



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

May 2026

MAY SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM

Onsite, on [YouTube](#), or on Zoom

May 3: *Who are We When it Counts?*

with Rev. Gy

Living on principle is a lot easier when times are good than when times are hard, but leaning into our shared values of kindness, justice, and equity will see us through.

To watch online visit tinyurl.com/uucconprinciple

May 10: *The Rainbow Connection*

with Miriam and Friends

Celebrate the beauty of diversity and the power of unity at our annual multigenerational Flower Communion Service. In this cherished ritual, we gather with flowers of every color of the rainbow to create a bouquet that symbolizes both our individuality and our deep connection to one another.

To watch online, [visit tinyurl.com/uuccrainbows](https://visit.tinyurl.com/uuccrainbows)

May 17: *The Language of Belonging*

with Marsha Laya

Join us for a fascinating presentation on the history and culture of American hobos—who they were, how they lived, the legacy they left behind and the secret code they used to communicate along the rails to navigate through an uncertain world.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/uucccodebreakers

May 24: *Boundaries and Bridges*

with Rev. Gy

Collaboration is often seen as a virtue, but it can be a double-edged sword, shaped by who we partner with and the purpose we serve. Grounding ourselves in our UU values helps guide our choices and extending grace to those who choose differently opens a path toward peace.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/uucccollaboration

May 31: *Unity*

with Rev. Gy

In times of great trouble, unity—sometimes with former adversaries - is the only way forward.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/weareuucc



Spiritual Theme for May UNITING

Our annual theme, Streams of Life, invites us to explore what it means to be like water—together. The cycles that water move through on our planet reveal how deeply intertwined all living beings truly are.

A single water molecule can journey across the Earth in remarkable ways, and across vast stretches of time. It may flow through our bodies for few days, sit in the damp soil for a few weeks, become part of a winter snowpack for months, remain locked in a glacier for centuries, or move through groundwater for hundreds, or thousands of years. These cycles have repeated for millennia, linking past, present, and future in an unbroken flow.

In May, we reflect on what it means to unite. Like water, we are part of something larger than ourselves, constantly moving, connecting, forming and re-forming. Our lives intersect in ways both visible and unseen, reminding us that we share more in common than we often realize.

As we seek to build the Beloved Community, we are called to look for common ground, to collaborate across differences, and to nurture unity without erasing individuality.

Questions to ponder:

Where do you find connection in your life right now?

What common ground can you cultivate with others, even across differences?

How does your life intersect with the lives of those around you—seen and unseen?

What does unity mean to you in a time of division?

FROM THE MINISTER



From the Minister

Rev. Karen G. Johnston (she/her/hers), the Senior Minister at First Unitarian Universalist Society Burlington in Vermont, shared this reflection in [Braver/Wiser](#) in March of 2026.

These are My People

This is the world I want to live in. The shared world....This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.—Naomi Shihab Nye, “Gate A4” from Honeybee

I have heard that the Buddhist teacher Sharon Salzberg has a spiritual practice when she flies. Waiting to board at the airport gate, she looks at the people sitting there and says to herself, *These are my people.*

A random, possibly ragtag, set of strangers are her people? Seriously? Yes, seriously.

I have begun doing this. At the gate. On board. For the next few hours, these are my people. With weather delays, even longer.

And I have begun doing it elsewhere. When riding the train. Attending a concert. In the grocery store. I even did it in January, when I was one of hundreds of clergy who traveled to Minneapolis to march with 50,000+ for the future of our nation. Every so often, in that frigid cold, I would feel the crowd around me and think: *These people: they are mine and I am theirs.*

They weren’t my besties nor my chosen family. Not even my immediate neighbors, but the ones that the universe cast as my temporary lot. Random. Not of my choosing.

Except I choose to choose them. As a spiritual practice, it stretches me. This embrace of others that I believe my faith asks of me (requires of me?) is not necessarily logical, as well as occasionally mystical and nearly always complicated.

Does this change anything? Bring about healing or justice? I’m not certain, but I can’t help wondering if this one way we get closer to Love at the Center.

Does this transform me? Hell, yes. It commits me to the very nature of reality: interdependence. It reminds me that I—that we—belong to each other, like it or not.

I’m thankful for the deep (so deep) and real (so real) and true (so true) ways in which we risk growing Beloved Community. In which we dare creating mutual aid networks beyond those besties. In which we risk creating and sustaining the necessary, complex, messy, sometimes prickly, sometimes joyful community coalitions to get us through this authoritarian nightmare.

These are my people.

You are my people.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting is Coming Soon!

In accordance with its by-laws, the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan will hold an **Annual Meeting of the Congregation** on **Sunday, May 31, 2026**, at **11:15 AM**.

The meeting agenda, the final proposed budget, the slate of candidates, and any other relevant documents will be emailed to you on Friday, May 15. If you need paper copies of these, please contact the office and Miriam will mail them to you. There will also be a few paper copies available at the Welcome Desk on and after May 17.

The Annual Meeting will be a **hybrid gathering** with members in good standing who signed the membership book on or before May 1, 2026, able to **vote onsite or via Zoom** for **candidates for the board and nominating committee, to approve the budget**, and on any other matters of business brought to the floor. There shall be no voting absentee by proxy, by email, by postal mail, or by facsimile. **Childcare will be available for those who need it.**

The 2025-2026 UCC **Nominating Committee**, (Eric Nelson and Pat Timm) has selected **two members to be nominated for two-year terms** on the Board of Trustees. The nominees will replace outgoing board members Pat Fuehr and Kathryn Ragains-Wilson. These appointments shall be approved by a vote of the members at the annual meeting. The nominees for a 2-year term are:



Stephanie Grathwol Kaitlin Koch Wojciak

In addition the Board of Trustees has nominated **Pat Fuehr** to a two year term on the Nominating Committee to replace outgoing member Pat Timm.

The Board and the Nominating Committee are very grateful to these members for agreeing to serve the congregation in leadership roles. In accordance with the by-laws, additional **nominations for elected positions may be submitted by any member or group of members**, two weeks in advance of the annual meeting by furnishing the name of the proposed nominee or nominees, in writing, to the Secretary of the Board of Trustees. A member may also self-nominate. **Nominations will close two (2) weeks prior to the annual meeting**, on May 17, and there will be no nominations from the floor.

If you have any questions about the Annual please contact Board President Dave Uttermohlen (daviduttermohlen@gmail.com or 574-276-2212)

CARING COMMUNITY



MAY CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

*May is the month of expectation,
the month of wishes, the month of hope.*

— Emily Brontë

Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

It was a joy to be joined by singer **Grace Fellows** one Sunday in April. Her beautiful voice was a wonderful addition to our service celebrating Women's History Month. Thanks to **Luke** for bringing her along.

Many UUCG folks asked for a hard copy of **Rev. Gy's** inspiring talk about the contributions of UU women. Click [HERE](#) to access a copy.

Our friends at **Sapphoasis** are grateful for the support we gave their Women's Music Concert. The event brought in almost half the money needed to apply for 503(c)3 status!

Luke Kritzman, in his role as WMU Student Association President, was in the news recently following visits with Kalamazoo City and County Commissioners in an effort to forge closer ties between Western students and the wider community. Click [HERE](#) (and scroll down a bit) to read all about it!

Chris Petersmark, his wife **Addy**, and baby **Kameron** made a surprise visit to UUCG recently. Chris's family is doing well, and he shared that he has started a new job teaching Elementary music in Grandville.

We are delighted to hear that **Judy Halseth** will join the Paw Paw Community Chorus at their spring concert "What the World Needs Now is Love" on Sunday, May 3, at 4 PM at Paw Paw United Methodist Church. She would love to see some UUCG folks in the audience! Members and friends have reported challenges and illnesses. Please send warm thoughts to our friends who are suffering:

Judy Halseth has received a diagnosis of MDS, a type of bone marrow cancer. She would welcome cards and notes of support from her UU friends and family at this difficult time.

Robin Chico's mother is in poor health and is receiving hospice care.

Naomi Chapman is recovering from gall bladder surgery.

Love and healing light go out to **Stace Danielson**, who has been under a doctor's care as she suffers from ongoing health issues.

Just a reminder to members who knew **Jon Vanderberg**, a cherished member of UUCG who passed away on March 19. You can read his obituary [HERE](#). Jon's family would love to hear memories of his time at UUCG. Please share your reminiscences with his daughter, Laura at vanderbergl@gmail.com

(More Caring News on page 5)

LEADERSHIP

Let's applaud and encourage our UUCC university scholars - **Nick Tasko, Amanda and Matthew Nelson, David Brozovich, and Luke Kritzman**- as they finish up another academic year. We hope all your projects, recitals, exams, papers, applications, and interviews went well!

Thank you to all who have given their returnable bottles and cans to UUCC, including **Rev. Gy and Patti, and Nancy Stob**, who faithfully continues to collect at StoryPoint Kalamazoo. Our totals so far: \$344.78 for Church Year 2025-2026 and \$1053.98 since the amazing **Stephanie Grathwol** started helping with returns way back in April, 2023. We can do so much more when we work together!

Happy Birthday to YOU!

Look at who was born in the merry month of May! 5- **Nick Tasko**, 12- **Juniper Chico-Elder**, 17-**Denise Sonier**, 20-**David Brozovich**, 23—**Naomi Chapman**, 25-**Larry Higgins**, and 30- **Joel Folkert**

Wedding Anniversaries:

Congratulations to **Denise Sonier and Steve Tasko** as they celebrate 31 years together on May 27 (1995).

In Memoriam:

In Mays past, we lost some wonderful members of UUCC. Take a moment to remember each of them: **Harold Oliver**-May 24, 2012, **Joan Wallace**-May 15, 2015, **Marjorie Snow**-May 4, 2016, and **Bill Boyer**-May 25, 2021

Welcome Visitors:

We were delighted to welcome to so many new visitors to our services in April, including **Byron** from UU Lansing, guest speakers **Gairen Tembreull, Molly Mechtenberg**, and **Bailey Mead, Julie Marron, Jennifer Randazzo, Jerry Berrigan, Lisa Ott, Julie Rubsam, Luke Howell, Seth, Vanessa, Kolleen, Logan, Elijah, Matt, Priscilla**, and a few more whose names we didn't catch. **We hope to see you again soon!**



The Board of Trustees met on April 1. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Reviewed the proposed budget for the 2026/2027 church year
- Reviewed and amended board policies
- Agreed to pay half of Dawn Renner's registration for General Assembly as she is attending as UUCC's delegate.
- Reviewed a proposed contract with a commercial real estate agent to find a regular renter.

Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from the April meeting. The next regular Board meeting will take place via Zoom on **Wednesday, May 6 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](#).

PROGRAM COUNCIL



Program Council—Where TOGETHER—We Get Stuff Done!

Everyone - members, friends, visitors—is invited to help create programming at UU Community Church by attending our Program Council Meetings. Our final Program Council Meeting of the church year was on April 12.

We had much to **CELEBRATE**:

We welcomed great guest speakers **Fiona Dougherty**, **Manuel Bernal**, and **Liis Lahti** to our pulpit in March. We enjoyed great services from **Rev. Gy** including an inspiring Stewardship Sunday message and an amazing Women's History Month tribute. A local financial planner, **Sandy Derby**, visited and spoke to several UUCC folks about planned giving. We held two Thoughtful Thursdays! One with **Allen Webb** of the Kalamazoo Immigrant Solidarity Coalition and another focused on permaculture with **Katie Pearson** of Tabitha Farm. A group of volunteers filled our freezer with meals for those in need. And eleven folks attended the UUCC Euchre Classic organized by **Pat and Bob Fuehr** and **Dawn Renner**. Last, but not least, the Stewardship Committee—**Regena Nelson**, **Joe Calme**, **Marsha Laya**, **Ron Crowell**, and **Rev. Gy** coordinated an amazing Giving Campaign with inspiring testimonials, a wonderful Celebration of Generosity, and a pledge total that exceeded expectations! Hooray for us!

Other things we discussed at Program Council in April included:



Program Council decided to use \$125 of its budget as a donation to [OutFront Kalamazoo](#) in honor of Pride.



We agreed to use \$250 of its budget to pay our yearly membership dues to [Interfaith Strategies for Advocacy and Action in the Community](#) (ISAAC).



We added a \$100 to our budget request for a yearly donation to [Hope for Creation](#).



Alana Hilton, **Dawn Renner**, **Regena Nelson**, and **Marsha Laya** volunteered to form a committee to explore holding a Flea Market/Rummage Sale at UUCC in Spring of 2027.

Our next meeting is in AUGUST! Program Council will be replaced by the Annual Meeting in May. There will be no meetings in June and July. **Thank you to everyone who has participated in Program Council this year!** We look forward to seeing you next church year!



STEWARDSHIP

Thank you to everyone who came to our Celebration of Generosity on April 11! We enjoyed a wonderful dinner, great company, and Trivia! The Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce **the 2026-2027 pledge total of over \$112,500!** They are continually **amazed by YOUR ongoing generosity** and support for the mission of this church. Please know that everyone's contributions to our church, in all forms, are valued! **Thank you for all YOU do** and give to our beloved Unitarian Universalist Community.



STEWARDSHIP
**CELEBRATION
OF
GENEROSITY**
APRIL 2026



UPCOMING EVENTS



Mother's Day Tea

There is room for a few more guests at our **Mother's Day Tea on Saturday, May 9 at 3 PM**. If you would like to bring your mom, or the person who has mothered you, or the mother of your children, or if you just want to treat yourself to an a proper English afternoon tea party complete with fine china, fresh flowers, live music, finger sandwiches, scones with cream and jam, and a variety of cakes and pastries, all served with your choice of tea, please RSVP to Miriam before May 6. Spaces are limited.

Church Clean Up Day

UUCC could use a little spring cleaning—inside and out! Put on your gloves and join the Building and Grounds Team on **Saturday, May 16 from 10 AM to 1 PM** for weeding, trimming, organizing, sanitizing, and scrubbing outside, in the kitchen, community room, and in the RE area, and more.

Many hands make light work! We hope to have a big crowd of UUCCs on hand to help make our building a welcoming and inviting space for all who enter.

If you have any questions about Clean-Up Day, contact our **Building and Grounds Guru: Eric Nelson**
ericvnelson1@gmail.com



Celebrate Flower Communion on May 10

In June of 1923, worshippers at the Unitarian Church in Prague, were introduced to a new ritual by their minister, Rev. Norbert Čapek—a **Flower Communion**.



The beauty of Flower Communion is rooted in its powerful simplicity: each person brings a flower to church, where they're mingled in a single vase. After being blessed the flowers are redistributed so that everyone takes home a flower different from the one they brought. It is a **celebration of beauty, human uniqueness, diversity, and the power of community**.



This year's Flower Communion will be held on **Sunday, May 10**. If you plan to join us onsite, be sure to bring a flower with you from your yard, your favorite florist, or even from the roadside to place in the communal vase.



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

This spring we plan to sing on **May 10** for Flower Communion.

All you need to do to add your voice to our song is meet Luke at the piano at **9 AM on Sunday May 3 and Sunday May 10**.

Questions? Contact our Music Director, Luke: luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu

CONNECTION



Women's Book Group

Friday, May 8
1 PM via Zoom

May Selection:
The Lost Pianos of Siberia
by Sophy Roberts

From [This is a Bookstore](#):

Siberia's story is traditionally one of exiles, penal colonies, and unmarked graves. Yet there is another tale to tell. Dotted throughout this remote land are pianos, grand instruments created during the boom years of the nineteenth century, as well as humble, Soviet-made uprights that found their way into equally modest homes. They tell the story of how, ever since entering Russian culture under the westernizing influence of Catherine the Great, piano music has run through the country like blood. How these pianos traveled into this snow-bound wilderness in the first place is a testament to noble acts of fortitude by governors, adventurers, and exiles. The Lost Pianos of Siberia is largely a story of music in this fascinating place, following Roberts on a three-year adventure as she tracks a number of different instruments to find one whose history is definitively Siberian. Her journey reveals a desolate land inhabited by wild tigers and deeply shaped by its dark history, yet one that is also profoundly beautiful, and peppered with pianos.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Book Group Zoom Meeting ID 996 0783 5644 Passcode: 360981. Contact Dawn Renner (sargg.64@gmail.com) if you have questions!

The Book Group will not meet again until July when they gather for their Summer Annual Meeting, during which they will select next year's book selections.

New on the Art Wall

UUCC member and talented artist **David Senecal** returns to the Art Wall in May with a series of mandala inspired pieces. The word "mandala" comes from the Sanskrit word



for circle and they are found in many cultures and religious traditions. David has found creating these mandalas to be very meditative and centering. He hopes you enjoy them!

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group



The UUCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **May 16** at **9:00 AM** at **Berries Famous Pancake House** on Westnedge.

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

Please contact Ron (ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) if you plan to attend. A RSVP is not required but sometimes plans change at the last minute and checking in with Ron will ensure you aren't having breakfast alone.

1st Saturday Game Gathering

People of all ages and game-playing abilities are invited to our monthly Game Gathering on **Saturday, May 2** from **1-4 PM**.

You are welcome to bring a snack to share, a beverage of your choice, a favorite game, and friend or two, or you can just bring yourself.

We hope you will join us for a relaxing afternoon of fun, fellowship, and games!



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

Small Groups at UUCC are a great way to deepen your relationship with the church community and our Unitarian Universalist faith. Newcomers and visitors are always welcome to participate!

Thoughtful Thursdays

Thoughtful Thursdays at UUCC are enlightening evenings that feature thought leaders sharing insights on a topic of importance to us: spiritual growth, social justice, environmental sustainability, and more. It is your opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions and broaden your perspective about critical issues and ideas



We are honored to welcome **Maliha Raza** as our guest on Thursday, **May 14 at 7 PM on Zoom**. Together, we will explore the powerful connection between faith and social justice. Maliha serves as the Director of Development and Operations at Kalamazoo Housing Advocates, where she works to support individuals and families experiencing housing insecurity. As a practicing Muslim, her commitment to service is deeply rooted in her faith. During our conversation, she will share how Islamic teachings on compassion, dignity, and

justice have shaped her personal and professional path, guiding her work with the unhoused community in Kalamazoo. To register, visit tinyurl.com/uuccsjislam

Sustainability Group

The **UUCC Sustainability Group** meets 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**. Newcomers are always welcome to join the conversation!



The next meeting is on **May 20 at 7 PM**. Click [HERE](#) to join Zoom Meeting. Or visit, tinyurl.com/uuccgreenteam

Qigong at UUCC

You are invited to join our weekly Qigong sessions, every Tuesday and Saturday morning at 9:00 AM!



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](#).



Mindful Living Group

As spring blooms around us, the **Mindful Living Group** is nearing the close of its series of practices inspired by *Comfortable with Uncertainty* by Pema Chodron.

The **final session** of the series will be **Monday, May 4 at 7 PM via Zoom**. Don't miss this opportunity to join **Eric Nelson** one last time for a time of grounding and calm. Although Eric will be taking a break from leading Mindful Group for a while, **recordings of past sessions are available on our YouTube channel** for those who wish to continue to their personal practice. Click [HERE](#) to check them out.

DEFEND DEMOCRACY



Democracy Defenders We are grateful for the many UCCers who put their faith in action at No Kings rallies in March! Here are more ways to get involved with the movement to defend democracy:



May Day On Friday, May 1, Unitarian Universalists are invited to join the tidal wave of everyday people demanding that our tax dollars fund stability and care, not occupation and repression. The Unitarian Universalist Association is a coalition partner of [May Day Strong](#). Please consider joining a local May Day action to demand:

- Tax the rich so our families, not their fortunes, come first.
- ICE Out. No private army serving authoritarian power.
- Expand democracy, not corporate power
- Defend free and fair elections, not a rigged disaster.

Will you participate?

UU Call to Moral Action On Tuesday, May 5 at 8 PM you can join the Unitarian [Universalists for Social Justice](#) as they host Rev. Liz Theoharis of the Kairos Center, renowned for her co-leadership of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, for a Zoom gathering to help us meet this moment with courage and solidarity, and strategic action.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/We-Organize>



Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis

Join Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis for a gathering to help Unitarian Universalists meet this moment with courage, solidarity, and strategic action.

**Freedom Demands We Organize
A National UU Call to Moral Action**

Tuesday, May 5th

8:00 pm ET • 7:00 pm CT • 6:00 pm MT • 5:00 pm PT

OPPORTUNITIES

Our justice partners at the **ISAAC Housing Task Force** would like us to participate in one of the upcoming virtual community conversations as part of the **home sharing feasibility study** being conducted in partnership with the City of Kalamazoo. This study is focused on understanding community perspectives on the feasibility of home sharing in the city. ISAAC supports Home Sharing as it would create new affordable housing without any construction costs and could possibly help more seniors stay in their homes.

These **90-minute virtual sessions** will include a brief overview of the study, followed by an opportunity to share your thoughts, experiences, and questions. The community's input will play an important role in shaping the final feasibility report.

- **Tuesday, May 12, 5:30–7:00 PM**
- **Wednesday, May 13, 1:00–2:30 PM**

Both sessions will cover the same content, so please sign up for the one that works best with your schedule. [RSVP by May 8 using this form.](https://forms.gle/EnFMWgdSiWMAAGc5A)

Important note: This is a research and listening process only. These conversations are intended to inform the study for educational and exploratory purposes.

HOMESHARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

Join a virtual conversation to share your thoughts, experiences, and questions about a home sharing feasibility study in Kalamazoo.

 **Tuesday, May 12**

 **5:30 - 7PM**

 **Wednesday, May 13**

 **1 - 2:30 PM**



RSVP by May 8:
<https://forms.gle/EnFMWgdSiWMAAGc5A>



Can't make it? Email your thoughts and/or questions to Michelle at michelle@newventureadvisors.net

The **Justice League of Greater Kalamazoo Michigan** exists to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath. In the spirit of repentance for the sin of racism, it seeks to **build relationships and facilitate reparations between houses of worship and collaborative partners to increase wealth gap equity for African Americans** in the Greater Kalamazoo Area.



The Justice League is offering an opportunity to learn about the Justice League of Greater Kalamazoo and how to participate in this reparation initiative on **Sunday, May 3 at 3 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church.**

LIFE LINE SCREENING






**You're invited to a
Life Line Screening event!**

Where: Unitarian Universalist Community Church
10441 Shaver Road, Portage

When: **Friday, May 8, 2026**

Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk** Screenings.

Trusted by over 11 million customers.

Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection.

Who should attend:
Anyone **age of 40+**

Special Pricing for \$129

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Call **800-324-9458** and use
promo code **HABC001**

Visit  [LLSA.SOCIAL/HABC](https://llsa.social/habc)



Text the word **"circle"**
to **216-279-1607**

These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease. Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they understand the risk and benefits of any additional testing or procedures.

QUILT OF THE MONTH

Welcome to the Quilt-of-the-Month Sale

Recently, UUCC 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, 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 UUCC. Members, visitors, and friends may purchase the quilt for its asking price at anytime during the month. If no one at UUCC 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. 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 its mission to assist people around the world struggling with natural disasters, famine, war, disease, and poverty.

Jewel-Toned Lone Star—102” x 103”

This month’s quilt is an exquisite Lone Star quilt, intricately hand quilted, in excellent vintage condition, circa 1990. This striking heirloom quality piece features a radiant eight-point star bursting from the center in rich, jewel-toned fabrics—reds, greens, golds, browns, and creams—set against a beautifully quilted white field.

The intricate diamond piecing creates a sense of movement and depth, while the hand quilting elevates the entire piece with rich texture. The surrounding white space showcases elegant quilting motifs, adding sophistication and balance to the bold central design.

At **102" x 103"**, this generously sized quilt is ideal for a king-sized bed and makes a dramatic statement as either functional bedding or as wall hanging.



The asking price for this stunning showpiece is only \$400. It is being sold on a first-come, first-served 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.

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION



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

I had been noticing the kids in RE getting a little squirrely during chalice lighting time, so I decided to switch things up by taking a break from our customary chalice lighting words (which start to lose meaning when you say them over and over again) and invite the kids to decide what we would light the chalice for. I told them to choose something that they wanted to see more of in the world. This exercise has brought a new interest to our chalice lighting and, so far, they have taken the whole thing very seriously. They have lit their chalice for things like kindness and love, and for protecting the rain forest and the penguins at risk in Antarctica. And almost every week, someone requests that we light the chalice to end war and bring the world more peace.

The ongoing violence in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran, among other places, has not gone unnoticed by the young people in our lives. The constant media coverage, the upsetting headlines, and the adult conversations in the background have seeped into their consciousnesses. It may be causing them fear, anxiety, sadness, and even anger. The folks at UNICEF have put together some tips for how to talk to young people about war in a way that provides them support and comfort and encourages empathy and compassion for those on both sides of the conflict. Visit [unicef.org/parenting/child-care/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war](https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war) to check it out and use it to guide conversations about current events with the young people in your life.

We will be shifting gears in RE in May. Our exploration of world religions came to a close at the end of April. We have covered a broad array of religious traditions including, Earth-centered pagan traditions, Eastern practices like Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Sikhism, and the Abrahamic religions. But now the S.S. ComUnity (the imaginary ship we have been traveling around the world on this year) is heading back to port so the kids can work on some end-of-year church activities. Over the next few weeks, the kids will be working behind the scenes on the multi-generational Flower Communion service scheduled for May 10, and they will reflect on gratitude and brainstorm some ways to say “Thank You” to all the wonderful volunteers who make our Religious Exploration classes possible.

In other news, I am excited to announce that UCC will again be collaborating with Open House Theatre Company to offer a **Kids Theatre Day Camp** in August for kids 8-12 years old. Thanks to everyone who supported our Souper Sundays, we will again be able to keep the cost

RE SCHEDULE FOR MAY	
May 3	Pat Timm
May 10	N/A
May 17	Alana Hilton
May 24	Julie Kelemen
May 31	Isaac Epskamp

of the camp very affordable. If you know of any kids who would be interested in the camp, you can find more info about it on our website.

Finally, please save the date for the very family-friendly **We Gather Pride Picnic on Sunday, June 7 at 1 PM** at Portage United Church of Christ. There will be food, games, crafts, music, and fun for everyone as we celebrate diversity, community, love, and queer joy! May it be so! *Miriam*

KIDS THEATRE CAMP

OPEN HOUSE THEATRE COMPANY

KIDS THEATRE CAMP

**AGES
8-12**

.....
AUGUST 10-14
9 AM - 4 PM

.....

ACTIVITIES:

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



MAY 2026

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Saturday	May 2	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1-4 PM
Sunday	May 3	Choir <i>Who Are We When It Counts?</i> with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	May 4	Stewardship Committee Meeting Mindful Living Group	1:00 PM 7:00 PM
Tuesday	May 5	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	May 6	Board of Trustee Meeting	6:30 PM
Friday	May 8	Life Line Health Screening Women's Book Group	9 AM—4 PM 1:00 PM
Saturday	May 9	Qigong Mother's Day Tea	9:00 AM 3:00 PM
Sunday	May 10	Choir <i>The Rainbow Connection</i> with Miriam and Friends NO UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Tuesday	May 12	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	May 13	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
Thursday	May 14	Thoughtful Thursday with Maliha Raza	7:00 PM
Saturday	May 16	Qigong Church Clean Up Day	9:00 AM 10 AM—1 PM
Sunday	May 17	<i>The Language of Belonging</i> with Marsha Laya and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	May 18	Sustainability Group	7:00 PM
Tuesday	May 19	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	May 20	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Growth Team Meeting	12:00 PM 3:30 PM
Saturday	May 23	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	May 24	<i>Boundaries and Bridges</i> with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time	10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Tuesday	May 26	Qigong	9:00 AM
Saturday	May 30	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	May 31	<i>Unity</i> with Rev. Gy and UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time Annual Meeting	10:00 AM 11:00 AM 11:15 AM

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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Consulting Minister
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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, May 20 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

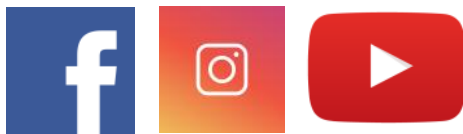
CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

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CONNECT WITH US!



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