



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

January 2026

JANUARY SUNDAY SERVICES

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

January 4: *Letter to Self* with Rev. Gy

Join Rev. Gy for our First-Sunday –in-January tradition of writing a letter to our future selves.

For the Zoom link, visit: tinyurl.com/uucclatters26

January 11: *Imagine the Flow* with Rev. Gy

The stories we tell ourselves about who we are shape our choices and our potential, much like water follows the paths laid before it. To transform our lives and our world, we must engage our creativity and imagination to examine those paths, rewrite limiting narratives, and re-imagine the flow. When we do, we create room for new possibilities to move freely, refreshed, energized, and full of promise.

For the Zoom link, visit tinyurl.com/uuccflow

January 18: *UUCC's Got Talent* with Luke and Friends

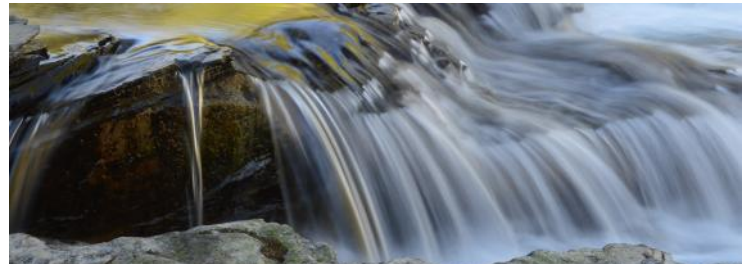
Music Director, Luke Kritzman, will lead us in an Intergenerational service focused on the importance of music in our spiritual lives. In addition to Luke's normal musical contributions, we'll hear from several members and friends of UUCC as they share the music that inspires them.

For the Zoom link, visit: tinyurl.com/uucctalent

January 25: *Life is a River* with Conrad Kaufman

Local artist Conrad Kaufman will reflect on life as a river and its connection to creativity and the course of his life.

For the Zoom link, visit: tinyurl.com/uuccriver



Spiritual Theme for January FLOW

Streams of Life, our spiritual theme for the 2025/2026 church year, invites us to explore what it means to be like water—together. In January we will explore the importance of flow, of imagination, creativity, and inspiration in our lives.

Imagination is like water. It is always moving, shaping our inner landscape whether we notice it or not. We imagine what others are thinking, predict futures that may never arrive, and rehearse worst-case scenarios before they happen. Our imaginations get plenty of practice, often rushing ahead like a fast current that carries us farther than we meant to go.

The spiritual practice of imagination is not about stopping this flow, but about guiding it. Water left unguided can stagnate or erode, but when directed, it nourishes life. When we place our life-affirming values in the driver's seat, imagination becomes a creative force rather than a source of fear. Creativity emerges when imagination flows with purpose, like a river shaped by its banks. It carries ideas into action and helps us envision new possibilities for ourselves and our communities.

Questions to ponder:

Where does my imagination tend to rush ahead of me, and where does it become stuck?

What values do I want guiding the flow of my imagination and shaping the stories I tell myself?

How might I intentionally direct my imaginative energy toward creativity, connection, or purposeful action?

GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

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

Local painter, muralist and woodworker **Conrad Kaufman** grew up appreciating nature. A self-taught artist with a B.S. in Anthropology from WMU, his many public works of art can be seen at the People's Food Co-op, the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, the Portage and Kalamazoo Public Libraries and illuminating poems on walls all around Kalamazoo. He also paints landscapes that "soak in the soft combing of wind through branch and leaf, the gossip of birds and the swish and sway of grasses, the smell of dew, the decay of leaves, the flavor of serenity." His work brings nature and the great outdoors to the forefront of our senses.



Our January **Thoughtful Thursday** conversation on January 18 at 7 PM via Zoom will feature special guest **Hristina Petroskva**, Food Systems Program Coordinator at Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Food Innovation Center.

Hristina was born and raised in Macedonia, and has called Kalamazoo home since 2013. She is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) with a Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics and a graduate certificate in Climate Change

Management and Policy from Western Michigan University. At the Food Innovation Center, she coordinates community classes and public events that are meant to bring people together around celebrating good food and building a just and sustainable future for all! She is also part-time faculty at Western Michigan University, teaching food and climate change in the Nutrition and Dietetics department. She pulls inspiration from her homeland, her family, and her fierce love for the natural world!

Interested in becoming a member of UU Community Church? Let's talk!

We want to make sure that all folks who are interested in membership understand what it means to be a member of a spiritual community before formally joining. We welcome folks who are ready to make these commitments:

Participation—Attend Sunday services whenever you can. The Sunday worship is our core community-wide spiritual practice. Your regular presence is a priceless gift to the congregation.

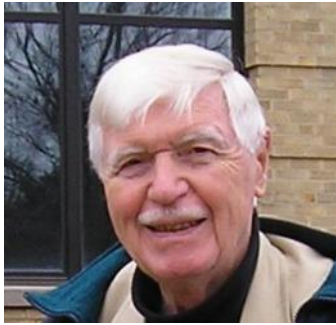
Involvement—The ministry of this church is carried out by all of us. Your contributions of time, talent and treasure help grow the richness of the community.

Financial Support - Our congregation exists because of the sustained generosity of its members and friends.

If you think you are ready to take the next steps on your path to membership, please reach out to [Rev. Gy](#) today. We would love to have you join us!



FROM THE WIDER UU WORLD



Our guest perspective this month comes from **Richard S. Gilbert**, who retired 2005 after serving 44 years in the Unitarian Universalist ministry in Cleveland, Ohio, Golden, Colorado, Ithaca, New York, and for 32 years at the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York.

When Life is Messy

It is easy to pray when the sun shines
And we are grateful for another glorious day of being.
It is hard to pray when wind and rain and thunder
Plague our every step and spoil our every plan.

It is easy to be virtuous when life goes well
And our existence is a journey from bliss to beauty and back.
It is hard to be virtuous when life assaults us
And our very being is a pilgrimage from bad to worse to worst.

It is easy to be cheerful when health bursts in us
So that we can feel the very pulse of life.
It is hard to be happy when pain and fatigue beset us
And we wonder if we can go on.

It is easy to do good when our goodness is rewarded
And we feel the power of pride in accomplishment.
It is hard to do good when we suffer for our efforts
And are troubled because we have been misunderstood.

It is easy to feel religious impulses well up inside us
When inspiration lives at our elbow and walks on our path.
It is hard to feel religious when we are tired with work to be done
And discouragement seems to mark our every move.

O God of order and neatness, we give thanks for all that is good.
We are grateful for manifold blessings bestowed upon us.
O God of chaos and disorder, be with us also when life is messy.
Bless our coming in and our going out from this day forth.



CARING COMMUNITY



JANUARY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

I hope that in this year to come, you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes, then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world. You're doing things you've never done before

—Neil Gaiman

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

We lost two very dear friends in December 2025. **Kathy Hays** passed away on December 4, and **Lee Smittendorf** left us just days later on December 14. Both Kathy and Lee leave a legacy of abundant generosity, kindness, and love that is cherished by all who knew them.

Many members and friends have undergone surgery or struggled with health issues this winter. Please keep **Nancy Calme, Nancy Crowell, Dick Bott, Bob Fuehr, Dave Uttermohlen, Mary Roscoe, Bob** and **Barb McWhorter, Rev. Gy** (and any others we may have missed) in your thoughts and prayers.

We are very proud of **Joel Folkert**, who completed his Wind Turbine Technician program at KVCC and was offered and accepted a job serving wind turbines across North America. He will start his new job in January.

We were wowed by all **the folks at Open House Theatre Company** who put on another great production of *The Night Before Christmas*. The youth performers were fabulous, and theatre-goers of all ages seemed to enjoy the show. Many thanks go out to **Mary Roscoe, Miriam, Teri and Dave Uttermohlen, Dawn Renner, Alana Hilton, Jude Springsteen, Stephanie Grathwol, Beverly Folts, Freya Lake**, and all the other UUCG folks whose generous donations and behind-the-scenes efforts helped make the performances possible.

We are grateful for **Eric Nelson** and **Dave Uttermohlen**, whose hard work and ingenuity have made it so that we now have a monitor that allows folks to see what is on the screen from the stage! No more frantic signaling to the musician from the sound table or lay leaders goose-necking to see what is going on. Thank you, thank you!

Birthdays:

January brings us many birthdays to celebrate! 5-**Dick Bott**, 7-**Nancy Stob**, 7 – **Pat Fuehr**, 11-**Sherrie VandePutte**, 17-**Ron Crowell**, 17-**Mary King**, 20-**Amanda Nelson**, 23-**Judy Oliver**, 25-**Isaac Epskamp**, 27- **Kevin Brozovich**

And **Betty Lee Ongley** will celebrate **100 trips around the Sun** on January 25. Congratulations on such an auspicious birthday!

Anniversaries:

Congratulations to **Teri and Dave Uttermohlen**, who will celebrate their wedding anniversary on **January 3**.

Remembering Friends Who Have Passed On:

Please take a moment to think about friends no longer with us: **Susie Johnson** -January 19, 2006, **Otto Byers**—January 22, 2015, **Elizabeth Fernandez** - January 14, 2021 (a founding member), and **Herb Gross** -January 10, 2024

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 UUCG office: 269-324-7262 or uucommunity@gmail.com.

LEADERSHIP



The Board of Trustees met on December 3. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Continued working on their goals of tech upgrades, a strategic plan for the building and grounds, and planned giving.
- Gave approval to a group wanting to collect signatures for the Invest in MI Kids ballot initiative following a church service in January

- Discussed changes to the Emergency Closing Policy

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

The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, January 7 at 6:30 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](#).

**MICHIGAN
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
SOCIAL
JUSTICE
NETWORK**

Michigan faith communities
connected and empowered
to create a more just
and caring world

**2026
Membership
Drive**

Get Out the Vote Environmental Justice LGBTQ+ Rights Challenging Racism Women's Rights Economic Justice

Established in 2002, the **Michigan UU Social Justice Network** (MUUSJN) is a statewide social justice coalition that includes allies, activists, clergy, and people like YOU.

The network provides UU all over the state with:

- Opportunities to learn about the social justice issues facing our communities and what actions can be taken
- Ways to collaborate with like-minded organizations to build collective power
- Representatives who show up and speak out publicly in ways that reflect UU values and principles

MUUSJN relies on the financial support of UUs and friends such as yourself to continue its justice work. Please consider becoming a member today! Visit uujustice.org to learn how.

Here is to working together to build a world with more peace, more justice, and more grace in 2026!

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process. **Anyone may attend.**



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JUNE 14 – 21, 2026

MEET THE MOMENT: TOGETHER EVERYWHERE

For General Assembly in 2026, the UUA will try creating a virtual “everywhere GA” with both online and distributed in-person options that will allow Unitarian Universalists to participate in whichever way works best for them. This new format will reduce travel costs and environmental impacts, offer optional in-person connections, streamline production costs, and provide a more flexible schedule for participants.

We know there is a deep need in this moment to build and sustain community as Unitarian Universalists. Given the strain that our congregations and individual UUs face in the current political climate, when travel brings increased risks and person-to-person connection remains important to our continued thriving, we are leaning into this creative approach.



To maintain safety, accessibility, and equity, the UUA is offering several ways to engage with the content and connections offered at this virtual GA, including fully virtual participation streaming live across many time zones.

By experimenting with smaller, more localized gatherings we can uphold the value of equity for GA participants around the country and production quality that supports the experience of online attendees. Truly, we can be together everywhere as we build the courage and capacity to Meet the Moment.

General Assembly 2026 will take place from **Sunday, June 14, through Sunday, June 21.**

Business meetings will take place between June 14-16. June 17–18 will be set aside for Connection, Travel, or Personal Time. Worship, Learning and Celebration will take place June 19–21 (online and broadcast from the Studio Site in Louisville).

Adult registration for GA is now open. Visit uua.org/ga/registration to learn more.

Two delegates are needed to attend business meetings and represent UUCC at General Assembly. If you are interested in serving as a delegate, contact a UUCC Board Member or discuss the details with Miriam. Delegates may attend the General Assembly business meetings at no cost.

To learn more about GA, visit uua.org/ga or talk to someone who has attended in the past—Eric Nelson, Marsha Laya, Rev. Gy, Judy Halseth, Kimberly Ridley, or Miriam.

PROGRAM COUNCIL



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 **January 11**. We will meet following the service. You can participate either in person or on Zoom.

At our December meeting, we had much to **CELEBRATE!**

We enjoyed great Sunday services in November with **Rev. Gy, Larry Farris, and Tony Ettwein**. Our young folks—**Declan, Theo, Rook, Amanda, and Nick**—help lead a wonderful **Bread Communion** service with lots of good bread, good memories, and a choir. We hosted two Thoughtful Thursdays! One with organizers from the **United Farm Workers Foundation** and another with **Rabbi Shelley Goldman**, who spoke about Joy from the Jewish perspective. We also hosted an uplifting **Community Thanksgiving service** with lots of new friends, lots of pie, and a bigger choir! **Eric Nelson** held an **Autumn Mindfulness Retreat** that drew rave reviews. And, thanks to the efforts of the Stewardship Committee—**Regena Nelson, Marsha Laya, Ron Crowell, and Joe Calme**, we raised over \$7400 for the church at an **amazing Auction!** We may be small, but we are mighty!

We also cheered for some awesome volunteers who answered calls to service during (or shortly after) the meeting. **Pat Fuehr** agreed to inventory our First Aid Kits. **Jameson Whitney** and **Bev Folz** joined the Meal Ministry Food Prep Team. **Dave Uttermohlen** volunteered to work on grant applications to improve our building and grounds. **Pat Timm** and **Dawn Renner** offered to help as lay leaders. Thank you! Thank you! Together, we can do great things.

We agreed to spend \$200 of the Program Council budget to renew our congregational membership to the Michigan UU Social Justice Network (MUUSJN Folks were also encouraged to become individual members (only \$35!) to help provide MUUSJN with support. (See page 5 for more information about becoming a member.)

Two new programming ideas were presented and approved at the meeting:

- Thanks to a generous donation from **Lisa Wagner** of several handmade, vintage quilts, a **Quilt Show/Auction** was proposed by **Marsha Laya**. Several people expressed an interest in helping with the event and the Stewardship Committee will pursue this idea.
- A **Euchre Night** was not offered at the Auction this year. **Dawn Renner** proposed that we hold one in the spring. **Pat Fuehr** and **Dave Uttermohlen** volunteered to help Dawn organize the event.

Please plan to join us at the next Program Council meeting on Sunday, January 11 at around 11:20 AM, in person or via Zoom, and help keep UCC's programs going strong. We will serve a light soup luncheon before the Program Council Meeting. All donations will help support youth programs at UCC.

If you have any questions about Program Council, or items to add to the agenda, contact

[Joel Folkert](#).

STEWARDSHIP

Beat the Winter Blues with Megan Dooley

Baby, it's cold outside, so warm up with us at the **Beat the Winter Blues Fundraiser** on **Saturday, February 28, at 5:00 PM** at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church (UUCC)!

Join us for a cozy evening that starts with a hearty winter supper of vegetarian and meat chili, along with a flavorful vegetarian mushroom paprikash, bread, and dessert. A cash bar will be available, with beer priced at \$5. Tickets are just \$20 per person, and kids are free.



The evening will feature live music starting at 6:00 PM by the talented **Megan Dooley**, a Kalamazoo-based singer-songwriter known for her rich, soulful voice and eclectic style that blends folk, blues, jazz, and Americana. Megan's performances are full of warmth and energy, making her the perfect artist to brighten a winter night.



Please bring your friends and neighbors for a night of great food, community, and fun that will help beat the winter blues and support



2025 Contribution Statements

Contribution Statements will be emailed in January

If you gave traceable payments on a pledge or other contributions to UUCC, you will receive an emailed Contribution Statement in January 2025 from Kimberly Ridley.

The Contribution Statement will show all your giving activity recorded in church records for the calendar year ended 12/31/25. This statement is intended to support your tax records and claims of deductions for charitable giving to UUCC. All receipts made via check, Vanco, or other recorded means for which you received no goods or services are listed. As always, please review your record and let me know if you find any discrepancies which require correction (or if you do not receive the emailed statement by January 31). Your contributions and donations are sincerely appreciated.

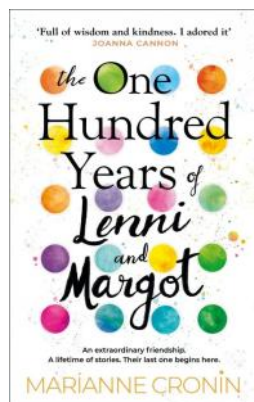
Thank you,

Kimberly Ridley, Assistant Treasurer

Email ridleyk@hotmail.com or

(269) 569-3658

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

Friday, January 9
1:00 PM via Zoom

January Selection:
The One Hundred Years of Lenni and Margot
by Marianne Cronin

From [This Is a Bookstore](#):

Seventeen-year-old Lenni Pettersson lives on the Terminal Ward at the Glasgow Princess Royal Hospital. Though the teenager has been told she's dying, she still has plenty of living to do. Joining the hospital's arts and crafts class, she meets the magnificent Margot, an 83-year-old, purple-pajama-wearing, fruitcake-eating rebel, who transforms Lenni in ways she never imagined.

As their friendship blooms, a world of stories opens for these unlikely companions who, between them, have been alive for one hundred years. Though their days are dwindling, both are determined to leave their mark on the world. With the help of Lenni's doting palliative care nurse and Father Arthur, the hospital's patient chaplain, Lenni and Margot devise a plan to create one hundred paintings showcasing the stories of the century they have lived—stories of love and loss, of courage and kindness, of unexpected tenderness and pure joy. Though the end is near, life isn't quite done with these unforgettable women just yet.

The Book Group will meet at 1:00 PM on January 9 for a short business meeting and a discussion of the book led by **Marsha Laya**.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom Meeting ID: 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981

Please direct any questions you might have about the Women's Book Group to chair, [Dawn Renner](#).

January Game Gathering

Our monthly Game Gathering will meet on the **lower level** of UCC on Saturday, **January 3** from **1-4 PM** or an afternoon of board and card games.



Board games aren't just a way to pass the time; they're a great tool for improving cognitive function, boosting creativity, and enhancing our social connections. In a world full of

digital distractions, spending time playing some analog games with friends also offers an enjoyable way to unplug and de-stress.

Come give our Game Gathering a try! You can bring your favorite game and a snack to share or simply come. People of all ages and game-playing abilities are welcome. If you have questions about our Game Gathering, please contact [Nancy Calme](#).

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group



The UCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, January 17** at **9:00 AM** at

Berries Famous Pancake House located on Westnedge Ave.

The Breakfast Group "regulars" would love to have YOU join them for good food and conversation.

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 having breakfast alone. Ron's contact info is ronald.crowell@wmich.edu or (269)599-1242.

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 in to most groups as your schedule allows or make regular attendance your spiritual practice. Newcomers are always welcome!



Mindful Living Group

Unlock the power of mindfulness with **Eric Nelson** at the monthly meeting of our Mindful Living Group on the first Monday of each month from **7-8 PM** on Zoom. During the session you will experience guided mindfulness, insights from *Comfortable with Uncertainty* by Pema Chödrön, and meaningful community dialogue to nurture calm, compassion, and clarity. Newcomers are always welcome! The next session is on **January 5**. To register: tinyurl.com/UUCCMindfulLiving



Qigong Group

Why not start the New Year off right with a new self-care practice? Come and join the UUCC Qigong Group every **Tuesday** and **Saturday**!

Qigong, a series of mindful movements and breathing exercises that can help center the mind and relax the body, is a great way to start your day.

Each session begins at **9:00 AM** with a brief check-in followed by 30 minutes of exercise (with cameras and mics turned off), led, via videorecording, by an

experienced instructor.

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](#).



Quilting for Community

Quilting for Community, the quilting group at UUCC, will take a break in January and February when many of its members are traveling. They will begin meeting again in March on the **1st and 3rd Wednesday** of the month from 10:30 AM—2 PM at UUCC. Please direct your questions about this group to [Marsha Laya](#).



Sustainability Group

The UUCC Sustainability Group usually meets at **7:00 PM** via Zoom on the **3rd Monday of Each Month** 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. Their next meeting is **January 19 at 7 PM** when they hope to be joined by a guest speaker from the Grosse Pointe UU Church who will talk about some of things their Green Team has been working on. Click [HERE](#) for the Zoom link.

LEARNING AND GROWTH



THOUGHTFUL THURSDAYS

Cultivating Change

An evening with *Hristina Petrovska*
Food Systems Program Coordinator, Valley Food Hub

January 29 7:00 - 8:30 PM on Zoom



Join us for a conversation about cultivating resilience through cultivating joyful and creative community.

Thoughtful Thursdays, our monthly online series, helps us explore how we can live with deeper compassion, clarity, and connection with ourselves, with others, and with the Earth. Through storytelling, teaching, spiritual reflection, and shared dialogue, we are striving to create a space that will nurture both our personal and collective transformation. Please plan to join us for our next Thoughtful Thursday event:

January 29: Cultivating Resilience through Cultivating Community

Resilience does not grow in isolation. Like a healthy garden, it thrives when nurtured through connection, shared purpose, and care for one another. On Thursday, **January 29 at 7:00 PM**, join us on Zoom for our January Thoughtful Thursday program, *Cultivating Resilience through Cultivating Community*.

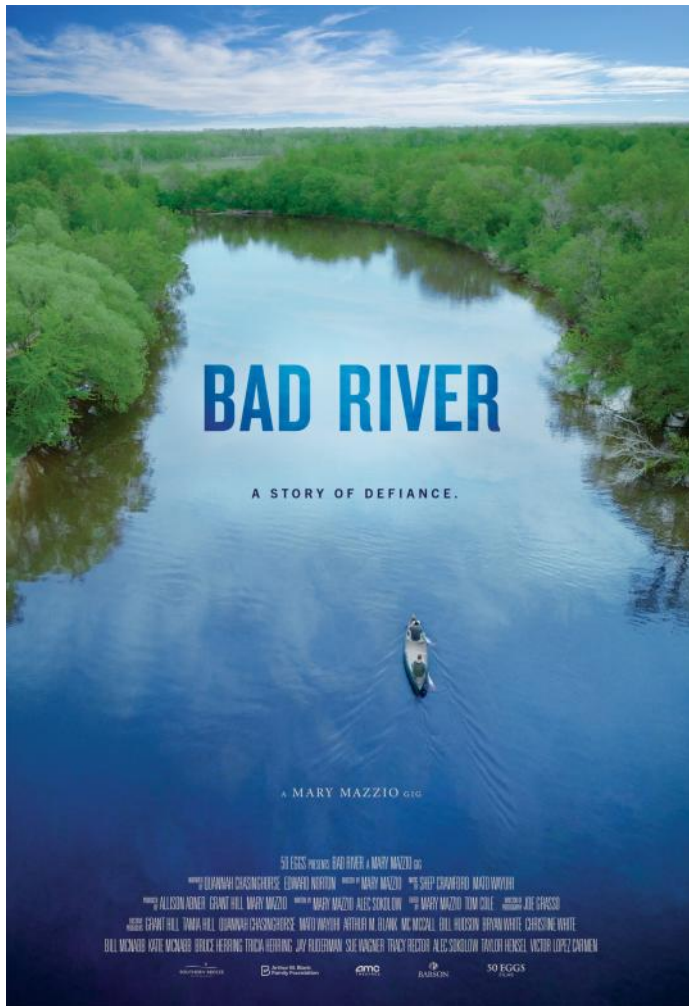
Our guest speaker, **Hristina Petrovska**, Food Systems Program Coordinator at Kalamazoo Valley Community College's **Valley Food Hub**, will share how community-centered food and land-based programs bring people of all ages together to learn, share skills, and build meaningful relationships. From classes like Vegetable Gardening Basics, Structural Pruning for Small Trees, Beekeeping, and Home Landscape Design to youth summer camps and field trips rooted in gardening, these programs offer powerful opportunities to gather around shared interests and shared care for the earth.

Hristina will explore how cultivating love—for ourselves, our neighbors, and our other-than-human relatives—can guide our work and strengthen our resilience. Together, we will reflect on ways to create opportunities for stewardship and connection that arise from joy and love, rather than fear and despair.

Come be inspired by what can grow when community is rooted in care.

To register for the Zoom link, visit tinyurl.com/uuccfoodhub26. If you can't join us on January 29, register for link anyway and we will send you a recording of the program.

GREEN YOUR NEW YEAR



Join our environmental justice partners at **Hope for Creation** on Sunday, **January 18** at **5 PM** to watch and discuss, *Bad River*, the award winning documentary about one tribe's struggle against big oil. Visit hopeforcreation.net to register.

Join our friends at **Kalamazoo Area Wild Ones (KAWO)** for programs in January:

January 15: *Pints & Native Plants*, an informal meet-up that takes place on the third Thursday of each month, will meet at **7 PM** at **Brewery Outré**. This is a chance to have a drink and chat about native plants, challenges in our gardens, pollinators, and more. Everyone is welcome to come by and get to know other native plant enthusiasts and KAWO members.

January 28: Native garden designer and advocate **Mike Weis** will present ***Oak Savanna Garden Design: Going Beyond 'Prairie Style' Pollinator Gardens To Maximize Ecological Services in your Yard*** on Wednesday, **January 28** at **6 PM** at the Portage District Library.



Climate Calling

Join other concerned citizens across the state on the first Tuesday of the month for an advocacy call on a relevant and timely climate justice related issue.

The next Climate Calling session is on Tuesday, **January 6** from 8-8:30 PM on Zoom. Visit hopeforcreation.net to register for the Zoom link.

RACIAL JUSTICE



The City of Kalamazoo sponsors a community-wide day of service in January each year in honor of the late **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** This year's **Day of Service** will take place on **Monday, January 19.**

Social service organizations around Kalamazoo County provide opportunities for community volunteers to take a day-on rather than a day off. Community members are encouraged to celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. King by finding ways to serve our community.

Volunteer registration is coordinated through Gryphon Place. You can visit [their website](#) to learn more, browse volunteer opportunities, and sign up to help.



On Sunday, **January 11 at 3:30 PM**, the Racial Equity Group at the **Portage Westminster Presbyterian Church** will share the short but compelling film, **My Father's Name**, that explores the legacy of racial violence through a personal lens: about one woman's journey to come to grips with the shocking discovery of her father's participation, as a young man, in a lynching.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. describes this film as "*A gripping and essential exploration of race, accountability, and the far-reaching consequences of family secrets.*"

UUCC shared this film in October. If you missed seeing it then you should consider taking this opportunity to watch and discuss this film. This event is free and open to the public.

NATIONAL DAY OF RACIAL HEALING

#HowWeHeal

FREE EVENTS ALL OF JANUARY

- YOUTH OPEN MIC ✦ LOCAL ART ✦ YOGA
- RACIAL HEALING RETREAT ✦ TEACH INS
- SHARED RESOURCES ✦ MUSEUM EXHIBITS
- SOLIDARITY SESSIONS ✦ WORKSHOPS



MITTRANSFORMATION.ORG/NDORH2026/

National Day of Racial Healing

Our justice partners at the Michigan Transformation Collective (MTC) are gearing up for a bold, community-wide celebration of National Day of Racial Healing because healing is not a moment, it's a practice.

Throughout January, MTC invites you to reflect, connect, and take meaningful action as neighbors committed to a just and loving community.

Plan to join them at one of their many events including teach-ins, museum exhibits, solidarity sessions, and workshops.

Visit mitransformation.org/ndorh2026 for a full list of events with dates, times, and registration information.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



R.E.flections From [Miriam Epskamp](#), Director of Religious Education
Happy New Year, Friends!

Whatever 2026 brings, I truly believe we are better off facing it together than on our own.

Thank you for your continued support of UUCC. Thank you for showing up, again and again, wholly, authentically, lovingly, bringing kindness, gentleness, laughter, and hope.

The kids and I will certainly miss the way that **Kathy Hays** showed up in our Religious Exploration space and as a volunteer at our Kids Theatre Camp full of warmth, caring, and enthusiasm. She will be missed.

My wishes for you (and for myself) in 2026 come from the words of the Rev. Addae Ama Kraba, who serves the Unitarian Universalist New Braunfels congregation in Texas.



Let this year be a clean slate for new beginnings.

I Pray for Stamina. *To finish things left uncompleted. To call on people neglected last year.*

I Pray for Courage. *To rally in the cause for peace and justice. To speak out in support when others remain silent.*

I Pray for Empathy. *To better understand the pain and suffering of others. To continue engaging heart to heart.*

I Pray for Patience. *When seeking resolutions to problems. When seeking a new beginning after an ending.*

I Pray for Creativity. *In seeking new meaning in service. Engaging others in service to the beloved community.*

I Pray for Peace. *Between friends and families. Between communities and countries.*

All these things I pray for you in this time of beginning, in this new year.

May it be so. Love *Miriam*

DATE	VOLUNTEERS	Our Religious Exploration classes will continue Sailing Around the World to learn about different cultures and religious traditions. On January 4, we will finish our exploration of Mexico and Christianity with a pinata! Then we will set sail for Japan to learn about Taoism.
January 4	Eric and Regena Nelson	
January 14	Pat Timm	
January 18	N/A	
January 25	Pat Timm	

JANUARY 2026

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Thursday	January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR	All Day
Saturday	January 3	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	January 4	<i>Letter to Self</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	January 5	Stewardship Committee Meeting Mindful Living Group	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	January 6	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	January 7	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Friday	January 9	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	January 10	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	January 11	<i>Imagine the Flow</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time and Souper Sunday Program Council Meeting	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Tuesday	January 13	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	January 14	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
Saturday	January 17	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	January 18	<i>UUCC's Got Talent</i> with Luke Kritzman and Friends NO—UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM — — — 11:00 AM
Monday	January 19	MLK DAY	All Day
Tuesday	January 20	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	January 21	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	January 24	Qigong Betty Lee's 100th Birthday Party	9:00 AM 2-4 PM
Sunday	January 25	<i>Life is a River</i> with Conrad Kaufman UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	January 27	Qigong	9:00 AM
Thursday	January 29	Thoughtful Thursday with Hristina Petrovska	7:00 PM
Saturday	January 31	Qigong	9:00 AM

WEATHER EMERGENCIES: For the safety of our members and friends, we occasionally make the decision to cancel onsite Sunday Services in the event of severe weather or similar emergencies. If Rev. Gy and the Board President decide to cancel, we will send out an email via Mailchimp to let everyone know we are not meeting at the building. We will also post closing information on our Facebook page, on our website, and on WWMT's Closing Alerts, as well as local radio stations, if time permits. ***On Sundays when we have had a lot of snow or are under a Winter Storm Warning, please double check we are in session before heading out to church***

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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

Miriam Epskamp
Office Administrator and
Director of Religious Education
uucommunity@gmail.com
Church office: 269-324-7262
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Luke Kritzman
Music Director
luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu
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2025-2026 Board of Trustees

Dave Uttermohlen

Joel Folkert

Pat Fuehr

Kathryn Ragains-Wilson

Dawn Renner

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, January 21 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:
uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

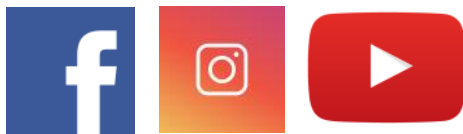
CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

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