Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan

October 2026

# ComUUnity Matters



## Spiritual Theme for October: PHYSICAL ABILITY

Our 2026–2027 spiritual theme is MOSAIC. Like pieces in a mosaic, each of us brings unique gifts, stories, and perspectives that create a beautiful whole. This diversity inspires us to work to dismantle oppression and build a more just and Beloved Community where everyone can thrive.

In September, we will reflect on our bodies. Unitarian Universalists affirm that every person has inherent worth and dignity and in turn, that all bodies are sacred. These beliefs inform our commitment to bodily autonomy, reproductive justice, and LGBTQIA+ and disability rights.

Questions to ponder:

- What gifts does my body offer me, and how have those gifts changed over time?
- How might my assumptions about physical ability affect the way I see and interact with others?
- What does it mean to truly honor that all bodies are sacred?
- How can we create a community where every body is welcomed, valued, and able to participate?

## Upcoming Sunday Services

Sundays at 10:00 AM. Casual Dress.
Onsite, YouTube, or on Zoom
Childcare is provided.

**October 4: *Making Room for Every Piece* with Rev. Gy**

Each of us is a unique piece of the mosaic of life. Together we create a spiritual community rooted in purpose, friendship, belonging, inclusion, compassion, and justice, where everyone has a place.

**October 11: *Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* with Rev. Gy**

The mind-body connection is not a new idea. Even the Romans recognized it. While modern life brings new challenges, the goal remains the same: finding balance and feeling our best along the way.

**October 18: *Disability 101* with Miranda Grunwell**

This introductory presentation will offer a basic understanding of disability and the Disability Community. We'll explore disability language, common experiences, and the services provided by Disability Network Southwest Michigan. It's a starting point for building greater awareness, understanding, and inclusion.

**October 25: *The Paradox of Aging* with Rev. Larry Farris**

Much of what we hear about aging seems to treat it as a problem for which someone is always ready to offer a solution. At age seventy-seven, our guest speaker, Larry Farris, doesn't find these "fixes" particularly helpful. Indeed, he finds them rather suspect. Instead, he wants to explore what aging makes possible that earlier stages of life did not.

# Guests in Our Pulpit



**Miranda Grunwell** is an educator, advocate, and storyteller dedicated to building a more inclusive world. With over 20 years of experience in disability rights, she brings both professional expertise and personal insight to her work. As the Community Education Program Manager at Disability Network Southwest Michigan, Miranda develops and leads engaging workshops, trainings, and public presentations that challenge assumptions and expand understanding. Her work spans accessibility, disability history, allyship, and creating spaces where everyone can fully participate. Passionate about education as a tool for empowerment, she sparks meaningful conversations that help individuals and organizations break down barriers and foster true inclusion.



The **Rev. Larry Farris** is a pastor, preacher, teacher, and spiritual director -pastoral coach. He is the author of *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry; Ten Commandments for Pastors New to a Congregation; and Ten Commandments for Pastors Leaving a Congregation,* as well as numerous articles. Now retired and living in Minneapolis, he served Presbyterian churches in Maryland and Michigan. A voracious reader, Larry loves to garden, cook, travel, walk, cycle, canoe, grandfather, and sing. His wife Pat is a retired hospice nurse, an accomplished flutist and watercolorist, and serves on the board of the Haiti Nursing Foundation. Their son Jordan lives outside Chicago with his wife Joanna and their children, Alec and Demi. Daughter Rachel lives in Minneapolis with her husband Fernando, and their daughter Luciana. Larry is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Princeton Theological Seminary.



**Cathie Laurent Schau** is a Kalamazoo native and a K-College grad. She and her husband Jordan, an attorney, live in Oshtemo. After a career in corporate and nonprofit communications as well as stints of freelance writing and copyediting, Cathie now works part-time for Integrated Services of Kalamazoo (ISK) — the county's community mental health organization. Back in 2015, while working as a writing tutor and longing to engage in Big Talk with people (as opposed to small talk), Cathie decided to bring to life a long-simmering dream: forming a conversational salon in Kalamazoo — like the salons of old, where people gathered in European drawing rooms for erudite discussion. And so KalaSalon was born. Cathie will share her salon experiences with us at our first **Thoughtful Thursday** on **October 29** at 7 PM. See page 13 for more information

# October Sunday Opportunities

## Life is Better with Friends!

On Sunday, **October 4 at 10:00 AM,** we'll celebrate **Bring A Friend Sunday** at UUCC. This special service is a chance for each of us to share the warmth and spirit of our community with someone in our lives.

Rev. Gy's message will explore how being part of a spiritual community nurtures our deepest needs for purpose, friendship, and belonging.

After the service, we'll gather for coffee, conversation, and connection - a relaxed, friendly opportunity to introduce your guest to our community and help them experience the joy of fellowship firsthand.

Whether your friend is curious about UU values, seeking a sense of community, or simply wants to spend time with you, Bring-A-Friend Sunday is the perfect way to share what makes UUCC special.

## It Feels Good to Sing Together!

Singing together brings peace, unity, belonging, and connection! Join the UUCC Singers and enjoy the benefits! We will be raising our voices in song several times in the coming months, including (but not limited to),

- Bread Communion, November 22 at 10 AM
- Sunday, November 22, 5 PM – With the multi-congregation We Gather choir at the Community Thanksgiving service at Portage United Church of Christ
- Winter Holiday Service, December 22 at 10 AM

The choir rehearses on Sundays at 9 AM beginning on October 4. Want to join? Let Luke know (luke.j.kritzman@wmich.edu), and he'll add you to the UUCC Singers email list so you receive updates on practice times and upcoming performances.



## Generosity Giving for October

Periodically, UU Community Church holds special "Generosity Sunday" collections to support local organizations that promote justice, equity, and inclusion in our community. Our Generosity Sunday recipient for October is **Interfaith Action of SW Michigan,** a collaborative network of faith communities dedicated to promoting peace, justice, and compassion. They focus their efforts on environmental issues, migration, economic justice, peacemaking, and promoting pluralistic democracy.

To help support Interfaith Action in a meaningful way, our goal for this Generosity Giving campaign is $1000. If it is yours to do, please consider giving generously.
There are several ways to give:

- CHECK - made out to UUCC with Generosity Sunday in the memo
- DEBIT OR CREDIT Give online using the church website or the Vanco app on your phone. Be sure to choose Generosity Sunday in the menu.
- CASH - We hope to have a representative from Interfaith Action join us sometime in October. On that day, we will donate all cash and loose change in the offering plate to the organization.

# From the Wider UU World



Our guest perspective this month is from **Rev. Dr. Laura Solomon.** Rev. Dr. Solomon is the settled minister at the the Unitarian Universalist Church of Delaware Count, PA  This reflection first appeared in the Unitarian Universalist Association blogspot, **Braver/Wiser** in October 2013.

## Unlearning the Rules

*"Radical self-love summons us to be our most expansive selves, knowing that the more unflinchingly powerful we allow ourselves to be, the more unflinchingly powerful others feel capable of being. Our unapologetic embrace of our bodies gives others permission to unapologetically embrace theirs." —Sonya Renee Taylor, The Body Is Not an Apology*

When I was ten years old, I learned that I needed glasses. While I remember the shock of seeing leaves on trees for the first time, what I remember more profoundly was wearing my glasses to dance class.

In my mind, I was an extraordinary dancer. I knew what felt right in my body, and—because I could not see myself as anything but a blob in the mirrors surrounding us—I was able to rely solely on how dancing felt.

But when I showed up to dance class in my glasses, I learned that my dancing body did not look at all like I imagined. What had felt just-right was revealed to be awkward or wrong: my knees were too bent, or my elbows too high, or my head too crooked. While I am certain that my dancing "improved" when my vision did, I am equally certain that my dancing changed. I was more self-conscious and hesitant. I was less able to rely on what I knew felt right.

In recent years, I started to dream several times a week about dance. In the fifteen years since I have danced, my body has changed dramatically due to normal aging, illness, and chronic health conditions. The thought of dancing again after multiple surgeries was intimidating. I was unsure of how (or if) my body would move, and how (or if) my body would be able to generate and sustain movements. Regardless, I took the frightening leap of registering for an adult dance class—having no idea what to expect.

When I got home from my first class, my partner asked how it went.
"I was terrible," I laughed. "And it was so good."

Dancing again has meant unlearning all the rules and judgment and expectations I carried, and learning how to move my body in the ways that feel right. Amazingly, my body remembers how ten-year-old me felt before I got glasses: my internal sense of rightness, of grace, of strength has persisted all these years.

(Continued on Page 5)

I wish ten-year-old me had known how to love the terrible moves: the bent knees, the crooked head, the too-high elbows. The scars, the glasses, the things my body will not do. Embodying myself, focusing only on what feels right, allowing myself to be terrible at a thing I love is the ultimate act of self-care. Embodying all of me is the best way I know to love the world.

May we find the courage to attune to our bodies. May we know the ways we collectively thrive when we bring our whole selves to any place. As we unlearn what does not serve and relearn embodiment and joy, may we experience the freedom of our fullest selves.

# From Your Board

The Board of Trustees met on September 26 for their annual retreat and a short business meeting. Here are some of the things they accomplished during the business meeting:

- Created a designated Benevity account on the spreadsheet for matching contributions from Stryker.
- Authorized a special collection for indigenous speaker, Jaike Spotted Wolf.
- Initiated a review of the UUCC Employee Handbook and Child Safety Policy.

Click **HERE** to read the minutes from the meeting.

Having just met in late September, the Board will not meet as scheduled on Oct 1. Their next regular meeting will take place on **Thursday, November 5 at 6:30 PM** on Zoom. Regular 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.**

# Finance Report

We ended the 2025/2026 fiscal year (July – June) with a $10,583 surplus in the General Fund. As you can see in the chart below, we anticipated a deficit at the end of the year. However, we received a donation in June, which allowed us to end the year with a surplus.

The Board requested that the surplus be added to the Property and Maintenance Fund and to the Technology Fund. This brings our General Fund Balance to $34,583 (this total is the culmination of all surpluses and deficits since our church began).

| | INCOME | EXPENSES | SURPLUS (DEFICIT) |
|---|---|---|---|
| ACTUAL | $144,795 | $134,212 | $10,583 |
| BUDGET | $132,652 | $137,972 | ($5,322) |

Thanks to the Board and committee members for working hard to keep our church financially healthy. A special thanks to my fellow Finance Team members, **Kimberly Ridley** and **Joe Calme,** for all their hard work and expertise.

Submitted by: Tami Brozovich, Finance Chair




As we explore physical ability this month, we encourage you to participate in the **United Way 21-Day Disability Equity Challenge.**

The Disability Equity Challenge was developed in partnership with **Disability Network Southwest Michigan** (DNSWM). The curated content and guided discussion is designed to raise awareness. Topics of exploration will include ableism, the history of disability justice movement, intersectionality, language, accessibility, systemic inequalities for people with disabilities, allyship, and disability pride.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about supporting equitable communities.

**How it works:**

- Participants sign up for free and starting will receive an email each weekday morning during October to read, watch, or listen to at their own convenience.
- Each email includes a brief introduction on a topic related to disability, followed by resources such as podcasts, articles, videos, and infographics.
- You do not need to utilize all the resources. Plan to spend 10-15 minutes learning about each topic.
- Two virtual community conversations facilitated by DNSWM will be offered during the Challenge as an opportunity to connect with other participants and gain deeper knowledge from experts in the space. You will receive email invitations to these events.

To sign up, visit **unitedforscmi.org/equity-challenge/**

# Program Council in Action




The best ideas for UU Community Church come from all of us. Whether you're a longtime member, a new friend, or visiting for the first time, you're invited to join the conversation at our monthly Program Council Meeting.

We had lots to **CELEBRATE** at our meeting in September:

In August, we kicked off a new church year with Mosaic as our spiritual theme. We enjoyed GREAT Sunday services from Rev. Gy, and UUCC folks Regena Nelson, Joe Calme, and Alana Hilton. We partnered with Open House Theatre Company to put on our 3rd Annual Kids Theatre Camp. We served a meal to the Youth Group at OutFront Kalamazoo and raised funds for the church through Stewardship in Action and our Quilt of the Month program. And our 6th annual Backyard BBQ was fantastic, with a record number of folks in attendance. Together we can do great things!

We discussed upcoming **OPPORTUNITIES**, including:

- **Bring-a-Friend Sunday** on October 4 (see page 3)
- The **Goods and Services Auction** on November 7 (see page 8)
- A UUCC **30th Anniversary T-shirt** sale
- A possible **Open House Theatre Company's** production in December - talk to OHTC Artistic Director to learn how you can be part of the fun!

We heard a few **REQUESTS,** including

- Fill out an **I Can Help Survey** to help our Caring Community Team find support for members and friends in need.
- **Check your listing in the directory** at the Welcome desk to help us with our next directory update.
- Sign up on the sheet at the back of the sanctuary for the next **Meal Ministry Work Day** so we can fill the freezer with meals to share when the need arises.
- Sign up to **be a Greeter** on the sheet at the back of the sanctuary.

The next Program Council meeting is on **October 11** at about **11:30 AM.** Please join us and help keep programming at UUCC vibrant and relevant.

As always, a **Soup Luncheon** will be served before the October Program Council meeting. Donations are appreciated but not required. Many thanks to last month's soup makers - **Nancy Calme, Julie Kelemen, and Marsha Laya!** If you would like to be one of our Souper Volunteers who donates a pot of soup, sign up at the back of the sanctuary. If you can help coordinate this important and delicious ministry, please talk to **Miriam.**






Mark your calendars for the exciting **2026 UUCC Service and Goods Auction** on **Saturday, November 7, at 5 PM.** Whether you're joining us in person at UUCC or tuning in via Zoom, this event promises to be fun and exciting for everyone. We will even provide childcare if you need it!

Do you have a hankering for homemade meals or themed dinners? Or are you craving social events like movie nights, craft parties, and local theatre outings? You could even learn a new skill or get some help with chores. These and many more unique offerings can be yours for the highest bid at the Service Auction.

The evening begins at **5 PM** with a **Taco Bar** (vegetarian options available) and drinks for just $10 per adult (kids eat free).

From 5 to 6 PM, browse the **Silent Auction** tables featuring household items, holiday decor, homemade baked goods, and more.

At 6 PM, the excitement kicks in as UUCC auctioneers **Kevin Brozovich** and **Marsha Laya** conduct the **Live Auction** of special items, services, and events.

Afterward, you'll receive an email with your total purchases and payment options.

**Let's make this year's auction unforgettable!**

Sign up to **donate and RSVP by November 1** using this link:
**forms.gle/vPnE9Sz9exVtWEne7**

Questions? Talk to any member of the Stewardship Committee
-- **Joe Calme, Ron Crowell, Marsha Laya, or Chair Regena Nelson.**

# Quilt-of-the-Month Project

UUCC was honored to receive a collection of vintage quilts from the estate of Frances Keenan. These quilts reflect many hours of careful work, with beautiful piecing and, in many cases, detailed hand quilting. After considering several options, we decided to offer the quilts for sale, with all proceeds supporting church programs and activities.

Each month, a different quilt will be displayed at UUCC and available for purchase throughout the month. If a quilt is not sold through the congregation, it will later be offered for sale online.

The Quilt-of-the-Month project will continue through July 2027. Any quilts that remain unsold at that time will be donated to the Northern Michigan Relief Sale, where they will be auctioned to support the work of the Mennonite Central Committee, which provides assistance to people affected by natural disasters, conflict, hunger, disease, and poverty around the world.

## *Classic Checkerboard- 56.5 x 69*

This month's quilt is a lovely little piece featuring a classic alternating checkerboard design in soft cream, taupe, and gray fabric with a matching backing. It was made in the early 1990s and is in excellent condition. It is machine quilted with a simple overall pattern and a neatly finished edge.



This quilt would be perfect for a twin-sized bed or as a cozy throw. The versatile neutral palette would work well with a wide range of decor. You can take this quilt home for only $75. 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 credit card on our website or the Vanco app.

# The Caring Column



*Speak to your body in a loving way. It's the only one you've got! It's your home, and it deserves your respect.*

*– Iskra Lawrence*

***Joys and Concerns***

This month brought its share of challenges for UUCC folks. **Stephanie Grathwol** experienced quite a stormy visit with her cousin in Detroit when severe thunderstorms and two tornadoes swept through the area. Fortunately, the home was unharmed, although the family was among 250,000 people who lost power for four days. **Ken VanEseltine** was hospitalized with a serious UTI and sepsis. **Teri Uttermohlen** pulled a muscle in her back, while **Beverly Folz** took a tumble at home and was left pretty bruised. Jameson Whitney's daughter Natalie was treated in the emergency room for a badly sprained wrist. **Alana and Sean Hilton** and their family mourned the loss of Alana's grandmother and the tragic death of their neighbor, Bill. Our friend and justice partner **Gwendolyn Hooker** also grieved the loss of her fiancé, **Mark Hughes.**

There were plenty of bright spots, too. **Nancy and Ron Crowell** enjoyed a Labor Day weekend at son **Chris'**s cottage and son **Corey**'s home up north. **Joe Calme** reached a new milestone in his guitar journey by playing in an Irish pub, while **Lisa Wagner's son, Aaron**, started a new job with Meijer in Grand Rapids. **Stace Danielson's son, Justin,** also began a new job working on wind turbines across the United States. And all our UUCC scholars who headed back to school, from **Rook Hilton** starting 1st grade to **Matthew Nelson** continuing work on his Ph.D. We hope everyone has a rewarding school year!

Through the ups and downs, we are reminded of how many stories, milestones, and life experiences make up our UUCC mosaic.

***Happy Birthday to You!***

We wish all the best to everyone celebrating birthdays in October: **Ellie Epskamp, Kathryn Ragains, Judy Halseth, Grayson Tasko, Carol Higgins, Barb McWhorter.**

***Happy Anniversary***

Best wishes to **Connie and Mike Leatherman** as they celebrate their wedding anniversary on October 7. And it is not an anniversary yet, but we want to send early congratulations to **Robin Chico and Juniper Elder,** who are planning to tie the knot at UUCC on October 24.

***In Memoriam:***

We remember those who passed on in Octobers past and the many gifts they shared with us: **Dorothea Tompkins, Jean Houston, Donald Mollhagen, Barbara Maddox, Jim Heveran, Ken Kurtz,** and **Andy Miller.**

***New visitors in September:***

We were delighted to welcome **Vanessa Orozcco, Dana Kubinski, Jim and Paula Gilchrist, Kevin Keith, Ben, and Sue** to our services recently. We hope you will stop by again soon!

Every person in our congregation is part of our Caring Community, and caring for one another is at the heart of who we are. If you have a need, know someone who could use some support, or have news you'd like to share with the congregation, please let our Caring Community coordinators know through the UUCC office at 269-324-7262 or uucommunity@gmail.com. **Sharing is caring!**

# New on the Art Wall



UUCC member **Marsha Laya** has recently discovered the joy of creating **fused glass artwork**. Signing up for a class to "see what it was like" has turned into a passion, and half of her garage is filled with supplies.

From **October 4-18**, Marsha will display the pieces she has created on a table in front of the Art Wall for all of us to enjoy. As an added bonus, each of the pieces will be available for purchase, with all the profits (after she recoups material costs) going to UUCC.

# Coming Out Day

Observed each year on October 11, **Coming Out Day** celebrates LGBTQ+ people and the courage it can take to live openly and authentically. First observed in 1988, the day was inspired by the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.
Coming out can help challenge stereotypes, reduce isolation, and remind LGBTQ+ people that they are not alone. For friends, family, and allies, it's an opportunity to listen, offer support, and help create a community where everyone can live openly and safely. How lucky are we that Coming Out Day falls on a Sunday this year and we can celebrate together! **UUCC folks are encouraged to wear their Pride swag to church on October 11.** Miriam will be taking photos and videos for a social media post to help let the wider community know that UUCC is a place that is working to be welcoming and supportive of people of all identities and orientations.

# Small Groups at UUCC

Small Groups at UUCC are a wonderful way to build community, make meaningful connections, and find your place in our congregation. Whether you're new to UUCC, have been around for years, there's a place for you in our small groups. You can drop in to most groups as your schedule allows, or make regular participation part of your spiritual practice.

The **Women's Book Group** meets on Zoom from about **1-3 PM** on the **2nd Friday of each month on Zoom,** September through May. All UUCC folks on the feminine spectrum are welcome to attend. Their next meeting is on October 9**.** They will discuss **The Correspondent** by Virginia Evans. Click **HERE** for the Zoom link. For more information about this group, contact the group chair, **Dawn Renner.**

The **UUCC Sustainability Group** meets on the **third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM on Zoom** *(note the time change)* 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. Newcomers are welcome! Click **HERE** for the Zoom Link. Questions? Talk to **Miriam.**

Our **Mindfulness Group** led by Eric Nelson is currently **on hiatus.** We have videos of past sessions on our **YouTube channel** that you are free to use.

Eric will hold a free **Mindfulness Retreat** on Saturday, **November 14** at UUCC from **10 AM to 3 PM**.
Click **HERE** to register.

The Zoom Mindfulness Group will resume sometime after the first of the year. Watch your newsletter and Weekly Email for updated information.

The **Qigong Group** meets at **9 AM** every Tuesday and Saturday for a half hour of gentle mind/body exercises. We practice with our cameras off so you can concentrate on the exercises and leave your self consciousness behind.
Click **HERE** for the TUESDAY Zoom.
Click **HERE** for the SATURDAY Zoom
Questions about Qigong at UUCC?
Contact **Freya Lake.**

The **UUCC Breakfast Group** meets at **9 AM on the 3rd Saturday of each month,** usually at Berries Famous Breakfast House on Westnedge Ave for good food and fellowship. The venue changes occasionally, so please contact **Ron Crowell** to RSVP or if you have any questions.

**Quilting for Community** the UUCC quilting group meets at UUCC on the **3rd Monday of the month** in summer and autumn at **1 PM** to create quilts to donate to area service organizations. Schedules sometimes change. Be sure to double-check with **Marsha Laya** before coming.

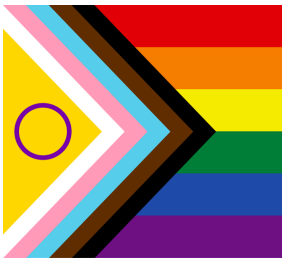
The **UUCC Game Group** meets from **1-4 PM on the 1st Saturday of the month at UUCC** to play board and/or card games**.** People of all ages and game-playing abilities are welcome to attend. You can even bring a friend or two! Please contact **Dawn Renner** for more information.




**Thoughtful Thursdays** is our monthly guest speaker series. These enlightening evening gatherings on Zoom 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.

For the past six years, all our guests have come from outside UUCC. This year, we're opening the circle to learn from the wisdom and experiences of our own members and friends.

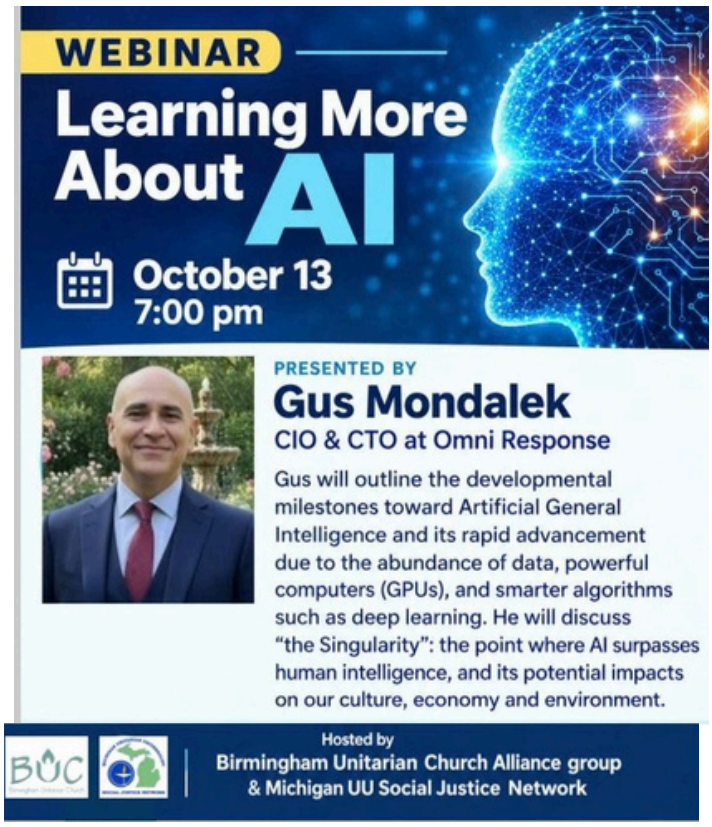
We're kicking off this year's series on **Thursday, October 29,** at **7 PM** with **Cathie Schau**, founder of KalaSalon. For more than ten years, KalaSalon has hosted **"Fearless Conversations"** in Kalamazoo on topics ranging from UFO sightings in Michigan and the American healthcare system to homelessness, the school-to-prison pipeline, a good death, liberal gun ownership, psychedelic healing, and AI. Cathie will share her journey with KalaSalon and what she has learned along the way about the power of conversation. Click **HERE** to register for this Thoughtful Thursday, or visit **tinyurl.com/uuccfearless**



Our first Thoughtful Thursday featuring UUCC members and friends, "**Non-Binary and Beyond"**, will take place on Thursday, **November 12,** at **7 PM** on Zoom. **Rev. Gy** and other members of our congregation will share their personal perspectives and invite conversation about pronouns, attacks on LGBTQIA+ rights, queer joy, and more. Click **HERE** to register, or visit **tinyurl.com/lgbtquucc**

We hope you'll join us for these thoughtful conversations. Bring your curiosity, your questions, and your own experiences. We'd love for you to be part of the conversation.

# Take Action for the Earth




## Get Informed about AI

Our justice partners at the [Michigan UU Social Justice Network ]() are co-sponsoring a webinar with the Birmingham Unitarian Church, which is open to anyone to attend. **Learning More about Artificial Intelligence with Gus Mondalek** will take place on Zoom on Tuesday, October 13 at 7 PM.

Gus Mondalek, Chief Information Officer and Chief Technology Officer at Omni-Response, will review developmental milestones toward Artificial General Intelligence and its rapid advancement. He will discuss "the Singularity"—the point where AI surpasses human intelligence—and potential impacts on our culture, economy, and the environment. To register for this event, visit **bit.ly/AI-Oct 13**

## Drop-Off Your Recycling

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) foam, electronics, paper shredding, and other recycling is available in Kalamazoo once every quarter. Residents can drop off any amount of the accepted materials during collection times. Volunteers will be set up in the parking lots of **Mayors' Riverfront Park** from 10 AM to 1 PM on Saturday, **October 31**. Visit the **City of Kalamazoo's website** for more information.

## Visit Our Recycling Center

Located in the Community Room, the UUCC Recycling Center is a one-stop location for all of our recycling efforts, including Cans for Kids, EPS Foam #6 (aka Styrofoam collection), Basic Recycling—paper, plastic, etc., and Plastic Bag Recycling. Members and friends without access to curbside recycling are encouraged to use the bins to help reduce the amount of waste in our landfills. Contact Miriam if you have any questions about our Recycling Center or would like to volunteer as a trash recycler.

## Make a Call for Climate Justice

Join our climate justice partners at **Hope for Creation** on Tuesday, October 6 from 8-8:30 PM to learn about an issue that is relevant and timely to our care for the earth and its people, from an expert on the details of the issue, and to make the critical calls or emails to advocate for climate justice. Click **HERE** to register or visit **hopeforcreation.net/events-1**

# UU the Vote




Join folks from all over Kalamazoo and groups across the country on **Saturday, October 17,** in a show of **support for nonpartisan voter participation** and to encourage people to vote early to avoid the possible chaos and uncertainty this election may bring.

Organized by Kalamazoo area Indivisible, this rally will take place from **12-2 PM** on **Drake Road.** Participants pledge to be nonviolent and peaceful in every action. Please bring signs in support of voting and also donations of food for local people in need. More info: **nokings.org**.




## What is On Your Ballot?

When Michigan voters cast a ballot this fall, whether it is from home or at the polls, there will be a lot to decide. In addition to selecting the state's next Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, and other elected officials, voters will be asked to vote on two statewide ballot questions.

- **Proposal 1** asks voters whether a constitutional convention should be convened to draft a revised state constitution.
- **Proposal 2** prohibits campaign contributions from certain regulated utilities and contractors and amends Michigan's campaign finance laws.

When longtime UUCC Democracy Defenders, **Ron and Nancy Crowell**, heard that the Michigan UU Social Justice Network (MUUSJN) was offering a Zoom presentation to help voters learn more about these two proposals, they said, "*Sign us up*!"




**Mary Jo Ebert,** MUUSJN's Executive Director, will join us on Zoom on **Monday, October 12** at **6:30 PM** for a **Ballot Proposal Deep Dive** and to answer any questions we might have. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors to this presentation. The more informed voters are, the better! Click **HERE** to register or visit **tinyurl.com/uuccvote2026**

# Seasonal Fun

## We're Going on a Hayride

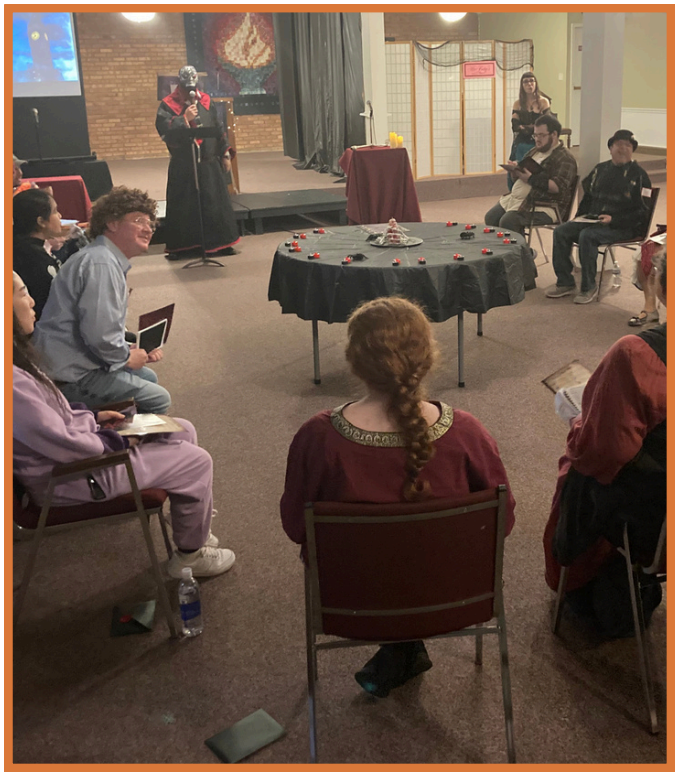
The **Hayride and Campfire** outing sold at last year's auction is coming up on Sunday, **October 11,** at **4 PM** at **Larry and Carol Higgin's** house in Mendon. (The rain date for this event is October 18.) Winners of this auction item are asked to RSVP to Carol by October 5.

You should plan to bring a lawn chair and a blanket. The Higgin's will be serving popcorn, cider, donuts, and pumpkin pie. Bringing a snack to share is optional but welcome.

There may be a few spaces left on the hay wagon, so if you didn't get this at the auction and would like to join the fun, contact Carol at covecarol34@gmail.com today!







## Blood on the Clock Tower

Voss Media Board Game Cafe will host an evening of **Blood on the Clocktower** at UUCC on Saturday, **October 17,** starting at **4 PM.** Blood on the Clocktower is a bluffing game with players on opposing teams of Good and Evil, overseen by a Storyteller player who conducts the action and makes crucial decisions. The goal of the game is to successfully deduce and eliminate the demons before they outnumber the townfolk. For the night, UUCC will be transformed into an eerie village with a tavern, an apothecary, a morgue, and more. Players (many in costume) wander through rooms socializing, trading knowledge, or spreading lies as they try to identify who is good and who is not.

Tickets for this event are $20 and include a pizza dinner. There are sessions for both experienced players and those new to the game. To learn more and to purchase tickets visit the **Voss Media Board Game Cafe website.**



# R.E.flections

**from Miriam Epskamp, Director of Religious Exploration**

When my middle son was little, he got very interested in the Laura Ingalls Wilder books. He read his way through the entire series and wanted more so, I went to the library and checked out a sequel series, *The Rocky Ridge Years* by Roger Lea MacBride. The books are told through the eyes of Laura Ingalls Wilder's daughter, Rose, as the family travels by covered wagon from South Dakota to a new farm in Mansfield, Missouri. I read the books along with my son, and I still recall a chapter about Rose when she was nine or ten. Now, this was 30 years ago, so my memory may be faulty. But the way I remember it, the family had purchased a full-length mirror from a family heading West. It was the biggest mirror they had ever owned. They had smaller mirrors for fixing your hair that barely showed your whole face, but this one was large enough to see your entire body from head to toe. Young Rose became fascinated by her reflection. At first, she couldn't pass by the mirror without looking at herself. Then she began spending any extra time she had staring at her reflection. Before long, critical thoughts about her body began to creep into her mind: *My nose is too big. My eyes are too close together. My figure is too curvy—or not curvy enough.* I suspect many of us, especially those of us socialized as girls and women, have heard similar voices in our heads. I can't remember how the story ended, but I find myself thinking about it whenever I come across a news story about the connection between social media use and negative body image among young people. Different generation, same challenges. I am grateful to be part of a religious community that gives parents, kids, and all of us tools to push back against the messages, images, doubts, and self-criticism that can take root in our minds. We teach that every person has inherent worth and dignity, and that all bodies are sacred. And we work together to build a Beloved Community where everyone, no matter what their body looks like, can thrive. May it be so. *Miriam*

# UU Exploration for Kids

The kids will continue working on our 30th Anniversary Time Capsule Project throughout October. We will learn how UUCC kids celebrated Halloween in the past and create our own celebration on October 25.

Our next Parents Night Out is scheduled for **October 10** fro **5-9 PM**. We provide free dinner and childcare for all UUCC kids. Registration is required. Contact Miriam if you have questions.

| OCTOBER RE SCHEDULE | |
|---|---|
| October 4 | Julie and Alana |
| October 11 | Pat Timm |
| October 18 | Alana |
| October 25 | Isaac |

# The Water Communion Project

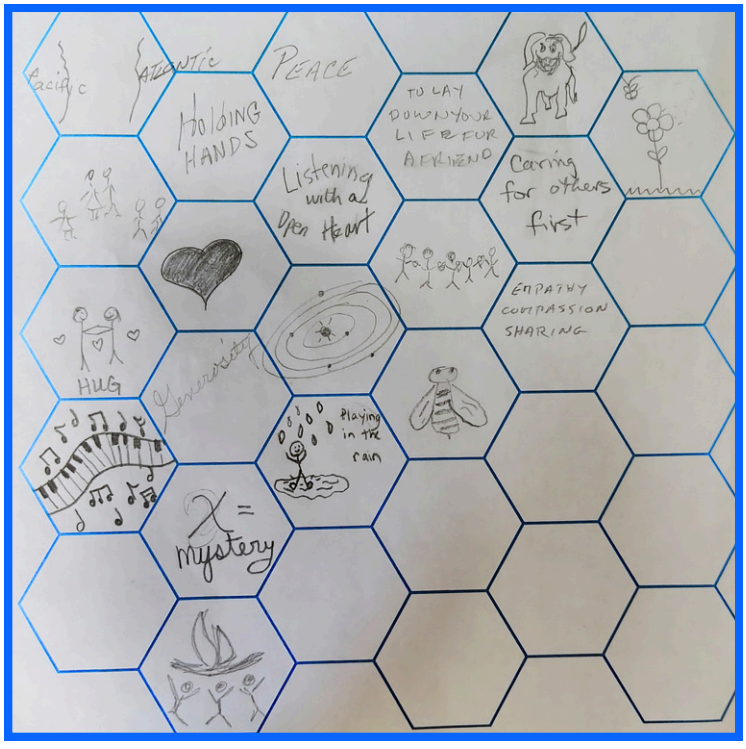
During our Water Communion service on September 13, we tried something a little different: a collaborative activity designed to add another layer of meaning to the service. Three clipboards were passed around during the service, each inviting people to share their thoughts and creativity in a different way.




On one clipboard, people were asked to write down how they were feeling in that moment. We gathered all the words and used a word-cloud generator to create a water droplet shaped word cloud. It a visual snapshot of how we were feeling together.

On another clipboard, people filled in a hexagon to show what love means to them. The third clipboard featured an ocean scene with a submarine. Participants added drawings of sea creatures, creating a colorful underwater world together.

We're grateful to everyone who participated in this Water Communion project. It was a creative and meaningful way to share our individual perspectives and see how they come together to create something larger.






# 10.20.30 Celebration

On September 20, the congregation gathered to kick off our **30th Anniversary celebrations** and honor **Rev. Gy** on 10 years as UUCC's minister and **Miriam** for 20 years as a religious educator. We also unveiled a beautiful new chalice, a gift to UUCC from the Sunday Services committee. The artist **Laura Hershey** shared that the chalice was designed as an abstract tree form to symbolize deep roots, steady growth, and the branching out of community. What a perfect symbol for our congregation!

Our 30th Anniversary celebrations will continue this month with the first installation of a timeline project curated by Dawn Renner. Dawn will use photos and other artifacts from the church archives to create displays that capture the highlights of our last 30 years. The timeline project will be a great way for us to remember where we have been as we dream and make plans about where we would like to go.















# Annual Backyard BBQ








UUCC members and friends gathered in **Rev. Gy and Patti**'s beautiful backyard on a perfect evening in September for our 6th Annual Backyard BBQ. **Eric Nelson** and **Kevin Brozovich** did the grilling, and some scrumptious sides were served up by the Stewardship Committee. (**Ron Crowell** will share the recipe for his amazing baked beans if you ask!) **Joe Calme** warmed up the crowd with a card game before the incomparable **Megan Dooley** took the stage to entertain us with her musical stylings.

**Thank you to everyone** who helped make this event a wonderful success. It was our best attended BBQ to date and we raised around $900 in support of UUCC's ministries.

# Calendar of Events
# October 2026

| DAY | DATE | EVENT | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| Saturday | October 3 | Qigong<br>Game Gathering | 9:00 AM<br>1:00 PM |
| Sunday | October 4 | Choir Practice<br>*Making Room for Every Piece* with Rev Gy<br>UU Exploration for Kids<br>After-Service Social Time | 9:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| Tuesday | October 6 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Friday | October 9 | Women's Book Group | 1:00 PM |
| Saturday | October 10 | Qigong<br>Parents Night Out | 9:00 AM<br>5-9 PM |
| Sunday | October 11 | Choir<br>*Mens Sana in Corpore Sano* with Rev. G<br>UU Exploration for Kids<br>Souper Sunday<br>Program Council<br>Hayride with the Higgins | 9:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>11:00 AM<br>11:30 AM<br>4:00 PM |
| Monday | October 12 | Sunday Services Committee<br>Ballot Proposal Deep Dive | 5:00 PM<br>6:30 PM |
| Tuesday | October 13 | Qigong<br>AI Webinar | 9:00 AM<br>7:00 PM |
| Thursday | October 15 | Sustainability Group | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday | October 17 | 3rd Saturday Breakfast Group<br>Qigong<br>Blood on the Clock Tower | 9:00 AM<br>9:00 AM<br>4:00 PM |
| Sunday | October 18 | Choir<br>*Disability 101* with Miranda Grunwell<br>UU Exploration for Kids<br>After-Service Social Time | 9:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| Monday | October 19 | Quilting for Community | 1:00 PM |
| Tuesday | October 20 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Wednesday | October 21 | NEWSLETTER DEADLINE<br>Growth Team Meeting | 12:00 PM<br>3:30 PM |
| Saturday | October 24 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Sunday | October 25 | Choir<br>*The Paradox of Aging* with Rev. Larry Farris<br>UU Exploration for Kids<br>After-Service Social Time | 9:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>10:00 AM<br>11:00 AM |
| Tuesday | October 27 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |
| Thursday | October 29 | Thoughtful Thursday with Cathie Schau | 7:00 PM |
| Saturday | October 31 | Qigong | 9:00 AM |

**UU Community Church is served by:**

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**2026-2027**
**Board of Trustees**

**Dawn Renner**
**Stephanie Grathwol**
**Joel Folkert**
**Kaitlin Koch Wojciak**

**The next Newsletter Deadline is Wednesday, October 21 at NOON**
**Please send submissions to:**
**uuccnewsletter@gmail.com**

CommUUnity Matters
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