

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.

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2022-23 Ministry Themes

| | |
|------------|--------------------|
| September: | Belonging |
| October: | Courage |
| November: | Change |
| December: | Wonder |
| January: | Finding Our Center |
| February: | Love |
| March: | Vulnerability |
| April: | Resistance |
| May: | Creativity |
| June: | Delight |



Sunday Services Schedule

January Ministry Theme: Finding Our Center

In January we continue with two Sunday morning services at 9:00 and 11:00 AM We simultaneously broadcasted the 11:00 service in Zoom. (Note that on New Year's Day there will be a single service at 10:00 AM, which will also be broadcasted on 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 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.

January 1: "Wanderer, Worshipper, Lover of leaving: What is a UU Pilgrimage?"

One service at 10:00 AM

This morning Coryn Clark, Susan Barlow and Laurel Hennebury share their ideas on how travel, either local or distant, deepens their lives.

Coordinator(s): Beth Hankins

January 8: "What Shared Ministry Means to Me."

As we begin exploring our January ministry theme, finding our center, Rev. Josh reflects on the meaning of shared ministry at UUS:E. Shared ministry certainly lives at the center of our congregational life. Josh will name why it matters so much.

Coordinator(s): Rev. Josh Pawelek

Note: following the 11:00 service the UUS:E Policy Board is holding a special meeting to discuss the congregation's financial position. Bring a brown bag lunch. Contact the UUS:E office to request childcare.

January 15: "Let the Children March."

All-Congregational Worship. Social justice activism and organizing live at the center of our congregational identity. In honor of the national observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, we take time to learn about the 1963 "Children's Crusade" to end segregation in Birmingham, AL. We ask the question: For what would you march today?

Coordinator(s): Gina Campellone and Rev. Josh Pawelek

January 22: "A New UUA Article 2?"

Wait, what? The UUA's seven principles and spiritual sources are being replaced? How can this be? Rev. Josh offers his initial reflections on proposed changes to Article 2 of the Unitarian Universalist Association's bylaws.

Coordinator(s): Rev. Josh Pawelek

January 29: "Mothers and Daughters."

One of the most powerful relationships there is! Come hear reflections on and celebrations of this relationship from members of the UUS:E community—talks by Donna Johnson and Marsha Howland, original writings by Kate Howard-Bender and Gianna DiMaiolo and some very moving, very special music.

Coordinator(s): Gianna DiMaiolo, Kate Howard-Bender and Marsha Howland

February 5: "Imbolc Meditations."

Rev. Josh and members of UUS:E's pagan group explore the meaning of Imbolc, one of 8 sabbat celebrations in the Neo-Pagan wheel of the year. Winter still blankets the earth, but signs of spring are beginning to emerge.

Coordinator(s): Rev. Josh Pawelek and Mary Bopp

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.

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.

Member Spotlight



Leslie Greene has attended UUS:E since 1991. It was a time of major changes in her life. She had two teenage daughters, and her husband and she had separated. She realized that going through a divorce could be a very traumatic experience. Leslie understood that the divorce process would put her at risk both emotionally and mentally. In 1988 she had been hospitalized for major depression with suicidal thoughts. During her recovery she realized her need to take a more proactive approach to her life. At that time, she and her husband were attending an evangelical church. Leslie could see that church was not only conservative Christian, but also repressive about the role of women in society, even oppressive. She knew that there was no magic cure for her depression, that she needed to take charge of her life. She realized how unhealthy it was for her to belong to a church where recovery from a mental illness was contingent upon "confessing your sins to Jesus." In 1989 Leslie and her husband left the church. She knew that would lead to other members being told to dissociate from them.

Having left evangelical religion behind, Leslie explored Native American spirituality and paganism. As to how she arrived at UUS:E in 1991, her boss at work suggested it. He had seen her reading a book about paganism and told her that he thought there was a pagan group at UUS:E.

Leslie's spiritual journey has been a long one. She was born in Massachusetts, but her family moved frequently because of her father's job. She was raised in the Episcopal faith. The family moved to Connecticut when she was a preteen. She describes her family as dysfunctional. At age 13 she was sexually abused. She recalls how much she loved nature and animals as a teenager, and she still does. As a teenager looking for "spiritual truth," she explored Buddhism and other Eastern religion. She eventually became involved with an Assemblies of God church and describes having a "born again" experience. She wanted to know what God wanted her to do, what her purpose was.

Eventually she married and had two daughters. She was a stay-at-home mother for a while, started at Manchester Community College, but found it too stressful balancing that with parenting.

When Leslie attended her first service at UUS:E, she was amazed at the level of tolerance. She recalls the "joys and concerns" part of the service when Al Benford, a longtime member, shared something about social justice. Someone else talked about a recent Gay Pride event. The minister at the time was Reverend Connie Sternburg, whom Leslie describes as "incredible." One very meaningful experience came in 1992. Leslie had been hospitalized for the second time that year, again for depression. She decided to call Reverend Sternberg, who quickly arrived to see her, and asked Leslie what happened. They talked for an hour and Leslie felt incredibly supported. Reverend Sternberg asked if there was someone else she could call. Leslie mentioned the pagan group at UUS:E and two members of the group soon visited. They offered their help, including a Native American ritual "smudge" ceremony which involves burning a small bundle of sage. Leslie at that time was eligible to go outside on the grounds, so they performed the ritual there. She laughs as she describes the reaction of staff members who looked outside and saw smoke surrounding the small group. (You might guess what the staff suspected was smoking!)

Leslie eventually obtained a bachelor's degree in Women's Studies from Trinity College. She started law school at UConn but decided that her attention deficit disorder limited her auditory learning ability, which would impede a legal career.

Leslie is grateful for the many connections and friendships she has found in our community. She is a member of the small group ministry led by Reverend Josh. She has worked on the building and grounds committee and briefly on the music committee.

During the pandemic, Leslie pursued an interest in quilting. She joined several quilting groups on Facebook. She recently completed her first quilt, which she gifted to a cousin who is undergoing chemotherapy.

At age 67 Leslie Greene believes she has reached the goal of accepting herself. She is grateful for UUS:E's role in her achievement.

Enter, rejoice, and come in!

A Children and Youth Ministry Message from Désirée

'Tis the season for burnout. Our minds are fried, our wallets are empty and senses over-stimulated. We focus on bringing joy to others and creating smiles on the faces of people we love. We put ourselves on the back burner.

Once the winter freeze is officially upon us we must pause and reflect. We draw inward in order to reset. But how do we find our footing, our grounding, our center?

While everyone journeys along their own path, I have found that placing my feet flat on the ground, closing my eyes and taking some deep breaths is a good start.

When I feel myself slipping back into that over-stimulated state of mind I try to focus on my senses. Five things I can see... a snowflake falling, a sleeping child, unfinished projects, fairy lights, a heap of yarn. We must take this sliver of slowness to plant our feet, reach out and feel what is around us. Four things I can feel...a fuzzy blanket, a Ticonderoga pencil, dried glitter, tape stuck on the counter. We must open our ears to our surroundings and empty our minds of expectation. Three things I can hear...instrumental lullabies, snoring, a scratching pen. Put your mind to what brings you joy. Close your eyes and breathe deep. Two things I can smell...a cranberry wax warmer, cleaning spray. With this exercise I am able to find focus and energy. I can bring those things back to my body where I can take on what is in front of me. One thing I can taste...coffee.

All Ages Game Night

Saturday, January 21, 6:00 – 8:00 PM

[flyer](#)

Bring your favorite board games, card games, puzzles...

Eat before you come or bring your own dinner.

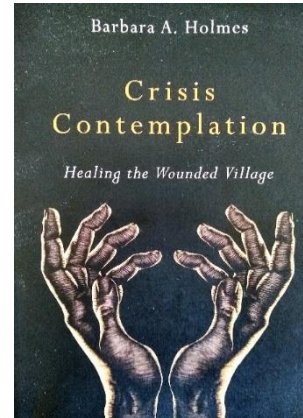
We'll provide popcorn & pretzels.

Questions? Contact Désirée at desiree.holian@gmail.com or Kaitlyn at kaitlyn12308@gmail.com.

Community Read

Crisis Contemplation: Healing the Wounded Village
by the Rev. Dr. Barbara A. Holmes

Thursday evenings, February 2 and 9, 7:00 PM in
the UUS:E chapel and on Zoom



Crisis Contemplation describes the spiritual practice of contemplation during crisis, both individually and in community. We will discuss passages from the book and engage together in Holmes' recommended spiritual exercises. This book is short—136 pages. Purchase it anywhere books are sold. If you need financial support to make the purchase, or if you have any other questions, please contact Rev. Josh Pawelek at 860-652-8961 or minister@uuse.org. This offering is co-sponsored by the UUS:E Pastoral Friends and Adult Religious Education Committees.

Register with Annie Gentile in the UUS:E office at 860-646-5151 or uuseoffice@uuse.org.

Look! We Have a Book Cart!!!

Starting on Sunday, January 15 and every third Sunday thereafter, the Membership Committee and the Book Lovers Group are bringing you ... books!

We invite you to get your coffee or tea and then stroll over to take a look. The "rules" are simple:

You may take a book and keep it.

You may borrow a book and return it after you've read it.

You may give us some of your books so others may enjoy them.*

You MUST talk about the books you have read with your fellow UUs (this is really our only rule).

Members of the Book Lovers Group and the Membership Committee wish you happy reading!

*The more books we have to share, the better.

Contact Sheila Foran at sforan2@cox.net if you have some to donate.

UUS:E Valentine's Day Chocolate Auction!!!!

(6th Annual)

Sunday afternoon, February 12, 12:30 PM



Why? Because chocolate is awesome, and a chocolate auction is a great way to raise \$\$\$\$ for UUS:E!

How will this work? Well, it's pretty simple, actually. We need BAKERS and BIDDERS (and a few volunteers to help out)

All members and friends of UUS:E are invited to create chocolate confections (cookies, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, and any other kind of chocolate dessert you can imagine). Bring your creations to the meeting house on the 12th (include your name and a list of ingredients). Please let Rev. Josh know you are bringing something for the auction at minister@uuse.org.

Then, come to the auction at 12:30 on the Feb. 12 and bid on whatever looks best to you! Bring your check book or cash and pay when you collect your confection.

It's that simple!!!

We need 3-4 volunteers to help out on the 12th. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Rev. Josh at minister@uuse.org or 860-646-5151!



Ladies at Lunch

Thursday, January 12, at noon, we will enjoy our lunch at Red Heat in Evergreen Walk. Do join us if you can! Please let Sharon Huber know by Wednesday January 11 afternoon if you will be attending ~ Sayhuber@yahoo.com or text/call 860-543-9444.

Green Sanctuary News

January is the time many of us make New Year's resolutions... maybe to finally get more fit and lose those extra pounds. But what about a resolution to reduce your carbon footprint? Consider reducing or eliminating meat and dairy which is healthier 1) for people, 2) for the animals, and 3) for the planet!

The **New York Times** recently published a "[What's the Best Way to Shrink Your Carbon Footprint?](#)" quiz for readers. There are ideas like using energy-efficient appliances, carpooling, recycling, and lowering room temperatures which readers can guess how big or small an effect each action has on reducing personal greenhouse gas emissions. The results might surprise you! (HINT: Think about the food you eat.)

According to the author Sander van der Linden, "Americans tend to underestimate the effects of actions that are harder to take, like avoiding air travel or adopting a vegan diet. And they overestimate the amount of emissions avoided by using energy-efficient appliances and recycling." While we love the "reduce, reuse, recycle" mantra, it may not actually have as big of an impact as we hope. In fact, although individual actions are important, collective action that demands transformation to the underlying systems and holds government and businesses accountable is what matters most. Perhaps a resolution to get more involved with climate activism might bring a sense of accomplishment in 2023, while also being an effective contribution to saving our planet.

FUN FOOD FACT: Did you know Nebraska is the largest producer of popcorn? However only 1% of Nebraska's corn is for human consumption, while 99% of is for livestock feed and ethanol. Neighboring Iowa is the largest corn producer.

Looking for Hosts for Pledging Potlucks!

HOORAY! This spring the Stewardship Committee will again offer Pledging Potlucks during two weekends: March 10 – 12 and March 17 – 19. We are looking for people who will host a potluck during those weekends. The potlucks are often dinners but could be a brunch or lunch or even dessert & coffee/tea. You can steward your own potluck, or a steward will attend to facilitate the conversation about pledging if you choose. We need to gather a list of hosts with dates and times of their potlucks by **February 12, 2023**. These potlucks are a way to come together in community, enjoy good food and have a deeper conversation about our connection to UUS:E and our hopes and dreams for our future. We hope you will consider being a host!

Signups for potlucks will begin after the second services February 19, 26 and March 5 when the Annual Appeal officially kicks off.

Please contact Stan McMillen at 860-742-8447 or Stanley.mcmillen44@gmail.com to host a pledging potluck in March. THANK YOU!

Intro to UU

Would you like to know more about Unitarian Universalism and Unitarian Universalist Society: East?

Please attend the Intro to UU.

Sunday, January 22, 2023, 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Location – UUS:E

(Zoom option available)

Rev. Josh Pawelek and the Membership Committee invite you to an informative seminar where you will learn more about the Unitarian Universalism and UUS:E.

Registration Required

Please Email Annie at uuseoffice@uuse.org or call 860-646-5155

Questions?

Please contact Sylvia Öunpuu or Sheila Foran at membership@uuse.org.

Stewarding Opportunity!

The Stewardship Committee is planning our 2023 Annual Appeal – **Investing in Our Future** for next spring. This year we are providing 3 ways to make a pledge. 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. We are also bringing back Pledging Potlucks the weekends of March 10 – 12 and March 17 – 19. After March 19, people who have not made their pledge will be assigned a steward for follow up. The steward will use a personal visit, email, phone calls, texts, Facebook, 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.

Being a steward 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 few 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 want people younger than 60 to be stewards!!

We will provide training on a weeknight or a Saturday morning. Dates and times to follow.

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

Our Annual Appeal occurs from March 5 – April 9, 2023.

Coffeehouse Returns

Musicians, Poets, Raconteurs, and Bagpipers! The UUS:E Coffeehouse and Open Mic returns Saturday, January 7. Signups start at 6:00 with 12 timeslots, 3 songs/10 minutes each. Family friendly performances start at 7:00. Bring your own food, snacks, beverages and friends. We'll supply the coffee. Voluntary donations support UUS:E. This event will not be live streamed.

Best Regards,
Dan Thompson

The Minister's Column: Hallelujah!

Dear Ones:

The numbers 2-0-2-3 feel somewhat inauspicious to me as far as years go. 2023 is no 1999 ("party like it's..."), 2000 (new century) or 2020 (pandemic, George Floyd, etc.). It certainly doesn't have the smooth, quarter-century feel of 2025. Nope, 2023 feels like a non-milestone year. Meh. Blah. Ho-hum. Except that for Unitarian Universalism, it's a big year, in a funky, congregational way. 2023 is the year when the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly (Pittsburgh, third week of June—anyone interested in joining me there?) debates wholesale changes to Article 2 of its by-laws. (Actually, as members of a member institution, they are **OUR BYLAWS!**) Article 2 is where the 7 UU principles live. Article 2 is where the sources of our living tradition live. And if the new Article 2 proposal passes, both the principles and the source language will disappear.

Our ministry theme for January is Finding Our Center. There are, of course, many ways to approach this theme. In my January 8th sermon, I'll be talking about the concept of "shared ministry," which is a critical "center" for our congregation. At our January 15th Sunday service, Gina and I will talk about the 1963 "Children's Crusade" to end segregation in Birmingham, AL. We will emphasize another important "center" of our congregational life: social justice activism. And in my January 22nd sermon, I will be preaching about the proposed changes to the UUA's Article 2. Certainly, the seven principles and the sources live at the center of Unitarian Universalism. They have lived there comfortably for many years. We should not give them up lightly. We should feel confident that the new language serves just as well as an enduring and inspiring center for our faith.

I am persuaded that the proposed new language, if accepted, will indeed serve as such an enduring and inspiring center for our faith. I am most heartened by the way the writers of the Article 2 proposal have put love at the center of Unitarian Universalism. While I am deeply committed to the 7 principles, I've always felt that the absence of any reference to love is problematic. To be sure, I have some concerns about the new proposal, which I will discuss in my January 22nd sermon. But my support for the changes far outweighs my concerns.

Regardless of why I think about feel about the changes, I recognize that this change may be unfathomable to some of you. While a small number of you were Unitarian Universalists before 1985 when the current Article 2 was adopted, the vast majority of you became Unitarian Universalists after 1985, and you have never experienced our faith without the principles and the sources at the center. Hear me: this is a HUGE change. It's important that we pay attention to and, where possible, participate in the Article 2 conversation in the larger UU community.

I'll leave you with a reminder about the nature of liberal religion. As liberal religious people, we recognize the reality of change. We recognize that change is inherent in the natural order. We agree that "change alone is unchanging." We do not preach an unchanging theology. We allow our theology to change in response to changes in society, culture and the natural world. The UUA's Article 2 is written with the assumption that it will change over time, precisely so that our center can continue to respond to our times. And that is the question I leave for you as we search for our center. Does the proposed language for Article 2 respond more effectively to our times than the current language? As we move through this month and through the first half of the year toward the General Assembly in Pittsburgh, I invite you to share your thoughts with me. How do you answer this question?

With love,
Rev. Josh



Stop & Shop Cards

A reminder that Stop & Shop cards will be sold after each service on the first Sunday of the month. The cards make great holiday gifts! Cards can be purchased in \$50, \$100 or \$250 amounts. Check it out and if you'd like to help out, contact Sandy Johnson at 860-888-9673.

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

- 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)
- May 9: **Three Junos**, a novel by Julia Glass (368 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 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. 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 for the Zoom link. We meet on 4th 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 for the Zoom link. We meet on 3rd Tuesdays at 4:30 PM.

Science and Religion Discussion Group

Fourth Thursdays at 4:30 PM in the Sanctuary

Topic: planning meeting to select discussion topics for the year

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.

UUS:E GENERAL INFORMATION

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

Meetinghouse Office: 860-646-5151

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