



# Community Matters

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Southwest Michigan August 2018

## August Services

Services and Children's Religious Education Classes begin at 10:00am. Nursery Care is available.

**Sunday, August 5th - Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney will be speaking on "New Beginnings"**

Please join us for our first Sunday Service back after our summer break!

**Sunday, August 12th - Rev. Gy Ludvig-McCartney will be our speaker for this Sunday. Watch the weekly newsletter for the topic.**

**Sunday, August 19th - Rev. Larry Higgins will be speaking on the Aramaic translation of the first Beatitude** as presented in the gospel of Matthew (Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven). He will recite the entire 10 Beatitudes from the original Aramaic as spoken in the first century by Yeshua over 2,000 years ago, but will only focus on the first one of the ten.

**Sunday, August 26th - Terry Tessari will be speaking on "Resilience"**

In his message, Terry will reflect on the adaptive ability of resilience. What does it take to not only survive, but to thrive beyond life's challenges? He will share experiences over his career of individuals, communities, people and from his own life that display the importance of getting beyond life's adversities and not getting stuck in them.



## **From the Minister Gy Ludvig-McCartney**

Welcome back!

I hope that the month of July was truly an opportunity for regeneration, rest, and recommitment to all that brings joy, fulfillment, and purpose into your life.

It may have been the same for me too, although I am not yet there to be able to assess. I am still in the midst of loss, grief, and change.

My father-in-law was fairly recently diagnosed with Lewy Body dementia and his decline was rapid and thorough. The disease is such that it changes one's personality. Richard, the mild, gentle, kind man that we've all known turned into a combative, cussing, angry human being. While due to his rapid decline he qualified to be admitted to a nursing home with a memory care unit, no one would take him because of his combativeness.

His care was left to the family. And that sums up the month of July. We've all missed work and spent sleepless nights with a restless, confused man constantly wanting to go "home". I think home, in his mind, was the place where he once felt well, healthy, and clear-minded. A place no longer available to him.

Eventually he fell into a deep sleep that he hasn't awakened from in the past four days, and once the sleep came, Kairos Dwelling admitted him. We are waiting for his passing as I am writing this.

I've learned some through this process. I've learned that I am capable of caring in ways I didn't know I could. I've learned that I am married to a remarkable woman. I've learned that doing the right thing at the right time makes a difference. I've learned that



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life has its own terms, we don't get to vote. I've learned that when life calls for action, act we must. I've learned that LOVE matters.

I suspect I'll learn some more once this is over and the new begins.

Those of you who have known of the recent unfolding of my life have been kind, supportive, and very understanding. I've learned how much value that has at a time like this. It is like a gentle, cool breeze on a scorching day. Like a sip of water after long, thirsty hours. Thank you.

Thank you for the gift of community. The gift of belonging. Thank you.

It takes much for a group of people to become the "beloved community". Sometimes it is laughter, sometimes it is tears, but it always requires holding a safe place for each of us to experience ourselves as it is true for us. I don't think it is easy. I am not even sure that it always comes naturally. I just know that it has to happen if a group of people is to bond in compassion, kindness, and yes, love.

In the words of Maya Angelou: "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty".

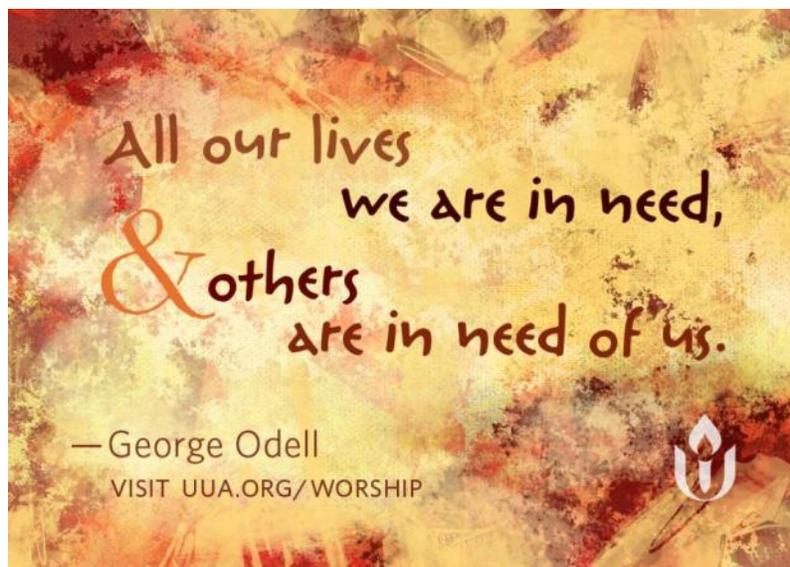
Being in community changes us, shapes us. Constantly. As we welcome new people into our midst, we can't help but change some more, expand the safe place to include other, more varied personalities. It is the way of it. And it isn't always easy. In fact, perhaps, it never is. Yet, when it happens, it makes us all beautiful.

This is the beginning of our third year together! Can you believe it?

We step into this third year with some hefty goals. Our eyes are set on growth, abundance, and inspired living. Some of us are very passionate about it. Some of us are just a bit more cautious. Others yet are on the fence. It is the way of it.

It is my hope and wish that we strike a healthy balance of forging ahead and compassionately taking care of those of us who need just a bit more time to catch up. To quote one more time the wise Maya Angelou: "Seek patience and passion in equal amounts. Patience alone will not build a temple. Passion alone will destroy its walls".

Thank you for being my beloved community where my heart is safe, my mind is welcomed. I wish to be the same to all of you. Here's to us!





## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Welcome back! It's hard to believe that July is history. Some folks love history and enjoy recalling the good ol' times. It's fun to remember the fun and the successes of days and years gone by. We sure have much in our history to celebrate at UUCC. It is rich history and it is that history that has brought us to where we are today. Kudos to our historian! Let's never forget the contributions and achievements of those who came before us.

Then there are those who live in the moment. Today is today and lets take time to smell the roses. Again, looking around at UUCC there is much to celebrate. We have many, many roses in our garden. We have abundance! Great members, friends and staff and great resources. Ah! Just bask in that. What a joy to behold.

Then there are those who find stepping into the future to be exciting. And exciting it will be at UUCC! Because of our rich history and our current abundance our future is filled with promise! We have a clear Vision and Mission. We have a strategic plan with a clear set of achievable goals. With those tools in our pockets and fire in our bellies, we will be making a history. I am so proud to be a part of this community. Mission Inspirational!

**Marsha Laya**  
[marshalaya@gmail.com](mailto:marshalaya@gmail.com)



## August Calendar

<b>Every Sunday, August 5th, 12th, 19th &amp; 26th</b> 10:00 am - Sunday Service	<b>Every Tuesday, August 7th, 14th, 21st &amp; 28th</b> 6:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal
<b>Wednesday, August 1st</b> 5:30 pm - Sunday Celebration Committee meeting	<b>Saturday, August 4th</b> 2:00 pm - Celebration of Life Service for Richard "Yo" Godsey, Patti & Gy's Step-Father
<b>Sunday, August 5th</b> ** NO ** POTLUCK **	<b>Wednesday, August 8th</b> 12:15 pm - Stewardship Meeting 5:30 pm - Sunday Services Meeting
<b>Thursday, August 9th</b> 1:00 pm - iPhone / iPad class 5:30 pm - Board Meeting	<b>Sunday, August 12th</b> 11:30 am - Faith in Action Committee Meeting 11:30 am - Connections Team Meeting
<b>Tuesday, August 14th</b> 6:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal	<b>Wednesday, August 15th</b> 6:30 pm - UUCC Film Forum
<b>Saturday, August 18th</b> 8:30 am - Men's Breakfast @ Burger Town	<b>Sunday, August 19th</b> Program Council Meeting
<b>Wednesday, August 22nd</b> 1:00 pm - iPhone / iPad class 5:00 pm - September newsletter deadline	

## R.E.flections

**Jacquis Robertson**  
**Director of**  
**Religious Education**



*"It's been a long, a long time coming. But I know a change is gonna come, oh yes it will."*

– Sam Cooke

Here we are at the beginning of another fantastic church year together! I can't believe it's been four years that I've been here with you at UUCC! Those years have gone so fast, filled with beautiful memories, with more to come this church year! I'm excited for this year, given that, as a church, we're going to be moving in a more contemporary direction.

On Wednesday, July 25, 2018, I met with Darby, Nick, Mary R., Joyce and Rev. Gy, for our first Sunday Celebration Committee Meeting. We talked about making church more of an experience and more fluid. So, what does this mean for Religious Education? Great question!

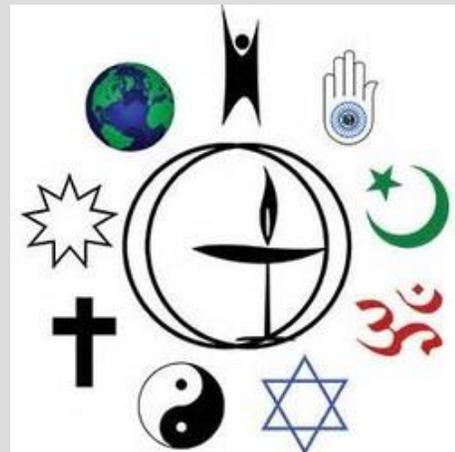
The first thing it means is that there will no longer be a "children's moment." The Story for All Ages is something that the children have said that they do not like; so, they will start church downstairs. This will give them time to hang with their friends and ease into religious education, versus having to rush to begin, in order to get through the lesson. I'm excited about this change, as it will give us a lot more time in Religious Education.

Another significant change is that we will cultivate the RE Curriculum monthly, instead of for the whole year. The reason for this is that we want the lessons to coincide with the sermons. I'm super excited about this change, given that it will ensure an alignment between the sermons

and the lessons, as well as UUCC's Vision and Mission.

And, last but not least, expect more projects and trips this year. I want the kids to have more hands-on learning and experiences. This will, however, require more volunteers, especially for trips, so please be aware of that. I think it's going to be an enjoyable and great experience for our children/youth. Our first "project" will be planning the "R.E. Retreat" (formerly known as the "R.E. Sleepover") that will take place in early October.

I hope you're as excited for this year as I am! As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out!



### **Religious Education Weekly E-Newsletter:**

If you are a parent and you are not receiving the Religious Education Weekly E-Newsletter please e-mail me at [Jacquis.O.Robertson@gmail.com](mailto:Jacquis.O.Robertson@gmail.com) so I can get you signed-up.

If you are not a parent and would like to receive the Religious Education Weekly E-Newsletter, please e-mail me at [Jacquis.O.Robertson@gmail.com](mailto:Jacquis.O.Robertson@gmail.com) so I can get you signed up.

## August R.E. Schedule

### Nursery Volunteers

Please contact Jacquis at [jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com](mailto:jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer to hang out with our littlest UUCG people.

Dates	Lesson	Teacher
8/5	“New Beginnings”	Jacquis Robertson
8/12	“Building Together”	Jacquis Robertson
8/19	“Letter to Self”	Jacquis Robertson
8/26	“UUGer”	Jacquis Robertson

UUCG’s **Religious Education Curriculum** is available in digital format. If you would like to have a digital copy of the lessons, please e-mail me at [jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com](mailto:jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com). Your participation, your questions and your suggestions are most welcome.

For those in our congregation who are new to volunteering as a Religious Education teacher, a **R.E. Teacher Check List** is available; this provides the appropriate details, and will give you an understanding of the routine.

For our best communication, please talk with me on Sunday and also send an e-mail to me at [jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com](mailto:jacquis.o.robertson@gmail.com).

Our children need the participation of our adults, so thank you for considering this vital role.

## August Sunday Service Guest Speakers

### Sunday, August 19th, Rev. Larry Higgins

will be speaking on the Aramaic translation of the first Beatitude, as presented in the gospel of Matthew ("Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"). He will recite the entire 10 Beatitudes from the original Aramaic, as spoken in the first century by Yeshua over 2,000 years ago, but will only focus on the first one of the ten.

Rev. Higgins was born in Kalamazoo's Borgess hospital in 1944. He grew up in Kalamazoo and graduated from Loy Norrix in 1962. He enlisted in the Navy after high school, and his last duty assignment was on a ship off the coast of Vietnam. After discharge from the Navy, he enrolled at W.M.U. and graduated with a BS degree in Communications (yes that's as funny as it sounds). He earned a Masters of Divinity from the Methodist Theological School in Delaware, OH, and spent 12 years in the United Methodist ministry. Upon leaving the ministry, he entered the field of psychiatric social work and received a Certified Social Work certificate from the State of Michigan. During his time in psychiatric social work, he joined the Naval Reserves. He retired from social work in 1998, and retired from the reserves in 2004. He and his second wife Carol owned and operated a B&B from 2005 to 2012, and are currently retired from all regular employment. They have six children between them, and eight grandchildren. Carol enjoys gardening, and Larry enjoys golf. Rev. Higgins is attending membership classes, and will become a member of this community upon completing the membership classes. He looks forward to serving humanity with respect to the social justice issues that the Unitarian Universalists espouse.

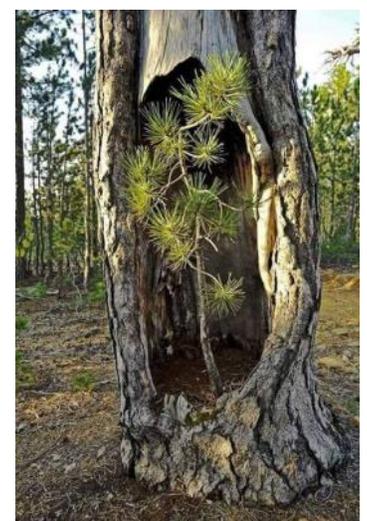


Painting by Hyatt Moore  
[www.hyattmoore.com/beatitudes/](http://www.hyattmoore.com/beatitudes/)

### Sunday, August 26th, Terry Tessari

will be speaking on "Resilience." In his message, Terry will reflect on the adaptive ability of resilience. What does it take to not only survive, but to thrive beyond life's challenges? He will share experiences over his career of individuals, communities, people and from his own life that display the importance of getting beyond life's adversities and not getting stuck in them.

Terry Tessari is a retired clergyman in the United Church of Christ and a retired limited licensed psychologist. He and his wife Scooter are owner/operators of the Cruise Center, a travel agency that specializes in ocean and river cruising and group land tours. Terry and Scooter live in Portage and have two adult children and two grandchildren.



## August Caring Community News

Our Mary Oliver brings us into August. August is the happy warm time of the summer season and brings many birthday celebrations for UCCers!

Join in to wish Happy Birthday to **Lauren Ritter**, August 4; **Adel Johnson**, August 10; **Larry Connor**, August 15; **Kimberly Ridley**, August 16; **Betty Byers**, August 19; **Linda Cook**, August 22; **Miriam Epskamp**, August 25; **Jeff Mais**, August 27.

In August of 2000, we said our final goodbye to Jean Batts, and we can always remember her as we listen to her generous gift, our grand piano.

Wedding bells rang for four couples at UCC in the summer of 1963 to 1994. **Jim and Mary King**, August 23, 1963; **Kevin and Tami Brozovich**, August 23, 1989; **Tim and Erin Michael**, August 18, 1980; **Eric and Regena Nelson**, August 6 1994.

Latest up-date on Ron Crowell is that he is walking with a cane, seeing a chiropractor, and working hard at PT appointments. He is getting stronger each day

and greatly appreciates all

the positive outreach that has come his way from members and friends at UCC!

UCC sends good wishes to all members and friends who are celebrating events this month, and encouragement to those who need it. If you know of someone who we have missed, please contact the point people:, Nancy Crowell (381-7659), or Judy Oliver (353-9397), or Judy Pigg Behrendt (217-5252).



### *August*

By Mary Oliver

When the blackberries hang  
swollen in the woods, in the brambles  
nobody owns, I spend

all day among the high  
branches, reaching  
my ripped arms, thinking

of nothing, cramming  
the black honey of summer  
into my mouth; all day my body

accepts what it is. In the dark  
creeks that run by there is  
this thick paw of my life darting among

the black bells, the leaves; there is  
this happy tongue.

### **VOLUNTEER HELP WANTED**

UCC works as a special faith community because we engage with each other, making possible any number of activities that all help to make this a better world. Are you looking to help, or are you looking for helpers?

Here's a brief list of some of the current opportunities for volunteers and the contact person:

- Coffee Hour - Denise Sonier
- Library - Brian Leekley
- Religious Education - Jacquis Robertson
- Greeters and Folks to Be at Tables for Sunday Service - Nancy Crowell

## Mission: Inspirational

UUCC's Strategic Planning Task Force used the congregation's vision and mission to create an initial set of one-year goals and a process for working together. We plan to mentor each church team to help them create and track their own projects designed to achieve these goals. As we head into August, it is time to look at the goals for the 2018-2019 church year.

First, let's back up to our 10-year target, to be "*Known throughout SW Michigan as the popular and safe community for independent thinkers and their families to be spiritually inspired and join together to make the world a kinder place.*"

To be that kind of church, we need to have a robust building that can support all kinds of uses and programs, and this will require some improvements. The first step is to be accomplished through goal number one:

1. Facility assessment completed with project plan, including timeline, for top three priority needs and capital campaign underway.

We cannot be known throughout Southwest Michigan if we have not shared our story. Thus, goal number two:

2. Develop Marketing Plan promoting UUCC which increases revenues and attendance by 20%.

What would draw independent thinkers and their families more than having lots of opportunities to gather for learning and discussion, making or listening to music together, and most important, wonderful programs for their children? Today, most people know us primarily from our Sunday morning services. We have to offer much more than that! This is the source of goals number three and four:

3. Double the volume of programs we offered in 2017-2018.
4. Quarterly evening fun celebrations with two being family focused.

Lastly, we are not UUs in a vacuum, but are part of the vast network of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) that offers all sorts of training, assistance, and support. There is great power and inspiration in numbers, and we rarely take advantage of that opportunity. This is a resource we want to begin tapping into right away. This is the purpose of goal number five:

5. Promote involvement in the larger UU community by having greater than 10% of members participating as Chalice Lighters and 10% of the congregation participating in UUA/Mid-America Region events/offering.

This will be a year of learning and getting familiar with a new way of working together. As we move through the year and projects begin to take form, we will highlight the progress in newsletter articles and weekly emails. Stay tuned to watch as a shift begins and gains momentum.

### ***The Mission: Inspirational Task Force***



## Women's Book Group Schedule September 2018 – May 2019

Here is this year's list, from the July 13 gathering at Judy Halseth's home in Paw Paw.

**Sep 14, 2018** (non fiction)

***Fascism: A Warning* by Madeleine K. Albright**

Discussion Leader: Rita Stevens Hostess: Stephanie Grathwol

**Oct 12, 2018** (non fiction)

***Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren**

Discussion Leader: Denise Hartsough Hostess: Beverly Folz

**Nov 9, 2018** (fiction)

***The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.**

Discussion Leader: Judy Oliver Hostess: Marsha Laya

**Dec 14, 2018** (non fiction)

***Wild Things: The Joy of Reading Children's Literature as an Adult* by Bruce Handy**

Discussion Leader: Judy Halseth Hostess: TBD

**Jan 11, 2019** (fiction)

***The Trouble with Goats and Sheep* by Joanna Cannon**

Discussion Leader: Stephanie Grathwol Hostess: TBD

**Feb 8, 2019** (fiction)

***The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah**

Discussion Leader: Beverly Folz Hostess: TBD

**Mar 8, 2019**

**KPL's Community Read**

Discussion Leader: Betty Lee Ongley Hostess: TBD

**Apr 12, 2019** (non fiction)

***White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo and**

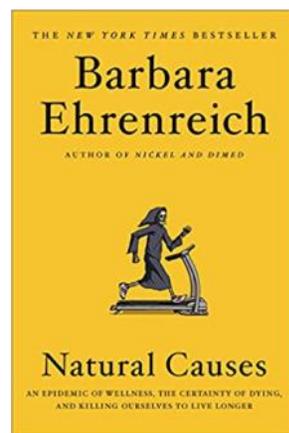
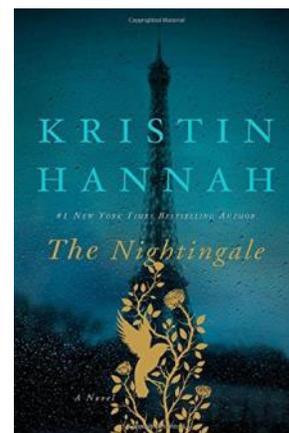
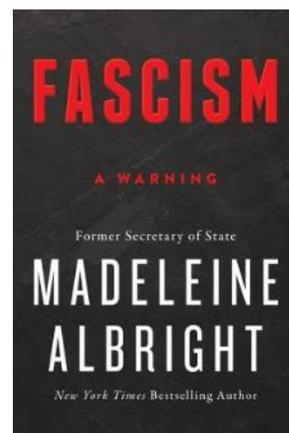
***Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Blacks to Succeed* by Jason L. Riley**

Discussion Leaders: Denise Hartsough and Judy Halseth Hostess: TBD

**May 10, 2019** (non fiction)

***Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer* by Barbara Ehrenreich**

Discussion Leader: Betty Lee Ongley Hostess: TBD





# STRONGER TOGETHER



## **Board Briefs**

**Regular Meeting: July 12, 2018**

**From Marsha Laya**

- The July Board of Trustees meeting was held with all members present.
- The date for the Board Retreat was set for September 29th at Marsha's house.
- Tag Sale plans were reviewed and other routine reports received.
- Each member selected the committee(s) he/she would serve as liaison as follows:
  - \* Mary Roscoe - Nominating, Sunday Services, Finance, Web Team
  - \* Betty Lee Ongley - Human Resources
  - \* Phil Najjar - Marketing, Program Council
  - \* Joyce - Committee on Ministry
  - \* Marsha - Building and Grounds.
- The "Tickler File" was reviewed and it was agreed that it's time to update this very useful tool. This will be on the Board Retreat Agenda.
- It was announced that Darby is willing to serve on a Marketing Committee to be formed.
- Kevin Brozovich and Eric Nelson will be pulling together a Building and Grounds Committee in late August or September.
- Sunday Services are booked through January.
- But the best news came from the Finance Committee. We apparently ended the 2017-2018 FY in the BLACK! This hasn't happened since 2010.

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be August 13th at 5:30 PM.

# LOVE RESISTS

## Dear Beloved Members of UU Community Church of SW MI

As the deeply racist and oppressive nature of the Trump administration continues to reveal itself and we see our country returning more and more to overt and often violent methods of disempowering people of color and other vulnerable communities, we can find the strength to remain steadfast in our resistance by reinvesting in solidarity.

Ever faithful in our commitment to building Beloved Community, we must keep our hearts, eyes, and ears open to the guidance and needs of those most at risk. Love Resists the racism that is tearing apart our shared community. And we know we must be courageous in our resistance.

To renew courage and sustain commitment, we've compiled stories, resources and actions on the Love Resists blog. Check them out; we hope they can provide the support and encouragement so needed to stay the course in this work.

As we work together under Love Resists, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee are in solidarity with communities on the frontlines of resisting the criminalization of people based on their identities. Join the conversation using #LoveResists on Twitter. Follow @UUA and @UUSC to stay up to date.

[www.loveresists.org](http://www.loveresists.org)

*Love Resists is a joint campaign by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.*





## Thank you for moving toward Justice!

The first ever ISAAC Walk/Run/Roll “Moving Toward Justice” brought people of all ages together from many different parts of the community on Saturday, June 30, at Spring Valley Park!

Many thanks to UUCC's Team for representing our community in this event: Pat Fuehr, Stephanie Grathwol, Regena Nelson, Amanda Nelson, Ken VanEseltine, Kayle Rice, Brian Leekley, Mary Roscoe, and Jon Vanderberg. The support team included Lauren Ritter, Nancy and Ron Crowell, and Rev. Gy. It was a very hot and beautiful day full of community coming together!

You can read all about the event and view many photos (including one of our own Jon Vanderberg!) on ISAAC's website at <https://isaackalamazoo.org/thank-you-for-moving-toward-justice/>





**UU Community Church  
is served by:**

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Kristi Montgomery  
Office Administrator  
Office Hours: Thursdays 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
[uucommunity@gmail.com](mailto:uucommunity@gmail.com)  
Church office: 324-7262

**2018-2019 Board of Trustees**

Marsha Laya  
Phil Najar  
Betty Lee Ongley  
Mary Roscoe  
Joyce Van Baak

**The next Newsletter Deadline is  
Wednesday, August 22nd at 5:00 pm**  
Send Submissions to:  
[uccnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uccnewsletter@gmail.com)

## Community Matters

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Community Church  
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