

# BUC

Birmingham Unitarian Church  
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

October 3 (10:30 am)



“Inherent Worth  
& Dignity”

October 3 (12:00 pm)

Blessing of  
the Animals



October 10



“Spiritual Practice &  
Connection”

October 17



“When Bees Go to Church”

October 24



“Who Am I, Really?”

October 31



Samhain

## Women's March

Saturday, October 2 @ 2:00 pm

Temple Shir Shalom, West Bloomfield

Mark your calendars for the Women's March this **Saturday, October 2**, at various locations across the country. The Women's March organization called the march to send a message about reproductive rights to the U.S. Supreme Court, which reconvenes on October 4. Sign up at [womensmarch.com](https://www.womensmarch.com) to get updates on details. Locally, a march is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 2 at 2:00 pm at Temple Shir Shalom, 3999 Walnut Lake Rd., West Bloomfield, and Rev. Mandy will be a speaker. Sign-making for all ages is at 1:30 pm.



—BUC Civic Engagement

## Blessing of the Animals Service

Sunday, October 3 @ 12:00 pm

Outdoors at BUC

Animals play an important role in our emotional and spiritual lives. Join us for an outdoor Blessing of the Animals service this **Sunday, October 3 at 12:00 pm**. Bring your animal companions, photos of those who have crossed the rainbow bridge, or your favorite stuffie to receive a special blessing.



## Sunday Usher Signup

**contact: Janet Brown (janet\_brown@wayne.edu)**

Now that our sanctuary is open again, WE NEED USHERS! We need four ushers every Sunday morning from 10:00 am until 11:45 am.

Click [HERE](#) for more details and to sign up for usher spots for the entire church year, or use the button on our [website](#) under Worship Links.



## Sunday Greeters

**contact: Kris Schreck (kristinschreck@gmail.com)**



We also need greeters on Sunday mornings! This is an important contribution to BUC as we welcome newcomers to our community and greet congregants returning to in-person service. If you've never greeted before, that's OK—all are welcome! We need two greeters every Sunday from 10:00 am until just after service begins (about 10:40).

Click [HERE](#) to sign up, or use the button on our [website](#) under Worship Links.

## Sunday Flower Dedications

**contact: Ginger Luckins (ginluckins@gmail.com)**

Signups are open to dedicate flower arrangements for our chancel on Sunday mornings. For a minimum \$50 donation, you can dedicate a flower arrangement in honor/memory of a loved one, or in honor of a cause, milestone, or special occasion. Click [HERE](#) for the sign up form with payment instructions, or use the button on our [website](#) under Worship Links.

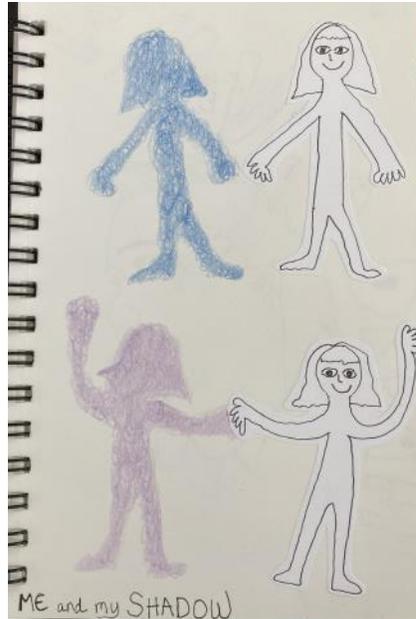


# October's worship theme in art ...

Welcome to our new monthly feature showcasing artwork by BUC's Living by Heart group. Each month, members of the group will be sharing original artwork related to the monthly worship theme. Here are the group's contributions on the October theme, "Self." Thank you to the members of Living by Heart for sharing your art. If you'd like to join Living by Heart at their weekly meetings (virtually or in-person), see the events listing near the end of this newsletter.



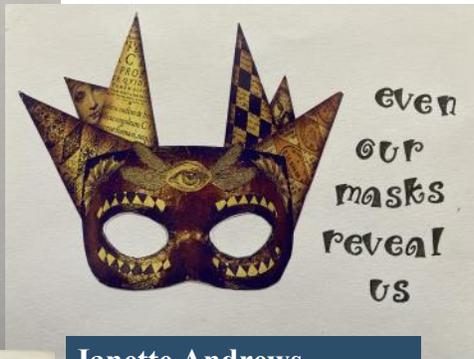
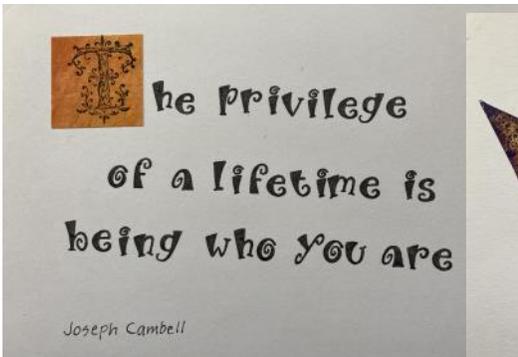
Carol E. Jackson



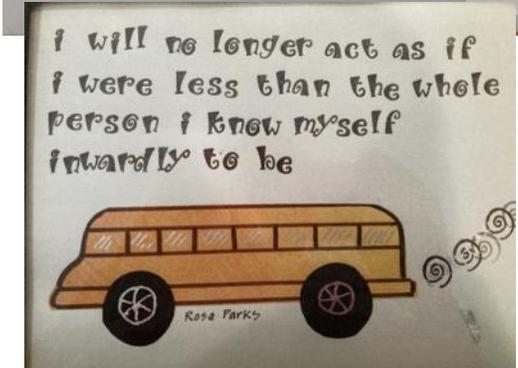
Beth Singer



(anonymous)



Janette Andrews from a set of collages made as a Living by Heart project that hung in BUC's foyer restroom a few years ago



Susan Darlington

## Staff Reflections

### “Self”



**Rev. Mandy Beal**  
*Senior Minister*

This year’s worship themes are organized around our Unitarian Universalist Principles, including the proposed 8th Principle (learn more about the 8th Principle [here](#)). We kick things off this month by using the lens of “self” to explore our First Principle, “The inherent worth and dignity of every person.” Together, we’ll think about questions related to the concept of “self.” What does it mean to be an individual who has inherent worth and dignity? What does it mean to interact with others in a way that affirms their worth and dignity?

Unitarian Universalism is sometimes called Our Living Tradition. I love this phrase. It instills a sense of hope in the progress of humanity onward and upward forever. It is a reminder that we cannot be satisfied that there is one right answer to life’s big questions. Similarly, we must expect our personal reflections on

these questions to evolve over time, based on our individual life experiences.

Our Living Tradition pushes us further into questions, welcoming changes in our answers. Unitarian Universalism embraces the constant ebb and flow of our perspectives by giving us plenty of space to learn and grow. Our church is a place where we learn from each other and challenge each other. By sharing our experiences of the world, and how those experiences have shaped us, we encourage each other’s continued growth and development. Who we are as individuals makes us who we are as a church, and who we are as a church impacts who we are as individuals. This is a fascinating process, and I’m looking forward to digging into who we are individually and as a community in the coming month.



**Abha Dearing**

*Co-Director of Music Ministry*

Three gratuudes and three wins. Ommmm. Seek first to understand, then to be understood. Listen without blame, shame, judgement, criticism or guilt. Stay curious.

This is a partial list of some of the things which guide me to be my best self so that I can be my best for others. Discussing “Self” this month is challenging because in church-work, so much time and energy is spent in making sure others are satisfied spiritually, emotionally, musically, and otherwise. At the same time, I am realizing as I age that if I do not care for myself enough, I will not be equipped to care for those in my family, my students, and our Beloved Community.

Many of the things on my shortlist address “listening” as the important binding factor. I must listen to myself to be able to list things for which I am grateful and wins (things that went well in the day). I must listen to my voice (“ommmm”) and block out other sounds, feelings, thoughts. I must listen in order to understand someone else’s perspective so I can empathize, help, and validate. And finally, listen with open heart and ears, disallowing myself of the need to draw any conclusions. These practices help keep me connected to self and others. I have mastered none of them, but I do rest in the knowledge that just being on the journey is growing me and allows me to contribute to making my world better.



**Steven Dearing**

*Co-Director of Music Ministry*

As Abha mentioned, thinking of “self” is not something that comes easily or naturally when you do a church job. Things are even more complicated as a father steering the family ship.

I am grateful to have inherited genes that are overall healthy, but when health goes wonky for me, I tend to be of the mind to “suck it up.” It takes me a long time and a lot of heckling by my life partner to go get help, let alone take something/do something to help address the issue.

I tend to wait until I cannot function at all, laying in pain and completely dysfunctional. It is then I finally realize that I cannot be a good dad if I cannot stand up without wincing. My mood changes, I am really grumpy, and I end up being mean to the closest people in my life who do not deserve such unintentional ugliness.

One perk of being a church musician is having a group of folks looking out for how you are. I am reminded that I am important, and valued as a co-creator of worship. If I am not healthy, both physically and spiritually, the unhealthy vibes only trickle down in a bad way.

Let us all be reminded that we need to be there for each other, and to do so effectively, we need to be whole, ourselves.

**Nico Van Ostrand***Director of Religious Education*

When I was about six years old, I experienced a handful of moments that I would describe as being aware of my soul. I realized that there is only one me in the whole span of space and time. It was overwhelming! My concept of Self has shifted over time, and while I still struggle to wrap my head around being the only Me to ever exist, my focus is now on more mundane aspects of Self like identity and welcome.

So many aspects of identity—race, gender, class, more—are social constructs. They hold meaning because we as a society give them meaning. This is not inherently bad, though many of the systems and practices we've built around identities certainly are. It doesn't have to be that way, and so much of our work

as UUs is to counter those systems and move towards welcome. To me, welcome is an action: how I recognize each person's Self and affirm their inherent worth and dignity. Welcome means learning everyone's name and pronouns, respecting cultural reference points and practices, offering low- or no-cost options, following the lead of our youth.... Welcome means recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of your Self, and trusting that you will recognize the same in me.



**Valerie Phillips**  
*Administrator*

On considering self, I believe it's about identity, which is the basis of who I am deep down. It's part of my essential being that distinguishes me from others. Everyone holds a special value that is tied solely to them being human. This is the basic concept of human dignity. We are all born with dignity, which is our inherent value and worth. I believe it is easy to see that when a child is born, they are born with dignity. We view them as completely priceless, and they are treasured. In fact, they are absolutely irreplaceable.

When we have something in our lives that is so precious, we treat it carefully, with attention and care. By treating others with the dignity that they deserve, we let them know they are valuable. This becomes the basis of our interactions with others, allowing us to build healthy relationships.

Honoring the dignity of others is not always easy or simple. It is a behavior we need to learn. We have to practice to positively acknowledge and appreciate others' values. Some of the ways I try to acknowledge others' basic dignity is by actively listening and encouraging others to share and provide input, validating their contributions, and having empathy for others' life situations. It is important to apply this type of value and worth inward on ourselves as well. Being positive about ourselves helps us be positive towards others, and builds valuable relationships.

**Andrew Schreck***Rental Coordinator*

For me, part of being a UU is about how I live out our values in the world, to make the world into a beloved community. The Ministerial Search process I was involved in a few years ago was transformative in reaffirming the place that Unitarian Universalism has in my life, and in guiding my interactions with the world. During that time, I read a story by UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray about how she got a chalice tattoo on her right forearm, a reminder to live her values through her actions. Her story and my desire to live my values more fully was the spark that sent me to the tattoo parlor for my first tattoo, my own chalice, a reminder of who I am and how I want to act in the world.

My chalice tattoo hasn't magically made me act more like a UU. That comes from the work, the actions I take, to affirm the inherent worth and dignity of all people. It serves as a reminder to consider my interactions with others. Are those actions, and interactions, guided by my beliefs and desire to make the world into the beloved community? Sometimes that work seems easy for a lifelong UU, and other times it is hard work. But it is the work that I do, that we do, to live our values through our actions.



**Sara Constantakis**  
*Communications Coordinator*

This past April, I watched something called *In & Of Itself*, a filmed version of a live one-man stage show by Derek DelGaudio, which was released on Hulu in 2020. It's difficult to describe this show without giving away key parts of the experience (and I do recommend watching it if you have the chance). DelGaudio is a storyteller and magician, and the show—which has been referred to as conceptual magic and interactive theater—is, at its core, an examination of self. Through the lens of his own life experiences and identity, DelGaudio invites audiences to examine our own identities and how we see ourselves and are seen by others... with a bit of magic aiding the process.

The examination of the self—who we are, who we want to be, how we are and want to be seen—permeates many as-

pects of modern life and culture, and religion takes up these questions in different ways. Our UU faith puts them right up front, in our first Principle, and—importantly—places them in the context of our relationships with *others*. The first Principle guides us how to treat others by reminding us of a constant, unchanging aspect of everyone's self and identity: inherent worth and dignity. The first Principle is what drew me to Unitarian Universalism, and it's the first thing I mention whenever I'm asked what our faith is all about.

In the real world, it can and does take real effort and discernment to truly live out our first Principle. But when our very first step, our foundation, is seeing the worth and dignity in every person, I believe all other questions can be answered from there.



**Joanne Copeland**  
*Bookkeeper*

“About all you can do in life is be who you are. Some people will love you for you, most will love you for what you can do for them, and some won’t like you at all.” –Rita Mae Brown

That about sums it up for me when thinking about our theme for October, “Self.”

I’ve been taught and lived by the words “just be yourself,” which sometimes has gotten me in trouble, but I have found if I live by the “Golden Rule,” I’m okay.

I was raised by parents who always seemed to put other people’s needs to the forefront. They taught us the need to volunteer and help those who didn’t have as much as we did. Although, I must say I didn’t think we had that much, but I learned that

we did have more than those we helped, after all (lesson learned). All of what they passed on to us has helped me in the different jobs I’ve held over the years, especially when I worked at Hospice of Southeastern Michigan. I met so many interesting and different people. They made me a better person.

## Getting to Know UU

Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism (GTKUU) returns this month for our fall session. All are welcome to attend this introspective, interactive, and fun experience for anyone exploring Unitarian Universalism or BUC. You will examine your spirituality individually and with others and learn how BUC can serve as your spiritual home. GTKUU is hosted by the Membership Committee and led by Rob Davidson.

The fall session will remain in a virtual-only format, using the curriculum that has been adapted for virtual learning and discussion. Four non-sequential classes will take place on the following Sundays on Zoom: **October 10, October 24, November 7, and November 21**. Classes start right after worship service/social hour and run from 12:00 to 1:30 pm. Zoom details are available on the BUC [calendar](#) and will be shared in the weekly update emails.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP to Rob Davidson at [kathyd8082@gmail.com](mailto:kathyd8082@gmail.com).

## From the Board



**Donna Larkin Mohr**  
*President, Board of Trustees*

How do we explore our Unitarian Universalist Principles and the concept of self? I recently read something by Laurel Hallman that helped me put the two, somewhat disparate, things together.

“In the ancient Psalms of the Hebrew Bible, the Psalmists often begin by naming despair, moving by the end of the psalm into hope and praise. They trace a pattern for us which it would be wise to follow: acknowledging our fears with a spirit of welcome and, in time, letting our gratitude emerge out of them.”

In reflecting on our Principles, I become quite head-oriented, but the Universalist in me always brings the heart forward. When pondering self, great philosophers guide my thinking. Then, there is that tug pulling me away from the intellectual and into the present moment—mindfulness. Yes, I am a compulsive thinker! Hallman says:

“When we take on too strong an identification with the thinking mind at the expense of all of our experience, we lose something. What we lose is a sense of direct experience of the richness of life.”

When I focus on the innate worth and dignity of everyone, I am conflicted. If, for example, I think of a serial rapist or a pedophile, I am seriously challenged. For me, Principles are goals. I try to live them, but am not always successful.

Mindfulness and experience come to the forefront, aiding me in being thoughtful and recognizing that as a human, I am far from perfect. Perhaps our lack of perfection helps us to connect with the earth, with each other, with the divine.

## October Plate Collection

The organization receiving a portion of our October plate collections is the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MUFI). MUFI uses urban agriculture as a way to promote education, sustainability, and community by empowering people living in urban settings, solving many social problems facing Detroit and developing a model for other urban communities.



MUFI's primary focus is the redevelopment of a three-acre area in Detroit's North End, which is being positioned as an epicenter of urban agriculture. They are hoping to demonstrate everything from best practices for sustainable urban agriculture, effective strategies for increasing food security, cost-competitive and scalable models for blight deconstruction, and innovation in blue and green infrastructure.

200 people volunteer at MUFI each week, and thousands of pounds of organically grown produce is given to households near its Brush Street location. Some of the farm's other initiatives include a high-density fruit orchard, children's sensory garden, and a retention pond, which uses the basement of a once-blighted home as a rainwater harvesting cistern that automatically supplies water to an adjacent urban farm via drip-line irrigation.

For more information, you may contact Jane O'Neil at [janeaoneil@gmail.com](mailto:janeaoneil@gmail.com) or go to [www.miufi.org](http://www.miufi.org).

## "5 Questions" on Facebook Live

Monday, October 25 | 6:00 pm

Join us on Facebook Live every fourth Monday of the month at 6:00 pm for "5 Questions," Rev. Mandy's monthly conversations with BUC leaders.

To watch the October session live, visit the [Birmingham Unitarian Church Facebook page](#) at 6:00 pm on Monday, October 25. The video will stay on our Facebook page for later viewing.



Rev. Mandy and August guest  
Brian Schandevl

## Oppose Voter Suppression

You may have seen the news recently that a coalition is moving forward with a petition in Michigan to implement legislation that will make it more difficult to vote. The Michigan Board of State Canvassers voted its approval at the end of September, so we can expect to see this anti-voter petition in the field very soon. The petitioners will have six months to collect the minimum number of signatures, and we need activists to fight this effort.

First, DO NOT SIGN THESE PETITIONS, which will be promoted as improving “voting integrity” or “protecting democracy” and circulated by a group identified as “Secure MI Vote.” Michigan’s constitution allows an “adopt and amend” procedure so the state legislature can adopt a citizen petition initiative and pass it into law with a simple veto-proof majority. The scheme only requires about 340,000 signatures, or 8% of the total votes cast in the last gubernatorial election, meaning that Michigan’s heavily gerrymandered Republican majority and 3.4% of the state’s population can pass a law without majority citizen support or the governor’s signature.

If you’d like to help oppose these petitions, Voters Not Politicians is conducting training online right now. Sign up here:

<https://www.mobilize.us/vnp/event/411648/>

For more information on this or any of BUC’s Civic Engagement activities, contact Harper West at harper\_west@yahoo.com.

## Calendar of Events

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The events listed here can always be found on our website [calendar](#). Events are also listed in weekly emails; on announcement slides on the foyer TV, website, and before worship services; and in our [BUC Community private Facebook group](#). The [calendar](#) also lists information for committee and group meetings. The color of the dot on the calendar tells you if the meeting is virtual-only (blue), in-person only (pink) or multiplatform (yellow; with both virtual and in-person options).

## Weekly Events

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### Worship Services

October theme: “Self”

Sundays | 10:30 am | Multiplatform (Sanctuary + Zoom)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/196899450?  
pwd=RXJuNFpHdWMraENaZmFDWFVaSEExqUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/196899450?pwd=RXJuNFpHdWMraENaZmFDWFVaSEExqUT09)

dial-in: 253-215-8782  
meeting ID: 196 899 450  
passcode: 882131

### Sunday Discussion Group

Sundays | 3:00 pm | Virtual only

[https://zoom.us/j/96501517735?  
pwd=Yy9NSUg3TGRHUGxjNDY5VzRtT0dzZz09](https://zoom.us/j/96501517735?pwd=Yy9NSUg3TGRHUGxjNDY5VzRtT0dzZz09)

dial-in: 253-215-8782  
meeting ID: 965 0151 7735  
passcode: 047076

### Living by Heart | Multiplatform (Red Door room + Zoom)

1st Mondays of the month | 7:00 pm

[https://zoom.us/j/99983328991?  
pwd=N1cybVdKYXhWSE9PVEZDS  
Vo3Y1VxQT09](https://zoom.us/j/99983328991?pwd=N1cybVdKYXhWSE9PVEZDSVo3Y1VxQT09)

dial-in: 253-215-8782  
meeting ID: 999 8332 8991  
passcode: 569485

Remaining Mondays of the month | 1:30 pm

[https://zoom.us/j/92103015538?  
pwd=YzVMZzZpQTthhb0lFUVhYYlk5Vy8  
vZz09](https://zoom.us/j/92103015538?pwd=YzVMZzZpQTthhb0lFUVhYYlk5Vy8vZz09)

dial-in: 253-215-8782  
meeting ID: 921 0301 5538  
passcode: 016260

## October Events

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### Blessing of the Animals Service

Sunday, October 3 | 12:00 pm | Outdoors

### Getting to Know UU session 1

Sunday, October 10 | 12:00 pm | Virtual only

[https://zoom.us/j/95878308013?  
pwd=STILVGRrVnNMaWozaWN6WVBsamxVUT09](https://zoom.us/j/95878308013?pwd=STILVGRrVnNMaWozaWN6WVBsamxVUT09)

Meeting ID: 958 7830 8013

Passcode: 320888

Dial-in: 253-215-8782

### Humanists of BUC

“Anti-Semitism: The Latest Trends on the Oldest Hatred”  
with Carolyn Normandin of the Anti-Defamation League

Sunday, October 17 | 4:30 pm | Virtual only

[https://zoom.us/j/94051049821?  
pwd=R0RNQjVLcHA4SjR1WFFRbnZGY2t3Zz09](https://zoom.us/j/94051049821?pwd=R0RNQjVLcHA4SjR1WFFRbnZGY2t3Zz09)

Meeting ID: 940 5104 9821

Passcode: 958816

Dial-in: 253-215-8782

### Getting to Know UU session 2

Sunday, October 24 | 12:00 pm | Virtual only

[https://zoom.us/j/95878308013?  
pwd=STILVGRrVnNMaWozaWN6WVBsamxVUT09](https://zoom.us/j/95878308013?pwd=STILVGRrVnNMaWozaWN6WVBsamxVUT09)

Meeting ID: 958 7830 8013

Passcode: 320888

Dial-in: 253-215-8782

### 5 Questions

Monday, October 25 | 6:00 pm

Live on the [Birmingham Unitarian Church Facebook page](#)

**Birmingham Unitarian  
Church**  
38651 Woodward Avenue  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304