



# GUESTS IN OUR PULPIT

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



**Mary Jo Ebert** is a long-time social justice activist and community service organizer. A member of Birmingham Unitarian Church since 2001, she has co-led the growth and development of its social justice program and, at present, is VP of its board. She joined the board of the Michigan UU Social Justice Network in 2019 and, after serving as Chair for three years, was appointed its Director. In her professional career, Mary Jo has worked as a program manager and consultant in the private, government, and nonprofit sectors. She is a member of a large family and mentor for two 12-year-old boys. She believes that UUism has much to offer for those seeking community, justice, and exploration of life's questions and can be a catalyst not only to navigate these challenging times, but also to thrive.

The **Reverend Ms. Kim K. Crawford Harvie** was ordained into the Unitarian Universalist ministry in 1984, she spent the following year as an intern at First Parish in Brewster, Massachusetts. In 1985, she was called to the Universalist Meeting House in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she served until 1989. In 1987, she received the Maximilian Kolbe Award for Community Service and, in 1988, she was named Provincetown Citizen of the Year. In 1989, she was called to Arlington Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts, where she served as Senior Minister until 2024.



## June Generosity Giving



Our Generosity Sunday recipient for June is the [Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#) (MUUSJN). Since its founding in 2002, MUUSJN has worked to promote coordination among UU congregations across the state of Michigan to educate and take collective action on common justice issues with the goal of creating a more just and caring world. A large part of MUUSJN's funding comes from its member congregations and through the generosity of individual UUs like you! If it is yours to do, please

consider giving generously to support our important justice partner.

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

- ◆ You can place a check made out to UUCC with Generosity Sunday the memo in the offering basket anytime in June. You can also mail your check to our building.
- ◆ If you prefer to use a debit or credit card, give online using the church website or the Vanco app on your phone. Be sure to choose Generosity Sunday in the menu.
- ◆ If you prefer to give cash, we will donate all cash and loose change in the offering plate on **June 15** to MUUSJN.

# FROM THE MINISTER



## From the Minister

**Rev. DanaLee Simon** (she/her/hers) is an ELCA Pastor and Spiritual Director living in Salt Lake City, UT. She loves accompanying people on their journeys through life, often bringing along tools of self-compassion to use herself and share with others along the way. Her reflection on the *Possibility of Joy* was originally shared in the UUA's [Brave/Wiser](#) blog in January 2025.

*Resistance is the secret of joy.* —Alice Walker

The theme of Joy has been reverberating as a holy echo in my life over these past months. Joy feels like one of the most compassionate offerings I can hand over to the depth of my soul which, in many moments on many days, is throbbing with an anger and overwhelm beyond what I can explain. The most obvious explanation is simply that I'm paying attention. Also, maybe, puberty's bookend: menopause.

My clearest observation about the Joy bouncing around inside of me is that she's never by herself—and her unlikely companions surprise me: Sorrow and Suffering. Fear and Fraudulence. Pain and Perseveration. How Joy has the audacity to sidle up to these unlikely characters is beyond me. I'm in awe when she appears like a grace, beyond my own doing. It's a wonder when she arises like a gift, beyond my own deserving.

And, I'm becoming more aware of my own agency in inviting Joy's emergence. As I attune my attention to the reality of the world and my own life, it helps me figure out my intention—the intention that has more to do with the how than the what:

How am I going to show up in my life?

How do I want to live out my values in the process of my own transformation?

How do I hold all of life's complexities while trying to show up as my whole self?

As I deepen my intention, my agency—my power—rises up, showing me the possibilities. One of the possibilities is always Joy. I can choose her. Or not. She's not a bypass of everything in this world that's hard to hold and feel. She is a tool that helps us grapple with their reality. She's like finding something you thought you'd lost forever. She's like a rain falling on parched, cracked ground. She's like the person at a party who approaches you when you're feeling lonely.

I choose her. I can and I do.

The Psalms tell us that “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” May we be instilled with the desire to search for joy, the intention to find it, and the courage to live it, out loud.

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Registration for **Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (GA) 2025** is open and there is still time to commit to taking part in what is sure to be the largest gathering of UUs this year. The 2025 GA will be hybrid, taking place onsite in Baltimore, MD and online. Registration info and a schedule of events can be found at [uua.org/ga](http://uua.org/ga)

Business meetings and Sunday Worship can be accessed by anyone. No registration is required. To watch live or on demand after the event visit [uua.org/ga/off-site/2025](http://uua.org/ga/off-site/2025)



**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
BALTIMORE • JUNE 18 - 22, 2025



- ◆ **Opening & General Session I** (1 hour): Wednesday, June 18, 6:PM
- ◆ **General Session II** (3 hours): Thursday, June 19, 1 PM
- ◆ **General Session III** (3 hours): Friday, June 20, 1 PM
- ◆ **General Session IV** (3 hours): Saturday, June 21, 1 PM
- ◆ **General Session V** (2 hours): Sunday, June 22, 2 PM
- ◆ **Sunday Morning Worship** (1.5 hours): Sunday, June 22, 11 AM

**INDIVISIBLE**  
GREATER KALAMAZOO

# JOIN US



**JUNE 14TH | 12-2PM**

**400 Block Drake Rd**  
Kalamazoo, MI

On **Saturday, June 14** there will be an opportunity for UUCG folks to step out and voice our commitment to UU values of justice, equity, democracy, and love.

A rally will take place in Kalamazoo from **12-2 PM** on **Drake Road** to mark **NO KINGS DAY** – a day where thousands of Americans from red and blue states, from small towns and from big cities, from every corner of the country, will join together to **support the Constitution**, insist that our elected officials **follow the rule of law**, and **reject authoritarianism**.

Sponsored by the non-partisan group, **Indivisible of Greater Kalamazoo**, this peaceful demonstration will highlight Kalamazoo's joyful and diverse community and include **a collection of food and personal care items** to support area organizations. Click [HERE](#) to see a list of requested donations.

# LEADERSHIP

The Board of Trustees met on May 7. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:



- Made plans for the annual Minister's Evaluation
- Finalized plans for the Annual Meeting
- Recruited a candidate to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from the May meeting. The final regular Board Meeting for the church year will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, June 4 at 6:30 PM**. Newly elected board members will be invited to attend. The board will be in a closed session for part of their meeting to discuss a staffing issue.

## Program Council

Program Council is the group at UUCC that helps us create vibrant and engaging programming. Everyone—members, friends, and visitors can participate. Program Council is hiatus until August but we will want to hit the ground running at our first meeting on **Sunday, August 10** by voting for **Generosity Sunday** recipients. Four times a year UUCC holds a special collection to support non-profit organizations whose work aligns with our values. Recipient organizations are nominated by congregants and voted on by the Program Council. In the past, we have supported groups like Planned Parenthood, First Day Shoe Fund, Face Off Theatre, etc. To get a head start on the voting process, we will be collecting your nominations for Generosity Sunday recipients by email during June and July. Your summer assignment is to spend some time thinking about organizations you have a relationship with, whose work aligns with our Unitarian Universalist values, and that would benefit from a few extra dollars. Please send your nominations to the office to be included on our Generosity Sunday ballot. At our August meeting, we will finalize our voting and be ready to hold our first special collection in September.



## Pledges and Receipts



The 2024/2025 programming and fiscal year are almost complete. If you need reimbursement from the church, please get all receipts turned in to **Joe Calme** by **June 15**.

If you made a financial pledge for the year spanning July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, you will soon receive an email from **Kimberly Ridley** with your giving statement to date attached. Remember to check your junk mail folder. If you don't receive the email, contact Kimberly at [ridleyk@hotmail.com](mailto:ridleyk@hotmail.com) or 269-569-3658

To match pledges and church income in the same financial year, it would be helpful if you can remit all pledge dollars by the end of June. If you make a payment after June 30 for the 2024/2025 year, please note "24/25" in the memo line of your check. If you are prepaying (before July 1) on your 2025/2026 pledge, please note "prepay 25/26" in the memo line.

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

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

# ANNUAL MEETING

The **Annual Meeting of the Membership of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan** (UUCC) is scheduled for **Sunday, June 1, 2025, at 11:15 AM.**

All Members are encouraged to attend this meeting. Members are those who have pledged financial support and have signed the membership book no later than May 1, 2025. Per our Bylaws, there is no proxy or absentee voting. Members must be present, in person or on Zoom, to vote.

A copy of the agenda for the Annual Meeting was emailed to members on May 16. If you did not receive one, please contact the office. Paper copies are also available at the welcome desk for those who cannot access documents online.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

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

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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

Nominees to the Board of Trustees at this time are **Joel Folkert**, (2-year term), **Dawn Renner** (2-year term), and **Dave Uttermohlen** (two-year term). The deadline to nominate other candidates has now passed. There shall be no nominations from the floor.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the annual meeting, members will be asked to elect a candidate to serve a term on the Nominating Committee. The Nominee to the Nominating Committee is **Eric Nelson**. **Pat Timm** will complete one more year on this committee. Nominating Committee members each serve two (2) years with rotating membership.

## ANNUAL BUDGET

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

## QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions or concerns about the Annual Meeting for your Board of Trustees, please feel free to discuss them with any member.

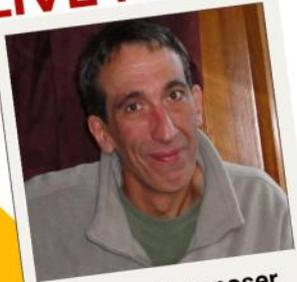


# STEWARDSHIP

## BACKYARD BASH BBQ & LIVE CONCERT

Sunday, July 20 | 5:00 - 8:00 PM

LIVE MUSIC



Singer/Composer  
Kirk Roundhouse

Backyard BBQ Bash with  
Live Music, Fun & Games, and  
Great Vibes!

**RSVP**

RSVP by July 13 to  
[tinyurl.com/UUBBQ2025](https://tinyurl.com/UUBBQ2025)



## Save the Date for the UUCC Summer FUNdraiser!



**What:** Backyard Barbecue

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

**When:** Sunday, July 20 (Rain Date: July 27)



Join us at **5 PM** for **games and prizes!** At **5:30 PM**, we will be serving up a **delicious dinner** featuring grilled burgers and hotdogs (vegetarian options available) with delicious side dishes, and dessert.

At **6:00 PM** get ready to enjoy some easy listening classic rock music with **Kirk Roundhouse**, a life-long musician who has played piano and sang in a wide variety of musical ensembles covering many styles of music, a professional career spanning over 45 years.

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

RSVP at this link by Sunday, July 13 [forms.gle/XdzQ4dMuFmWXWBQa7](https://forms.gle/XdzQ4dMuFmWXWBQa7)

Join us for a lovely gathering in a beautiful shaded backyard. We'll have tables set up for dining, so please bring your favorite beverage and a chair to relax in. Can't wait to see you there!

# CARING COMMUNITY



## JUNE CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me: I lift my lamp beside the golden door. - Emma Lazarus*

June is Immigrant Heritage Month in the United States. **National Immigrant Heritage Month** presents an opportunity for Americans to reflect on their own immigrant roots, regardless of whether they are first or fifth-generation Americans. It encourages individuals and communities to share their family stories, honor their ancestors' struggles, and embrace the diversity that makes the nation stronger. ***Do you know and celebrate your own ancestors' contributions?***

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

Our members and friends experienced some highs and lows in the past month. On the challenging side, **Larry Higgins** suffered a heart attack as **Carol Higgins** was dealing with the death of her mother, **Joyce Kline**. Larry was able to participate in the visitation and spend time with the visiting family. **Marsha Laya** underwent hip replacement surgery in Florida and is working to get fully mobile again. **Ron Crowell** experienced a nasty bout of pneumonia but is recovering steadily.

There were some things to celebrate as well. Former UUCC RE kid, **Laura Wheeler**, married her good friend **Scott Weststrate**. **Kaitlin and Justin Wojciak** traveled to Greece for a well-deserved vacation. **Nick Tasko** graduated from Portage Central High School.

### ***Happy Birthday***

Our June birthdays are: **5 – Rita Stevens and Judy Pigg-Behrendt, 6– Darby Fetzer, 14- Brent Ridley, 23- Bob McWhorter, 27 – Lee Smittendorf**. And, as the Caring Column will be on vacation next month, let's send early birthday wishes to our friends born in July: **7-Tim Michael and John Mais, 12-Alex Brozovich, 21—Eric Nelson, and 31-Brinna Michael**.

### ***Anniversaries***

**Kathryn Ragains-Wilson and Michael Wilson** tied the knot on June 29, 2022. Our July lovebirds are **Joe and Nancy Calme** who married on July 1, 1978, and **Ron and Nancy Crowell** who exchanged vows on July 5, 1958.

### ***In Memoriam***

We remember two UUCC members -- **Marge Hallam** who passed away on June 1, 2014, and **Brian Leekley** who moved away to the West Coast in 2019 and passed away on June 13, 2022.

### ***New Visitors:***

We were glad to welcome new visitors **Michelle Meulman, Drew Elliot, Sue and Chris Ellis, Ray Brown, and Shelly Burnet** in May. We hope you will visit us again soon!

*Caring for one another is a key feature of UUCC. 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)*

# CONNECTION



## June Game Gathering

Our Game Gathering Group will end the year by trying something a little different.

Instead of meeting on the

1st Saturday as usual, they will gather on the last Saturday of the month, **June 28** from **1-4 PM**.

Instead of meeting at UUCC, the group will head to **Schrier Park** on Westnedge Ave for an end-of-year potluck picnic and gaming session.

The Game Gathering Group will meet at 1 PM at the picnic pavilion. The rain location will be UUCC.

As usual, people of all ages and game-playing abilities are invited to attend. You are welcome to bring your favorite game, a dish to pass for our potluck lunch, and a beverage of your choice. You can bring a friend too! Don't miss this opportunity for fun and fellowship with your UUCC friends!

## Women's Book Group

The UUCC Women's Book Group finished their program year in May. They will hold a **Summer Salad Potluck and Annual Meeting** on **July 11** to choose their book selections for 2025-2026 books and to elect a new Chair.

Book Group members are reminded to **send Stephanie Grathwol their recommendations** (one fiction, one non-fiction) **by June 15**.

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

If you are looking for something to read while the Book Group is on hiatus, click [HERE](#) to check out the **Banned/Challenged Books List** from the Kalamazoo Public Library.

## Qigong at UUCC

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



YOU are Invited to "Zoom in" for this set of stretching & breathing exercises in the privacy of your home, with the video off and sound muted. The exercises only last for about 25 minutes and it is the same DVD each time, so the routine becomes familiar.

And...an added BONUS is the opportunity to visit with each UUCC friends for a bit before we start the DVD. NEWCOMERS are always welcome!

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

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

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

## 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UUCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **June 21** at **9:00 AM** at the **Rooster's Call** on Shaver Road.

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

Please RSVP to Ron Crowell ([ronald.crowell@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.crowell@wmich.edu))

if you plan to attend the 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group. An RSVP is not required but sometimes plans change at the last minute.

Checking in with Ron will ensure you aren't having breakfast alone.



# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY



## Sustainability Group

The UUCC Sustainability Group meets at **7:00 PM** via Zoom on the **3rd Monday of most months** to reflect on their sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures, and to explore ideas about how to live more gently on the Earth. Newcomers are always welcome to join the conversation!

The Sustainability Group has been exploring opportunities to partner with [Hope for Creation](#) on various projects to strengthen our community-based climate action efforts. Hope for Creation—the Southwest Michigan chapter of **Interfaith Power and Light**—is a grassroots, interfaith organization dedicated to promoting faith-based responses to climate change in the greater Kalamazoo area. Examples of successful collaboration include the **Fish for the Future Project**, which urged elected officials to stop the flow of oil through the Straits of Mackinac (our RE program contributed by making 116 origami fish!), and the **Climate Grief Sharing Circles**, which UUCC is hosting on June 1. Members of the Sustainability Group have committed to attending Hope for Creation's monthly planning meetings and look forward to creating more opportunities for UUCC to partner with others in the community in taking meaningful climate action. Interested in getting involved? Come to the **next Sustainability Group meeting on Monday, June 16 at 7 PM**. Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID 960 9812 1445



## Thank You, Volunteers!

An amazing group of sixteen UUCers came out for our **Spring Clean-Up Day** on May 31. They did an amazing job weeding, trimming, scrubbing, polishing, sanitizing, and more! We are so grateful to **Justin, Kaitlin, Theo, and Declan Wojciak, Joe and Nancy Calme, Nancy and Ron Crowell, Stephanie Grathwol, Kimberly Ridley, Adrienne Cascarella, Jaime Jones, Dawn Renner, Pat Fuehr, Michael Graham, and Miriam** for helping to keep UUCC looking good.

Our volunteers are the BEST!!



# 8TH PRINCIPLE



## Putting Our 8th UU Principle into Action

In 2023, UUCC voted to adopt an 8th UU Principle which calls on us to engage in individual and communal action to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in our congregation and society at large. Here are some of the ways we acted on the 8th Principle this year:

### Education:

- The **Exploring Anti-Racism Group** disbanded due to lack of participation. Ideas about how to continue the group's work were collected at a Program Council meeting, but none have been acted on yet.
- The **Women's Book Group** discussed several books that explored race and racism including *Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey from Slavery to Freedom* by Ilyon Woo; *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* by David Wallace Adams; *Solito* by Javier Zamora; *James* by Percival Everett, and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain.
- The **Civil Conversation Group** hosted a discussion about the **Land Back Movement** with **Jaike Spotted Wolf**.
- 5 UUCC folks participated in a **Community Iftar** to get to know members of the Muslim community in Michigan.

### Sunday Services:

Two Sunday services had racial injustice as a central theme:

- Feb 9 - *Albert White: A Beacon of Light at WMU* with **Min. Dr. Karika Parker**
- Feb 16 - *Building the Beloved Community* with **Wendy Fields**

### Projects:

- We raised over \$1400 during our **Generosity Sunday** collection for **ISAAC** in support of its mission to build a Beloved Community infused with more justice, equity, abundance, and love.
- The **UUCC Board** donated \$200 from its discretionary fund to **WMU's Lewis Walker Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnic Relations' Youth Juvenile Justice Fellowship**.
- Four UUCC folks attended the November "**Souls to the Polls**" **ISAAC Public Meeting** during which Miriam shared a reading.
- We supported the **MKB-NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet Fundraiser** by purchasing an ad in the souvenir booklet.
- We hosted the **MKB-NAACP Community Baby Shower Drive** to help combat Black maternal and infant mortality.
- On behalf of UUCC, Miriam attended organizational meetings for the **Justice League of Kalamazoo County**, a faith-based reparations project seeking to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath.

# JUNETEENTH

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

## Kalamazoo Valley Museum

Attend a FREE film screening of the acclaimed **Mr. SOUL!**, a documentary that explores the first nationally broadcast all-Black variety show on public television.

It will be shown Tuesday, **June 17** at 5 PM in the Kalamazoo Valley Museum's Mary Jane Stryker Theater. A panel discussion follows with local Black creatives, curated by Soul Artistry LLC.

The screening is part of the museum's annual **Juneteenth Celebration of Freedom: Black Film Festival**.

The free tickets will be released on the day of the show at the museum's front desk on a first-come, first-served basis.



## Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Join the KIA for Juneteenth Family Afternoon on Thursday, June 19 from 11 AM to 2 PM to remember Juneteenth and the abolishment of slavery in the United States. Participate in various activities, like guided tours of African American artists, drop-in low-mess art activities, and more.

## City of Portage

To commemorate Juneteenth and better understand the evolution of our nation and its people, visit [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park](#) for an opportunity to reflect upon and learn about African American resilience and achievement as you explore the "Garden of Hope," participate in the self-led tour, reflect on mediative benches, and view the interpretive kiosk.

## Rootead

Get ready for a day filled with rhythm, flavor, and Black excellence! Rootead's **Juneteenth Celebration** returns to **Bronson Park** on **Saturday, June 14** from **1PM—7PM**, and it's bigger, bolder, and more soulful than ever. This is a space for all ages to come together in celebration, whether you are dancing, shopping with local-owned vendors, enjoying delicious food, connecting with your community, or just soaking it all in.



# RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

Our Religious Exploration program at UUCC is pretty tiny. But even a small program with a half dozen kids takes a lot of volunteers to work. I am so very grateful to the dedicated team of RE volunteers who show up week after week to nurture and support the kids at UUCC. Kudos to **Pat Timm, Eric and Regena Nelson, Mary Roscoe, Kathy Hays, and Isaac Epskamp-Hunt.** Everyone at UUCC is thankful for all you do!

The theme for May in Religious Exploration was Joy and I was having so much fun that I didn't take very many pictures. We learned about Ralph Waldo Emerson and his advice for a good life—

**Be Silly. Be Honest. Be Kind.** We leaned into being silly by playing with shaving cream, putting on make-up, making clown feet, and practicing some very silly walks. We also heard a story

about a Magic Vase that brought joy to a family that was down on its luck. We made some magic of our own with an exploding color milk experiment, some invisible ink, a house of cards, and some classic magic tricks. The kids also had the option to participate in the Flower Communion Sunday Service but most of them chose to play a joyful game of hide and seek downstairs instead. And, that is okay!



The kids will have another opportunity to participate in a multigenerational service on June 8 when we celebrate Religious Education Sunday. I am guessing they will be more interested in staying upstairs this time because they are helping to lead the service. I

hope lots of you will be in the pews that Sunday to cheer them on. It is also an important day because we will honor Nick Tasko as he transitions from a kid in RE to an adult Unitarian Universalist. Nick has been part of RE since he was four years old. It has been a joy to watch him grow into the amazing human being he is now. Don't miss this opportunity to wish him

well on this new leg of his journey through life.

The remaining Sundays in June the kids will be celebrating Juneteenth and enjoying our traditional ending to the year....Ice Cream Sundae Sunday when we eat ice cream sundaes with toppings that represent our UU values. Yum!!

JUNE RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION SCHEDULE		
DATE	LESSON	VOLUNTEERS
June 1	Service Prep Day	Miriam and Kathy
June 9	Multigenerational Sunday Service	N/A
June 15	Juneteenth Sunday	Regena and Eric
June 22	Sundae Sunday	Mary and Nick
June 29	Potluck Sunday	N/A

# COMING OF AGE



Unitarian Universalist Community Church is proud to announce that **Nick**, the youngest child of **Steve Tasko** and **Denise Sonier**, has completed our Coming of Age program for high school students. The Coming of Age program, a six-month-long program focused on religious exploration and self-reflection, is the way our church community marks the transition of our young people into adulthood.

Nick has been meeting with a mentor since January for a series of conversations about their values, beliefs, and personal spiritual journeys. Nick will share the insights they have garnered from these discussions with us during the service on Sunday, June 8 and, as a community, we will acknowledge the beginning of this new stage in their life.

Nick is also celebrating their graduation from Portage Central High School this month. In recognition of this accomplishment, Steve and Denise will host a “Come and Go” Celebration at UCC on **Saturday June 14** from **1-3 PM**. They extend a warm invitation to all their UCC friends to join them on this joyful day.



# CONGRATULATIONS!

# PRIDE



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

UUCC's commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion and empowerment doesn't just happen in June. It is something we support all year round because we believe that love is love and it is our responsibility to help build a world where people of all sexual orientations and gender identities feel welcome and supported. Here are some of the things we did this year to make our values real:

## Observances:

- We shared social media posts to mark **Coming Out Day** in October, **Transgender Day of Remembrance** in November, **World AIDS Day** in December, **Transgender Day of Visibility** in March, **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia** in May, and **Pride Month** in June.
- We also incorporated readings and visuals into our Sunday services, weekly emails, and newsletter to raise awareness about these days.

## Adult Education:

- We encouraged everyone at UUCC to watch the film *Will & Harper* to reflect on the power of empathy, acceptance, and trans allyship.
- 8 UUCC folks participated in the **discussion group** about the film.



## Sunday Services:

- We invited members of the LGBTQIA+ community to share their stories on **Coming Out Sunday** in October.
- In April, **Heather Sanford from OutFront Kalamazoo** spoke about the religious trauma experienced by some queer folks and the role UUCC can play in advocacy
- Also in April, **Drag Queens Miss Moscato and Reba Rose Rau** spoke about their journey to drag fabulousness and what acceptance and inclusion meant to them.
- We invited members of the LGBTQIA+ community to share their stories on **IDAHOBIT Sunday** in May.

## Projects:

- In January, we hosted an **All-Ages Drag Show** to show our commitment to LGBTQIA+ visibility and acceptance.
- Miriam, our Director of Religious Education shared a reflection and passed out blessings at the **OutFront Faith Alliance's Transgender Day of Visibility Service** in March.
- With several other progressive churches, we will co-host a **Portage Pride Celebration** from 12:30 –3 PM on June 8 at the Portage United Church of Christ.
- Our Program Council donated \$200 to **OutFront Kalamazoo** in support of its programs and services for youth and adults and their mission to advance social justice and achieve equity & inclusion for the LGBTQIA+ community.

# OPPORTUNITIES



We Gather

# PRIDE POTLUCK PICNIC

Sunday, June 8 12:30 PM Portage United Church of Christ

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

Family-friendly event with fun games and activities!



Rev. Gy is hoping to see you at the Portage Pride Picnic! Co-hosted by UCC and other progressive churches in the community, this family-friendly event will provide an opportunity for us to show our support for LGBTQIA+ equity and inclusion in Portage and remind people that hate has no home here.



## KIDS THEATRE CAMP



AGES 8-12

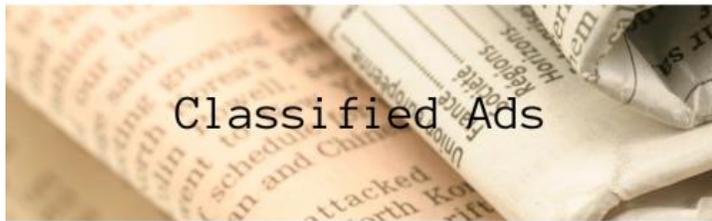
.....  
**AUGUST 18-22**  
**9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**  
.....

- ACTIVITIES:**
- Learn Theatre Skills
  - Play Games
  - Try Improv
  - Create Props
  - Construct Scenery
  - Design Costumes
  - Produce a Play

# REGISTER TODAY!

[tinyurl.com/OHTCKidsTheatreCamp](http://tinyurl.com/OHTCKidsTheatreCamp)

# OPPORTUNITIES



## Classified Ads

### Help Wanted

If you remember playing with Erector Sets as a kid, **Joe and Nancy Calme** could use your help on **Saturday, June 7, at 10:00 AM**. We are **putting up a greenhouse** on our farm, and it's sort of like a big Erector set. There is an aluminum frame that needs to be bolted together. We need maybe 2-4 people to help. You will need to be comfortable with being on a step ladder and able to follow printed instructions. **Refreshments and cookout provided.** Contact Joe Calme at [joe.calme@gmail.com](mailto:joe.calme@gmail.com) or call at 269-271-8852.

### Free Firewood

**Kathy Hays** has a pile of wood from a tree that was taken down this winter that anyone from the church or anyone they know can take if they need it. Contact Kathy at [hays.kathy16@gmail.com](mailto:hays.kathy16@gmail.com) to arrange a time when you can **pick up it from her Eagle Lake home** for free, or if you are feeling generous, for a goodwill offering to UUC.

*Three Rivers*  
**PRIDE**  
*Festival*

**Saturday, June 21st, 2025**  
**12pm – 7pm**  
Downtown Three Rivers  
**LIVE MUSIC • VENDORS**  
**FOOD TRUCKS**  
Free event • All ages are welcome!

**LIVE DRAG SHOW!**  
starring "The Kalamazoo Kittens"  
7pm at The Riviera Theatre  
Tickets: \$15 advance, \$20 day of  
minors must be accompanied by an adult

**KZOO**  
**PRIDE**

A FUNDRAISER FOR OUTFRONT KALAMAZOO

**JUNE 7-8**  
ARCADIA FESTIVAL SITE, KALAMAZOO

### Water Communion 2025

[Water Communion](#) is a unique Unitarian Universalist ritual traditionally held at the beginning of the church year that serves to remind us of our interconnectedness and celebrate our gathering together as a community. If you would like to participate in our 2025 Water Communion, please plan to collect a small sample of water from a special place you visit over the summer to add to a communal bowl in September. If you are lucky enough to be able to travel, the water can be from a lake, river, or ocean you pass along the way. If you are staying close to home, bring water from a pond, a fountain, or a backyard hose. The important part is that the water represents a place or experience that gives meaning to your life or provides sustenance for your soul.



# SAVE THE DATE!



# SAVE THE DATE



# WALK/RUN/ROLL

# 9/6/25

## 3:00 pm



Save the date for ISAAC's Beloved Community Walk/Run/Roll on **September 6, 2025** at **3 PM** at **Spring Valley Park in Kalamazoo.**

This event will include a Walk/Run/Roll distance of your choice for people of all ages. This walk/run/roll is open and inclusive for community members using wheelchairs, walkers and strollers.

After the walk/run/roll there will be community fellowship with food, music, singing, drumming and performances from social justice, cultural and faith communities.

There will also be vendors to promote connections and awareness to businesses, agencies, social justice organizations, health institutions, and faith communities.



# JUNE 2025



DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Sunday	June 1	Choir Practice <i>Love is the Spirit of This Church</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time Annual Meeting Climate Grief Sharing Circles	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:15 AM 4:00 PM
Tuesday	June 3	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 4	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Saturday	June 7	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	June 8	Choir Practice <i>With Love at the Center</i> Youth-Led Service NO RE Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time Portage Pride Picnic	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 12:30 PM
Tuesday	June 10	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 11	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Thursday	June 12	Growth Team Meeting	3:30 PM
Saturday	June 14	Qigong Nick's Graduation Party	9:00 AM 1-3 PM
Sunday	June 15	<i>Side with Love</i> with Mary Jo Ebert UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	June 16	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	June 17	Qigong	9:00 AM
Saturday	June 21	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	June 22	<i>Mystery Loves Company</i> with Rev. Kim Crawford Harvie UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:00 AM
Tuesday	June 24	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 26	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	June 28	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1-4 PM
Sunday	June 29	<i>Potluck Sunday</i> NO RE Exploration for Kids	10:00 AM



**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney M.Div., M.A.  
Consulting Minister  
By Appointment Only  
[gyludvig@gmail.com](mailto:gyludvig@gmail.com)  
Cell: 269-352-2412

Miriam Epskamp  
Office Administrator and  
Director of Religious Education  
[uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)  
Church office: 269-324-7262  
Cell phone: 269-993-8758

Luke Kritzman  
Music Director  
[luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu](mailto:luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu)  
Cell: (734) 545-3197

**2024-2025 Board of Trustees**

**Steve Tasko**

**Kathryn Ragains-Wilson**

**Pat Fuehr**

**Mike Graham**

**Eric Nelson**

**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, June 25 at NOON**

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

*CommUUnity Matters*

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church  
of Southwest Michigan**

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



**CONNECT WITH US!**



[uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)  
[www.uucommunitychurch.org](http://www.uucommunitychurch.org)  
[www.facebook.com/uuccswmi](https://www.facebook.com/uuccswmi)  
[www.instagram.com/uuccswmi/](https://www.instagram.com/uuccswmi/)

