



April 2026

The Bellnote

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EAST LIBERTY
2231 Jefferson Road
Clarklake, MI 49234
(517) 295-3290 - New(er again) Church Number
Located 3/4 miles West of U.S. 127

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Message from the Minister

More Than the Role

Over the past few months, I've been hearing a quiet but important refrain from some of the leaders in our congregation—Board members, committee chairs, and volunteers who give so much of their time and energy.

What they've shared is not about workload. It's not about burnout in the usual sense. It's something simpler... and, in some ways, more tender. They miss being seen as people.

Many of them have noticed that most of their interactions at church, especially during social hour, are focused almost entirely on their roles. A quick question about a budget item. A follow-up about a meeting. A reminder about something that needs to be done.

All important things, for sure - all part of congregational life. But when those are the only interactions, something begins to fade. The sense of connection. The feeling of being known. The simple joy of being part of a community where you are more than what you do. One person put it this way: "It would be nice if someone asked how I'm doing... or even talked about the weather." That stayed with me because it's such a small thing. And, such a big thing.

In a community like ours, it's easy to begin relating to people primarily through the lens of their responsibilities. We see the role. We see the task. We see the function. And without meaning to, we stop seeing the person.

But the heart of congregational life has never been the work alone. It has always been the relationships that hold that work together - the small moments of connection, the conversations that have no agenda, the sense that we are known not for what we do but for who we are.

Our covenant calls us back to that. It reminds us that how we are with one another matters just as much as what we accomplish together. That community is not built only through meetings and decisions, but through attention, presence, and care.

So, this is a gentle invitation. The next time you see someone who carries a leadership role in this congregation, pause for just a moment before jumping into "church business." Ask how they are with genuine curiosity rather than a perfunctory statement. Share a story. Make a connection. Talk about something that has nothing to do with meetings, committees, or decisions - not because the work doesn't matter, but because the people doing the work matter just as much or more.

And perhaps this invitation extends beyond leadership. What would it look like for all of us to practice seeing one another more fully? To resist the pull to move quickly into business and instead linger, just a little, in relationship? Because in the end, it's not just the work of the church that sustains us. It's one another.

May it be so.

Rev. Dan



Notes from the Board

On March 16 the board held our regular meeting via Zoom. After reading the board covenant and approving the February minutes (which are posted on the social hall wall by the kitchen), Treasurer Laurie Campbell reported that our pledge income is lagging slightly but expenses are in line. In the Minister's Report Rev. Dan described the roll-out of the pledge campaign and reports of the cottage conversations.

Board terms for Alyce Oosting and Ann Green end this June and Alice Shepherd will step away. Alyce Oosting will not seek another term; Ann will accept another term and serve as president. Rev. Dan will convene the Nominating Committee to recommend two new board members. Updates on the Strategic Plan include the possibility of helping the League of Women Voters with ballot proposal signature gathering, the imminent posting of the reworked website, and the plan to participate in the No Kings rally. As a follow-up to Gene Kopf's recommended improvements for church safety, Alyce will contact several people interested in moving the project forward by identifying three items to start now.

Highlights of committee reports are a plan to hold a spring outdoor cleanup, replace cracked windows in the social hall, and caulk the front steps. The roadway sign has been repaired, and the fire extinguishers have been checked. Worship services are scheduled through May. A social media manager has stepped up. Rev. Dan and Darrin Palmer are organizing a Trans 101 workshop for the Elkhart Fellowship and our congregation. The Caring Committee continues to honor members by sending cards.

The next meeting will take place Tuesday, April 14th.

Ann

**Submitted by: Ann Green
Board President**

Notes from Religious Ed

Volunteers Update

We have at least one opening for a teacher assistant volunteer, which means a commitment of nine Sundays, scattered throughout the school year. UUCEL wants to continue to be an inviting church for families to bring their kids. So please consider answering this call!

UUCEL is proud to offer nursery care for babies and preschool children every Sunday. We have a roster of adult volunteers who kindly give one Sunday a month to make this happen (really, it's only about 45 minutes per month!). To continue offering this important service to our families, we need two adult volunteers per week. Due to some recent changes in our lineup, we have openings! Can you help out? Again, it is only a once-a-month obligation. Please contact Lori A. or Donna H. Thank you. **Submitted by: RE Committee**



**Go now and live your religion.
Its truth reflect in all you do.
Go, may love's presence ever guide you.
Live the good life the whole day through.**

Reminder to all Social Hour Teams

When done with the regular social hour duties, please make sure the following are done:

- ~Open all registers in social hall
- ~Close the doors that go upstairs to sanctuary

Submitted by: Alyce Oosting

You Are Not a Bother

I want to share something important, because I've been hearing a pattern across both congregations.

There seems to be a misunderstanding as to when I am available for pastoral care conversations. From time to time, people will say (and not to me directly, but to other people) things like:

I needed someone to talk to but:

- I didn't want to bother Rev. Dan.
- I know Rev. Dan is working at the other congregation this week, so I didn't think I could call him.
- I figured Rev. Dan was too busy.

And sometimes, I hear something even more tender: · I wish I had someone to talk to, even if it isn't an emergency.

So let me say this as clearly and gently as I can: You are not a bother. Not now. Not ever.

I serve both congregations part-time, yes. That's true. But pastoral care does not follow a schedule. It doesn't wait for office hours. It doesn't depend on which town I happen to be in that day. If you need support, an ear, or a shoulder, please don't hesitate to reach out, regardless of what my schedule says.

If you are going through something—grief, stress, uncertainty, loneliness, or simply need someone to listen—I will make room, no matter who's week it is. That's not an inconvenience. That's part of my calling.

You don't need to check what day it is. You don't need to worry about which congregation I'm "working for" that week. You don't need to decide if your concern is "important enough." If it matters to you, it matters.

Sometimes pastoral care looks like walking with someone through a major life crisis. Sometimes it looks like a quiet conversation when things just feel a little off. Both are worthy of attention. Both deserve care.

So please, don't hold back out of concern for my time. Trust that I will take care of my schedule. What I don't want is for anyone to feel alone or unsupported because they were trying to be considerate of my schedule and time. Reaching out is not an interruption. It's an invitation—to connection, to care, to shared humanity.

And that is always welcome.

Submitted by: Rev. Dan

New Adult RE Offering

Rev. Dan will be offering a three-month Adult RE class that began in March using a new curriculum offering from the folks at Soul Matters called Practice Matters. This curriculum is designed to support spiritual practice curiosity by learning and doing. In other words, Practice Matters doesn't just explain the featured spiritual practices; it helps people experience them and the deeper invitations to which they point.

Each session provides background about a particular spiritual practice, teases out how the practice speaks to universal hungers, and offers options about how participants can engage the practice in their own life, with care given to avoid cultural misappropriation. Participants then pick one of the options provided and do it prior to their group meeting. Sessions also contain reflection questions for participants to debrief their experience personally and with their groups.

The three-monthly practices we will explore are:

1. Labyrinth Work
2. Loving Kindness practice
3. Offering Gratitude

Classes will be held on Zoom so that both congregations can participate. Our first monthly session was March 26 at 6:30 pm. Please contact Rev. Dan if you have any questions.

Submitted by: Rev. Dan

Watch on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/LibertyUU>

Meetings and Events for UUCEL

Announcement from Rev. Dan

Rev. Dan will be hosting the next Lunch with the Minister on Friday, April 17 at 11:30 at the West End Farm to Table in Jackson. Come and enjoy casual conversation, good food, and a well-deserved break!

UU Younger

The UU Younger group (known as YUUMM) has started a recurring meeting the first Sunday of every month at 12:30 pm in the school house. It will include snacks, board games and conversation. **Submitted by: Scott Reese**

Quarterly Donations

The Social Mission Designee for the 4th quarter is **Partial to Girls/Women Taking Action**. Please, give by using the donate button on our website or by contributing with a check with Partial to Girls/Women Taking Action in the memo.

**Submitted by: Gretchen Marshall
& Ann Green**

LOST & FOUND

Box is in the window ledge Are they YOURS ?
- Kid's sleeping face mask 'Blue' Stitch' - Light Gray Sweater/Jacket - Dark Blue Shawl - Tan Scarf - White Cap/Hat w/ Intermobile Racing & Norman - Oversized Dark Sunglasses

Submitted by: Kathy Haynes

Ladies' Lunch

The Ladies Lunch will be meeting on Thursday April 9, at the Olive Garden at 12:00 noon. If you are not on Joan's list and want to come, please call her by Wednesday morning. Please see Joan's contact information on the top of the Supplement Page.

Submitted by: Joan Bernstein

Reminder of First Sunday Information for Social Hour Host

Those on the team that is on the **1st Sunday of Each Month** - Please READ the NOTE that has been added to the paper copy on the corkboard in the KITCHEN. - With directions YOU need to KNOW. **Thank you From the Board**

New Updated information for the

Jackson Personal Care Ministry

Jackson Personal Care Ministry JPCM is a cooperative mission of 7 area churches. We offer a weekly pantry of personal care and cleaning products to anyone residing in Jackson County. Our team consists of First Congregational and UUCEL and we volunteer the first Thursday of month, which would be April 2 and because April 2 is Maundy Thursday the Personal Care will be closed that evening. May 7 is the next time. Please let me know if you can help. JPCM is located at Partnership Place 801 S. Mechanic St. in Jackson. Distributors are 5:00- 6:30 pm with volunteers arriving at 4:30. Nena's contact information is on the top of the Supplement Page. **Submitted by: Nena Obits**

~~Visitor Tips for Everyone~~

Here are some ways to make people feel welcome that everyone can follow:

- Introduce yourself and get to know a visitor by name.
- Invite a visitor to social hour.
- Wear a nametag.
- Sit toward the middle of the pew or nearer to the front of the church so visitors can be more anonymous if they choose.
- Watch for people who may be alone during social hour and ask them about the sermon or their faith journey. Thank you!

UUMUAC now has Podcasts

UUMUAC, the Unitarian Universalist Multi-racial Unity Council, is now offering a growing library of podcasts that features sermons from our 40-plus monthly Vespers services, along with newly digitized recordings by founding member the late Finley Campbell. These short, accessible episodes make a welcoming experience for people who want to listen to them while driving, walking, crafting, or simply taking a quiet moment. Our Vespers services are already on YouTube and new podcast episodes are being added regularly to our feed on <https://rss.com/podcasts/uumuac-you-me-act>. These thoughtful and inspiring audio recordings are perfect for people who support liberal religion and multiracial unity, but don't have time for a full-length service. To help others discover this new resource, please share, rate, and comment. If you have additional feed-back, or want to help with the conversion process, contact Bjeanwalsh@outlook.com. For more information about UUMUAC, visit our website UUMUAC.org.

Memorials

For Jane Volk and Dorothy Kerr will both be having a memorial service at the church on different Saturdays in May. Jane's will be on May 2 at 1:00 pm and Dorothy's will be May 30 the time was not given at the time this went to press. Dorothy has requested that those attending her service to please wear a Hat.

Submitted by: The Editors

“If you had been assigned a task for a Sunday or even any committee meeting and you are not able to attend, would you please call or contact someone to let them know”

– thank you



April 's UUCEL Calendar

All Events are at the church Unless Otherwise Noted

- Thurs Personal Care Ministry @ Partnership Place, 801 S. Mechanic ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 5 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
- 5 Sunday YUUMM Meeting ~ School House ~ 12:30 pm
- 6 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 9 Thurs Ladies Lunch @ Olive Garden ~ 12:00 pm/noon
- 12 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
- 14 Tue Board Meeting
- 17 Fri Lunch with Rev. Dan at 11:30 @ West End Farm to Table in Jackson
- 19 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Patty Brue ~ 11:00 am
- 20 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 20 Mon The Bellnote Newsletter, Submissions Due
- 26 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Cory Page ~ 11:00 am

- May 2 Celebration of Life of Jane Volk ~ 1:00-4:00 pm
- May 30 Celebration of Life of Dorothy Kerr ~

Weekly Volunteer Schedule

- Sunday, Apr 5~~ Greeter, Alyce O ~~ Usher, Paul J & Helper Needed**
 ~~ Social Hour Host, Kathy H & Team 2
 ~~ Technology Streaming, Rob G ~~ Worship Associate, Elissa A
 ~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Intergenerational ~~ Nursery w/ Nena O & Sue R

- Sunday, Apr 12 ~~ Greeter, Lori A ~~ Usher, Paul J & Helper Needed**
 ~~ Social Hour Host, Nena O & Team 3
 ~~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~~ Worship Associate, Tom P
 ~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Alyce O & Helper Needed

- Sunday, Apr 19 ~~ Greeter, Joan B ~~ Usher, Paul J & Helper Needed**
 ~~ Social Hour Host, Nancy S & Team 4
 ~~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~~ Worship Associate, Cecily S
 ~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Kathy H & Ashley S

- Sunday, Apr 26~~ Greeter, Jackie J ~~ Usher, Paul J & Helper Needed**
 ~~ Social Hour Host, Lori A & Team 5
 ~~ Technology Streaming, Tom P ~~ Worship Associate, Tiffany R
 ~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Donna H & Helper Needed

~~ Celebrating Over 170 Years of Liberal Religion ~~

All Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am

Apr 5 - “Easter” ~~ 10:30 am Start Time

- Led by: Rev. Dan Miyake

In person or live on Facebook.

This will be a joint service with the Elkhart congregation. Rev. Dan will be physically in Elkhart, and UUCEL will be on Zoom. Please check the Wednesday Chimes for the Zoom link if you will be viewing from home. This will also be an Intergenerational service. An Egg Hunt will follow the service.

Apr 12 - “What if...?”

- Led by: Rev. Dan Miyake

In person or live on Facebook.

What if...? It’s a question that can open doors—or close them just as quickly.

This Sunday, we’ll explore how our “what ifs” shape our lives, and how a small shift in perspective might open the door to possibility—and maybe even a little joy. This will be one of the sermons that were won at last year’s auction.

Apr 19 - “Butterflies”

- Led by: Patty Brue

In person or live on Facebook.

The Monarch Experience from Dexter will be coming to talk with us about Monarch butterflies. This will be an Intergenerational service, with the kids doing a song with Nena.

Apr 26 - “Immigration”

- Led by: Cory Page

In person or live on Facebook.

Tom Ori from the Jackson County Immigration Coalition will be coming by to tell us about the JCIC’s work.



From The Editors:

“The Bellnote” is a monthly publication of UUCEL. If this is your 1st copy of the church’s newsletter, welcome. Our church year runs from July 1st - June 30th. The church board asks those that receive the paper version of the newsletter pay a \$18.00 per year subscription fee. New visitors will get a few months free, after that a subscription fee will be asked for, or change to an on-line version that is free of charge.

For the May 2026 issue, the information is needed by: Monday, April 20 ~~ send submissions to: uucel_bellnote@yahoo.com or in writing to Kathy or Vicki, thank you. We want to thank Rev. Dan Miyake, Ann Green, Nancy Smith, Gretchen Marshall, Darrin Palmer, Deb Hartsuff, Nena Obits, Scott Reese, Vicki Haynes, Tech Comm., and Worship Comm., for their news items this month.

A Quick Look at the Sunday Topics - Full Information on Page 7

Apr 5 - "Easter" - Led by: Rev. Dan Miyake ~ 10:30 am start time with UUCEL Zooming in

Apr 12 - "What if...?" - Led by: Rev. Dan Miyake

Apr 19 - "Butterflies" - Led by: Patty Brue

Apr 26 - "Immigration" - Led by: Cory Page



Church's Website ~ <http://www.libertyuu.org>
Church's E-Mail Address ~ uuliberty@gmail.com
Wednesday's Chimes ~ WednesdayChimes@gmail.com
Church's Facebook Page ~ <http://www.facebook.com/libertyuu>
The Bellnote's E-Mail Address ~ UUCEL_Bellnote@yahoo.com
Bellnote Newsletter ~ <https://libertyuu.org/category-newsletter/newsletter>

OUR 7 PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSES

WE, THE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION, COVENANT TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE:

- ~ The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- ~ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- ~ Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- ~ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- ~ The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- ~ The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- ~ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

Where People Care About Each Other And Care About The World.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

CLARLAKE, MI 49234

2231 JEFFERSON ROAD

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF EAST LIBERTY

