



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

October 2024

## OCTOBER SUNDAY SERVICES

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

### October 6: *Helping Others Helps Us* with Melanie Hooker

Melanie Hooker, Executive Director of the Paw Paw-based Domestic Violence Coalition will tell us about their programs, how they help others, and why this work is so rewarding.

Zoom Meeting ID: 987 3974 5710 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### October 13: *Coming Out Sunday* with Rev. Gy

In honor of LGBTQIA+ History Month and National Coming Out Day, we will celebrate the courageous ways that LGBTQIA+ folk live their authentic lives.

Zoom Meeting ID: 922 2333 9330 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### October 20: *Inside Out* with Rev. Gy

Join Rev. Gy for an exploration of the connection between the body and mind and how it impacts our ability to flourish.

Zoom Meeting ID: 998 3503 3476 Click [HERE](#) to register.

### October 27 : *Calm Within the Storm of Stress* with Fred Stella

While not a panacea all by itself, a consistent meditation practice is a very useful tool when it is included in a holistic regimen of meeting the needs of our mental and emotional well-being. Research shows that it has become indispensable in the treatment of returning military personnel suffering from PTSD. One would assume few of us are facing more challenging issues than that. Join our guest Fred Stella for an exploration of meditation.

Zoom Meeting ID: 945 3327 9487 Click [HERE](#) to register.



## Spiritual Theme for October GROWING IN SELF-LOVE

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

In October, we will focus on ways to support wellness in body and mind.

Cultivating self-love and strategies for self-care is essential if we are to grow and flourish on a personal level and in relationship to others. The work of being in a good, healthy, love-centered relationship with ourselves helps us be in a good, healthy, love-centered relationship with others and the world around us.

Our shared Unitarian Universalist values insist that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion. It is important that we recognize that “every person” includes us.

Questions to ponder this month:

*What are the things you genuinely love about yourself?*

*How do you practice self-compassion?*

*How are your bodily experiences affected by your emotional or spiritual experiences? Vice versa?*



# GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

***We are excited to welcome these guests to our pulpit in October***



**Melanie Hooker** has been with the Domestic Violence Coalition of Van Buren County since 2009. In October 2015, she went from victim advocacy to Executive Director. During her tenure with DVC she has added sexual assault services, migrant outreach services with a bilingual advocate, an emergency response team, LGBTQ+ and teen programming, offender programming, and is looking at Human trafficking services. She is a leader for several committees and community partnerships, volunteers for the Victim Service Unit for both Van Buren and Allegan Counties, and recently graduated with a BS in Criminal Justice which she hopes to use to further help victims of violence.

**Frederick Stella** was raised in an Italian-American Catholic family in Detroit, Michigan. It was in high school where he was introduced to the Hindu Dharma while taking a course in World Religions. This began a spiritual journey that led him to fully embrace the Dharma at the age of 33. Over these many years Fred has received training in Hindu theology and practice in ashrams and temples in the USA and India. In 2009 Fred was ordained by the West Michigan Hindu Temple as Mandir Pracharak (Outreach Minister). In this role, Fred is quite active appearing at schools, colleges, churches and civic organizations to teach the basics of Hinduism. He also acts as a spiritual counselor and meditation teacher. Since 2015 Fred has served on the National Leadership Council of the Hindu American Foundation, working in advocacy, education and community relations. Professionally, Fred Stella is a commercial actor. His career has included work in Radio, TV, Film, Stage and Web content. Most of his effort for the past 2 decades has been in the field of narrating and directing audiobooks. He has over 200 to his credit.



Our October Thoughtful Thursday guest, **Libby Slocum**, has had a lifelong interest in spirituality and healing. She pursued meditation, nutrition, various bodywork therapies, and then became a Board Certified Acupuncturist. She has shared one-on-one healing sessions for over 35 years. After 30 years of Acupuncture and 40 years of seminars in a wide array of natural healing techniques, Libby has felt a deep calling to share her many healing modalities and technologies, as well as her knowledge and gifts with a broader audience. In 2018, she and her partner Mary Ann Scott purchased 40 beautiful acres 10 minutes west of Kalamazoo to offer a healing environment in nature, where people could more easily reconnect with their deeper selves. Libby's goal is to empower others by teaching "how to" and sharing the wisdom of those 40 years of experience and amazing healing seminars from around the world. Our October Thoughtful Thursday with Libby Slocum will take place on Zoom at 7 PM on Thursday, October 24. Registration information can be found on [page 15](#).

# GENEROSITY GIVING

## Generosity Giving for October

Periodically UU Community Church holds special “Generosity Sunday” collections to support local organizations that promote justice, equity, and inclusion in our community.

**THE  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
COALITION,  
INC.**

Our Generosity Sunday recipient for October is the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC) of Van Buren County. Started by two women from Paw Paw in 1996 with hopes of helping those who were abused by their partners, the Domestic Violence Coalition has been providing free services to the residents of Van Buren County affected by the crime of domestic violence for nearly 30 years. In 2004, DVC added sexual assault services to its list of no-cost resources. The mission of the DVC is to provide compassionate assistance to victims of sexual and

domestic violence and to work toward eliminating these crimes in the community.

Domestic violence and abuse are critical problems in our communities occurring every minute of every day, just about every 15 seconds. To help support services and victims in a meaningful way, our goal for this Generosity Giving campaign is \$1000. Donations of any amount are gratefully appreciated but it would only take ten UCC folks writing a check for \$100 to get us to our goal. If it is yours to do, please consider giving generously.

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

- You can place a check made out to UCC with Generosity Sunday the memo in the offering basket anytime in October. 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 October 6 to DVC.



## We Want to Hear Your Story!

Everyone has a story, and we want to hear yours! We plan to pattern our service on **Sunday, November 24** after public radio's Moth Story Hour in which anyone can share a true, personal, 5-minute story centered on a chosen theme. Our theme for November 24

is **Awakening, Self-Discovery, and Transformation.**

If you have a good story to share that fits in some way with any part of this theme, come and pitch it to our service coordinators **Mary Roscoe** and **Miriam Epskamp**. The stories can be simple family memories, funny anecdotes, poignant incidents, or a retelling of a profound experience. Come, tell us your story and help create a unique and inspiring service.

# FROM THE MINISTER



## From the Minister

*Our guest perspective this month comes from the **Rev. Dr. Rebekah Savage**, the Senior Minister at the UU Congregation of Rockville, MD. This essay first appeared in [Braver/Wiser](#) in October of 2018.*

*Die before you die. / موتوا قبل أن تموتوا*

—regarded by Sufis as a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad

When I first heard of this spiritual teaching from the Sufis, I was miffed. What sense did that make: "Die before you die"? I thought about all of the suffering in the world. A teaching that emphasized more of the loss and grief of death just didn't make sense.

Then I fell in love with someone who made the world come alive. They brought magic and wonder to the way I beheld the world; I believed in myself and the infinite possibilities of a transformative love. They sent me flowers, wrote love poems, and showered me with words of affirmation and adoration. I was so far gone for them.... far, far out there in love.

Die before you die.

What died first was the crumbling of the fantasy they projected into the world of what we could be as a family.

Die before you die.

What died next was their word, their integrity, their cherishing of us.

Die before you die.

What died next was their respect for my body, for my voice, for my words of patience and acceptance.

Die before you die.

What died next was a layer of my own self-respect and a portion of my heart.

I died again and again over the course of that relationship: little deaths that coated my skin like a burnt coating — a layer of a previous life and dreams — encrusted and enfolded my heart.

Have you ever watched traditional pottery come out of a fire? The clay shape emerges from the flames, buried in burning wood and ash, and the potter has to cool and rub the clay form so that the beauty can emerge. What cooled and rubbed away the burnt coating around my heart was the hard work of spiritual self-reflection, self-care, and good old-fashioned love and acceptance from cherished friends.

Die before you die. What also had to die was my shame and my belief that I was not worthy of such love. These deaths are each precious to me as gifts along the journey — not towards a great love with someone else, but a greater love within myself as a creation of God, worthy of these gifts.



# UUCC QUILTING BEE

Mission accomplished in record time! The **UUCC Quilting Bee** organized by **Kathy Hays, Pat Fuehr,** and **Marsha Laya** has completed its goal of completing three quilts tops that will eventually be made into quilts that will be donated to the Kalamazoo Tiny House Project.

The team delivered the quilt tops to the volunteers who will be long-arm quilting ahead of schedule and they hope the quilting will be completed by October 11 so the finished quilts can be on display at the church on October 13 and 20. They hope you will come see and these lovely creations.

Kudos to all the volunteers who donated their scraps and their time, cutting, sewing, pressing, and pinning for more than 10 hours to produce these three wonderful quilts. Not only are the quilts lovely, but everyone had a great time working together for a wonderful cause.

Donations are still being accepted for expenses which include the backing, binding, batting, and thread and needles for the long-arm quilters. We expect expenses will not exceed \$300. If it is within your means and you desire to do so, you may make a donation to UUCC by check or using our online giving platform. Be sure to add "Tiny House" to the memo so your donation is directed to this project.



# CARING COMMUNITY



## OCTOBER CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

What is the best car to drive in October to take in the fall colors?  
An autumn-mobile.

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

Thank you to all who helped with the memorial open house for Linsey Furry - **Nick Tasko, Stephanie Grathwol, Sherrie VandePutte, Nancy and Joe Calme, Rev. Gy, Ken VanEsletine, Bev Folz, Tami and Kevin Brozovich, and Judy Halseth.** **Kendra Charboneau** (nee Furry) made a donation to UUCC as a gesture of gratitude on behalf of Linsey's family. Kendra shared, "Thank you so much for all the work everyone put into my mother's memorial celebration. You made the entire process so easy for us, which allowed us to have a beautiful day remembering. We are so appreciative of your support."

There have been quite a few medical surprises within our community:

**Kathy Hays** is grateful for all the positive healing thoughts and prayers she received as she recovered from treatment for a brain aneurysm. She amazed us with her rapid rebound!

**Ron Crowell** was hospitalized for pneumonia and when he got home to recover, **Nancy Crowell** fell and broke her hip. What a tough month September has been for them both.

**Pat Timm** fractured her knee.

**Stephanie Grathwol** fell while doing yard work and broke her wrist.

**Judy Pigg-Behrendt** will undergo neck surgery in early October.

It has not been not all bad news, though:

**Erin and Tim Michael** were lucky enough to travel to Los Angeles recently to visit their daughter **Kelin** and see the exhibit she and three of her colleagues curated. It was at the J Paul Getty Museum from June through the end of August 2024. The title of the exhibit was *The Book of Marvels: Wonder and Fear in the Middle Ages*. More good news is that son **Liam** started a new job! He is in Lakewood, CO, and is the lead digital print press operator for a family-owned printing company and enjoying it! They also share that their daughter, **Brinna**, will be moving to Ithaca, NY, at the end of October to start a new job at Cornell University. She will be working as a metadata librarian helping staff, faculty, and students best use the library system resources in the visual arts for their research. We love hearing about how our former UUCC RE "kids" are doing and we are delighted that Tim and Erin have so much joy to share!

**Judy Halseth** is being honored as one of 50 Over 60, by the Area Agency on Aging of Berrien, Cass, & Van Buren County as part of their 50th Anniversary Celebration on October 3 at Lake Michigan College. Here is what they have to say about her: *Judith Halseth, 80s, Paw Paw, spent her career as a professor of social work at Western Michigan University and has continued to teach, serve and impact her community in her retirement. She has a passion for genealogy and has shared that passion with others by teaching genealogy courses.* (More on [page 7](#))

# CARING COMMUNITY

*Judy also serves as the vice president of the Van Buren County Domestic Violence Coalition, is an active member of her church, and sings in the Paw Paw Community Chorus. We have always known how amazing Judy is and we are so happy she is being recognized by her community for it!*

**Rev. Gy and Patti** enjoyed an amazing once-in-a-lifetime cruise along the Alaskan coast in September. While on the ship they received notice that **Patti** will be awarded the American Ambulance Association's Stars of Life award at a conference in Washington D.C. in November. Congratulations!

**Isaac Epskamp-Hunt** began a new job in September in the IT department at Bronson Hospital's Battle Creek campus. Hooray!



**Darby and Bruce Fetzer** were delighted to welcome a new member to their family when daughter **Grace** was married to Kyle Dickson on September 21. The wedding ceremony was beautiful and everyone is overjoyed

And last but not least, UUCC hired a new Music Director! Originally from Whitmore Lake, MI, **Luke Kritzman** is in his third year studying piano performance at Western Michigan University. He also currently serves as WMU Student Body Vice President. We are so happy to have Luke join us. Welcome to UUCC!



## Happy Birthday!

Many of our past and present members, and friends, are having their birthdays in October.  
3 – **Ellie Epskamp**, 5 – **Joan Young**, 7 – **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson**, 8 – **Judy Halseth**,  
9 – **Grayson Tasko**, 24 – **Terry Tessari**, 30 – **Carol Higgins**, 31 – **Barb McWhorter**

## In Memorium:

Let us remember UUCC members and friends who have passed on.

**Dorothea Tompkins**—Oct 2, 1915 - Oct. 13, 1996

**Jean Houston**—Nov. 20, 1912 - Oct. 27, 1999

**Donald Mollhagen**—Oct.20,1919 - Oct. 20. 2011

**Barbara Maddox**— June 25, 1925 - Oct. 13, 2014

**Jim Heveran**—July 6, 1940 - Oct. 1, 2021

**Welcome Visitors:** We are so glad that **Gene Orlin, Emily and Jessica Sherwood, Heather, Norlyn Dimmitt, Marcia, Tressa Crosman,** and **Jameson Whitney** and **their family** visited us this month. We also were treated to visits from out-of-town family members including Joe and Nancy Calme's son **Ryan** and their grandson **Gordon** and Mary Roscoe's family **Peace, Justin,** and **Rachel**. We hope to see you all again soon!

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



# LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees met on September 4. Here are some of the things they accomplished:

- Elected **Pat Fuehr** as Board Secretary.
- Reviewed the Growth Team's progress and goals for 2024/2025
- Approved UCC's participation in a Spirituality Study conducted by a WMU Ph.D. candidate.

To learn more, click [HERE](#) to read the minutes of the meeting. 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.



Mark your calendars for the exciting **UCC 2024 Service and Goods Auction on November 9 at 5 PM**. Whether you're joining us in person at UCC or tuning in via Zoom, this event promises fun and excitement for everyone!

Do you have a taste for homemade pies, themed dinners, or fresh vegetable boxes? Or, are you craving social events like beach outings, pickleball, kayaking, or group bike rides? You could even learn a new hobby or get some help with chores. These and many more unique offerings can be yours for the highest bid at the Service Auction.

The night kicks off with a delicious meal featuring mushroom paprikash (vegetarian) and chicken paprikash, along with homemade bread, desserts, and beverages—just \$10 per adult.

From 5 to 6 p.m., peruse the Silent Auction tables, brimming with jewelry, books, decor, and more!

At 6 p.m., the real excitement begins as legendary auctioneer Lee Smittendorf leads the live auction of special services and events. After the auction, you'll receive an email with your total purchases and payment options.

Let's make this year's auction unforgettable! Sign up to donate and RSVP by November 3 using this link: [forms.gle/fgVrVWKqdoRCobhG9](https://forms.gle/fgVrVWKqdoRCobhG9)

Questions? Talk to any member of the Stewardship Committee  
- **Joe Calme, Ron Crowell, Marsha Laya, or Chair Regena Nelson.**





# IN COMMUNITY



***Autumnal Equinox  
Bonfire 2024***

# 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 took time to **CELEBRATE** at our September meeting! We were grateful to the **Rev. Gy, Eric Nelson**, and the **Sunday Service Committee** for the great Sunday services we enjoyed in August. We were delighted to meet a new friend, the **Rev. Leonetta Bugleisi**, and appreciated her comments about how bright, clean, organized, and welcoming our space is. (As a retired minister, she visits a LOT of UU congregations and she let us know this is a cause for celebration because it isn't always the case in the churches she visits.) We also celebrated the kick of our 2024/2025 Thoughtful Thursday speakers series with an insightful conversation with **Roger Walsh**. Things are going great at UUCC!

During our September meeting, we also talked about:

- The upcoming goods and services Auction on November 9. Be sure to save the date on your calendar and visit [page 8](#) to RSVP and donate items.
- A Ph.D. candidate at WMU who would like to visit UUCC, observe our services, and interview congregants for her dissertation: ***Varieties of Spiritual But not Religious: An Exploration of the Spaces Between Religion and Secularity in the United States***. The Board has signed off on this plan and will share more information about the project as it becomes available.
- **Open House Theatre Company** is planning to put on a production of ***The Night Before Christmas*** by Deborah Ann Percy and Arnold Johnston in December. Details about auditions and show dates can be found on [page 20](#).

At their annual retreat, the Board discussed the purpose and efficacy of monthly Program Council meeting and considered the input of the people who filled out a Program Council Survey last month. The consensus was that the meetings provide an important avenue for communication between the board, committees, and the congregation and should continue on a regular basis. There may be changes to the format and agenda as we try to make the best use of the time and not repeat things that people already know from other communications.

If you have any questions about Program Council or would like to add something to the agenda, contact **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson** ([kragains1@gmail.com](mailto:kragains1@gmail.com)). The next Program Council meeting will be on Sunday, October 13 at around 11:20 AM.

**Souper Sunday**, our monthly soup luncheon to benefit the Youth Program will also take place on **October 13** prior to the Program Council. 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 ([lizoflynn@gmail.com](mailto:lizoflynn@gmail.com))





# CONNECTION



## Women's Book Group

**October 11  
1:00 PM**

### ***Becoming Madame Secretary***

by Stephanie Dray  
Discussion Leader:  
**Denise Hartsough**

From Goodreads:

*New York Times bestselling author Stephanie Dray returns with a captivating and dramatic new novel about an American heroine Frances Perkins. Raised on tales of her revolutionary ancestors, young Frances arrives in New York City at the turn of the century, armed with her trusty parasol and an unyielding determination to make a difference.*

*Frances is destined to rise in a political world dominated by men, facing down the Great Depression as FDR's most trusted lieutenant—even as she struggles to balance the demands of a public career with marriage and motherhood. And when vicious political attacks mount and personal tragedies threaten to derail her ambitions, she must decide what she's willing to do—and what she's willing to sacrifice—to save a nation.*

If you have any questions about Women's Book Group, please contact Stephanie Grathwol -[sargg.64@gmail.com](mailto:sargg.64@gmail.com)

Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom meeting link:  
Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981

## Game Gathering

Our 1st Saturday Game Gathering is back!

We would love to see you on **October 5** from **1-4 PM**. You are welcome to bring your favorite game, a snack to share, and a beverage of your choice. Tea, coffee, and cocoa will be provided. You can bring a friend too! Childcare is available for anyone who needs it. We hope you can join us for some fellowship and fun!



## 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](mailto:freyalake@sbcglobal.net)

## UUCU Breakfast Group

The UUCU Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, October 19** at **9:00 AM** at 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 UUCU members and friends.

Please RSVP to Ron Crowell if you plan to attend— [ronald.crowell@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.crowell@wmich.edu)

## Hayride and Campfire

The Hayride and Campfire outing sold at last year's auction is coming up soon on Sunday, **October 13** from **5:30-8:00 PM** at **Larry and Carol Higgin's** house in Mendon (less than a 30-minute drive from church.)

Winners of this auction item should bring a lawn chair and a blanket. Snacks to share are optional but welcome.

There are a few spaces left on the hay wagon, so if you didn't buy this at the auction and would like to take part, contact Carol at [covecarol34@gmail.com](mailto:covecarol34@gmail.com) today.





# IN COMMUNITY



2024  
SUICIDE PREVENTION  
walk

We are grateful for UCC volunteers **Kathy Hays, Joel Folkert, Mike Graham, and Harold Beu** who participated in the 11th Annual Suicide Prevention Walk Celebration at Bronson Park on September 21. Showing up for those whose lives have been impacted by suicide helps to end stigma and build a Beloved Community that benefits us all.

# MINDFUL LIVING

## Mindful Living: Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind

2nd and 4th Mondays on Zoom

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Starts October 14th



Eric Nelson



Unitarian Universalist  
Community Church

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!

Join UUC member and mindfulness expert **Eric Nelson** for a new **Mindful Living Course**, starting **October 14**. Designed for both new and seasoned practitioners, the course features bi-weekly sessions that include guided meditations, insights from **Essential Spirituality** by Roger Walsh, and engaging community dialogues.

With no long-term commitment, participants can choose to attend sessions month-by-month, integrating mindfulness into daily life at a comfortable pace. This 9-month series is structured to help you develop emotional resilience, cultivate self-compassion, and foster deep, meaningful relationships.

### Monthly Themes:

October: Concentrate and Calm Your Mind

November: Transform Your Motivation

December: Cultivate Emotional Wisdom

January: Live Ethically

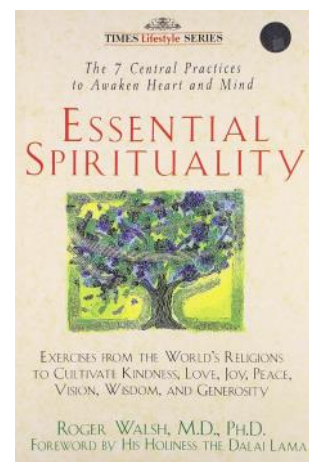
February: Awaken Your Spiritual Vision

March: Cultivate Spiritual Intelligence

April: Express Spirit in Action

May: Bringing Practice Into Your Speech and Relationships

June: Sustaining Your Practice



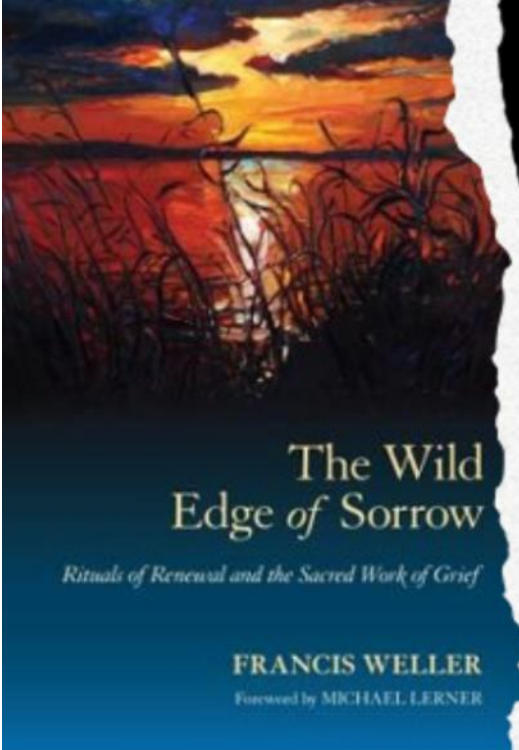
Sessions run **every 2nd and 4th Monday** from **7-8 PM** via Zoom. Join Eric for an enriching experience that guides you toward a more mindful, balanced life and discover the transformative power of mindfulness!

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





# GRIEF WORKSHOP



**The Wild Edge of Sorrow**  
Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief  
FRANCIS WELLER  
Foreword by MICHAEL LERNER

## The Sacred Work of Grief

A 90-minute mini-workshop  
Based on the book by Francis Weller  
With Rev. Tracey Laveque  
Tuesday, October 29  
7 PM via Zoom

*“This book rings a shivering bell of hope: that, when lifted by ritual and fellowship, the moist ground of grief actually contains a treasury of gifts that are our ancestral birthright.”*

## The Sacred Work of Grief Workshop

*Where there is grief, there is sacred ground.* ~ Oscar Wilde

We are excited to be joined by Rev. Tracy Laveque, graduate of One Spirit Interfaith Seminary and the Art of Death and Dying Institute for a special 90-minute mini-workshop on the Sacred Work of Grief, **Tuesday, October 29 at 7 PM** on Zoom.

During this workshop, we will look at grief through a larger lens and explore our own experiences of sorrow and loss. Relying heavily on Francis Weller’s book *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, we will pursue these goals:

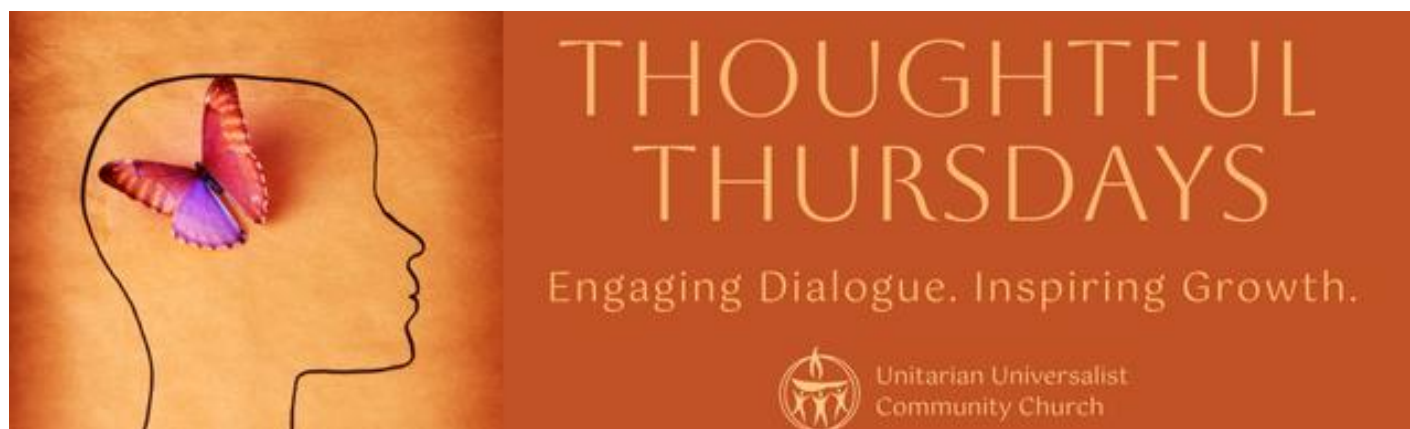
- Understand grief as sacred spiritual work, and essential to Life.
- Identify the five “gates” of grief as understood by Francis Weller.
- Contemplate our own experience with each source of loss, and what challenges and invitations grief is presenting to us.
- Explore using ritual as a tool for processing and moving through grief.
- Discuss the Spiritual Community’s role in supporting individuals and moving through collective grief and loss.

It is not necessary to have read the book to participate in this interactive exploration of grief as spiritual practice. Fair warning though, this workshop will likely inspire you to go deeper into this rich aspect of our humanity.

Please click [HERE](#) to register for this event or visit [tinyurl.com/uuccsacredgrief](https://tinyurl.com/uuccsacredgrief)



# 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.



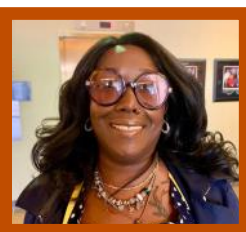
## **October 24: Land of Light with Libby Slocum**

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. Click [HERE](#) to register for the Zoom meeting or visit [tinyurl.com/LandOfLight](https://tinyurl.com/LandOfLight)



## **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*.



## **December 12: Generosity of Spirit with Gwendolyn Hooker**

Gwendolyn Hooker is someone in our community who exemplifies generosity of spirit. She is involved with so many organizations and initiatives in the City of Kalamazoo we couldn't possibly list them all here. She will join us to talk about not only the things she does in the community but also what motivates her and her commitment to service to others and how that has impacted her life.

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.

# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

## Building Beloved Community One Conversation at a Time



The UCC Civil Conversations Group meets once a month via Zoom to help participants learn the skills that will help them engage in more meaningful conversations with family, friends, and others to authentically build a more Beloved Community. The group's next meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 16 at 7 PM**. At this gathering, we will:

- Review what it takes to have a Civil Conversation
- Share Civil Conversations we have recently
- Explore our attitudes and ideas about the **unhoused population**

As a source of informed perspective, Sarah Gerstner has graciously offered to attend our Zoom meeting. Sarah has worked closely with residents of local encampments and was a first responder when people were displaced from their homes and mobile homes after the tornado in May. Sarah currently works as a manager for Visiting Angels and somehow finds time to attend to the needs of those unhoused in Kalamazoo.

As always feel free to invite friends and families to join these conversations. To register click [HERE](#) or visit [tinyurl.com/CivilConvosOct24](http://tinyurl.com/CivilConvosOct24).

## Finding Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Foot Print

On the third Monday of 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, October 21 at 7 PM** via Zoom. During the meeting the group will debrief the UU Climate Justice Revival and plan some follow up activities.

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](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)).



## Exploring Anti Racism

The UCC Exploring Anti-Racism Group will meet via Zoom at **7 PM** on **Tuesday, October 22**. 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 very 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—[ericnelson1@gmail.com](mailto:ericnelson1@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 Change - The Importance of Legislation

According to the EPA's Facility Level Information on Green House Gasses Tool (FLIGHT), in 2022 the four largest non-governmental emissions polluters in Kalamazoo County are Graphic Packaging International (245,837 metric tons), Pharmacia & Upjohn Co. (91,563 MT), Kalamazoo River Generating Plant (71,758 MT), and Western University (65,240 MT). The only one that has significantly reduced their emissions between 2010 and 2022, was Upjohn which went from 135,204 MT to 91,563 MT.

This is an example of why carbon fees are necessary to reduce GHGs. Why should entities spend money reducing GHGs if there is no repercussion when it's not done? After all, aren't companies supposed to work for their shareholders with ever increasing profits, rather than for the public good. In countries where carbon fees have been enacted, businesses have a financial incentive to reduce their emissions because the carbon fee grows year after year and becomes too expensive for the company to ignore, ensuring that they start to reduce their emissions.

Without powerful, enforceable, Federal legislation climate change can and will be ignored until it's possibly too late to mitigate the potential damages. For an example of State legislation, look at Community Solar.

In Kalamazoo we have Consumers Energy. This is a "natural monopoly" regulated by the State. There are a couple of options open to customers wanting to install or use solar panels. First, home owners can install solar panels on their property up to 110% of their annual usage. They sell the generated electricity to Consumers at wholesale pricing and buy back their actual usage at market price. They are now a wholesaler, rather than getting one for one as they used to do. Second, you can pay a monthly fee to buy into one of Consumers "solar gardens" and then pay a set price for your usage. This generally costs more than your standard bill but you are supporting the growth of solar power.

Community Solar would allow a private company to install a small solar farm and sell its electricity to customers. It would tie into Consumers grid, so there still would be a distribution cost on the bill but the total would be less expensive since the price of the electricity is less. (One of the truisms of economics is that monopolies charge more!) Also a number of community solar laws require that a certain percentage of the electricity generated is reserved for low income individuals in order to lower their costs. (More on [page 18](#))



# CLIMATE ACTION

Community Solar would also allow people who can't install their own solar panels, for whatever reason, to still be able to use renewable energy without incurring additional costs and at a cost savings.

There is currently a community solar law in the Michigan House and Senate co-sponsored by Democrats and Republicans which can't even make it out of the respective committees even when supported by both parties.

These are just one example of potential legislation. Both the House and Senate bills have been introduced over a number of years but due to lobbying efforts by the fossil fuel and utility companies are stagnant in their respective legislatures.

A couple of additional examples of changes which would need legislation are:

- Make polluters pay for the full extent of their pollution no matter how old the pollution is and start paying into a remediation fund to clean up sites as they're closed;
- Ensure all new buildings should be electric only
- Eliminate use of fossil fuels such as natural gas and propane.

There are a lot more changes which should and could be made if we had legislators concerned about the future.

This is an election year, and we need representatives at all levels of government willing to take the risk and start passing meaningful legislation. Become a Climate Voter! Your vote matters. Your vote is your voice so make sure you are heard both on November 5 and frequently afterwards through letters, texts, and in person meetings with your legislators. Vote and potentially make a difference in our fight for Climate Justice.

Sincerely, *Nicky*

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



Please consider **phone banking** with the [Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#) this election season. They are calling people in historically marginalized communities who don't tend to vote. Their goal is to identify and help overcome obstacles to voting. These are strictly nonpartisan calls.

MUUSJN phone banks **most weekday evenings** from **5-8:30 PM** and on **weekends** from about **1-5 PM**. They will continue to make calls up to election day. (You can pick dates and times that work for you.)

Each phone bank begins with a oom meet-up. The Zoom room remains open the entire phone bank so you can pop back in if you have any questions or concerns.

If you can help us, please fill out this form: [bit.ly/MUUSJNphonebanks](https://bit.ly/MUUSJNphonebanks)

You will be added to the email list and will receive an email every Friday with the phone banking schedule for the next week. You will need a laptop, computer, or other device to log into ThruTalk (GetThru).

# OPPORTUNITIES



## On the Art Wall

During October and November, we are delighted to display a selection of pastels and watercolor pieces by local artist **Beverly Comins**.

About her artwork, Beverly writes:

*My love for art began as a child. I was always doodling, drawing, or painting. As an elementary school teacher, I used art in my classroom to help students express themselves.*

*Being able to watercolor paint and work in pastels has been a gift in my life. Painting is a form of meditation for me, bringing me great peace and happiness. It helps me escape into my own world. I love experimenting with different color combinations, designs, and shapes. I'm a life-long student of art, and continue to take art classes, learning along the way.*

*I feel so lucky to be able to spend time doing something I love so much.*

The selection of pieces on display at UUCC all feature water in some way. Many of them are available for purchase.

## KALAMAZOO WOMEN'S MARCH



DATE AND TIME

**13 OCTOBER 2024**  
1:00PM - 3:00PM

LOCATION

**BRONSON PARK**  
200 S ROSE ST, KALAMAZOO

**WE'RE NOT GOING BACK!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

INSTAGRAM: KZOO\_WOMENS\_MARCH  
FACEBOOK: KALAMAZOO WOMEN'S MARCH

A day of commitment to action is being planned on **Sunday, October 13** from **1:00 to 3:00 PM** at Bronson Park in Kalamazoo. There will be speakers, music, a march, organizations with tables, and of course fun!

The tentative Schedule of Speakers include Paula Thornton from Planned Parenthood Michigan; Kim Shaw from the Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo; Dr. Kenlana Ferguson from Michigan Transformation Collective, Martha Omillian and Maya Davis from Moms Demand Action; Jeanne Hess, Kalamazoo Vice-Mayor and more!

**Plant-Based Party!**

**12 pm - 4 pm**  
**Sunday, October 6**

1204 BANK STREET, KALAMAZOO

KALAMAZOO Farmers Market

PFCMARKETS.COM

The **People's Plant-Based Party** is the annual vegan market organized by the Peoples Food Co-op and Vegan Kalamazoo. Head down to the Kalamazoo Farmers Market on **Sunday, October 6** from **12-4 PM** at the Kalamazoo Farmers Market to shop local artisans and try delicious vegan foods from local restaurants and food trucks. Replacing some of your meals with a plant-based menu is one of the ways that you can live more gently on the earth and the Plant-Based Party is a great way to learn how!



# OPEN HOUSE THEATRE

# AUDITIONS

## The Night Before Christmas

*A Play by Deborah Ann Percy and Arnold Johnston*

*Performance Dates: December 13, 14, and 15*

October 11, 4-7 PM

Oct 12, 10 AM - 3 PM

Casting 5 children and 10 adults



10441 SHAVER ROAD  
PORTAGE MICHIGAN

Questions? Contact us at  
[ucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:ucommunity@gmail.com)

The excitement, joy, and fun of the theater camp we held this summer have inspired us to expand our program. We are proud to announce Open House Theatre Company will be producing **The Night Before Christmas**, a one-hour, interactive, and charming play for the whole family. Please mark your calendars and join us! December 13th, December 14th at 6:00 PM, or December 15th at 2:00 PM.



# OPPORTUNITIES

- Attorney, consultant and human rights advocate
- Advocates for the rights of Indigenous Peoples before United Nations and Organization of American States bodies
- Member and clerk of session at Laguna United Presbyterian Church (Pueblo of Laguna)



Presbyterian Mission  
**Presbyterian Peacemaking Program**

June L. Lorenzo - Native Lands of the Southwest US

2024 INTERNATIONAL PEACEMAKER

**June L. Lorenzo** will be at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1515 Helen Ave, on **Friday, October 4 at 7:00 PM** to speak about *Doctrine of Discovery: The Effects Historical and Present Day*. All are welcome!

Representatives of the Justice [League of Greater Lansing](#) will be at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Portage on Sunday, **October 20 at 5:30 PM** to talk about the work they have done on reparations in their community (and the model they've developed which they hope can be replicated in other communities... including maybe ours.) This would be a meaningful way for UUCG to fulfill our 8th Principle commitment to “journey toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” Contact Miriam if you would be interested in being part of a group from UUCG that attends this meeting to learn more about how we can get involved in reparations.




## Save the Date

### ISAAC Public Meeting

#### Soles To The Polls

## Thursday October 24, 2024 Evening

Take Your **SOLES TO THE POLLS**



## Flu Clinic Schedule

<b>OCT 1</b>	<b>Senior Expo</b> 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. 2900 Lake St., Kalamazoo, MI 49048
<b>OCT 3</b>	<b>Galilee Baptist Church</b> 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 1216 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49007
<b>OCT 9</b>	<b>Project Connect</b> Noon to 3 p.m. 1000 W. Paterson St., Kalamazoo, MI 49007
<b>OCT 15</b>	<b>Galesburg-Augusta Schools</b> 4 to 7 p.m. 1076 N. 37th St., Galesburg, MI 49053
<b>OCT 17</b>	<b>Vicksburg Schools</b> 4 to 7 p.m. 301 S. Kalamazoo Ave., Vicksburg, MI 49097
<b>OCT 22</b>	<b>Trunk-or-Treat</b> 4 to 7 p.m. 311 E. Alcott St., Kalamazoo, MI 49001
<b>OCT 23</b>	<b>Celebrate Babies</b> 1:30 to 4 p.m. 1204 Bank St., Kalamazoo, MI 49001
<b>OCT 24</b>	<b>Parchment Schools</b> 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. 307 N. Riverview Dr., Kalamazoo, MI 49004



Appointments available at 311 E. Alcott St. daily. Please call 269-373-5203 to check availability.

# R.E.FLECTIONS



**R.E.fections** From [Miriam Epskamp](#), Director of Religious Education  
 In September, the kids at UUCC learned the story of John Murray and his journey from a fire and brimstone preacher to a Universalist minister who taught that Love is the most important thing. John Murray was converted to a Universalist by a woman in his congregation. Unfortunately, the rest of his flock didn't take kindly to his change of heart and drove him out of the church. My colleague Michelle Richards tells John Murray's story this way:

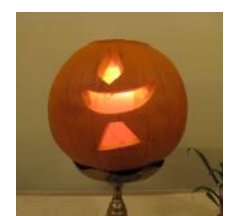
*On or near September 30 of each year, some Unitarian Universalist families and congregations celebrate the arrival of John Murray on the New Jersey shore in 1770—and hence the arrival of Universalism in America. As the story goes: After John Murray's ship became stranded upon a sandbar, Murray and a few other shipmates went ashore to gather some supplies. As part of this quest, Murray met a man named Thomas Potter who invited him and his stranded friends to join his family for dinner.*

*During the conversation over the meal, it was revealed that Potter had just built a chapel and was looking for a minister to preach in its pulpit. John Murray was a Universalist minister, but after losing his wife and son and being forced out of England for preaching Universalist ideas, he'd pledged never to preach again.*

*However, Potter asked the reluctant Murray if he would at least preach on the coming Sunday. Murray said his boat would sail out of port by Sunday and so he wouldn't be available. Of course, ships in those days relied upon wind power and the winds would literally have to change in order for his ship to sail. Potter asked him if he would preach on Sunday if his ship hadn't yet sailed, and Murray gave in. "If I'm still here on Sunday," he said, "I will preach."*

*On Sunday, September 30, the winds had not yet changed and so John Murray did preach a sermon in Thomas Potter's church. His Universalist message of a loving God who would not damn anyone to hell—the idea of universal salvation—was welcome news in America and soon John Murray found himself preaching regularly again to larger and larger crowds eager to hear his message. He went on to found the Universalist Church in America.*

The kids made cork boats and windsocks to celebrate John Murray's miraculous journey and as a reminder not to be rigid in their thinking and beliefs but to be willing to bend with the wind



DATE	RE VOLUNTEERS
October 6	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt
October 13	Regena and Eric
October 20	TBD
September 22	Mary Roscoe

every now and again. In October the kids will continue to explore the different ways Love surrounds us and learn about other UU ancestors who have helped keep Love at the center of our faith.



# OCTOBER



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Tuesday	October 1	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	October 2	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Thursday	October 3	Stewardship Committee Meeting	1:00 PM
Saturday	October 5	Qigong UUCC Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1-4 PM
Sunday	October 6	<i>Helping Others Helps Us</i> with Melanie Hooker UU Exploration for Kids	10:00 AM 10:00 AM
Tuesday	October 8	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	October 9	Growth Team Meeting Sunday Services Committee Meeting	2:00 PM 5:30 PM
Friday	October 11	Women's Book Group Open House Theatre Auditions	1:00 PM 4-7 PM
Saturday	October 12	Qigong Open House Theatre Audition	9:00 AM 10 AM—3 PM
Sunday	October 13	<i>Coming Out Sunday</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids Souper Sunday Program Council	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Monday	October 14	Mindfulness Practice with Eric	7:00 PM
Tuesday	October 15	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	October 16	Civil Conversations Group	7:00 PM
Saturday	October 19	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	October 20	<i>Inside Out</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids Justice League of Greater Lansing Presentation	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 5:30 PM
Monday	October 21	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	October 22	Exploring Anti-Racism Group	7:00 PM
Wednesday	October 23	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Spiritual Growth Group (closed group)	12:00 PM 6:30 PM
Thursday	October 24	Thoughtful Thursday with Libby Slocum	7:00 PM
Saturday	October 26	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	October 27	<i>Calm Within the Storm of Stress</i> with Fred Stella UU Exploration for Kids	10:00 AM 10:00 AM
Monday	October 28	Mindfulness Practice with Eric	7:00 PM
Tuesday	October 29	Qigong Sacred Work of Grief Workshop	9:00 AM 7:00 PM



**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney M.Div., M.A.  
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By Appointment Only  
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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, October 23 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

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

*CommUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
of Southwest Michigan**

10441 Shaver Rd.  
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269-324-7262



**CONNECT WITH US**

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