



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan November 2023

NOVEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM. Onsite, [Facebook](#), or Zoom.

November 5: *The Power Within* with Rev. Gy

The secret to building resilience is learning how to tap into your undiscovered sources of inner strength. Join Rev. Gy for an exploration of the power within.

Zoom Meeting ID: 986 7287 9087 Click [HERE](#) to register.

November 12: *Love Out Loud* with Rev. Greta Jo Siedohl

As Unitarian Universalists, we are being called to put Love at the center of our faith. Join Rev. Greta Jo as we explore center Love, not only in our faith, but in our lives and in our daily actions.

Zoom Meeting ID: 956 3070 9226 Click [HERE](#) to register.

November 19: *The Secret Ingredient is Love* with Miriam Epskamp, DRE

The ritual of breaking bread together is one that has been shared by the human family in various forms for millennia as a way to give thanks for the harvest, to pray that the Earth will continue to sustain life, and to celebrate the bonds of community. We will do all these things at our annual multigenerational Bread Communion. (More info on page 3.)

Zoom Meeting ID 913 7754 8740 Click [HERE](#) to register.

November 26: *The Power All Around* with Rev. Gy

Our relationships with each other help not only hold and sustain us, they often challenge us to change and grow. Join Rev. Gy for an exploration of the power without.

Zoom Meeting ID: 958 1591 3185 Click [HERE](#) to register.



Spiritual Theme for November ENCOURAGING PHOTOSYNTHESIS

The next stop in our exploration of the Tree of Life is Photosynthesis. Photosynthesis is the process that trees and other plants use to convert sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water into food. Photosynthesis is a crucial we-wouldn't-be-here-without-it miracle that provides most living things on Earth the sustenance and nourishment they need to survive.

While the trees are looking after our physical well-being, we will turn our attention to our minds and spirits and explore how we can tap into resources both within ourselves and all around us to become more resilient and adaptable as we face the inevitable changes and struggles that come with life.

Questions to ponder this month...

What is the source of your inspiration and inner strength?

What spiritual practices provide nourishment for your spirit?

What is hindering you from achieving spiritual growth and maturity?

GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

We are excited to welcome these guests to our pulpit in November:

Greta Jo Siedohl is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister called “to the messy and miraculous work of building resilient and restorative communities.” She believes in the power of collective wisdom and spiritual imagination and is supported by the beauty and wonder of the natural world and our place in it and the intricate web of life that weaves the divine into every moment and every relationship. She has a background in anthropology, digital communities, and has worked in congregational ministries in NY and MI. She currently works at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Recruitment and Admissions supporting the next generation of liberal religious leaders. She's passionate about queer faith organizing, reproductive justice work, and UU denominational engagement. She lives in Grand Rapids with a spouse, a child, an opinionated feline, and a loyal canine.



Tamara Morgan has participated with the [Foundation for Inner Peace \(FIP\)](#), the publisher of ***A Course in Miracles***, since its inception, pioneering its special projects and initiatives formally since 1984. She is also the keeper of its Archives and currently serves as President. With an educational background at Tufts University in writing, Greek and Roman Classics, and Comparative Religion, Tam traveled extensively in Nepal and India participating in the daily lives and practices of Buddhists and Hindus. In addition to over thirty years of service to FIP, Tamara was the Editor-in-Chief and VP of Programs for *Youth Noise*, a web-based non-profit organization for youth activists. She also served as the San Francisco Senior Director of *The Umbrella Project*, a nonprofit global children's art initiative. Tamara also co-authored the book *Double Vision* with her mother, Judith Skutch Whitson.

Tamara will join us at our **Thoughtful Thursday** on **November 9** at **7 PM** via Zoom. She will provide us with a brief introduction to ***A Course in Miracles***, share highlights of her personal spiritual journey, explore ways to find and nourish spiritual sustenance, and answer any questions we might have.

We hope you will join us for a conversation with Tamara Morgan, on the many gifts available in finding our own path to reconnect Spirit and the endless source of sustenance, love and guidance. Register Today: <https://tinyurl.com/TamMorgan>

Can't join us live? Register anyway. A recording of the event will be made available to all registrants.




INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY



Community Thanksgiving Service

When: **Sunday, November 19**
 Time: **5:00 p.m.**
 Where: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
 1747 W. Milham Ave, Portage

Join with folks from Prince of Peace, Chapel Hill, St. Barnabas Episcopal, Portage UU, Portage UCC, and Lord of Life for a community Thanksgiving worship followed by a pie social.




Transgender Day of Remembrance

11:00 AM

NOVEMBER 17

STETSON CHAPEL

You are invited to attend the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance Memorial Service presented by the chaplain's office of Kalamazoo College and OutFront Faith Alliance on **Friday, November 17** at **11:00 AM** at Stetson Chapel on the Kalamazoo College campus. Rev. Gy hopes to be part of the service.

Bread Communion

Bread is a symbol of life-giving sustenance. Each year, around Thanksgiving, our Unitarian Universalist community celebrates a bread communion as a way to give thanks and celebrate the bonds of community. This year's Bread Communion will be on Sunday, **November 19** at 10:00 AM.

If you are planning to attend the service in person and it is yours to do, **please a bring loaf of bread** (or similar food staple) that elicits memories of sustenance and nurturing to add to our communion table. You will have the opportunity to share this memory with us during the service.

If you will attend the service via Zoom, please consider having a piece of bread near you so you can partake in the communion with us. You will also have an opportunity to share your memories with the group.

Whether onsite or online, we hope you will join us as we break bread together.



FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

It's that time of the year when leaves are changing color and while their beauty is breathtaking, their demise is imminent. What a stunning swan song! Swan song nonetheless.

The rhythms of life are often characterized by cycles of growth, decay, and rebirth. From the changing of the seasons to the phases of the moon, the natural world teaches us that nothing remains constant.

This perpetual cycle mirrors the intricate dance of existence, symbolizing the universal truth that all things must eventually face death and, in doing so, find the opportunity for renewal.

The Eternal Dance of Dying and Renewal

Dying and renewal are integral parts of the human experience, touching every aspect of our lives. From the demise of relationships to the transformation of our physical bodies, we continuously confront the ebb and flow of existence. This cycle is not to be feared but, rather, to be embraced and celebrated as a gateway to spiritual growth. I know, I know! Easier said than done. Our culture places such a high value on perfect looks, fit bodies, eternal youth, sharp intellect. It is hard not to identify with mind and body, yet that is the holy grail. No identification.

One way to approach this cycle spiritually is to view it as a continuous journey of self-discovery. We die to old versions of ourselves, shedding layers of identity and belief systems that no longer serve us. As we release these burdens, we create space for renewal and rebirth, allowing our true selves to emerge. This process can be challenging, requiring introspection and courage. It invites us to confront our fears, attachments, and insecurities, serving as a transformative experience that ultimately leads to self-realization.

The Role of Letting Go

Letting go is a vital aspect of the dying and renewal process. Just as trees shed their leaves in the autumn, we must release the old to make way for the new. This act of surrender is not a sign of weakness, but a testament to our faith in the natural order of life. It means acknowledging that the past cannot be changed and that clinging to it only hinders our progress. One of the key spiritual lessons of dying and renewal is the practice of detachment. By releasing our attachments to material possessions, societal expectations, and even our own ego, we open ourselves to the profound experience of rebirth. The Buddhists, for example, teach the concept of impermanence, emphasizing the transitory nature of all things. Embracing this teaching can lead to inner peace and liberation, allowing us to transcend suffering and live more fully in the present moment.

The Transformational Power of Grief

Grief is an inevitable part of the dying process, whether it's the loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or the shifting of life circumstances. Many spiritual traditions acknowledge that embracing grief is an essential step toward renewal. It is through mourning and acceptance that we find healing and a deeper understanding of the human experience. *(More on page 5)*

GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Grief, when experienced with mindfulness, can become a powerful catalyst for spiritual growth. It teaches us compassion, empathy, and the interconnectedness of all living beings. It is in our shared experience of suffering that we can come together and find strength in this beloved community, reinforcing the idea that renewal is not a solitary journey but a collective one.

The Essence of Renewal

Renewal does not always manifest in the form of a new beginning but can often be a deepening of our existing journey. It is the moment when we embrace our true selves, align with our life's purpose, and experience a sense of wholeness. The renewal phase is not about escaping our past but integrating it into our present, creating a harmonious fusion of who we once were and who we aspire to be.

Dying and renewal are not to be feared, but rather embraced as essential aspects of the human journey. By accepting the perpetual dance of life and death, we can find peace, growth, and transformation, ultimately deepening our connection to the spiritual essence of existence. Embrace the cycle, for in it lies the wisdom of eternity.

And so it is.



Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) annual program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues. Since the UUSC works in

more than 20 countries, with over 50 grassroots partners, there are thousands of individuals involved in and who benefit from the work made possible by the funds raised through this program. The program is an opportunity to celebrate grassroots partnership, support human rights, and learn about just four of these individuals – the “guests” in Guest at Your Table.

The theme of this year's campaign is ***Pursuing Liberation***. The alarming rise of fascism, authoritarianism, and nationalism in the United States and in many places around the world is putting the lives of people, and the sustainability of the planet, in critical danger. These far-right forces have co-opted the word “freedom” for their own purposes, but the concepts of liberation and freedom mean something very tangible to UUSC's grassroots partners in communities the world over. Whether they are fighting for the right to seek safety in Mexico and the United States, convincing the UN's International Court of Justice to address the human rights threatened by the climate crisis in the South Pacific, or replenishing the energy of human rights activists in eastern Europe by addressing burn-out, UUSC partners invite us into an expansive, regenerative space to pursue liberation.

You can learn more about the UUSC and its partner organizations by visiting the Guest at Your Table display at the back of the sanctuary in November or by visiting the [UUSC website](https://uusc.org). If you would like to make a donation to support their work you can give online using their secure donation page, uusc.org/givetoguest. To donate by mail, please make checks out to “UUSC” with “Guest” or “GAYT” in the memo field, and send to: UUSC • PO Box 808 • Newark, NJ 07101-0808.

CARING COMMUNITY



OCTOBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

I like spring, but it is too young. I like summer, but it is too proud. So I like best of all autumn, because its tone is mellower, its colors are richer, and it is tinged with a little sorrow. Its golden richness speaks not of the innocence of spring, nor the power of summer but of the mellowness and kindly wisdom of approaching age. It knows the limitations of life and its content.— Lin Yutang

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

It was a joy to see **Judy Oliver** at our October 1 service. Judy moved to New Jersey to be closer to family and it has been many months since we saw her in person. She was visiting Michigan to celebrate a family wedding and she enjoyed being back with us if only for a short while. She shared how much she appreciates the online opportunities we offer and knowing the love and support of her UUCC community is only a click of a mouse away.

UUCC love and support have gone out to **Nancy Crowell** and **Nancy Stob** this month as they have struggled with health issues. Our good friend **Sandy Kristen** was also in our thoughts and prayers following the unexpected loss of her youngest son.

We celebrated with **July Halseth** who announced she is looking forward to meeting her first great-grandson in the coming months and with **Darby** and **Bruce Fetzer** who were delighted that their daughter **Della** was invited to speak at a recent TEDX event at Hope College (Click [HERE](#) and forward to around the 1 hour mark if you would like to listen to her talk.) We are overjoyed that **Larry Higgins** has recovered enough from his health struggles to be with us in person again and for **Rev. Gy and Patti** who have been enjoying a wonderful visit from Rev. Gy's Hungarian nephew, **Daniel**. We were also very happy to hear that **Matthew Nelson** is hoping to further his studies of Physics at graduate school and are sending him our love and support.

Birthdays:

November – the month of cold windy birthdays—is here! Please wish a very happy birthday to 18 – **Liam Michael**, 25 – **David Senecal**, 27 – **Stephanie Grathwol**, 28 – **Hayden Tasko**. If you are not on our birthday list, be sure to contact the office so we can send you good birthday wishes too.

Remembering Friends Who Have Passed On:

Ten years ago we lost our good friend and member, **Theresa Hollowell**. She was a sweet, spiritual soul who served on the Board of Trustees and was an enthusiastic participant in church events. What a shining example for us all!

Welcome Visitors:

We have enjoyed visits from **Marge Smith**, **John Dykhouse**, **Kendray Saunders**, and **Karen Chemler** as well as out-of-town UUCC family **Chris Grathwol** and **Alan Folz** this month. We are so glad you joined us! Please stop by and see us again soon.

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 UUCC office: 269-324-7262 or uucommunity@gmail.com.

LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees met on October 4. Here are some of the things they worked on:

- Made plans to determine the estimated cost of a name change.
- Made plans to collect more information about the cost and effectiveness of an electronic security system at UCC.

Click [HERE](#) to access the minutes from the meeting. The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **November 1** at **6:30 PM** via Zoom. 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](#). Questions about the Board of Trustees can be directed to Board President, Steve Tasko (stevetasko@gmail.com)



Putting Our 8th UU Principle into Action

Our 8th UU Principle calls on us to engage in individual and communal action to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in our congregation and society at large. We regularly share insights and resources in the space to help us do this work.

The Unitarian Universalist Association recently launched a new anti-racist/anti-oppression webpage called ***The Mosaic***.

The Mosaic is an online hub of connection, resources, and support for Unitarian Universalists dismantling racism and oppression. Through resources, programs, training, groups, and gatherings, The Mosaic hopes to foster belonging and liberation in Unitarian Universalist congregations and communities. ***“Our work for collective liberation can be as colorful, multi-faceted, and diverse as the tiles of a mosaic. Together, all of our contributions create something beautiful.”***

So far the webpage includes:

- An **Anti-Racism Resource Library** tagged by topic, age group, focus, type, and more.
- Links to **National Learning and Practice Gatherings** that provide opportunities to be in conversation with fellow UUs doing this work.
- **UU BIPOC Connections**, a guide for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) UUs to find support, connection, and Unitarian Universalist community.
- A link to sign up for **The Mosaic Newsletter**.

The Mosaic will continue to form and emerge as UU congregations, groups, and our Association, learn new things. Click [HERE](#) to visit the webpage and become part of the sparkling and colorful tiles that make up The Mosaic.



PROGRAM COUNCIL



Program Council—Where TOGETHER—we Get Stuff Done!

Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church on the **second Sunday of each month** at around **11:20 AM**. You can participate in Program Council in person or via Zoom.

We had lots to **CELEBRATE** at our October meeting:

In September, we enjoyed great Sunday Services from Rev. Gy, Ebony Peace, Neil Douglas-Klotz, and some of our own members and friends. Our Women's Book and Sustainability Groups successfully restarted after the summer break. We also began a Newcomers Book Discussion Group. We kicked off a Mindful Self-Compassion Course led by Eric Nelson with 35 people registered to attend. In fact, we are seeing an increased number of new people attending many of our online programs. Our Generosity Collection brought in \$767 for AACORN! Thirteen UUCC folks participated in the ISAAC Run, Walk, Roll event. We also fulfilled a pledge we made to ISAAC last fall to send two people to Anti-Racism Training. We staffed a table at the Gryphon Place Suicide Prevention Walk. And just for fun, more than a dozen UUCC folks attended the Equinox Bonfire hosted by Kathy Hays. What a wonderful month at UUCC!

During our October meeting, we discussed...

- Our **Styrofoam recycling efforts** and how to know you are collecting the right items.
- Our plans for **Christmas Eve**
- Our **Welcoming Congregation Renewal**
- And we received an **update from the Board** about building security and a possible name change

We also heard about some **OPPORTUNITIES** for YOU!

- Take part in our **LGBTQIA+ Equity Challenge Discussion** More about this on page 12.
- Bring joy to a refugee child in Kalamazoo through our **Toy Collection for Samaritas**. More info on page 14.
- **Help out on Sunday Morning** as a Zoom Tech, a Sound Person, or a Facebook Host. Talk to Miriam for more information.

Our next Program Council meeting is on Sunday, **November 12** at around **11:20 AM**, onsite or via Zoom. On the **AGENDA** for our November meeting:

- The Christmas Eve Survey Results
- News about a new UUCC Pamphlet
- Partner Outreach—What is it and how can you get involved?
- And much, much more!

Please plan to attend and help keep UUCC's programs going strong. As usual, the Youth Program will serve a soup lunch before the meeting (vegetarian and vegan options available). Your donations help support the youth program's social justice activities. Thanks for your support!

 **We are THANKFUL for YOU!** 

SERVICE AUCTION

The Stewardship Committee is grateful to everyone who helped make the **2023 Goods and Services Auction** a huge success - the donors, bidders, auctioneers, and the many wonderful volunteers who organized the event. **We raised over \$8000** to support programming at UCC.

We also had a fabulous time together at the Auction. The Soup Supper accompanied by Rev. Gy's homemade bread was delicious. There were jokes, laughter, and some good-natured competition as we bid on items. It was good to gather to have fun together and raise money for a very good cause. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you, to all who made it possible.



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



R.E.flections

[Miriam Epskamp](#), Director of Religious Education

Recently I have had a few opportunities to think more deeply about my spiritual beliefs and what Unitarian Universalism means to me.

I attended the three-session UU Elevator Speech Workshop presented by the 1st UU Church of Dallas in October. To start building our Elevator Speech we were invited to reflect on our shared UU values and complete the following statement. *"My life has been impacted by this faith*

because..." That is a question that can get a person thinking. How would you answer it?

I also have been filling in for Rev. Gy at the Newcomers Book Group for the past few weeks. It has been lovely getting to know a few of our newest UUCF friends better. It has also been challenging. Our discussions about *A Chosen Faith* by Forrest Church and John Buehrens have required me to examine my current spiritual truths and be ready to articulate them clearly. When was the last time you did this?

This month's spiritual theme of spiritual sustenance and nourishment is an invitation to explore these things more deeply. I hope you find opportunities to reflect and then talk about it with others.

Downstairs this month, our programs for children and youth will be focused on recycling because I recently learned that November is National Recycling Month! Reducing, reusing, and recycling fits in nicely with the kid's over-arching theme for the year of Climate Change.

Recently someone remarked that our programs for children seem more focused on activism than learning about religious beliefs and different religions. I could understand how someone might miss the connection between recycling and religious education but it is there.

Respecting the interdependent web of all existences is a core Unitarian Universalist value. Living in harmony with the rhythms of nature is a core Unitarian Universalist value. The sacredness of all living things is a core Unitarian Universalist value. Our exploration of Climate Change and Environmental Justice is rooted in UU values, in religious belief.

It doesn't feel true to me to claim these values as central to Unitarian Universalism without taking action to heal and protect the Earth. I think that our programs for kids should both introduce ideas and practices that will help them uncover their own spiritual identity and beliefs and help them recognize suffering in the world and see themselves as agents of positive change to alleviate that suffering. This month, we will do all that by recycling. May it be so.

RE SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER

DATE	TOPIC	VOLUNTEERS
November 5	A 7th Principle for 7 Generations	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt
November 12	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle	Regena and Eric Nelson
November 19	Multigenerational Service	N/A
November 26	Practicing Gratitude	Pat Timm

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Thoughtful

Thursday

We have an exciting lineup of guests for our once-a-month **Thoughtful Thursday Speakers Series**. Each of these events will give you an opportunity to listen to and dialog with people navigating spiritual, mental, or physical growth and change in their work and their lives. Please plan to join us on Zoom at 7 PM for these unique opportunities to learn and grow. And, if you cannot attend any of these Thoughtful Thursdays in real-time, you can **sign up to receive a recording** of the event by filling out the Zoom registration form.



November 9: What Nourishes Your Spirit?

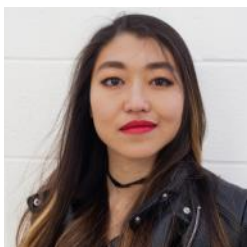
The President of the [Foundation for Inner Peace](#) (the publisher of A Course in Miracles), Tamara Morgan, will join us to talk about the course and the importance of finding what nourishes your spirit. More information about this conversation is on page 2.

Click [HERE](#) to register for this Zoom Meeting ID 996 7998 5253



December 7: A Conversation with Ben Brown

Ben Brown is a true renaissance man who feels blessed to be able to pursue many interests including permaculture, sustainability, energy conservation, tiny homes, machine knitting, beekeeping, and music. He is looking forward to joining us in December to talk more about his life's journey and his many passions. Click [HERE](#) to read more about Ben.



Coming in the New Year: A Conversation with Emilee Petersmark

Emilee Petersmark is a Grand Rapids-based artist and musician who favors dark, spiritual elements, creating unique and haunting imagery. Making a living as a touring musician with her band [The Crane Wives](#), Emilee takes inspiration from music and does much of her creating on the road. Emilee hopes to join us sometime in the new year to discuss the creative process and how she stays true to herself as she pursues her ambitions.



There will be an **Articulating Your Faith Follow-Up** after the service on **November 5** to help us each find easy, memorable words to explain and share Unitarian Universalism with others. Since our first workshop in August, several people have attended a UU Elevator Speech Workshop presented by 1st UU in Dallas. At this Follow-Up, they will share some of what they learned at the workshop and unveil an elevator speech they came up with together.

This will be a hybrid workshop. You can join us in person or over Zoom. For those joining us at UUCC, childcare will be provided. We hope to see you there!

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Building Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time

The UUCC Civil Conversations Group meets once a month via Zoom 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.

The group's next meeting will be on **Thursday, November 30** at 7 PM. At this gathering, we will:



- Review what it takes to have a Civil Conversation
- Share Civil Conversations we had recently
- Engage in a 'practice' conversation on a controversial topic

Newcomers are always welcome to join in our Civil Conversations. Please feel free to invite friends to this gathering. We work to intentionally create a safe space by following our Civil Conversation's guidelines and intervening if necessary.

Starting in November we will ask people to register for Civil Conversations. Click [HERE](#) to register.

If you have any questions contact Civil Conversations Facilitators Darby Fetzer and Miriam Epskamp.

Finding Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Foot Print



On the third Monday of the most months, 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 UUCC and in the wider community.

At their October meeting the group spent time discussing the possibility of getting solar panels for UUCC through [Solar Faithful](#), a faith-based solar initiative. They offer three different financing options including a Power-Purchase Agreement that would require no financial investment on UUCC's part. The group decided to do some research into the company and its offering to see if it would be a good opportunity for UUCC.

Sustainability Group's next meeting is on Monday, **November 20** at **7:00 PM** via Zoom. Newcomers are always welcome! Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID: 960 9812 1445 Passcode: 990641



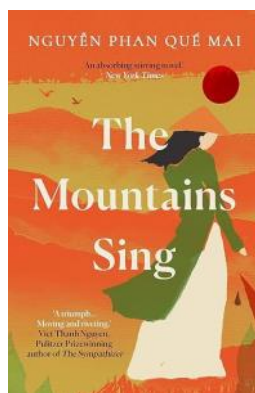
Welcoming Congregation Renewal

All UUCC members, friends, and visitors are encouraged to attend our **United Way 21-Day LGBTQIA+ Equity Challenge Discussion Group** on Thursday, **November 2** at **7 PM** via Zoom. We are using the Challenge and the follow-up debrief as part of our LGBTQIA+ Welcoming Congregation Renewal for 2023-2024, so it is important that as many people as possible join in the conversation, ***even if you did not sign up to take the challenge.***

During the discussion, led by Rev. Gy, those who took the challenge will have an opportunity to share some of the things they learned and everyone will have an opportunity to ask questions and reflect on ways we can continue to strive to make UUCC a welcoming place for all who enter our doors.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID 269 324 7262

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

**November 10
1:00 PM**

The Mountains Sing
by Nguyen Phan Que Mai
Discussion Leader:
Sally Cowles

From Goodreads:

The Mountains Sing tells an enveloping, multigenerational tale of the Trần family, set against the backdrop of the Việt Nam War. Trần Diệu Lan, who was born in 1920, was forced to flee her family farm with her six children during the Land Reform as the Communist government rose in the North. Years later in Hà Nội, her young granddaughter, Hương, comes of age as her parents and uncles head off down the Hồ Chí Minh Trail to fight in a conflict that tore apart not just her beloved country, but also her family.

Vivid, gripping, and steeped in the language and traditions of Việt Nam, *The Mountains Sing* brings to life the human costs of this conflict from the point of view of the Vietnamese people themselves, while showing us the true power of kindness and hope.

If you have any questions about Women's Book Group, please contact Stephanie Grathwol.

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

Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981



Qigong Group

You are invited to join our weekly Qigong sessions, every Tuesday and Saturday morning at 9:00 AM. Newcomers are always welcome!



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

Meeting ID: 697 338 090 Passcode: 138550

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

Meeting ID: 977 5286 6838 Passcode: 383810

If you have any questions about the group, contact Freya Lake (freyalake@sbcglobal.net)



Game Gathering

Come to the 1st Saturday Game Gathering on **November 4** from **1-4 PM** for an opportunity to

play tabletop games or cards with your UUC friends. People of all ages are welcome. Childcare is available on request.

Bring your favorite game, a beverage of choice, and a snack to share, and join us for a relaxing afternoon of fun, fellowship, and games.

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UUC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, November 18** at **9:00 AM** at Garcia's Mexican Kitchen conveniently located on Shaver Road, right next door to UUC.



Please RSVP to Ron if you plan to attend the 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group. An RSVP is not required but sometimes plans change at the last minute and checking in with Ron will ensure you are having breakfast alone. Ron's contact info is ronald.crowell@wmich.edu or (269)599-1242.

OPPORTUNITIES



The Giving Tree

This year, over 150 refugee children from several countries in the world arrived in Kalamazoo with little more than the shirts on their backs.

They have been uprooted from their homes after experiencing traumatic events and, with their family, moved thousands of miles away to a new country with a different culture and language. Many of the children are scared and unsure of what might come next. Many of them have no toys and their families do not have the means to provide them with any.

A new toy could be a big comfort as they adjust to a new life, while still a child, and help bring a smile to their faces. To help bring toys to these kids, our friends at Samaritas are holding a **TOY DRIVE for REFUGEE CHILDREN** drive this holiday season to provide toys to kids in Kalamazoo.

We will be setting up a Giving Tree at the back of the sanctuary on November 19 covered with tags that have a toy idea for a child 5-15 years old.

If you would like to purchase a toy, grab a tag, go shopping, purchase the item, and return the toy and the tag to the Giving Tree.

Please be sensitive to English comprehension and cultural differences when choosing gifts. Games should not require a lot of reading. No military, war-themed, or culturally insensitive toys. Dolls and Barbies should be dressed modestly.

Wrapping the gift is optional (but appreciated). If you do choose to wrap, please use a plain gift bag or wrapping paper (no Christmas, Santa, or holiday-specific themes). Please attach the tag labeling what's inside.

Toys must be returned to church by Sunday, December 10. Thanks for your support!

Choir! Choir! Choir!

The UU Community Church Choir is rehearsing again and would love to have YOU join them!

Singers of all abilities are welcome to join the group. We believe that everybody can and should sing!



The Choir plans to sing during the services on November 19 and December 17.

Rehearsals are held most Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM. Some afternoon or evening rehearsals may be added to prepare for the Winter Solstice service on December 17.

Please contact Chris Petersmark (christopherpetersmark@gmail.com) if you would like to join the choir or just show up to the next rehearsal!

Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm and promote "the Use of the Democratic Process Within Our Congregations and in Society at Large" So be sure to....



OPPORTUNITIES

21st Annual **Masks Welcome!**

Fine Art Sale & Holiday Bazaar

Saturday, November 18th 9am-3pm

People's Church of Kalamazoo
1758 N 10th St, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Unique Finds from 25 Local Artisans:

- Meg Tang Jewelry,
- Smallcombe Studio,
- Moonlight Studios,
- Donna Vogtmann,
- Llama Luna,
- Things of Steel,
- Picnic Prints,
- Birch and Blooms,
- Maria Dault,
- Ms. Charlotte Sews,
- Grannywoobie Mittens,
- Lucy in the Sky Quilting,
- Confections with Conviction,
- Kalamazoo Candles,
- Todd Beck Turned Wood,
- Sue Caulfield Fabric Art,
- Kalamazoo Calendar Project,
- and many MORE.

NEW IN 2023
Enter to win one of **THREE** gift baskets featuring treasures from our artists and specialty craft items!!!

Plus People's Specialty Foods & Crafts

- People's famous savory pasties
- Swedish Limpa Bread
- Cranberry Chutney
- Jams & Jellies
- Sweet Treats
- And MORE!

269-375-3262
peopleschurch.net



Funny Ladies Comedy Night to benefit the Domestic Violence Coalition

Enjoy a night of comedy with three hilarious women - Kim Cook, Pam Krugman, and Laura Hugg- on **November 17** at the Lucky Wolf Theater, 404 E. Michigan Ave in Paw Paw. All proceeds benefit victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Van Buren County.

Doors open at 6 PM. Show starts at 7:00 PM
Tickets are \$20 in advance if purchased [HERE](#) or \$25 at the door.

Visit domesticviolencecoalition.org to learn more about the Van Buren County Domestic Violence Coalition.

A Conversation with Dr. Mark Braverman

Executive Director, Kairos USA



As they mourn all loss of life, and stand against continued oppression of Palestinians, Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opposition to War and Kairos West Michigan invite the Kalamazoo community to join them at 7:00 pm, Wednesday November 1 for a conversation with Dr. Mark Braverman.

Mark was raised in the Jewish tradition, and trained in trauma studies and crisis intervention. Traveling to Israel and occupied Palestine in 2006, Mark was transformed by what he witnessed and by encounters with peace activists and civil society leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities. Since then, Mark has devoted himself full-time to a just peace in Israel and Palestine. Mark brings his deep and unique perspective as a Jewish American with family roots in Jerusalem and decades of experience working with Israelis, Palestinians and activists throughout the world dedicated to a just resolution of this conflict.

When: Wednesday, November 1st

7:00-8:30 pm

Where: WMU College of Health and Human Services Auditorium - Room 1010

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH SPEAKER SERIES

Our friends at the Native Justice Coalition are celebrating Native American Heritage Month with a virtual speakers series that will take place on Wednesday evenings 6:00-7:30 PM on Zoom throughout the month November.

The diverse lineup includes a variety of Native leaders who are inspiring, uplifting and supporting their communities. This a free event. Click [HERE](#) to register and the Zoom invitation will be sent before the event date.



Wednesday, November 1:

***American Indian Mental Health:
Insights from a Native Psychologist***

with Dr. Tonia Ballantyne



Wednesday, November 8

***Pueblo Futurist:
The Heartwork of Debra Yepa-Pappan***

with Debra Yepa-Pappan



Wednesday, November 15

Experiences of a Native Athlete

with Amber and Shayla Manitowabi-Huebner




Wednesday, November 29

Chef Walks First's Journey

with Jessica Pamonicutt



			
DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Wednesday	November 1	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	November 2	LGBTQIA+ Equity Challenge Discussion	7:00 Pm
Saturday	November 4	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	November 5	DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS Choir Practice The Power Within with Rev. Gy; UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time Articulating Your Faith Follow Up	2:00 AM 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Monday	November 6	Newcomers Book Group Mindful Self Compassion Course with Eric	5:30 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	November 7	ELECTION DAY Qigong	7 AM-8 PM 9:00 AM
Wednesday	November 8	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	November 9	Thoughtful Thursday with Tam Morgan	7:00 PM
Friday	November 10	Women's Book Group Growth Team Meeting	1:00 PM 2:00 PM
Saturday	November 11	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	November 12	Choir Practice Love Out Loud with Rev. Greta Jo; UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time Program Council	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Monday	November 13	Mindful Self Compassion Course with Eric	7:00 PM
Tuesday	November 14	Qigong	9:00 AM
Friday	November 17	Transgender Day of Remembrance Memorial at K-College	12:00 PM
Saturday	November 18	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	November 19	Choir Practice Love is the Secret Ingredient with Miriam and friends; NO Classes for Kids After Service Social Time Community Thanksgiving Service and Pie Social at Prince of Peace on Milham	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 5:00 PM
Monday	November 20	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	November 21	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	November 22	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Thursday	November 23	THANKSGIVING	ALL DAY
Saturday	November 25	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	November 26	The Power All Around with Rev. Gy; UU Explorations for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	November 28	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	November 30	Civil Conversations Group	7:00 PM

UU Community Church is served by:

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

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

Chris Petersmark
Music Director
christopherpetersmark@gmail.com
Cell phone: 248-535-4197

2023-2024 Board of Trustees

Steve Tasko

Eric Nelson

Pat Timm

Michael Graham

Marsha Laya

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, November 22 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

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269-324-7262



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