

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

January Ministry Theme: Living with Intention

In January we return to two Sunday services, one at 9:00 AM and the other at 11:00 AM. Note that for the time-being, we are only streaming the 11:00 service. At the time of publishing this newsletter, we are welcoming 25 people into the sanctuary for services. Please sign up to attend with the UUS:E office by 4:00 on the Friday prior to the service. Call our office at (860) 646-5151 or email at uuseoffice@uuse.org. And please watch our eblasts for updates to our protocols as we respond to increasing or decreasing severity of the pandemic.

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 or contact Annie Gentile in the UUS:E office to arrange another method of receiving relevant information.

January 2: "On Setting Our Intentions."

On this New Year's weekend, as we return to two Sunday services, we dive into our January ministry theme, "intention."

Special guest musician: Dorothy Bogнар.

Coordinator: Rev. Josh Pawelek

January 9: "Living in the Interval."

Our guest speaker this morning is Mary-Jane Foster, CEO and President of Hartford's Interval House, which provides services for victims of domestic violence and works to prevent it.

Coordinator: Martha Larson

January 16: "Safe Streets for Whom."

On this weekend when the nation observes the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, Rev. Josh explores the movement to tighten juvenile justice laws known as "Safe Streets." What's wrong with this movement, and what can we as liberal religious people do about it? Note: following this service we will host GHIAA house meetings for people live at UUS:E, as well as online. Check our eblasts for more information.

Coordinator: Rev. Josh Pawelek

January 23: "Do you believe in magic?"

For millennia, all that we could not explain we attributed to magic. How else to make sense of weather, magnetism, disease, and healing? These days we have scientific explanations for such

things. It seems the more we have of science, the less there is of magic. But is that true? Not necessarily! This morning three speakers will share their own experiences of magic in everyday life, and you may discover that you, too, believe in magic.

Coordinator: Gina Campellone

January 30: "On Setting Our Intentions, Part II!"

Rev. Josh shares some final reflections on our January ministry theme.

Coordinator: Rev. Josh Pawelek

Community Outreach Ministry

Charitable Giving for January 2022

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 January will go to the Connecticut Domestic Worker Justice Campaign.

Domestic workers (house cleaners, personal care attendants, nannies, etc.) remain one of the most exploited and exploitable classes of workers in the country. Connecticut's Domestic Worker Justice Campaign advocates for labor rights, workplace protections, and training for domestic workers. The campaign's long-term goal is to pass an enforceable Domestic Worker Bill of Rights in our state. Organizations who participate in the campaign include the CT Workers Center, Unidad Latina en Acción, the Naugatuck Valley Project, United Action of Southeastern CT, Comunidades Sin Fronteras, the Hartford Catholic Archdiocese Office for Social Justice, and a number of congregations, including UUS:E.

Please contact Louisa Graver at lgraver163@gmail.com, David Lacoss, or Nancy Madar at 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

Attention RE Volunteers

Proof of vaccination required for all Religious Education volunteers!

Beginning in January, all Religious Education volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This applies to anyone who helps with RE, be it on a regular basis or just occasionally. Please be sure to provide RE Director Gina Campellone with a copy of your vaccination card or paperwork PRIOR to January. You can scan it or simply take a picture of it and email it to redirector@uuse.org. Everyone's vax records will be kept in a digital folder, so that you won't need to show proof of vaccination every week. Not sure if this applies to you? If you work with kids, it does! Still not sure? Check with Gina.

You are strongly encouraged to send yours in now, before the holiday hubbub is in full swing.

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, or Peggy Gagne, 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.

UUS:E GHIAA House Meetings

Continue in January



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. Visit our Signup Genius page to sign up for a meeting at

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0d48aea62fabfd0-ghiaa>

Some meetings will be in person at UUS:E or in members' homes. Others will be on Zoom. Please sign up! This is a wonderful way to participate in shaping GHIAA's agenda for the next few years. Also, note that participating in a house meeting does not obligate you to become further involved in the work of GHIAA. We are simply looking for the issues that concern you the most! Questions? Contact Rev. Josh at minister@uuse.org or 860-652-8961.

Stewarding Opportunity!

The Stewardship Committee is planning our 2022 Annual Appeal—Moving Forward with Hope—for this spring. Because of uncertainty with the COVID virus, we will conduct the canvass like we did last year. Members and friends will receive canvass info in the mail (pledge form, giving guide, EFT form) and asked to return their pledge to Annie in the enclosed envelope. After two weeks, people who have not returned their pledge will be assigned to a steward for follow up. The steward will use email, phone calls, texts, Facebook, meet in a social distance safe way, etc. to get in touch with people to answer any questions and remind them to fill out their pledge form and return it to Annie.

The Annual Appeal is more than asking for money. It's a time for sharing our common goals and values, a time of community building. This is an opportunity to get to know new people, share your passion and commitment for UUS:E and help make our Annual Appeal a success. The time commitment is relatively short with one training session and a couple of weeks to contact a maximum of four members or friends. The stewardship conversations are a time of fellowship and sharing our dreams and aspirations. Talking about financial commitment is a small part of a much larger conversation about generosity and community. So please consider volunteering to be a steward this year. **We especially need people under the age of 60 to be stewards and parents with kids in RE.**

We will provide virtual training on Saturday, Feb. 26, 10 – 11:30 AM and Tuesday, March 1, 7 – 8:30 PM.

Please email Phil Sawyer at psawyer215@gmail.com or call 860-633-8655 if you are willing to help or have any questions.

Green Sanctuary News

Well, by the time you read this Christmas will be over and maybe New Year's Day is too. So now what do we do? Hopefully you did not overindulge in junk food, excessive Christmas shopping, wasteful wrapping papers or any of the things our culture tries to get us to do. And hopefully you were cautious as you reached out to share warmth and cheer with friends and relatives and stayed clear of any COVID viruses.

So now it's really winter. Can we rest from the mad house? Are your job, family, or other commitments keeping you from taking any rest and reflection or can you find time for yourself, for looking at our world and its needs, for looking at what is essential to being human among all the other humans and creatures we share our planet with?

Hopefully we can find small natural ways to experience joy without wasting anything carelessly and feel personal wellbeing and satisfaction in our daily lives without exhausting ourselves with what is not necessary, and to look at the problems at hand and know when, if and how we can help resolve them. No easy task I know.

If you wish to connect with our Sustainable Living Committee, please feel free to join us at our next meeting on Zoom. It will be on Tuesday, January 11 at 7:00 PM. Contact Mary Lawrence or any Sustainable Living Committee member to get your name on the email list for the Zoom link.

We hope to spend more time sharing ideas for what sustainable living things we each have found meaningful through reading, watching, listening or doing. So, if you have found something to share, please join us on January 11.

We all know that the issues of climate change, fossil fuels, plastic pollution, industrial agricultural, among many others need solutions ASAP. We all know how slowly government works and how frail our democracy really is, but we persevere, as long as we have breath, right?

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!

Dear Ones:

Our Ministry theme for January is **living with intention**. I was struck by a quote from Katie Covey, who serves as Director of Religious Education for Soul Matters. (Soul Matters is the independent UU resource center that provides theme-based worship and religious education materials.) She said that living with intention is different from setting goals or resolutions. Living with intention "pulls us into" who we truly are. Goals and resolutions "push us out" into future possibilities. While I'm not sure this distinction works in all cases, I find it very helpful. Do we want to change some aspect of who we are? Do we want, in essence, to be different from our current self? Do we want to fix something we don't like about ourselves? If so, then let's set a goal or make a resolution. And, with discipline, let's work to achieve it. That's how I understand the point of the traditional New Year's resolution.

However, if our longing is to become more fully who we are—if we want to hone or deepen dimensions of our self that we like, dimensions that give us a sense of meaning and purpose, then let's practice living with intention.

The poet David Whyte tells the story of a visit to a remote monastery high in the Himalayas. In the darkness, while waiting for one of his traveling companions to find a flashlight, he bumped into a carved statue, smiling, beaming with compassion, a temple guardian or **Vajrapani**. There were easily 100 of them in that dark hall. The encounter was very moving, an invitation to vulnerability. In response he wrote the poem, "The Faces at Braga." Here's an excerpt:

If only our own faces / would allow the inevitable
carver's hand / to bring the deep grain of love to the
surface,

If only we knew / as the carver knew, how the flaws
/ in the wood led his searching chisel to the very
core,

We would smile too / and not need faces immobilized
/ by fear and the weight of things undone....

If only we could give ourselves / to the blows of the
carver's hands, / the lines in our faces would be the
trace lines of rivers,

Feeding the sea / where voices meet, praising the
features / of the mountain and the cloud and the sky.

Perhaps living with intention is like this—allowing the carver to bring the deep grains of love to the surface. Not trying to overcome or master our flaws, but allowing them to teach us self-acceptance and love for who we truly are. It's not setting a goal to become someone different. Rather, this living with intention is more a process of listening inwardly, looking inwardly, discovering our core, and, over time, letting it manifest outwardly.

What grains of love might the carver bring to the surface of you? And if the lines in your face traced rivers feeding the sea where voices meet, what features would they praise? What features of you matter most to you? I invite you to ponder these questions as we embark on 2022. In doing so, may you live with intention.

With love,
Rev. Josh



New Year's Intentions

A Religious Education Message from Paula Baker

January. One year has come to an end, and another trip around the sun begins. Naturally, this time of year is one of reflection and remembrance, resolutions and resets. Long dark nights gradually give way to returning light, and "where we've been" touches "where we're going." But the transition into a new year can be jarring. If December is a cozy snuggle of carols, crackling fires and twinkling lights, January can be as harsh as an alarm clock. "Get off the couch! Get moving! Set some goals!" My 2022 daily planner sits there, accusatory, waiting for me to fill the first page with a formal declaration of my "NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS." To my planner I say, 'I will not play by your rules.' I will fill in your empty page when I'm ready. And my first and only resolution will be to cross out the word "resolution" and replace it with "intention"—for example, I intend to eat fewer cookies and exercise more; however, I will not be resolute in that.

Of course, I can talk back to my personal daily planner. I can't do that with my employer. At work, in January, I am expected to set goals for the year with my manager and break them down into measurable objectives. In those I must be resolute...mainly because they're paying me. There are lots of areas of life that require us to set goals and make plans. But in all areas, I'm trying to remember to allow myself some grace. At work, I can negotiate for objectives that are achievable and reasonable. In my personal life, I can set "intentions" seem to me to be a more mindful direction-setting, without the punishing pass/fail quality of a resolution. I can set an intention to be kinder to myself, to recognize even tiny steps in the right direction.

In the Religious Education committee, we've grappled with intentions and plans all year. In our holiday-themed December meeting (after fellowship, laughter, and ugly sweaters), we talked about the second half of the RE year. Because of this pandemic, RE planning is no longer a well-worn path. It's more like hacking a clearing through a forest. We can see a week or two in front of us, but after that all bets are off. Our planning discussions become a word-soup of contingencies: virtual/hybrid/in-

person/indoor/outdoor/ventilated/reduced capacity/upstairs/downstairs/at-home/take-home. We're at the mercy of the virus and its spread. We bob and weave with the numbers. The very best we can do is set intentions for what we hope to offer, seed those intentions with our most cherished values, and offer ourselves grace when things don't quite go as we thought they might. In the end it's not about the activities we do, it's about connection; it's about offering encouragement, support, and acceptance, celebrating our joys, and reveling in beloved community.

So maybe I can fill in that blank square in my daily planner after all. Because my intentions are pretty much the same as the committee's. Whatever the year ahead might hold, I intend to take time to deepen connections with those I love, to be brave and try new things, to educate and involve myself in causes that reflect my values, to generously offer myself and others grace when things go awry, and to laugh as much as I possibly can. Thank you to the members of the Religious Education committee for helping greatly in the connection and laughter departments!

Peace and good health all,
Paula

Widening the Circle of Concern!

A six-month adult study program

Widening the Circle of Concern is the title of the 2020 report from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Commission on Institutional Change. The Commission was established in 2017 with the charge of "supporting long-term cultural and institutional change that redeems the essential promise and ideals of Unitarian Universalism." The work of the commission included conducting an audit of the power structures within Unitarian Universalism in an attempt to understand how they perpetuate systemic racism and white supremacy culture. Widening the Circle of Concern presents the results of that work and a series of helpful recommendations.

Who wants to join a 12-session Widening the Circle of Concern study group? Starting on January 6th, the group will meet essentially every other Thursday evening for twelve sessions to work through the report's Study Guide. We'll begin in Zoom, and hopefully move to in-person meetings as it becomes more safe to do so. To read and/or listen to the report, visit the UUA website at <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening>.

Rev. Josh Pawelek will facilitate the study group. If you would like to join this effort, contact him at minister@uuse.org or 860-652-8961.

Wanted: Archivist/Historian For UUS:E

For many years, we were fortunate to have Lynn Chirico as our historian and archivist, but now we are looking for someone who can take over this responsibility.

Most of our historical documents and photos, many in binders, are housed in the new credenza as well as filing cabinets in the back room. However, since Lynn's passing we need someone who is willing to be in charge of 50 years' worth of our historical memorabilia. Unfortunately, over the years much has been lost because members had significant items in their homes and were unaware of who was keeping track of our history, so things were thrown out. Lynn did a great job, but there is much more to do.

If you would like to be considered for this responsibility, please contact Rev. Josh or our President, Peggy Webbe.

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.

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. 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.

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:



Send submissions to 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) for the Zoom sign in.

Goodreads descriptions:

https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/130686405-paul-cocuzzo?ref=nav_mybooks&shelf=uuse-book-lovers

- January 11: **Orphan Sky**, Ella Leya, led by Janet
- February 8: **The Lincoln Highway**, Amor Towles
- March 8: **The Warmth of Other Suns**, Isabel Wilkerson
- April 12: **The Parable of the Sower**, Octavia Butler
- May 10: **Clock Dance**, Ann Tyler



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 for the Zoom info.

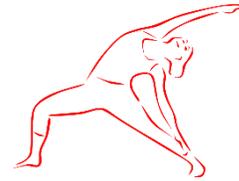


Community Drum Circle

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 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. 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 for the Zoom link.

We meet on 3rd 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 for the Zoom link.

We meet on 4th 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. Contact Linda Duncan at lindakduncan@gmail.com or Annie Gentile at 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

Minister: Rev. Joshua Pawelek 860-652-8961, 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

Director of Religious Education:

Gina Campellone, 860-875-8468, redirector@uuse.org

Newsletter Editor: Paul Cocuzzo, 978-270-2056, newsletter@uuse.org

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