



**Message from the Minister**

Dear UUCEL Members and Friends,

Over the last couple of years, we've been blessed with an extraordinary and precious gift: growth. And not just growth in numbers—but in the kinds of people who now call UUCEL home. Some of that growth has come in the form of small feet, curious eyes, laughter, wiggles, and the occasional joyful outburst (or not-so-joyful one). This is something we have hoped and prayed for over the years: that our beloved community would be vibrant, multi-generational, and full of life.

I know that for some of us—especially those who have long known our services as quieter, more contemplative spaces—this change can feel like an adjustment. And I understand that. For some, worship has been a time to find stillness and focus without interruption - a quiet and contemplative space. It can feel like “adult time.” But in our tradition, we believe worship is for all ages—and that includes the voices and movements of our youngest members. When we say we are a welcoming congregation, that welcome is not just for those who are quiet, still, and fully grown. It is for everyone—of every age, stage, and ability.

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**Sunday Services**

**Sept 7 - “Belonging Beyond These Walls”**

- **Led by: Rev. Dan** Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook. - Belonging is not just something that happens inside these walls; it is something we carry outward. Today we explore how our congregation can build belonging not only for ourselves, but for all people longing for a place of welcome.

**Sept 14 - “Water Communion and Ingathering”  
 Zoom with Joint & Intergenerational**

- **Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 10:30 am** Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook. - This is our annual Ingathering and Water Communion service to kick off the new church year! This year, Rev. Dan will be physically in Elkhart. UUCEL will participate on Zoom (link to appear in the Wednesday Chimes prior to the service). Please remember to bring water from your summer travels or activities for our Water Communion. **Important note: This service will begin at 10:30, not 11:00!**

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**Calendar**

- 4 Thurs Personal Care Ministry @ 1st Baptist Church, 201 S. Jackson ~ 4:30-6:30 pm
- 7 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 11:00 am
- 7 Sunday YUUMM Meeting ~ School House ~ 12:30 pm
- 8 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 8 Mon Board Meeting ~ 5:30 pm
- 9 Tue Lunch w/Rev. Dan at 12:30 at the old Luceros near Brooklyn
- 11 Thurs Ladies Lunch @ Bone Island Grille ~ 12:00 am
- 14 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Rev. Dan ~ 10:30 am ~ Voom
- 21 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Jim Benedict ~ 11:00 am
- 22 Mon The Bellnote Newsletter, Submissions Due
- 22 Mon Church Cleaning ~ by: Vicki Haynes
- 28 Sunday ~~ Service ~ Led by: Darrin Palmer~ 11:00 am

## Rev. Dan's Column Continued.....

Yes, children can sometimes be wiggly. They may whisper to a parent, drop a crayon, or need to be reminded about indoor voices. But they are not interruptions to our worship—they are a part of it. Their presence means that the good news of our faith is still being passed on to another generation. Their giggles, their curiosity, even their occasional squirming, are signs that we are alive as a community.

So I invite you—no, I encourage you—to welcome our children wholeheartedly. I invite you to see these sounds not as distractions, but as holy reminders that our faith is alive and growing. Smile when you see them. Learn their names. Let them know that this is their church home too. Because if we want them to grow into the kind of adults who will carry this faith forward, they must first feel that they belong here, just as they are. In a world that can be so unwelcoming to families, especially in public spaces, I want our congregation to be a place where parents can exhale, knowing their children are not only tolerated but cherished.

Yes, it will sometimes mean a little extra noise, and yes, it may mean moments when we have to re-focus our attention. But what we gain is immeasurable: a community that reflects the fullness of life, that welcomes everyone exactly as they are, and that models to the youngest among us that they are beloved here. I hope we can all remember that the presence of children is a sign that our congregation has a future. Every giggle, every question whisper-ed a little too loudly, is a sign that the values we hold dear are being passed to a new generation. So, when you hear a child in worship, I invite you to hear it as a blessing—a sign of growth, vitality, and hope. And if you ever feel your focus drifting during a service because of new sounds, perhaps offer a silent prayer of gratitude that our sanctuary is still a place where the next generation of Unitarian Universalists can learn, grow, and belong.

I strongly believe that if we truly believe our Principles and our Values, then we need to welcome children not just in theory, but in practice — even when it's not perfectly comfortable for us. Because comfort is not the goal of church. Connection is. Belonging is. Love is. Let us remember that we are all here—young and old alike—because we long for a place where we can be fully ourselves and wholly loved. May we be that place for each other. May we be that place for them. May it be so. With Love abundant,

**REV. DAN MIYAKE**

## Sunday Services Continued...

**Sept 21 - "What is Love?" - Led by: Jim Benedict** Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook.

**Sept 28 - "International Day of the Deaf" - Led by: Darrin Palmer** Masks are optional. In person or live on Facebook. PRAISE-CELEBRATE-HOORAY: Religion in the Deaf Community. Darrin will be discussing the prominence of religious worship in the Deaf community, and exploring the similarity and differences to religious worship in the hearing world.

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