



+ December 24 Christmas Eve

Two evening services:

5:00 p.m. Traditional Christmas service focusing on our younger people. Typically less than an hour long, and guaranteed to put a glow in the heart that will warm you at least through Christmas morning.

***NEW START TIME* 7:00 p.m.** Traditional candlelight service for the whole family

There is no childcare on Christmas Eve – children are invited to accompany you to either service.



- December services**
10:30 a.m.
- 2** During this service, we will introduce the theme of Advent, beginning with the staying power of Love. Rev. Mandy Beal with Worship Associate Kelly Taylor and music by The Sound Messengers.
 - 9** On this Music Sunday, The Chalice Choir presents Franz Schubert's Mass in G, accompanied by a chamber orchestra in a full service that is all about Hope and Love.
 - 16** For this year's multigenerational holiday service, we present a radio theater version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, that classic expression of learning to find Joy in Christmas. Musical accompaniment by Forrest Howell.
 - 23** Join Rev. Mandy for a shorter, quiet service of contemplation. A few readings and prayers will be offered, but there will be no music and no sermon.
 - 30** Worship Associates Paul Vachon and Anthony Kubien will lead a café-style service with roundtable discussions in the Hodas Family Hall. No childcare at this service.



Winter Solstice

Friday, December 21, 7:00 p.m.

We will welcome the returning light and pay homage to the darkness on the evening of the winter solstice, Friday, December 21 at 7:00 p.m., in the sanctuary. Led by Penny Hackett-Evans, this will be a quiet celebration with music, readings, and other surprises on this longest night of the year. It will be followed by a reception to which you are invited to bring a few cookies or other finger foods to share.

Joys and Sorrows

From Kelly Taylor: “My cousin Andrew’s film, *Time Freak*, opened November 9 in Royal Oak. He has worked hard on this project as the writer and director, and I’m very proud of him.”

From Deanna Zapico: “Please keep my son, Andre, in your prayers and healing thoughts as he struggles with mental health issues while pursuing graduate studies at the University of Michigan.”

George and Kay White Meyer celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on November 12. Congratulations!

Shirley Farrar, mother-in-law of Kym Worth, passed away on October 8. Her family gathered, as already planned, to celebrate her 92nd birthday, with friends and extended family joining in a celebration of her life.

Kathy DuHame’s father, Jerry DuHame, has been moved to a higher level of care at the memory-care facility where he resides.

Marilyn Kelly's husband, Donald Newman, passed away on November 18. A memorial service was held on November 28. If you are interested in making a charitable donation in Donald's memory, please consider Henry Ford Hospital Movement Disorders Center or Leader Dogs for the Blind.

BUC member William "Bill" Jackson, husband of Meighen Jackson, died on November 22. His funeral service was held on November 29.

Annette Sargent’s father, Bob Peelle, died suddenly on November 19 in Oak Ridge, TN. He had overcome numerous ailments over the years and was nearing his 90th birthday. He was a physicist, a prominent figure in his community, and, along with his UU congregation, was on the frontlines of the battles for civil rights in the region. His gentle, thoughtful spirit will be missed by his family and community, but will live on in the good he has done.



Getting to Know UU

Do you have questions about what BUC stands for, believes in, and values? Want to know more about BUC and ways you can give to and receive from the church?

Membership Committee member Rob Davidson is facilitating a class to discuss, share, and explore who we are as UUs. Whether you consider yourself a newcomer or have been attending for a while, you are welcome. Classes will be held on December 9, January 13, and February 10 from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. in the Blue Door classroom. On December 9, we will be learning about four major themes of

Unitarian Universalism and noteworthy people in our history. If you would like to attend an upcoming class, please RSVP to Rob Davidson via email at kathyd8082@gmail.com. **Childcare is also available by contacting Rob in advance.**

Sharing Dinners

The December sharing dinner has been cancelled. The January dinner is scheduled for January 12, 2019. Signup details will be emailed to current participants in December. Contact David Sabbagh at dsabbagh7@gmail.com with any questions.



Body Wisdom

Last chance before our winter hiatus! Join us in the Commons on Monday evenings at 5:30 p.m. for this group, which uses music, movement, stillness, and stories

to unlock the wisdom of your body. Stretch, bend, swing, and hang—no experience necessary. Come once or every week in December. Facilitated by Penny Hackett-Evans. The group is NOT meeting December 25 or January 1.



Living By Heart

Last chance before our winter hiatus! Join us at 7:00 p.m. on Monday

evenings in the Commons. We use writing, poetry, and simple art to explore what is in our hearts and minds. Bring a journal and a pen. No experience necessary. Come once or every week in December. Facilitated by Penny Hackett-Evans. The group is NOT meeting December 25 or January 1.

Grief Support Group

This group meets monthly on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. in the Large Conference Room. This month, the group will meet on December 11 only (no meeting on December 25). All who are processing and experiencing grief at the loss of a loved one are welcome to participate in this group. Facilitated by Alison Rule.

Caregivers Support Group

Being a caregiver can be an isolating, overwhelming, and challenging experience. We offer support for those doing the supporting. The group has moved to monthly meetings and will be gathering on Wednesday, December 12 and Wednesday, January 9 at 2:00 p.m. in the Large Conference Room. Facilitated by Alison Rule and Camille Harris.

Knitting Ministry

The group will not meet in December. We will resume on Monday, January 28.

Humanists of BUC

The group will be on hiatus in December.

Sunday Morning Discussion Group

The group continues on Sundays throughout December from 9:00 to 10:15 a.m. in the small Green Door classroom. We normally pick a topic from several suggestions, taking the one with the most votes. However, on December 9, we will discuss the first half of the book *Nomadland* by Jessica Bruder. We will discuss the second half of the book on January 13. Everyone is welcome to enrich their Sunday mornings with our lively discussions.

Alliance

The Alliance annual holiday luncheon is Tuesday, December 4 at the Iroquois Club, for those who have made their reservations. There will be no January meeting. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 20, 2019. The speaker will be Dr. Rob Glass, Superintendent of Bloomfield Hill Schools, on "The State of Michigan Schools."



Christmas Day Potluck

No plans for Christmas Day? Don't feel like having people over or traveling long distances? Come join us for an enjoyable potluck dinner and gift exchange. This year, we will be meeting at BUC on Christmas Day, Tuesday, December 25, at 4:00 p.m. Sign up after church on December 2, 9, or 16 or contact the coordinator, Carol Winslow at cwin@att.net or 248-892-8387.

Devotional Booklets

The monthly devotional booklet for December is all about Advent. It contains daily reflections on Advent-related topics that are appropriate for solitary reflection or discussion with friends and family. Devotional booklets are available outside the sanctuary doors before and after every service.

Membership Committee

BUC's Membership Committee has a new Welcoming Team! Judy Amir, Rob Davidson, Jan Devereux, Jay Labban, Marcia Mahood (chair), Kris Schreck, and Brianna Zamborsky are looking at how we currently welcome newcomers to our church, and how we can improve. We believe the job of welcoming belongs to all of us, and we look forward to working with greeters, ushers, congregants, and staff to extend authentic welcomes to each vulnerable person who comes through our doors.

Each of us came through those doors ourselves long (or not so long) ago for various reasons, but what we came here for is remarkably similar. It seems most of us seek a human connection as much as a spiritual one. So remember: the door doesn't close after you. Let's all work together to welcome those who come after us into the human community that is the hallmark of our spiritual home.

December Plate Collection

This month's recipient is the Welcome Inn, a warming center housed at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Southfield. BUC has been a source of critical support for the Welcome Inn through donations, casseroles, and help serving meals. Contact Welcome Inn board member Sharon Kirchner (248-224-3374) or BUC coordinator Annis Pratt (248-892-5533) to help make casseroles or sign up to work a meal shift. The center is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. from mid-December through mid-March, and on Tuesdays the rest of the year.

Any BUCer may nominate a local nonprofit organization to be a plate collection recipient. Submit an application online at bucmi.org by clicking the Social Justice tab, then Plate Collection Application. You can also contact Barbara Robinson at 248-320-8366 or brjdr8719@gmail.com to submit an application or discuss a potential recipient.

Paid Position Open at BUC

Job Title: Part-time hourly custodian

Reports to: Associate Executive

Status: Part-time

Hours: 4-16 (variable) hours per week; afternoons, evenings, and weekends

Job summary: Assist with maintenance of campus buildings and grounds; room set-up/tear-down for events and meetings; rental set-ups; outdoor maintenance; cleaning of restrooms and carpets/flooring

Applicants should contact Kym Worth at kym.worth@bucmi.org, 248-647-2380, ext. 215

Advent

Rev. Mandy Beal
Senior Minister



Advent is one of my favorite times of year. I realize that Advent might feel outside of our Unitarian Universalism; it probably feels explicitly Christian to a lot of us. It's true that Advent is rooted in the Christian tradition, but that doesn't mean that it's "off limits" to us.

It's OK for us to borrow from another religious tradition, if we do so thoughtfully and with reverence. We do this by finding the balance between the universal and the specific. It is the universal that attracts us to something outside of our own tradition. We can see pieces of our experience reflected in the practices of another tradition, and so we want to take part in that practice. Advent is a season of waiting with great expectation. There is no experience that more perfectly represents waiting with great expectation than pregnancy, which is why Advent precedes Christmas. We can all relate to the experience of waiting for a baby, be it our own baby or the baby of a loved one. The Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace of this experience is universal and has meaning for us all.

But there is still a specificity about Advent that cannot be denied. While we can borrow Advent from Christianity, we must be mindful of the difference between borrowing and stealing. In order for it to have meaning, I think we need to understand why we are borrowing Advent. For me, celebrating Christmas feels hollow and overly commercial without the spiritual preparation and grounding of Advent. We know that there are presents, time off, and feasts waiting for us. Taking time in the intervening weeks to reflect on Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace seems only appropriate. By celebrating Advent, we hope to cultivate a spiritual abundance to match the physical excesses of the season.

We will have four very different worship services to consider the Advent themes, and I'm delighted to share them with you in my first year participating in our congregation's holiday traditions.

Worship Notes

Are you having trouble hearing during Sunday worship services? We have hearing assistive devices ready for you! BUCer Heidi Kapsokavathis recently noticed that many people with hearing aids don't take advantage of the assistive devices. She has found that they work wonders for her ability to hear during worship services. If you'd like to try one, please speak to any Sunday morning usher.

Holiday Office Hours

The church office is closed from Christmas Day through New Year's Day. However, administrative staff will be onsite throughout the week. If you need to stop by, contact Associate Executive, Kym Worth via email to schedule an appointment: kym.worth@bucmi.org; or text/call her mobile: 248-914-3685.





MAMA's Coffeehouse: Finvarra's Wren

Saturday, December 15, 8:00 p.m.

Finvarra's Wren brings its solstice celebration back to MAMA's Coffeehouse. One of North America's most exciting Irish quartets, this Detroit-based band has an intense dedication to their instruments and to Irish music. Traditional and contemporary Irish, Scottish, and Celtic-American folk songs are punctuated with

wonderfully inventive arrangements of jigs, reels, and hornpipes.

The band is led by Jim Perkins and Cheryl Burns, well-known for their sensitive vocals and the inventive musical weaving of Jim's guitar and Cheryl's mountain dulcimer and bodhran. Their son Asher Perkins (button accordion and concertina) and daughter Alison Perkins (vocals, fiddle, and tin whistle) are world-renowned for their award-winning playing.

"Finvarra's Wren unequivocally ranks in the top-most echelon of American bands performing Irish traditional music today. With expert musicianship from every quarter, the band's imaginative interpretations of tunes and songs are wholly true to the Irish tradition." -Don Penzien, Director, CelticFest Mississippi

Music at BUC

December and the holidays hold a promise of connecting all of us as a family at BUC. One of the ways we do this is through rich music. Many of you have noticed our newest addition: pianist Forrest Howell. Forrest is a gentle soul who hails originally from Washington and is earning his doctorate from the University of Michigan after extensive accompanying and solo experience with various ensembles. He particularly enjoys collaborating with other musicians. We are thrilled this deft, affable pianist has joined us!

On December 9, The Chalice Choir presents the congregation with the gift of Franz Schubert's Mass in G, accompanied by a chamber orchestra made up of sought-after instrumentalists from all around metro Detroit; some are BUCers. Come and hear our wonderful soloists and choir sing this timeless Romantic-period work in a full service that is all about love and hope.

We have been missing our keyboard-friend Mark Watson, who is having back troubles with 3 herniated discs and is currently awaiting surgery. Some congregants say they miss his great smile and ever-present flip-flops. We wish Mark a quick recovery so he can play with The Sound Messengers once again.

On Christmas Eve, we need your voice! If you are a singer who normally just doesn't have time for choir, come and sing with us on December 24. We will rehearse the same day at 6:00 p.m. to sing at the 7:00 p.m. service. You can get the music early in December if you want to work on your own.

As always, write to us if you have music questions or comments: steven.dearing@bucmi.org and abha.dearing@bucmi.org. Happy Holidays to all!

-Abha Dearing and Steven Dearing, Co-Directors of Music Ministry

Service and Social Justice

During the holiday season, I get a slew of emails from several charitable organizations regarding donating money or food, adopt-a-family programs, and learning more about their mission and work. I have often found that many of these social justice organizations have predominately white board members and staff serving communities of color.

While donating a coat would help someone get through the winter season, I find myself asking what I can do to learn more about racial inequity. I recently attended the Facing Race conference in Detroit. It was an amazing experience to be with over 3,000 folks who are working towards racial equity in our country. I attended a workshop called "Beyond Allies." This workshop explored what it means to have white privilege. In the small group I was in, we asked ourselves: what is white privilege? Is white privilege not having to worry about being killed by the police? Is white privilege not having to worry about where to access safe, clean, and affordable water? Yes, these are examples of white privilege; however, shouldn't access to water, and freedom from the fear of police, be basic human rights that should be protected and afforded to all? Our conversations about white privilege should not be limited to the lack of human rights, but also about protecting human rights for all. We have much more work to do to learn about racial equity and to work towards protecting human rights that have been denied to so many, including Indigenous, Black, and Latinx people.

-Ben Gabel

Director of Service and Social Justice



Women's March in Washington, DC

Friday, January 18 through Sunday, January 20

We invite BUCers and their friends and family to attend the Women's March on Washington, taking place on Saturday, January 19, 2019. We have reserved a 55-passenger charter bus for the trip. All genders and ages are welcome, with parents deciding whether their children are old enough to participate. We will be departing from BUC on Friday, Jan. 18 at 8:00 p.m., marching at 10 a.m. on Saturday in DC, and arriving back at BUC on Sunday, Jan. 20 at 8:00 a.m. Seats are \$125 per person and reduced fares are available. Contact: Ben Gabel, ben.gabel@bucmi.org, 248-622-7848.

To purchase or to donate: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/birmingham-unitarian-church-womens-march-2019-tickets-51213928238>

Tutors Needed at Walt Whitman School

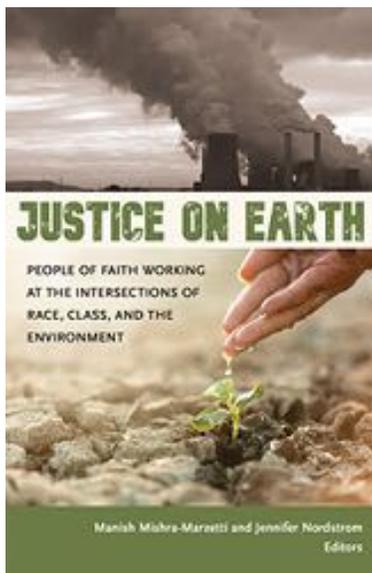
Walt Whitman Elementary School in Pontiac is in need of additional tutors to help students achieve the reading level appropriate for their grade. It is said that up to completion of Grade 3, students are learning to read, and after that they must read in order to learn. Thus, the K-3 years are essential. Please consider whether you could tutor a youngster and give them the boost they need and deserve. Contact Mary Jo Ebert (248-224-0223; maryjoebert@gmail.com) to learn more about what this work entails.

South Oakland Shelter – Thank You!

Volunteers from BUC, Muslim Unity Center, Northwest UU, and independents made South Oakland Shelter at BUC a success. You gave the best gift to these men, women, and children, your time! You made a difference! If you are interested in continuing your involvement, SOS has a program called HandUp that allows you to “target” help the specific people we housed. Money is contributed to a specific item and given to one of our guests through the SOS staff to guarantee its use for only that one thing. Contact Paul Plante (pplante@twmi.rr.com) for a list of people.

Below is an SOS story from Mary Jo Ebert:

While the SSJ team was serving dinner on Friday night, two men came into the social hall looking for the location of their AA meeting after discovering their usual meeting spot was inaccessible. As we walked around looking for their meeting, they asked what was taking place at our church. They could see everything set up and a number of our guests in the dining area in the social hall. I told them a bit about SOS and our hosting activity. One of them said, “Yes, I’m familiar with SOS. I spent 90 days in that program at one time. *I’m a success story.*” He was a tall, strapping guy with a warm smile. That man is living independently and committed to maintaining sobriety, in part because people provided a home and meals and treated him humanely when he was at a low point.



Green Sanctuary Ministry

Justice on Earth has opened my eyes, and my heart. After reading this book, I realize that I am only just beginning to see the deep intertwining of environmental degradation and social justice.

The UUA Common Read Selection Committee has chosen *Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and the Environment*, as the 2018-2019 UUA Common Read. The book is a collection of 12 essays by ministers and others—all UU’s—with a background in environmental and justice issues.

The Green Sanctuary Ministry and the Service and Social Justice Team are working on a plan for discussing this moving book; we’ll nail it all down soon. In the meantime, I urge you to buy a copy and get started on it. Most of the essays are about 10 pages, so not a long read. But they are each so full of insight and new ideas that they provide lots of food for further thought and discussion.

“This highly anticipated anthology presents a powerful and penetrating look at environmental justice from some of the key thinkers and activists in Unitarian Universalism today. Fourteen activist ministers and lay leaders apply a keen intersectional analysis to the environmental crisis, revealing ways that capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and other systems of oppression intersect with and contribute to ecological devastation.” (Amazon review)

So get your copy soon—maybe a good holiday gift? Delivered in a canvas shopping bag? Hmmmm. You can get a copy at the Green Sanctuary Ministry table OR the Service and Social Justice table after service, or from Ben Gabel, or on Amazon (\$9.99 for a Kindle version). Happy reading!

-Jane O’Neil, Co-Chair, Green Sanctuary Ministry

Adopt-a-Family



Adopt-a-Family is underway! We are so grateful to the many generous BUC members who provide holiday gifts for families at Walt Whitman School, where many BUC folks tutor and volunteer. Without you, many of these children would not have gifts. THANK YOU for your generosity!

Drop off your gifts at BUC on Sunday, December 16 between 10:00 am and 12:30 pm. Gifts will be delivered to the school on Monday, December 17. Contact Barbara Robinson at brjdr8719@gmail.com or 248-320-8366 with any questions.

Gingerbread House Construction Party



Saturday, December 8, 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon in the Hodas Family Hall

Fun for families, grandparents, grandkids, adults, and children!

\$7 donation requested per gingerbread house, payable at the event. Please bring cash or check.

Younger children will need assistance with their projects. They may bring a helper, or work with a friendly volunteer helper from BUC.

Snacks and beverages will be provided.

Signup is required.

RSVP to Merry Hoffmeyer at merryhoffmeyer57@gmail.com. Please provide the following in your email:

- Your name and contact information, including phone number
- Name and age of child or children
- If child needs a helper, will you be staying, or shall we find a volunteer?

Bring a box (or box lid) that is at least 14" x 10" for carrying your project home, and consider wearing craft-friendly clothing.

We have many volunteer opportunities, including:

- Frosting Fairy: Make royal icing at home and deliver it to BUC on Saturday morning (recipe and ingredients will be provided)
- Setup: 8:30 - 9:30
- Cleanup: 11:45 - 1:00
- Greeter/Host: Welcome guests and families as they arrive; help with nametags, coats, seating
- Construction helper: assist younger children with their projects

Volunteers are invited to make their own gingerbread houses at no cost.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact Merry Hoffmeyer or Mary Jo Ebert.



Religious Education

Love, Hope, Joy, and Peace

Advent for Directors of Religious Education is very special. We experience it all! There is the HOPE, of course, that our RE families will be present for the many exciting things that have been planned for December: the OWL sleepover, Candy Cane Sunday, the high school youth Adopt-a-Family shopping, and our multigenerational service on December 16. There is the JOY of working with children and youth—the cookies floating in frosting, the bags full of gifts for the children in need, the challenge of costuming the Christmas Eve nativity play, and sorting out 115 poinsettias. There is the PEACE that we all share during the quiet moments of the season. And above all, there is the LOVE we receive throughout the year as we connect with all the wonderful people who make up our BUC Religious Education community.

Starting December 2, as part of the annual Candy Cane Sunday event, the RE program will be collecting new socks, gloves, and mittens for children ages toddler through 6th grade at Walt Whitman School in Pontiac. Please bring unwrapped donations of these items to the RE office anytime through Sunday, December 17. Thank you.

Holiday schedule:

Dec. 2: Candy Cane Sunday happening during 10:30 a.m. service; gift wrap creation in Hodas Hall after service (K-12th grade participate in Candy Cane Sunday, and nursery/preschool offered)

Dec. 9: Music Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. (nursery/preschool and K-5th grade RE classes offered)

Dec. 16: Multi-generational rendition of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* at 10:30am (nursery/preschool offered)

Dec. 23: Contemplative service (nursery/preschool and K-5th grade RE classes offered)

Dec. 24: Two services at 5:00 p.m. (child-oriented) and 7:00 p.m. (no RE offerings for Nursery-12th grade)

Dec. 30: Café-style service at 10:30 a.m. (no RE offerings for Nursery-12th grade)

Please contact Eleanor McGuire, Children's DRE, at eleanor.mcguire@bucmi.org with any questions. If you are not receiving regular email updates about youth events, please send your contact information to Youth DRE Kimery Campbell at kimery.campbell@bucmi.org. You can also find updated youth event information on the RE Calendar on the BUC website.

Scrip

BUC's Scrip program is still going strong! If you've never heard of Scrip, it's "shopping cart fundraising"—we sell plastic, paper, or electronic gift cards and a portion of the card value is donated to BUC. Scrip cards are convenient—faster than writing a check, using a credit card, or even cash! Just swipe and go—and your balance is printed on your receipt. Scrip offers access to hundreds of merchants, from Ace Hardware to Zappos.com. Scrip cards are also a more secure alternative to credit cards. For example, using a Scrip gas card allows you to pay at the pump with no personal account information attached.

Ordering is easy—place your order at the Scrip table on Sunday morning and collect your cards the following week. And now you can pay for Scrip cards with a credit card!

For more information about Scrip, visit bucmi.org, talk to BUC Scrip coordinator Kimery Campbell, or stop by the table!

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Associates provide support for BUC congregants experiencing significant life challenges, through the support of pastoral care associates and helping hands volunteers working in partnership with the minister. We assist the congregant in moving toward being able to help themselves, by being a caring presence during a difficult time and providing support in such areas as visits, meals, transportation, and assistance in locating appropriate community resources for ongoing needs.

We recently developed a “helping hands” program that provides short-term practical support like transportation, errands, and more. This level of support is a good match for people recovering from illness or surgery.

Pastoral Care Associates are specially trained lay members of BUC. They work in collaboration with the minister to extend their services throughout the congregation. Pastoral care involves:

- Being present with the person
- Listening to the person describe his or her situation
- Asking appropriate questions to help the person tell their story
- Offering empathy and emotional support
- Referring to the minister, if appropriate, for pastoral counseling

The minister offers pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling is typically short term, and may lead to a referral to other support resources. If you or someone you know could benefit from pastoral care, please contact the minister or a pastoral care associate.

Minister: Rev. Mandy Beal

Pastoral Care Associates: Cindy Goldman, Alison Rule, Ed Sharples, Lisa Patterson, Paul Fordree, Mary Markovski
