and sparks change in our community and provides a safe space that develops and supports artists of color.

Early in the pandemic, FOTC pivoted to online programming and for the last year has offered hybrid performances. Most performances are at Dormouse Theatre at 1030 Portage Street, Kalamazoo. Every performance has a talk-back session that provides opportunities to hear from the director and cast and a deeper dive.

We are collecting donations for Generosity Sunday for the entire month of June, you may give by:

1. Mailing a check payable to UUC with "Generosity Sunday" in the memo line, OR
2. Give electronically using Vanco Mobile and select "Generosity Sunday Donation"

Thank you for your support!

Styrofoam, Plastic Caps, and Pop Cans

For months now congregants at UUC have gathered a plethora of colorful plastic bottle caps of all descriptions and sizes. Our Collecting 'Cap'tain Freya reports that, as of the end of May, the running total of caps accumulated is 220 POUNDS. We can be proud of our individual roles in helping Mother Earth!

We will continue to collect caps as well as returnable cans and bottles, and clean, dry, #6 Styrofoam (no packing peanuts, please) into the marked boxes at the back of the sanctuary. (There is a collection box for returnable bottles and cans in the Community Room.)

Thank you again for your ongoing support of our recycling efforts.

CONNECTION

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

June 18 at 9:00 AM

Garcia's Mexican Kitchen

The group that gathers at a local restaurant for breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of the month will continue to meet throughout the summer although there will be a few changes.

The first one that you might have noticed is the name change. Coordinator Ken VanEselstine feels that the new name will be more welcoming to our members, visitors, and friends who are non-binary or non-gender conforming.

The next big change is the venue. Starting in June the group will meet for breakfast at Garcia's Mexican Kitchen which is conveniently located right next door to UU Community Church. Many years ago, the group used to meet next door when it was known as Red's Grill so returning to that location will be like a homecoming.



Everything else about the Breakfast Group will be the same. Newcomers are always welcome to come and enjoy tasty food, interesting conversation, and good company.

Please RSVP to Ken by noon on Friday, June 17. If not many people can make it, Ken may decide to cancel. An email will be sent out to everyone on Friday evening if that is the case.

Ken can be reached at (269) 342-4793 or email vaneseltinekl@sbcglobal.net



[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.

If you would like to participate in your UU Community Church's 2022 Water Communion, you are invited to collect a small sample of water from a special place you visit over the summer to add to a communal bowl in September.

If you are lucky enough to be able to travel, the water can be from a lake, river, or ocean you pass along the way. If you are staying close to home bring water from a pond, a fountain, or a backyard hose. The important part is that the water represents a place or experience that gives meaning to your life or provides sustenance for your soul.

If all goes well, we anticipate being able to celebrate our Water Communion together in -person this year! This will make the familiar ritual even more meaningful and we hope that everyone will bring water, memories, and meaningful insights to share.

If you have any questions about Water Communion, please contact Rev. Gy

SUMMER READING

The Women's Book Group is on its usual summer hiatus. If you are looking for some interesting reading material in place of their usual excellent suggestions, consider some of the titles on this [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) reading list compiled by the librarians at the University of Missouri in Kansas City.

ABILITY, DISABILITY, AND ABLEISM

Being Heumann by Judith Heumann (2020)

Between Myself and Them by Carol Krause (2005)

A Disability History of the United States by Kim E. Nielsen (2012)

AGE, AGING, AGEISM

Agewise by Margaret Morganroth Gullette (2011)

Women Rowing North by Mary Pipher (2019)

You Don't Look Your Age... by Sheila Nevins (2017)

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN, IMMIGRATION, NATIVISM

The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears by Dinaw Mengestu (2008)

Citizen Illegal by José Olivarez (2018)

Pachinko by Min Jin Lee (2017)

FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

Blacks and Whites in Christian America by Michael O. Emerson and Jason E. Shelton (2012)

Infidel by Aaron Campbell (Artist), Jose Villarrubia (Artist), and Pornsak Pichetshote (2018)

The New Religious Intolerance by Martha C. Nussbaum (2012)

RACE, ETHNICITY, RACISM

American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin by Terrance Hayes (2018)

Americanah, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013)

An American Marriage by Tayari Jones (2018)

LGBTQIA and HETEROSEXISM

The Gay Revolution by Lillian Faderman (2015)

A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara (2015)

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy (2017)

SEX, GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Back Talk by Danielle Lazarin (2018)

Men Explain Things to Me by Rebecca Solnit (2014)

Rage Becomes Her by Soraya Chemaly (2018)

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND CLASSISM

\$2.00 a Day by Kathryn J. Edin and H. Luke Shaefer (2015)

Heartland by Sarah Smarsh (2018)

Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor by Rob Nixon (2011)



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

We are just days away from the Annual Meeting where our members will be asked to vote to adopt an 8th UU Principle that calls on us to engage in individual and communal action to accountably dismantle racism and other systemic barriers to full inclusion in our in ourselves and our institutions.

If this congregation votes to adopt the 8th Principle, (and I truly hope that it will), it will be in large part thanks to the youth in the congregation. Back in May of 2020, when presented with information about current events, Black Lives Matter, and systemic racism, the youth decided to lean in. They asked questions. They wanted to learn more. Their quest for information led them on a journey through the history they never learned in school, to techniques for disrupting the status quo, and strategies for organizing for change. Working on an 8th Principle campaign seemed like the next logical step.

I am grateful to Amanda and Nick for adding their ideas, energy, and voices to the effort to have UUCC formally adopt the 8th Principle. If the resolution passes (and our kids very much hope that it will) our youth will have accomplished something pretty amazing. They will have helped change the course of history not only of our little church but perhaps even Unitarian Universalism itself. That is a pretty awesome legacy.

Now, some of you may be a bit skeptical at this point. It doesn't seem possible that adding another principle will drastically change things at UUCC much less in the wider UU world. Of course, it will! The 8th Principle is a call to action. It requires us to examine everything—our basic assumptions, our structures, and our functions—through the lens of anti-racism and consider how we are falling short of our ideals of racial justice and inclusion. Then, the 8th Principle demands that we take decisive action to dismantle white supremacy and other systems of oppression. No one has ever asked us to do this before. The process may be awkward, uncomfortable, and difficult. It will certainly change us. Hopefully, for the better.

And, if UUCC joins the ranks of UU congregations who have voted to adopt the 8th Principle (and BIPOC UUs all over the country very much hope that it does), it help will send a strong message to the Unitarian Universalist Association that now is the time for brave and bold action to dismantle white supremacy in our faith community. Each congregation that embraces the 8th principle adds to the groundswell for meaningful change.

I am reminded of the famous quote from Margaret Mead, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* If the resolution to adopt the 8th Principle passes at UUCC (and I truly hope that it does) it will let our tiny Youth Group know they have the power to make a difference in the world. May it be so.

JUNE R.E SCHEDULE			JUNE YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULE		
DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
June 5	Service Prep Day	UUCC	June 5	Service Prep Day	UUCC
June 12	NO RE	N/A	June 12	Youth Led Service	UUCC
June 19	Ice Cream Sunday	UUCC	June 19	Ice Cream Sunday	UUCC
June 26	Game Day	UUCC	June 26	NO MEET-UP	N/A

COMING OF AGE



Unitarian Universalist Community Church is proud to announce that **Amanda Nelson**, daughter of Regena and Eric Nelson, has completed our Coming of Age program for high school seniors. The Coming of Age program, a six-month-long program focused on religious exploration and self-reflection, is the way our church community marks the transition of our young people into adulthood.

Amanda has been meeting with a mentor since January for a series of conversations about values, beliefs, and personal spiritual journeys. Amanda will share the insights she has garnered from these discussions with us during the service on Sunday, June 12, and as a community, we will acknowledge the beginning of this new stage in her life.

Regena, Eric, and Amanda extend an invitation to all UUCC members and friends to come and celebrate Amanda's Coming of Age and Graduation from Loy Norrix High School at their home at 2523 Ridgeview Drive on Sunday, June 12 from 12-3 PM.

YOU DID IT!
Congratulations

FAITH IN ACTION

Our Congolese Friends...



Empowerment of a refugee family from the Congo is a primary means by which UU Community Church demonstrates our UU faith in action. Jean, Francoise, Kwizera, James, Teddy, and Amelia arrived in Kalamazoo from Rwanda in January of 2019. The team of UUCC volunteers who offers support to the family is led by Denise Sonier, who offers this update.

As many of you might remember, Jean had a slide-off accident during bad weather in December that did a lot of cosmetic damage to the family car. The insurance money covered the repair and the van was in good working order until Jean decided to teach Francoise how to drive. She hit a tree, bent the frame, and the car was totaled. The good news is that Jean was able to, on his own, not only purchased a 2015 Ford Escape but also apply

for the plates and add it to his insurance policy! (The team has recommended that Jean get professional help from a driving school to teach Francoise to drive!)

The eldest son, Kwizera has struggled with school so the team brainstormed ways to find him mentors who might help provide some direction and additional help. Denise and Eric Nelson were able to sign him up for the *Men of Purpose* summer program. Led by Black men from the community, the program hopes to help participants strengthen their literacy skills and learn more about attending college and also about working in the construction trades. Kwizera, who is very interested in making money, has also begun mowing the lawn at UUCC under the supervision of Eric Nelson. Eric notes that he is a very hard worker and plans to have him help install the vanity in the women's bathroom and touch up the paint in several places inside the church building once school is out.

James is doing okay in his Middle School classes. The team filled out an application in hopes of having him attend camp at Pretty Lake this summer so he can continue to improve his English skills while spending time out-of-doors swimming, boating, hiking, and more.

The younger children Teddy and Amelia have had the easiest time adjusting to life in America. Now that Amelia will be entering kindergarten, it is likely that they will both be attending the same elementary school in the fall making transportation much easier for everyone.

The most exciting news of all for the family is that Jean was able to, again on his own, figure out how to apply for a home loan. He receive pre-approval and has found a house he would like to purchase! Denise met him and an inspector a few days ago at the house he is considering. It is an older 3 bedroom, 2 bath home with good bones, in a lovely neighborhood, with a huge yard. The next step is for the loan provider to appraise the property before the final loan approval. Barring some unforeseen hiccup, it is most likely that the family will be moving out of their apartment soon.

Our Congolese friends have come a very long way from their first days in the U.S. They are financially



secure, increasingly self-sufficient, and achieving their American Dream. Many thanks to all the UU Community Church staff and volunteers who have helped them on the way!

GUN VIOLENCE

National Gun Violence Awareness Day is the first Friday in June. In the wake of multiple tragedies over the last few weeks, the fight to end gun violence has never been more urgent and there are many ways that we as a church and as individuals can get involved.

Our interfaith justice partners at ISAAC have been working on Gun Violence Prevention for several years. Their **Gun Violence Prevention Task Force** meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 6:30—8:00 PM via Zoom. Members and friends of UUCC are welcome to attend their meetings and get involved. The next Gun Violence Prevention Task Force meeting is on June 28. Contact Rick Omilian—romilian@chartermi.net for more information.

The Kalamazoo area has and **Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America** Group. They are planning a Wear Orange Rally at Bronson Park on June 6 from 5-6 PM where you can connect with them and other local groups working to end gun violence. For more information contact Phyllis Lefebvre—kamdafgs@gmail.com.

There are groups in Kalamazoo doing outreach with at-risk youth who could use financial support. If it is yours to do, consider donating to **Peace During War Kalamazoo** (Contact: Michael Wilder—michaelwilder73@gmail.com) or **HOPE Thru Navigation** (Contact: Gwendolyn Hooker—officeofhope18@gmail.com).

March for Our Lives the group started in part by a group of survivors of the Parkland shooting, is calling for nationwide protests and a march on Washington DC on June 11. A local March for Our Lives action that may be of interest is a protest at Fred Upton's office in St. Joseph from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN A POPUP
WEAR ORANGE RALLY

AT
BRONSON PARK, KALAMAZOO
MONDAY JUNE 6, 2022
FROM 5 – 6 PM

NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE
AWARENESS DAY

>WEAR AN ORANGE SHIRT OR GEAR

>FIND OUT ABOUT ACTIONS YOU CAN
TAKE TO END GUN VIOLENCE

>LEARN ABOUT AND JOIN MOMS
DEMAND ACTION AND OTHER LOCAL
GROUPS TO END GUN VIOLENCE HERE

**JUNE 11,
2022**

**MARCH
FOR OUR
LIVES** 

IN SAINT JOSEPH, MI

**Saturday, June 11
1:00 - 3:00 PM**

**Congressman Fred Upton's
Saint Joseph Office
720 Main St, Saint Joseph**

LGBTQ+ PRIDE



In June of 1969, patrons and supporters of the Stonewall Inn in New York City, led by trans and gender non-conforming people of color, staged an uprising to resist the police harassment and persecution of the LGBTQ+ community. This uprising marked the beginning of a movement to overturn discriminatory laws and practices. Today, events including parades, picnics, parties, and festivals take place all over the world to honor those who resisted and to celebrate the myriad identities and experiences of self that make up the human family.

UU Community's church commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion and empowerment doesn't just happen in June. It is something we support all year round because we believe that Love is Love.

Here are some of the things we accomplished this year:

Observances:

- We shared a reading during the October 10 service in honor of Coming Out Day.
- We shared information about Trans Day of Remembrance in newsletters, announcements, and emails.
- Miriam wrote a newsletter article in March about Transgender Day of Visibility with a friendly snowperson graphic to help parents and others understand the difference between gender identity, sexual orientation, sex assigned at birth, and gender expression.
- Youth group made a banner to hang in the church window for Trans Day of Visibility.
- Information about International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia was shared during the May 15 service and on social media on May 17.
- We have dedicated a whole page in our June newsletter to Pride.

Education:

- Shane Barerra joined us in August for a Conversation with a Drag Queen.
- Queer presenter roddy bell-shelton biggs spoke to us in October about making people of all identities feel welcome in our church.
- Gender Identity/Pronoun Usage was a topic of discussion for the Civil Conversation Group in January.
- We watched *Disclosure*, a documentary about trans representation in film and TV, and discussed it in March.
- Trans 101 trainer Dell Darnell joined us in May for a conversation about supporting our transgender family and friends.

Worship:

- Rev. Gy participated in a Transgender Day of Remembrance Service at K-College in November.
- Rev. Gy preached about LGBTQ+ acceptance on March 27 in honor of Trans Day of Visibility.
- Rev. Gy spoke at the Faith Alliance Interfaith Pride Service in May.

Projects:

- We made pronoun stickers to add to our nametags
- We will partner with Peoples Church to staff a Unitarian Universalist table at Outfront Kalamazoo's Pride event at Arcadia Festival Site on Saturday, June 4 from 2-6 PM.

JUNETEENTH

Kalamazoo is offering up many ways to celebrate Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States and, the newest designated federal holiday. Check out this list of things going on and visit [Juneteenth Kalamazoo](#) on Facebook to see more.

Friday, June 17

Black History Bingo & Soul Food

6— 8 PM at the Black Arts & Cultural Center

Hosted by SHARE – The Society for History and Racial Equity

Saturday, June 18

Juneteenth Celebration

With Music, Dance, and Food

12 to 5 PM at Bronson Park

Hosted by Rooted Enrichment Center

Black Film Festival

1:30 to 3:30 PM at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Hosted by Soul Artistry LLC and the Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom- Black Women Elevated

A visual and performing arts showcase featuring Stephanie Payton and Shaquona Espinoza

4 -7 PM at The Space, 320 East Michigan

Hosted by Soul Artistry LLC.

Young Poets Community Poetry Slam

5 to 8 p.m. at Bronson Park

Hosted by Black Arts & Cultural Center and the Kalamazoo Public Library

Sunday, June 19

Juneteenth Celebrating Freedom

With Live Music, Food Vendors, Kids Activities and Fireworks

4 -8 PM in the Washington Square area of the Edison Neighborhood

Hosted by Edison Neighborhood Association, Black Wallstreet Kalamazoo, Twine Urban Winery

Juneteenth at Bell's Brewery

Featuring DC & The DC Quintet

Music starts at 2 PM

Juneteenth Celebrating Freedom Concert

Featuring The Velvelettes with Orchestra Jammbo'laya, Djembe Yaru, Mark Barnes, Suzuki Academy, Natalie Sako, and others.

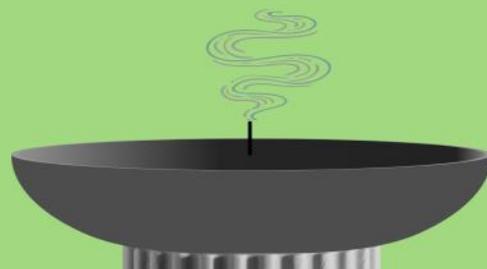
3:00 PM at the Arcadia Creek Festival Place in downtown Kalamazoo

Sponsored by The Gilmore, Kalamazoo Promise, Helen J. Gox Gospel Music Center, and others.



SUMMER SABBATICAL

CLOSED FOR
SPIRITUAL
MAINTENANCE



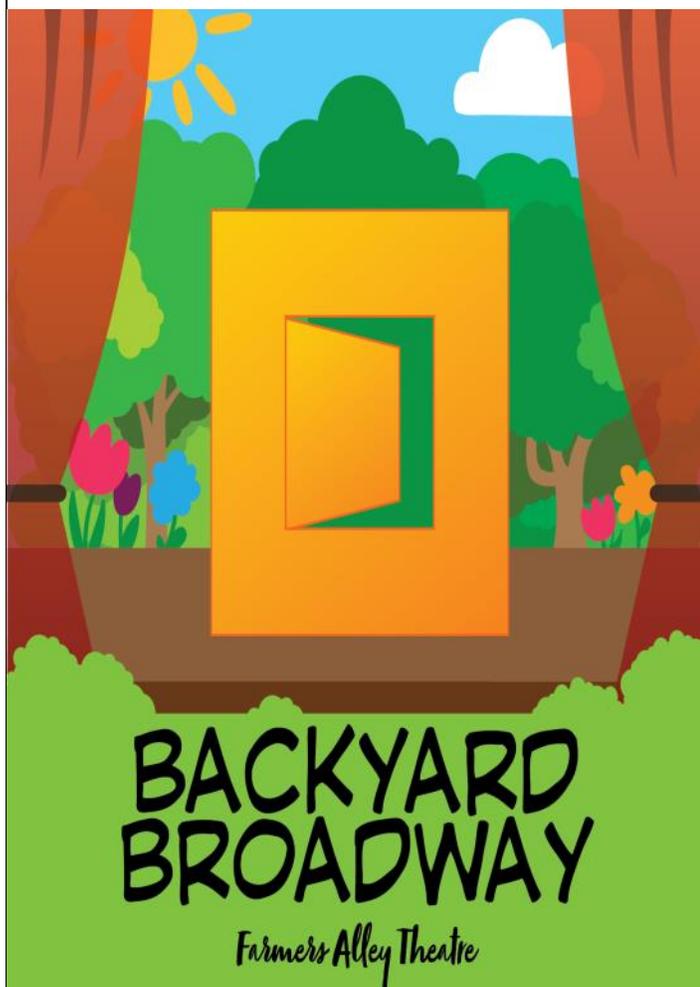
There will be no regular Sunday Services at UU Community Church during the month of July. Please use the time away to rest and recharge. Regular services will resume on **August 7**.

There will be no Thoughtful Thursday gatherings during the July sabbatical. Small groups and committees may choose to meet (or not). Several special events are being planned by various individuals and groups. Please watch your Weekly Email for up-to-date information and save the date for these events:

ISAAC Annual Meeting—Tuesday, July 12 at 7:00 PM

Backyard Broadway and Barbecue at Rev. Gy's—Sunday, July 16 at 5:00 PM

Lakeside Service hosted by Kathryn Ragains—Sunday, July 31 at 10:00 AM



Backyard Broadway and Barbecue
at Rev. Gy and Patti's home
5126 Meadowlark Lane, Portage, MI 49024
Saturday, July 16, 2022

5 PM: Dinner—grilled burgers (vegetarian available) and brats with side dishes

6 PM: Broadway tunes performed by Farmer's Alley actors

Suggested fundraiser donation at the door:
\$20 per person or love offering

Rain date: Sunday, July 17, 2022

Please RSVP to Regena Nelson:
nelsonr@wmich.edu by Saturday, July 9.

Bring your friends and family for a wonderful evening of good food, fantastic music, and great company. Patti and Gy's tree-filled, shady backyard is the perfect setting for a backyard Broadway show. They'll have tables set up for eating. Please plan to bring a comfortable chair and beverage of your choice.



JUNE 2022



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Thursday	June 2	Stewardship Committee Meeting Thoughtful Thursday	11:30 AM 7:00 PM
Saturday	June 4	Qigong Kalamazoo Pride	9:00 AM 2-8 PM
Sunday	June 5	Bloom and Grow with Rev Gy Religious Exploration for Children and Youth After-Service Social Hour Annual Meeting	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:45 AM 11:15 AM
Tuesday	June 7	Qigong Committee on Ministry	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Wednesday	June 8	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	June 9	Moral Decision Making	7:00 PM
Saturday	June 11	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	June 12	We are the Warp and Weft with UUC Youth After-Service Social Hour	10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Tuesday	June 14	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 15	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Thursday	June 16	Gratitude Practice	7:00 PM
Saturday	June 18	Qigong Men's Group Breakfast	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	June 19	Weaving the Tapestry of Life with Rev Gy Religious Exploration for Children and Youth After-Service Social Hour	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:45 AM
Monday	June 20	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	June 21	Qigong Board of Trustees Meeting	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
Wednesday	June 22	Mindfulness Practice with Eric	7:00 PM
Thursday	June 23	A Conversation with Jon Hoadley	7:00 PM
Saturday	June 25	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	June 26	Woven into a Single Garment of Destiny with Rev. Susan Fredrick –Gray Religious Exploration with Children and Youth After-Service Social Hour Yoga Nidra with Erica	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:45 AM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	June 28	Qigong	9:00 AM



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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2021-2022 Board of Trustees

Eric Nelson

Darby Fetzer

Judy Pigg-Behrendt

Freya Lake

Andy Miller

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

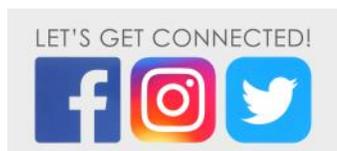
Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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