



# CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

February 2025

## FEBRUARY SUNDAY SERVICES

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

### February 2: *Cultivating Loving Connection* with Rev. Gy

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr said, “*We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be.*” Cultivating loving connections and mutually beneficial relationships is necessary to build the Beloved Community.

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

### February 9: *Connecting to the Sacred* with Rev. Gy

Connecting to spiritual sources/practices can help to inform and sustain our lives. How do you connect to the sacred?

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

### February 16: *Albert White: A Beacon of Light at WMU* with Karika Parker

The annals of history have blatantly erased, dismissed, and discounted the contributions of Black Americans as contributing chief architects and builders of this nation’s cultural, social, and economic foundation. Such omissions are an egregious form of racial injustice. One example is Albert White. Born to enslaved parents in a rural community in Canton, Indiana, White was a highly skilled brick mason who built the Western State Normal School (later known as WMU) in Kalamazoo in 1905.

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

### February 23: *Living Close to the Land* with Norm Bober

Join us to learn more about one man's life journey from a yearning for a deeper connection to the Spirit to a lifestyle that includes growing foods organically and sustainably, raising domestic animals with loving attention and gratitude for the foods they provide, and creating a habitat that offers refuge and sustenance to diverse species both in the plant and animal kingdoms.

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



## Spiritual Theme for February CONNECTING

During the course of this church year, we are exploring how we can ground our daily personal and collective choices in Love. In February, we will reflect on the essential role **cultivating connection** plays in our growth as individuals and in our mission to create a more just and sustainable world.

Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti writes “*Meaningful relationship does not emerge out of nothingness.*” Whether we want a deep connection with another human being, with nature, with an organization, or with the universe itself, we must be willing to work for it with intention and vulnerability. As individuals, we grow through relationships—with ourselves, others, and the natural world. Connection fosters empathy, understanding, and the ability to see beyond our own experiences. It helps us recognize our shared humanity and the deep interdependence that defines life.

Question to ponder: ***In what ways would you like to increase the number or depth of your connections? How might you do this?***

# GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

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



Minister Dr. **Karika Ann Parker** is an ordained Minister of Pastor On Call, Ministries, and Christian Leaders Institute. Dr. Parker has served in ministry for over 20 years. She is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Western Michigan University's (WMU) Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and Black Americana Studies, a Master's in U.S. History, and her doctorate in Educational Leadership and Organizational Analysis from WMU. She is the proud mother of 3 college students and enjoys spending time with her fiancé, Rev. Dr. John L. Jackson, Sr.

**Norman Bober** is a long time student of Tom Brown Jr., whose teachings include physical skills in living on the land and spiritual skills with an awareness of the Spirit that is in all beings. A current book, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer has reinforced Norm's understanding of indigenous way that include Spirit in everyday activities, expanding on Martin Buber's "I-Thou" relationships. Norm has enjoyed successful involvement with the Senior Odyssey of the Mind program, practices a Taoist style of Tai Chi, and is presently happily performing with a Senior Readers Theater group assembled with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at WMU.

Join us for an inspiring **Thoughtful Thursday** on **February 27** via Zoom with **Russell Bishop**, renowned life coach, mentor, and bestselling author. 40 years of consulting and operating expertise addressing real world business and personal challenges has afforded Mr. Bishop unique insights that inspire uncommon clarity while helping people make differences worth making. His experience includes creator and CEO of **Insight Seminars** (a personal growth seminar business with over 1,000,000 participants in 43 countries), a change strategy partner at **Accenture**, and Editorial Director at the **Huffington Post**. In addition to the best-selling book, *Workarounds That Work*, and his new book *From Self-Talk to Soul-Talk: Becoming More of Who You Already Are*, Russell Bishop has published hundreds of articles for the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Huffington Post, Crain's Chicago Business, PC World and Psychology Today. During our Thoughtful Thursday conversation, Mr. Russell will help us explore what it means to live a soul-centered life—a life guided by your true-self through heightened awareness and meaningful self-talk. Drawing from his transformative new book, he will share practical tools, meditations, and affirmations that can help bridge the gap between settling for a "good" life and embracing a truly "great" one. Whether you are seeking spiritual awakening, personal transformation, or simply practical advice to enrich your daily life, this evening promises to offer profound insights and actionable steps to support your journey. To register visit [tinyurl.com/UUCCSoulTalk](https://tinyurl.com/UUCCSoulTalk)



# FROM THE MINISTER



## From the Minister

[Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney](#)

*How to grow a backbone? Apply pressure!*

I am watching the unfolding of this current administration. I've seen this before. Not exactly this, but LIKE this.

This is what authoritarianism looks like. Pretty soon we will learn what it feels like.

The people of this country have experienced tremendous freedoms for so long that no one can even imagine what it is like to have to whisper the truth, hide the forbidden books, secretly attend certain gatherings deemed "revolutionary" by the government, therefore it is hard to believe it as a possibility. Not in this country.

But it can happen in this country. It can happen little by little or like a tsunami. I can see it happening right now.

Strategies of yesterday won't work anymore. We need to come up with new ones.

Courage is what we are called for.

Let me tell you a story:

As you know I am Hungarian. No big deal. Not today. Not in this country, not in this context.

But there was a time in my life when being Hungarian was a very big deal!! It defined every fiber of my being. Do you know why? Because the Romanian government chose to oppress the Hungarian minority. They applied a LOT of pressure on us Hungarians!!

And here's the interesting thing: in the short term it appeared to have worked. In the long term, though, it created very committed Hungarian nationalists!! Under pressure we grew a backbone! A Hungarian backbone!!!

Unintendedly, they strengthened the very thing they wanted to destroy.

Now that I live in this country where no one is oppressing me for being Hungarian, my national identity is no big deal. It is a part of me, of course, but I'm not up in arms about it. No need. I feel perfectly safe being Hungarian. Would that change, however, guess what might become very important to me again??

Something similar is happening here in this country. We relaxed around democratic values and freedoms, because we've taken them for granted. Well, that's changing now. There's a new government in power and they seem to be bent on destroying our democracy.

I think this current government is unendingly sowing the seeds of a stronger democracy.

*(More on page 4)*

# WE GATHER

(Continued from page 3) We are only now beginning to realize how important these freedoms, values and principles are!

We might be scared now, confused, angry and directionless. Every day many times we are appalled by new executive orders, one more unjust and cruel than the next. But I guarantee you that this is not forever and not for long. This pressure will train our backbone, harden it, turn it into steel. It may take us a minute to re-group, but re-group we shall!

We will defend all the marginalized people who are now targeted, we will protect the environment, and we will reclaim our democracy!!!

We will learn to lean into our trusted communities even more. Together we will do what we cannot do alone!



The **We Gather in Hope** event, originally planned for January 20, has been rescheduled for **Monday, February 3, at 6 PM** at **Portage United Church of Christ** on Milham.

This gathering is an opportunity to come together as a community to reaffirm our shared values of justice, equality, diversity, and compassion. The event will include:

- A simple community art project
- A short service with music and readings (Rev. Gy will be one of the speakers)
- A potluck supper (bring a dish to pass if you can)

This is not a vigil or a protest, but a time for solidarity and encouragement as we build connections and support one another. All are welcome to join.

This big heart event is brought to you by **We Gather**, a collective initiative led by local pastors, including Rev. Gy, to connect people of faith across denominations and foster collaboration for the common good. Participating churches: Westminster Presbyterian, Prince of Peace Lutheran, Portage United Church of Christ, St. Barnabas Episcopal, Unitarian Universalist Community of Southwest Michigan, and Chapel Hill Church.

# CARING COMMUNITY



## FEBRUARY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

February can be darn cold and dreary. If you need a little lift, here are some jokes!

*When is the best outfit for February 2nd? - A tu-tu.*

*Can February march? - No, but April may.*

*Do you have a date for Valentine's day? - Yes, February 14th.*

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

It seems that January has been tough on many of our members this year. Please remember people who need your love and support.

**Marsha Laya** and **Erin Michael** had Covid over the holidays.

**Stephanie Grathwol's sister Gloria** fell and broke her wrist.

**Tami Brozovich's mother** fell and broke her hip.

**Carol Higgins's father** passed away. **Her mother** was hospitalized with pneumonia.

**Judy Pigg-Behrendt's brother Charlie, Erin and Tim Michael's child Kelin, and Miriam's daughter Ellie** were affected by the fires in California.

**Deborah Warner's** cat Maya passed away.

**Kevin Brozovich** had a ride to the hospital in an ambulance after experiencing complications following surgery. He is home now and recovering nicely.

**Rev. Gy** continues to suffer from a CSF leak. They will return to Cedar-Sinai in March for further treatment.

Fibromyalgia is keeping **Stace Danielson** from doing all that she would like, including coming to church.

It's not all bad news, though! On Sunday, January 26, UUCC held a potluck in honor of **Betty Lee Ongley's** 99th birthday. It brought back favorite things we haven't seen in a long time –potlucks and Betty Lee! We were also thrilled to be joined by elected officials Senator **Sean McCann**, MI Representative **Julie Rogers** and **Matt Longjohn**, and Kalamazoo County Sheriff **Rick Fuller** who gave Betty as special Thank you to **Mary King** and **Mary Roscoe** for decorating in the Russian Tea Party theme and to everyone for pitching in to make a good party.



More photos of Betty's party are on page 6!

### **Birthdays**

Wish a happy February birthday to our members and friends...

Feb. 10 – **Hunter Ridley**, 10- **Marsha Laya**, 13- **Bev Folz**, 15 – **Regena Nelson**, 26- **Joe Calme**

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

Three dear friends we lost in the month of February, past..

**Barbara Cousins** Feb 11, 2009, **John Folz** Feb 4, 2023, and **Linsey Furry** Feb 27, 2024

### **Welcome Guests!**

We are grateful for all the visitors who joined us in January—**Cap Caponolla, Kristin Nichols, Kendall Gladding, Debra Clark, Alana Johnson, Anne Lindquist**, and long time friend **Sandy Kristen** to name a few. We also were happy to see some UUCC extended family back in the building including Freya's daughter **Liz Lake**, Betty Lee's daughter **Jill Ongley**, and Mary's daughter **Kathryn King**—We hope you will stop by again soon!

# CELEBRATE BETTY LEE



# LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees met on January 8. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Continued reviewing Board Policies
- Discussed creating a policy for accepting cryptocurrency
- Activated the Nominating Committee in preparation for

the 2025 Board Election.

Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from their January meeting.

The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, February 12 at 7:00 PM.**

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



Program Council—Where TOGETHER—We Get Stuff Done!

Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church on second Sundays at around 11:20 AM. Bring your voice to our next meeting on **February 9**. We will meet following the service and you can participate either in person or on Zoom.

On the Agenda:

Details about our **Newcomers Sunday** planned for March 1 and how YOU can get involved

Firming up plans for our **Welcoming Congregation Adult Ed** program

Finding a date for a **BeSmart Gun Safety** presentation

Volunteer opportunities at the **NAACP Baby Shower Drive**, with **Connections Team, Art Wall** And More!

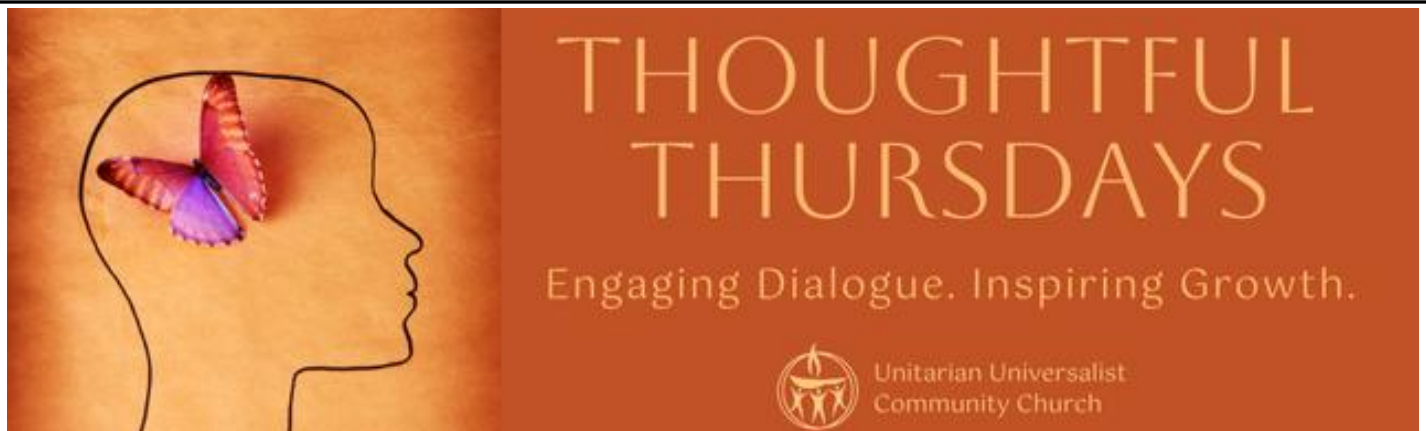
As always we will serve soup before the Program Council meeting as a fundraiser for our Youth Program. If it is yours to do, please put a donation into the basket and then help yourself to a bowl of delicious homemade soup served with bread and crackers. Contact Mary Roscoe ([lizoflynn@gmail.com](mailto:lizoflynn@gmail.com)) if you are interested in donating a pot of soup. Thank you for your support!



## Important Tax Information

2024 Donation Tax Statements were emailed Tuesday, January 28 from [ridleyk@hotmail.com](mailto:ridleyk@hotmail.com) If you did not receive yours, please contact Assistant Treasurer, Kimberly Ridley.

# THOUGHTFUL THURSDAY



**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.



**February 27: Becoming More of Who You Are 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*. (Registration info is on page 2)



**March 20: Housing for All with Stephanie Hoffman**

Stephanie Hoffman, former Executive Director at Open Doors Kalamazoo, current Kalamazoo City Commissioner, and overall AWESOME and IMPACTFUL housing advocate (according to our friend Gwendolyn Hooker) will join us to discuss the housing situation in Kalamazoo.



**April 24: Environmental Concerns with Jenny Doezma**

As the Vice President of Learning and Engagement at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, the Director of the Kalamazoo Climate Crisis Coalition, and co-chair of Kalamazoo County's Climate Action and Climate Justice Advisory Council, Jenny Doezma has extensive expertise on local environmental issues. She joins us to discuss meaningful actions we can take to more fully respect and protect the interconnected web of life to which we are a part.



# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Small Groups at UUCC are a great way to deepen your relationship with the church community and our Unitarian Universalist faith. You can drop into most groups as your schedule allows or make regular attendance your spiritual practice. Newcomers are always welcome!



## Finding Joy Through a Smaller Environmental Foot Print

Our **Sustainability Group** meets once a month to reflect on their personal sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas for promoting sustainable living at UUCC and in the wider community. At their January meeting they talked about their **holiday sustainability wins**, shared some sustainability **goals for 2025**, discussed an **energy audit for UUCC**, and made plans to attend the Hope for Creation's **Faith.Climate.Action** on February 8 in lieu of their regular meeting. Their next regular meeting will be on Monday, March 17. If you have any questions about the Sustainability Group, contact Miriam ([uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com))

## Building Beloved Community, One Conversation at a Time



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

Each session starts with a review of what it takes to have a civil conversation and an opportunity to share personal successes and failures we have experienced recently as we have tried to engage with people with different world views than our own.

In February, we will try something we're calling **Gripe a Bit Then Get a Grip**. We will set aside time to gripe about the recent actions of the government that we find especially concerning then collectively challenge ourselves to curiously explore other perspectives &/or actions to help us "get a grip".

All are welcome to join the conversation on Wednesday, **February 6 at 7 PM** Click [HERE](#) to register or visit [tinyurl.com/UUCCcivilconvosFeb25](https://tinyurl.com/UUCCcivilconvosFeb25)



## Cultivating Emotional Resilience and Self-Compassion

Experienced Mindfulness practitioner, Eric Nelson hosts our **Mindful Living Group** on the **2nd and 4th Mondays of each month from 7-8 PM on Zoom**.

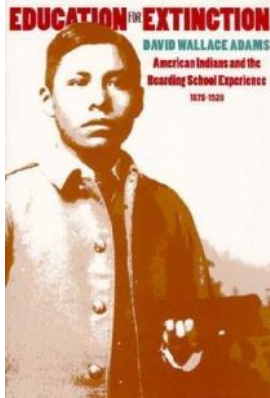
With no long-term commitment, participants can choose to attend sessions month-by-month, integrating mindfulness into daily life at a comfortable pace. This group is structured to help you develop emotional resilience, cultivate self-compassion, and foster deep, meaningful relationships.

The theme for February is **Awaken Your Spiritual Vision**

Join Eric for an enriching experience that guides you toward a more mindful, balanced life and discover the transformative power of mindfulness! If you are interested but can't attend in real-time, recordings of each session will be sent to everyone who registers

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

# CONNECTION



## Women's Book Group

**Friday, February 14  
1:00 PM via Zoom**

February Selection:  
***Education for Extinction***  
by David Wallace Adams

From Goodreads:

*The last "Indian War" was fought against Native American children in the dormitories and classrooms of government boarding schools. Only by removing Indian children from their homes for extended periods of time, policy-makers reasoned, could white "civilization" take root while childhood memories of "savagism" gradually faded to the point of extinction. In the words of one "Kill the Indian and save the man."*

*Education for Extinction offers the first comprehensive account of this dispiriting effort. Much more than a study of federal Indian policy, this book vividly details the day-to-day experiences of Indian youth living in a "total institution" designed to reconstruct them both psychologically and culturally. Especially poignant is Adams's description of the ways in which students resisted or accommodated themselves to forced assimilation. Many converted to varying degrees, but others plotted escapes, committed arson, and devised ingenious strategies of passive resistance. Adams also argues that many of those who seemingly cooperated with the system were more than passive players in this drama, that the response of accommodation was not synonymous with cultural surrender. This is especially apparent in his analysis of students who returned to the reservation. He reveals the various ways in which graduates struggled to make sense of their lives and selectively drew upon their school experience in negotiating personal and tribal survival in a world increasingly dominated by white men.*

The Book Group will meet at 1:00 PM on February 14 for a short business meeting and a discussion of the book led by Marsha and Judy. Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom.

## Qigong at UCC

The UCC Qigong Group meets every Tuesday and Saturday. Newcomers are always welcome.



Click [HERE](#) for the **TUESDAY** Zoom link. Meeting

ID: 697 338 090 Passcode: 138550

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

If you have any questions about the group, contact [Freya Lake](#).

## 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, February 15 at 9:00 AM** at [The Rooster's Call](#) (formerly Burger Town Grille) at 9136 Shaver Road in Portage.



Please RSVP to Ron if you plan to attend the 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group. An RSVP is not required but sometimes plans change at the last minute and checking in with Ron will ensure you are not having breakfast alone. Ron's contact info is [ronald.crowell@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) or (269)599-1242.

## Game Gathering

We would love to see YOU on Saturday, **February 1** from **1-4 PM** on the lower level for our **1st Saturday Game Gathering!**

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!



# CELEBRATE

## SUPERBOWL PARTY

**Teri and Dave Uttermohlen** are hosting a Super Bowl Party at UUCC on **February 9**. Kick-off is at 6:30 PM. We will be projecting the big game on the big screen in the sanctuary.

The Uttermohlen's will provide chili and pizza for everyone (with options for meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans). Guests are invited to bring their own drinks and a snack to share.

**Please RSVP to Dave by February 7.** Send an email to [daviduttermohlen@gmail.com](mailto:daviduttermohlen@gmail.com) or call 574-276-2212. If you would like to join the fun, but don't like to drive at night, please contact the office ([uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)) and we will arrange a ride for you.



**St. Patrick's Celebration**  
Saturday, March 15  
Starts at 6:00 PM

**LIVE MUSIC**

**TRILLIUM IRISH**

**\$20 Donation includes - Irish Dinner - Live Music - Dancing - Games - Fun**

### Join Us for a Night of Irish Food and Festivities!

Celebrate Irish culture in honor of St. Patrick's Day with delicious food, lively music, and great company at UUCC **on Saturday, March 15, at 6 PM**. Indulge in a traditional Irish dinner featuring corned beef or vegetarian bratwurst, cabbage with potatoes, homemade bread, and dessert.

Don't forget to bring your favorite Irish beverage to sip while enjoying live music from the **Trillium Irish Band**, performing on the fiddle, uilleann pipes, and guitar. Whether you want to dance, play board games, or relax to the tunes, there's something for everyone! Guests and children are welcome.

Suggested donation: \$20 per person or love offering (kids attend free). **Please RSVP by Wednesday, March 12**, to reserve your spot. You can pay at the door with cash or a credit card. Come for the food, stay for the fun! We can't wait to celebrate with you.

RSVP link - <https://forms.gle/rJwkuueR2MKqZLKs5>

# OPPORTUNITIES



Our friends at Peoples Church invite us to join them for an evening of celebration, dancing, and community fun for all ages to honor **Rev. Rachel's** 10 years of ministry. The party is on **February 15**, from **6-8:30 PM** (Feb 22 if there is inclement weather.) All are welcome!

Our justice partners at Hope for Creation are holding a **Faith. Climate. Action** workshop on **February 8** from **1-5 PM** at Portage United Church of Christ on Milham Ave. This will be a great opportunity to learn, discuss and plan with others in the community about how to keep our climate movement strong during the years ahead. For more details and to RSVP visit [hopeforcreation.net](http://hopeforcreation.net)

## Bring-a-Friend Sunday



March 2, 2025



Save the date for **Bring-a-Friend Sunday** on **March 2!**

This will be a perfect opportunity to invite a friend to check out UCC. There will be:

- An uplifting Sunday service that introduces folks to who we are
- An inspiring message from Rev. Gy
- Reflections from UCC folks
- Special Music
- A Potluck Lunch
- A special Welcome Packet for each newcomer.

**Come to Program Council on February 9 to learn more about this event and how YOU can get involved.**

# OPPORTUNITIES

## Death Midwife Certification

March 21, 22, 23, 2025

Four Points Sheraton

3600 Old Cork St, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

Friday March 21 - Sunday March 23, 2025

Cost: \$750

QUESTIONS? CONTACT ANGIE BUCHANAN  
(224) 501-5443

OR [Angie@EarthTraditions.org](mailto:Angie@EarthTraditions.org)

The work of Death Midwives and home funeral guides does not duplicate the work of professionals such as nurses or funeral directors. We work alongside them and our skills are not medically oriented, they are community, spiritually, traditionally, hands and heart-oriented. We use the ancient and time-proven techniques of an open and compassionate heart, touch, and our voices. This work can be done in any setting, whether in a hospital, nursing facility or a home.

In this training you will:

- Learn tools and techniques to midwife the dying.
- Consider family dynamics that occur as someone dies.
- How to determine if a family is a good fit for a home funeral.
- Experience the practice of dying; visioning our own death before we die.
- Learn tools for creating a sacred space for transition, before and after death.
- Legal paperwork required - how to research state laws and build bridges with others presently working in the funeral industry.
- Awareness of the many on-line issues of after death and social networking.
- Will receive certification as a Death Midwife through Earth Traditions.



Our justice partners at the [Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#) in partnership with the Birmingham Unitarian Church in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan invite UUs from around the state to participate in a hybrid (either onsite or online) training to explore **How to Protest More Effectively** on **Saturday, March 1**. Details about the workshop are still being finalized and will be shared in the Weekly Email as soon as they are available.



**Calling all UCC Singers!** Choir practice is starting again! Meet Luke at the piano on **Sunday, February 9 at 9 AM.**

We hope to have enough voices to sing on special days this spring including Bring-a-Friend Sunday on March 2. Can we count on you?

People of all singing abilities and experience are welcome to join us. No auditions or judgment! At UCC, we believe that everyone can sing!

Questions? Contact our Music Director, Luke: [luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu](mailto:luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu)

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## Community Solidarity Session 2

Co-facilitated by:  MICHIGAN TRANSFORMATION COLLECTIVE



Co-facilitated by the YWCA and Michigan Transformation Collective, a **Community Solidarity Session** will take place **2 –5 PM** on **February 17**, at 612 Park St in Kalamazoo. In honor of the **National Day of Racial Healing**, the focus will be on intersectional racial healing circles, providing participants with an opportunity to share experiences and perspectives in a meaningful way. Celebrate Black History Month by strengthening solidarity, celebrating diversity, and working toward collective healing and understanding.

Click [HERE](#) to register or visit [ywcakalamazoo.org/news-events/solidarity-sessions](http://ywcakalamazoo.org/news-events/solidarity-sessions)

In honor of Black History Month, the City of Portage will host a special speaker at the **Portage Zhang Senior Center** on Saturday, **February 1** at **6:00 PM**. This year’s special guest is **Jackie Joyner-Kersey**, one of the greatest track and field athletes in American history. A question-and answer session and book/autograph signing will take place after the presentation. A copy of her book, *A Kind of Grace*, can be purchased at the event (limited quantities available; cash only) or you may bring your own copy.

**FREE ADMISSION**

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH PRESENTATION

**WITH JACKIE JOYNER-KERSEE  
A TRAILBLAZER IN TRACK & FIELD**

**Saturday, February 1, 6 PM**  
**Portage Zhang Senior Center**  
**203 East Centre Avenue**



FEB 7-28

## THE 4L'S A BLACK HISTORY MONTH EXHIBIT

FEATURING WORK FROM  
JAYLEI ART

OPENING RECEPTION  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH 5-8 PM

359 S Kalamazoo Mall Suite 102

During the month of February, the **Black Arts & Cultural Center** will feature art by Jaylei Art. This will be a solo exhibition showcasing her series "The 4L's." The exhibit will be on display from **February 7th through February 28th** in our Gail Sydnor Gallery during regular business hours. The **opening reception** for this exhibit will take place on Friday, **February 7** from **5-8 PM**

Celebrate 125 years of **Lift Every Voice and Sing** with a very special program celebrating *Sing a Song: How Lift Every Voice and Sing Inspired Generations*. Author Kelly Starling-Lyons’ picture book will be presented by Kalamazoo Public Library with the Helen L. Fox Gospel Music Center and the SW Michigan Chapter of the NAACP on **February 12** at **6 PM** at the Northside Association for Community Development.

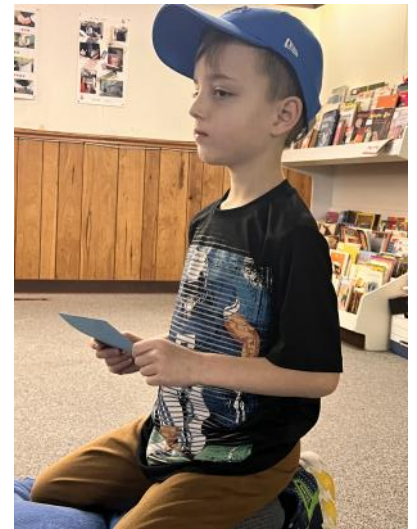
## Sing a Song: 125 Years of “Lift Every Voice and Sing”



# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



In January, the kids in RE explored the concept of empathy. They played the **Emotions Game**, giving them an opportunity to reflect on how different experiences made them feel and to share their emotions with others.



During a discussion about the fires in California, they learned that many people lost their homes. They were invited to imagine what they would pack in a “Go Bag” if they had to take their most important possessions with them in an emergency.



They also discovered that there are people in our own community, including children their age, who don’t have a place to live. Eager to help, the kids decided to support the **Warming Center at Portage Westminster Presbyterian Church**, which provides our unhoused friends with a warm place to stay on cold winter days. Guests are



served a meal and warm drinks, and they have access to showers and laundry facilities.

Keeping the Warming Center open requires many donations, so the kids created a donation box for UUC members to contribute. They are hoping YOU will help fill it with essential items such as **washcloths, warm socks, hand warmers, hand cream, packaged cookies, and sugar**. The center also needs institutional-sized cans of **tomato soup, chili, hot chocolate mix, and lemonade mix**. Additionally, they are accepting gently used or new men's clothing, including **belts, long-sleeved shirts, sweatpants, and sweatshirts**. Due to limited storage, the Warming Center can only accept the items listed above.

If you’d like to support the kids’ collection—and perhaps help deepen their understanding of empathy and compassion—look for their beautifully decorated donation box at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you for your support!

Miriam Epskamp, Director of Religious Education, [uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)

DATE	VOLUNTEERS	<p><b>Our February RE Exploration classes will focus on the UU Value of Interdependence sometimes we need to be loved on, and sometimes we love on others. Our high school senior, Nick Tasko will begin our Coming of Age program with his mentor, Mary Roscoe.</b></p>
February 1	Pat Timm	
February 9	Eric and Regena Nelson	
February 16	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt	
February 23	Mary Roscoe	

# DRAG SHOW 2025



Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Drag Show at UCC, especially our wonderful volunteers **Steve Tasko, Denise Sonier, Abe Epskamp, Liz and Freya Lake, and Dawn Renner.** Thanks as well to all the UCC folks who came out to enjoy the performances. **Miss Moscato and friends** put on a great show that had the audience laughing, cheering, and dancing! It was a great way to celebrate **diversity, inclusion, and community.** UCC should be proud of its support for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights!





# FEBRUARY 2025



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday	February 1	Qigong Renewal Retreat Game Gathering	9:00 AM 9 AM-2 PM 1-4 PM
Sunday	February 2	<i>Cultivating Loving Connection</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	February 3	Growth Team Meeting <i>We Gather in Hope</i> at Portage United Church of Christ	11:00 AM 6:00 PM
Tuesday	February 4	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	February 6	Stewardship Committee	1:00 PM
Saturday	February 8	Qigong <i>Faith. Climate. Action</i> at Portaged United Church of Christ	9:00 AM 1-5 PM
Sunday	February 9	<i>Connecting with the Sacred</i> with Rev. Gy; UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time/Souper Sunday Program Council	10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Monday	February 10	Mindful Living with Eric	7:00 PM
Tuesday	February 11	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 12	Sunday Services Committee Meeting Board of Trustees Meeting	5:30 PM 7:00 PM
Friday	February 14	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	February 15	Qigong 10 Year Anniversary Celebration for Rev. Rachel Lonberg at Peoples Church	9:00 AM 6:00 PM
Sunday	February 16	<i>Albert White: A Beacon of Light at WMU</i> with Rev. Dr Karika Parker UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	February 18	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 19	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	February 22	Qigong NAACP Community Baby Shower Drive	9:00 AM 9-11 AM
Sunday	February 23	<i>Living Off the Land</i> with Norm Bober UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	February 24	Mindful Living with Eric	12:00 PM
Tuesday	February 25	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 26	Spiritual Growth Group (closed group)	6:30 PM
Thursday	February 27	Thoughtful Thursday with Russell Bishop	7:00 PM



**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

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**2024-2025 Board of Trustees**

**Steve Tasko**

**Kathryn Ragains-Wilson**

**Pat Fuehr**

**Mike Graham**

**Eric Nelson**

**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, February 19 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:  
**[uuccnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uuccnewsletter@gmail.com)**

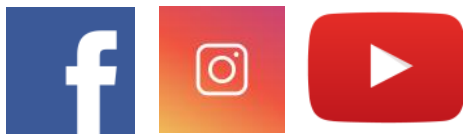
*CommUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
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