



Unitarian Universalist Church of Midland

December 2023

Unitarian Universalist Church
of Midland

WELCOMING diversity

EMPOWERING spiritual growth

FOSTERING the interdependent web

TRANSFORMING lives

Please visit our website at www.uumidland.org for a listing
of all current events.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Have you been getting to know the church and Unitarian Universalism? Do you feel that this congregation might be a spiritual home? Are you considering a deeper commitment to the church? Membership comes with great gifts and opportunities, as well as responsibilities to the church community. If you are considering membership, please check out our membership brochure in the foyer or see Erica Stoltz or Barbara Handley, Membership Chair, or a Board member.

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December 2023 Sermons at a Glance

December 3 “When It’s Not Most Wonderful”

A popular song calls the holiday season “the most wonderful time of the year.” For various reasons, not everyone experiences the season as wonderful. Stress, grief, trauma, and other factors can complicate life. In this service, Rev. Dr. Stevie Gaines will offer comfort and encouragement.

December 10 “Tis the Season for Hope”

Local and world news is exhausting and leaves us susceptible to despair. Not to mention the fact that this time of year can be stressful and depressing for some. So it is definitely time for another round of hopeful headlines with Rev. Lisa Jebesen.

December 17 “Winter Celebrations from Around the World”

Just about every culture and faith has some sort of celebration on or around the winter solstice. Join Rev. Lisa Jebesen for a thoughtful exploration of some well-known and not so well-known traditions.

December 24 “A Very UU Christmas Eve Service”

Does the story of Christmas Eve have a place in our UU faith? Rev. Ernest H. Sommerfeld makes a strong case:

We believe that some stories deserve to live forever because of what they tell us of ourselves [and our world]. The angels singing an anthem of peace and goodwill deserve to be heard forever because they are the angels in human hearts. The humble shepherds, who had ears to hear and hearts to receive a message of joy, deserve to live to the end of time. [They remind us of our responsibility to make this world into a better place.] The three wise persons, so faithfully seeking the way of a star, deserve to go in search again each year as long as years shall be, for they are the story of our quest for [what is best in] ourselves [in each other], and in our broken and beautiful world.

Whether you believe that Jesus was simply a human being, that he was an inspired spiritual teacher and compelling social revolutionary or none of these things, we hope you will join Rev. Lisa Jebesen to explore this story through the “UU lens.”

December 31 “New Year’s Eve Brunch”

Although we will not have a regular worship service today, we will gather for food and fellowship as we welcome a new year.

Potluck Luncheon and All Church Holiday Party

Please join UU’s for our monthly potluck luncheon on Sunday, December 17th following the church service. This will be our All Church Holiday Party and our theme for food is Mexican!!

Spirit Play meets in person from 10:00-10:45. This class meets in person and has no Zoom option. Interested in RE, see the **RE Corner** on **page 6** for details.

Sunday Mornings

Sunday services remain in a hybrid format both in-person and virtually. For in person services, masks are optional and available on the guest table. We will also continue to broadcast our services over Zoom (<https://zoom.us/j/2750827327>). services so that people who cannot attend in person will be able to join us online.

For a low-tech option, you can call in with any phone to this number: 929-205-6099. When it asks for your Meeting ID, enter the below number.

11:00 AM SUNDAYS

All are Welcome!
Online Service

Zoom Meeting ID
275 082 7327

Or check our home page
for the link or call-in #

10:15 - 10:45 AM
Children's Space

UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST

UUCOM BOARD

Harry Nutter, President
Kyle Farmer, President-Elect
Alex Fields, Treasurer
Emmy Ulmschneider Secretary
David Allen, At Large Member
Chris Stoltz, At Large Member
Tom Parks, At Large Member

UUCOM STAFF

Lisa Jebson,
Lay Minister

Office Hours:

Tuesday, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
 Wednesday, 12:00 PM - 4:00 PM
 Thursday, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM
 Email: minister@uumidland.org

Jessica Stewart,
Office Administrator
 (432) 694-4308

Office Hours:

Wednesday 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 Email: office@uumidland.org

Sonja and Scott Millichamp,
Music Directors
 Email:

music-directors@uumidland.org,

Visit our website:

www.uumidland.org

Like us on Facebook:

Unitarian Universalist Church of
 Midland TX

[https://www.facebook.com/
 UUMidland](https://www.facebook.com/UUMidland)

ONLINE GIVING

While we are mostly meeting online, remember that there are still ways to give to our weekly offering and submit your pledge. You can text: "Give" to 432-271-4921. Or you can go to our website: uumidland.org and scroll down to the yellow PayPal Donate button. You can also mail a check to our office, or have your bank send a check.

Minister's Musings

On November 11, Tim and I were busy. He was at Midland Community Theatre the better part of the day to work on *The Sound of Music*. I was at UUCOM in the morning for our blood drive then I was at MCT as well. We planned to spend our Saturday night relaxing before another stretch of long busy days. Unfortunately, our dog Bandit was clearly not doing well and we knew a trip to the emergency vet was needed. Of course, the clinic was very full and other more urgent cases took priority. When we finally spoke to the vet, there was a lot of talk about end of life care and making our elderly dog's remaining time as comfortable as possible.



The complete opposite of a chill night at home!

Our little friend got a shot and some more meds to help with the pain and we headed home to get some rest. However, this was not to be. I was up most of the night with our sweet pup, trying to comfort him as he whimpered in pain. I can't tell you how many times I thought we needed to take him back and put him to sleep and out of his misery.

We made it through the night but Sunday morning, November 12, I was shattered. Thanks very much to David for agreeing to lead a discussion in lieu of a sermon while Barbara took care of the worship associate duties with Scott and Sonja providing excellent music to which we've become so accustomed. I hated to miss but I felt so loved and supported by the UUCOM community in a time of need.

The happy ending to this story is that Bandit is doing well - the medicine seems to have relieved him of his pain and we are enjoying a long stretch of "good days."

The only problem is that I really like the sermon I prepared for that day and I'd hate for it to go to "waste." However, as I write this, we are a couple days away from the Thanksgiving holiday and I had an epiphany... While I love my family's traditional meal, one of my favorite things about it is all those leftovers! So maybe my November 12 sermon, *More Ways to Cultivate Gratitude* can be used in the future? Like the extra turkey, stuffing or cranberries we'll feast on throughout the holiday weekend, that message doesn't have to go to waste. Unlike leftovers though, I believe the central theme of gratitude and ways we can continue to make it a part of our daily lives, is eternal. So hold on to that thought and be on the look out for that message in the future.

Meanwhile, thanks again for all the love and care you gave me and Tim in our time of need!

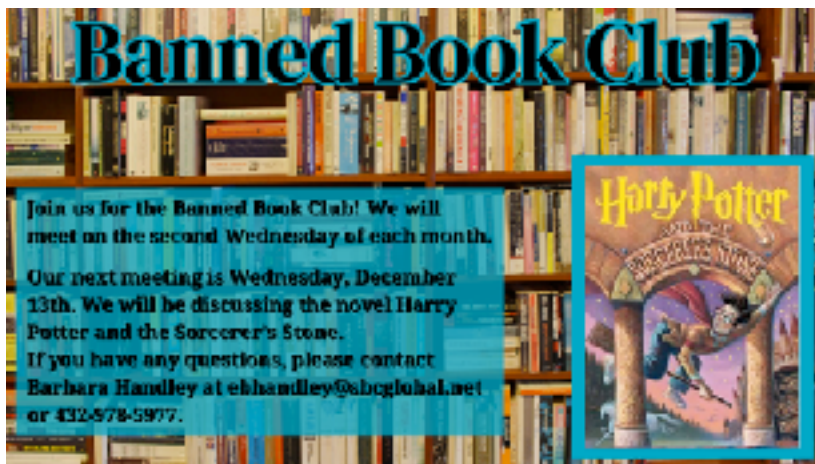
OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dec. 17 - Monthly Potluck

We hope you will join us immediately after 11AM worship for our monthly potluck.

Banned Book Club

The Banned Book Club meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 at the church. Our next meeting is Wednesday, December 13th. We will be discussing the novel Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone. If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Handley at ebhandley@sbcglobal.net or 432-978-5977.



UUCOM Circle Suppers

If you are interested in attending or hosting a Circle Supper contact the office at office@uumidland.org or 432-694-4308. A sign up sheet may also be on the foyer table.

December Share the Plate

We will share ½ of all cash donations with this December's Share the Plate recipient. The Board has chosen the following recipient, **the Minister's Discretionary Fund**.

This month, half of all cash donations go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which is used to support church members and friends who have fallen on hard times.

SCAM ALERT!

Please note that scammers may contact you via text, email or phone pretending to be someone representing UUCOM like Rev. Lisa or Harry Nutter (board president). They will usually make it sound urgent and may try to get you to buy gift cards or send money.

No staff member or volunteer from UUCOM will ever solicit in this way. Do not engage with anyone who contacts you like this. Block the number and/or email address.

If you have any concerns or would like to discuss ways to stay safe from scammers, please reach out to Rev. Lisa.

RE Corner

Spirit Play 10:00-10:45

Spirit Play is a UU curriculum based on Montessori teaching principles for children in Kindergarten through sixth grade.

December 3: “The Mitten Tree.” his story explores the spiritual practice of generosity.

December 10: “Hanukah.” Children will learn about the story behind the Festival of Lights.

December 17: “The Story of St. Nicholas.” We will explore the generosity of giving by St. Nicholas in this sources story.

December 24: No Spirit Play since Barbara is cruising!

December 31: No Spirit Play since Barbara is still cruising!!

Mitten Tree

Mitten Tree—Beginning on Sunday, December 3rd, we will accept donations for hats, mittens, scarves and socks. At the end of the holiday season, all contributions will be donated to children at South Elementary School to help keep them warm during our chilly winter. You may also drop off your donations at Barbara Handley’s home (4209 Arroyo) by placing them in her mailbox. Please text her at 432-978-5977 to let her know about delivery.

Advent Calendars

If you would like a “traditional” advent calendar that reveals historical UU contributions to the holiday, go to <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/images/uu-advent-calendar>.



What's Happening at UUCOM

Permian Basin Buddhists

The Tuesday night Buddhist class has expanded to include a 30 minute meditation session to begin at 6:15 PM.

The Permian Basin Buddhists continue to meet here at UUCOM on Tuesday nights, 7:00—8:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome, whether you are new to Buddhism or have been practicing the Middle Way for some time. For regular updates about the group, join the [Permian Basin Meetup Group](#).

Tree of Life

The modern Pagan movement provides a means for people to connect with the daily, monthly, and yearly cycles that continue to affect us physically and emotionally. Through classes and rituals, the Tree of Life Open Circle explores this connection in an ongoing effort to foster growth and community for kindred spirits of the earth.

For updates and further information about Tree of Life, please check out their Facebook page [here](#).

Interested in Becoming a Member?

Interested in officially joining our church community? Reach out to Lisa Jebson, Jane Hellinghausen, or Barbara Handley; or check out our Path to Membership brochure in the foyer or info online. The process consists of committing to attend a Newcomers' Drop-In Circle or class; making a pledge of time, talent, &/or treasure; and signing the membership book. We welcome you!

Care Team for Church Members and Friends

We invite you to share any needs you may have or concerns about church members/friends with the care team. When others in our church family approach you about a difficult situation in their life please ask them if it is ok to share that information with the care team. You may share requests and concerns with Jane Hellinghausen ([413-4612](tel:413-4612)), or by calling the church office ([694-4308](tel:694-4308)).

Thank you for helping to make our church an even more supportive and caring community!

Food donations for people and pets!

Each Sunday during our offering, we collect donations of nonperishable food for local food pantries, and pet food for Lone Star Sanctuary for Animals. Make a special note to remember your food donations for our monthly Intergenerational Services, as the children love to collect the food and bring it forward. (You can check our calendar online to see when those are!)



Wider World

TXUUJM

TEXAS UU JUSTICE MINISTRY NEWS (11/21/23): Please join your UU state action network TXUUJM in celebration [Thursday, Nov. 29, on Zoom!](#) We will gather at 6:30pm CT (5:30pm MT) to exhale and honor the great work YOU, the member congregations of TXUUJM, have done together in 2023, including the latest defeat of school voucher schemes and the big year in work for LGBTQIA+ rights, healthcare, racial and gender justice, and more. Guest speaker: Alex Kapitan of Transforming Hearts Collective! [Registration is free](#) (with an option to donate) and everyone is welcome! Register here: [TXUUJM 2023 Year-End Celebration](#) (virtual).

Nov. 22, 2023 - [Message](#) of gratitude to all of TXUUJM and our justice-seeking friends, from [Rev. Erin Walter](#), TXUUJM Minister & Executive Director

UUJEC

[Fall Letter to UUJEC Friends](#)

UUJEC News & Views Winter 2024 - [Read and share it from here.](#)

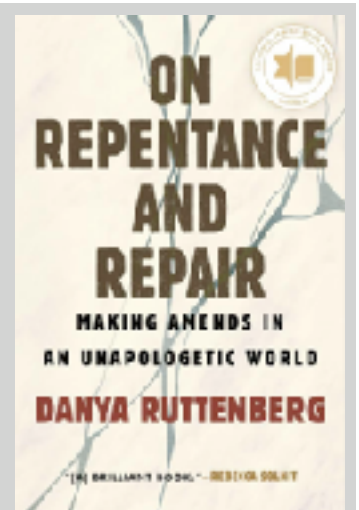
Create Climate Justice

Climate Justice through Energy Democracy with the Energy Democracy Project, TBD

2024 UU Common Read

The UUA Common Read for 2023-2024 is [On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World](#) by Rabbi Danya Rutenberg (Beacon Press, 2022). This Common Read offers a glimpse into one of our faith's foundational sources, Judaism. Readers explore our own call to be accountable in these modern times as we follow Rabbi Rutenberg into a framework for making amends offered by the 12th century Jewish physician and scholar, Maimonides.

[Join the Common Read.](#)



Wider World

UUA Newsletter

Final Revision of Article II Proposal is Now Available

After extensive engagement with UUs across our faith tradition, the Article II Study Commission have completed their Final Proposed Revision to Article II of the UUA Bylaws. Links to the text and additional important information are in this email, including a deadline of 5pm ET on February 1, 2024 for submitting any new amendments. The Commission's letter that follows lifts up all of the creative energy around the process, reflecting generations of UUs actively shaping our faith.

The Commission held thousands of conversations with UUs and developed a proposal that went before a vote at the 2023 General Assembly. Delegates voted to move forward with a process to discuss further changes and approved several amendments to the Commission's proposal. In the months since GA 2023, the Commission has worked to incorporate those amendments into a final document for congregations to review. That document, the [Final Proposed Revision to Article II](#), is now available.

At GA 2024, we will come together and vote on whether to adopt this revision as the new Article II of the UUA Bylaws. This email shares links to the proposed revision, information on submitting amendments, and resources to support engagement with this important opportunity to connect more deeply with what it means to be UU.

[Read the full UUA Newsletter](#)

UUMFE

- [December Musings](#)

Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 4 pm PT/ 5 pm MT/ 6 pm CT/ 7 pm ET

The Winter Solstice occurs when Earth's axis tilts away from the sun, making it the shortest day and longest night of the year for those living in the Northern Hemisphere.

Join us the evening BEFORE the Winter Solstice for music, reflection, meditation, and spiritual grounding.

On this longest night, we will be featuring the work of the [Energy Democracy Project](#) and sharing a portion of our offering with them. Let's work for light for all on the longest night of the year. Our service is part of the larger arc of Clean Energy as a Human Right being led by Side with Love.

Register Here For. the Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0vcumurzgvGNfGw4lsyIL9eG3tGfc3ZGaL#/registration>

Wider World

Side with Love

“Not Just Cop City” webinar series in collaboration with the American Friends Service Committee:

- Session 2: December 6, 8-9pm ET: Abolition
- Session 3: January 11, 8-9pm ET: Police Foundations & Policing
- [Read more from Side with Love.](#)

Skill Up Series: Summoning Courage

Skill Ups are our monthly training series on various organizing skills to help strengthen our congregational and community justice teams. These trainings incorporate spiritual fun and hands-on exercises to help deepen the lesson.

Skill Ups occur every 3rd Sunday for 90 minutes, starting at 4 ET / 3 CT / 2 MT / 1 PT.

- Jan 21: [Community Safety and Security](#)

Check out the collection of past Skill Ups [here](#).

Monthly Mixers

Following the success of our virtual and in-person mixers for General Assembly, we're thrilled to announce our virtual monthly Side With Love Mixer.

This mixer will be held the 2nd Monday of every month at 5pm PT / 8pm ET.

Come connect with one another, build community across issues, and have some facetime with our staff. Register now!

- [December 11](#)
- [January 8](#)

Faithful Gathering

Join our Side with Love Fun & Spiritual Nourishment Squad for an hour of spiritual sustenance and grounding with others organizing on the side of love. Show up as you are, with whatever is in your heart, and have your camera on or off as you need. Come drink in the music, meditation, play, and prayer. We end with a Connection Cafe for those who wish to talk together.

This gathering happens monthly on the 4th Thursday of the month at 4:30 PT / 5:30 MT / 6:30 CT / 7:30 ET. Register Now:

- [November 23](#)
- [December 28](#)
- [January 25](#)
- [February 22](#)
- [March 28](#)