



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan September 2024

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES

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

September 1: *There is a Room for All* with Rev. Gy

Unitarian Universalism is a pluralistic faith tradition. We travel many different spiritual paths but are united by a spirit of Love that bridges our differences and holds us together. Today we reflect on the UU value of pluralism, and the challenges of building a world with room for all. Zoom Meeting ID: 960 0480 8681 . Click [HERE](#) to register.

September 8: *E Pluribus Unum* with Rev. Gy

As summer ends, we will celebrate our annual Water Communion, a ritual of welcome and homecoming to begin the new church year. Combining water from different sources in a communal bowl, Water Communion represents our connection and unity. Out of many, there is one! Be sure to bring a little water that represents a place or an experience of importance to you to this service.

Zoom Meeting ID: 951 3781 9411 Click [HERE](#) to register.

September 17: *Wisdom* with Rev. Harold Beu

Rev. Harold Beu thinks what is most lacking today in America is wisdom. And despite what oldsters may think, wisdom does not necessarily come with old age. But what is wisdom? Join Harold as he does his best to explicate what wisdom is and how we can manifest it in our own lives.

Zoom Meeting ID: 922 7150 2609 Click [HERE](#) to register.

September 22: *Focus on Humanization* with Jodi Hope Michaels

Dive into the work of Global Ties Kalamazoo to bring together thought leaders from around the world and around West Michigan to explore local solutions to global challenges and build meaningful relationships.

Zoom Meeting ID: 951 9273 4689 Click [HERE](#) to register.

September 29: *Reimagine Together* with UCC Sustainability Group

Join the Sustainability Group for a UU Climate Justice Revival that invites us to reimagine a more just, sustainable, and nourishing future for us all.

Zoom Meeting ID: 961 1956 2344 Click [HERE](#) to register.



Spiritual Theme for September LOVE-CENTERED THINKING

UCC will spend the 2024/2025 church year exploring how we can ground our daily personal and collective choices in Love.

In September we will consider how to cultivate love-centered thinking by listening to differing viewpoints, embracing understanding across lines of difference, and seeking to gain greater wisdom.

Our explorations will be inspired by the UU value of Pluralism. As Unitarian Universalists, we celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology. We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning and embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

Questions to ponder this month:
What changes do you need to make to center Love in your thinking? How are you embracing and learning from those who think differently than you do?

GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

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



UU Community Church member and retired Unitarian Universalist minister **Rev. Harold Beu** was a senior in high school when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He participated in anti-war protests, including the March on Washington against the Vietnam War. He worked in a poverty-stricken neighborhood in Pittsburgh as part of ViSTA, the domestic version of the Peace Corps. He worked for a time as a high school teacher of history, civics, math, and psychology. Harold went to graduate school in Berkeley and received his MDiv from Starr King School for the Ministry in Oakland. Ordained in 1982, he served Unitarian Universalist churches in California, Michigan, and Indiana before retiring a few years ago. Harold actively works for Peace and Justice in our community as a member of Kalamazoo Non-Violent Opponent to War (KNOW) and can frequently be found at one of their vigils for Peace. Harold would like you to know that you are always welcome to join him at these vigils and reminds everyone to, "Keep hope alive!"

Jodi Hope Michaels joined Global Ties Kalamazoo as its Executive Director in 2016 following nearly two decades in international community development work, with a focus on human rights and social justice. She previously worked as a director of communications for an international network of local community organizations, as a community organizer for a theatre redevelopment project, and also spent several years working at a large foundation in Jerusalem, among other roles. Hailing from Canada, Jodi has a degree in Human Biology, with a focus on health in the global south, from Stanford University. She has visited some 20 countries, both through her work and general interest in cultural immersion and exchange.



Molly Metchenberg took over the directorship of Hope for Creation, an interfaith coalition focused on climate action for people and the planet, in May of this year. Molly has built relationships within the Kalamazoo community for almost two decades as a co-founder of Peace House, a community in the Eastside neighborhood that supports children and families. She has also worked extensively in the field of Restorative Justice and continues to advocate for alternatives to punitive measures in schools and organizations. She is a life-long nature lover and with Hope for Creation, looks forward to forging new partnerships in Kalamazoo and working toward a more just and climate resilient community. Molly will join us for a **Thoughtful Thursday** conversation on **September 19** from **7-8:30 PM** to learn more about her vision of creating a model for faith-based environmental grassroots organizing and how we can get involved. Click [HERE](#) or visit tinyurl.com/HopeandClimate to register for this event.

UU CLIMATE REVIVAL



Reimagine Together From An Extractive Age To A New Era

UU Climate Justice Revival | September 28-29, 2024

We Want YOU to Come to the UU Climate Justice Revival

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.

The **UCC Sustainability Group**, the **Sunday Services Committee**, the **Growth Team**, **Rev. Gy**, and **Miriam** have been collaborating with folks at **Peoples Church Kalamazoo** and other UU congregations in West Michigan to come up with an amazing plan for the Revival and are hoping that ALL of our UCC folks will take part in two days of spirit-filled of climate justice action. We know this is a big time and energy commitment, but our world is facing an existential climate crisis and NOW is the to **come together and act**.

Here is the schedule:

Saturday, September 28

12—1 PM—**Potluck** at Peoples Church (optional)

1—5 PM —**Facilitated Discussions for Adults** (at Peoples Church or on Zoom)
—**Revival Activities for Children and Youth** (in-person)

Sunday, September 29

10 AM—**Reimagine Together**—a Sunday service at UCC (or on Zoom)

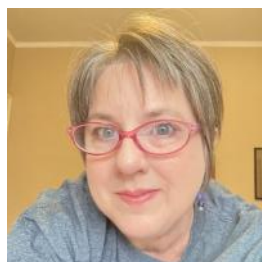
11 AM—**Advocacy Hour** - GOTV letter writing and sign making at UCC

11:30 AM—**A Vegetarian Feast** at UCC—bring your favorite meatless dish to pass

This Revival is not just about seeing problems, it is about deepening our understanding, making new connections, and identifying ways to take meaningful action for ourselves, our community, and maybe even for the world.

Please plan to be part of the UU Climate Justice Revival. We need your ideas, energy, and contributions to transform the world! Click [HERE](#) before September 22 to register for the Saturday Workshop or visit tinyurl.com/uuccclimaterevival

R.E.FLECTIONS



R.E.flections From Miriam Epskamp, Director of Religious Education

I know if you have made it this far into the newsletter you already know about the great UU Climate Justice Revival coming up at the end of the month. Are you excited? I know I am. I love that we are focusing on our ministry for the Earth. I love that our congregation will be doing this work in solidarity with UUs all across the U.S. and Canada. I love that the Revival has given us an opportunity to collaborate more closely with congregations in our region.

I will admit that at first the idea of a 'Revival' gave me a little bit of a pause. Probably thanks to movies and TV, the word evokes a hot, crowded tent and displays of loud and raucous religious fervor complete with shouting, crying, faith healing, and altar calls. My little Unitarian heart recoils a bit at that. Indeed, during the 19th century's Second Great Awakening (whence my tent imagery probably comes) our staid and affluent Unitarian ancestors were firmly in the "formalist" camp that opposed religious revivals.

On our Universalist side, it was a different story. Organized Universalism was actually spread in New England by itinerant revivalists. Many of the early Universalist preachers were circuit riders with little formal education but very well-versed in the Bible. They traveled from town to town gathering disaffected Baptists, Congregationalists, and the unchurched, and then preached sermons and held debates (sometimes for hours on end) that challenged the dominant Calvinist theology of the day. Many of the Universalist preachers were known for their quick wit, clever comebacks, and total disregard for standardized form and ritual.

Rest assured that our UU Climate Justice Revival will not be like either of these scenarios. The materials we have received from the revival organizers are excellent and well-organized. The facilitated discussion on Saturday will be very engaging. There will be opportunities to listen to and share our ideas with other UUs in our region. We will use maps, art, and music to augment our exploration of how the effects of climate change intersect with justice issues in our community. The activities for children and youth have been well thought out and will fun for kids of all ages. We are holding the Saturday program at Peoples Church to accommodate lots of people with lots of different perspectives, but Carol Higgins and I will be part of the facilitating team so you are sure to see at least two familiar faces.

Pat Fuehr, Kathryn Ragains-Wilson, Joe Calme, David Senecal, and Ron Crowell are excited to be presenting the service on Sunday. It will include stories, songs, readings, and ritual that will celebrate of all creation and inspire our stewardship and care.

Regena and Eric Nelson are organizing the Advocacy Hour following the Sunday service to give us an opportunity to reach out beyond our walls with our dream of a just, compassionate, and sustainable future as we engage with voters in our community by writing letters and postcards encouraging them to get to the polls in November.

We will end our Revival with good food and fellowship at our celebratory vegetarian potluck lunch hosted by the Sustainability Group. They are already thinking about delicious meat-free recipes they want to share with you.

A lot of care and effort has gone into planning this event. A lot is being asked of those who attend. But our world is facing an existential climate crisis and NOW is the time for us to come together and act. I hope to see all of you at the UU Climate Justice Revival. Amen and Hallelujah!

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 - A Circular Economy

A circular economy is one where a product is designed and manufactured with the manufacturer designing for the end product to be reused or recycled. For instance, plastics with numbers 1 (PET) and 2 (HDPE) are easily recycled, whereas other plastics have varying levels of difficulty to recycle and contain toxins. A circular economy also applies to a consumer. When buying a new product: is it needed, how often will it be used and what will happen to it when it dies or is no longer needed. So the basic essence of a circular economy is: nothing (or very little) should end up in a landfill.

Within our economy, considering the circularity of all items is a seemingly impossible task. I would not even hazard a guess as to how many different items I have in my house, car and yard space! Earlier this year I went to an Electric Vehicle event and I got a swag bag from Nissan. In the bag was a water bottle made from recycled plastic. And a light throw blanket also made from recycled plastic. The bag itself was made from recycled cotton clothing. The paper tags were made from recycled paper. These technologies exist today. The labels claiming to be recycled showed the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. This is an organization working to preserve forests through charging a carbon fee and paying the landowners to cultivate the forests to be carbon sinks. Whenever possible, buy paper/wood products displaying the FSC logo.

Ikea has committed to be 100% circular by 2030. At this point, over 60% of their products use renewable and recyclable resources such as wood, cotton and wool, as well as over 10% contain recycled products. Some of their stores have a drop off for items no longer wanted. They are then often sold in their reuse store (as-is), or recycled into usable parts. In 2019, 47 million items were given a second life. Both Ikea and Aldi have committed to using recycled plastic for all their plastic wrapping by 2030. Aldi has also reduced its operational emission by 38% since 2019 and is working with its suppliers to help reduce their emissions.



What about the ultimate consumer circularity? We're born, we die. Oshtemo allows for green Burials—un-embalmed, plain casket or shroud burials. (More on page 10)

CLIMATE ACTION

Except for the manufacturing of the shroud, basically zero carbon emissions, since the decaying body feeds the soil. From dust to dust. Cremation releases over 400kg of carbon dioxide plus mercury and other pollutants. Traditional burials with lined caskets and embalming releases over 700kg of carbon emissions. Both don't sound like much, until you multiply by billions of people.

Many companies are working to reduce carbon emissions, reuse and recycle, and attempting to work into circularity models. They find it saves them money to upgrade to the newest greenest technologies and for the most part it creates customer goodwill, especially if they pass those savings back to the consumer.

Our problem as consumers is to know what companies are actually doing vs greenwashing while doing very little. I don't have an answer to that. We can look for information on their websites, by googling, by reading climate related articles. It really just takes a few minutes. I had been reading an article about why English Cucumbers were wrapped in plastic. In the article it talked about some growers starting to use compostable plastic wrapping and it mentioned a brand Compostic. I looked up Compostic and found out it is certified compostable plastic. As a side trail I looked up "plastic certification" to make sure it's a real thing and not just greenwashing. The whole search was about 5-10 minutes and I now know I can order Compostic products as well as other certified products on Amazon. (By the way, the English Cucumbers are wrapped tightly to retain their moisture and retard spoilage, and we should keep them wrapped in a warmish part of the frig until ready to use.)

If it's a local store you frequent, talk to them. Express your concerns about the climate and environment. Don't be afraid to speak up, it is really the only way they know their customers opinions. Also, talk with your friends and compare notes.

Your decisions today could make a world of difference for our future generations.

Sincerely, Nicky nickyleigh1226@gmail.com



Our climate justice partners at Hope for Creation invite us to join them on Saturday, September 28 at 6 PM at Peoples Church Kalamazoo as they celebrate the bounty of collective climate action and take steps toward a more sustainable and just future.

Come and share a meal together, hear stories and examples of collective action in our community that are addressing climate change, and consider steps that we collectively can take to be part of this critical work.

Please RSVP for this event at:

hopeforcreation.net/harvest_of_unity All are welcome!

LEADERSHIP

PROGRAM COUNCIL SURVEY

At their August meeting (held on July 31) the Board of Trustees decided to spend some time at their September Board Retreat evaluating Program Council to make sure that it is still a good use of our precious time and resources.

To help the board gather more information about the congregation’s attitude toward Program Council, we have created a short survey. Please click [HERE](#) to share your opinion about Program Council with your Board of Trustees.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **September 6** at **6:30 PM** via Zoom. Board meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. A link to the Zoom meeting can be found on the [UU Community Church online calendar](#).

End-of-Year Finance Report

We ended the 2023/2024 fiscal year (July – June) with a \$6,542 surplus in the General Fund. This surplus is wonderful because we had budgeted a deficit of (\$4,484) this year (see the chart below).

There are a few things that contributed to this surplus. Our Building Use line item increased due to the rental income received by the Living Church of God. We also received almost \$3,000 more than budgeted in the Contributions Not Pledged line item. Similarly, we brought in almost \$1,400 more than budgeted in the Fundraiser line item.

The Board has directed that 80% of the surplus, \$5,233, be put in the Property and Maintenance Fund. The other 20%, \$1,309, will remain in the General Fund. This brings our General Fund Balance to \$40,392 (this total is the culmination of all surpluses and deficits since our church began).

Summary for the fiscal year 2023/2024 General Fund

	INCOME	EXPENSES	SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)
ACTUAL	\$130,507	\$123,965	\$6,542
BUDGET	\$118,682	\$123,166	(\$4,484)

Thanks to the Board and committee members for working hard to keep our church financially healthy. A special thanks to my fellow Finance Team members, Kimberly Ridley and Joe Calme, for all their hard work and expertise.

-Tami Brozovich, Finance Chair



PROGRAM COUNCIL



Program Council—Where TOGETHER—We Get Stuff Done!

Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church.

We had lots to **CELEBRATE** at our August meeting: Our July Summer Sunday Forum series was a great success! Thank you to **Rev. Harold Beu** for organizing and presenting opportunities for people to gather and discuss different topics.

Lots of lovely social activities took place over the summer including the Women's Book Group salad potluck and **Judy Halseth's** house and wonderful Chat and Chill at **Kathy Hays's** house. **Mary Roscoe** and **Miriam** (with help from staff **Nick** and **Grayson Tasko** and volunteers **Mary King, Dawn Renner, and Debbie Lyng**) held a successful Kids Theatre Camp and the Stewardship Committee (and volunteers) put on a wonderful Summer FUNdraiser in **Rev. Gy and Patti's** backyard. Together we can do amazing things!

During our August meeting, we also made plans for our 2024/2025 **GENEROSITY GIVING**. Thank you to everyone who nominated organizations:

October - Domestic Violence Prevention Van Buren County

January - Interfaith Strategies for Action and Advocacy in the Community

April—Recovery Institute of SW Michigan

June—Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network

Are you for ways to become more involved with our community? We've got lots of upcoming **OPPORTUNITIES** for YOU!

- UUCC will host a table at the **Suicide Prevention Walk** from 8:30 AM-11 AM at Bronson Park on September 21. Contact Miriam if you are interested in taking a shift.
- We will offer a **UU History 101** class and a **Sacred Work of Grief** workshop with Rev. **Tracy Laveque**, a graduate of One Spirit Interfaith Seminary and The Art of Death and Dying Institute.
- We will sign up to host a **Community Meal for Open Doors Kalamazoo** in the spring. This will be held at one of the downtown churches and will help support folks who are struggling with housing insecurity. We estimate we will need 6-8 volunteers to put on a meal. More information will be available closer to the date.
- **Open House Theatre Company** is planning to put on a family-friendly holiday-themed production in December! This will be a new direction for OHTC and artistic director Mary Roscoe is hoping that lots of UUCC folks will be willing to help both on the stage and behind the scenes. Watch your newsletters for more information or talk to Mary about how you can help today!
- A date has been set for this year's **Service Auction**! Please save **November 9** for Start thinking about the items and events that you can donate to make this fundraiser a big success.

The next Program Council meeting may (or may not) be on Sunday, September 8. The Board will decide at the Board meeting on September 4. **Souper Sunday**, the soup luncheon to benefit the Youth Program usually prior to Program Council, **will take place on September 8 as usual**. Our "souper" luncheon coordinator, **Mary Roscoe**, would love to add you to her list of soup-makers. If you would be willing to donate a pot of soup to Souper Sunday, contact Mary today.

CARING COMMUNITY



AUGUST CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

There is a time in late September when the leaves are still green, and the days are still warm, but somehow you know that it is all about to end, as if summer was holding its breath, and when it let it out again, it would be autumn.

-Sharyn McCrumb



Joys:

- **Kimberly Ridley's** son **Brent** married his love **Hannah** in Alaska.
- Wedding bells are warming up for **Darby and Bruce Fetzer's** daughter **Grace's** wedding in September.
- **Isaac Epskamp-Hunt** has successfully completed all the classes he needs for an associate's degree in computer science from KVCC.

Concerns:

- Covid cases are on the rise again and several **UUCC folks** have tested positive. Be careful out there!
- **Dawn Renner** lost a dog to cancer.
- After suffering a severe headache, **Kathy Hay's** doctors discovered a life-threatening brain aneurysm. She was able to undergo treatment to prevent it from rupturing and hopes to be fully recovered in time to host our annual bonfire on September 20. The best way you can support her as she heals is to send lots of positive thoughts and energy her way.

Member News:

School has begun for all our UUCC scholars. **Theo** and **Declan Wojciak** are 1st graders! **Nick Tasko** has begun his senior year at Portage Central HS. And **Amanda Nelson** and **David Brozovich** are working on their bachelor's degrees at WMU. Best wishes for a great school year!

Birthdays:

Surprisingly, we currently have only one September birthday ... **Julie Kelemen** was born on September 17. Be sure to wish her many happy returns of the day!

In Memoriam:

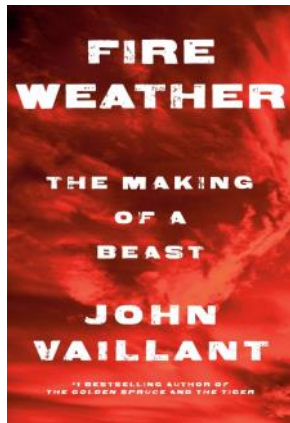
Alice Foote, a beloved and energetic founding member, left us on September 24, 2012, just short of 84 years of age.

Recent Visitors: It was lovely to meet **Kathy, Joe, Stephen, Ann, Michelle** and her daughter, and **Jameson** and their wonderful kids **Travis, Becky, Natalie, and Emmett** in August. We do hope you will come back and visit us again soon!

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

269-324-7262 or uucommunity@gmail.com. **Sharing is Caring!**

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

September 13
1:00 PM

Fire Weather

by John Vaillant

Discussion Leader:
Nancy Calme

From Goodreads:

In May 2016, Fort McMurray, the hub of Canada's oil industry and America's biggest foreign supplier, was overrun by wildfire. The multi-billion-dollar disaster melted vehicles, turned entire neighborhoods into firebombs, and drove 88,000 people from their homes in a single afternoon. Through the lens of this apocalyptic conflagration—the wildfire equivalent of Hurricane Katrina—John Vaillant warns that this was not a unique event but a shocking preview of what we must prepare for in a hotter, more flammable world.

With masterly prose and a cinematic eye, Vaillant takes us on a riveting journey through the intertwined histories of North America's oil industry and the birth of climate science, to the unprecedented devastation that modern forest fires wreak, and into lives forever changed by these disasters. His urgent work is a book for—and from—our new century of fire, which has only just begun.

If you have any questions about Women's Book Group, please contact Stephanie Grathwol - sargg.64@gmail.com

Click [HERE](#) to see their reading selections for the 2024/2025 church year.

Click [HERE](#) for the link.

Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981

Qigong Group

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



Click [HERE](#) for the TUESDAY Zoom link.
Meeting ID: 697 338 090 Passcode: 138550

Click [HERE](#) for the SATURDAY Zoom link.
Meeting ID: 977 5286 6838 Passcode: 383810

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

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, September 16** at **9:00 AM** the **Colonial Kitchen** located on Westnedge Ave (next to the Habitat for Humanity ReStore).

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— ronald.crowell@wmich.edu

UCC Quilting Bee

Kathy Hays, Pat Fuehr, and Marsha Laya are organizing a UCC “quilting bee” with the goal of completing three quilts that will be donated to the Kalamazoo Tiny House Project.

There are lots of ways to help. You can cut, sew, or press at the one of quilting bees held on Monday, **September 16, 23, and 30** from **12-5 PM**.

Come one of those days or all three. People of all skill levels and experience are welcome!

If you have any questions, contact Marsha at marshalaya@gmail.com



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Building Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time



The UCC Civil Conversations Group will begin meeting again in September! Civil Conversations is a dynamic gathering where we glean a deeper understanding of today's hotly contested topics and engage our individual perspectives in discussion as we strive to build the Beloved Community, one conversation at a time.

The group will meet over Zoom once a month, usually on a Wednesday. The September meeting will be on **Wednesday, September 18 at 7:00 PM** via Zoom. During this meeting, the group will review what it has learned so far about engaging in conversations with people who hold differing world views, practice some of the strategies can help building better understanding between people who disagree, and brainstorm possible discussion topics for future meetings.

Newcomers are always welcome to join this gathering and please feel free to invite friends with varying perspectives to this gathering.

Click [HERE](#) to be part of the conversation or visit tinyurl.com/CivilConvosSept2024

If you have any questions contact Darby (269-569-5557 or darbylynnfetzer@gmail.com).

Finding Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Foot Print

On the third Monday of the most months, the UCC Sustainability Group meets to reflect on their personal sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas for promoting sustainable living at UCC and in the wider community. The group's next meeting is on **Monday, September 16 at 7 PM** via Zoom. During the meeting they will be sharing some individual goals and brainstorming some group plans for the new church year. If you have been thinking about joining the Sustainability Group, now is a good time!



Click [HERE](#) to join. Zoom Meeting ID: 960 9812 1445 Passcode: 990641

If you have any questions about this group, contact Miriam (uucommunity@gmail.com).



Exploring Anti Racism

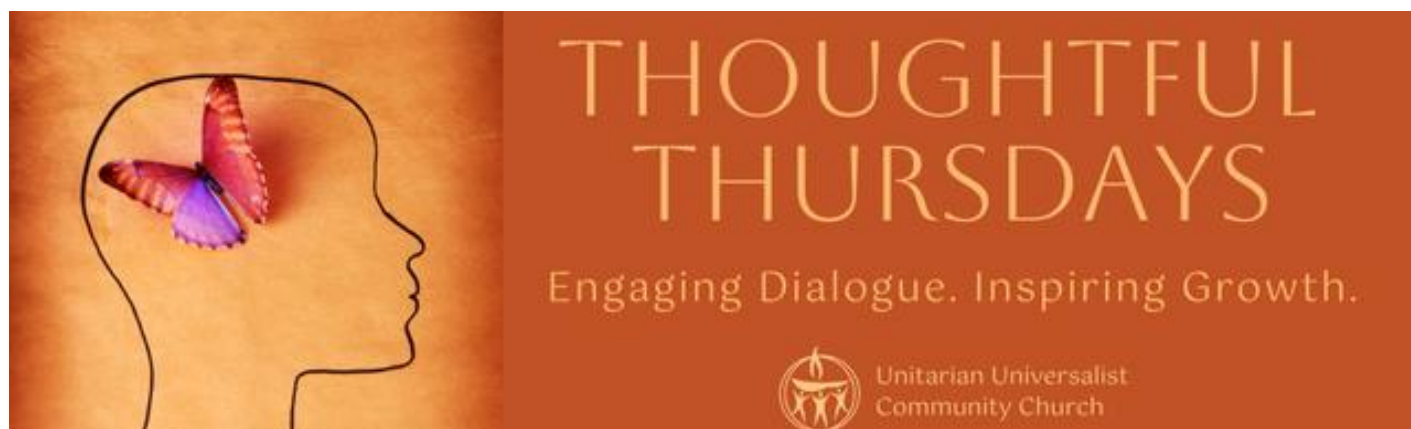
The UCC Exploring Anti-Racism Group will meet via Zoom at **7 PM** on **Thursday, September 26**. All are welcome to join this group as your schedule allows.

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. The conversations so far have been insightful

Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID 269 324 7262. If you have any questions about this small group, please contact Eric Nelson—ericvnelson1@gmail.com

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Thoughtful Thursdays at UUCC 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.



September 19: Faith and Climate Action with Molly Metchtenburg

Hope for Creation executive director Molly Metchtenburg will join us onsite and online to talk about her vision for creating "a model for faith-based environmental grassroots organizing." You can meet Molly at 7 PM at UUCC or on Zoom to be part of the conversation. To register visit tinyurl.com/HopeandClimate



October 24: Land of Light with Libby Slocum

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



November 14: Awakening and Transformation with Russell Bishop

Renowned life coach, mentor, bestselling author, and creator of Insight Seminars, Russell Bishop will join us to talk about awakening, transformation, self-improvement, and his latest book, *From Self-Talk to Soul Talk: Becoming More of Who You Truly Are*.

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.

LIVING FROM THE HEART

Mindful Living: Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind

On Zoom
1st and 3rd Tuesdays
7:00 - 8:00 PM
Starts October 1st



Eric Nelson

Discover peace and balance with bi-weekly mindfulness sessions, featuring teachings from "Essential Spirituality" and guided meditation practice. Join us to awaken your heart and mind!



Unitarian Universalist
Community Church

Introducing Mindful Living: Practices to Awaken the Heart and Mind

In today's fast-paced world, caring for our well-being is more important than ever. To support your journey toward health and spiritual growth, the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan (UUCC) is excited to offer a new, free, year-long course as part of its Living from the Heart programming. Beginning in October, Mindful Living will meet bi-weekly via Zoom on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7 pm.

Led by Mindfulness Trainer Eric Nelson, the course draws upon the wisdom of Roger Walsh's renowned book, *Essential Spirituality*. Each session will include instruction and guided meditation practice, exploring seven essential practices common to the world's great spiritual traditions: transforming motivation, cultivating emotional wisdom, ethical living, calming the mind, awakening spiritual vision, developing wisdom, and expressing spirit through service. These principles will help you develop emotional, spiritual, and mental balance in your daily life.

Join Eric to awaken your heart and mind! Register Now: tinyurl.com/AwakenTheHeart



**What we get from each moment depends
on the attention we give it,
and the quality of our experience
reflects the quality of our awareness.**

- Roger N. Walsh

CELEBRATE



Unitarian Universalist Community Church

Equinox Bonfire

Friday
September

20

6:00 PM

Hosted by
Kathy Hays

For directions to Kathy's house:
269.598.6132
hays.kathy16@gmail.com

Weenies and
S'mores provided.

Bring your own
preferred beverage.



Please bring a reading honoring the arrival of fall, the history of bonfires, equinox, a fall tradition, a ghost story, a joke, or any other bits of wisdom we should know, you will have a chance to share as we become mesmerized by the crackling fire.

OPPORTUNITIES

National Popular Vote

America is more politically divided than ever, yet many voters' voices go unheard. It seems we can't bridge the gap between our peers on some opposite side of the aisle to get things done. This is a symptom of our broken elections, but the folks Rank MI Vote believe that if we come together, we can work to fix it.



They are extending you an invitation to join your fellow

citizens at a Town Hall Meeting for a presentation of the problems with our current voting system and their ambitious plan for the solution: **Ranked Choice Voting.**

The Town Hall will take place **at UUCC on Thursday, September 26 at 6 PM.** You are encouraged to invite your friends, family, and neighbors to attend. At this Town Hall, you may ask any and all of your democracy reform questions.

This event is part of Rank MI Vote's "40 Town Halls in 40 Days" campaign taking place across the state this September and October. Click [HERE](#) to register for the event.



Our justice partners at [Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#) are hosting two Climate Justice Events in September on Zoom!

Energy Democracy

Thursday, September 5—6:30-8:30 PM

Guests from [MI Interfaith Power & Light](#) and [Souardarity](#) will join us to discuss taking our power back and investing in the future of a healthier planet.

Building Power through Connections and Intersections

Thursday, September 12—6:30-8:30 PM

Guests from CRAFT, Protect the Porkies, Clear the Air Coalition and 48217 will join us to discuss nuclear power, coal power, metallic sulfide mining, and the impact on water and air quality and how through these webs of connection/intersection we can share information, resources and build our power- People Power!

Speakers and registration information can be found here: <https://bit.ly/micjaa924>

Please register to receive a recording, even if you cannot attend. For questions or ideas contact: Jenny at Jennifer.a.teed@gmail.com

PEOPLE POWER



Help UUCC support suicide prevention at the 11th Annual Suicide Prevention Walk Resource Fair on September 2 from 8:30 –11 AM at Bronson Park. Contact the office if you would like to help staff our table –uucommunity@gmail.com. Thanks!

UU THE VOTE

UU THE VOTE 2024 PHONEBANK

Help reach out to **Michigan** voters before the November election!

RSVP: bit.ly/uutvmiphonebank

For other phone banking and poll monitoring in MI contact nomijoyrich@gmail.com



Among the core principles and values of Unitarian Universalism is a commitment to use inclusive democratic processes to make decisions. This does not happen on its own. With an important election season upon us, we are called to do the work of promoting democratic processes, including ensuring that all people who are eligible to vote can do so without hindrance.

The Michigan UU Social Justice Network team invites and encourages you and your congregation or fellowship to participate in several non-partisan election support activities taking place from the current primary election season through the November general election:

Phonebank with UU the Vote—We need YOUR help! Join UUs from all over the county reaching out to low-propensity voters in marginalized communities and encouraging them to vote. Please sign up to phonebank with us on September 10 and October 29. Visit bit.ly/uutvmiphonebank to register.

Volunteer to be a Poll Monitor— Poll monitoring is an important component of Election Protection, especially during this particular election season. Michigan UU Social Justice Network needs volunteers to help with poll monitoring during early voting and on election day. Training is provided and the work can take as little as two hours of your time. Please contact Nomi Joyrich—nomijoyrich@gmail.com - TODAY if you are able to be a poll monitor.

THIS NOVEMBER
VOLUNTEER TO MONITOR THE POLLS

UU the VOTE

UU EXPLORATION FOR KIDS

The kids at UUCC have been preparing for the coming church year by searching for treasure! They have heard stories about treasure, made spyglasses, painted treasure chests, went on a scavenger hunt, and searched for clues that lead to an unexpected treasure. They also made a list of things that they think are treasure (to name a few):

- Money
- Pokémon Cards
- Roblox Robux
- Legos
- Ice Cream
- Friends
- Family
- Memories
- Happiness
- Peace
- Love



Painting a Treasure Chest



The things we create can be a treasure too!

They also discovered that **they** are a treasure to their family and friends.

All this practice searching for treasure should come in handy in September when we start lessons from the **Love Surrounds Us** curriculum. Each week the kids will be searching for the ways Love shows up in our homes, schools, neighborhoods, and world. What a perfect way for us to explore UUCC’s spiritual theme for the year Putting Love at the Center! If all goes as planned (knock on wood), these lessons should take us through the end of the calendar year and we will start with a new love-centered curriculum in January.

The kids will have several opportunities in the coming months to stay upstairs and join the adults in the worship service. It is good for both kids and adults to participate in multi-generational activities. We will do our best to include songs, stories, and activities during these services that will appeal to people of all ages.

The multi-generational services on the calendar are:

- September 8—Water Communion**
- September 29—UU Climate Revival**
- November 17—Bread Communion**
- December 22—Winter Solstice**
- December 29—The Burning Bowl**

DATE	LESSON	VOLUNTEERS
September 1	Love Surrounds Us	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt
September 8	Multigenerational Service	N/A
September 15	Sharing	Kathy Hays
September 22	Forgiveness	Mary Roscoe
September 29	Multigenerational Service	N/A

FAREWELL CHRIS



Farewell and Thank You for the Beautiful Music!

We bid our Music Director, Chris Petermark a bittersweet farewell on Sunday, August 25. We are grateful to have met Chris and for all the beautiful music he has shared with us over the last two years. We are currently searching for Chris's replacement. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please have them submit a resume and sample performance to uuccdre@gmail.com



SEPTEMBER



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Sunday	September 1	<i>There is Room for All</i> with Rev Gy; UU Explorations for Kids	10:00 AM
Tuesday	September 3	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 4	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	September 5	Stewardship Committee Meeting	1:00 PM
Friday	September 6	Lifeline Health Screening	9 AM—4 PM
Saturday	September 7	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	September 8	<i>E Pluribus Unum: A Water Communion Service</i> with Rev Gy Souper Sunday Possible Program Council Meeting Memorial Open House for Linsey Furry	10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM 1:00 PM
Tuesday	September 10	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 11	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	September 12	Growth Team Meeting	10:00 AM
Friday	September 13	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	September 14	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	September 15	<i>Wisdom</i> with Rev. Harold Beu; UU Exploration for Kids	10:00 AM
Monday	September 16	UUCQ Quilting Bee Sustainability Group	12-5 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	September 17	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 18	Civil Conversations Group	7:00 PM
Thursday	September 19	Thoughtful Thursday with Molly Metchtenberg	7:00 PM
Friday	September 20	Autumnal Equinox Bonfire at Eagle Lake	6:00 PM
Saturday	September 21	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group at Colonial Kitchen	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	September 22	<i>Global Ties</i> with Lori Hope Michaels; UU Exploration for Kids	10:00 AM
Monday	September 23	UUCQ Quilting Bee	12-5 PM
Tuesday	September 24	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	September 25	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Spiritual Growth Group (Closed Group)	12:00 PM 6:30 PM
Thursday	September 26	Rank Choice Voting Town Hall Exploring Anti-Racism Group	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
Saturday	September 28	Qigong UU Climate Revival Workshop at Peoples Church and on Zoom	9:00 AM 1-5:30 PM
Sunday	September 29	<i>Reimagine Together: A UU Climate Revival</i> with the Sustainability Group Climate Justice Advocacy Hour Vegetarian Feast Potluck	10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:30 AM
Monday	September 30	UUCQ Quilting Bee	12-5 PM

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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Consulting Minister
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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, September 25 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

CommUUnity Matters

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