

The Fellowship Focus

Monthly Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Elkhart

December 2023



Deepen your understanding of Article II

If you've been wondering what all this discussion about Article II has been all about, UUFE is offering an in-depth exploration on this historic stage for all Unitarian Universalists.

Article II of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Bylaws, Principles and Purposes, is the foundation for all the work of our UUA and its member congregations and covenanted communities. It is the covenant to which Unitarian Universalist congregations and covenanted communities pledge themselves when they become members of our UUA.

Article II Spiritual Reflections is four sessions of 90 minutes each, conducted in-person at UUFE. The dates and times are 10 a.m. Saturday, November 18; 10 a.m. Saturday, December 2; 10 a.m. Saturday, December 9; and 10 a.m. Saturday, December 16. The sessions are free of charge. Terry Mark and Pam Wycliff will be the co-facilitators of these sessions.

NOTE: While it is not a requirement, participation in all four sessions is strongly recommended to help you get the most out of the experience. This series will likely be offered again in early 2024.

If you would like to enroll, please fill out an online form at <https://forms.gle/MbrVN94mUmksA7Qz8> (or send an email to Terry Mark at klagmorn@gmail.com).

Sundays at UUFE

1st Sunday, 12/3, 10 am: The Freedom of Christmas

Anna Hagen, harpist and storyteller, will bring us beautiful carols with her Celtic harp and share how the Christmas story is interwoven with messages of freedom from Exodus.

2nd Sunday, 12/10, 10 am: Whose Side Are You On? (Roots of Israeli/Palestinian Conflict)

Rich Meyer, a former worker in Community Peacemaker Teams, and the director of Cora Dale House in Goshen, will speak about the current conflict, its roots, and the concerns of all parties.

3rd Sunday, 12/17, 10 am: Yule, plus an RE program

Worship Committee member and CUUPS co-leader Laura Snow will speak on Yule. Our RE Program will have something special for us as well! Plus, we will share Joys & Sorrows. Potluck after the service. Bring a dish to share, and no worries if you forget, there is always plenty.

*****4th Sunday, 12/24, 6 pm Social Hour, 7 pm Service: Christmas Eve Service**

The Worship Committee will bring a Reader's Theater program to a special Sunday evening service. (NOTE: there will be NO Sunday morning service.) This will be preceded with a 6 pm Social Hour/Cookie Exchange. This program is being written by Genee Crump. Will we have our 4th Sunday candle? Will we sing "Silent Night?" Only Genee knows for sure!

5th Sunday, 12/31, 10 am: Chuck Bower, "Coffin and Cradle".

This will be a fresh take on leaving the old and bringing in the new. What will you leave behind in 2023? What do you want to rebirth in 2024? As we close out the year, please consider sharing your thoughts and feelings on these questions.

1st Sunday, 1/7/24, 10 am: Dwight Fish, "Now and Then".

We don't have any other information than a title, but you can be sure that Dwight will speak about something!

Coffee, tea, and refreshments will be offered in the Gathering Place after each service, and Meditation meets at 11:45 am, except on 3rd Sunday for potluck.

A Walk in the Park

Sunday afternoon, December 3, weather permitting, we plan to meet at Cobus Creek County Park on CR 8 at 1:30 p.m. We'll be at the parking lot not far from the bathrooms. If you have any questions call Carolynne at 574 584 4571 or Terry at 574 316 6210.

Community Euchre

Join people from the community and our Fellowship for relaxing fun and warm fellowship. We play round robin games and get to know each other. All euchre fans and "wannabes" are invited to join the fun. If you're a beginner, no worries, we'll set you up with other beginners and easygoing veterans. Contact Mary Adams at createnjoy@yahoo.com for more information. Events held monthly on 2nd Saturdays at 4pm, next on December 9.

Art Committee

Thank you to Carolynne Andersohn, Emily Morison, and Carolee Searles for the most recent installation in the gallery hallway. The current display is an art collection on loan from Gordon and Phyllis Hostetler.

Worship and Arts

Thanks to everyone that has participated in services this year! There are plenty of opportunities, and look for those on the signup sheet that is usually stationed on Ivy Island in the foyer.

*** Special service time *** Please note that on Sunday, Dec. 24th, we will have an EVENING service ONLY. There will be no Sunday morning service.

December's services open with Anna Hagen returning. Then we'll have an informative speaker with Rich Meyer, a former Community Peacemaker, talking about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Yule/Krampus and an RE program is our first holiday themed service. For Christmas Eve, we'll have a reader's theater service, plus special music. For our year-end New Year's Eve service (regular time at 10 am) Chuck is asking for 3 volunteers to do parts of a reading, entitled "Carry Each Other into the New Year". Another volunteer could read, "Purification", by Wendell Berry. This service will be participatory, and include sharing of things we wish to leave behind, or give birth to in 2024.

Finally, Rev. Jimmy Clifton wishes to express his thanks for all the cards, calls, emails, and texts of well-wishes and encouragement as he recovers from his bypass surgery. When he is more fully recovered, he will come visit us.

Science And Society

We will suspend the Science and Society programs for December. Currently we anticipate starting them back up in January but will make that decision during December. If anyone would like to start an alternative program, such as a forum discussion or other program, please contact Ken Clayborn.

Meditation

The meditation group will meet at 11:45 am, in the RE classroom, as follows: December 3, December 10, and 31. Since we have a potluck on December 17th, we will take the day off so we can all enjoy the meal together. In addition, since we are having an evening service on Sunday-Christmas Eve the 24th, we will not hold the meditation session that day. We generally discuss our meditation practices followed by a guided meditation. The sessions usually last about an hour. There is no charge for this program, and all are welcome.

UU Feasters

Feasters will meet at 11:30am on Wednesday, December 27 at Olive Garden, 3003 Brittany Ct., Elkhart.

Let Mary Adams know that you can come so that she can reserve adequate space for us. Contact her at 619-921-0613 or createnjoy@yahoo.com.

UU Feasters is a social outing for those interested in sharing a monthly luncheon together. Please consider coming and having a wonderful social time with others from our Fellowship.

YOGA at UUFEE

We are pleased to have Kristen Smith-Myers as our yoga teacher. She will be with us on most Thursday evenings beginning at 6pm in the Gathering Place.



Saturday, December 23 at 5 PM: The UUFEE CUUPS Group Celebrates Yule

Our CUUPS group celebrates Yule around the time of the winter solstice. This is a time of new beginnings, rebirth, transformation, getting rid of unwanted habits, and creativity. Please plan to bring a side dish or sweet treat to share for our potluck feast after the rite.

Highlights from the Board of Trustee meeting on Wednesday, November 8, 2023

All Board members were present: Laura Snow, President Elect, Lorna Lane, Secretary, Ken Clayborn, Treasurer, Pam Wycliff, President and Dwight Fish, Linda Gill and Taylor Chadwick, Trustees.

1. We have two of the three members needed for our Stewardship Committee: Karen Cripe and T.J. Shaum. A third will be invited.
2. The task force to research Computer platform/software was tabled for a month. Dwight will be giving the committees information he has used from Environmental Center.
3. Ministerial Search Committee will be meeting within a few days so will give updated report at December meeting.
4. A white board for committees to post small tasks needed by committees is in place in the Gathering Place and ready for Committees to post small jobs/tasks and for congregation members to look at the board and find tasks they would be interested in completing.
5. When each committee has opportunity to review any policies that may affect them, a task force will be formed to review and update all policies for UUFE. Definitely needed will be the creation of a policy for Armed Intruder/Risk Control. When reviewed, updated and Board approved we will consider putting the policies on the UUFE website.
6. Re-visited possible renting to UCC church for services. It was agreed we would consider renting to this congregation but not between hours of 9:00 AM-12 noon on Sunday mornings. Pam will contact Rev. Izzy Harbin and find what they are needing and if they would want to rent with the above restriction.
7. It was agreed by the Board that committee work and membership should be by members who are local and currently involved in the Fellowship. Pam will contact those who fall outside those parameters.
8. We continue to need someone to assume role of Treasurer, Worship and Arts Chair, and Board Secretary for 2024-2025.
9. Next board meeting, which is always open to membership, is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM



Finance Committee

from Ken Clayborn

1. Tycol Excavating has completed the installation of the drainage swale in the parking lot to the west of Garden Street. They needed to remove a large stump that was left by the city when they cut down the tree at that location in mid-2022. The drainage swale includes a small dry well (French Drain) and should provide more than adequate drainage from that section of the parking area. The Building and Grounds Committee plans to plant that area with perennials which have already been purchased with leftover parking lot funds.
 2. All payments are current. The fiscal year second quarter installment to UUA was sent. The total was \$1581 (\$6,324/year annual pledge to UUA).
- Members of the fellowship have asked how the annual UUA pledge is calculated. Many remember a time in the past when it had been a practice to apply the annual pledge based on the number of members in the congregation but that is no longer the case. UUA now uses a formula based on the Adjusted Operating Expenses from the previous full fiscal year (2022-2023). The adjustment includes a subtraction for the mortgage payment (or any other capital expense as UUA defines it). This is a factor in our favor since we doubled our payments back to the Endowment last year to retire the loan they gave us to pay off the balloon mortgage in 2015. That payoff in fiscal 2022-2023 was \$23,316. This significantly reduced our Operating Expenses for last year. Because of that reduction we were informed by UUA this month that next fiscal year's anticipated pledge is \$5,692 or \$1,423 per quarter. This is a good thing for us in the next fiscal year but, since we paid the mortgage off, we will not have that payment to use as a reduction in capital expenses in the 2026 fiscal year.

Preparing for General Assembly 2024

Even though it's still several months away, preparations have been underway for General Assembly 2024. This annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists from around the world will be a virtual gathering.

Last week, the Unitarian Universalist Association released a preliminary schedule for each day of General Assembly from June 20-23, 2024. The events are designed to foster engagement and connection, while also providing beneficial programming and conducting the business of our association.

December 2023

Birthdays

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
					1 <i>Geneele Crump</i>	2 10am Article II discussion (2 of 4)
3 <i>Gloria Carney Francisco Avila</i> 10am Service Coffee Hr 11:45am Meditation	4	5	6 5pm Membership	7 6pm Yoga	8	9 10am Article II discussion (3 of 4) 4pm Euchre
10 10am Service Coffee Hr 11:45am Meditation	11	12 7pm Worship & Arts	13 <i>Patty French</i> 6:30pm Board	14 <i>Ron Gill</i> 6pm Yoga	15	16 10am Article II discussion (4 of 4)
17 <i>Don Wycliff</i> 10am Service Potluck	18	19	20	21 6pm Yoga	22	23 5pm Yule, CUUPs
24 6pm Social Hour, 7pm Service	25 <i>Cindy Benedict</i>	26	27 11:30am Feasters FOCUS INFO DUE	28 <i>Elena Mark Victoria Mark</i> 6pm Yoga	29	30 <i>Stacey James</i>
31 <i>Zanzer Anderson</i> 10am Service Coffee Hr 11:45am Meditation						

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