



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

March 2024

## MARCH SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM Onsite, on YouTube, or on Zoom

### **March 3: *Change Your Seat* with Rev. Gy**

Change your seat. That is all. Come on Sunday to find out more.

Zoom Meeting ID: 945 8624 8608 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **March 10: *Building Power for the Long Haul* with Jennifer Teed**

Relational Organizing is a buzzword in Movement work these days. Jenny will speak on her work in Detroit deepening connections that have led to more meaningful and impactful work. She will share tips on how we can engage and expand our networks to create change, while also having a good time!

Zoom Meeting ID: 984 8618 2615 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **March 17: *Patchwork to Freedom* with Pamela Chapman**

Our guest speaker will discuss the hidden messages of quilts during the underground railroad era, what the message each block in the quilt conveyed, and the myth/fact of the use of quilts by enslaved people pursuing freedom. She will also bring some quilts that are relevant to African-American heritage and history for us to enjoy.

Zoom Meeting ID: 925 8400 2302 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **March 24: *From Root to Fruit* with Rev. Gy**

We will celebrate Stewardship Sunday by considering how our good care of what is already here will lead to a bountiful harvest in the future.

Zoom Meeting ID: 968 1889 5583 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### **March 31: *The Resurrection of an Idea* with Rev. Gy**

Rooted in more than 2,000 years of ritual and rite, Easter plays a significant role in Christian theology. Join Rev. Gy for an exploration of the Easter story and what we can learn from it today.

Zoom Meeting ID: 959 7742 6227 Click [HERE](#) to register.



## **Spiritual Theme for March SPROUTING NEW BUDS**

During the course of this church year, we are taking inspiration for our spiritual explorations from the Tree of Life.

At this time of year, the trees in our lives begin to undergo a miraculous change. One day they seem bare and lifeless and the next they are covered with that vibrant neon-green tinge that trees develop as their buds fatten and burst open, and tiny new leaves unfurl. The scientific name for this is bud-break and although it seems to happen almost by magic, the trees have been preparing for this moment for months. They have been storing up the nutrients they will need to burst forth with new life. When the conditions are just right, they flood their roots and shoots with the enzymes that produce explosive growth, and our world changes from drab grey and brown to verdant green.

We too have been storing up the resources we need to pursue the growth that changes lives and heals our world. Resources like courage, imagination, communication, understanding, compassion, and empathy.

Questions to ponder this month as we lean into transformation and change:

*Are you open to transformation?*

*Can you imagine a new way of being for yourself?*

*For this community? For our nation? For the world?*

*What do you need to do today to get where you want to be tomorrow?*

# GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

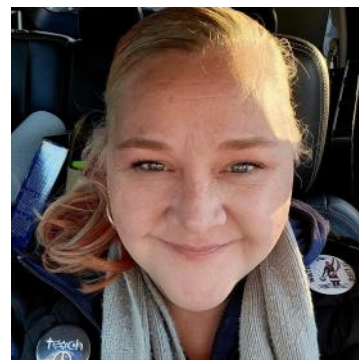
***We are excited to welcome these guests to our pulpit in March:***



**Pamela Chapman** is a semi-retired registered nurse with a career spanning more than fifty years. Her most recent nursing practice was in Hospice Information Management. She is married and has two children. Her son, Kendrick is in heaven and her daughter Ursula lives in Kalamazoo. She has two grandchildren, my grandson, Kendrick is in heaven and my granddaughter, Magnolia is a first-grade student at Winchell Elementary. She also has a two-and-a-half-year-old great-granddaughter, Delialiah. Pam started her quilting journey years ago with her mother but she was never truly interested in the craft until

2015 when her daughter was pregnant with her first child (that's how a lot of quilters get started). Pam decided I would make a baby quilt and that's when she discovered she had not been a very good student all those years ago. Unfortunately, on February 24, 2015, the baby was born prematurely and subsequently died. She finished that first quilt as best she could and that baby, Ezekial James became her muse. She taught herself to quilt and is still learning and exploring. Some say, things happen for a reason but I say things happen for a purpose.

**Jennifer Teed** is the daughter of Arlene and Bob Teed. She is a lifelong Unitarian Universalist from Detroit. She lives with her partner, Eric, and their dog, Tyson. She served as Director of Religious Education at the Detroit and Farmington UU congregations from 2006-2011. She is currently consulting for MUUSJN (Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network) around issues of racial and environmental justice. Jenny received her BSW with honors from University of Detroit Mercy. She is also a visual artist who especially loves dabbling in mixed media. She has worked with children and youth for three decades and for the last ten years has taught art to children, families, and senior citizens primarily through the YMCA. Jenny is a long-time grassroots activist who has helped organize and participated in many actions and events. She is one of the founders of Metro Detroit's chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and the Suburban Connections for Collective Liberation newsletter.



Our **Thoughtful Thursday** guest on **March 21** at **7 PM** via Zoom is **Dr. Omid Safi**. You can learn more about this gathering on page

**Dr Safi** is a scholar of the Islamic mystical tradition of Radical Love. He serves as a professor of Islamic studies at Duke University. Ten times nominated for Professor of the Year awards, Omid has published extensively on the foundational sources of Islam and Sufism. He has authored ***Memories of Muhammad*** and ***Radical Love: Teachings from the Islamic Mystical Tradition***. He has also appeared as an expert on Islam in the New York Times, Newsweek, Washington Post, Al-Jazeera, PBS, NPR, NBC, BBC, and CNN.

# FROM THE MINISTER



## From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

It is that time of year. You know, the time when your church leadership is sending out the pledge cards, church members give testimonials on why they support our spiritual community during Sunday services, and the minister writes an article on why you, too, should support our spiritual community.

Of course, you already know why you are supporting us. You already understand that without your contributions nothing we do and are would be possible. You also already love us and many of you have had this love for a long time. You've been doing this for a long time and chances are this commitment is cemented in the center of your being and in fact, you need not be nudged or reminded that it is that time of year again.

So, I don't want to talk to you about the importance of giving. Others will do that and you know anyway. You know that the congregation is the only source of income for our community. Not only that, but we also support the larger UU world with our contributions and we also support other worthy causes in our community.

I instead want to talk to you about the importance of doing good. The Dalai Lama said (and I am paraphrasing), *"Do good, and if you can't do good, at least do no harm."* He advocates for a sense of responsibility towards all living beings, fostering a mindset that transcends narrow self-interest.

"Narrow self-interest" – if you frequent our services and attend our special programs and classes – I think and hope that this is one of the first things you will transcend. Of course, I suspect, you are attracted to us because this has always been your way. Serving, caring, and considering the well-being of another be that human or any other life form.

If you have chosen us, it is because you have also chosen to abandon narrow world views. You do not limit yourself to exploring only one way, only one spiritual path to the Divine, or whatever your understanding of what is Holy is.

You also care about all aspects of Life. You care about the health of our little planet, you consider your actions carefully – looking ahead for seven generations.

Your love is unlimited and you are kind and compassionate even when it challenges you. You do hard things, because, well it is who you are at the core. You include the disenfranchised. You struggle in good faith with pronouns even if it challenges everything you've ever known about English grammar because people are more important than language. You try, you fail, you try again.

(More on [page 4](#))

# STEWARDSHIP

You get it that Love is Love and Black Lives Matter. You stand for our transgender siblings. You keep cultivating your mind while opening your heart.

You understand the interconnectedness of all life forms and recognize that the well-being of each individual contributes to the overall health of the planet.

You also know that you don't have to do any of this alone. You know that this is a community that will hold you up, will walk alongside you, pick you up when you need it, and share in your joy when your heart overfloweth...

This is a safe place for you to be exactly the way you are. There's room for you to grow, rest, regroup, recharge, manifest your most honest self. Love has a way here.

This I like to talk about.

The rest is important, too. The giving, the generosity, because when you give, you are not losing something. You are only making use of an opportunity to explore a larger possibility within yourself. – I just don't want to talk about it now. Because you get it anyway.

So, here's to LOVE. Here's to open minds and welcoming hearts. Here's to us!

Big Love, Rev. Gy

## Celebration of Generosity

Pledge materials will soon arrive in your mailbox that explain how you can support UUCC's mission and activities for the next church year. If you do not received a packet in the next few days and would like one, please contact the office and we will send you one .

We ask that you return your pledge cards by March 31 so we can finalize the budget for the next church year. Supporting UUCC with your pledge is one of the ways you can show your gratitude for UUCC and ensure its future.

On Saturday, April 6, we will have an onsite, catered celebration dinner to announce the pledge results and share our appreciation for all the ways you give to UUCC with your time, talents, and treasure. All are welcome. Child care will be provided. Transportation is available. See details below.

### **Celebration of Generosity Saturday, April 6, 2024**

5:00 PM – Social time

5:45 PM – Welcome by Rev. Gy

6:00 PM – Dinner

6:30 PM – Dessert and Magic Show by Evan D. Priem

7:00 PM – Pledge Results Announced

Click [HERE](#) to RSVP by March 31. Thanks!



# CARING COMMUNITY



## MARCH CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*In March, winter is holding back and Spring is pulling forward.  
Something holds and something pulls inside of us too.*

~ Jean Hersey

### **Joys, Concerns, and Member News:**

This past month has been a mix of sweetness and sorrow.

We were also heartbroken to learn of the sudden passing of our former music director and member, **Linsey Furry**. Many of us have fond memories of the beautiful music Linsey shared with us over the years. Our hearts are with **Darby Fetzer** and her family as they mourn the loss of Darby's mother. And we feel for **Patti** and **Rev. Gy** who laid to rest their 16-year-old cat Kiz.

Health issues have prevented too many UCC friends from being with us as much as they would like and several folks have been quarantined by Covid-19. We send our healing thoughts to all who are suffering including **Teri Uttermohlen** who took a bad fall back in December, broke her leg, and is struggling with a slow and painful recovery.

But there were joys to celebrate as well. We were happy to hear that **Christopher Grathwol** started a new job in Alpena. After many years as a "single," **Stace Danielson** has found a special someone and is full of hopes and dreams for the future.

And many UCC folks have been experiencing the joy of travel. Folks have planned trips to Chicago, South Carolina, New Orleans, London, and even Australia (just to name a few).

**Stephanie Grathwol** recently enjoyed a 10-day Princess Cruise in the Caribbean. The highlight of the trip was transiting the Panama Canal twice. **Rev. Gy and Patti** are looking forward to spending a week in Florida in the coming weeks and **Miriam** and her grandson Eli are off to San Diego at the end of the month.

### **Birthdays:**

Offer your joyful greetings to your church friends who celebrate birthdays in March:

**5- Pat Timm, 9- Erin Michael, 12- Bruce Fetzer, 25- Marcia Adams**

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

Members from past years who we mourn in March include **K. C. Kozminski** (July 8, 1957 - March 9, 2006), **Dori Gerritson** (July 20, 1933 - March 21, 1999), and **Jim King** (May 31, 1930 - March 20, 2021)

### **Welcome Visitors:**

We were delighted to welcome first-time visitors **Mo Couzens, Sue Poppink, Rachael Croy, Sherie Missaoui**, Stace's friend **Stephen**, and **Courtney** to our services in February. It was also good to see our long-time friend **David Bott** who has relocated to Northern Michigan stop by for a visit with his co-worker **Breanne**. We hope to see you all 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 UCC office: 269-324-7262 or [uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com).*

# LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees met on February 7. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Reviewed a draft **Security Plan** and agreed to adopt several of the measures.
- Voted to allow the Youth Program to host a **Drag Show** at UCC in late May or early June.
- Discussed creating a **Technology/Computer Replacement Fund** to ensure we have enough financial resources to support our staff and continue our virtual programming.
- Set a timeline for the budget process and set the date for the **Annual Meeting on June 9**.
- Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from their February meeting.

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

## Proposed Changes to Article II

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bylaws, also known as our **Principles and Purposes**, is the foundation for all of the work of our UUA and its member congregations and communities. It is the covenant to which all of our congregations and covenanted communities pledge themselves when they become members of our UUA.

In 2020, the UUA convened an Article II Study Commission and charged it to **review and suggest changes** to the Principles and Purposes to help guide Unitarian Universalism into the future.

In January of 2023, the Study Commission presented draft language of a new Article II to the UUA Board of Trustees. The draft language underwent a process of revisions and amendments before June 2023 when the General Assembly of UUA voted to adopt and refer the language back to the Article II Study Commission for consideration and incorporation into the final proposal.

In October of 2023, the Study Commission **submitted a final draft of its proposed revisions** to Article II to the UUA Board of Trustees. UU congregations then had the opportunity to submit petitions to amend the proposed revision.

At the deadline of February 1, **four amendments** had reached the support threshold (at least 15 UUA member congregations agreed to support) and will be moved to the final agenda for voting at General Assembly in June of 2024.

They are as follows (in no particular order): 1) **Equity: Every Person is Inherently Worthy**; 2) **Peace as a UU Value**; 3) **Equity Calls Us to Listen, Understand, Respect, and Respond**; 4) **Reason and the Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning**

To learn more about the Article II Revision Process and to read the four Amendments in their entirety, visit [uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission](https://uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/article-ii-study-commission)

# 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. Bring your voice to our next meeting on **March 10**. We will meet following a brief social time and you can participate either in person or on Zoom.

At our February meeting, we had much to **CELEBRATE!**

We enjoyed great Sunday Services in January from **Rev. Gy, Bob Weir**, and **Rev. Larry Farris**. Co-founder of the indie band the Crane Wives, **Emilee Petersmark**, joined us for a wonderful Thoughtful Thursday conversation. We chased away the winter blues with a fabulous Chili Supper and a concert by the talented **Dana Scott! Darby Fetzer** hosted a very well attended Tiny Habits Workshop that several participants described as life-changing! And we hosted an additional 13 group meetings and activities during the month! Together we can do great things!

We learned about many upcoming **OPPORTUNITIES** including:

- **Drop-in Mindfulness Practice:** Led by Eric Nelson on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month** at Prince of Peace Church and on Zoom. Click [HERE](#) to register or visit [tinyurl.com/uuccdropin](https://tinyurl.com/uuccdropin)
- **ISAAC Community Read and Author Visit:** Our justice partners at ISAAC are holding a community read of *Me and White Supremacy* by **Layla Saad**. Ms Saad will join ISAAC president, **Doug King** for a virtual “fireside chat” about the book on **March 16** starting at 1 PM. The group indicated support of participating in the community read and holding a watch party at UCC for the virtual event. You can learn more about this event on [page 11](#).
- **Kalamazoo Earth Day—Rooted in Action:** This year’s celebration features a series of hand-on events around Kalamazoo **beginning on April 6 and ending on Earth Day (April 22)**. The group decided to spend \$100 of the Program Council budget to become an official sponsor of this event. Visit [kalamazooearthday.com](https://kalamazooearthday.com) to learn how to get involved.
- **Open House Theatre Company:** The theatre company that makes its home at UCC is planning to produce a series of one-act plays in May. Performers are needed on the stage and volunteers behind the scenes. Contact Mary Roscoe ([lizoflynn@gmail.com](mailto:lizoflynn@gmail.com)) to learn more.
- **Join the Tech Team:** As our online audience continues to grow and our Tech Team is always looking for new volunteers to help keep things running smoothly. Contact Steve Tasko ([stevetasko@gmail.com](mailto:stevetasko@gmail.com)) to get started.
- **Art Wall:** We are always looking for new artists to spotlight on our Art Wall. If you know of anyone who would like an opportunity to display a few pieces at UCC, please contact Miriam.

Please plan to join us at the next Program Council meeting on **Sunday, March 10** at around 11:20 AM, in person or via Zoom, and help keep UCC’s programs going strong. We will serve a light soup luncheon before the Program Council Meeting. All donations will help support youth programs at UCC.

If you have any questions about Program Council, or items to add to the agenda, contact Eric Nelson ([ericvnelson1@gmail.com](mailto:ericvnelson1@gmail.com))

# LEARNING AND GROWTH



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.



## March 21: Love and Justice: A Muslim Perspective on Palestine/Israel

We are very honored to be joined by **Dr. Omid Safi** for an opportunity to discuss and process the heartbreaking situation in Palestine and Israel. Since the beginning of the current conflict on October 7, 2023, Dr. Safi has been receiving 10-20 invitations a day to speak to different groups. As his time is very limited, Thoughtful Thursday will begin with a 30-minute recording of a presentation Dr. Safi gave to the nonprofit spirituality-centered group [Science and Non-Duality](#). The pre-recorded presentation is powerful, emotional, thought-provoking, and aimed at the deepest questions of justice and peace such as:

- *Can we move beyond condemnation to envision what “love has to say” at such a time?*
- *Can honoring each other’s grief allow us to reclaim some humanity?*
- *Can we speak difficult truths yet keep hoping that reconciliation remains possible?*
- *Can we respond to this crisis in a way that doesn’t reinforce its architecture?*
- *Can we respond in a prophetic way — calling for real justice, not just an end to external violence?*
- *What could a sustainable peace, rooted in justice, look like, given the huge imbalance of power?*

Dr. Safi will join the Zoom call after the video presentation to answer our questions.

Click [HERE](#) to register for this Zoom Event or visit [tinyurl.com/UUCCpeacePerspective](https://tinyurl.com/UUCCpeacePerspective)



## April 18: Going Native

In April, our Thoughtful Thursday special guest will be **Mike Weis**, the owner of [Dropseed Native Gardens and Ecological Restoration](#). Mike will help us learn more about the power of native plants to improve the earth’s ability to sustain people and wildlife. Click [HERE](#) to register for this event or visit [tinyurl.com/uuccgoingnative](https://tinyurl.com/uuccgoingnative)

# KPL COMMUNITY READ



The 2024 Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL) Community Read selection is **Yellowface** by R.F. Kuang.

The **UUC Women's Book Group** will discuss the book at their next meeting on **Friday, March 8 at 1:00 PM** via Zoom.

KPL will host a **Q&A with R.F. Kuang** at Chenery Auditorium in Kalamazoo on **Saturday, March 23 at 3 PM**.

About the Book: *Authors June Hayward and Athena Liu were supposed to be twin rising stars: same year at Yale, same debut year in publishing. But Athena is a literary darling and June is literally nobody. When Athena dies in a freak accident, June steals her unpublished manuscript and publishes it as her own under the ambiguous name Juniper Song. But as evidence threatens June's stolen success, she will discover exactly how far she will go to keep what she thinks she deserves. What happens next is entirely everyone else's fault. With its totally immersive first-person voice, Yellowface grapples with questions of diversity, racism, and cultural appropriation, as well as the terrifying alienation of social media. R.F. Kuang's novel is timely, razor-sharp, and eminently readable.*

The UUC Women's Book Group encourages everyone to take part in this year's Community Read. If you are interested in taking part in their discussion of Yellowface led by Betty Lee Ongley, contact Stephanie Grathwol (sargg.64@gmail.com) For more information about the KPL Community Read and the author visit, check out [kpl.gov/reading-together](https://kpl.gov/reading-together)



## Borrow a Book from MeLCat [Judith Halseth, Ed.D.](#)

Do you know how to borrow library books from the Michigan interlibrary loan system? MeLCat is the Michigan eLibrary, a 24/7 online library for Michigan residents. The system was set up by the Library of Michigan, using federal grant money and offering access to library materials from all over Michigan. You need a resident library card from the local library where you reside. To borrow a book that is not available in your local library, either order it online from MeLCat, or get help from your local library in ordering the book from MeLCat. Use the online address [mel.org/welcome](https://mel.org/welcome) and be prepared to enter the number of your library card, and to click on the name of your local library, from a list of participating libraries. If the book is available (you will be able to see if it is available) it will be delivered to your local library in about one or two weeks. The book is checked out for four weeks while DVDs are usually checked out for 2 weeks.

- MeLCat allows you to order books, audiobooks, music, movies, and other materials and have them delivered to your participating library.
- MeLCat databases allow you instant access to full-text articles from tens of thousands of magazines and newspapers. Databases are available for kids, teens, and adults.

Thanks to Jill Ongley, Library Assistant for MeLCat Services at the Kalamazoo Public Library, for sharing this information. Jill's mother, Betty Lee Ongley, is a UUC member and an avid reader!

# CONNECTION



## Join the UUCS Singers!

The choir plans to sing during the service on Sunday, **March 24!** Come and add your voice to their song!

Practices are on **Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM.** No auditions or judgment! People of all singing abilities and experience are welcome. At UUCS, we believe that ***everyone can sing!***

Questions? Contact our Music Director, Chris: [christopherpetersmark@gmail.com](mailto:christopherpetersmark@gmail.com)



## 1st Saturday Game Gathering

1st Saturday Game Gathering on **March 2** will meet later than usual this month. We will gather from **3-6 PM** for an opportunity to play tabletop games or cards with your UUCS friends. A light dinner will be served. You are welcome to bring a side dish to pass.

People of all ages are welcome. Childcare is available on request.

We will be meeting downstairs in the RE area to accommodate renters on the 1st floor. Please enter the building through the set of doors on the right to go directly downstairs.

Don't forget to bring your favorite game and join us for a relaxing afternoon of fun, fellowship, and games.

## Qigong at UUCS

You are invited to join the UUCS Qigong sessions every **Tuesday** and **Saturday!**

Qigong is an ancient Chinese practice that combines gentle stretching, self-massage, and deep breathing. People of all ages and physical ability can participate.

Each session begins at **9:00 AM** with a brief check-in followed by 30 minutes of exercise (with our cameras and mics turned off). We are led, via videorecording, by an experienced instructor.

Newcomers are always welcome to join in.

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](#).

## 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UUCS Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **March 16** at **9:00 AM** at Garcia's Mexican Kitchen located right next door to UUCS.



The Breakfast Group "regulars" would love to have YOU join them for good food and conversation.

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 aren't having breakfast alone.

Ron's contact info is [ronald.crowell@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) or (269)599-1242.



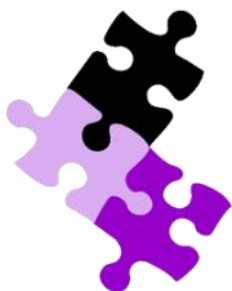
# 8TH PRINCIPLE

BUILD a  
diverse  
BELOVED  
COMMUNITY

## 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.*

Our 8th Principle resource this month comes from our justice partners at Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community (ISAAC) :



**A Virtual Fireside Chat with Layla Saad,  
Author of *Me and White Supremacy*:  
Combat Racism, Change the World,  
and Become a Good Ancestor**

**Saturday, March 16**

**1:00 PM: Pre Fireside Chat Recordings**

**1:30 PM: Fireside Chat with Layla Saad  
and ISAAC President, Elder Doug King**

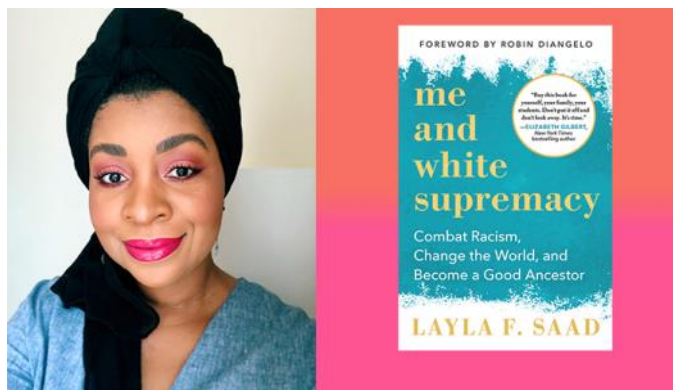
There are two ways to participate in this event.

**1) Join UUC friends at a Watch Party.**

We will meet on the lower level to watch the presentation together and spend time afterward discussing what we heard. Coffee, tea, cocoa, and juice will be provided. Please bring a snack to share.

**2) Watch from home.**

The conversation with Layla Saad will be streamed live on Facebook and YouTube @ISAACKalamazoo. Click [HERE](#) to register for the event.



The UUC Exploring Anti-Racism Group will attend this event in lieu of their March meeting. They plan to gather again in April to discuss *Me and White Supremacy* in greater depth. They encourage everyone, whether you plan to attend the March 16 event, participate in the group discussion, or not, to read Ms Saad's book and work through the accompanying journal to help our community have a shared understanding of the impact of white supremacy as we work to dismantle racism and other oppressions in our community.

# CLIMATE CHANGE



*UUCC member Nicky Leigh believes Climate Change is an existential threat to life on planet Earth. She works to raise awareness about the problem through the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition and is active with the Kalamazoo Township Climate Action Planning Committee. In the coming months, she plans to provide UUCC with a series of newsletter articles about Climate Change covering what it is, the possible ramifications, and what can be done. She is also willing to answer any questions our newsletter readers might have. This month Nicky considers the source of the Climate Change problem.*

## Climate Change - The Sources

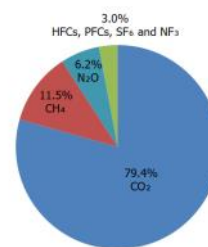
Since the Industrial Revolution, human activities have released carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere in concentrations more abundant than at any time in the last 800,000 years.

These numbers show where our problem lies:

Carbon Dioxide - 300ppm -> 421ppm (part per million)

Methane - 800ppb -> 1900ppb (part per billion)

Nitrous Oxide - 280ppb -> 334ppb



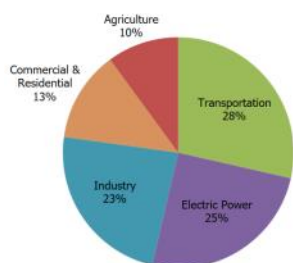
What are the sources of these gases?

Sometimes trying to determine numbers is like “catch as catch can”. Different sites have slightly differing figures, differing years, and differing methodologies. What can be said is they agree the numbers are trending UP and not down. 2023 was the first full year that the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) 1.5c threshold was broken.

In 2021, the world emitted 36.82 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e (Gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents). China emitted 11,336 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e and the United States emitted 6,001 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e. Between these two countries, 17.34 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e were emitted, or to put it in perspective, approximately one-half of all emissions came from 2 out of 196 countries. Unfortunately, we are one of the two!

Generally speaking, we have no control over the actions of any country except possibly our own. And between all our forms of government, local, state, and federal, we may not have much control over the actions of our country.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, in 2021, the sectors producing GHGs were:



Agriculture - 10%

Commercial/Residential - 13%

Industry - 23%

Electrical Power - 25%

Transportation - 28%

More on [page 14](#)

# SUSTAINABILITY

Allocating the GHGs is another “catch as catch can”. Do you allocate the 8% of GHG emission created by the making of concrete to Commercial/Residential or Industry? Do you allocate fossil fuel refining to industry or transportation? In the long run, does it really matter where it is assigned as long as it is dealt with?

What we need to know is, ***Where can we lower or eliminate GHG emissions?***

Really short synopsis of each sector:

**Agriculture** produces methane primarily from animal husbandry and cattle, nitrous oxide primarily from excess fertilizer and runoff, and carbon dioxide when the soil is disrupted more than it can absorb carbon.

**Commercial/Residential** burns fossil fuels for heat, hot water, and cooking. Most air conditioning is electric. Some building materials, such as concrete, create GHGs for the life of the product. Industry uses fossil fuels to make products. Furnaces, large quantities of boiling water or melted elements heated by fossil fuels. Industry needs energy to convert raw materials to finished products.

**Electricity** is primarily created by using coal and/or fossil fuels to turn the turbines. It then needs thousands of miles of high and low transmission lines. These lines are supported by steel girders or tree poles grown for this purpose.

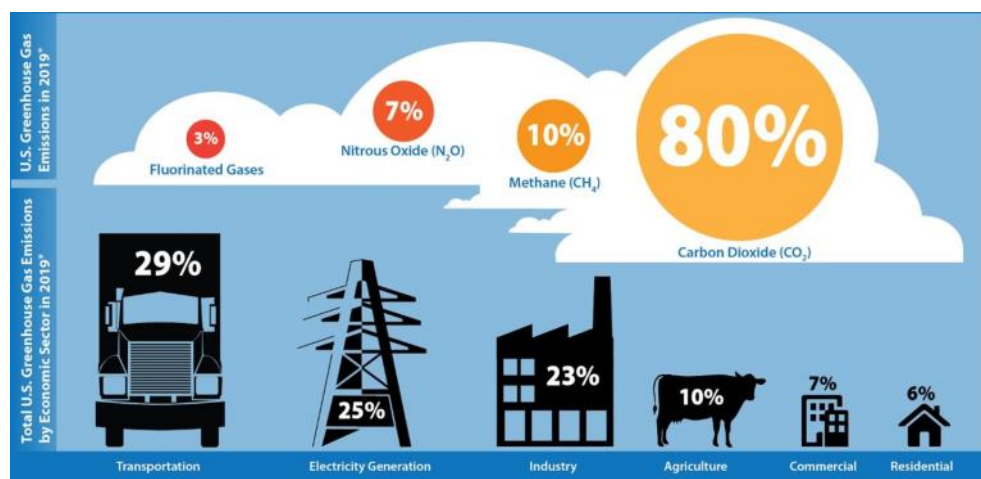
**Transportation** includes motorized bikes, cars, buses, planes, and trains. We need to refine fossil fuels into various grades of gasoline, different types of diesel, and jet fuel. Plus, of course, all the oils that are needed to keep the engines, wheels, whatever running. And don't forget that 60% of the “rubber” in the tires is derived from oil.

This month, I am just leaving you with more questions than answers. Each sector will be discussed in more detail in subsequent newsletters.

Sincerely,

Nicky

[nickyleigh1226@gmail.com](mailto:nickyleigh1226@gmail.com)



Sources:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20231130-climate-crisis-the-15c-global-warming-threshold-explained>  
<https://www.wri.org/insights/interactive-chart-shows-changes-worlds-top-10-emitters>  
<https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>  
<https://thetiredigest.michelin.com/an-unknown-object-the-tire-materials>

# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Small Groups at UUC are a great way to deepen your relationship with the church community and our Unitarian Universalist faith. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome to participate!

## Civil Conversations Group

Our Civil Conversation Small Group led by Darby Fetzter meets on Zoom once a month to practice Emotional Intelligence skills and learn to build bridges toward greater understanding in the world through thoughtful conversation.

Each session starts with a review of what it takes to have a civil conversation and an opportunity to share personal successes and failures we have experienced recently as we have tried to engage with people with different world views than our own. Then, participants are given a chance to practice conversation skills by tackling a challenging topic.



The next meeting of the UUC Civil Conversations Group is on **Wednesday, March 20 at 7 PM.**

Click [HERE](#) to register or visit [tinyurl.com/UUCCcivilconvosMar](https://tinyurl.com/UUCCcivilconvosMar)



## Sustainability Group

The UUC Sustainability Group led by Miriam meets at **7:00 PM** via Zoom on the **3rd Monday** of each month to reflect on their sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas about how to live more gently on the Earth.

The next meeting of the group is on **Monday, March 18**. In addition to sharing information about their personal sustainability challenges and celebrations, participants will discuss the possibility of installing **solar panels** at UUC with help from [Solar Faithful](#) and make plans to observe **Earth Day** in April with a Sunday service and a 30-Day Sustainability Challenge.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Sustainability Group Zoom meeting. Meeting ID 960 9812 1445



## Spiritual Growth Discussion Group

The UUC Spiritual Growth Discussion Group led by Rev. Gy meets once a month both at UUC and on Zoom to talk about ethics, philosophy, and theology from a UU perspective.

Please register via Zoom whether you plan to attend onsite or online.

Please contact the office ([uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)) if you require onsite childcare.

The next meeting of the group is on **Wednesday, March 6 at 6:30 PM.**

Click [HERE](#) to register or visit [tinyurl.com/uuccspiritualitygroup](https://tinyurl.com/uuccspiritualitygroup)



## Exploring Anti-Racism Group

The Exploring Anti-Racism Group led by Eric Nelson meets once a month to explore structural and systemic racism and the actions we can take to dismantle these systems.

The group often uses readings or a video as a starting point for honest and authentic dialogue about racial identity, privilege, and dismantling systems of oppression.

The Exploring Anti-Racism Group will not meet in March. The group plans to attend the ISAAC Fireside Chat with Layla Saad instead (see [page 11](#) for more details). Their April meeting will be devoted to discussing Ms Saad's book, *Me and White Supremacy* in more detail.



# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

If you have read the newsletter carefully up to this point, you probably already know what I am going to report this month. Our youth member Nick and I have decided to host another Drag Show. We received approval from the Board at their February meeting and our dear friend, Miss Moscato responded with an enthusiastic, *"Oh OF COURSE I want to participate!!!"* when asked if she was interested. The date has been chosen—**May 25, 2024** — and preparations are underway. If you would like to be part of the planning committee, let me know!

Although we know that most drag performers are neither transgender nor non-binary, it somehow feels appropriate to make the announcement about Drag Show 2024 during the month of March when we dedicate a day to celebrating transgender visibility and joy. For the LGBTQ+ community, drag shows are about pride, acceptance, joy, and breaking down stigmas. I think our world could use a lot more of all of that.

Perhaps like me, you have been sickened by news stories bout Nex Benedict, a non-binary child in Oklahoma who died after a violent attack by fellow students at their school. While the details are still emerging, we do know that, according to their friends and mother, Nex had experienced bullying from classmates due to their gender identity for more than a year before their death. We also know that Oklahoma has passed several pieces of legislation that make it difficult for transgender folk to be their authentic selves including prohibiting the use of non-binary gender markers on birth certificates, legally requiring people to use a bathroom that corresponds with the sex assigned at birth, and preventing minors from receiving any sort of gender-affirming health care. The current legislative session has seen even more anti-trans bills being introduced. To top it off, an Oklahoma State Senator made a statement to the press referring to LGBTQIA+ people as "filth." This marriage of hateful rhetoric and legislative power can be deadly.

Similar stories are playing out all over the country. Trans Legislation Tracker reports that 504 anti-trans bills have been introduced in 41 states. Transgender, queer, and non-binary folk are facing an onslaught of negativity right now. A blog post on the National Institute of Health website put it this way, "From the church, the school, the courthouse, to the family—the explicit message to an overwhelming number of queer and trans people is clear: you are not welcome here, not wanted, not cherished, not loved. This message is repeated not only in myriad acts of abuse, rejection, and violence against the mind-body-spirits of LGBTQ+ people and communities."

As Unitarian Universalists, we are called to do all we can to counteract those messages. When we fly

DATE	LESSON	VOLUNTEERS
March 3	Lego ValUUes	Eric and Regena Nelson
March 10	Lego ValUUes	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt
March 17	Lego ValUUes	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt
March 24	Lego ValUUes	Mary Roscoe
March 31	Easter Games	HELP WANTED

our rainbow flag, when speak up for LGBTQIA+ equality at school board meetings, when we mark LGBTQIA+ days of visibility and remembrance, when we write letters to our legislators, and when we put on a drag show we are saying you are you welcome here, you are wanted, you are cherished, and you are loved. May it be so.

# WELCOMING CONGREGATION



**March 31 is Transgender Day of Visibility!** Unitarian Universalists unapologetically proclaim that trans lives are divine. On Transgender Day of Visibility and every day, we uplift and support all of the trans and non-binary people in our lives, our congregations, and communities.

## 10 Ways to be More Welcoming and Inclusive of Transgender People

1. Avoid making assumptions about gender identity or sexual orientation.
2. Respect a person's identity and self-label, and respect a person's chosen name and pronouns. It can be incredibly painful to be misgendered! When people are misgendered, they feel invalidated and unseen. If you find yourself making frequent mistakes, try practicing in your thoughts before saying anything out loud.
3. Do not assume a trans person wants to speak about trans issues and only trans issues. Engage them in conversation and get to know them as you would anyone. Learn more about transgender identity and gender diversity on your own.
4. Recognize that "transgender" is not a sexual orientation and educate yourself and others on the distinctions between sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.
5. Use non-binary terms that encompass all genders rather than only two (e.g., "children" instead of "boys and girls"; "people" instead of "women and men"; "siblings," "kindred," or "brothers and sisters and siblings of all genders" instead of "brothers and sisters").
6. Review your congregation's policies and procedures. For example, are gender-exclusive groups inclusive of trans men and women? Do people with non-binary identities have a way to be involved? If you use forms that ask for gender, is that information necessary? If it is, make it an open field if possible, and if not, include the option "Transgender" as well as a fill-in-the-blank box, and allow people to check more than one box. Look into your congregation's policies for youth gatherings, your Safe Congregation Policy, and more.
7. Talk to children about gender diversity. Provide age-appropriate education around understanding one's gender identity and how gender roles and norms play out in our society.
8. Help your congregation to designate gender-neutral bathroom(s) and label all bathrooms in a welcoming way. Make sure your signs throughout your space point the way to all bathroom options.
9. Participate in continuing education on transgender issues and gender diversity.
10. Learn about local and federal laws and how to change them if they are not inclusive (e.g., non-discrimination policies around employment, housing, credit, school and college admissions, and public accommodations; name changes; and gender marker changes). Follow the leadership of local and national transgender organizations.

Visit [uua.org/lgbtq/resources](https://uua.org/lgbtq/resources) for more ideas about how to support transgender and non-binary people and let us continue the work of being welcoming and supportive to all who enter our doors.

# OPPORTUNITIES

## Art Wall: Expanding Imagination

New on the Art Wall this month, we are delighted to be sharing artwork created by UCC member **David Senecal**.



David writes:

*I am primarily a draftsman and not a painter. That is, I draw rather than wield a brush. I began pursuing art as a serious hobby after I retired in 1985 and have taken dozens of classes at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts (KIA).*

*For the first ten years, I enrolled in life drawing*

*classes using graphite and charcoal media. In 2015, I began taking classes with Karen Matson at the KIA in colored pencil, and I've continued under her instruction to the present day. Those classes were my introduction to color, and I'm sticking to it! Karen opened many doors for me visually and set me on the path to expanding my imagination. She is an enthusiastic teacher with an infectious sense of humor and an excellent artist in many media.*

*As far as subjects for my drawing, I enjoy doing portraits, buildings, cars, editorial illustrations, posters, and caricatures. I try to use reference photos that I've taken myself as much as possible as the basis for my work. I am very pleased to be sharing my pictures with all of you at the UCC.*

David's art will be on display through the end of April. You can view the Art Wall on Sundays from 8:30 AM—2 PM or at other times by appointment.

## Help Each Other Survey

Do you need occasional help with household tasks? Is there a skill or hobby you'd like to learn? Perhaps someone at UCC can help you out! To get the mutual-aid ball rolling, please fill out our **Help Each Other Survey!** After we collect the kinds of help people would like, we will do a follow-up survey of to find out who might be willing to help. We plan to make these lists available for you to consult when the need arises. Click [HERE](#) to access the survey and help this project get started!



## Chalice Sparx Family Camp & Retreat July 4-7, 2024

Enjoy...

- Worship for All Ages
- Exploration Stations and Crafts
- Archery
- Fun and Games
- Popcorn Hollow
- Canoeing and Swimming
- Plus rock painting, outdoor adventures, scavenger hunt, and more!

Chalice Sparx is a multigenerational community that is intentionally welcoming for LGBTQ+ families, and families who have a member who is trans or non-binary make up a sizeable portion of the families who have attended over the years. This camps offers a "time out of time and a place out of place" experience for Unitarian Universalist families to connect and support one another. Visit [chalicesparx.org](http://chalicesparx.org) to learn more.



**Don't forget! Daylight Saving Time begins on March 10. Be sure to set your clock ahead so you don't miss church!**

# OPPORTUNITIES

**SAT MARCH 23 @ 3:00PM**

**unity**  
of Kalamazoo *presents*

SINGER - SONGWRITER-STORY TELLER

**DAVID ROTH**

- PREMIUM CONCERT TICKET: \$25 ONLINE
  - INCLUDES A SOUP AND SALAD LUNCH
  - LUNCH SERVICE BEGINS AT 1:30 PM
- ADVANCE CONCERT ONLY TICKETS: \$20 ONLINE
- DAY OF TICKETS: \$20 CASH ONLY AT THE DOOR

FOR TICKETS VISIT [WWW.UNITYKALAMAZOO.COM](http://WWW.UNITYKALAMAZOO.COM)

1204 WHITES ROAD • KALAMAZOO MI • 49008  
269-385-2239

MICHIGAN  
TRANSFORMATION  
COLLECTIVE  
A PROJECT OF TIDES CENTER

**National Day  
of Racial Healing**

We welcome the Kalamazoo community to join us on Friday, March 1 & Saturday, March 2 to celebrate the National Day of Racial Healing for these paired events.

**Weekend Agenda**

**Origin Movie Screening**

**Friday, March 1, 2024 @ 6:00 PM**  
Celebration Cinema, 6600 Ring Rd, Portage, MI 49024

**Commitment Request:**  
We request that individuals registering for the movie screening also commit to participating in the Racial Healing Circles the following day.

**Racial Healing Circles**

**Saturday, March 2, 2024 @ 10:00 AM**  
Registration, late comers will not be able to join after 10:30 AM  
1523 Riverview Dr, Kalamazoo, MI 49004

PLEASE BE AWARE  
SPACE IS LIMITED

**Register today!**

For questions or concerns, please reach out to Emily [emily@mitransformation.org](mailto:emily@mitransformation.org)

To Register for the **National Day of Racial Healing** events hosted by the Michigan Transformation Collective (formerly Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Kalamazoo) on **March 1&2** visit → <https://bit.ly/NDORH2024>

## "Let Gaza Live" a voice from Gaza



Join us in listening to  
**Tareq  
Abuhallima**

share his firsthand  
perspective of life in Gaza.

[Kalamazoo Non-Violent](#)

[Opposition to War](#) presents

**Let Gaza Live** at People's Church on **Sunday, March 24 at 2:30 PM** with special guest and Gaza-native, **Tareq Abuhallima**. Tareq is a Graduate Assistant at Bluffton University's The Lion and Lamb Peace and Arts Center. He grew up in Gaza City, but has been in the U.S. since January 2023. Tareq has lost three of his sisters in Israeli assault on Gaza. He has graciously agreed to share his firsthand perspective of life in Gaza.



# MARCH 2024



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday	March 2	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 3:00 PM
Sunday	March 3	Choir Practice Change Your Seat with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	March 5	Qigong Drop-In Mindfulness with Eric	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
Wednesday	March 6	Board of Trustees Meeting RESCHEDULED—Spiritual Growth Small Group	6:30 PM 6:30 PM
Thursday	March 7	Stewardship Committee Meeting	1:00 PM
Friday	March 8	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	March 9	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	March 10	DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS Choir Practice Building Power for the Long Haul with Jennifer Teed and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time/ Souper Sunday Program Council Meeting	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Tuesday	March 12	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	March 13	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Saturday	March 16	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group ISAAC Fireside Chat with Layla Saad	9:00 AM 9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	March 17	Choir Practice Patchwork to Freedom with Pam Chapman and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	March 18	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	March 19	Qigong Drop-In Mindfulness with Eric	9:00 AM 7:00 PM
Wednesday	March 20	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Civil Conversations Group	12:00 PM 7:00 PM
Thursday	March 21	Love and Justice: A Thoughtful Thursday with Omid Safi	7:00 PM
Friday	March 22	Growth Team Meeting	2:00 PM
Saturday	March 23	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	March 24	Choir Practice From Root to Fruit with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	March 26	Qigong	9:00 AM
Saturday	March 30	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	March 31	EASTER The Resurrection of an Idea with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 11:00 AM

## UU Community Church is served by:

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

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

Chris Petersmark  
Music Director  
[christopherpetersmark@gmail.com](mailto:christopherpetersmark@gmail.com)  
Cell phone: 248-535-4197

## 2023-2024 Board of Trustees

Steve Tasko

Eric Nelson

Pat Timm

Marsha Laya

Mike Graham

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

Please send submissions to:

**[uuccnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uuccnewsletter@gmail.com)**

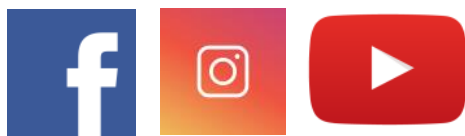
## *CommUUnity Matters*

### Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

10441 Shaver Rd.  
Portage, MI 49024  
269-324-7262



### CONNECT WITH US!



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