



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

August 2024



Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love.

These words introduce the newly adopted statement of principles and purposes found in Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association by laws. The idea that Love is at the center of our Unitarian Universalist faith is fairly new concept. Love was not mentioned in our previous principles at all. But, after surveying and interviewing more than 10,000 Unitarian Universalists about the values that guide their lives, it became clear that Love is central to our faith, our living, and the mission of our congregations. Unitarian Universalists are guided by and centered in our engagement with all that Love requires. .

The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, the current president of the Unitarian Universalist Association says, *Given everything our world faces today, having faith in Love is no small thing.* She believes that our pressing task now is to ask ourselves and each other how this putting Love in the center calls us

forward, individually and collectively. We may agree that Love is central, but what does that mean to us and what does it require of us?

It is in that spirit that the UUCS Sunday Services Committee (Joe Calme, Nicky Leigh, David Senecal, Rev. Gy, and Miriam) has decided to devote this new church year to exploring how we can ground our daily personal and collective choices in Love, how we can become more kinder and compassionate, and how we can create and maintain relationships that support and challenge us as we work to grow into our best selves. Please join us for a year of **Putting Love in the Center.**



INSPIRED SPIRITUALITY

AUGUST SUNDAY SERVICES

Our Sunday services start at 10:00 AM. Dress is casual. Childcare is provided. You can also join us on YouTube and Zoom.



Spiritual Theme of the Month: THINKING

Our services in August will focus on the skills, discernment, and practices we need to center Love in all we do.

We put love at the center, unflinching, insistent: this free faith we so cherish reveres the past and trusts the dawning future more. We believe in evolution—unfolding always, not unraveling—and revelation is not sealed.— Rev. Victoria Safford

August 4: *Love at the Center* with Rev. Gy

Delegates to the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly recently voted on a significant, historic revision of the self-description of our UU movement. Rev. Gy will help us explore what has changed and what has stayed the same at the center of our living faith tradition.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the Zoom link or visit tinyurl.com/uucclove

August 11: *Ready, Set, Go!* with Rev. Gy

Discover the power of setting direction and intention in our lives and our community. In a world full of distractions and uncertainties, having a clear purpose can be our guiding light. Click [HERE](#) to register for the Zoom meeting or visit tinyurl.com/uuccfinddirection

August 18: *Living From the Heart* with Eric Nelson

Living from the heart is a way to foster inner and outer peace. Living from the heart is an antidote to the deeply divided times we live in. During this service, we will explore how we as individuals and as a community can understand and embody “Living from the Heart.”

Please join us as we embark on a journey of discovery, healing, and transformation.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the Zoom link or visit tinyurl.com/uucclivingfromtheheart

August 25: *Practicing Kaleidoscope Mindfulness* with Rev. Leonetta Bugleisi

Our guest speaker and UU minister Rev. Leonetta will offer us a template of Kaleidoscope Mindfulness that can be applied to each stage of our lives. As we contemplate personal, political and professional balance in these trying times, this approach provides a practical application of both reason & compassion for ourselves and others. Rev. Leonetta encourages you to invite a friend to join you this Sunday for a midsummer boost for spiritual and relational balance.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the Zoom link or visit tinyurl.com/uucckaleidoscope

GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

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

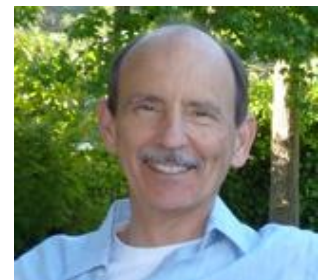
UUCC member **Eric Nelson** received his BA and MA in Social Psychology and Organizational Communication from Western Michigan University, worked as a Program Officer at the Fetzer Institute for 22 years in mind-body health and contemplative science. Eric started practicing mindfulness in 1973 and began teaching in 1986. Eric served as a Program Officer for 22 years at the Fetzer Institute, in Kalamazoo, MI, where he developed and managed programs in the US, Middle East, Asia and India, in the fields of Complementary Medicine, Contemplative Science, and Interfaith Dialogue.



Reverend Leonetta Bugleisi was ordained as a UU Minister in 1990. She has served congregations in Mankato, St. Louis, Chicago, Rochester Hills, Farmington and most recently Brighton (where she retired in May for the second time). Her theology is best described as Transcendentalist Buddhist. She lives in southeast Michigan with her husband, Michael Murphy, grandson, and her cat Misty. Her interests of writing poetry, travel, dabbling in mosaics and collage art, becoming a Grief Educator through David Kessler's program, and pulpit supply might secure that this second retirement works!

Once a month we invite a special guest to join us for a virtual **Thoughtful Thursday** to tell us more about the work they are doing and answer any questions we might have.

Our guest on **Thursday, August 22 at 7:00 PM** will be **Dr. Roger Walsh** the author of the book ***Essential Spirituality***. Our conversation with Dr. Walsh will explore the perennial spiritual practices that support joy and resilience in everyday life and are critical to meeting the many challenges we face in the 21st Century.



Dr. Walsh's work spans four decades of research and practice in various spiritual disciplines from around the world. He holds professorships in psychiatry, philosophy, and anthropology at the University of California, Irvine.

In his comprehensive book, *Essential Spirituality*, Dr. Walsh explores the common wisdom and transformative practices shared by major world religions.

Please plan to join us for what is sure to be an illuminating conversation about how to make kindness, love, joy, peace, vision, wisdom, and generosity become an ever-growing part of everything you do.

Click [HERE](#) to register or visit tinyurl.com/uuccessentialspirituality

Feel free to register for this event even if you don't think you can make it. We will send you a recording of our conversation with Dr. Walsh.

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister

If you know me well, you know that I ponder a lot. I like to look at issues closely, from the Moon, I want to discover the moving particles of events, movements and such.

Lately I've been thinking about lofty ideas like idealism, realism, and practical-ism...

My thinking is not well formed yet, but a newsletter deadline is a newsletter deadline, and it appears that I am going to present you with a half-baked idea.

All movements, political or religious, emerge from ideas. If we are lucky, from ideals. Ideals are moonshots, beautiful, powerful aspirations. *"All men are created equal"* – humanity has never lived up to this ideal, but we try when we are at our best. We aspire to bring it close to everyday lived experience.

I do wonder why don't we succeed? Why don't we always succeed? Is there something at the core of us that would have us believe otherwise? – I don't know. Perhaps now I've given you, too, something to ponder about...

Some things do stand in the way, though, I think I have clarity about that. Nothing kills idealism faster than realism. Down-to-earthism. Realism cares about the bottom line, looks at circumstances to determine the possible. And there's a huge price to pay for this down-to-earth way of being. So many beautiful aspirations are sacrificed at the altar of this mediocracy: art, beautiful architecture, kindness, generosity, and most importantly grand ideas.

Realism created city blocks that lack beauty. Sure, the buildings are functional, they do the job, but no beauty, harmony, delight. Realism quickly gives way to good-enough-ism. You find it everywhere, in every aspect of life that received the cold kiss of realism.

What is the antidote then? Obviously, idealism, the inspirer or dreams, giver of grand ideas and ideals! Oh, the thought of it stirs my soul!! Idealism shapes circumstances to bring forth an inspired reality!!

And idealism and realism exist together as ying and yang. Sometimes one is up, the other down, and then it all changes again. It's a constant cycle that we can't seem to resist engaging. Much like darkness and light need each other, how would we even understand one without the other, realism and idealism need each other.

Our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has engaged in a phase of idealism. After years of hard work and deliberation we UUs decided to put LOVE at the center of who we are and how we wish to show up in the world. At this year's GA (General Assembly) 80% of the delegates voted to define us in this new way. Love is at the center.

"The UUA's bylaws mandate a regular revision process of this core religious language every fifteen years, and this section of our bylaws has been revised a number of times over the course of the UUA's history. The last wholesale revision took place in 1987 and so much has changed in both our society and our congregations in the interim," said Carey McDonald, the UUA's Executive Vice President. (Continued on page 5)

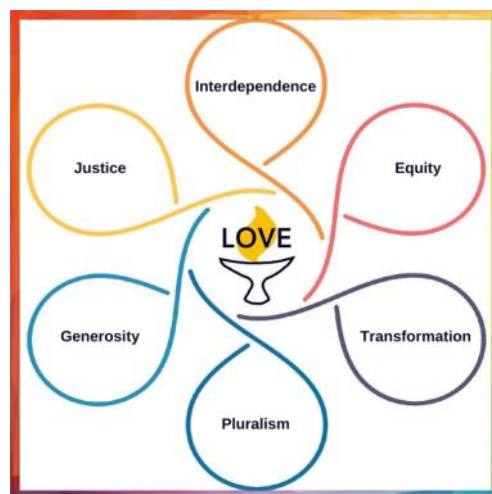
A CHOSEN FAITH

"We're pleased with the thoughtfulness and care UUs brought to this process. This new language honors the principles and traditions of UUs while allowing us to evolve as a faith."

I think of this as beautiful and powerful work. I think of this as a worthy aspiration for our existence. I think I wouldn't want to have it any other way.

Love understands our interdependence, wants us to have equity, wants us to transform ourselves and our world into a better version of what's possible, love would have us allow for other beliefs, ideas, expressions, Love is generous and wants justice for all.

It was interesting and inspiring to listen to all the different opinions expressed at GA. Most were in favor of this change, some felt strongly otherwise. Love won. May it always!



Shared UU Values Flower, created by Tanya Webster.



Book Discussion Group

Once a year, Rev. Gy invites both long-time members and newcomers to this Unitarian Universalist community to join them in a discussion of ***A Chosen Faith: An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism***.

In the book, two long-time ministers and denominational leaders, Rev. John A. Buehrens and Rev. Forrest Church, describe the sources and history of Unitarian Universalism, how those traditions are adapted in congregations today, and how they each came to choose Unitarian Universalism as a career and a way of life. It provides a nice framework for participants to talk about their own spiritual journeys and to get to know each other better. We also ask that people who are considering formal membership at UUCC take part in this book discussion group before signing the membership book.

Rev. Gy likes to split the discussion into six, 90-minute sessions. The discussion group will meet once a week, most likely on Tuesday evenings starting in September or October.

The class will be hybrid both meeting in person at UUCC and on Zoom for those who prefer. Childcare will be provided for anyone who requests it.

If you would be interested in participating in this year's discussion of ***A Chosen Faith***, please contact Miriam (uucommunity@gmail.com) by Friday, August 30 so she can purchase you a copy of the book and set the class schedule.

LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees for the 2023/2024 church year met for the first time on July 31.

Here are some of the things they accomplished:

- Elected Steve Tasko as Board President for another term.
- Made plans for the Board Retreat in September
- Discussed possible repairs Pride Flag/Black Lives Matter sign
- Authorized spending \$550 of the Artistic Endeavor Fund to pay Kids Theatre Camp staff.

Board meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. A link to the Zoom meeting can be found on the [UU Community Church online calendar](#).

Program Council—Where TOGETHER—We Get Stuff Done!

Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church. Our first Program Council meeting of the new church year will be on Sunday, **August 18** at around **11:20 AM**. You can participate in Program Council in person or via Zoom.



On the **AGENDA** for August Program Council Meeting is **choosing our Generosity Sunday Recipients for 2024/2025**. Several times a year UCC holds a special collection to support non-profit organizations whose work aligns with our values. Last year we collected over \$3900! Below are the nominations we have received so far for this year.

[Domestic Violence Coalition of Van Buren County](#)—Nominated by Judy Halseth.

The mission of the Domestic Violence Coalition is to provide compassionate assistance to victims of sexual and domestic violence and to work toward eliminating these crimes in the community.

[Recovery Institute of Southwest Michigan](#) —Nominated by Julie Kelemen. The Recovery Institute is a local nonprofit that helps people in recovery from mental illnesses and addictions. Their services are peer-run and peer-delivered.

[Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community \(ISAAC\)](#)—Nominated by Bev Folz. UCC is a proud member of this interfaith organizing network of congregations and strategic partners working together to build a more just community. Bev notes in her nomination that everything ISAAC does supports our UU principles.

[Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#)—Nominated by Miriam. UCC is a proud member of this social justice network that helps organize UUs all over the state for collective action on issues such as climate change, criminal justice reform, reproductive rights, and LGBTQIA equity.

If you have an organization you would like to nominate for Generosity Sunday, please send your suggestion to the office by August 11.

CARING COMMUNITY



AUGUST CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

August is the bridge between summer's light and autumn's change that inspires us to cherish each moment. ~Unknown

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

We took a break from Sunday services and other programs in July but were treated to other opportunities to gather for fun, fellowship, and learning including Summer Sunday Forums and the Eagle Lake Chat and Chill. We are grateful to **Rev. Harold Beu** and **Kathy Hays**, and for making these gatherings possible.

Judy Halseth hosted the UUCC Women's Book Group annual meeting at her lakeside home. Book club members enjoyed an amazing salad potluck and chose the 2024-2025 books. The meeting was especially pleasant as the group welcomed new members and celebrated their first in-person gathering since February 2020 and COVID-19!

Many UUCC friends are watching their families grow this summer. Our friend **Laura Wheeler** recently announced her engagement to her partner **Scott**. **Pat Timm** welcomed a new granddaughter to the world. And **Kimberly Ridley** will gain a daughter-in-law when her son **Brent** gets married on August 10. Congratulations to all!

We are grateful that **Nancy Calme** and **Freya Lake** are recovering so nicely from recent surgeries, that **Stephanie Grathwol** is up and about after a bad case of COVID, and we are sending healing love and light to **Hunter Ridley** who underwent carpal tunnel release surgery following an accident at work that kept his right arm in a sling since May. Hopefully, the procedure will help him to regain full use of his fingers.

We were saddened to hear that **Chris Petersmark** accepted another position and will be leaving us in September but we are grateful for all the beautiful music Chris has shared with us over the last two years and we wish him well in future endeavors.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy birthday to our August babies **Lauren Ritter**, **Kimberly Ridley**, **Miriam Epskamp**, and **Peggy Clausing**!

Celebrating wedding anniversaries in August are **Kevin** and **Tami Brozovich**, **Eric** and **Regena Nelson**, and **Tim** and **Erin Michael**. Many happy returns of the day!

Remembering Friends

We pause to remember dear friends who are no longer with us—**Jean Batts** and **Lin Foote**, both passed away in August in 2000 and 2019 respectively.

Welcome New Visitors: We enjoyed meeting **Rob Pike** during our services in July. **Harold Beu's** daughter **Arbra** and her partner **Matthew** also stopped by. Welcome!

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

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 Crisis - Falling Behind

The US is approximately 40 times the size of the UK. With around 1 million registered battery electric vehicles (BEV) the UK has approximately 65,000 public EV charging stations, while the US with about 3.3 million BEVs has approximately 61,000. The UK is still building them at a rate of close to 21,000 a year. Over the last 3 years, the US averaged 10,667 per year. Another way of looking at it is, the UK has approx. 68 million population vs US 333 million. That means in the UK there is one charging station for every 1046 people and in the US it's one for every 5459. Since lack of charging stations is one of the major reasons people are hesitant about buying BEVs, however you slice it, we are behind. And, this is just one example of what can be done and we are not doing it.

Luxembourg is a tiny country. It's smaller than Rhode Island. Its population is 672,050 while Rhode Island's is 1,070,000. So basically, Luxembourg is one large city with suburbs and some rural land. But what Luxembourg does have is a completely free public transportation system. While it is probably not fair to compare a country with the population of a medium sized city to the US, the question does arise: if they can do it, why can't we. The trains, buses, trams and funiculars are free unless you want a first class ticket or are crossing a country border. The average American car trip is less than 12 miles. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics in 2021, 52% of all trips were under 3 miles. If our cities and suburbs had free functional transportation could we significantly reduce the number of cars on the roads. We might even be able to help get this going by not allowing cars into city cores.

From the small to the large. The latest figures I could find were from 2022 but they are still relevant in 2024. If anything they favor China even more. China is the largest GreenHouse Gas producer followed by the United States in second position. But, China produces over 10% of its electricity by renewable sources, and we only produce 6.5% of ours from renewables. The European Environment Agency tracks 30 countries and Ireland produces the least percentage by renewables at 13.11%. Iceland produces over 86% with renewables primarily because of their geothermal capability. All the countries tracked by the EEA get a higher percentage of their electricity from renewable sources than we do. Renewable does not include nuclear. The US gets about 19% from nuclear and France is the highest with about 64%. China only gets about 4.9% from nuclear power.

Transportation and electricity, two of the major producers of GHG's. We are behind, not just other countries, but in our commitment to reduce our GHG's by 2030 and keep the world under a 1.5c increase in average temperature or 2.0c maximum.

CLIMATE CHANGE

This is an election year. Considering the crisis of climate change, maybe, just maybe we should be judging our candidates by their urgency about climate change. If we don't do something about climate change in the near future, we may be too late to have an impact on the lives of our grandchildren.

We need legislation phasing out fossil fuels and encouraging electrification. We need this at all levels of our government. The only way to get this is to vote for candidates who care. So remember to vote in the August primary!

Sincerely, Nicky nickyleigh1226@gmail.com



Reimagine Together From An Extractive Age To A New Era

UU Climate Justice Revival | September 28-29, 2024

A very exciting **Climate Revival** is sweeping the UU world this September and UU Community Church is going to be part of it!

On **September 28-29**, congregations all over the US and Canada will host UU Climate Justice Revivals to collectively reimagine a spirit-filled and liberatory future. Through **conversations, worship, and advocacy**, congregations will work together to realize climate justice and collective liberation in our communities.

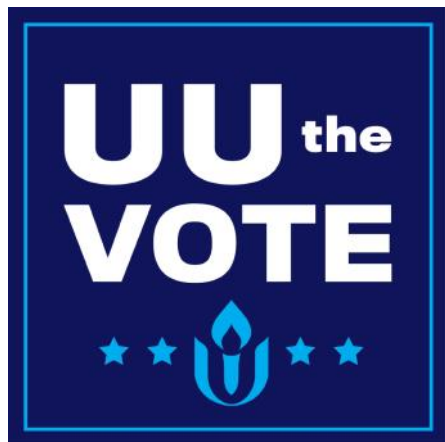
These kinds of things don't happen often! Unitarian Universalist churches tend to stand alone and apart. Collaboration with other organizations can be difficult. The beauty of the UU Climate Revival is that congregations will all be exploring the same materials. at the same time, from the comfort of their own facilities with facilitators from the congregation who have been trained with other UUs. When it is over, our congregation can be part of the national UU conversation about moving our association's climate work forward.

On Saturday, **September 28** we'll engage in transformative discussions and activities for children and youth. On Sunday, **September 29** our Sunday service will be focused on climate justice. Following the service, we'll engage in an Advocacy Hour in solidarity with other UUs congregations around the country. We will even throw a Vegetarian Feast in there somewhere. Isn't it exciting?

Please **mark your calendar** and plan to join us for **two days of spirit-filled of climate justice action!**

P.S If you are interested in learning more about the Climate Revival and how you can get involved, join the **Sustainability Group** on **Monday, August 19** at **7 PM**. Click [HERE](#) to join via Zoom.

UU THE VOTE



Unitarian Universalists support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large. Make your UU values real by participating in nonpartisan "Get Out the Vote" and other voting-related actions this election season.

UU the Vote a non-partisan outreach project of the Unitarian Universalist Association will host a **Weekly Phone Banking** session on **Tuesdays from 7-9 PM** starting on **August 27** and continuing through October. You will be making phone calls to voters in different states each time. UU the Vote facilitators will provide spiritual grounding and training help you make calls that

make a difference. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about opportunities to make "good trouble" with UU the Vote.

Our justice partners at the **Michigan UU Social Justice Network** are looking for volunteers in the following areas:

Poll Watchers / Election Protection: Serve as a non-partisan poll watcher during the early voting period and/or on election day for the August primary and November general elections. (Training will be provided!)

Phonebanking: Make calls to low-propensity voters to share information about registering to vote, where to vote, how to vote by mail, etc. An automated dialer will be used and your phone number will not be visible to the person being called. (Training will be provided, along with a script to guide the conversation with voters!)

Write postcards: Write and send postcards to people in Michigan jails who are eligible to vote. Postcards and a name/address list will be provided, along with messaging examples. This will start after the August primary.

SIGN UP -- Click [HERE](#) to complete a form telling MUUSJN which of these activities you can participate in.

Our justice partners at **Moms Demand Action** are hosting **Postcard Parties** to write postcards to voters who support the goals of voting for gun-sense candidates up and down the ballot.

Stop by to join them on any of these dates:

Wednesday, **August 21** from **4:00 to 6:00 PM**
at First United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo.

Wednesday, **September 18** from **4:00 to 6:00 PM**
at First United Methodist Church in Kalamazoo

Stay and write as long as you have available time. You can also reach out to Moms Demand Action Co-Lead Jennifer Coyle (jennifer@coyleprojects.com) if you want to get a packet of postcards to **write at home**.



STEWARDSHIP

BACKYARD BASH FOLK CONCERT & BBQ

Saturday, August 10 | 5:00 - 8:00 PM

LIVE MUSIC



Folk Artists:
LVNMUZIQ

THE BAND

LVNMUZIQ is a toe-tappin' urban folk muziq band. Most of their songs are original works... good folk muziq tunes with a beat and great lyrics. Come out and enjoy the concert!

RSVP

RSVP by August 4 to
tinyurl.com/UUCCAUGBBQ

THE BACKYARD

Rev Gy's Backyard
5126 Meadowlark Lane,
Portage. Limited parking.
Consider carpooling..

WHAT TO BRING

Tables will be set up for eating. But bring a lawn chair or blanket and your favorite drink.

WHAT'S COOKIN'
Burgers, Hotdogs, Vegetarian
Options, Summer sides,
Dessert, BYOB.



**SUGGESTED
DONATION: \$20**



Unitarian Universalist
Community Church
uucommunitychurch.org

It's time for a UCC Summer FUNdraiser!!

You are invited to this summer's **Backyard Barbecue and Concert** at Rev. Gy and Patti's home, 5126 Meadowlark Lane, Portage, MI 49024 on **Saturday, August 10**.

Join us at 5 PM for dinner! We will serve grilled burgers, hotdogs (vegetarian options available), delicious side dishes, and desserts.

At 6 PM, get ready to enjoy a musical performance by **LVNMUZIQ**, an urban folk duo from Three Rivers, Michigan, featuring Liz and Kristi Montgomery. They perform original music by Liz and covers of artists like Patty Griffin and Chris Stapleton. Liz's playful guitar and unique vocals, paired with Kristi's harmonies and bass, create their distinctive sound. Since 2006, Liz has played over 400 shows in 25 states and released five CDs. Come out and enjoy the concert!

What to bring: The backyard is shaded. We'll have tables set up for eating. Please bring a lawn chair or blanket for lounging and bring your favorite beverage for imbibing!

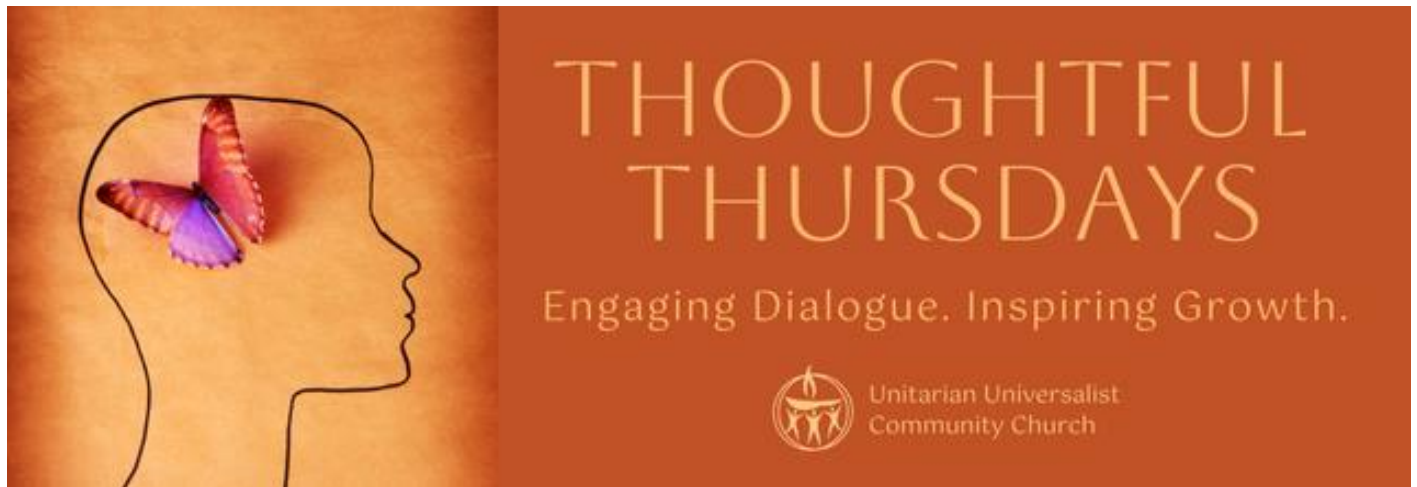
Suggested fundraiser donation at the door is \$20 per person or a love offering of whatever amount works for your budget. (Kids and newcomers are free!) We always pass the hat for the performers so please bring a little extra cash, if you can.

Please RSVP by August 4th at tinyurl.com/UUCCAUGBBQ so we know how much food to make.

Guests are always welcome! We look forward to seeing you there!



LEARNING AND GROWTH



Thoughtful Thursdays at UCC are enlightening evenings that feature thought leaders sharing insights on a topic of importance to us: spiritual growth, social justice, environmental sustainability, and more. It is your opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and broaden your perspective about critical issues and ideas. We have an exciting lineup of guests scheduled for this fall. Each of these events will give you an opportunity to listen to and dialog with people who are living from the heart. Please plan to join us on Zoom at 7 PM for these unique opportunities to learn and grow.



August 22: Essential Spirituality with Dr. Roger Walsh

In August we will be joined by Dr. Roger Walsh to explore seven essential practices found in many of the world's spiritual and indigenous traditions. These teachings have been analyzed by research for the past four decades and found to be highly effective in fostering inner healing and resilience and outer service and justice in the world. Click [HERE](#) to register for the conversation with Dr. Walsh. Or visit tinyurl.com/uuccessentialspirituality



September 19: Hope for Creation with Molly Metchtenburg

In September Hope for Creation executive director Molly Metchtenburg will talk about her vision for creating "a model for faith-based environmental grassroots organizing."



October 24: Land of Light with Libby Slocum

With a background is in nutrition, reflexology, body work, energy psychology and Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, Libby Slocum is passionate about helping people be free of what hold's them back from full health on all levels.

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.

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

On July 12, Judy Halseth hosted the UCC Women's Book Group annual meeting at her lakeside home. Members enjoyed a salad potluck and chose the 2024-2025 books. The meeting was especially pleasant as we welcomed new members and celebrated the group's first in-person gathering since February 2020 and COVID-19.

The Women's Book Group meets from about 1-3 PM on the second Friday of each month, September through May. Since the pandemic, they have been meeting via Zoom as one way to include members who live away from Kalamazoo/Portage. All UCC folks who identify as women are welcome to attend and participate in one or more book discussions; members periodically invite friends to participate as well. Please contact Book Group chair person, Stephanie Grathwol with any questions and/or comments.

Sep 13, 2024 (non fiction) *Fire Weather: On the Front Lines of a Burning World* by John Vaillant (2023)

Discussion Leader: Nancy Calme

Oct 11, 2024 (fiction) *Becoming Madam Secretary* by Stephanie Dray (2024)

Discussion Leader: Denise Hartsough

Nov 8, 2024 (non fiction) *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo (2023)

Discussion Leader: TBD

Dec 13, 2024 (fiction) *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus (2022)

Discussion Leader: Beverly Folz

Jan 10, 2025 (non fiction) *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* by David Wallace Adams (1995)

Discussion Leaders: Judy Halseth and Marsha Laya

Feb 14, 2025 (fiction) *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams (2020)

Discussion Leader: Stephanie Grathwol

Mar 14, 2025 The Kalamazoo Public Library Community Read

Discussion Leader: Betty Lee Ongley

Apr 11, 2025 (non fiction) *Poverty, By America* by Matthew Desmond (2023)

Discussion Leader: Judy Halseth

May 9, 2025 (fiction) *James: A Novel by Percival Everett* (2024)

Discussion Leader: TBD

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom link for Women's Book Group. Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644

Passcode: 360981



3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, August 17 at 9:00 AM** at the Colonial Kitchen on Westnedge, located on Shaver Road, 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 Crowell if you plan to attend.



RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

Welcome back from the July break! I hope you are having a wonderful summer! I spent a good portion of my time in July preparing for the Kids Theatre Camp that is going on at UCC these first days of August. The camp is a joint venture between UCC and Open House Theatre Company. Open House’s artistic director Mary Roscoe and I are co-directors. We are grateful to all the UCC who have donated time and treasure to make the camp a success— **Mary King, Dawn Renner, Ron and Nancy Crowell, Stephanie Grathwol, Justin and Kaitlin Wojciak, and Nick and Grayson Tasko.** Together, we do some pretty awesome things!



OPPORTUNITIES

UCC Quilting Bee

Affordable tiny homes are coming to Kalamazoo's Northside neighborhood, as Gwendolyn Hooker, Founder and CEO of HOPE thru Navigation (Helping Other People Exceed) and her team broke ground on the project this past April. Three homes are currently being built with projected completion this fall.

Tiny Homes for HOPE will be available to people with a history of substance abuse disorder and/or a criminal record. Many of these individuals often struggle to find housing due to discrimination or a lack of credit. People with good jobs are turned down for housing due to a history they're working hard to overcome. Applications will be accepted once the homes are completed.

Let's support HOPE thru Navigation by giving each of these tiny home occupants a handmade quilt! Kathy Hays, Pat Fuehr, and Marsha Laya are organizing a "quilting bee" with the goal of completing three quilts by the end of October. An organizing meeting will be held on **August 4** after Sunday Services. Please consider joining this discussion to learn how you can help cut, sew, or press at the quilting bees to be held on Monday afternoons **September 16, 23, and 30**. Help on one of those days or all three. Don't have a sewing machine? No problem. We have two extras. Can't sew? No problem. People willing to press or cut are also needed. Finally, if cutting, sewing, pressing or the timing isn't a fit for you, funds will be needed for supplies such as boards, backing, and batting. So, join us as you are able/willing and give someone HOPE and a warm hug wrapped in a hand made quilt.

If you have any questions about the UCC Quilting Bee, contact Marsha Laya at marshalaya@gmail.com



Qigong at UCC

Our twice-weekly Qigong sessions are still going strong! Often described as a mindbody-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. Because it is the same series of light exercises each time it is easy for newcomers to join.

Click [HERE](#) for the TUESDAY Qigong.
Click [HERE](#) for the SATURDAY Qigong

If you have any questions about Qigong, feel free to contact Freya Lake.



Water Communion

[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.

To be a part of this year's communion in September, be sure to collect a small sample of water from a place that brings you peace or provides sustenance for your soul to add to our communal bowl. If you have questions about Water Communion, please contact Rev. Gy: gyludvig@gmail.com



LIFE LINE SCREENINGS



You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!



Where: **Unitarian Universalist Community Church
10441 Shaver Road, Portage**

When: **Friday, September 6th, 2024**

Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings.**

Trusted by over 10 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend: Anyone over the age of 40

Special Pricing for \$159

- Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Plus a FREE Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Scan here:



Call 888-814-0466
and use promo
code: HSCA001

Visit
[LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA](https://www.llsa.social/hscas)

Text the word
"circle" to
216-279-1607

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease.

Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.



AUGUST 2024



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Thursday	August 1	Stewardship Committee Meeting	1:00 PM
Saturday	August 3	Qigong	6:30 PM
Sunday	August 4	Love at the Center with Rev Gy UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time UUCQ Quilting Bee Informational Meeting	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:15 AM
Tuesday	August 6	ELECTION DAY Qigong	7 AM—8 PM 9:00 AM
Saturday	August 10	Qigong Backyard BBQ Summer FUNdraiser	9:00 AM 5:00 PM
Sunday	August 11	Ready, Set, Go! with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	August 13	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	August 14	Sunday Services Team Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	August 15	Growth Team Meeting	10:00 AM
Saturday	August 17	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group (Backyard BBQ RAINDATE)	9:00 AM 9:00 AM 5:00 PM
Sunday	August 18	Living from the Heart with Eric Nelson UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time Program Council Meeting	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Monday	August 19	Sustainability Group Meeting	7:00 PM
Tuesday	August 20	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	August 21	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	August 24	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	August 25	Practicing Kaleidoscope Mindfulness with Rev. Leonetta Bulgeisi UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	August 27	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	August 28	Spiritual Growth Group (closed group)	6:30 PM
Saturday	August 31	Qigong	9:00 AM

Love is the spirit of this church,
 And service is its law
 This is our great covenant:
 To dwell together in peace,
 To seek the truth in love,
 And to help one another.



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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2024-2025 Board of Trustees

Steve Tasko

Eric Nelson

Pat Fuehr

Michael Graham

Kathryn Ragains-Wilson

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, August 23 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:
uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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