

# 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.

## Need a Hard Copy?

If you or someone you know could benefit from receiving a paper copy of this newsletter, please contact Annie at the office at 860-646-5151.

Follow us on Twitter [@uuseast](#). Check out [#uuseast](#).  
Find us on Facebook at [/UUSEast](#).



## Table of Contents

Need a Hard Copy?	1
2022-23 Ministry Themes	1
Sunday Services Schedule	2
Community Outreach Ministry	2
Impermanence	3
The President's Column	4
Green Sanctuary News	4
Vegan Thanksgiving Potluck	4
New(ish) Members and Friends	5
Ladies at Lunch	5
UU Class Conversations!	5
Care Packages	5
The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!	6
Stop & Shop Cards	6
GHIAA Power Summit	7
Free At Last Players	7
24 <sup>th</sup> Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance	8
UUS:E Aesthetics Chair Opening!	8
Women's Circle Forming at UUS:E	9
Building & Grounds News	9
Member Spotlight	10
Member Spotlight Participants	10
Books, Classes, and Discussions	11
Book Lovers	11
Buddhist Group	11
Yoga at the Meetinghouse!	11
"God Talk"	11
Humanist Group	11
Science and Religion Discussion Group	11
Community Drum Circle	11

## 2022-23 Ministry Themes

September:	Belonging
October:	Courage
<b>November:</b>	<b>Change</b>
December:	Wonder
January:	Finding Our Center
February:	Love
March:	Vulnerability
April:	Resistance
May:	Creativity
June:	Delight

## Sunday Services Schedule

November Ministry Theme: Change

In November we continue with two Sunday morning services at 9:00 and 11:00 AM. We simultaneously broadcast the 11:00 service in Zoom. As always, 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 [uuseoffice@uuse.org](mailto:uuseoffice@uuse.org) or contact Annie Gentile in the UUS:E office to arrange another method of receiving relevant information

Although COVID is still present in the wider community, we currently have no attendance limit. Furthermore, while we continue to recommend wearing masks to indoor events at UUS:E, we no longer require them.

---

### November 6: "Nothing Gold Can Stay: The Inevitability of Change."

If we consider the possibility that change itself is the one constant thing, there is much to ponder and appreciate. UUS:East member David Garnes will discuss how Robert Frost's and other writers' views on the subject, as well as his own experiences, have helped him navigate the twists and turns of the finite life journey..

**Coordinator(s):** David Garnes and Gianna DeMaiolo

---

### November 13: "Post-Election Sermon."

Many ministers across the United States follow the tradition of preaching a pre-election sermon to encourage their people to vote. Because UUS:E members and friends require no such encouragement, it has become Rev. Josh's tradition to preach a post-election sermon, to help us make sense of and, if necessary, begin healing from, whatever happened the previous Tuesday.

**Coordinator(s):** Rev. Josh Pawelek

---

### November 20: "Practicing Gratitude, Bolstering Hope."

On this Sunday before Thanksgiving, we'll express and celebrate what we're grateful for this year. Speakers from our loving community, special music and an interactive session in which participants in the sanctuary and on Zoom will have a chance to share will be included.

**Coordinator(s):** Kate Howard-Bender and Marsha Howland

---

### November 27: "For So the Children Come..."

One of the most reliable indications that a congregation (of any denomination or faith) is thriving is the presence of children and youth. This morning we contemplate a vision for ministry to children, youth and their families, and we celebrate the Holy Hubbub.

**Coordinator(s):** Rev. Josh Pawelek

---

### December 4: "Wonder: Igniting Scientific and Spiritual Curiosity."

Do you take time to wonder? Alan Ayers will reflect on how wonder and curiosity have been a lifelong spark for his pursuit of what makes things tick. As we wonder along with him we will ask the questions: Can wonder and curiosity also be an avenue for deepening our spiritual growth? If we take the time to focus on the miraculous and puzzling, how might we deepen our connection with wonder and awe?

**Coordinator(s):** Alan Ayers and Sande Hartdagen

## Community Outreach Ministry

Charitable Giving for November 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 November will go to Manchester Senior, Adult, and Family Services

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.

December: Three Area Shelters

## Impermanence

### A Religious Education Message from Heather Alexson

I have been procrastinating, again, to write for the UUS:E newsletter. It isn't that I don't want to write, I enjoy writing! I just get entrenched in self-doubt only to eventually clamber out of my comfort zone in order to create something new yet relatable. I like to engage my audience with feelings, images, and experiences that may offer a moment of real connection.

Connection, an experience that has been lacking in recent years. Years! Hard to believe it has been nearly two years since COVID appeared on our doorsteps, very much an uninvited 'guest' and an even worse roommate. A stranger peering into our homes, throwing stones at our windowpanes, interrupting the ebb and flow of everyday. Leaving us castaways stranded on our islands with the same walls, and all too familiar faces (if you were lucky...or unlucky), tracing well-worn paths from the bed to the kitchen to the couch or desk and back to the kitchen. Hostage to the best intentions out of love for fellow humans that we wanted to protect.

There is an unhappy weatherman and precocious groundhog on some timeline rolling their eyes and chastising our naivety in thinking that we know an existence in the familiar and unchanging. Did we persist too long in that pause? Do we remember what it is to see, feel and be change?

I watch the ripples change their size  
But never leave the stream  
Of warm impermanence  
So the days float through my eyes...

from **Changes** - David Bowie

I imagine the ripples were our hearts and minds, cascading from our islands, a longing to be together. A slow drift into the universe, expanding around the stones and logs stuck in the water as intentions that never come to fruition; the Echo back to our lonely souls. Like the moss-covered stones and gnarly branches that gather leaves, sticks, and miscellany adrift, we huddled in bobbing clumps clinging to the rocks. Unsure of the direction the current would send us, we settled into the steadiness of a global pandemic. We found a strange relief unanchored from the pre-COVID routines and we clung like limpets against the battering surf.

"Of warm impermanence"... I have been ruminating on this phrase. I don't usually associate warmth with change. At first, change conjures chaos, anxiety, and a reluctance to step toward, never mind accept it. Now I think of the sameness in the days when COVID restrictions started to feel as if this would be the new normal. It wasn't comfy cozy, nor warm or inviting. It was cold and stiff, it was tantalizing and bland, definitely isolating and lonely.

I'd like to think that there is a warmth to impermanence. A fondness for appreciation that we overlook when we are immersed in changes, either for better or worse. We relish the 100-degree heat waves of Summer during the arctic chill of Winter. We long for the dry, leaf-littered lawns of late Autumn when we surrender our left boot to the vacuum of barren, cold mud in early Spring.

Change can make us hesitate and second-guess the next decision. It can make us hold our breath in anticipation of all the what ifs that send our anxiety into a dizzying spiral. We become bystanders of our own lives, watching and waiting for the right moment to jump into the fray.

Is there ever really a right moment? Those leaps of faith that everyone before us and with us assure we take. So we run toward it, faster, our hearts racing. Arms flailing, we grunt and yell as we push off the edge and JUMP! Scared and excited, we do land. A bit wobbly at times. Sometimes the landing won't stick, but we did make it to the other side in spite of all the doubt, fear, and worry. The other side feels like a warm embrace of our authentic selves. There is calm, there is peace, confidence and an openness that is ready for the next move.

It is in our nature to persist. Nature has programmed us to the very depths of our DNA to adjust to changes in our environment. Change is growth. While the days are getting shorter as life slows and becomes still, impermanence persists beneath the frost waiting for longer days that bring the warmth of whatever may come next.

## The President's Column

As guest contributor to this column, I want to tell you how our leadership and congregation are ripe for change. I volunteered to write about the UUS:E Leader Retreat that took place at the Meetinghouse Saturday, October 15. Our morning session facilitated by Rev. Josh focused on confronting white supremacy culture and fighting racism. We began with some historical context in which the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) began a study several years ago to understand the power structures of our Association governance and among them our hiring practices. Out of that work came a 2020 book **Widening the Circle of Concern** (available from the UUA bookstore here <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Search.aspx?k=widening+the+circle>) for which Rev. Josh facilitated a biweekly six-month seminar (spring 2022) on the findings and especially the recommendations for change within the UUA and our congregations. During these sessions, UUS:E participants selected the most salient recommendations to potentially inform UUS:E in its work on confronting white supremacy culture and fighting racism. These were condensed into a set of recommendations Josh presented at the Retreat that committees could take up as part of their agendas. The long and short versions are in Basecamp 3 in the **Docs and Files** folder of the Policies and Procedures project to which everyone should have access (please let me know if you don't).

Most importantly, we discussed the characteristics of white supremacy culture and the antidotes to confronting practices that embody and operationalize these characteristics. We recognized some characteristics that manifest in our congregation! The characteristics have evolved through conversations with facilitation groups led by Tema Okun and which originally appeared in her seminal paper in 1999. I highly recommend you visit the UU Allies for Racial Equity website ([Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture - UU Allies for Racial Equity \(uuare.org\)](https://www.uuare.org)) to study these characteristics and their antidotes, which are powerful practices for confronting white supremacy culture and fighting racism. We invite you to examine your feelings about these characteristics and think about how we as a congregation can incorporate antidotes into our policies, procedures and practices. We are ripe for change as we recognize the dangerous world we live in and that

we can be agents of change in our congregation and our communities.

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee presented 'nuts and bolts' in the afternoon session so that leaders could be informed as to committee structures, important calendar events and other mundane issues (keys to the building, safety procedures, forms) as well as key aspects of Spiritual Leadership that infuse our practices at UUS:E.

Stan McMillen ([Stanley.mcmillen44@gmail.com](mailto:Stanley.mcmillen44@gmail.com))

## Green Sanctuary News

Want to cut back on clutter and reduce your carbon footprint? The Sustainable Living Committee does, too! That's why we've created a Library of Things (LoT) to promote borrowing and lending tools, home appliances, small equipment, and even toys instead of buying them new. When we share these items we minimize our consumption, and it helps grow our community, too.

Planning a family fiesta? There's a tortilla press waiting for you!

How about pasta night? Try your hand using the ravioli maker.

Sunday brunch? That Belgian waffle maker will be perfect!

Got a green thumb? There's a weed whacker, hedge trimmer, and lots of garden tools waiting for you! If we have a very snowy winter you can reach for a roof rake.

Click on the Library of Things tab (always under the Sustainability tab on our website) to learn how to become a borrower or lender and get started working on those projects you've been putting off because you didn't have the right tool. And if you need something not listed we might be able to find it for you.

## Vegan Thanksgiving Potluck

Paul's House, Nov. 24, time TBD

Looking for a vegan option for Thanksgiving? Are you vaccinated and okay with being indoors with other vaccinated people? Contact Paul at [pcocuzzo@gmail.com](mailto:pcocuzzo@gmail.com) and let him know your time preference and any notable dietary restrictions or likes/dislikes.

## New(ish) Members and Friends

Invited to Join Us on November 13

The Membership Committee invites all new(ish) members and friends to join us for one of our favorite activities ... a guided nature walk at the Manchester Land Conservation Trust property on Bush Hill Road. Led by Susan Barlow, this casual gathering will feature an informative stroll on the property, light fall-themed refreshments, and some well-loved poetry/readings (and everyone is invited to share a favorite). This is a family friendly event and children are welcome!

And truth? You don't even have to be that "new" to join us. We love a festive crowd and the opportunity to share this beautiful natural setting.

**Date:** Sunday, November 13, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM

**Place:** Manchester Land Conservation Trust – 330 Bush Hill Road, Manchester

Please RSVP to Annie in the church office at [uuseoffice@uuse.org](mailto:uuseoffice@uuse.org) or membership co-chair Sheila Foran at [sforan2@cox.net](mailto:sforan2@cox.net) by Thursday, November 10.

## Ladies at Lunch

In November we will enjoy lunch Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> at noon, indoors at Sawadee Thai, 465 Buckland Rd., South Windsor. Do join us! By Wednesday evening the 9<sup>th</sup> please let Sharon Huber know if you will be attending ~ [Sayhuber@yahoo.com](mailto:Sayhuber@yahoo.com) or call/text 860-543-9444.

## UU Class Conversations!

We are writing to ask that you please share our job posting for a caucus coordinator with those who might be interested in joining us. While for all UUs, this job may be of particular interest to divinity students and community ministers. Our Working Class Caucuses, meeting from January – June 2023 will focus on those who identify as working-class and will generate recommendations for UU congregations and our larger association on ways that their policies and procedures can become more welcoming for people with more limited class advantage. We hope you will share this in your communications with them as well.

Until next time, with hope and faith,

The UU Class Conversations Steering Committee  
[info@uuclassconversations.org](mailto:info@uuclassconversations.org)



## Care Packages

Each fall the High School Youth Group prepares and mails care packages to our congregation's young adults, as a reminder that they are loved and supported by their church community. We invite you to help with this endeavor by donating items for the packages or making a financial contribution to help offset the cost of postage. (Mailing the packages is actually the biggest expense!) Popular care package items include snacks, candy, cocoa & tea, laundry detergent packs, lip balm, hand sanitizer, and Dunkin gift cards. Fidget toys were a big hit last year!

Options to help:

- Place purchased items in the labeled bins in the main level or garden level lobbies.
- Create a brief note or letter as a reminder that UUS:E is thinking of them. All notes will be included in the care packages.
- Choose an item from our Amazon wish list. Simply follow the link at the bottom, select an item, and when you check out make sure it is sent to the gift registry address.
- Make a monetary donation to help defray shipping costs. You can place cash or checks in the drop off bin, send a check to the UUS:E office with "Care Packages" in the memo line, or use the donate button on the Sunday services webpage—choose **Other** option and type **Care Packages**.

Please donate by 11/20.

Wishlist link:

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3HILOO1K47RSL?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3HILOO1K47RSL?ref=wl_share)

Questions? Contact Youth Group Advisor Kaitlyn Blesso at [kaitlyn12308@gmail.com](mailto:kaitlyn12308@gmail.com).

## The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!

Dear Ones:

Our ministry theme for November is **change**. While there are many ways to talk about change, I want to say a few words about social change. Our UU principles call us to build a more just and loving community. The work of social change is a large part of who we are as a congregation. Thus, as your minister, it's important for me to periodically name the variety of connections I have to social justice organizations in our region and around the state. Members of the Social Justice / Anti-Oppression Committee get regular updates from me; but most of you don't attend those meetings, so don't necessarily know what I am up to.

I am up to a lot. Our shared worship ministry makes this possible. Many of my colleagues prepare worship liturgies and write sermons every week, a process which takes me an average of 20 hours. But with our shared worship model, I only preach twice a month. This sharing of the worship leadership with lay people affords me time to be involved in the wider community. For this reason I remain exceedingly grateful to UUS:E for its shared worship ministry, and especially to the members of the Sunday Services Committee.

What am I up to? Here's a list:

- I serve on the Strategy Team of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Committee (GHIAA). Note elsewhere in this newsletter that GHIAA is planning a huge "Power Summit" on December 7 at Central CT State University. Can you attend?
- I serve on the Coordinating Committee of Recovery for All, a statewide coalition of labor, community and faith-based organizations dedicated to expanding state revenue so that more investments can be made in critical public services.
- I serve on the board of a new Connecticut think tank called "A Better Connecticut Institute," whose mission tracks very closely with Recovery for All.
- I provide faith-based support to the HUSKY for Immigrants campaign.
- I provide faith-based support to the Domestic Worker Justice Campaign.

- I dedicate time and energy as a faith leader/ally to Moral Monday CT, our state's oldest Black Lives Matter organization.
- I dedicate time and energy as a faith leader/ally to Power Up CT, a Manchester-based Black Lives Matter organization.
- I am participating in Equality Connecticut Clergy, the faith-based arm of Equality Connecticut, the new statewide LGBTQ rights organization.

There's more, but these are the primary organizations and campaigns to which I dedicate time and energy during the course of the year. I am proud of these connections, and proud that UUS:E and UUism are represented in these critical change efforts. To find out more, consider yourself invited to attend meetings of the UUS:E Social Justice / Anti-Oppression Committee (1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00). Or reach out directly to me to learn more about ways you might participate in any of these efforts.

With love,  
Rev. Josh



### Stop & Shop Cards

We're happy to announce that starting in December, Stop & Shop cards will be sold after both services on the first Sunday of the month. The December date is covered but we need folks to help out starting in January for the 11 AM service. Anyone interested should contact Sandy Johnson at 860-888-9673..

# **GHIAA Power Summit**

December 7

All Are Encouraged to Attend



The UUS:E GHIAA core team is excited to invite you to our upcoming GHIAA Power Summit!

**Who:** GHIAA leaders, congregational members, elected officials, incoming congregations, denominational heads, and special guests

**What:** GHIAA Power Summit 2022

**When:** Wednesday, December 7, 7:00-9:00 PM

**Where:** Welte Hall, Central CT State University

**Why:** To launch new campaigns, obtain commitments from elected officials, and embody the power of our almost 50 interfaith congregations to make change for justice in our communities, region, and state.

This is a large-scale action, and turnout will be critical. UUS:E has committed to bringing 70 people in person to this event, so WE NEED YOU!! Watch for opportunities to commit to attending this historic event.

To make this action widely accessible, GHIAA has made the following arrangements:

- For COVID safety, KN95 masks will be required throughout the event and will be available at the door for those who need them. We ask that all attendees be vaccinated and boosted, and that you test at home before coming.
- Real-time ASL and Spanish interpretation will be provided.
- Accessible parking and seating are available at Welte Hall.
- Reimbursement is available for the cost of childcare at your home for the evening.

In order to demonstrate GHIAA's power to the elected officials who will be present, and in order to energize ourselves for the work ahead, we envision this as a primarily in-person event. However, for those who truly are not safe in large gatherings due to ongoing health concerns or other circumstances, we will provide a livestream option as well.

Please stay tuned for further information in the coming weeks. We can't wait to see you on Dec. 7!

Shining a light on the lived experience of mental illness

**FREE AT LAST PLAYERS**

Come & join us for a show of Promise & Possibility!  
6th of November, 2022, 1pm

UUS:E, 153 Vernon St West, Manchester

**Free At Last Players**  
November 6, 1 PM  
Shining a light on the lived experience of mental illness.  
Come and join us for a show of Promise and Possibility!

The poster features a purple background. At the top, a black circle contains two white theatrical masks facing each other. Above the masks, the text "Shining a light on the lived experience of mental illness" is written in a yellow, serif font. Below the circle, the title "FREE AT LAST PLAYERS" is written in a large, bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Underneath the title, the event details "Come & join us for a show of Promise & Possibility! 6th of November, 2022, 1pm" are written in a smaller, white, serif font. At the bottom, the location "UUS:E, 153 Vernon St West, Manchester" is written in a white, serif font. A white box at the very bottom of the poster contains the event title "Free At Last Players", the date and time "November 6, 1 PM", and the tagline "Shining a light on the lived experience of mental illness. Come and join us for a show of Promise and Possibility!" in a black, serif font.



## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance

7:00 PM Sunday November 20, 2022

Hosted by

The Metropolitan Community Church of Hartford

A **Blended** Event (in-person and on Zoom)

via Zoom use this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/719817716>

(link is also available at

<https://www.mcchartford.com/>)

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. It raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgender people; it publicly mourns and honors the lives of those we lost who might otherwise be forgotten, and it provides a time to gather to support, affirm, and encourage one another as a community. Through the vigil, we express love and respect for those who live a trans experience in the face of national indifference, opposition, and even hatred. The Day of Remembrance invites those who are not transgender to become allies—to step forward and stand with us as we grieve, dream, and create a world where anti-transgender violence becomes unthinkable.

Let us gather to remember, honor, and promise, knowing that we are resilient, beautiful, precious, and loved.

## UUS:E Aesthetics Chair Opening!

After more than a decade of decorating UUS:E's sanctuary, Cyndi Krupa is stepping down from her role as Aesthetics Chair. Similarly, her partner in this work, Kristen Dockendorff is also stepping down. When you encounter either Cyndi or Kristen, please give them a big, warm UUS:E 'thank you' for their years of service.

Cyndi writes:

I have had the total pleasure of being the Aesthetics Chair for many years but now find I need to move on. This position for me has been a joyful one with fringe benefits. In the beginning it was as simple as being part of a group that agreed to bring flowers in once every 6 weeks, but I was totally inspired in a different direction with the opening of our new Meeting Room.

While the music played during that first service I glanced out the window to see a Red-Tailed Hawk flying effortlessly through the trees outside. It felt like we now had our own special version of "stained glass windows," only ours were alive, moving and changing with the seasons, and I wanted to see more of nature in the room as well. But that was my vision and now it's time for someone new.

The **fringe benefits** I spoke of earlier included meeting many more people in our congregation which helped me feel even more connected as a member. It also introduced me to the wonderful artistic community we have within UUS:E! These talented artists can be called on to enhance any service and would gladly have their art work hanging on our walls. Then there's our annual holiday Deck the Halls in our Meeting Room, which has taken on a party vibe and we've had fun!!! The actual time allotment has not been huge, especially when you invite people to help you.

## UUS:E is looking for a new Aesthetics Chair!

Are you interested in volunteering? Or perhaps being part of an Aesthetics Team? Let us know. Contact Rev. Josh at [minister@uuse.org](mailto:minister@uuse.org) or 860-652-8961. And please know that Cyndi has graciously offered to coach anyone who is willing to take on the position; and Kristen has offered her ongoing services as an artist available for special aesthetics projects.

## Women's Circle Forming at UUS:E

Nora Mijares Alpers-Leon, facilitator



Third Tuesdays at 7:00

In person at UUS:E

Suggested Donation: \$10 per session (or ask about sliding scale)

Nora describes this women's circle as a "judgment-free comfort zone." She invites participants to "sit, connect and share." Bring a journal and a pen and a cushion or mat to sit on if you prefer that to a chair.

The theme for the first session is "Falling Gracefully into Autumn."

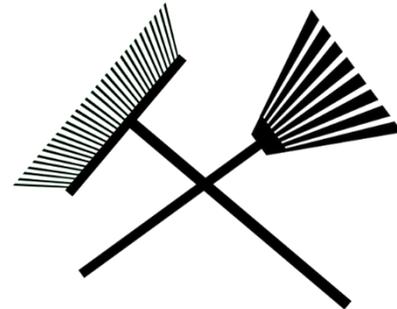
Nora Mijares Alpers-Leon is an indigenous (Colombian) mother, developmental psycholinguist and educator, who has a background in dance, yoga, and mindfulness. She completed 2 bachelor and 2 master's degrees and a graduate certificate between UW-Madison and UConn. She did her Yoga Teacher Training in the Berkshires, and has led mindfulness workshops and talking circles in the United States and Colombia with both adults and children.

To sign up for this circle, or if you want more information, contact Nora at [alpers6@gmail.com](mailto:alpers6@gmail.com) or 608-620-5969.

## Building & Grounds News

The Building & Grounds Committee has been BUSY! Here's a list of this past month's accomplishments:

- assessed short-term and long-term maintenance needs and prioritized projects
- tested new thermostats and ventilation in the sanctuary
- trimmed underbrush at entrance and exit of parking lot
- cleaned out drywells in the parking lot
- painted trim of shed (check out the new roof members installed this summer!)
- prepped and painted rail above the retaining wall near the office entrance (partially completed, more to be done next spring)
- replaced a damaged post of the rail
- cleared bittersweet vines and other invasive bushes from woods at back of grounds
- contacted contractors about removing dead trees, fixing driveway/parking lot, repairing electrical issues, building retaining wall, and fixing drainage issues



B&G needs your HELP! Join us for the annual **Fall Clean-up** on Saturday, **November 12, 9 AM – 12 noon**. Bring what you have for raking and pruning and we'll supply the rest: snacks, coffee, cider, equipment, guidance, and a few laughs. Children and youth with responsible adults are welcome. This is a great way to connect with others in our congregation and to care for the land, the seventh principle in action! Contact Cory Clark or Jane Osborn for more information.

## Member Spotlight



This month, the Membership Committee is shining a spotlight on Desiree Holian-Borgnis. Despite her busy schedule as a wife, mother, and assistant director for a preschool center, she made time to share her story.

Desiree and her husband Kevin were high school sweethearts in Naugatuck, Connecticut. They maintained their romance long distance during college and have now been married for fourteen years. Both raised as Catholic, they began to seriously re-examine that connection during their college years. Desiree graduated from the University of New Haven and has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in elementary education. After working in a preschool/daycare center, she soon realized that was her passion.

When Desiree joined Kevin in Rochester, New York, where he was completing a bachelor's degree, they began attending a U.U. congregation there. They moved back to Connecticut before the birth of their two children, Cole, who will be 13 in December, and Kaidee, age 10 this month.

Desiree recalls first visiting UUS:E while pregnant with Cole. It was a time of change in the congregation with the major renovation and expansion of the meeting house. She admits that she initially felt very welcome at UUS:E but somewhat disconcerted. The Rochester congregation had been much larger. There would be no "anonymous" visit to check things out at UUS:E. She can laugh about it now. She and Kevin also attended the Universalist Church of West Hartford for a while but found they were not comfortable with the degree of Judaism-Christian emphasis.

Before long they became active members of UUS:E. Kevin has served two terms as Vice President of the congregation. Desiree is currently Chairperson for the Religious Education Committee. She manages the Sustainability Committee's once monthly sale of Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate in the lobby, after services on second Sundays. She has enjoyed singing alto in choir. Desiree and Anne Carr became close friends working together on the UUS:E 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary "Gala" party.

As to how she and her family have survived the pandemic, it was not easy. She is grateful that Kevin was able to work from home and manage some of the extra pandemic-related parenting needs of Cole and Kaidee while Desiree was at work. (She returned to her preschool/daycare job after the short shutdown period in March 2020.)

This year is Desiree's fourth time managing the UUS:E Holiday Fair, aka "Holiday Artisan Market". She strongly believes in the artisan quality of so many items created by the UUS:E artists and "crafters" and therefore wants to emphasize that aspect of this major fundraising event. She knits, crochets, and "crafts" and has been in a knitting club which meets monthly, for over a decade. Hence, she appreciates the time and energy it takes to create such impressive items.

The Holiday Artisan Market will include a few changes this year. The significant one is that there will be no luncheon served. However, beverages and dessert will be

offered on Friday evening and Saturday. She would love to hear from anyone willing to bake.

Desiree hopes that other younger members at UUS:E will not hesitate to join a committee or help with a special event, and perhaps eventually assume a leadership role. It is a good opportunity to contribute, make connections, friends, and even have some fun.

### Member Spotlight Participants

The Membership Committee invites you to participate in our getting-to-know-you spotlights of members. These spotlights help us learn more about each other—what's important to you, why you come to UUS:E, what your hopes are for the future, etc. If you want to participate in an interview, please contact Gail Crook at [e.gail.crook@gmail.com](mailto:e.gail.crook@gmail.com).

## Books, Classes, and Discussions

Adult Religious Education

### Book Lovers

The Book Lovers continue to meet via Zoom every second Tuesday from 3:30 to 5:00. You are welcome even if you haven't finished the book. The link is sent out each month with the meeting reminder, usually the weekend before that Tuesday by [Carolyn Gimbrone](#). Here are the books, with number of pages, for the next several months.

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)

- Oct. 11: **Clara and the Sun**, by Kazuo Ishiguro (320 pages)
- Nov. 8: **The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Sisters Brought Medicine to Women and Women to Medicine**, by Janice P. Nimura (352 pages)
- Dec. 13: **Books for Living**, by Will Schwalbe (257 pages)
- Jan. 10, 2023: **Search**, a novel by Michelle Huneven (400 pages)
- Feb. 14: **Redeeming Justice: From Defendant to Defender, My Fight for Equity on Both Sides of a Broken System**, by Jarret Adams (304 pages)
- Mar. 14: **The Overstory**, a novel by Richard Powers (512 pages)
- Apr. 11: **Remarkable Creatures**, a novel by Tracy Chevalier (320 pages)

### 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.

### 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.

## "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.

We meet on 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

### 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.

We meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

### Science and Religion Discussion Group

Next meeting December 1

(Usually Fourth Thursdays at 4:30 PM in the Sanctuary)

#### Topic: **Creating God**

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 with any questions.



### 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](#).

**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, 860-268-4636, [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

Unitarian Universalist Society: East  
153 West Vernon Street  
Manchester, CT 06042