



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

February 2026

FEBRUARY SUNDAY SERVICES

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

February 1: *100 Years of Betty Lee* with UUCC Members and Friends

UUCC member and community treasure Betty Lee Ongley celebrated her 100th birthday last month. We will honor this milestone by reflecting on the impact she has had on our congregation and the wider community.

For the Zoom link: tinyurl.com/uuccbettylee

February 8: *Life is a River* with Conrad Kaufman

Conrad Kaufman's planned visit to UUCC last month was interrupted by bad weather. He will reflect on life as a river and its connection to creativity and the course of his life.

For the Zoom link: tinyurl.com/uuccriveragain

February 15: *Defending Trans Lives* with Imara Jones

Each year at our General Assembly the UUA President chooses someone to offer a lecture to our entire association. In 2025, Imara Jones, a political journalist and transgender activist, offered an important reflection on the state of our country. During this service we will watch excerpts of Ms Jones' address and explore how defending trans lives is essential to defending our democracy.

For the Zoom link: tinyurl.com/uucctranslives

February 22: *Good Trouble* with Jenny Snyder

Why is peaceful protest effective and why is engaging with the political process *right now* so important? Drawing on Erica Chenoweth's "3.5%" research and her personal experience with Indivisible Greater Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo Visibility Brigade, local activist Jenny Snyder will help us explore the power of nonviolent movements and other ways to engage in what the late Representative John Lewis described as "Good Trouble".

For the Zoom link: tinyurl.com/uuccgoodtrouble



Spiritual Theme for February SURGE

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 February, we will acknowledge the power water has to sculpt, erode, and transform landscapes as we explore the role of action, activism, social justice, and protest in our spiritual lives.

In Unitarian Universalism, social justice action flows from the heart of our faith, not the margins. Like water, our tradition has surged through history—helping erode the foundations of slavery, carve new channels for women's suffrage and civil rights, and transform the landscape of marriage equality. Guided by our values, we are called to keep on moving forward together, as a living current, shaping a more just and compassionate world through collective action and public witness. This work is not easy and it is not always safe. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once remarked, "*Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable...Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.*"

Questions to ponder this month: *What is required of us at this moment in the struggle for justice?*

If we cannot be the ones taking on tireless exertions, how can we support those who are?

How can we stay engaged with the injustice all around us, without becoming numb to it?

GUESTS IN THE PULPIT

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



Imara Jones, whose work has won Emmy and Peabody Awards, is the creator of *TransLash Media*, a cross-platform journalism, personal storytelling and narrative project, which produces content to shift the current culture of hostility towards transgender people in the US. As part of her work at *TransLash*, Imara hosts the WEBBY-nominated *TransLash Podcast with Imara Jones* as well as the investigative, limited series, *The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against Equality*. In 2019, she chaired the first-ever *UN High-Level Meeting on Gender Diversity* with over 600 participants. Imara has been featured regularly in *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, *MSNBC*, *CNBC*, *NPR*, *Mic*, and *Colorlines*. Imara has held economic policy posts in the Clinton White House and communications positions at Viacom. Imara holds degrees from the London School of Economics and Columbia. She also serves on the boards of the *Transgender Law Center*, *Anti-Violence Project*, *GLSEN*, the *LGBTQ+ Museum*, and the *New Pride Agenda*. Imara is also part of the *Move to End Violence*. In June 2025, she delivered the Ware Lecture at the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly.

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 gorgeous landscapes, a few of which he has displayed on our Art Wall through February 8.



After the 2016 election, **Jenny Syndergaard Snyder** woke up to the reality that activism was no longer optional. Her decision to "Talk Less/Do More" has led to wide-ranging projects. Currently, Jenny organizes peacekeepers and other volunteers for Indivisible's No Kings protests and other actions. She grabs motorists' attention with Kalamazoo Visibility Brigade bridge messages. She knocks doors for candidates, serves as a Precinct Delegate, and works the polls on Election Day. She has also been active in the League of Women Voters and the local Democratic Party. And in 2022, Jenny and her husband, Bo, led a team of Voters Not Politicians volunteers to help expand voting rights in the Michigan Constitution. "There are so many ways to get involved," she says. "For me, a decade of 'doing' has been the antidote to feeling overwhelmed and powerless."

FROM THE WIDER UU WORLD



Our guest perspective this month comes from the settled minister at the UU Church of Delaware County Pennsylvania, **Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon**. This essay first appeared in [Braver/Wiser](#) in June 2022.

You at the edges and shores, in the rooms of quiet, in the rooms of shouting, in the airport terminal, at the bus depot saying “No!” and each of us looking out from the gorgeous unlikelihood of our lives at all, finding ourselves here, witnesses to each other’s tenderness, which, this moment, is fury, is rage, which, this moment, is another way of saying: You are who I love You are who I love You and you and you are who

–Aracelis Girmay, “You Are Who I Love,” from Split This Rock’s The Quarry: A Social Justice Poetry Database

As we collectively attempt to process the trauma, pain, and senseless violence of the past several weeks, I find myself repeating Aracelis Girmay’s phrase: you are who I love. I’m thinking about how heavy the world feels and how hard it is to breathe under that weight. I’m thinking about self-care and the ways we talk about it and the ways we don’t. It’s easy to accept the weight of the world’s suffering into our hearts and onto our bodies. It is easy to become heavy with the burdens of the world.

You are who I love.

Many believe that religion is the place where we find answers and meaning to the unanswerable questions. For some, religion is the place where answers to the unanswerable questions about evil and violence, death, injustice, and cruelty reside. My Unitarian Universalism doesn’t give me answers to unanswerable questions, but does give me a faith big enough to hold my questions in a place beyond answers.

To be human is to not have answers. To be human is to feel as though the enormity of sorrow, anger, grief, and pain will pull me into the undertow. My Unitarian Universalist faith reminds me that this is simply the way of it: our hearts are meant to crack open under this enormity of grief. Because of this cracking and unknowing—because of this stumbling and holding one another—you are who I love.

Us, human, here, breaking and crying, crumbling and loving still: you are who I love. Your tenderness, your rage, your hope and hopelessness, your justice-seeking, your protesting, your loving us anyway: you are who I love.

We do not need to fear the how of putting-back-together. We will come back together because it is what humans have always done: fallen apart and witnessed the crumbling; come together and tethered ourselves to each other.

We are an angry and beautiful people. We hold our questions, our rage, our not-knowing, our loss, our devastation, and even in the uncertainty, we know we are made to hold one another.



CARING COMMUNITY

FEBRUARY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

When world events overwhelm you, February can give you a chance to retreat and catch your breath.

In February's hush, a silent world, snow-covered streets, quietly unfurled.

A pause in time, a tranquil spell, in winter's heart, where peace dwells.

~Anonymous



Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

Please keep **Bob and Barb McWhorter, Deborah Warner, and Mary King** in your thoughts and prayers as they struggle with health issues.

Our dear friend **Nancy Stobb** sends her love to her UCC family, “*I do miss everyone,*” she writes. Although health issues keep her from attending church, Nancy does keep tabs on everyone as a Caring Community point person.

Thank you to **Stephanie Grathwol** for taking a load of UCC styrofoam to the Kalamazoo EPS Foam Recycling Day in December and for her plans to do it again on February 14. She is helping us live more gently on the Earth!

Congratulations to **Julie Kelemen's father, Joe**, who celebrated his 94th birthday in January. Many happy returns of the day!

Please keep **Dave Uttermohlen** in your thoughts and prayers. He was recently diagnosed with cancer and has undergone surgery to remove the affected kidney. (Update: Surgery was on January 18, and so far all is well. No evidence of cancer elsewhere.)

Safe travels to all our UCC friends who are on the move - **Harold Beu and Julie Mack** are in Alabama, soaking up the sun, **Pat and Bob Fuehr** are staying warm in Arizona, **Freya Lake** is visiting family in California, the **Wojciak family** is heading off for a well-deserved get away in Puerto Rico, and **Joel Folkert** is excited to be traveling to New Mexico for his first assignment as a wind turbine technician.

Betty Lee Ongley took a tumble just before her 100th birthday on January 25 and broke her ankle. She underwent surgery and spent a day or two in hospital before being transferred to a skilled nursing facility to recuperate. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers. Given the rates of flu in Kalamazoo and Michigan (reportedly the worst flu season in over 25 years) and that COVID cases are on the rise, Betty and her family decided to postpone celebrating her birthday until it is safer for everyone to gather. She would love to receive birthday greetings and get-well messages by mail.

Best wishes to all our UCC scholars who returned to the classroom after winter break, including those at WMU, **Luke Kritzman, Amanda Nelson, and David Brozovich; Matthew Nelson**, who is pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois - Champagne/Urbana; and **Jameson Whitney**, who joins **Nick Tasko** taking classes at KVCC. We also wish good luck on their studies to all our UCC kids, including **Jude, Rook, Declan, Theo, Travis, Natalie, Emmett, and Harper**. In other academic news we send our congratulations to **David Brozovich's girlfriend Haleigh**, who has earned a bachelor's degree from Western Governors University. Woo hoo! (*More caring news on page 5*)

LEADERSHIP

Happy Birthday to YOU!

Best wishes to our friends with birthdays this month: 10 – **Hunter Ridley**,
10- **Marsha Laya**, 13- **Bev Folz**, 15 – **Regena Nelson**, 26- **Joe Calme**

In Memoriam:

We fondly remember three of our members who we lost in February's past.

Barbara Cousins—February 11, 2009

John Folz— February 4, 2023

Linsey Furry—February 27, 2024

Welcome Guests!

We are grateful for all the visitors who joined us in January including **Natalie, Marcy, Marjorie**, and **Travis** who visited for the first time, and **Marti** from Three Rivers, and **Isaac Johnson**, who joined us for repeat visits. It was lovely to meet **Nicky Leigh's daughter, Jamie**, and **son-in-law Andrew**, and **Miriam's son, Abe**, too. We hope you will all stop by again soon!

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



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

- Continued reviewing and updating Board Policies
- Made plans to review and update our Safe Congregation Abuse and Molestation policy
- Made plans to help UUCC folks leave a legacy of love through Planned Giving!
- Set the date for the Annual Meeting - May 31, 2026

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

The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, February 4**, 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](#).



Important Tax Information

2025 Donation Tax Statements were emailed Saturday, January 24 from uucommunityfinance@gmail.com. If you did not receive yours, please contact Joe Calme.

STEWARDSHIP



Beat the Winter Blues
WITH MEGAN DOOLEY

Jan Dwyer
PHOTOGRAPHY

 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
COMMUNITY CHURCH
ucommunitychurch.org

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 28
5:00 PM

\$20 per person
includes
a chili supper

Warm Up Winter with Food, Music, and Community

Winter can feel long, but gathering together with good friends, delicious food, and fantastic live music is sure to make it brighter. Please join us for **Beat the Winter Blues** on **Saturday, February 28**, starting at **5:00 PM** at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church for an evening designed to bring warmth and connection to the season.

The night begins with a **hearty winter supper** featuring vegetarian and meat chili, vegetarian mushroom paprikash, bread, and dessert. We'll also host our first ever **Cornbread Bake-Off Contest***, where everyone gets to taste and vote for their favorite recipe. Tickets are \$20 per person, beers are only \$5, and kids eat free, making this a welcoming event for all ages.

At **6:00 PM**, enjoy **live music from Megan Dooley**, a Kalamazoo-based singer-songwriter known for her rich, soulful voice and her blend of folk, blues, jazz, and Americana. Her music brings warmth and energy that pair perfectly with a cozy winter evening.

Bring friends, invite neighbors, and come enjoy good food, great music, and the gift of community. Your participation also helps support UUCS programs and ministries. Let's make winter a little warmer—together.

***If you are ready to put your baking skills to the test at our Cornbread Bake Off and win bragging rights for the coming year, contact [Marsha Laya](#) for contest rules, details, and supplies.**

QUILT OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the UCC Quilt-of-the-Month Sale

Recently, UCC was gifted a treasure trove of vintage quilts from the estate of **Frances Keenan**. Each one was pieced with love and care and many of them are hand-quilted. After brainstorming what to do with them at our last Program Council meeting, we have decided to try to sell the quilts with the proceeds going to support church programming.

We will start by displaying one quilt a month at UCC. Members, visitors, and friends may purchase the quilt for its asking price at anytime during the month. If no one at UCC is interested, we will list the quilt online on various sites and try our luck there.

Our Quilt-of-the-Month offerings will continue until we run out of quilts (in about a year). Any quilts unsold by July 2027 will be donated to the Northern Michigan Relief Sale, a quilt auction to benefit the Mennonite Central Committee and their mission to assist people around the world struggling with natural disasters, famine, war, disease, and poverty.

February Quilt-of-the-Month—Pink and White Stars—62 x 80 in.

Bring timeless charm to your home with this beautiful, vintage, hand-quilted, rose pink and white star quilt, crafted circa 1990. With carefully pieced star blocks, balanced negative space, and detailed hand quilting throughout, this quilt showcases creativity, craftsmanship, and classic Americana style. In excellent vintage condition, showing very little wear and no visible stains or damage, this quilt has both decorative and functional appeal. Whether you display it as a wall hanging, layer it on a bed, or showcase it in a quilt collection, this is a wonderful piece for quilt lovers and collectors of handmade vintage textiles.

The asking price for this beautiful gem is only \$200. It is being sold on a first come, first serve basis, so don't wait too long to claim it! Contact [the office](#) if you want to make it yours. Payment can be made by cash, check, or with a credit card on our website or the Vanco app.



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 **February 8**. We will meet following the service and you can participate either in person or on Zoom.

At our January meeting we had lots to celebrate. In December, we enjoyed **great Sunday services** celebrating the holidays and the new year with Rev. Gy and Miriam. We held **a lovely Christmas Eve gathering** with beautiful music, candlelight, many visitors, and **a collection of nearly \$140** for the Minister's Discretionary Fund. We hosted Open House Theatre Company's fabulous production of **The Night Before Christmas**. It was good to see so many young visitors in the building! **Quilting for Community**, our quilters group, finished **two gorgeous quilts** that they plan to donate to organizations that support women and children. And the hard working folks on the **Building and Grounds Team** replaced stained ceiling tiles and fixed lights in the Community Room and painted shelves in the kitchen!

After celebrating all the good work we are doing, we learned about upcoming events including:

- Voss Media Café's **Blood on the Clock Tower** game being held at UUCC on February 7 at 4 PM
- Our **Beat the Winter Blues Fundraiser** on February 28 and the Cornbread Bake-Off (see *page 6 for more info.*)
- The Stewardship Committee announced that **March is Stewardship Month!** Our annual **Celebration of Generosity** will be held on **April 11**. And, the **Annual Meeting** to approve the budget for 2026-2027 (among other things) will be held on **May 31**.

The **Board of Trustees** gave us a little overview of what they have been working on (see *page 5 for details*) and representatives from each of our **small groups** checked in and encouraged everyone to join a small group as a way to find more supportive connections at UUCC.

We ended the meeting with a discussion about what to do with the donation of quite a few **vintage quilts**. (See *page 7 for info about what we decided to do.*)

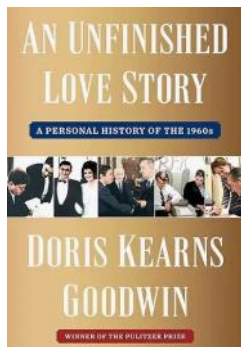
Please plan to join us at Program Council in February as we work together to create vibrant and meaningful programming at UUCC.



As always **we will serve soup** before the Program Council meeting as a fundraiser for our programs for kids. 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) if you are willing to donate a pot of soup. Thank you for your support!

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

Friday, February 13
1:00 PM via Zoom

February Selection:
An Unfinished Love Story
by Doris Kearns Goodwin

From This Is a Bookstore:

An Unfinished Love Story: A Personal History of the 1960s by Doris Kearns Goodwin, one of America's most beloved historians, artfully weaves together biography, memoir, and history. She takes you along on the emotional journey she and her husband, Richard (Dick) Goodwin embarked upon in the last years of his life. Dick and Doris Goodwin were married for forty-two years and married to American history even longer. In his twenties, Dick was one of the brilliant young men of John F. Kennedy's *New Frontier*. In his thirties he both named and helped design Lyndon Johnson's *Great Society* and was a speechwriter and close advisor to Robert Kennedy. Doris Kearns was a twenty-four-year-old graduate student when selected as a White House Fellow. She worked directly for Lyndon Johnson and later assisted on his memoir. Their expedition gave Dick's last years renewed purpose and determination. It gave Doris the opportunity to connect and reconnect with participants and witnesses of pivotal moments of the 1960s. The voyage of remembrance brought unexpected discoveries, forgiveness, and the renewal of old dreams, reviving the hope that the youth of today will carry forward this unfinished love story with America.

The Book Group will meet at **1:00 PM** on **February 13** for a short business meeting and a discussion of the book led by **Stephanie Grathwol**. Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom. Questions? Contact [Dawn](#).

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UUCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **Saturday, February 21** at **9:00 AM** at **Berries Famous Pancake House** on Westnedge Ave in Kalamazoo.

Sharing a meal with your UUCC friends on a regular basis creates space for genuine conversation and deeper relationships that go beyond Sunday mornings.



People of all ages and gender identities and expressions are welcome to join this group. **It is not just for the retired guys any more!**

Please RSVP to Ron Crowell 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 or (269) 599-1242.

Game Gathering Group

We would love to see YOU on Saturday, **February 7**, from **1-4 PM** 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!

People of all ages and game playing ability are welcome to come.

We hope you can join us for some fellowship and fun!

Questions? Contact [Nancy Calme](#)

LEARNING AND GROWTH



Thoughtful Thursday

Thoughtful Thursdays, our monthly online guest speaker series, helps us explore how we can live with deeper compassion,

clarity, and connection with ourselves, with others, and with the Earth.

We don't have the date or the speaker nailed down quite yet, but we hope one of our **Muslim neighbors** will join us for a discussion about the **role of social justice and action in Islam**.

Please watch our website or your Weekly Email for information about our February Thoughtful Thursday and plan to join us for what is sure to be a fascinating conversation.



The 8th UU Principle

In 2022, at the urging of our youth, this congregation voted to formally adopt the 8th UU Principle, which calls on us to *"affirm and promote:*

journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

In honor of Black History Month, we will be sharing an **8th Principle Moment** during our services in February to review and renew our shared commitment to truth-telling, learning, racial justice, and building a Beloved Community where our deepest values of abundance, equity, community, hope, and love are infused into our policies and practices, so that every individual is held as beloved and has the opportunity to thrive.



Welcoming Congregation

Each year, in order to maintain our Welcoming Congregation certification and reaffirm our commit-

ment to **welcoming and supporting people of all gender identities and sexual orientations**, we plan an **interactive learning opportunity** for adults.

We hope as many UUCF folks as possible will join us on **Sunday, February 15**, at **10 AM** for this year's event. We will watch and discuss parts of the [2025 Ware Lecture](#) given by trans activist, **Imara Jones** to gain a deeper understanding of the assault on transgender lives happening in this moment and how our UU values can guide us to a more just and liberating future.

Because the Ware Lecture is long and because we want to take time to engage in meaningful conversation with each other, we know **this service will run 20-30 minutes longer than usual**. Please plan accordingly and join us with an open heart and in hopes of leaving with renewed clarity and courage.



Judaism 101

Rabbi Simone Schicker at Temple B'nai Israel is offering her very popular, six-week **Introduction to Reform Judaism** course

again this year. Classes will start on **February 17** and are held at the Temple on Tuesdays from **7-9 PM**. The course is designed for those who would like to learn about the foundations of Judaism. No prior knowledge is required. To learn more and to register visit tinyurl.com/IntroTBI2026

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!



Find 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.

Their next meeting will be on **Monday, February 16**, at 7 PM on Zoom.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting. If you have any questions about the Sustainability Group, contact Miriam (uucommunity@gmail.com)



Move Gently. Breathe Deeply. Find Peace.

Qigong is a gentle, flowing practice that weaves together breath, movement, and mindful attention to support whole-body well-being. Regular practice may help you reduce stress, improve balance and flexibility, boost energy, and cultivate a sense of calm presence that carries into daily life.

Give qigong a try with the **UUCC Qigong Group** every Tuesday and Saturday, at 9 AM on Zoom. 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](#).



Cultivate Emotional Resilience and Self-Compassion

Join Eric Nelson for a nourishing hour of mindfulness and connection at our monthly **Mindful Living Group**, meeting on the first Monday of each month from 7–8 PM on Zoom.

Together we'll explore guided mindfulness practices, reflections inspired by *Comfortable with Uncertainty* by Pema Chödrön, and open, heartfelt conversation that supports calm, compassion, and clarity in everyday life.

Whether this is your first time or you're returning, you are warmly welcome.

Next session: February 2 at 7 PM

Register: tinyurl.com/UUCCMindfulLiving

GOOD TROUBLE



Put Your Faith in Action

Our UU values call on us to **confront and transform systems of oppression and build a world where all people can thrive**. If you are concerned what is going on in the world right now, here are some opportunities for you to get into some **Good Trouble**, as the late Representative John Lewis urged each of us to do:

During **Lessons from Minneapolis** on Sunday, **February 1**, at **12:30 PM** at **Peoples Church**, former UUC minister **Jill Terwilliger** will share what she saw and learned about resisting rising authoritarianism in the U.S. during a recent trip to Minnesota. Her reflections will be followed by updates from Kalamazoo leaders on local organizing and how you can take part. You can join onsite or online—<https://uuma.zoom.us/j/5527667326>

Hear directly from **Sheriff Rick Fuller**, **Lily Eggeres** from the ACLU, and Kalamazoo **Vice Mayor Drew Duncan** at a **Community Conversation about Our ICE Response** on Tuesday, **February 3**, at **6 PM** at **Crawlspace Comedy Theatre**. Hosted by the **Do Something Committee of the Kalamazoo Democratic Party**, this event is free and open to the public.

KISC (**Kalamazoo Immigrant Solidarity Coalition**) is working to increase the **rapid response** capacity and **mutual aid** infrastructure in our community to support our immigrant neighbors. If you are interested in learning more and participating in upcoming trainings, please plan to attend their next meeting at **People's Church** on **Friday, February 6**, at **7 PM**.

Indivisible Greater Kalamazoo and Indivisible Paw Paw are teaming up to offer **Peacekeeping 101** on Wednesday, **February 11**, from **6:30–8:00 PM** at **People's Church**. This introductory session will help you discern whether the peacekeeper role is right for you while covering why peaceful protest works, what peacekeepers do (and don't do), risk assessment, best practices like working with a partner, and practical de-escalation strategies. If you choose to volunteer afterward, you'll receive additional, event-specific training closer to events and actions planned by Indivisible. Contact [Jenny Snyder](#) if you plan to attend.

Following a very successful January event that saw 30 UUs from 14 different congregations come together to take action on a justice issue, the **Michigan UU Social Justice Network** will host another **Calling & Connection** event on Wednesday, **February 25**, from **7-7:45 PM** on Zoom. There will be opportunities to learn about justice issues facing our communities, to connect with other UUs to share ideas and resources, and to take direct action by calling an elected official. To register, visit tinyurl.com/muusjnaction

The **White Bear UU Church** in Mahtomedi, MN, is inviting UUs from around the country to join their **Chains of Resistance** project. Folks in the congregation (just northeast of Minneapolis/ Saint Paul) have been writing the different ways they are resisting fascism on strips of paper to create a long chain that reminds them of the many acts of resistance and care going on every day in their community. People write that they have been resisting by joining bus stop and school drop-off patrols, bringing meals to people who cannot leave their homes, calling lawmakers, holding space for community joy, and more. **Materials to make our own paper Chain of Resistance will be available at the back of the sanctuary in February**. Please stop by and add a link. We will share our efforts with the folks at White Bear so they know UUs all over the country are holding Minnesota in our hearts and doing what we can to help.

R.E.FLECTIONS



R.E. Flections from Miriam Epskamp, Director of Religious Education

You may know that February is Black History Month, but did you know that this year marks the 100th anniversary of observances? In 1926, historian, author, and journalist Dr. Carter G. Woodson established a weeklong recognition of African American history and culture. By 1976, the weeklong observation had evolved into a month-long one. And today, it plays an important role both honoring and celebrating the resilience and contributions of Black folks throughout history and shining a light on systemic injustices of the past and today.

It seems like a great time to remember and celebrate some of our ancestors. Take a few minutes to remember (or meet for the first time) some of the extraordinary Black Lives of UU History:



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825–1911)

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was an abolitionist, suffragist, lecturer, and member of both a Unitarian and an African Methodist Episcopal congregation in Philadelphia. She who challenged Unitarians and Christians alike to practice a form of religion that reflected *“a stronger sense of justice and a more Christ-like humanity on behalf of those ... homeless, ignorant, and poor.”* Starting in 1845, she also had a very successful literary career, publishing dozens of poems, short stories, and novels. She is one of the first black women to be published in America.



Lewis Latimer (1848–1928)

Lewis Howard Latimer was an inventor, engineer, and draftsman whose innovations helped make electric lighting practical and widely accessible. Born to parents who had escaped slavery, Latimer rose through talent and determination to become a key contributor to the work of Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison. In 1908, he helped found what was eventually known as the UU Congregation of Queens, which sadly closed its doors in June of 2022.



Whitney M. Young Jr. (1921–1971)

Whitney M. Young Jr. was a civil rights leader, social worker, and president of the National Urban League during a pivotal era of the movement for racial justice. A Unitarian Universalist, joining congregations in Atlanta, GA and White Plains, NY, Young worked to bridge grassroots activism and institutional reform, advocating for economic justice, fair housing, and equal opportunity. He challenged both government, private industry, and his church communities to take responsibility for systemic inequality.

For more Black UU history you may have forgotten or maybe never knew, be sure to check Rev. Mark Morrison Reed’s 2017 article in UU World, [The Black Hole in the White UU Psyche](#).

DATE	VOLUNTEERS	<p>The kids in R.E. will be heading off to China in February to learn about Taoism and celebrate lunar New Year. Health issues and travel schedules are keeping some of our usual RE volunteers from being able to help out. If you are interested in spending some time downstairs with our awesome UU kids, please talk to Miriam</p>
February 1	Isaac Epskamp-Hunt	
February 8	Eric and Regena Nelson	
February 15	HELP WANTED	
February 22	Julie Kelemen	

UU SUMMER FUN



July 5th-11th, 2026

• What is MUUSA? •

The Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA) is an intergenerational, week-long "camp" for all ages! MUUSA is a place for spiritual reflection, intellectual growth, and creative play within a caring and supportive community. Unique and exciting activities await- adults try out workshops and excursions while kids and teens spend time learning and exploring with their peers.
Come join the fun in Ripon for MUUSA 2026!



The Midwestern Unitarian Universalist Summer Assembly (MUUSA), with roots that go back to the 1940s, is a intergenerational summer camp meeting July 5-11, 2026, in Ripon, WI. Couples, families, and singles of all ages and assortments will find lots to do. Find out more at MUUSA.org.



Looking for a great summer experience?

Join us at Bayside UU Family Camp on the shores of Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, WI for a week of adult workshops, activities for children, free time for family fun and relaxation, and intergenerational activities. For more information, see our website or contact baysideuu@gmail.com

June 28 – July 4, 2026
baysideuu.org



Alaska National Parks Tour

June 20 – June 30, 2026
 11 days, 10 nights
 Visit Anchorage, Seward,
 Kenai Fjords National Park,
 Denali National Park, Fairbanks

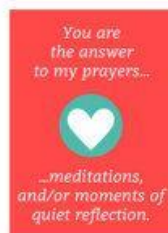
The All-Alaska Tour

July 17 – July 29, 2026
 13 days, 12 nights
 Explore Fairbanks,
 Denali National Park,
 Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka

WhaleCoast Alaska is a Unitarian Universalist eco-cultural and spiritual program for people who are looking for a more authentic Alaskan travel experience. It is operated in cooperation with four UU Alaska fellowships – Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka.
 Visit whalecoastak.org to learn more!

FEBRUARY 2026

Day	Date	Event	Time
Sunday	February 1	100 Years of Betty Lee with UCC members and friends UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	February 2	Stewardship Committee Meeting Mindful Living Group	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	February 3	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 4	Board of Trustees Meeting	6:30 PM
Saturday	February 7	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	February 8	Life is a River with Conrad Kaufman UU Exploration for Kids Souper Sunday and After Service Social Time Program Council	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:20 AM
Tuesday	February 10	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 11	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:30 PM
Friday	February 13	Women's Book Group	1:00 PM
Saturday	February 14	Valentine's Day Qigong	All Day 9:00 AM
Sunday	February 15	Defending Trans Lives with Imara Jones UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:30 AM
Monday	February 16	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	February 17	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 18	Growth Team Meeting	3:30 PM
Saturday	February 21	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	February 22	Good Trouble with Jenny Snyder UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	February 24	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	February 25	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	February 28	Qigong Beat the Winter Blues with Megan Dooley	9:00 AM 5:00 PM



**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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2025-2026 Board of Trustees

Dave Uttermohlen

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Kathryn Ragains-Wilson

Dawn Renner

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

Please send submissions to:
uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

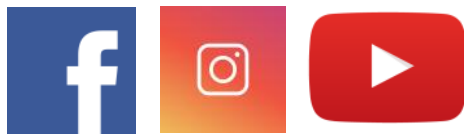
CommUnity Matters

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