



December 2025

# 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

## Minister

Rev.: Dan Miyake  
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## Staff

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Trustee: Alice Palmer  
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## Caring Committee

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## Message from the Minister Choosing Hope

As we enter December—the month of long nights, soft lights, and ancient stories of miracles—it’s tempting to think of hope as something that simply arrives on its own. A feeling. A mood. A passing moment of uplift that comes and goes like winter sunshine.

But real hope—the kind that changes us, anchors us, and keeps us moving—is not passive. It is something we choose.

Choosing hope does not mean ignoring the griefs and injustices of the world. It doesn’t require optimism or cheerfulness. It certainly doesn’t mean pretending everything is fine when it clearly isn’t.

Choosing hope means deciding to believe that what we do still matters.

It means taking the next faithful step even when the path ahead is unclear.

It means lighting one candle against the darkness—not because it banishes the night, but because it reminds us that the dark does not have the final word.

Hope is a discipline.

It’s a practice.

It’s a muscle we build together in community.

Every time we show up for one another, we choose hope.

Every time we speak a kind word in a harsh season, we choose hope.

Every time we keep learning, keep resisting, keep caring, keep loving—especially when it’s difficult—we choose hope.

This month invites us to ask:

What does it look like for me to choose hope, on purpose, right now?

Maybe it looks like reaching out to someone who’s struggling.

Maybe it looks like giving yourself permission to rest and heal.

Maybe it looks like refusing to let cynicism, fear, or cruelty have the last word.

Continued on Page 3....

# Notes from the Board

## Board of Trustees Meeting

On November 10<sup>th</sup> the board held our regular meeting. After reading the board covenant and approving the October minutes (which are posted on the social hall wall by the kitchen), Secretary Nancy Smith reported that the church sent a thank you to the Beurmann family for donating their land on which our large shed sits. Treasurer Laurie Campbell summarized the balance sheet and income statement to date and noted that we are on target with the budget. After Rev. Dan presented his October report, the board discussed our mission statement and how on target we are with meeting it. The Strategic Plan needs just a few more tweaks for clarification.

## Committee Reports

**Building and Grounds:** Repairs and upkeep over the next few months include gutter cleaning, replacement of cracked windows in the social hall, caulking the front steps, and trimming the large oak tree out front. The septic tank has been pumped out and snow removal has been confirmed. The board voted a stipend for Doug Greene in recognition of his extra work during the winter.

**Worship:** Sermons are planned out for several weeks.

**Membership:** A potluck Harvest Dinner is planned for November 30 after the service.

**RE** is still one person short on nursery volunteers. The teaching schedule is filled through May.

**Technology:** We are pursuing arranging a webmaster to update our website.

**Social Justice** receives updates.

**Caring** sent out cards and delivered a meal.

**Other:** Gene Kopf will attend a seminar on security measures in places of worship and will share his findings. The board approved the purchase of a social media toolbox from Soul Matters which has sayings and images suitable for posting online.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 8, 2025 at 10:00 am (in person at UUCEL)

**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!). Thank you

**Submitted by: RE Committee**



**Watch on Facebook:**

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

## 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**

# Rev. Dan's Column Continued

## Our Strategic Plan for this church year

Each year the board prepares a strategic plan that details what we intend to accomplish, how, when, and by whom. Below are the highlights of this year's plan. To see further detail, look for the plan posted on the bulletin board in the social hall. Your responses are most welcome.

Goal 1: Increase Internal Involvement in the church: identify and train Pastoral Care Associates/plan regular social events/improve the process for collecting information on members who need help.

Goal 2: Maintain Structural Integrity of the Buildings and Grounds: replace cracked windows in the social hall/investigate insulating the schoolhouse bathroom/paint the metal benches on the playground/caulk the front steps/trim the large oak tree.

Goal 3: Increase Visibility of UUCEL in the Community: Contract a web professional to update the website/identify a person to post on social media/attend upcoming community events

Goal 4: Increase Involvement with the UUA and the Mid-America Region: identify one or two community needs to respond to/participate in pro-democracy actions/inform congregants/attend and report on monthly meetings with the Mid-America congregations and report it in the *Bellnote*.

**Submitted by: the Board**

## 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**

Whatever shape your hope takes this season, know this:

You don't have to choose it alone.

We are learning this practice side by side, strengthening one another's courage as we go.

May this December find us not waiting for hope, but creating it—together.

With Love Abundant,

**Rev. Dan Miyake**

## ~~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!**

**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.**

# Meetings and Events for UUCEL

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## 2 Announcements from Rev. Dan

### Christmas Eve Service

Our Christmas Eve service will be a joint intergenerational service on December 24 at 6:00 pm. Rev. Dan will be in the pulpit at UUCEL, and the Elkhart congregation will be joining via Zoom. Come and enjoy familiar carols and a special story for this season of Hope!

### Study Leave

Rev. Dan will be on Study Leave from December 29 through January 2. He will not be available for meetings or respond to emails/texts unless it is an emergency. Please refrain from unnecessary emails/texts to Rev. Dan during this time.

### Ladies' Lunch

The Ladies Lunch will be meeting on Thursday December 11, at The Roadhouse Grill & Bar, 4112 Lansing Ave. in Jackson at 12:00 am. 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**

### 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 2nd quarter is **Residents in Action, Inc.** is a nonprofit community - driven initiative, focused on addressing social issues, particularly homelessness and racial equity. Please, give by using the donate button on our website or by contributing with a check to the church with Residents in Action in the memo line.

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

### Grief In Slow Motion

There was no memorial service for the last time you went out to dinner together, the last time they told you a joke, the last time they said your name. No one sent you flowers for the social events you've missed, the roles that have changed, the plans that will never be, the decisions you have to make. When you love someone with dementia, Parkinson's, or other progressive neurological disease, you lose so many things along the way, long before you lose your person. When we don't recognize and process our losses, they build up and weigh us down. Join **Jill Terwilliger, M.Div., CPCC**, grief coach, educator, and UU minister for **Grief in Slow Motion**, a 4-session grief group combining learning, sharing and support for people caring for loved ones with dementia. <https://www.anbaucoaching.com/slowmotion>

**Grief in Slow Motion** will take place live on zoom the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month from 10-11:15am EST through January. The first session was in October. The cost is \$75 for all four sessions. The group is live, confidential, and will not be recorded for public sharing. Register here:

<https://www.anbaucoaching.com/slowmotion>

Whether you are a direct caregiver or indirect, you are allowed to honor and grieve your losses, even while your person is still alive. You don't have to do this alone. Jill Terwilliger, M.Div., CPCC; Jill was a minister at UUCEL.

**Submitted by: Dan & Ann**

**We love music!**



### **Updated info of the Jackson Personal Care Ministry**

JPCM is a cooperative mission of 7 area churches now, it was 14. We offer a weekly pantry of personal care and cleaning products to anyone residing in Jackson County. Our team, the First Congregational and UUCEL, just 2 churches, was 3, works the first Thursday of the month, and that would be December 4th. Because we are serving more people, the number of volunteers needed has grown from 3-4. Please let me know if you can help. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 4:30 pm. **JPCM has now relocated to St. John's Church** at 801 S. Mechanic Street in Jackson. Distributions is still on Thursday evenings 5:00- 6:30 pm. It's an excellent way to meet the community and give back! If you'd like to work or have any questions. Nena's contact info is on the top of the Supplement Page if anyone needs more info. **Submitted by: Nena Obits**

### **LOST & FOUND ----- Are they YOURS ??**

**NEW ITEM** a Green thick sock found in parking lot ---- A bag was in the frig with an Apple & oversized Dark Sunglasses - the Apple has been tossed out ----Sweater/Jacket - Light Gray & White w/ Zipper - Size X-L ---- Shawl, Dark Blue, Long Rectangle w/ Fringe and Buttons by: harve benard ----Scarf - Very Long, Tan Knitted w/ 4 rows of Cable by: Isotoner ----Cap/Hat - White w/ Intermobile Racing & N norman ---- oversized Dark Sunglasses ----- These items are in the bottom part of the bookcase in the social hall.

**Submitted by: Kathy Haynes ~ 5 ~**



# December 's UUCEL Calendar

All Events are at the church Unless Otherwise Noted

- 1 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 4 Thurs Personal Care Ministry @ St. John's Church, 801 S. Mechanic St ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 7 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Guest Methodist Minister ~ 11:00 am
- 7 Sunday YUUMM Meeting ~ School House ~ 12:30 pm
- 8 Mon Board Meeting ~ 10:00 am
- 11 Thurs Ladies Lunch @ The Roadhouse Grill & Bar, 4112 Lansing Ave. ~ 12:00 am
- 14 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Nate Close and Joe Pryor ~ 11:00 am
- 15 Mon The Bellnote Newsletter, Submissions Due a week early due to the Holidays
- 15 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 21 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
- 24 Wed Christmas Eve Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 6:00pm
- 28 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Alice Palmer ~ 11:00 am
- 29 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes

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## Weekly Volunteer Schedule

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**Sunday, Dec 7 ~ Greeter, Alyce O ~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S**  
 ~ Social Hour Host, Lori A & Team 5  
 ~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~ Worship Associate, Nathan B  
 ~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Nancy S & Cecily S ~ Nursery w/ Nena O & Sue R

**Sunday, Dec 14 ~ Greeter, Lori A ~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S**  
 ~ Social Hour Host, Liz W & Team 6  
 ~ Technology Streaming, Tom P ~ Worship Associate, Tomm T  
 ~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Nancy S & Cecily S ~ Nursery w/ Alyce O & Alice P

**Sunday, Dec 21 ~ Greeter, Joan B ~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S**  
 ~ Social Hour Host, Alyce O & Team 7  
 ~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~ Worship Associate, Lori A  
 ~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Christmas Pageant ~ Nursery w/ Kathy H & Ashley S

**Sunday, Dec 24 ~ Greeter, Jackie J ~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S**  
 ~ Social Hour Host, Deb H & Team 1  
 ~ Technology Streaming, Rob G ~ Worship Associate, Wendy S  
 ~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Intergenerational ~ Nursery w/ Donna H & Nicole B

**Sunday, Dec 28 ~ Greeter, Julie F ~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S**  
 ~ Social Hour Host, Kathy H & Team 2  
 ~ Technology Streaming, Ann G ~ Worship Associate, Tom P  
 ~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Intergenerational ~ Nursery w/ two helpers needed

~~ Celebrating Over 167 Years of Liberal Religion ~~  
All Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am

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**Dec 7 - "Guest Minister"**

**- Led by: Cory Page & Rev. Baker**

In person or live on Facebook.

Today is a Guest Methodist Minister Rev. Melanie Baker with Cory Page coordinating

**Dec 14 - "Journey to Faith"**

**- Led by: Nate Close and Joe Pryor**

In person or live on Facebook.

We will be hearing the Journey to Faith from Nate and Joe

**Dec 21 - "Christmas Pageant!"**

**- Led by: Rev. Dan**

In person or live on Facebook.

Come join the fun as we present our annual Christmas Pageant! Always a hit with both humor and deeper meaning, this service helps us to remember "the reason for the season".

**Dec 24 - "Christmas Eve Service"**

**- Led by: Rev. Dan**

**6:00 pm starting time with Rev. Dan at UUCEL, Zooming in with UUFE**

In person or by zoom. Not live on Facebook for this service.

Our Christmas Eve service will be a joint intergenerational service with Rev. Dan in the pulpit at UUCEL, and the Elkhart congregation will be joining via Zoom. Come and enjoy familiar carols and a special story for this season of Hope!

**Dec 28 - "Topic To Be Determined"**

**- Led by: Alice Palmer**

In person or live on Facebook.



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**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 January 2026 issue, the information is needed by: Monday, December 15 ~~ send submissions to: [uucel\\_bellnote@yahoo.com](mailto: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 of What's Inside - Full Info on Page 7

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Dec 28 - "Topic, To Be Determined" - Led by: Alice Palmer



Church's Website ~ <http://www.libertyuu.org>  
Church's E-Mail Address ~ [uuliberty@gmail.com](mailto:uuliberty@gmail.com)  
Wednesday's Chimes ~ [WednesdayChimes@gmail.com](mailto:WednesdayChimes@gmail.com)  
Church's Facebook Page ~ <http://www.facebook.com/libertyuu>  
The Bellnote's E-Mail Address ~ [UUCEL\\_Bellnote@yahoo.com](mailto: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

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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