



CommUUunity Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

June 2026

JUNE SUNDAY SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 AM Onsite, on [YouTube](#), or on Zoom

June 7: Pride Sunday with Rev. Gy

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms every person's inherent worth and dignity, and this Pride Sunday, we will joyfully reaffirm our commitment to LGBTQIA+ equality, love, and justice for all.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/uuccpridesunday26

June 14: Children's Sunday with Rev. Gy

Join us as we celebrate our young people and the volunteers who donate their time and wisdom to our Religious Exploration classes.

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

June 21: New Member Sunday with Rev. Gy

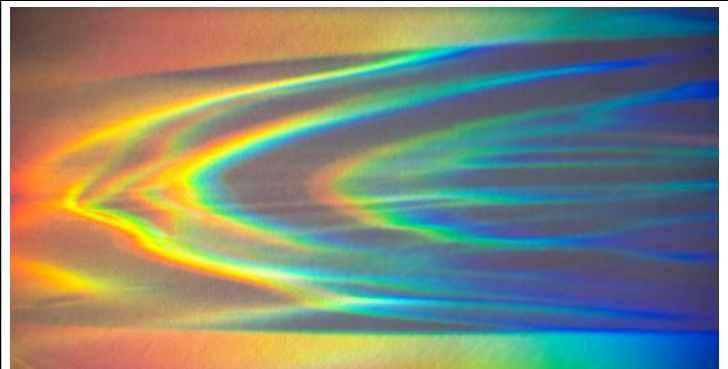
As our church year comes to an end, we pause to welcome our newest members and celebrate our volunteers and the transformative power of devoting time, effort, and love to something greater than ourselves.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/uuccnewuu26

June 28: Association Sunday with Rev. Dr. Nicole Kirk

We will find inspiration and connection to our broader faith with a look at some of the highlights of the Sunday Worship at the 2025 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association in Baltimore featuring a sermon about the beginnings of the American Unitarian movement, "Revolution Begins with a Dream," given by Rev. Dr. Nicole C. Kirk.

To watch online, visit tinyurl.com/uuccgasunday26



Spiritual Theme for June REFLECTING

Empty your mind. Be formless, shapeless, like water... Water can flow, or creep, or drip, or crash. Be water, my friend. — Bruce Lee

During this church year, we have explored what it means to be like water—soothing, cleansing, healing, quenching, refreshing, flowing, surging, eroding, transforming, and uniting.

As we come to the close of our church year, we will turn to water one last time for inspiration. Water has the ability to act as a mirror, reflecting the world around it. During June, we will “be like water” by taking time to reflect on what we have learned, how we have grown, and all that we have accomplished together.

Questions to ponder:

What spiritual lessons have you taken from our theme of "being like water"?

What ideas or experiences challenged you the most? Why?

What topics or questions would you like to explore more deeply? How might you do that?

What moments from this year do you want to remember and celebrate?

GUEST IN OUR PULPIT

We are excited to welcome a guest to our pulpit in June:



Rev. Dr. Nicole C. Kirk (she/her) is the Rev. Dr. J. Frank and Alice Schulman Chair of Unitarian Universalist History at Meadville Lombard Theological School and a historian of American religious history. She has served UU congregations in Ohio and New Jersey and is currently the Program Minister (part-time) at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

She joined the Meadville Lombard faculty in 2012 after serving eight years in the parish and earning her Ph.D. at Princeton Theological Seminary. Her research interests include religion, business, mobility, and material culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. .



June Generosity Giving

Our Generosity Sunday recipient for June is the [Care Collective of Southwest Michigan](#).

The Care Collective works to provide barrier-free access to **diapers, wipes, and menstrual products**—so every family has what they need, when they need it. They distribute diapers and period products through a network of partner organizations throughout Kalamazoo so that families can consistently access products in the spaces they already frequent, where they feel safe and welcome. Partners include WMU, KVCC, YWCA, El Concilio, OutFront, Douglas Community Assn. and more. The Collective exists because there are no state or federal public assistance programs that provide help for diaper need or period poverty. **These family care essentials are basic human needs, not luxuries!**

The **need in Kalamazoo is great** with 48% of children living in households that struggle to meet essential needs. The Care Collective reports that 1 in 2 families in our community do not have adequate access to diapers, and that in the U.S. 1 in 4 teenagers have missed school due to period poverty.

Your donation to our special collection for the Care Collective can have an big impact in our community. \$25 can purchase 5 months of supplies for a young menstruator. \$100 provides 2 months of diapers for a Kalamazoo baby.

There are several **ways to give** :

- ◆ You can place a **check** made out to UUCC with Generosity Sunday the memo in the offering basket anytime in June. You can also mail your check to our building.
- ◆ If you prefer to use a **debit or credit card**, give online using the church website or the Vanco app on your phone. Be sure to choose Generosity Sunday in the menu.
- ◆ If you prefer to give **cash**, we will donate all cash and loose change in the offering plate on **June 7** to the Care Collective.

Thank you for your support!

FROM THE WIDER UU WORLD



From the Minister

Elea Kemler has been the minister at First Parish Church of Groton, Massachusetts since 2000. She loves being a small-town minister where she gets to bless just about everything, from chickens to the new postmaster. Her reflection was originally shared in the UUA's [Brave/Wiser](#) blog in February 2019.

Your Soul's Address

I will believe the truth about myself no matter how beautiful it is.

—Macrina Wiederkehr

I recently suggested to the congregation I serve as minister that they might want to try praying naked in front of a full-length mirror. Their response was, not surprisingly, slightly hysterical laughter. I didn't make up the idea but got it from the priest and writer, Barbara Brown Taylor. She recommends that from time to time we take off our clothes, look at ourselves in the mirror, and tell ourselves with as much tenderness as we can, "*Here I am. This is the body-like-no-other that my life has shaped. I live here. This is my soul's address.*"

To face ourselves naked in the mirror with some measure of gentleness, much less reverence, is a hard assignment, I know. Many of us learned early on that we are either too much or not enough. Many of us grow up believing that essential parts of us are unacceptable—the way we look or feel or talk or love or learn—and we never seem to fully unlearn that shame. It is deeply spiritual work to put down our self-loathing, to set it aside, even for a few moments. It is deeply spiritual work to learn to treat ourselves with compassion; to learn to see ourselves, if only in moments, the same way we look at something or someone we find beautiful: a newborn baby, the ocean, a sunset.

A couple of years ago I started wearing a pin on my coat that says "You are beautiful." It is small and most people don't notice it or say anything if they do. Not long ago, in Dunkin' Donuts (a place where I spend a lot of time and where a lot of life happens), I got up to the counter to order my coffee and realized the woman behind the counter was staring at the button on my coat. I also noticed the woman had small, raised, red birthmarks all over her face. For a moment that felt like a long time, we were both completely still. I watched her as she took in the words. You are beautiful. Then she raised her eyes to mine and said very quietly, "*I like that.*"

"*I'm glad,*" I said, also very quietly, and we moved on to coffee.

Let us give thanks for tender flesh, for heart beat and breath and bone. Let us give thanks for these bodies-like-no-others which our lives have shaped, each one beautiful, each one whole, each one holy.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Registration for **Unitarian Universalist General Assembly (GA) 2026** is open and there is still time to commit to taking part in what is sure to be the largest gathering of UUs this year. The 2026 GA 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. Registration info and a schedule of events can be found at uua.org/ga



Business meetings and Sunday Worship can be accessed by anyone. No registration is required. To watch live or on demand after the event visit uua.org/ga/off-site/2026

◆ **General Session I:** Sunday, June 14, 4:30 - 6:00 PM



◆ **General Session II:** Monday, June 15, 12:00 - 3:00 PM

◆ **General Session III:** Monday, June 15, 5:00 - 6:30 PM

◆ **General Session IV:** Tuesday, June 16, 12:00 - 3:00 PM

◆ **General Session V:** Tuesday, June 16, 5:00 - 6:30 PM

◆ **Sunday Morning Worship:** Sunday, June 21 at 11:00 AM



ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

In accordance with the bylaws, an Annual Meeting of the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan was held on May 31, 2026. Nineteen voting members attended onsite, and five attended via Zoom.

All items of business put before the congregation were passed.

- ◆ Approval for a balanced **Annual Budget** for 2026-27 in the amount of **\$134,537**
- ◆ The election of two board members, **Kaitlin Koch Wojciak** and **Stephanie Grathwol**, to two-year terms.
- ◆ The election of **Pat Fuehr** to a two-year term on the Nominating Committee.
- ◆ Approval to join **Hope for Creation of Southwest Michigan** as a Congregational Member.

During the open comment period, member **Larry Higgins** shared his deep concern for the **coming energy crisis** and the impact it may have on individuals, the church, and the wider community. He urged folks to learn more about the situation through interviews and blog posts by **petroleum geologist Art Berman** and others.

The meeting concluded with Vice President, **Joel Folkert**, expressing gratitude to the outgoing board members, **Kathryn Ragains-Wilson** and **Pat Fuehr**, and their years of service and outstanding leadership for our community.

LEADERSHIP

The Board of Trustees met on May 6. Here are a few of the things they accomplished:

- Finalized the proposed budget for 2026-2027
- Voted to sign an agreement with a commercial real estate agent
- Voted to enter into a partnership with Camp Tavor in Three Rivers to bring Palestinian peace activist Raja Khouri to the area



Click [HERE](#) to read the minutes from the May meeting. The final regular Board Meeting for the church year will take place at UUCC on **Monday, June 22 at 6:30 PM**. Newly elected board members will be invited to attend.

Program Council

Program Council is the group at UUCC that helps us create vibrant and engaging programming. Everyone—members, friends, and visitors can participate. Program Council is hiatus until August but we will want to hit the ground running at our first meeting on **Sunday, August 9** by voting for **Generosity Sunday** recipients. Four times a year UUCC holds a special collection to support non-profit organizations whose work aligns with our values. Recipient organizations are nominated by congregants and voted on by the Program Council. In the past, we have supported groups like Planned Parenthood, First Day Shoe Fund, Face Off Theatre, etc. To get a head start on the voting process, we will be collecting your nominations for Generosity Sunday recipients by email during June and July. Your summer assignment is to spend some time thinking about organizations you have a relationship with, whose work aligns with our Unitarian Universalist values, and that would benefit from a few extra dollars. Please send your nominations to the office to be included on our Generosity Sunday ballot. At our August meeting, we will finalize our voting and be ready to hold our first special collection in September.



Pledges and Receipts

The 2025/2026 programming and fiscal year are almost complete. If you need reimbursement from the church, please get all receipts turned in to **Joe Calme** by **June 15**.

The 2025/2026 programming and fiscal year is almost complete. If you made a financial pledge for the year spanning July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026, you will soon receive an email from **Kimberly Ridley** (using the UUCC Finance gmail account) with your giving statement thru May 31, 2026 attached. Remember to check your junk mail folder. If you don't receive the email, contact Kimberly at ridleyk@hotmail.com or 269-569-3658.

To match pledges and church income in the same financial year, it would be helpful if you can remit all pledge dollars by the end of June. If you make a payment after June 30 for the 2025/2026 year, please note "25/26" in the memo line of your check/electronic payment. If you are prepaying (before July 1) on your 2026/2027 pledge, please note "prepay 26/27" in the memo line.

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

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

PROMOTE PEACE



PEACE JUSTICE EQUITY

For Israeli Jews and Palestinians



On **Sunday, June 28 at 3:00 PM**, UUCC will host an important community conversation with **Raja Khouri**, co-author of the acclaimed book ***The Wall Between: What Jews and Palestinians Don't Want to Know About Each Other.***

As the war in Gaza continues to shape public discourse, deepen divisions, and raise urgent humanitarian and moral questions around the world, this event offers **an opportunity for thoughtful dialogue grounded in listening, empathy, and shared humanity.**

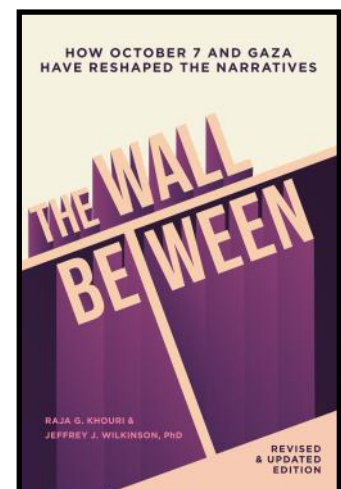
Khouri, a Palestinian Canadian human rights advocate and former commissioner with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, has spent years working to **foster understanding** between Jewish and Palestinian communities.

Drawing from themes explored in *The Wall Between*, Khouri will discuss how trauma, identity, history, and competing narratives influence conversations about Israel and Palestine, and what it might take to move beyond polarization toward justice and mutual recognition. The book, co-written with Jewish educator **Jeffrey Wilkinson**, calls for deeper listening and honest engagement across divides.

This program is intended for anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the conflict in Gaza and the human realities behind the headlines. There will be time for questions and community discussion.

UUCC is partnering with **Camp Tavor** in Three Rivers to bring Raja Khouri to Kalamazoo. **Young people from the camp plan to attend this event.**

We hope that many UUCC folks will **attend this event and help us spread the word** about it in the wider community. Donations to help offset the cost of this event are also appreciated.



STEWARDSHIP



SAVE THE DATE

2024 Backyard BBQ

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 5-8 PM

With special musical guest
Megan Dooley

Save the Date for the UUCC Summer FUNdraiser!



What: Backyard Barbecue

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

When: Saturday, July 18



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

At **6:00 PM** get ready to enjoy a performance by **Megan Dooley**, a Kalamazoo-based singer-songwriter known for her rich, soulful voice and eclectic style that blends folk, blues, jazz, and Americana.

Suggested fundraiser donation at the door is **\$20 per person** (same as last year, no inflation here!) or a love offering of whatever works for your budget. As always, kids and newcomers are free! We always pass the hat for the performers so please bring a little extra cash if you can.

Join us for a lovely gathering in Patti and Gy's beautiful shaded backyard. We'll have tables set up for dining, so please bring your favorite beverage and a chair to relax in.

Can't wait to see you there!

CELEBRATION OF LIFE



A Celebration of Life will be held for **Kathy Hays** on **Saturday, June 13** at her home on Eagle Lake. Use 536 Aquaview, Kalamazoo, 49004 in your GPS for the best directions.

People will begin to gather at **1:00 PM**. There will be a service at 2:00 PM, followed by food and drink for as long as people want to stay.

Kathy's family would like an idea of how many UUCF folks plan to attend. Please RSVP to Nancy Crowell at nancyfordcrowell@gmail.com or text 269-599-1235.

Erin Michael and her brother Wendell Kurtz invite UUCF folks to attend a Celebration of Life service for their parents, **Ken and Mary Lou Kurtz** on **Saturday, August 1, 2026, at 4:00 PM EST**. The service will be live streamed from the Unitarian Universalist Church in Santa Fe, New Mexico at UUSantaFe.org.

Please email your RSVP to Wendell by June 10 stating whether you will attend in person or online. You are also invited to provide a picture or two of Ken and Mary Lou (with date of photo) for a short slide show that will be shared during the service.



Water Communion 2026

[Water Communion](#) is a unique Unitarian Universalist ritual traditionally held at the beginning of the church year that serves to remind us of our interconnectedness and celebrate our gathering together as a community. If you would like to participate in our 2026 Water Communion, please plan to collect a small sample of water from a special place you visit over the summer to add to a communal bowl in September. If you are lucky enough to be able to travel, the water can be from a lake, river, or ocean you pass along the way. If you are staying close to home, bring water from a pond, a fountain, or a backyard hose. The important part is that the water represents a place or experience that gives meaning to your life or provides sustenance for your soul.

CARING COMMUNITY

JUNE CARING COMMUNITY NEWS

June is busting out all over! – Rodgers and Hammerstein



Joys, Concerns, and Member News:

Our hearts are with everyone who sustained damage during the May windstorms, including **Naomi Chapman** and **Robin and Juniper Chico-Elder**, whose back garden was destroyed by falling trees; the **Hilton family** and **Teri and Dave Uttermohlen**, who were without power for several days; and **Miriam's son Ben**, who had a very close call when a tree fell on his car.

We hold all who are struggling with health issues in our thoughts and prayers, including **Kevin Brozovich**, who suffered a concussion and broken jaw after a fall; **David Senecal**, who has been diagnosed with metastatic prostate cancer; **Mike Graham**, who is undergoing tests for a growth on his neck; **Naomi Chapman**, who is experiencing complications from gallbladder surgery; **Robin Chico-Elder**, who has been diagnosed with ulcers; **Judy Halseth**, who is receiving treatment for MDS; **Stace Danielson**, who is dealing with sleep issues; **Alana Hilton**, who suffers from migraines; and our friends **Mike Leatherman** and **Bob and Barb McWhorter**, who live with chronic health challenges. We also hold in our hearts those who are facing difficulties but have not shared them publicly.

We were heartbroken to learn that **Ron and Nancy Crowell's** daughter-in-law, **Mary Lampen Crowell**, passed away on May 29, following a long illness.

We rejoiced with **Pat Timm** when she shared the news that her daughter, **Sara**, is cancer-free. And we were delighted to hear that **Betty Lee Ongley** is finally home again after an extended stay in a skilled nursing facility to recover from an ankle fracture.

We send our congratulations to **Alana Hilton** and **Nick Tasko**, who overcame many obstacles this year to earn a 4.0 in their studies, and to **Amanda Nelson**, who earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, with honors, Magna Cum Laude from WMU! You all are amazing!

We wish safe travels to the **Nelson Family**, who are headed to the Pacific Northwest to celebrate Amanda's graduation, and **Dave Uttermohlen**, who is enjoying a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Spain. And also to **Robin Chico-Elder** and family, who have been traveling out of state more often than they would like to deal with complicated family issues.

And finally, we head into Pride Month celebrating with our former Music Director, **Nick Sienkiewicz**, on his appointment as the next Artistic Director and Conductor of the historic Stonewall Chorale in New York City!

Happy Birthday

Let us wish a happy June birthday to:

5 – **Rita Stevens** 5- **Judy Pigg** 7 – **Darby Fetzer** 14- **Brent Ridley** 21-**Sean Hilton**

23- **Bob McWhorter** And, as the Caring Column will be on vacation next month, let's send early birthday wishes to our friends born in July: 7-**Tim Michael** and **John Mais**,

12-**Alex Brozovich**, 21—**Eric Nelson**, and 31-**Brinna Michael**.

(More on page 10)

RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION

Anniversaries

Kathryn Ragains-Wilson and Michael Wilson -June 19, 2022.

Joe and Nancy Calme - July 1, 1978, **Ron and Nancy Crowell** -July 5, 1958.

In Memoriam

Please remember this UCC friends who have passed on: Kind soul and KPS teacher, **Marge Hallam** -June 1, 2014 ; Church librarian and blogger, **Brian Leekley** -June 13, 2022

New Visitors:

We were glad to welcome visitors **Kelsey Emmerich, Kim Walsh, Emily Brittan,** and **Cynthia** in May. We also were happy to have **Bev Folz’s son Alan** join us one Sunday. We hope you all will visit us again soon!

Caring for one another is a key feature of UCC. 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 UCC office: 269-324-7262 or uucommunity@gmail.com



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

The wider UU world has seen a tsunami of resignations from well-established and highly regarded religious educators lately. I don’t know the details behind most of these resignations. I only see their bittersweet goodbyes on social media. Reading between the lines, it seems these separations are not happy ones. People who have devoted decades of their lives to nurturing the future of our faith are not leaving Unitarian Universalist congregations and UUA positions to pursue more interesting or rewarding career opportunities. They are being burned out by the stress of the times we live in or pushed out because of a scarcity of resources. I think we can all relate.

It has been a challenging year in our little corner of the UU world, too. We stressed over replacing a leaky roof. Many of us, including Rev. Gy, have faced serious health issues. We lost too many friends to illness and age. People we cared about have stepped away and are no longer part of our Sunday mornings. We truly feared we would not have enough resources to keep on keeping on. And don’t even get me started on the anxiety caused by what is happening in the wider world. *It has been a lot!*

But through it all, I think we have tried to keep love at the center of all we do and to live into the values of our faith, placing our relationships with each other at the forefront. People are what is important here—more than money, the building, or our ideas about how things should be run.

Of course, I know mistakes have been made. (I have made quite a few!) Feathers have been ruffled, and feelings have been hurt. I also know that, in addition to our UU values, many of us hold a deep-seated commitment to staying “Midwestern nice,” so we bite our tongues, bottle up our feelings, and avoid conflict at all costs. But remember, people are what is important here, so if you are feeling misused, mistreated, or misunderstood, please speak up. Let’s talk about it—honestly, respectfully, and kindly—both giving and receiving grace, while keeping love at the forefront. It is what our faith calls us to do. And let’s hold fast to the ways this community continues to bring us connection, care, and joy despite its shortcomings. This is how we keep from throwing up our hands and giving up when times get tough.

May it be so. *Miriam*

JUNE RE SCHEDULE	
DATE	VOLUNTEERS
June 7	Pat Timm
June 14	N/A
June 21	Alana Hilton
June 28	Julie Kelemen

CONNECTION



Game Gathering

Researchers at the University of Plymouth recently confirmed what board game fans have known for a long time— that playing tabletop games helps

“enhance well-being, foster inclusion, and support learning.” What a great reason for you to come and play games with friends at UUCC on **June 6 from 1-4 PM!**

We will have an assortment of board and card games for people to play, or you can bring along your favorite from home.

Feel free to bring a snack to share and a beverage of your choice. Bring your family and friends too. People of all ages and game-playing abilities are welcome.

Questions? Contact [Nancy Calme](#).

Qigong at UUCC

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



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

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

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

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

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



Women’s Book Group

The UUCC Women’s Book Group finished their program year in May. They will hold a **Summer Salad Potluck and Annual Meeting** on **July 10** to choose their book selections for 2026-2027.

Book Group members are reminded to **send Dawn Renner recommendations** for one fiction and/or one non-fiction book for the group to consider for next year’s reading list.

If you are looking for something to read while the Book Group is on hiatus, click [HERE](#) to check out the **Understanding Fascism Reading List** from Goodreads.

3rd Saturday Breakfast Group

The UUCC Breakfast Group will meet for breakfast on **June 20 at 9:00 AM** at the **Berries Famous Pancake House** on Westnedge Ave.

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

Please RSVP to Ron Crowell (ronald.crowell@wmich.edu) if you plan to attend the 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group. An RSVP is not required but sometimes plans change at the last minute.



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY



Sustainability Group

The UCC Sustainability Group meets at via Zoom on the **3rd Monday of most months** to reflect on their sustainability journeys, to share their successes and failures,

and to explore ideas about how to live more gently on the Earth. Newcomers are always welcome to join the conversation!

The group is excited to share some upcoming opportunities to connect, learn, and take action for a greener future.

Tuesday June 2: [Calling for Climate Justice](#) with Hope for Creation focused shutting down the J.H. Campbell coal plant in West Olive.

Friday, June 5: [Climate Conversation](#) with Taylor Van Winkle, Climate Sustainability Manager for Kalamazoo County.

Friday, June 12: [Michigan Climate Summit](#)

Friday, June 12: [Westminster Art Show](#)
Closing Ceremony Celebration

Saturday, June 20: [Kalamazoo River Clean Up](#). (One of the organizers, the [Kalamazoo River Watershed Council](#), would love for you to donate your unused kayaks to their Youth Experience program.)

Saturday, August 20: Tour the [KVCC Food Innovation Center](#) with Hope for Creation.

Interested in learning more and getting involved? Come to the **next Sustainability Group meeting on Monday, June 15 at 5:30 PM** on Zoom and help us make some goals for the 2026-2027 church year.

Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom Meeting ID 960 9812 1445

If you have any questions about this small group, contact Miriam.

Quilting for Community

Whether you're an experienced quilter or just looking for a fun way to help with a community project, the UCC quilting group would love to have you join them on **Monday, June 8**, from **1:00–3:00 PM** for an afternoon of sewing.

The group is working on a twin size quilt using the disappearing 9 patch as the pattern. When it is finished it will be donated to a service organization to help someone in need.

Not interested in sewing? We can use help with cutting, ironing, and other tasks. There is a role for everyone, regardless of skill level.

Come enjoy good company while helping create beautiful quilts for a good cause!

Questions? Contact [Marsha Laya](#)

Thank You, Volunteers!

A hardy group of eight UCCers came out for our **Spring Clean-Up Day** on May 16.

They did an amazing job weeding, trimming, scrubbing, polishing, sanitizing, organizing, and more! We are so grateful to **Regena and Eric Nelson, Ron Crowell, Stephanie Grathwol, Mike Graham, Dawn Renner, Dave Uttermohlen, and Miriam** for helping to keep UCC looking good.

Our intrepid Building and Grounds Team hopes to plan another clean-up day later in the summer, so watch the weekly email for information about the next opportunity keep UCC looking shipshape!



8TH PRINCIPLE



Putting Our 8th UU Principle into Action

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

Education:

- In October, held a screening and discussion of the film *My Father's Name* which explores the history of lynching in the US. 14 people from UUCC and the wider community attended.
- In February, members of the congregation shared an **8th Principle Moment** during each Sunday service to remind the congregation about our commitment to anti-racism and expand our understanding of dismantling white supremacy culture.
- In honor of Black History Month, **anti-racism resources** – books, handouts, reading lists, etc. – were made available at the back of the sanctuary.
- The library team displayed **books about race/racism** in the Lending Library during Black History Month.
- A sign-up for a book discussion group about *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad only garnered one interested person, so the group did not convene.
- Two members of the Board and the DRE attended an online **anti-racism course** offered by ISAAC.
- The Women's Book Group discussed several books that explored race and racism, including *The First Ladies* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray, *An Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, and *Take My Hand* by Dolan Perkins-Valdez

Sunday Services:

We offered one Sunday service focused on racial injustice as a central theme:

- March 22 – **The Transformative Power of Anti-Racism** with guest speakers from [ERACCE](#), **Manuel Bernal** and **Liis Lahti**

Projects:

- Ten UUCC folks/friends attended the **ISAAC Run, Walk, and Roll** event in September, and we supported the event by purchasing an ad in the souvenir booklet.
- Collected food, clothing, and personal care items for migrant agricultural workers and sent a representative to **Interfaith Action's Celebration of the Harvest and Harvesters** in Buchanan.
- Supported the **MKB-NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet Fundraiser** by purchasing an ad in the souvenir booklet.
- Hosted the **MKB-NAACP Community Baby Shower Drive** to help combat Black maternal and infant mortality.
- On behalf of UUCC, Miriam attended organizational meetings for the **Justice League of Kalamazoo County**, a faith-based reparations project seeking to repair the breach caused by the historical damage of slavery and its aftermath.

How can we lean into our 8th Principle commitments next church year?

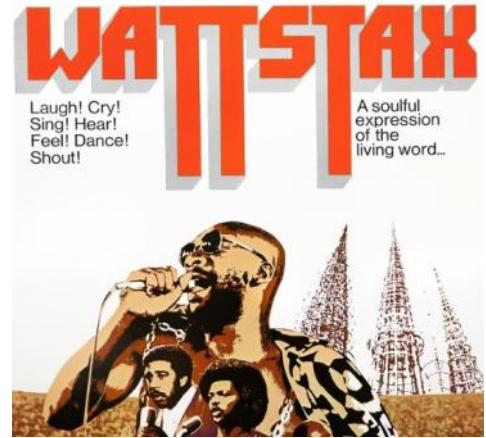
JUNETEENTH

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

Kalamazoo Valley Museum

A Movie and Some Music: The Juneteenth Edition

You won't want to miss this screening of *Wattstax* followed by a musical performance by Yolonda Lavender on **June 18 at 6 PM**. *Wattstax* was a benefit concert that took place in the summer of 1972, organized by Stax Records to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the 1965 uprising in the African American community of Watts, Los Angeles. The film, directed by Mel Stuart, was nominated for a Golden Globe award for Best Documentary Film in 1974.



Kalamazoo Institute of Arts

Join the KIA for Juneteenth Family Afternoon on Thursday, **June 18 from 11 AM to 2 PM** to remember Juneteenth and the abolishment of slavery in the United States. Participate in various activities, like guided tours of African American artists, drop-in low-mess art activities, and more.

SELF-GUIDED TOUR

Friday, June 19
Normal Park Hours

Dr. MLK Junior Park
1000 MLK Drive

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

City of Portage

To commemorate Juneteenth and better understand the evolution of our nation and its people, visit [Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park](#) on **Friday, June 19** for an opportunity to reflect upon and learn about African American resilience and achievement as you explore the “Garden of Hope,” participate in the self-led tour, reflect on mediative benches, and view the interpretive kiosk.

Bronson Park

Rootead’s Juneteenth Celebration returns to **Bronson Park** on **Saturday, June 20** from **1PM—7PM**. Enjoy a day filled with music, performances, food, local vendors, community resources, activities for kids, and space for the community to come together in celebration.

If you go downtown, be sure to stop by **Black Voices of Dignity** exhibit on Juneteenth weekend, **June 18-21**, at First Congregational Church.



PRIDE



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

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

Observances:

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

Adult Education:

- During the Sunday service on February 15, we watched excerpts of **Imara Jones's** 2025 Ware Lecture, **Defending Trans Lives and Democracy**, and discussed it in small groups. 51 people participated.



Sunday Services:

- For Coming Out Day in October, local transactivist **Regan Hanley** spoke about **The Right to Love Yourself**.
- Rev. Gy** will share a message with us on **Pride Sunday** on June 7.

Projects:

- The **UUCC quilting group**, presented our guest speaker, Regan Hanley, co-President of the OutFront Kalamazoo Board of Directors, a beautiful **rainbow quilt**
- With several other progressive churches, we will co-host a **Pride Celebration** from **1-3 PM** on **June 7** at the Portage United Church of Christ.
- We are hosting a page on our website for the [Elder Lesbian Association of SW Michigan](#).
- Our Program Council donated \$200 to **OutFront Kalamazoo** in support of its programs and services for youth and adults and their mission to advance social justice and achieve equity & inclusion for the LGBTQIA+ community.

How can we become more Welcoming community in the next church year?

OPPORTUNITIES

 We Gather Portage

P R I D E

**June 7
1-3 PM** **Potluck Picnic** Portage United Church Of Christ
2731 Milham Ave

Live music from Dana Scott

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

Family-friendly event with fun games and activities!

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



OPEN HOUSE THEATRE COMPANY

**AGES
8-12**

**KIDS
THEATRE CAMP**

.....

AUG 10 - AUG 14

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

.....

REGISTER TODAY! SPACES ARE LIMITED

tinyurl.com/OHTCKidsTheatreCamp







QUILT-OF-THE-MONTH

Four months into our **Quilt-of-the-Month project**, we are delighted to share that two quilts have found new homes, generating \$700 in support of UUCC programs. Thank you to everyone who has supported this project so far. We look forward to sharing many more of these beautiful quilts in the months ahead.

Earlier this year, UUCC received a treasure trove of vintage quilts from the estate of **Frances Keenan**. Each quilt reflects remarkable craftsmanship, pieced with love and care, and many are beautifully hand-quilted. After considering several possibilities, we decided to offer the quilts for sale, with all proceeds benefiting church programming.

Each month, a different quilt is displayed at UUCC and is available for purchase throughout the month. If a quilt does not sell through the congregation, we will offer it for sale online.

Our Quilt-of-the-Month project will continue until July 2027. Any quilts remaining unsold by then will be donated to the Northern Michigan Relief Sale, where they will be auctioned to benefit the Mennonite Central Committee and its work assisting people around the world affected by natural disasters, famine, war, disease, and poverty.

Floral Fan Quilt – 41.5" x 60"

This hand-quilted fan quilt is a lovely example of traditional quilt-making. Made circa 1990, it features rows of fan blocks pieced from a variety of floral fabrics in shades of pink, blue, green, cream, and burgundy.

The hand quilting is one of the quilt's standout features. Decorative quilting patterns fill the background and borders, adding texture and highlighting the craftsmanship that went into making the piece.

At 41.5" x 60", this quilt is a versatile size—large enough to use as a lap or crib quilt, yet small enough to display on a wall or drape over a chair or sofa.



The quilt is in excellent vintage condition and would make a wonderful addition to a quilt collection or a cozy accent in any room.

The asking price for this lovely little gem is only \$100. 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.

OPPORTUNITIES

Stewardship in Action

The Stewardship Committee is pleased to launch a new fundraising opportunity called **Stewardship in Action**.

The idea is simple: members or friends may post a task or project on a whiteboard at the back of the sanctuary. The task could be a small household chore, gardening help, or pet sitting. Or it might be a larger project, like painting a room, power-washing a deck, or cleaning and organizing a garage.

Another member, with the time, interest, and skill, would contact the person to discuss details and, if both agree, complete the work. In gratitude, the person receiving the help would make a donation to the church in an amount believed to be appropriate.

This program offers a wonderful way to support one another, share our talents, and contribute to the financial health of our congregation. It is stewardship in action: friends helping friends while strengthening our connections and our community.

Got Questions? Contact [Marsha Laya](#) for

Faith Alliance Meal Ministry

OutFront Kalamazoo's Connections is a weekly youth group for LGBTQ+ youth ages 12-18 in the greater Kalamazoo area; this program serves anywhere from 13-20 youth per week and is supported by a strong network of volunteers and staff.

Due to current and ongoing cuts to funding that are happening to LGBTQ+ supportive programs nationwide, the program is experiencing some significant obstacles in maintaining an important facet of the program's quality: food security.

To help overcome these obstacles, the OutFront Kalamazoo Faith Alliance is calling on local churches to sign up to provide a hot meal for these kids.

UCC has signed up to cook and deliver a meal to OutFront's office between 5-6 PM on **Thursday, August 20**. If you can help with this effort, look for the sign up sheet at the back of the sanctuary or email the office at uucommunity@gmail.com.

KALAMAZOO PRIDE 

A FUNDRAISER FOR OUTFRONT KALAMAZOO



YOUTH PRIDE

PRESENTED BY OUTFRONT KALAMAZOO

Dive Into Pride!

Saturday, June 27

12:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan

601 West Maple Street

Kalamazoo, MI 49008

>>FREE FOR ALL!<<



JUNE 2026

DAY	DATE	EVENT	TIME
Monday	June 1	Stewardship Committee Meeting	1:00 PM
Tuesday	June 2	Qigong	9:00 AM
Saturday	June 6	Qigong Game Gathering	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	June 7	<i>Pride Sunday</i> with Rev. Gy RE Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time Portage Pride Picnic	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 1:00 PM
Monday	June 8	Quilting for Community	1:00 PM
Tuesday	June 9	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 10	Sunday Services Committee Meeting	5:00 PM
Saturday	June 13	Qigong Celebration of Life for Kathy Hays	9:00 AM 1:00 PM
Sunday	June 14	<i>Children's Sunday</i> with Rev. Gy NO Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	10:00 AM 11:00 AM
Monday	June 15	Sustainability Group	7:00 AM
Tuesday	June 16	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 17	Growth Team Retreat	3:30 PM
Saturday	June 20	Qigong 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group	9:00 AM 9:00 AM
Sunday	June 21	<i>New Member Sunday</i> with Rev. Gy UU Exploration for Kids After-Service Social Time	9:00 AM 10:00 AM 10:00 AM
Tuesday	June 23	Qigong	9:00 AM
Wednesday	June 24	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	12:00 PM
Saturday	June 27	Qigong	9:00 AM
Sunday	June 28	<i>Association Sunday</i> UU Exploration for Kids After Service Social Time Peace, Justice, and Equity with Raja Khouri	10:00 AM 10:00 AM 11:00 AM 3:00 PM

**UU Community Church
is served by:**

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Consulting Minister
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2025-2026 Board of Trustees

David Uttermohlen

Joel Folkert

Pat Fuehr

Dawn Renner

Kathryn Ragains-Wilson

**The next Newsletter Deadline is
Wednesday, June 24 at NOON**

Please send submissions to:

uuccnewsletter@gmail.com

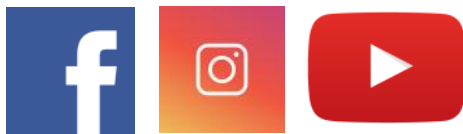
CommUUnity Matters

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church
of Southwest Michigan**

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



CONNECT WITH US!



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