



March 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

Minister

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UUDJM@YAHOO.COM

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Message from the Minister

March – The Month of Paying Attention

Each month our theme gives us a lens through which to look at our shared life. March offers a deceptively simple one: Paying Attention. We often imagine community is shaped mostly by decisions, programs, or leadership, but just as often it is shaped by perception. The same moment can feel welcoming or frustrating, hopeful or discouraging, depending on what we notice. In fact, much of our experience of belonging begins not with what happens, but with where our awareness settles.

Two people can walk into the same gathering and leave having experienced two entirely different events.

One notices the warm greeting at the door, the person quietly making the coffee, the choir practicing, the Board member staying late after a meeting, the newcomer sitting alone and trying to decide whether this place is safe.

The other notices the microphone squeal, the awkward pause, the typo in the order of service, the decision they wouldn't have made, the thing they wish were different.

Both people are telling the truth.

But they are not living in the same congregation.

Because communities are not built only by decisions or leadership or plans. They are built by attention. What we consistently notice becomes the emotional climate we all inhabit together.

There's an old story about two wolves battling within us — one generous, patient, and hopeful; the other resentful and suspicious. When asked which one wins, the answer is simple: the one we feed. In other words, what we pay attention to the most becomes our reality.

In our congregational life, if we pay attention to appreciation, then energy grows. If distance, apathy, and non-involvement circulate, people become spectators. If negative commentary circulates, we slowly become critics of a place we actually care about.

Most congregations do not struggle because people don't love them. They struggle because people begin to experience them as something they observe rather than something they help create. The shift is subtle. We attend instead of participate. We evaluate instead of engage. And over time the work of the community quietly concentrates into fewer and fewer hands.

Yet the opposite is also true. The moment people begin noticing needs, they begin meeting them. The moment people notice effort, encouragement multiplies it. Participation rarely begins with a sign-up sheet. It begins with attention.

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Notes from the Board

On February 9th the board held our regular meeting. After reading the board covenant and approving the January minutes (which are posted on the social hall wall by the kitchen), Treasurer Laurie Campbell reported that we continue to have a net income and that spending and income are on track with budget. In the Minister's report, Rev. Dan raised the topic of potentially taking on a ministerial intern; if we decided to do this the position would begin in the fall of 2027.

Review of the Strategic Plan progress included Rev. Dan's plan to establish Pastoral Care Associates for our congregation. In terms of our visibility in the community, Rooted Pixels has been hired to redo the church website. For our Action of Immediate Witness/Faithful defiance of authoritarianism we will focus on voter education, partnering with the League of Women Voters Jackson Area. We will help with the upcoming candidate Meet and Greet. The possibility of working with the Jackson County Immigration Coalition was also introduced.

We discussed the church security report from Gene Kopf and plan to call a meeting after church soon to discuss the issues of security as well as other safety issues. Guest Vic Marshall outlined the history of our Trust Fund which receives donations for the sustainability of the church. Rev. Dan will include the information in his March 1 pledge drive kickoff service. The pledge drive theme is *Paying It Forward* and initial plans are in place.

Committees. Building and Grounds has purchased a new remote-controlled thermostat for the school house and continues to follow up on other initiatives. Worship reports services are planned through March. RE seeks a new committee leader. Tech plans to meet Elkhart techs in person for the Easter Zoom service. Social Justice and Membership committees have no report. Caring has sent 11 cards and made three visits to hospice patients.

The next meeting will take place March 16, 2026 at 12:30 pm via Zoom.

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

HELP WANTED!

Let's spread the word about our church community on social media. Our new website is in the works but we need more visibility. Are you willing and able to post images from our UU collection to Facebook, Instagram, and other media? Know someone who would? Give Ann Green a holler

Submitted by: Ann Green

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

Rev. Dan's Column Continued

The same is true for concerns. Every healthy community needs honest feedback. But the direction that feedback travels matters. When concerns move toward the people who can respond, relationships strengthen and trust grows. When concerns move sideways through the community, they create frustration without resolution and distance without understanding. One path builds community. The other builds uncertainty.

Paying attention, then, is not simply about mindfulness. It is about authorship. It is how we decide whether this congregation is something that happens around us or something we are actively shaping together.

So, for this month, I want to offer a small shared practice: Each week in March:

Notice one thing that helps this community exist — and thank the person connected to it.

Notice one place where your presence could make something lighter — and offer it.

Notice one concern — and bring it directly, kindly, to the person who can actually hear it and do something about it. Complaining to your friend doesn't solve anything, and only feeds the Bad Wolf.

Small acts of positive attention accumulate. They feed the Good Wolf. They change how a place feels. They remind us that a congregation is not a performance we attend but a relationship we practice and engage with. Relationships grow in the direction of the attention we give them.

So, how will you choose to feed the Good Wolf this month?

Rev. Dan

Watch on Facebook:

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

New Adult RE Offering

Rev. Dan will be offering a three-month Adult RE class beginning in late 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 will be Thursday, March 26 at 6:30. Please contact Rev. Dan by March 10 if you would like to participate.

Submitted by: Rev. Dan



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

Announcement from Rev. Dan Study Leave

Rev. Dan will be on Study Leave March 9 through March 15. He will not be available for meetings, phone calls, emails, or other communications except in an emergency. He will return to the office on Monday, March 16.

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**

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 & N norman - Oversized Dark Sunglasses

Submitted by: Kathy Haynes

Ladies' Lunch

The Ladies Lunch will be meeting on Thursday March 12, at the Alfa Coney Island inside the Jackson Crossing Mall 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 March 5th. 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**

"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

**~~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.

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 inspir-ing 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.

Celebrating the Life of

Jane
VOLK



The Celebration of Life for our beloved mother, Jane Volk, is Saturday, May 2, 2026, 1:00 to 4:00PM. There will be time during the service at 1:00 for those who wish to share stories or memories of Jane. Refreshments will be served.

It will be held at the UU Church of East Liberty: 2231 Jefferson Rd, Clarklake, MI.

(The paper copies maybe hard to read. So, the below information is the very same as above)

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Submitted by; Vicki Volk- McGaffigan

~~ Celebrating Over 169 Years of Liberal Religion ~~
All Sunday Services Start at 11:00 am

Mar 1 - “Stewardship Kickoff”

- Led by: **Rev. Dan Miyake**

In person or live on Facebook.

This Sunday begins our annual Stewardship Pledge Drive. This topic, even though few people like to talk about money, is a critically important aspect of our church’s health and vitality and viability for the future. Rev. Dan will share his thoughts about our Stewardship theme of “Paying it Forward”. A potluck dinner will follow the service.

Mar 8 - “MLK JR., Boston College and Jesus and the Disinherited”

- Led by: **TBD**

In person or live on Facebook

Mar 15 - “Spirituality in Mathematics”

- Led by: **Cory Page**

In person or live on Facebook.

Mar 22 - “Spiritual Journey”

- Led by: **Melanie Baker, Guest Speaker**

In person or live on Facebook.

Mar 29 - “Seeing What’s Been Invisible”

- Led by: **Rev. Dan Miyake**

In person or live on Facebook.

Most of what shapes our lives hides in plain sight. Habits, expectations, unspoken roles, even people can disappear into familiarity. This service invites us to look again — not harder, but differently — and discover what becomes possible when the unseen finally comes into view.



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 April 2026 issue, the information is needed by: Monday, March 23 ~~ 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 the Sunday Topic's - Full Information on Page 7

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Mar 29 - "Seeing What's Been Invisible" - Led by: Rev. Dan Miyake



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
CLARKE, MI 49234
2231 JEFFERSON ROAD



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF EAST LIBERTY