



~ January 2026 ~

The Bellnote Mini-News

UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EAST LIBERTY
2231 Jefferson Road, Clarklake, MI 49234
(517) 553-4311 Located 3/4 miles West of U.S. 127

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.

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Sunday Services

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.

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Calendar

- 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

MINISTER ~ DAN MIYAKE ~ UUDJM@YAHOO.COM
BOARD PRESIDENT ~ ANN GREEN ~ GREENANNM@JCCMI.EDU

Rev. Dan's Column Continued....

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. 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

Sunday Services Continued...

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.

<http://www.libertyu.org/category/newsletter/>

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