



January 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

Practicing Resistance

January has a way of arriving heavily. The holidays fade, the light is thin, and the world rarely offers us the courtesy of a gentle start. It's a fitting moment to talk about practicing resistance.

Resistance isn't only about protest or public action. It's also about formation. It's about what we practice when no one is watching, what habits shape us long before a crisis demands a response.

It is said that, "We don't rise to the occasion. We fall back on our training".

That's true for first responders, musicians, and athletes, and it's just as true spiritually. When pressure comes, we don't suddenly invent courage or clarity. We draw on whatever we've been practicing all along. What we practice becomes what we are.

Resistance isn't something we switch on in emergencies. It's something we train for. It's built slowly through habits, disciplines, and repeated choices that shape our character over time. Practicing spiritual resistance strengthens the muscles that help us stay human in inhumane conditions: the muscles of attention, compassion, truth-telling, courage, and connection.

Like any muscle, these grow through use.

Some practices that help build this kind of resistance include:

***Practicing attention by staying present to what is actually happening, rather than numbing ourselves or looking away. This can be as simple as reading the news slowly and thoughtfully, listening deeply to one another, or noticing where our own bodies tighten or shut down.

***Practicing connection by resisting isolation. Showing up for worship, reaching out to one another, and remembering that community itself is a form of resistance in a culture that thrives on division and disconnection.

***Practicing truth-telling by naming what we see and feel honestly, without exaggeration or denial. This includes speaking up when something is harmful, and listening when we are challenged.

***Practicing rest and renewal by refusing the lie that exhaustion is a virtue. Resistance that lasts requires sleep, joy, beauty, and Sabbath. Burned-out people are easier to silence.

These practices strengthen a kind of spiritual muscle memory, the kind that helps us respond with integrity rather than panic when the world feels unsteady. We practice resistance when we refuse to let despair harden us. When we stay curious instead of cynical. When we keep showing up for one another, even when it would be easier to withdraw.

Continued on Page 3....

Notes from the Board

On December 8th the board held our regular meeting via Zoom. After a reading of the board covenant and approving the November minutes (which are posted on the social hall wall by the kitchen), Treasurer Laurie Campbell noted that we are on target with the budget. Committees who have expenses are encouraged to submit their bills. Rev. Dan presented his November report, including leading a Trans Day of Remembrance service at the Elkhart Fellowship attended by over 100 people. He will activate the Nominating Committee at the beginning of the year.

Strategic Plan Progress includes an effort to host a harvest dinner to bring people together, the initiation of a list of upcoming community events where UUCEL can be present, and Ann's attending a Mid-America Region Program zoom meeting to connect with larger UUA community. Finally, after years of search to locate a professional to overhaul our website, we have connected with a local organization, Rooted Pixels, to go forward with guidance from a board committee. In the near future, Rev. Dan would like to start a winter adult RE program, is seeking ideas.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds: Gutters have been cleaned. The loose railing in the nursery will be repaired. We have a bid to repair stairs down to the social hall by adding a metal strip to the edge of the steps.

Worship: Services are planned through February and Worship Associate training has been reworked. The speaker from the cancelled December 7 service will reschedule for a spring date.

Membership continues to plan activities to connect members both present and away such as writing postcards.

RE has recruited several people to participate in Rev. Dan's pageant on December 21st.

Technology: At long last we have identified a webmaster to overhaul our website and will proceed with updating it.

Social Justice seeks 1-2 new leaders.

Caring continues their work honoring those with birthdays and illnesses.

The next meeting will be January 12, 2026 at 10am. All are welcomed. The board would like to thank the congregation for their confidence in our leadership and to know that all ideas are seriously considered. We wish you a season of warmth and camaraderie and a new year filled with promise, hope and love.

Ann

Submitted by: Ann Green Board President

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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

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

East Liberty: The Town That Doesn't Exist

The story of our church building is one of determination, dispute, and ultimately, harmony.

Universalists from New York settled in the Clark Lake area and formed the Universalist Society in 1856. Worshippers met outdoors, in log cabin homes, or later in a little schoolhouse they built around 1860.

In time, they shared a church they built with the Methodists in the nearby village of Liberty. Methodists would hold services Sunday mornings and Universalists, Sunday afternoons. The agreement was that the church would not be dedicated to any one faith or creed. Yet one Sunday the Universalists arrived at the church to discover that an evangelist had stirred such fervor in the Methodists that they had dedicated the church to the trinity.

Appalled, the Universalists left, never to return. They met instead back in the schoolhouse. The story goes that one Universalist who could see the Liberty church from his farm and who had loved it, was so incensed by the Methodists that he built a barn to block his view of their church forever.

By 1881 the Universalists had built a two-story church with a sanctuary seating 100 with a social hall downstairs. They built it with their own hands. It was often said the best of materials and workmanship went into it. The builders "made the foundations deep and wide, the walls square and upright as they hoped we might build our lives."

The structure is characteristic of late 19th century churches in this area, with its rectangular shape, orange brick exterior, and tall white steeple. The steps were added later and were fashioned of fieldstone from the farms of the church pioneer families. Inside, the pews are made of white ash trimmed with black walnut.

After all the brouhaha of leaving Liberty, the Universalists designated this church *East Liberty*, even though there is no such place on the map. They welcomed people of all faiths to the dedication of the building. During that ceremony, in

the spirit of religious harmony, Baptists, Methodists and Universalists stepped up to donate \$2400, guaranteeing the church would begin debt-free.

While remodeling the social hall about fifteen years ago, a part of a wall was pulled down to reveal a glimpse of the building's foundations. The exposed wall lets us stand in awe at the handiwork of our ancestors who erected a building that would embody their dreams and that still stands 145 years later.

In 2026 the church celebrates its 170th anniversary.

Submitted by: Ann Green



**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.**

Rev. Dan's Column Continued

In Unitarian Universalist community, we don't train alone. Worship, shared reflection, service, and mutual care are not distractions from the work. They are the training ground itself. Resistance rooted in love is a communal practice. We strengthen one another simply by gathering, listening, and remembering the values that hold us together.

This January, we're invited to ask: What are we practicing right now? What habits are shaping us? And who are we becoming as a result?

Because resistance that endures is not fueled by adrenaline alone. It's sustained by formation. And formation happens through practice. What muscle(s) will you choose to exercise this new year?

Rev. Dan Miyake

Continued on Next Column

Meetings and Events for UUCEL

2 Announcements from Rev. Dan

Rev. Dan has been hosting regular monthly small group discussions over lunch. These discussions are not structured or require outside work. Just come and chat and connect. The next gathering will be Friday, January 16 at 12:30 at Applebee's in Jackson. 1706 West Michigan Ave.

Rev. Dan will be attending the UUA Institute during the week of January 26. He will not be available for meetings that week, but can still respond to emails and texts.

Ladies' Lunch

The Ladies Lunch will be meeting on Thursday January 8, at The Roadhouse Grill & Bar, 4112 Lansing Ave. 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 3rd quarter is AWARE they provides services for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. They support survivors at every stage. They're dedicated to ensuring that survivors have the resources, support, and comfort they need during this critical time. Please, give by using the donate button on our website or by contributing with a check to the church with AWARE in the memo line.

Submitted by: Gretchen Marshall & Ann Green

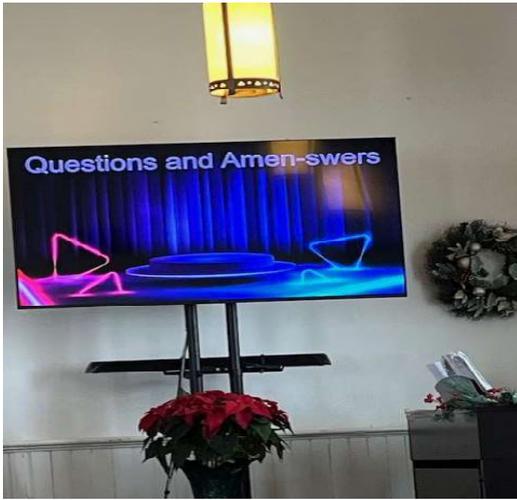
Grief In Slow Motion

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 2nd 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: Rev. Dan & Ann**

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 January 1st and they will be closed, so next up is Feb 5th. 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



Cory Page led the December 14th service on the “Journey to Faith” with Tomm Triplet as Worship Associate. Nathan Close and Joe Pryor each described their faith journey in such a personal way that invited us to reflect on our own experiences.

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 ~



January 's UUCEL Calendar

All Events are at the church Unless Otherwise Noted

Feb 5	Personal Care Ministry @ St. John's Church, 801 S. Mechanic ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
4 Sunday	~~ Service ~ Led by: Darrin Palmer ~ 11:00 am
4 Sunday	YUUMM Meeting ~ School House ~ 12:30 pm
8 Thurs	Ladies Lunch @ The Roadhouse Grill & Bar at 4112 Lansing Ave ~ 12:00 am
11 Sunday	~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
12 Mon	Board Meeting ~ 10:00 am
12 Mon	Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
16 Fri	Rev. Dan small group discussions over lunch ~12:30 pm at Applebee's in Jackson
18 Sunday	~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
19 Mon	The Bellnote Newsletter, Submissions Due
25 Sunday	~~ Service ~ Led by: Cory Page~ 11:00 am
26 Mon	Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes

Weekly Volunteer Schedule

Sunday, Jan 4 ~~ Greeter, Alyce O ~~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S
~~ Social Hour Host, Nena O & Team 3
~~ Technology Streaming, Tom P ~~ Worship Associate,
~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Intergenerational ~~ Nursery w/ Nena O & Sue R

Sunday, Jan 11 ~~ Greeter, Lori A ~~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S
~~ Social Hour Host, Nancy S & Rob G & Team 4
~~ Technology Streaming, Rob G ~~ Worship Associate, Elissa A
~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Alyce O & Alice P

Sunday, Jan 18 ~~ Greeter, Joan B ~~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S
~~ Social Hour Host, Lori A & Team 5
~~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~~ Worship Associate, Wendy S
~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Kathy H & Ashley S

Sunday, Jan 25 ~~ Greeter, Jackie J ~~ Usher, Paul J & Bob S
~~ Social Hour Host, Liz W & Team 6
~~ Technology Streaming, Mike B ~~ Worship Associate, Alice P
~~ R.E. K-5, Classes w/ Lori A & Nathan B ~~ Nursery w/ Donna H & Nicole B

~~ Celebrating Over 167 Years of Liberal Religion ~~

All Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am

Jan 4 - "Fed in Love!"

- Led by: Daren Palmer

In person or live on Facebook.

Shortened Service with a Potluck to follow.

Jan 11 - "Practicing Resistance: Responding Instead of Reacting"

- Led by: Rev. Dan

In person or live on Facebook

In a world that constantly trains us to react, what does it mean to respond instead? This sermon explores resistance not as outrage or impulse, but as a practiced discipline. Drawing on everyday experience and spiritual wisdom, we'll reflect on how the habits we cultivate shape who we become, and how learning to pause can be a powerful act of faith.

Jan 18 - "Practicing Resistance: A Third Way"

- Led by: Rev. Dan

In person or live on Facebook.

Martin Luther King Jr. taught that nonviolence is not weakness, but a demanding spiritual discipline. This MLK Day service explores a "third way" of resistance beyond fight or flight, inviting us to reflect on how practiced, thoughtful responses can challenge injustice without surrendering our humanity.

Jan 25 - "Spiritualism of Judo"

- Led by: Cory Page

In person or live on Facebook.



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 February 2026 issue, the information is needed by: Monday, January 19 ~~ 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 of What's Inside - Full Information on Page 7

Jan 4 - "Fed in Love!" - Led by: Daren Palmer with a Potluck following

Jan 11 - "Practicing Resistance: Responding Instead of Reacting" - Led by: Rev. Dan

Jan 18 - "Practicing Resistance: A Third Way" - Led by: Rev. Dan

Jan 25 - "Spiritualism of Judo" - 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

