

# Unitarian Universalist Society: East

Member of the New England Region of the  
Unitarian Universalist Association



**Unitarian Universalist Society: East** is a welcoming, open-minded, spiritual community seeking truth and meaning in its many forms. We share responsibility for building a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable world.

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Find us on Facebook at [/UUSEast](#).



## Sunday Services Schedule

December Ministry Theme: Opening to Joy

At the time of preparing this newsletter, we are expecting to begin welcoming many more people into our sanctuary on Sunday mornings. Watch our eblasts for information on our planning. If you think you've missed a message about this, call our office at (860) 646-5151 or email rev. Josh at [minister@uuse.org](mailto:minister@uuse.org).

No matter how many people we welcome into the sanctuary for our December services, UUS:E will continue to livestream worship in Zoom every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM. Our Zoom login and call-in information will be shared through the congregational eblasts on Wednesdays and Saturdays. To subscribe to the congregational eblast, please send a message to [e-news@uuse.org](mailto:e-news@uuse.org) or contact Annie Gentile in the UUS:E office to arrange another method of receiving relevant information

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### December 5: "What Gives Us Joy."

December's worship theme is joy. On this first Sunday of the month, join members of the UUS:E family as they share what gives them joy... and think about your own sources of joy, perhaps sharing in breakout room discussions.

**Coordinators:** Sandy Karosi and Marsha Howland

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### December 12: "Let Us Make a Joyful Noise."

As we come fully into the holiday season, we continue exploring our December ministry theme of joy. We also joyfully welcome new members into our congregation.

**Coordinator:** Rev. Josh Pawelek

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### December 19: "Deck the Halls!"

All-Congregational Worship. Join us for our annual Holiday Music Service, featuring our holiday choir! Through music and story, we ground ourselves in the magic and joy of the holiday season.

**Coordinators:** Mary Bopp, Gina Campellone, and Rev. Josh Pawelek

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### December 24, 7:00 PM: "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Join us for all congregation Christmas Eve worship. One service at 7:00 PM. Through music and story we welcome the spirit and magic of Christmas.

**Coordinators:** Mary Bopp, Gina Campellone, and Rev. Josh Pawelek

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### December 26: "Making the Best of a Turbulent Year."

As we close out the year on this Christmas Holiday weekend, we all have stories to tell about our experiences during the past year. Several members of our UUS:E community will share the ways in which they navigated the sometimes turbulent days of 2021, and how friendships and special interests carried them through.

**Coordinators:** Sheila Foran and Beth Hudson-Hankins

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### January 2: "Homecoming, Finally!"

Yes, if all goes well, this will be the day that we return to UUS:E without limits. This will also be the day we return to two Sunday services at 9:00 am and 11:00 am. The 11:00 service will be available on Zoom. While we will continue to practice a variety of safety protocols, it will be good to be together.

**Music:** Dorothy Bogнар

**Coordinator:** Rev. Josh Pawelek

## Community Outreach Ministry

Charitable Giving for December 2021

As always, thank you for your generosity.

"We do not gather our gifts only for ourselves, but to share with the larger community."

Continuing our practice of sharing our gifts with the community beyond our walls, fifty percent of our Sunday plate collections for the month of December will go to three area shelters: McKinney Men's Shelter (Hartford), East Hartford Community Shelter, Cornerstone Shelter (Rockville).

Please contact Louisa Graver at [lgraver163@gmail.com](mailto:lgraver163@gmail.com), David Lacoss, or Nancy Madar at [nancymadar@hotmail.com](mailto:nancymadar@hotmail.com).

Checks made out to UUS:E will be treated as follows. If the memo line:

- ✓ is blank or "pledge" is written, all will go toward your pledge.
- ✓ has "COM" or the name of the charity is on the memo line, all will go to the charity.
- ✓ has "1/2 pledge, 1/2 COM," it will be divided equally.

## 2021-2022 Ministry Themes

<https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/themes.html>

September:	Embracing Possibility
October:	Cultivating Relationship
November:	Holding History
December:	Opening to Joy
January:	Living with Intention
February:	Widening the Circle
March:	Renewing Faith
April:	Awakening
May:	Nurturing Beauty
June:	Celebrating Blessings

### We Need You!



#### What do you love to do?

Are you a painter, a quilter, a knitter, a print maker, a collage artist, a cartoonist, or a set designer? Do

you enjoy acting, storytelling, origami, or puppeteering? Perhaps you are a chef, a poet, a scientist, a nature lover, an outdoor enthusiast, or a naturalist? Do you have a passion for music, drumming, activism, meditation, or yoga?

Everyone has a hobby, a talent, a special skill, or a practice that makes them come alive! This year's RE program will use project-based learning in the form of workshops to explore religious themes and concepts. We are seeking members and friends of the congregation to share their passions or gifts with the children. Don't see your hobby or skill listed above? No worries! Those are just some potential activities. We'd love to hear about your own passion.

Reluctant to make a long-term commitment? You're in luck. The commitment is just two or three Sunday mornings in total. That's it! You'll have the support of RE staff and volunteer assistants, so there's no need to worry about managing on your own. And please know that you need not be an expert! Your enthusiasm is what matters most!

To learn more about how you might be involved, please contact Gina Campellone at [redirector@uuse.org](mailto:redirector@uuse.org).

## Medicine Bottles for Haiti



Peggy Gagne has set up a yellow collection box for empty medicine bottles in the foyer, near the ink cartridge recycle box, to help Jean Labutis with a project. Jean has a contact in Haiti who has been receiving donations of medicines in very large batches, and they need empty pill bottles to distribute them into. So, we are recycling by collecting pill bottles of all sizes, with the labels removed or with info blacked out. Please drop them in the yellow box in the foyer. Thank you!

Any questions, please contact Jean Labutis, [jeanalabutis@gmail.com](mailto:jeanalabutis@gmail.com), or Peggy Gagne, [pgagne15@att.net](mailto:pgagne15@att.net).

### Stop & Shop Cards

Stop & Shop cards can still be purchased despite the pandemic. Anyone who is interested in buying a card can contact Annie, our office administrator. Cards come in \$50, \$100 and \$250 amounts. The money raised from this effort goes into the general fund. And they make great holiday gifts! If you need any help with this or more information, contact Sandy Johnson at 860-888-9673.

### Homemade Holiday Videos 2021

The December holidays are coming soon. Just like last year, I'm inviting musicians and music lovers to contribute your own holiday music videos. These will be presented at the holiday music service on December 19 and other December services. It can be an instrumental or vocal solo, even just your family singing a holiday song-anything goes! If interested contact Mary Bopp at [music@uuse.org](mailto:music@uuse.org)



## Lara Herscovitch

Returns for Virtual Benefit Concert at UUS:E  
December 4 at 7:00 PM

Join UUS:E on Zoom to enjoy a live benefit by Lara Herscovitch, former Connecticut State Troubadour. Revel in meaningful and uplifting music by Lara, while you lift Manchester's youth through donations to **Power Up CTs** youth program, **Empower U**.

Lara Herscovitch, singer-songwriter-poet-performer, leads with authenticity, integrity, humor and heart. **Acoustic Live in NYC** says, "She possesses not only a huge reservoir of musical talent and a voice with a bell-like clarity, but a keen sense of global concern and a fierce intellect... It might seem too good to be true, but true it is." Her decades-long connection with social justice and the needs of disenfranchised youth match perfectly with **Empower U**. (<http://lara Herscovitch.com/>)

Proceeds will be donated to **Power UP CTs** program for Black and Brown Youth in Manchester, **Empower U**, offering our youth a variety of resources and activities as they recover from the pandemic and systemic racism. **Power UP CT** amplifies voices within marginalized communities, fosters positive health outcomes and civic engagement, and advocates for social change in Manchester and Connecticut.

To donate and receive your ticket with Zoom link go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lara-Herscovitch-in-concert-a-fundraiser-for-empower-u-manchester-tickets-191746487907>

Suggested donation: \$10.00

For any questions about the concert or Eventbrite, email [music@uuse.org](mailto:music@uuse.org)

## Green Sanctuary News

The holidays bring special opportunities to gather with family and friends, to share meals and gifts and ideas. They also bring temptations and sorrows such as excessive eating, purchasing of stuff, wastefulness, and loneliness for those not gathered into the fold of loving families. Of course, there are the on-going worries about the virus, even for those vaccinated who may have some special risks.

Whether you are overwhelmed with too many responsibilities for too many people or feeling a sense of loneliness, worry or isolation or in mourning for lost loved ones—or somewhere in the middle, may you find peace in nature and in quiet moments, pleasure in thoughtful discussions and quiet visits, and hope in little things if not in the daily news.

If you also find pleasure in reading good books, please plan to join members of the Sustainable Living Committee for our upcoming Book Discussion series. Plan ahead and look for these books. You can always join the discussion even if you don't have time to find or read the book, but of course reading is recommended

Book Discussion number one: **Sunday, December 12: Diet for a Small Planet—50th anniversary edition** <https://www.dietforasmallplanet.org/>

Join the Sustainable Living Committee from 1:00 to 2:00 PM for a lively discussion of Francis Moore Lappe's fully updated groundbreaking book which sparked the vegetarian movement. It's more than a diet! Lappe shows us how "plant-centered eating can help restore our damaged ecology, address the climate crisis and move us toward real democracy.

Contact Mary Lawrence here ([wellonwheels@hotmail.com](mailto:wellonwheels@hotmail.com)) to let us know you are planning to join us. Mary will send a Zoom link.

Future book discussions are being planned including, **The Story of More**, by Hope Jahrens in late January, **Saving US**, by Katherine Hayhoe in April, and possibly **The Book of Hope**, by Jane Goodall in late February or March.

## The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!

Dear Ones:

Our ministry theme for December is joy. I thought it might be interesting to review my newsletter column the last time I wrote about joy, which was five years ago, December of 2016.

I said that joy was "not high on my emotional list these days." That comment was a response to the 2016 presidential election. I don't like to admit it, but after nearly 2 years of pandemic living, and after every demoralizing, painful, unnerving, frightening thing that has happened since December of 2016, that comment remains true and, if possible, is more true. Joy—real, genuine, heart-felt JOY—is hard to come by. In 2016 I urged us to cultivate joy in the midst of our blues. I said "cultivating joy is essential ... not only as a foundation for engagement in the wider world, but [for sustaining] our health and well-being ... our sense of confidence ... our sense of self-worth, and our capacity for hope." Then I shared my responses to the question "What brings joy to my life?"

Some of the answers I gave then have not really been available during the pandemic, like "playing the drums in worship," "hearing people laugh when I'm preaching," and "a good night's sleep." But for the most part, my sources of joy continue to bless my life. In that list I included:

- Working with the UUS:E staff.
- Yard work, as long as everyone's willing to help.
- A day off.
- A meaningful pastoral visit.
- Watching my sons do something creative I don't expect them to do.
- Watching leaves fall.
- The darkness of this late autumn/early winter season.
- My wife's rock-solidness—mind, soul, body.
- A good book.
- Great colleagues, UU and non-UU alike.
- 153 West Vernon St. on Elm Hill in Manchester, East of the Connecticut River.

There were more items on the list, but these stand out to me from five years ago.

I wondered if living through the pandemic has brought different kinds of joy to my life. I don't think it has. But certainly there are new sources of joy—most importantly, the joy of watching my kids

slowly become adults. The older one is discerning who he is after high school, finding his place on a college campus and figuring out his academic major. The other is challenging himself to succeed in a number of sports, making new friends, and participating in the Affirmation class at UUS:E. Watching them mature brings me joy. Perhaps this joy is more intense because of the pandemic, but I suspect I would have experienced it even if there'd never been a pandemic.

Let me ask you: What brings joy to your life? Send me a note. Give me a call. I'd like to hear your answer to this question. And more than that, as we are entering the "season of joy," can you bring your answers into the forefront of your living in this season and beyond? I really do believe cultivating joy is essential for our health and well-being, our confidence and self-worth, and our capacity for hope.

My prayer for each of us this holiday season is that we may experience abundant, unbridled joy!

With love,  
Rev. Josh



## Enter, rejoice, and come in!

### A Religious Education Message from Gina

Dear Friends,

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a bit of a Christmas fanatic. Actually, I think all the winter holidays are pretty awesome. Hanukkah, Solstice, Kwanzaa, Diwali, Three Kings Day, Chinese New Year... there is wonder and awe to be found in all of the rituals and traditions of these holidays. But Christmas is the winter holiday I know best, as it's the one I've celebrated my whole life. Growing up, my family was not particularly religious. We were Catholic, which meant my brother and I were baptized as infants and made our First Holy Communion at age eight. Other than that, we seldom went to church, even on Christmas. However, my mother loved to sing Christmas Carols, and from those carols I learned the story of the birth of Jesus. Eventually I would learn all the carols—including their many verses—by heart. But the very first one I learned was **Away in a Manger**.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,

The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Perhaps the simplicity of the song is what initially drew me to it. But it's the mystery it represents that really intrigued me, even as a little kid. Forget about the inexplicable mystery of the virgin birth—that part of the story was lost on me as a child. What I found so powerful then, and still do today, is the mystery of love epitomized by a tiny, helpless baby sleeping in a bed of hay on a cold, clear, star lit night. How cool that this ordinary, unassuming infant was actually a divine gift, a messenger of love, a teacher of forgiveness, an ambassador of hope. How incredible that shepherds and scholars and even the animals in the stable could sense that this child, born poor and homeless, was none other than a messiah.

All these years later, singing Christmas Carols is still my favorite of all the holiday traditions, and **Away in a Manger** will always hold a special place in my heart. Sure, perhaps there are more beautiful carols. **Oh Holy Night** is downright breathtaking, and **Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming** has been known to bring tears to my eyes. But the simple, ordinary lyrics and melody of **Away in a Manger** serve as a reminder to me that the most divine

gifts sometimes appear quite simple and ordinary. **Away in a Manger** reminds me that each and every one of us has inherent worth and dignity, and each and every one of us is a divine gift, regardless of how ordinary we might look or feel. **Away in a Manger** reminds me of the endurance of love, forgiveness, and hope. Most of all, **Away in a Manger** reminds me to always leave some room for mystery.

If you love Christmas Carols, too, please join us for carol singing and cocoa on Saturday, December 11 at 6:00 PM. This is an outdoor event, held in the UUS:E parking lot. We'll build a fire to help stay warm. All ages are encouraged to attend. Friends & family are welcome, too!

May your lives be richly blessed with wonder, awe, and mystery this holiday season.

Be well & be loved,

Gina



## Carols & Cocoa

### Flyer

Where: UUS:E parking lot

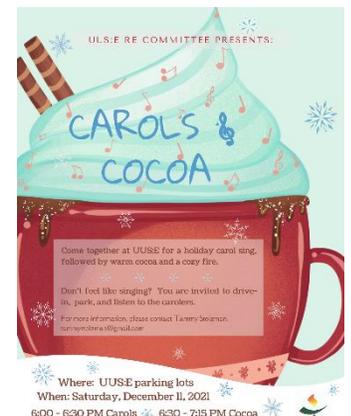
When: Saturday,  
December 11, 2021

6:00 – 6:30 PM Carols

6:30 – 7:15 PM Cocoa

Come together at UUS:E for a holiday carol sing, followed by warm cocoa and a cozy fire.

Don't feel like singing? You are invited to drive in, park, and listen to the carolers. For more information, please contact Tammy Stolzman, [tammystolzman@gmail.com](mailto:tammystolzman@gmail.com).



## UUS:E to Host COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

December 16



In partnership with Community Health Center, Inc. and the Community Renewal Team, UUS:E will host a vaccine clinic from 1:00 to 5:00 on Thursday afternoon, December 16. This effort is part of our congregation's commitment to helping increase the number of vaccinated people in the wider community. While this clinic will be open to the general population in our area, UUS:E members and friends are welcome to register for a shot. The clinic will be offering first and second doses and booster shots for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Watch our eblasts for registration information. Questions? Contact Rev. Josh at [minister@uuse.org](mailto:minister@uuse.org) or 860-652-8961.

## UUS:E to Host Series of GHIAA House Meetings



Following on the heels of a very successful first two years of social justice organizing, the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance, GHIAA, is launching a "house meeting" campaign among its nearly 50 congregational members. The purpose of a house meeting is very simple. Participants discuss the issues that concern them the most, especially issues that may impact them directly (climate change, healthcare, the erosion of democratic institutions, etc.). In short, what keeps you up at night? UUS: E has pledged to hold 15 house meetings. Our GHIAA core team is beginning to schedule them now. Some will be in person at UUS:E or in peoples' homes. Others will be on Zoom. Watch for information in our regular eblasts for opportunities to sign up. And please sign up! This is a wonderful way to participate in shaping GHIAA's agenda for the next few years. Questions? Contact Rev. Josh at [minister@uuse.org](mailto:minister@uuse.org) or 860-652-8961.

## Get Connected!

with UUS:E on the Web

**UUS:E WEBSITE** is located at <http://uuse.org>. Here you can find the latest news about our community and upcoming events, basic information about group and committee activities, Rev. Josh's sermons, and much more.

**DIALOGUE FROM HOME** is our ongoing virtual **talkback series** that continues online after each of Rev. Josh's sermons. Whether you want to read along, post your thoughts, and/or engage in dialogue about the topic, you are welcome to join this group. Request a password from Annie, the office administrator, to get access to the discussion. Email [uuse153@sbcglobal.net](mailto:uuse153@sbcglobal.net).

**FACEBOOK!** UUS:E has two Facebook pages where members and friends can share all things UUS:E. Our main site is [www.facebook.com/UUSEast](http://www.facebook.com/UUSEast). You can find out what's going on at UUS:E here. And please share our events to your own page to help spread the word about all of the great things we do!

We also have a second site, UUS:E Happenings, designed specifically to share ideas and events with others in the UUS:E community. Anyone can post here. Is your child going to be in a play? Are you performing a concert? Looking for people to hike with? Post it here! This is a closed group, request to join here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/587066578028806/>

**MEETUP:** We have started a Meetup page! Join our group! Find events, RSVP and more at: <http://www.meetup.com/Unitarian-Universalist-Society-East/>. If you'd like to add an event to the Meetup site, contact Carol Marion at [cmarion333@gmail.com](mailto:cmarion333@gmail.com).

**Rev. Josh** has his own website located at <http://revjoshpawelek.org>

Catch up on his latest writings, community work, and more. You can also follow Rev. Josh on **Twitter @revjoshpawelek**, or connect with him at **LinkedIn** and **Facebook**.

**Weekly eblast** – To sign up, look for the button near the top-right at [uuse.org](http://uuse.org):



Send submissions to [e-news@uuse.org](mailto:e-news@uuse.org)

## Books, Classes, and Discussions

Adult Religious Education



### Book Lovers

The Book Lovers meets second Tuesdays at 3:30 on Zoom. Ask Martha Larson ([marlar@wordshard.com](mailto:marlar@wordshard.com)) for the Zoom sign in.

Goodreads descriptions:

[https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/130686405-paul-cocuzzo?ref=nav\\_mybooks&shelf=uuse-book-lovers](https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/130686405-paul-cocuzzo?ref=nav_mybooks&shelf=uuse-book-lovers)

- December 14: **The Book of Longings**, by Sue Monk Kidd, led by Martha
- January 11: **Orphan Sky**, by Ella Leya, led by Janet



### Buddhist Group

The Buddhist Group meets via Zoom at 7 PM on the first Tuesday of each month, for meditation and discussion. All are welcome, no meditation experience necessary. Contact Nancy Thompson at [nancythompson123@yahoo.com](mailto:nancythompson123@yahoo.com) for the Zoom info.

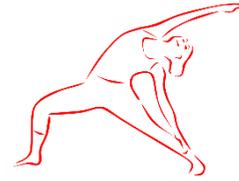


### Community Drum Circle

First and Third Mondays  
in the Sanctuary  
7:00 – 8:30 PM

Open to all levels of ability and experience. Facilitator Mary Ertel provides djembe drums and other hand instruments, and you may bring your own.

Contact Paul Cocuzzo at [pcocuzzo@gmail.com](mailto:pcocuzzo@gmail.com) or 978-270-2056 with questions or to reserve a drum. Or even better, check out our [Meetup](#).



### Yoga at the Meetinghouse!

All welcome to these gentle-to-moderate yoga classes in the UUS:E Meetinghouse, Wednesdays at 10:00 AM with Susan Barlow. \$5 drop-in fee. Bring a yoga mat or towel and wear comfortable clothes. All welcome, including beginners! Bring a friend or neighbor; you do not have to be a UUS:E member to come to the classes. Yoga provides an opportunity to quiet the mind as well as strengthen and relax the body. Direct questions to: Susan at [SBarlow627@aol.com](mailto:SBarlow627@aol.com). Yoga is one of the UUS:E adult education offerings. For the time being, masks are required inside the building.

### Humanist Group

This ongoing group explores Religious Humanism and its applications to life, both historically and today. All welcome. Contact Rev. Josh at [mininster@uuse.org](mailto:mininster@uuse.org) for the Zoom link.

December 21 at 4:30 (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 4:30 PM)

### "God Talk"

A discussion group for UU theists

This ongoing group explores how UUs can name and experience God in meaningful, useful ways. All are welcome. Contact Rev. Josh at [mininster@uuse.org](mailto:mininster@uuse.org) for the Zoom link.

December 28 at 4:30 (4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 4:30 PM)

### Science and Religion Discussion Group

How does science inform our beliefs? Where do science and religion meet? Where are they in opposition? Members of this ongoing group will select and discuss readings covering myriad topics such as evolutionary biology, artificial intelligence, climate change, the brain, genetics...and the way we look at the Big Questions. December's meeting is on December 2, at 4:30. Contact Linda Duncan at [lindakduncan@gmail.com](mailto:lindakduncan@gmail.com) or Annie Gentile at [uuseoffice@uuse.org](mailto:uuseoffice@uuse.org) or 860-646-5151 for more information. January – October meets fourth Thursday at 4:30 PM.

**UUS:E GENERAL INFORMATION**

**UUS:E Office Schedule:** Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Meetinghouse Office:** 860-646-5151

**Office Administrator:** Annie Gentile email: [uuseoffice@uuse.org](mailto:uuseoffice@uuse.org)

**Minister:** Rev. Joshua Pawelek 860-652-8961, [minister@uuse.org](mailto:minister@uuse.org)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesday 10 AM to 7 PM and Thursday 10 AM to 4 PM

**President:** Peggy Webbe, 860-871-8035, [peggywebbe@gmail.com](mailto:peggywebbe@gmail.com)

**Director of Religious Education:**

Gina Campellone, 860-875-8468, [redirector@uuse.org](mailto:redirector@uuse.org)

**Newsletter Editor:** Paul Cocuzzo, 978-270-2056, [newsletter@uuse.org](mailto:newsletter@uuse.org)

**Website Coordinator:** Carol Marion 860-643-8765, [uuse.web@uuse.org](mailto:uuse.web@uuse.org)

**World Wide Web address:** <http://uuse.org>

Newsletter Deadline:  
The 20<sup>th</sup> of Each Month

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Manchester, CT 06042