



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

June 2024

JUNE SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM Onsite, on [YouTube](#), or on Zoom

June 2: *Native News*

with Levi Rickert

Levi – Calm Before the Storm – Rickert (Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation), founder, publisher, and editor of Native News Online, will be with us to discuss Native American issues. We will also take a special collection to benefit the Native American College Fund.

Zoom Meeting ID: 994 6926 8699 Click [HERE](#) to register.

June 9: *Welcome and Gratitude*

with Rev. Gy

Join us as we celebrate New Member Sunday and bestow Volunteer Recognition Awards to a few of the dozens of amazing volunteers who support our Unitarian Universalist community.

Zoom Meeting ID: 958 2287 9281 Click [HERE](#) to register.

June 16: *Harvesting the Fruit*

with the Sunday Services Committee

Join members of the Sunday Services Committee for a walk down memory as we look back over and celebrate some of the things we have learned in our year *Growing The Tree of Life*.

Zoom Meeting ID: 976 7276 8596 Click [HERE](#) to register.

June 23: *Celebrating Our Living Tradition*

with Pastor Jacqueline Duhart

To help us connect with the spirit of the 63rd General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association happening this weekend, we will share a recording of the sermon given at the 2022 General Assembly's Service of the Living Tradition.

Zoom Meeting ID: 973 8441 7921 Click [HERE](#) to register.

June 30: *Pride Sunday*

with Rev. Gy

Our UU faith affirms every person's inherent worth and dignity, and this Pride Sunday, we will joyfully reaffirm our commitment to LGBTQIA+ equality, love, and justice for all.

Zoom Meeting ID: 949 0519 9028 Click [HERE](#) to register.



Spiritual Theme for June HARVESTING FRUIT

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

Since we began in August, we have prepared the soil; nurtured our roots; contemplated senescence; encouraged photosynthesis; explored our heartwood; encouraged fresh sap and tended new buds; stretched our branches into entwined groves; and worked to sow seeds of love and hope in the world. As we come to the end of our church year it is time to harvest the fruit of our labors by reflecting on what we have learned and celebrate all we have we have accomplished.

Question to ponder at the end of the church year:

What spiritual lessons have you learned as we explored the Tree of Life?

What were the ideas or experiences challenged you the most? Why?

What do you want to spend more time exploring? How will you do that?

What about this Unitarian Universalist community brought you the most joy?

How can this Unitarian Universalist community spread more love and joy to this hurting world?

GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

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



Levi Rickert, a tribal citizen of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, is an award-winning Native American journalist who started [Native News Online](#) and Tribal Business News.

Since its inception in February 2011, Native News Online has become one of the most read and trusted Native American daily news outlets across the country.

Rickert hosts Native News Online's weekly Native Bidaské which spotlights "those making news and leading change in Indian Country." Additionally, Rickert hosts the Hope + Healing podcast in conjunction with the National Indian Health Board.

Pastor Jacqueline Duhart serves as the Director of Spiritual Care Services at Starr King School for the Ministry, a Unitarian Universalist seminary in Oakland, California.

Pastor Jacqueline is a Queer feminist of African heritage, a mother, a prison abolitionist, a beloved partner, a daughter and a sibling, Minister Emerita of First Unitarian Church of Oakland, a NURTURER, and LOVER of everything that supports life to thrive in joy.

Prior to pursuing a ministerial calling, Pastor Jacqueline spent more than 20 years as a social worker for the U.S. Air Force including time on the ground as a chaplain in Iraq during the first Gulf War.

In a world that hungers for justice, respect, and mercy, Pastor Duhart's mission is to provide guidance to individuals and groups as they explore life's purpose, their deepest truth, and nurture an authentic relationship with the sacred ground of their being which goes by many names and no name at all.



AMERICAN
INDIAN
COLLEGE
FUND

June Generosity Giving

Our Generosity Sunday recipient for June is the [American Indian College Fund](#) (AICF). Since its founding in 1989, the American Indian College Fund has been the nation's largest charity supporting Native student access to higher education. They provide scholarships and programming for American Indian and Alaska Native students to access higher education and achieve their educational goals.

There are several ways to give to our special collection for AICF:

- ◆ You can place a check made out to UUCC with Generosity Sunday the memo in the offering basket anytime in June. You can also mail your check to our building.
- ◆ If you prefer to use a debit or credit card, give online using the church website or the Vanco app on your phone. Be sure to choose Generosity Sunday in the menu.
- ◆ If you prefer to give cash, we will donate all cash and loose change in the offering plate on **June 2** to AICF.

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister [Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

I am writing this on May 30, 2024. It is a historic day. For the first time ever in the life of our country, a former president was found guilty on 34 felony charges. Twelve ordinary New Yorkers weighed all the arguments presented through weeks of long trial days and in about 9 hours arrived to a guilty verdict on every single account.

Many of us rejoice that the legal system held in New York and that no one is above the law. Others are reeling and convinced that this was a politically motivated trial rigged from the get-go.

If history at all predicts or points to the future, times like this are ripe for conflict and upheaval. History reveals that revolutions often happened during such upheavals. We can't know what tomorrow holds for us and it is our hope and wish, of course, that peace, justice, and calm minds will prevail.

I think at times like this it behooves us to stand firm on our values and principles. Perhaps it is not coincidence that the work our Unitarian Universalist Association is doing on Article II of its By-Laws have come about at this time. Much is brewing in the collective consciousness and we are all attempting to define where we stand in this fast changing world.

Giuseppe Dilampedusa said in his famous book *The Leopard*, "If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change" .

Things have to change so more and more feel included in our large tent. It is good for us to look at our governing documents and see if they still adequately represent those of us aligned with Unitarian Universalism. To the degree that there is a discrepancy, changes must be made. Hence the work on [Article II](#). Every generation does not need to revamp their belief systems, our generation, however, is called to do just that. It takes courage and so much LOVE.

The General Assembly of Unitarian Universalist Association will meet again soon and we will send two delegates to represent our spiritual community. They will vote on the final version of Article II and they take their responsibility very seriously. They hope to adequately represent the heart and voice of our congregation. We are grateful for their beautiful commitment.

I have an awareness of the gravity of this political moment. I am also sensing my instinct to want to circle the wagon and I think that is precisely the wrong instinct.

I am placing my bet on Love and Inclusivity. I am going to attempt to stay open when I'd really want to close out the world. I think the times that are coming won't be ordinary times. I hope we can meet them with extraordinary LOVE and COMPASSION.

Because "if we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change".

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Registration for **Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (GA) 2024** is open and there is still time to commit to taking part in what is sure to be the largest gathering of UUs this year. This year's GA is 100% online. Registration info and a schedule of events can be found at uua.org/ga

Business meetings and Sunday Worship can be accessed by anyone. No registration is required. To watch live or on demand after the event visit uua.org/ga/off-site/2024

**VIRTUAL
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**
JUNE 20 - 23, 2024



- ◆ **Opening & General Session I** (1 hour): Thursday, June 20, 1:00 PM
- ◆ **General Session II (2 hours)**: Thursday, June 20, 4:00 PM
- ◆ **General Session III** (3.5 hours): Friday, June 21, 2:30 PM
- ◆ **General Session IV** (3.5 hours): Saturday, June 22, 2:30 PM
- ◆ **General Session V** (approximately 1 hour): Sunday, June 23, 3:00 PM
- ◆ **Sunday Morning Worship** (1.5 hours): Sunday, June 23, 1:00 PM

Voting on Changes to Article II

The UUCB Board of Trustees has chosen two members, **Marsha Laya** and **Dawn Renner**, to serve as our delegates to General Assembly (GA). We are grateful to Marsha and Dawn for committing their time and energy to attending the GA business meetings and casting votes on our behalf.

Some of the most important votes they will cast during GA will be in regard to the **proposed changes to Article II** of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) By-Laws. The UUA has been working on a rewrite of the Article II section of its By-Laws for several years. Click [HERE](#) for an overview of that process.

At General Assembly, delegates will be asked to take a final vote on the changes recommended by the Article II Commission. Click this link to read the [Final Draft Proposed Article II Changes](#).

Four amendments to the final draft proposed changes have been submitted by individuals and/or groups and supported by at least 15 UU congregations and will appear on the agenda at GA.

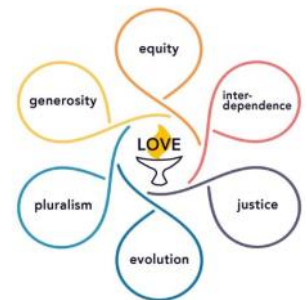
Follow these links to read the proposed amendments and the rationale behind them. You can also read comments about each amendment from members of the wider UU community.

[Reason and the Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning](#)

[Equity Calls Us to Listen, Understand, Respect, and Respond](#)

[Peace as a UU Value](#)

[Equity: Every Person is Inherently Worthy](#)



Our delegates would **appreciate some feedback** from the congregation about these amendments and whether they should be supported or not. Between now and June 19, please take time to read and reflect on the amendments and share your thoughts with Dawn and Marsha, or click [HERE](#) to fill out our online survey and share your opinion there. Thanks for helping our delegates make an informed decision when they vote at General Assembly!

CARING COMMUNITY



JUNE CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

When all Americans are treated as equal, no matter who they are or whom they love, we are all more free. — Barack Obama

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

Our hearts are with everyone who was affected by the May 7 tornadoes. Many UCC folks lost power and a few had trees uprooted on their property. It was heart-warming to see how quickly our Caring Community kicked into gear sending texts and emails and making phone calls to make sure the most vulnerable among us had weathered the storm safely. Thank you to everyone who took the time to reach out to someone in the UCC family to make sure they were ok.

Our hearts are also with former UCC member and current Book Group member **Sally Cowles** as she mourns the loss of her husband **David** who passed away on May 2 in Vancouver, WA.

UCC musicians, artists, and thespians have been spreading joy in the world! **Freya Lake** performed with the Kalamazoo Community Chorale, **Judy Halseth** sang with the Paw Paw Community Chorus and **David Senecal** added his voice to the Kalamazoo Male Chorus spring concert. David also performed a monologue at Open House Theatre Company's production of *Continuum of Care* under the direction of UCC member **Mary Roscoe**. UCC actors **Dawn Renner**, **Darby Fetzer**, and **Steve Tasko** did a great job as part of the cast of the play and **Miriam** even had a cameo. Three artists familiar to UCC - **Carolyn Zinn** (who designed our chalice quilt and sources triptych), **Dorothy Brooks** (who has participated in our Book Group in the past), and occasional Civil Conversations group participant, **Ann Marcelletti-Murray**, had artwork displayed at the 10th Annual Westminster Art Festival.

Please send healing thoughts and prayers to **Hunter Ridley** who was involved in an accident at work that has put his right arm in a sling. Get well soon, Hunter!

We are happy that **Chris Petermark** is making a full recovery from his thumb injuries and is now cast-free! It was amazing that he powered through and provided music at our services even with a splint. Now, he is bringing the choir back together for a rousing performance on June 9.

Stace Danielson could use some positive vibes. She is still trying to get back on her feet after the death of her mother last month. Some days are harder than others.

Ken VanEseltine reports that his wife, **Barb**, has been experiencing fainting spells and will have to depend on Ken to do all the driving until this is sorted out. Send your good vibes to them both to get through this challenging time.

Birthdays:

We missed a May birthday last month! Send belated wishes to **Dawn Renner** who blew out her candles on May 29. June birthdays are the fun beginning of summer! Send your good wishes to **5 – Rita Stevens, 5- Judy Pigg-Behrendt, 6– Darby Fetzer, 14- Brent Ridley, 23- Bob McWhorter**. And, as the Caring Column will be on vacation next month, let's send early birthday wishes to our friends born in July: **7-Tim Michael, 21—Eric Nelson, and 31-Brinna Michael**. (More on page 6)

LEADERSHIP

Happy Anniversary:

Kathryn Ragains-Wilson and **Michael Wilson** were married in June 2022.

In Memoriam:

Our UCC member, **Marge Hallam**, passed away ten years ago, on June 1, 2014, and the talented **David Adams** passed away on July 22, 2009.

New Visitors:

We were glad to see that **Nancy Knauber**, **Casey Goodwin**, and **Michele Prouty** joined us online in May. We hope you will visit us again soon!

Caring for one another is a key feature of UCC. 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

The Board of Trustees met on May 1. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Made plans for the annual Minister's Evaluation
- Approved a new design for a UCC T-shirt
- Recruited a candidate to serve on the Nominating Committee
- Made plans to recruit delegates to the 2024 General Assembly



Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from the May meeting. The final regular Board Meeting for the church year meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, June 5** 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](#).



Pledges and Receipts

The 2023/2024 programming and fiscal year are almost complete. If you need reimbursement from the church, please get all receipts turned in to **Joe Calme** by **June 15**.

If you made a financial pledge for the year spanning July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, you will receive an email from **Kimberly Ridley** in early June with your giving statement to date attached. If you do not receive the email by June 15, please contact Kimberly at 269-569-3658 or

ridleyk@hotmail.com.

To match pledges and church income in the same financial year, it would be helpful if you could remit all pledge dollars by the end of June. If you make a payment after June 30 for the 2023/2024 year please note "23/24" in the memo line of your check. If you are prepaying (before July 1) on your 2024/2025 pledge, please note "prepay 24/25" in the memo line.

As always, please review your records and let Kimberly know if you find any discrepancies which require correction. Your contributions and donations are sincerely appreciated!

From your Finance Team: **Tami Brozovich**, **Joe Calme**, and **Kimberly Ridley**

ANNUAL MEETING

The **Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan** (UUCC) is scheduled for **Sunday, June 9, 2024, at 11:15 AM.**

All Members are encouraged to attend this meeting. Members are those who have pledged financial support and have signed the membership book no later than May 9, 2023. Per our Bylaws, there is no proxy or absentee voting. Members must be present, in person or on Zoom, to vote.

A copy of the agenda for the Annual Meeting was emailed to members on May 24. If you did not receive one, please contact the office. Paper copies are also available at the welcome desk for those who cannot access documents online.

ANNUAL REPORTS

The Board Secretary, Committee Chairs, and Team Leaders work hard to create annual reports to keep members up-to-date on the progress being made on UUCC's mission and vision, to show how donated funds are used, and to provide accountability to those who support UUCC's ministries. Please take time to read them. Click [HERE](#) to access the Annual Report Packet. Paper copies are also available at the welcome desk for those who cannot access documents online.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

During the annual meeting, members will be asked to approve a slate of nominees to serve terms on the Board of Trustees.

Nominees to the Board of Trustees at this time are **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson** (2-year term) and **Pat Fuehr** (2-year term). The deadline to nominate other candidates has now passed.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the annual meeting, members will be asked to elect a candidate to serve a term on the Nominating Committee. The Nominee to the Nominating Committee is **Pat Timm**.

Judy Pigg-Behrendt will complete one more year on this committee. Nominating Committee members each serve two (2) years with rotating membership.

ANNUAL BUDGET

During the annual meeting, members will be asked to approve the budget for the next program year. A copy of the proposed 2024-2025 Budget was emailed to members on May 24. If you did not receive one, please contact the office. Paper copies are also available at the welcome desk for those who cannot access documents online.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns about the Annual Meeting for your Board of Trustees, please feel free to discuss them with any member. Members include: Steve Tasko, Eric Nelson, Pat Timm, Mike Graham, Marsha Laya



STEWARDSHIP



SAVE THE DATE

2024 Backyard BBQ

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10 - 5-8 PM

With special musical guest **LVNMUZIQ**

Save the Date for the UUCC Summer FUNdraiser!



What: Backyard Barbecue

Where: Rev. Gy and Patti's home
5126 Meadowlark Lane
Portage, MI 49024

When: Saturday, August 10, 2024



Join us at 5 PM for dinner! We will be serving up grilled burgers and hotdogs (vegetarian options available) with delicious side dishes, and dessert.

At 6:00 PM get ready to enjoy a **musical performance by LVNMUZIQ**, the Three Rivers-based urban folk duo featuring **Liz and Kristi Montgomery**. LVNMUZIQ performs original music written by Liz, as well as covers by some of their musical heroes like Patty Griffin, Joy Oladokun, Chris Stapleton, Miranda Lambert, and more. Liz's playful acoustic guitar and unique vocals, combined with Kristi's harmonies and supportive bass, weave together to create LVNMUZIQ.

Suggested fundraiser donation at the door is \$20 per person or love offering of whatever works for your budget. (Kids and newcomers are free!) We always pass the hat for the performers so please bring a little extra cash if you can.

Please click [HERE](#) to **RSVP by Sunday, August 4** so we know how much food to make. Guests are welcome! The backyard is shaded. We'll have tables set up for eating. Please bring your favorite beverage and a chair.

CONNECTION



1st Saturday Game Gathering

Nancy and Joe would like to invite everyone to **Bluestem Pond Farm** in Cassopolis for the next **UCC Game Gathering** on Saturday, **June 1 at 1:00 PM.**

Please contact the office for directions. The drive is about 1 hour so you might consider carpooling to save gas (and the planet!)

Please bring your favorite games, snacks, drinks, and a lawn chair. We'll meet at the barn where Joe and Nancy will have several tables set up for the festivities.

You can bring a suit if you want to sit in the hot tub. Or, bring a fishing rod if you have an interest in their catch-and-release pond. There may even be a scavenger hunt covering the 8-acre farm. (Joe also has plenty of tools if you want to help weed the garden.)

This is a rain-or-shine event. The barn provides plenty of cover if it is raining. Bring a friend, bring a family member, and kids of all ages! All are welcome to attend this unofficial church picnic.

Women's Book Group

The UCC Women's Book Group finished their program year in May. They will hold a **Summer Salad Potluck and Annual Meeting** on **July 12** to choose their book selections for 2024-2025 books and to elect a new Chair. Book Group members are reminded to **send Marsha Laya their recommendations** (one fiction, one non-fiction) **by June 12.** If you have any questions about Book Group, please contact Stephanie at sargg.64@gmail.com.

If you are looking for something to read while the Book Group is on hiatus, click [HERE](#) to check out the **Women's Suffrage Reading List** from the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

Qigong at UCC

Our twice-weekly Qigong sessions are still going strong and will continue all summer long!



Often described as a mind-body-spirit practice, Qigong can help improve your mental and physical health by integrating posture, stretching, movement, breathing, self-massage, and focused intent.

YOU are Invited to "Zoom in" for this set of stretching & breathing in the privacy of your home, with the video off and sound muted. The exercises only last for about 25 minutes and it is the same DVD each time, so the routine becomes familiar. And...a BONUS is the opportunity to visit with each other for a bit before we start the DVD. 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](#).

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **June 15 at 9:00 AM** at Garcia's Mexican Kitchen located right next door to UCC.

The 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group is a wonderful opportunity for conversation and connection and is open to all UCC members and friends.

Please RSVP to Ron (ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) 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.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Sustainability Group

The UCC Sustainability Group 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. Newcomers are always welcome to join the conversation!

At their last meeting, the group brainstormed some of things they would like to see in a **County-wide Climate Action and Justice Plan** including:

- ◆ Community Solar Programs
- ◆ Better Public Transportation
- ◆ Improved Waste Water Treatment
- ◆ Community Composting Programs
- ◆ More innovative programs and measures that will make Kalamazoo County a national leader in sustainability



If you have additional ideas, please share! The Sustainability Group plans to send someone to the next **Community Visioning Session** held by Taylor Van Winkle, Kalamazoo County Climate Sustainability Coordinator. If you want to talk more about climate action and justice, come to the next Sustainability Group meeting on **June 17**. All are welcome!



Exploring Anti-Racism

The UCC Exploring Anti-Racism Group will meet via Zoom at **7 PM** on **Thursday, June 27**.

All are welcome to join this group as your schedule allows. Each session is a stand-alone conversation.

Currently, the group is using questions posed in ***Me and White Supremacy*** by Layla Saad to guide their discussions. UCC has been challenged by our justice partners at [Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community](#) (ISAAC) to study this book to help us do the work of dismantling white supremacy culture so we can build a Beloved Community that benefits us all.

Don't worry if you haven't read the book yet. The discussion questions invite participants to explore their personal experiences, thoughts, and beliefs about race and racism. Anyone can do it.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID 269 324 7262. If you have any questions about this small group, please contact Eric Nelson.



Program Council

the group that helps us create vibrant and engaging programming at UCC is on summer break until August but we will want to hit the ground running at our first meeting on **Sunday, August 11** by voting for the 2024/2025 Generosity Sunday recipients. Four times a year UCC holds a special collection to

support non-profit organizations whose work aligns with our values. Recipient organizations are nominated by congregants and voted on by the Program Council. In the past we have supported groups like Planned Parenthood, First Day Shoe Fund, Face Off Theatre, Kalamazoo Coalition for the Unhoused, and others. To get a head start on the voting process, we will be collecting your nominations for Generosity Sunday recipients by email during June and July. Your summer assignment is to spend some time thinking about organizations you have a relationship with, whose work aligns with our Unitarian Universalist values, and that would benefit from a few extra dollars. Please send your nominations to the office and we will include them on our Generosity Sunday ballot. At our August meeting we will finalize our voting and be ready to hold our first special collection in September. Thank you for your support!

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.

Climate Change - Despair or Hope

In 2006, Al Gore called his documentary “Inconvenient Truth” probably because no one wanted to face the reality of climate change. It was inconvenient to do so. This documentary built on the work of Bill McKibben who had been trying to get people to realize we should never, ever, have more than 350 ppm of carbon equivalents in the atmosphere. We passed that redline in 1989. By the time of “Inconvenient Truth”, not even 20 years later, we were already at 379 ppm. In 1896, Svante Arrhenius, a Swedish scientist predicted that carbon dioxide levels could heat the earth’s atmosphere through a greenhouse effect.

Our scientists have known of the potential problem for 128 years. Do you think we might stop procrastinating and actually face the problem head on?

Rev. Gy recently talked to us about hope. When faced with a problem we “hope” it can be solved. We “hope” things will be better. But hope, like “I’ll pray for you”, needs action. Hope without action is a sentiment not a solution.

For 128 years, we have been hoping that something will happen to make climate change unreal. It’s not happening. Life is good, we don’t need to concern ourselves about what we can’t see. But we are now seeing it. In this country we have droughts, floodings, wildfires, tornados, heat waves, and hurricanes in unprecedented ways. 100 year occurrences are happening every few years. I visited a cave in Missouri that had had two 100 year floods in a 5 year span. Just in Europe, during the heatwave of 2022, approximately 63,000 people died from heat related causes. And this is happening around the world. We hear of massive flooding in India and Pakistan. Deadly mudslides in Afghanistan from excess rain. Wildfires in Siberia and Canada. Heatwaves and droughts in Africa, Mexico and India.

This is a problem which many consider large enough to cause despair. But like hope, despair is a sentiment not a solution. Generally, hope is positive and leads to action, while despair is negative and leads to apathy - it is beyond me to make a difference so why even try.

Despair can be said to be self-defeating. One common reaction is: let’s enjoy life while we have it, throw all precaution to the wind and live our lives to the excess we want. This can really be fun - flying around the world, taking long cruises, buying everything we ever dreamt of wanting. Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow I may die. We no longer have generational thought or true community. To cover our fears, we become an ostrich with our heads buried in the sand.

But that is not our community. Our community is one of hope and helping. *(More on page 12)*

SUSTAINABILITY

There are two ways to lower our atmospheric carbon equivalents: mitigation to reduce our emissions to zero and carbon capture and storage to remove it from the atmosphere. The latter requires technological advancements that are currently being worked on.

We hold our 30-Day Sustainability Challenge every year to remind people of individual actions which make a difference. These actions do make a difference. My solar panels have produced about 75% of my household electrical needs and that includes an electric car for the past 5 years.

But one of the biggest individual actions you can take is: become an activist! Write your Congressperson and your State representatives. Join an organization that does lobbying, gets out the vote, or works locally on problems. Join demonstrations, carry posters, vote based on climate matters. Find like minded people, have fun, and be loud.

In 2024, we passed 422 ppm. That means in 35 years we have increased the ppm by 72 ppm and it's still climbing.

Sincerely, Nicky nickyleigh1226@gmail.com

Take the UCC 30-Day Sustainability Challenge

Did you miss the UCC 30-Day Sustainability Challenge emails? There is still time to take the challenge and find new ways to live gently on the planet. After all, **EVERYDAY** is Earth Day!

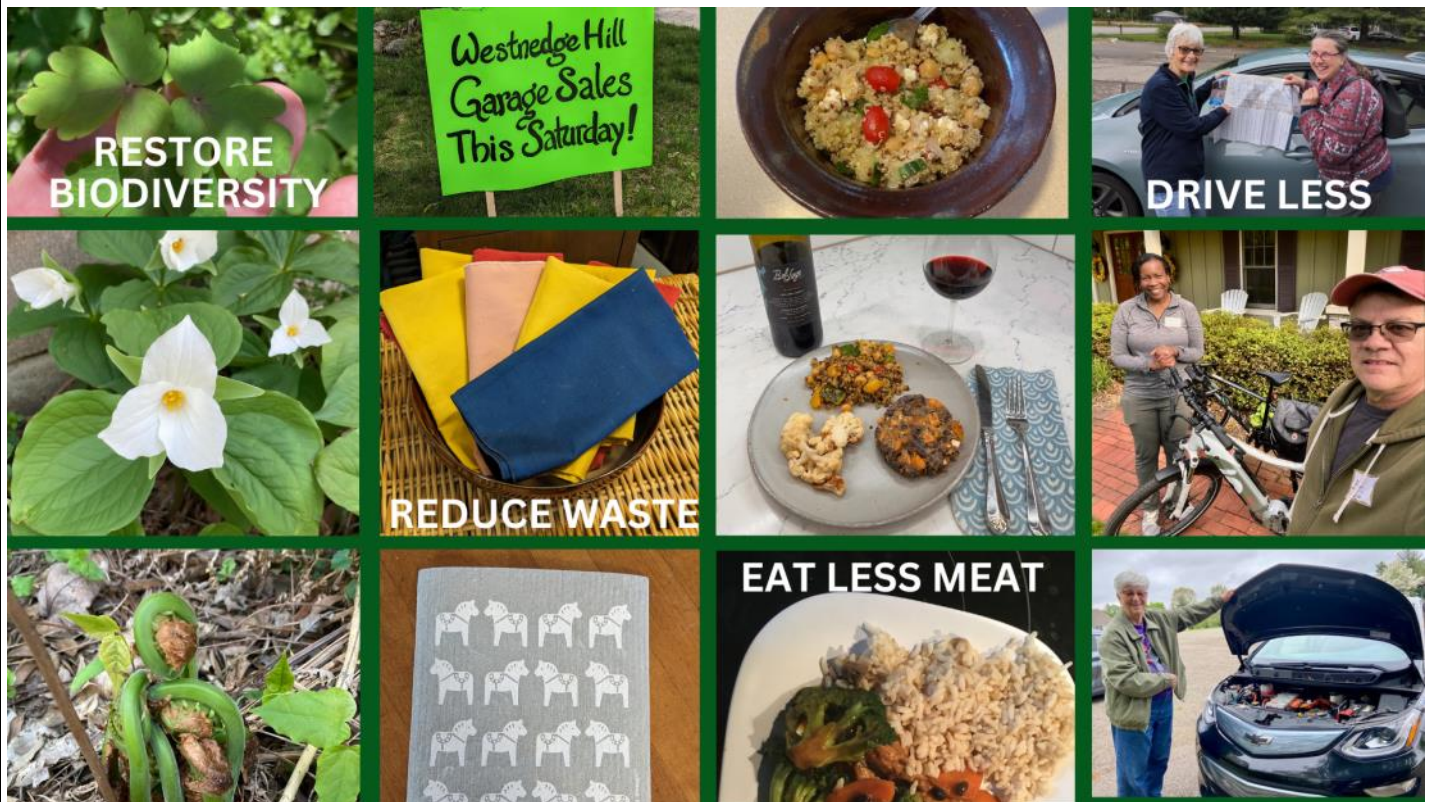
Week 1: [Restore Biodiversity](#)

Week 2: [Reduce, Reuse, Recycle](#)

Week 3: [Ditch the Car Keys](#)

Week 4: [Eat More Sustainably](#)

Week 5: [Be an Earth Advocate](#)



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.

There are several wonderful opportunities on offer in the coming months for folks interested in engaging in the inner work that is needed to dismantle systemic racism and other oppressions. Please consider taking part in one or more of these events.

ISAAC Healing Whiteness Workshops: Our justice partners at Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy Action in the Community are offering a series of in-person workshops and monthly virtual practice sessions to support white people in embodied anti-racism practice.



Healing Whiteness is a white-affinity space convened for members of ISAAC to deepen their embodied anti-racism practice while working in a multiracial space as racialized white people. Each workshop has a theme as listed below and will include embodiment practice.

JUNE - On Connection

June 9, 1-6 PM

JULY - On Conflict

July 21, 1-6 PM

OCTOBER - On Coordination

Oct 27, 1-6 PM

Click [HERE](#) to learn more and to register for one or more of the workshops.



ERACCE Trainings: ISAAC is also partnering with ERACCE to offer two no-cost educational opportunities to folks in ISAAC member congregations.

Introduction to Systemic Racism Workshop (1 day) - June 5

Understanding & Analyzing Systemic Racism Workshop-(2.5 day): Aug 21 – 23

Register at the ERACCE website eracce.org/event-calendar and list ISAAC as the source of your payment for registration.

In observance of Juneteenth, our justice partners at the Michigan Transformation Collective will be offering a free community **Racial Healing Circle** on **Saturday, June 15 from 10 AM-1 PM.**

The Racial Healing Circle process brings together individuals from varying identities and racial backgrounds in a curated space to share personal narratives and provide insight, understanding, and appreciation of one another. By engaging at this level, the circles help illuminate past and current truths about the trauma and harm caused by racism, both individually and collectively.

Click [HERE](#) to register for this event.

JUNETEENTH

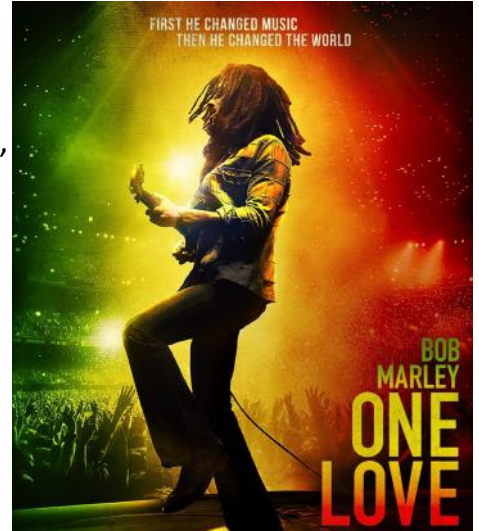
Kalamazoo is offering up many ways to celebrate Juneteenth, the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States and the newest designated federal holiday. Put on your UCC T-shirt and attend some of these events to show our support!

Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Come to a screening curated by Soul Artistry LLC of the newly released *film Bob Marley: One Love*. This event is free of charge, taking place at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum on **Friday, June 14, at 5 PM**

Bob Marley: One Love is the story of how reggae icon Bob Marley overcame adversity, and the journey behind his revolutionary music.

Honor Juneteenth by celebrating the life of an icon who inspired generations through his message of love, peace and unity.



Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Join the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts or a Community Juneteenth Celebration. FREE general admission on June 15, 2024.

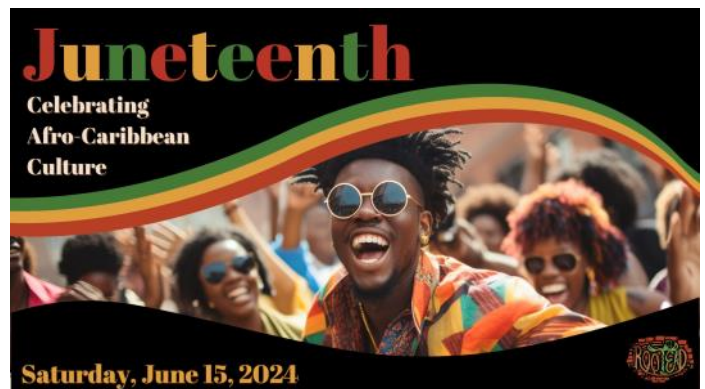
- ◆ 11:00 am to 5:00 pm: **Explore the Museum**
Use a gallery guide to learn more about African American artists in the KIA's collection.
- ◆ 11:15 am: **Art Detectives**
Watch Faith Ringold read her book "Tar Beach" followed by a self-directed community art activity. (The recording will be played multiple times between 11:15 and 11:30 am.)
- ◆ 11:30 am to 3:00 pm: **Silent Family Book Club**
Families can borrow children's books from the Meader Fine Arts Library
- ◆ 11:30 am to 4:00 pm: **Community Paper Quilt**
Families can create paper quilt squares to be added to the community quilt.
- ◆ 1:00 to 2:00 pm: **Screening of PBS's Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom**
A Black man throughout Texas and discovers how the Juneteenth holiday reveals a resilient hope that empowered the formerly enslaved and their descendants to fight for freedom in an often unjust society.

Rootead

Join Rootead for their **Annual Juneteenth Celebration** at Bronson Park on Saturday, June 15 from 3-9 PM.

This year's theme is **Afro-Caribbean Carnival Culture**.

There will be vendors, performances food trucks, music, and more!



OPEN HOUSE THEATRE



To my Beloved Unitarian Universalist Community,

Thank you for supporting Open House Theatre and this year's production of ***Continuum of Care***. You graciously allowed us to take over the sanctuary and create a theatre and stage. There are so many individuals who helped to make my vision a reality.

First, I want to thank my continuing sponsors, **Larry and Carol Higgins** and **Rick and Lisa Fuller**. Their support of my vision for OHTC is deeply appreciated.

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors, [Visiting Angels of SW Michigan](#) and [Holtyn & Associates](#). Thank you **Darby Fetzer** for securing their sponsorship.

Thank you, **Kathy Hays**, for the introduction to playwrights Arnold and Deborah Johnston. Without this introduction, OHTC would have missed the opportunity to produce the play ***Continuum of Care***.

Thank you, playwrights **Arnold Johnston** and **Deborah Ann Percy** for creating such a compelling one-act play and allowing OHTC to produce and direct it. It was an honor to bring ***Continuum of Care*** to life.

Thank you, **David Senecal**, for writing and sharing your heartfelt personal monologue, ***Ralph and Bette: Never the Twain Shall Meet***. Thank you also for welcoming our guest with your curtain speech. I appreciate your support of OHTC by performing in our productions.

To my cast: my heart overflowed with gratitude and awe many times during rehearsals and performances. From the beginning to the end, it was my joy to watch you change and grow into your characters and entertain our patrons.

Dawn Renner (Louise), and **Matthew Morris McCormick** (Albert), you both did an excellent job of "raging against the light or the dying" or was it just being "mildly irritated at the sweater" Your enjoyment of Manhattans "as the sun crossed the yardarm" was excellent as well. Dawn, as Louise, you did a wonderful job of balancing your character's love and frustration with Albert. The warmth and humor you created with Louise was fun to watch. Matthew as Albert, you made us feel your anger and frustration by being left behind in the world of academia that you had loved forever. Being able to see your decline and knowing there was no way to stop it, the audience came to care about you. Thank you both for a job well done.

Darby Fetzer (Eleanor) your portrayal of the daughter that loved her parents even though she had been absent from their lives was spot on. As you tried to do what you felt was best for them, you showed us the fear, frustration, and love that a child has for the aging parent, and your heart was in the right place.

Steve Tasko (Tom Kent) you brought to life every salesman I have ever known. You came to us late in the production and yet without missing a beat you created this man who had all the answers and solutions that anyone could have needed, even if it was contraindicated by the person's own wishes. Also thank you for stepping in and creating the handyman to help between scenes. The audience loved that.

Thank you, **Miriam Epskamp**, for doing the graphic design/marketing, supporting my ideas, and helping make them a reality.

(More on page 16)

CONTINUUM OF CARE

Thank you as well for being a character reminiscent of Vanna White between scenes. The audience loved your character. Collaborating with you is always a pleasure. You never fail to give above and beyond my expectations.

Thank you again **Steve Tasko**, for being a sound designer and for the many other hats you wore for the production.

Thank you, **Nick Tasko**, for volunteering to be our sound tech. Your timing was impeccable for the music during the show, helping to make the transitions between the scenes flawless.

Thank you to members of the Stewardship Committee (and their partners)—**Regena and Eric Nelson, Nancy and Joe Calme, and Marsha Laya and Lee Smittendorf**—for providing hospitality for the shows, making sure that coffee, cookies, vegetables, and fruit were set up and ready to go for our patrons.

Thank you, **Ron and Nancy Crowell, Joe and Nancy Calme, Dawn Renner, Darby Fetzer** and **Miriam Epskamp** for the props. Thank you, **Kimberly Ridley**, for handling the online tickets.

Thank you, **Isaac Epskamp-Hunt** for helping behind the scenes. Thank you **Stephanie Grathwol** for greeting our patrons on Sunday.

Thank you, **Carol Roscoe**, for taking my calls when I was stuck and listening to me walk through problems I was having with the play, encouraging me, and letting me know my instincts were correct.

A huge thank you to everyone who made up our audience all three nights. Theatre can't happen without an audience and I am grateful you were there to appreciate the craft.

And last but not least, many thanks to **Rev. Gy** and the **UUCB Board of Trustees**. Without your loving support, Open House Theatre Company would not have a home where we can bring our visions to life.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Mary Roscoe, Artistic Director, Open House Theatre Company



Continuum of Care
A One-Act Play by Arnold Johnston and Deborah Ann Percy

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

We had another drag show! And it was wonderful!

Ten people attended the Drag 101 Workshop for an opportunity to learn more about the art of drag and the performers who are drawn to the craft. The workshop also included a lesson in walking the runway which had everyone releasing their inner kings and queens. (Someone thought your DRE was channeling Sunny Bono as she practiced her swagger sporting a bushy brown mustache!)

We had a very nice crowd for the All-Ages Drag Show. About 60 people were treated to sequined, high-energy entertainment from Miss Moscato, Gretta Vandetta, and Reba Rose Rau. There was laughter, cheering, and most importantly joy.

Some things I noticed about this event...

The audience was much younger and more diverse than our congregation. (But, there was at least one octogenarian in the audience as **Larry Higgins** chose to celebrate his 80th birthday with us!)

Some of our UU Young Adults who have drifted away after leaving our Religious Education program came to both volunteer and attend the event.

Folks who might describe themselves as queer or non-gender conforming were having an absolutely wonderful time.

For me, seeing the huge smiles on those young and queer faces made all the work that went into the event worthwhile. One particularly special smile was on a young person who I learned had come out recently and was facing horrible bullying at school. Finding spaces, like UUCC, that are welcoming, supportive, and celebrate LBGTQIA+ identities can be lifesaving for someone in their situation.

The Drag Show Planning Co-Chair, **Nick Tasko**, and I are very grateful to all the UUCC folks who supported the and our amazing volunteers who helped make everything run smoothly including **Justin Wojciak, Kaitlin Wojciak, Ken VanEseltine, Kimberly Ridley, Grayson Tasko, Steve Tasko, Joel Folkert, Mary Roscoe, Stephanie Grathwol, Christopher Grathwol, Joe Calme, and Rev. Gy.** Thank you as well to **Sherrie Vandeputte** for helping set up for the show on Friday.

We noticed that Portage Public Safety officers drove by a few times on Saturday making sure all

was well. We are grateful for their support and relieved that there was no reason for them to stop and keep the peace. This year's drag show did not draw protest or conflict of any kind.

All in all the event was a success. And, Nick and I had so much fun, we might have to do it all again next year! May it be so.

| JUNE RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION SCHEDULE | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| DATE | LESSON | VOLUNTEERS |
| June 2 | Lego ValUUes | Regena and Eric Nelson |
| June 9 | Multigenerational Sunday Service | N/A |
| June 16 | Lego ValUUes | Kathy Hays |
| June 23 | Lego ValUUes | Mary Roscoe |
| June 30 | Sundae Sunday | Isaac Epskamp-Hunt |

PRIDE



In June of 1969, patrons and supporters of the Stonewall Inn in New York City, led by trans and gender non-conforming people of color, staged an uprising to resist the police harassment and persecution of the LGBTQ+ community. We celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride each June to honor those who resisted and to celebrate the many identities and experiences of self that make up the human family.

UUCC's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion and empowerment doesn't just happen in June. It is something we support all year round because we believe that love is love and it is our responsibility to help build a world where people of all sexual orientations and gender identities

feel welcome and supported. Here are some of the things we did this year to make our values real:

Observances:

- We shared social media posts to mark **Coming Out Day** in October, **Transgender Day of Remembrance** in November, **World AIDS Day** in December, **Transgender Day of Visibility** in March, **Day of (NO) Silence** in April, and **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia** in May.
- We also incorporated readings into our Sunday services to raise awareness about these days.

Adult Education:

- We encouraged everyone at UUCC to take part in the **United Way/OutFront Kalamazoo 21-Day LGBTQIA+ Equity Challenge**.
- 12 UUCC folks attended the **LGBTQIA+ Equity Challenge Debrief Session** led by Rev. Gy.

Sunday Services:

- We invited members of the LGBTQIA+ community to share their stories on **Coming Out Sunday** in October.
- Rev. Gy will share a **Pride Sunday** message on June 30.



Projects:

- In November, Rev. Gy and Miriam **spoke out against transphobia** at a Vicksburg School Board meeting.
- In December, we partnered with OutFront Kalamazoo to host a **LGBTQIA+ Elders Pancake Breakfast**
- We sponsored a hole at the **Queer Disc Golf Tournament-Kalamazoo** held in May.
- Also in May, we hosted a **Drag 101 Workshop** and **All-Ages Drag Show** to show our commitment to LGBTQ+ visibility and acceptance.
- With 4 other progressive churches, we will co-host **Portage's very first Pride Celebration from 12:30 –3 PM** on June 2 at the Portage United Church of Christ.
- We will staff a table at **Outfront Kalamazoo's Pride** event at Arcadia Festival Site on Saturday, June 8 from 12-6 PM. (If you are interested in volunteering at Pride contact Miriam today!)



OPPORTUNITIES

**Celebrate Portage
PRIDE**

Potluck Picnic **JUNE 2 | 12:30 - 3:00 PM**

Portage United Church Of Christ | 2731 Milham Ave

Family-friendly event with fun games and activities!

All are welcome!
Grilled meat, veg option,
& drinks provided.
Please bring a dish to pass.

Come and make history with us at the first-ever Portage Pride Celebration! Co-hosted by UUC and other progressive churches in the community, this family-friendly event will provide an opportunity for us to show our support for LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion in Portage and remind people that hate has no home here.

AGES 6-12

OPEN HOUSE THEATRE COMPANY

KIDS THEATRE CAMP

.....
JULY 29 - AUG 2
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Registration is going on now!
tinyurl.com/OHTCKidsTheatreCamp

OPPORTUNITIES

Take time out of your busy life to relax and de-stress at our **Drop-In Mindfulness Practice** led by **Eric Nelson** at 7 PM on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month. ***(Please note, there will be no Drop-In sessions in July)***

There are several ways you can participate:

- In-person at Prince of Peace Church located at 1747 Milham Road, Portage
- Live Online via Zoom link
- At your convenience. All Zoom registrants receive a recording of each class to view when convenient and to use for guided practice between sessions.

To register for a Zoom link and recordings visit tinyurl.com/uuccdropin



Mindfulness Meditation
Drop-In Session with
Eric Nelson

1st and 3rd Tuesdays
7:00 - 8:00 PM

In person at Prince of
Peace Lutheran Church
or on Zoom

REGISTER FOR ZOOM
tinyurl.com/uuccdropin

Unitarian Universalist
Community Church



UCC T-Shirt Sale

The hard-working T-shirt Team has chosen a design, picked out a color, found a supplier, and is ready

to place an order for some snazzy new UCC T-shirts that will show off our UU values and help us stand out in a crowd!

Click [HERE](#) to place your order. As soon as we have 25 shirts sold, we will place the order with Kalamazoo Sportswear.

If you have any questions about our T-Shirt Sale, contact the office: uucommunity@gmail.com



**KALAMAZOO
PRIDE
2024!**

KALAMAZOO
PRIDE

JUNE 7-8
ARCADIA CREEK
FESTIVAL SITE

PRESENTED BY OUTFRONT KALAMAZOO

Water Communion 2024

[Water Communion](#) is a unique Unitarian Universalist ritual traditionally held at the beginning of the church year that serves to remind us of our interconnectedness and celebrate our gathering together as a community. If you would like to participate in our 2024 Water Communion, please plan to collect a small sample of water from a special place you visit over the summer to add to a communal bowl in September. If you are lucky enough to be able to travel, the water can be from a lake, river, or ocean you pass along the way. If you are staying close to home, bring water from a pond, a fountain, or a backyard hose. The important part is that the water represents a place or experience that gives meaning to your life or provides sustenance for your soul.





JUNE 2024



| DAY | DATE | EVENT | TIME |
|-----------|---------|--|---|
| Saturday | June 1 | Qigong Game Gathering | 9:00 AM 1:00 PM |
| Sunday | June 2 | Choir Practice <i>Native News</i> with Levi Rickert and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time Portage Pride Potluck Picnic | 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 12:30 PM |
| Tuesday | June 4 | Qigong Drop-In Mindfulness Practice with Eric | 9:00 AM 7:00 PM |
| Wednesday | June 5 | Board of Trustees Meeting | 6:30 PM |
| Thursday | June 6 | Stewardship Committee Meeting | 1:00 PM |
| Saturday | June 8 | Qigong UUC at Kalamazoo Pride | 9:00 AM 12-6 PM |
| Sunday | June 9 | Choir Practice <i>Welcome and Gratitude</i> with Rev. Gy NO UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time/Souper Sunday Annual Meeting | 9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:15 AM |
| Tuesday | June 11 | Qigong | 1:00 PM |
| Thursday | June 13 | Growth Team Meeting | 10:30 AM |
| Saturday | June 15 | Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group | 9:00 AM 9:00 AM |
| Sunday | June 16 | <i>Harvesting the Fruit</i> with the Sunday Services Committee UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time | 10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM |
| Monday | June 17 | Sustainability Group | 7:00 PM |
| Tuesday | June 18 | Qigong Drop-In Mindfulness Practice with Eric | 9:00 AM 7:00 PM |
| Saturday | June 22 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Sunday | June 23 | <i>Celebrating Our Living Tradition</i> with Pastor Jacqueline Duhart UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time | 10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM |
| Tuesday | June 25 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Wednesday | June 26 | NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Spiritual Growth Group | 12:00 PM 6:30 PM |
| Thursday | June 27 | Exploring Anti-Racism Group | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday | June 29 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Sunday | June 30 | <i>Pride Sunday</i> 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
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

Marsha Laya

Mike Graham

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, June 26 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

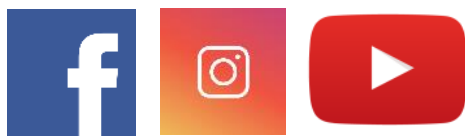
CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

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



CONNECT WITH US!



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