

The BUC Big Picture

March 2025



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March Worship

March 2: “Living with Mortality”

Being honest with death—honest with ourselves and each other—offers us the opportunity to curate our lives—not just in retrospect, but in our living and in our dying. How do we want to live, and how do we want to die?

March 9: “You Can’t Go Wrong with Ambiguity (Or Can You?)”

Ambiguity carries a challenge: to disambiguate or to carry the ambiguity in creative tension.

March 16: “Faith and Doubt”

“Doubt isn’t the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith,” according to Christian theologian Paul Tillich. Can we Unitarian Universalists “cherish [our] doubts” (as UU minister Robert T. Weston put it) without making an idol of them? In what do we place our faith?

March 23: Daffodil Sunday

An annual celebration of “Flower Power” as we recount the story of this BUC tradition, with daffodils galore symbolizing the inclusive welcome offered here. If you wear yellow and green, you’ll look like a daffodil, too!

March 30: “Gathering Ourselves”

Moving from angst to action, how will we respond to these times to do the work of justice?

March Plate Sharing

The recipient of our plate sharing in March is the [Michigan UU Social Justice Network](#), also known as MUUSJN (pronounced “moose gin”). This is a statewide coalition of UU congregations and our allies working together for progressive change. BUC is a member of this network, which leverages resources and expertise to support the member congregations’ social justice work. It also joins with allies to expand the coalition’s impact. Our plate donations enable MUUSJN to engage consultants to assist with this work.

In February, we collected approximately \$1331 for the Cooley Innocence Project.

Plate donations can be made via cash or check during worship services or at any time via our [online giving portal](#) (choose “Plate Collection” from the Fund drop-down) or [Venmo](#) (send payment to @BUCMI and note “Plate Collection”).

“Who to Contact” List

Do you have an idea, question, or concern and need to know where to direct it? Check out our [“Who to Contact”](#) list, also linked on our [home page](#) in the “Learn About Us” box in the middle of the page.

Minister's Message

Rev. Connie Grant

Ways to Grow

As a congregation, you are growing. At the beginning of February of 2024, the number of members reported to the Unitarian Universalist Association was 258; at the beginning of this year, the number of members was 264, and 12 members have signed the book so far this church year. After years of declining numbers, that's significant growth.

As I like to remind us all, when people join the church, they really aren't "new members" anymore. Now, they are just "members" who will become or have already become active in the life of the congregation in their own ways—singing in the choir, organizing activities for young families, facilitating Religious Education activities, or volunteering to help with the Rummage sale. New members, who become just "members," bring new energy and new ideas, and help provide the critical mass to make things happen.

Numerical growth can be an important indicator and driver of congregational vitality, but it's not the only way congregations grow. How can lives be shaped and changed by participation in this congregation?

We may be on the cusp of a new trend in American society as participation in a religious community seems to be regaining prominence in people's lives, as indicated by a newly released Religious Landscape Study by the Pew Research Center.

Members of a religious community belong to each other and to something larger than themselves alone. In a religious community, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In such a community, people gather together to be more and do more than they could be and do individually, in order to live in the best way they can and to do their part to make the world a better place. Expectations of membership include participation in the life of the congregation and financial support in keeping with the needs of the institution, the value of the congregation to you, and your ability to contribute.

According to Loren Mead, in *More Than Numbers: The Ways Churches Grow*, there are four modes of growth a congregation may experience.

The obvious one is numerical growth—membership numbers, Sunday attendance, size of budget (and, I would add, the ability to achieve a balanced budget), numbers of activities.

The other modes of growth that congregational-life experts have identified are maturational growth, organic growth, and incarnational growth.

Maturational growth is defined as “the ability of a congregation to challenge, support, and encourage each one of its members to grow in the maturity of their faith, to deepen their spiritual roots, and to broaden their religious imagination.”

We welcome each other, recognizing, accepting, and embracing each other for who we are even as we change and grow. We include each other, not just “people like us,” but people who are different from us. People, like us.

You support each other’s religious and spiritual growth as you share ideas and learnings, in discussion groups, as a participant or facilitator in Religious Education classes, and in coffee-hour conversations.

Major ways you grow maturationally are through formal and informal pastoral care and through the ministry of small groups. Pastoral care—attention to the life events and the joys and sorrows in people’s lives—takes place in the Choir, in small groups, in the Alliance, through the Pastoral Care team, and in the congregation at large in both formal and informal gatherings.

Organic growth is defined as growth of the congregation as a functioning, healthy community, able to maintain itself as a living organism, an institution that can engage the other institutions of society.

Your social justice activities, as you partner with other organizations to work for the betterment of the community, provide examples of organic growth.

Through your Social and Environmental Justice program, BUC ministers to the needs of your communities; promotes social, economic, racial, and environmental justice; addresses the climate crisis; offers opportunities for civic engagement; and serves as an agent of social systemic change. Your Sunday-morning plate offering supports a different charitable organization each month, supporting these goals.

You put your principles and values into action to build a world that embodies justice and compassion for all people. This includes serving communities in need, advocating for reforms, and bearing public witness. You are lifelong learners, striving for greater understanding and adapting your actions as you gain new perspectives and experiences.

Civic Engagement works to promote and support individual and congregational involvement in civic action to create a more just society for all people.

Racial Justice works to confront and dismantle racism in ourselves and our institutions.

Environmental Action focuses on how BUC and the community at large can address the climate crisis and deepen connection to the earth.

Economic Justice offers opportunities to volunteer and financially support the needs of community partners like South Oakland Shelter, Welcome Inn, and Walt Whitman Elementary School.

Incarnational growth is defined as the ability to take the meanings and values of the faith-story and make them real in the world and society outside the congregation.

You live your Unitarian Universalist values, every day, in your personal and professional lives as well as your church life, in your volunteer work, and through your financial contributions toward the work of this congregation and to other organizations doing good work in the world.

You are growing, in all these ways. May you continue to grow as a congregation, in all the ways congregations grow.

Religious Education Musings

Shannon Snideman, Director of Religious Education

For those who are not as familiar with educational pedagogy, I want to talk a bit about an educational model that is near and dear to my heart—one that drew me to the education field in the first place as a direct result of my experiences in UU Religious Education programs as a youth.

Experiential learning is a hands-on, participatory approach to education that emphasizes learning through action and reflection. It prioritizes direct experience, personal reflection, and active engagement over passive consumption of information. It's based on the idea that people learn best when they participate fully in an activity, reflect on their experiences, and apply what they've learned to their lives. Rooted in the belief that deep understanding comes from engaging directly with the world, this method empowers learners to explore, question, and grow through real-world experiences and personal insights.

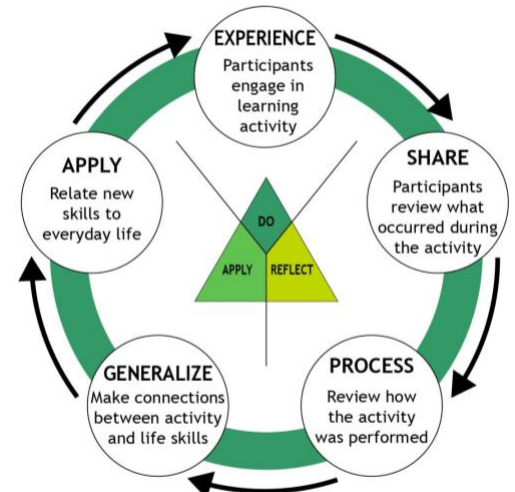


Image from the University of Wisconsin-Madison 4H Extension

This model is particularly effective in Unitarian Universalist Religious Education as it helps us all to cultivate compassion, justice, and spiritual depth in meaningful, tangible ways. Experiential learning helps us explore what living out our UU principles and values feels like, rather than just studying them. This means creating opportunities for participants—whether children, youth, or adults—to embody values like compassion, justice, and interdependence in ways that are meaningful and memorable.

For example, children in a UU Religious Education class might explore “interdependence” through a hands-on project like our native seed planting. They not only learn about environmental stewardship, but also experience the joy and responsibility of nurturing life. Youth may take on service-learning projects, such as volunteering to gather food or create meals for those who are unhoused and/or are experiencing hunger. This allows them to connect their UU values to real-world action and witness the positive impact of their actions.

For adults, experiential learning often takes the form of deep conversations, creative workshops, or spiritual practices that foster personal growth and community connection. This could include engaging in group meditations, participating in social justice advocacy, or exploring spiritual themes through art, writing, or storytelling.

Remember, everything that we do is religious education. And religious education is not defined by the age of its participants. Here at BUC, whether we are in the Sanctuary, in a classroom, or in Hodas Hall, we are all teachers who have wisdom and knowledge to impart, and we are also all students who have a lot to learn. We do it all while growing together.

A prime example of religious education in which we all participate is our Sunday morning worship service. When children are present and participating in worship services, they learn about different rituals, hymns, and practices, those part of our shared faith tradition and those unique to our congregation. They learn by observing those around them, and also by serving specific roles during the service.

Having children and youth participating in our worship services is a formative experience that is essential to their faith development. As they reach adolescence, they become even more involved in creating worship experiences for others, whether their peers or the whole congregation. They take on the role of worship leaders to guide the rest of us through our rituals and practices. However, to know how to curate these experiences, children and youth first need to find which practices, rituals, songs, and words are most meaningful to them. It is one thing to hand them an Order of Service and tell them to fill it in with hymns and readings. It's another far more desirable thing to have them build out a meaningful worship service because they have a fundamental understanding of the worship experience. When youth age out of Religious Education programs, Sunday morning worship services become a primary experience. We hope that they continue to seek out UU worship experiences and find deep connections to their community, wherever they may find themselves in the world.

But children and youth are not the only ones who are learning how UU worship services work. Newcomers to our congregation and to Unitarian Universalism are also learning what it means to be a part of a liberal religious community and what

it's like to be a part of our BUC community. I would venture to guess that we all want to be a community that demonstrates how much we value learners of all ages, especially children and youth. This starts by welcoming all newcomers into the Sanctuary and continues with demonstrating compassion and understanding for the learning process.

Of course, learning to participate in worship services also comes with learning about how to listen or communicate quietly. Thankfully, we have spaces like our Family Room that allow for young children to gradually learn about these practices and still engage in worship with the congregation. This is especially true for any families who may not be comfortable separating on Sunday mornings or would prefer to worship all together.

The goal of experiential learning is not simply to impart information, but to create transformative experiences that deepen participants' understanding of themselves, their values, and their connections to others. By actively engaging the head, heart, and hands, experiential learning ensures that UU Religious Education is not just about what we know, but about who we are and how we live in the world.

Music Memos

Abha and Steven Dearing, Co-Directors of Music Ministry

Over the last couple of weeks, the two of us have met with Rev. Connie to negotiate how we can continue to provide the highest quality of varied music to our congregation with 25% fewer hours and lesser remuneration.

It is very difficult for a musician to describe and quantify what they are able to do thanks to years of schooling and years of professional experience.

Music is not tangible. It's not quantifiable. It's an acquired skill, and the work is never complete. Its full effects are unknowable and highly personal to the artist and the audience.

We realize that some folx think we show up on any given Sunday and music “magic” happens. It is the creative process, practice, synthesis, and simply drilling.

We hope, whatever happens in the future with music at BUC, that congregants continue to support high-quality, varied musical styles, and that folx participate in many ways through singing and playing their instruments at church. BUC is a beloved musical community, indeed.

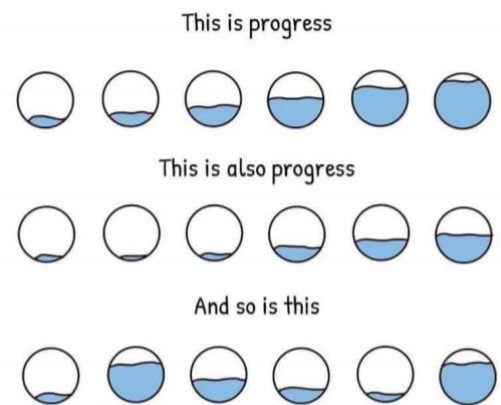
Membership Matters

Sara Constantakis, Director of Congregational Life

When we think about growth—in our community, our church, our country, our world, ourselves—the things that come most easily to mind are the visible, tangible signs of growth—things like new housing developments, new businesses, new jobs, and new members. That’s growth that’s easy to see, because there’s evidence. But there are other aspects to growth that are more subtle because we don’t or can’t always readily see the evidence. And there’s a lot of work that happens behind the scenes leading up to a growth moment.

Growth also isn’t always linear. In fact, I’d venture to say that it’s almost *never* linear. The above image visually illustrates this idea through three different paths of non-linear growth. These paths look very different, each with moments of both advance and retreat, filling and emptying... but *all* of these paths are growth. All of them are progress.

I found a quote some years back that reads “Tension can strain, but it can also expand,” and I have thought about that a lot since I first read it. It’s tempting to avoid tension (I know I rather would) because it can and does cause painful strain. Growing pains are both the real, physical pain common in preschool and school-age



children as their bodies grow and develop, and the metaphorical pain of the change that is constantly happening in our community, our church, our country, our world, ourselves. But if we can see beyond the pain, be patient with it, and see in the tension the potential to expand, to grow, perhaps we can be strengthened and inspired to continue our journey, here in our faith community and out in the world.

New Members

Please welcome BUC's newest members!

Maureen Dunphy (she/her) and **Craig Daly** (he/him)

Maureen and Craig began singing with the choir this fall and were thoughtful and open participants in our last Getting to Know UU class.

Hannah Kelly (she/her) and **Alex Kelly** (he/him)

Hannah and Alex are parents to baby Magnolia, who joins us in the Sanctuary on Sundays and played the role of the infant Jesus in December's participatory Christmas pageant. Hannah and Alex found BUC through their good friends and recent new members, Jess and James Casolari. We heard these families' stories during our February 2nd "What Makes a Family?" worship service.

Mike Mansour (he/him)

A retired middle-school science teacher and US Army veteran, Mike is transitioning from another faith tradition and is eager to explore UU theology and BUC's social and environmental justice programming.

This brings us to a total of 12 new members this church year!

Nurturing belonging at BUC involves our staff, minister, and the entire congregation. Thank you to Director of Religious Education Shannon Snideman for leading the RE programming that engages BUC families. Thank you to Co-Directors of Music Ministry Abha and Steven Dearing for leading the music programming that is an integral part of spiritual life at BUC. Thank you to our Welcome Team and all our greeters for the welcome you've helped extend to friends old and new. And thank you to every BUC congregant who welcomes newcomers to our community by sitting next to them in service, chatting with them

during coffee hour, and inviting them our events. We are growing and building beloved community one step at a time.

Board Minutes

Hello from the BUC Board!

Stewardship time is here! Our Stewardship team (Bob Clement, Mary Dunn, Jane O'Neil, and Paul Vachon) hosted a great kickoff on February 16, with community activities continuing each Sunday in Hodas Hall. Your timely pledge helps the Board determine the 2025-26 budget, so we encourage you to make your pledge as soon as possible and help us build our BUC community.

Work on the Birmingham-Bloomfield Montessori school has begun on the Lower Level. The school logo is on the window near the entrance, and classroom furnishings are arriving and being assembled. Removal of extra BUC furniture, toys, etc., is complete, thanks to the ongoing efforts of Bette Moen and Kym Worth. Work to clear storage areas in the Red Door will begin next.

The Board did not hold a Town Hall in February but will provide a short Stewardship update immediately after service on March 16, which is the end of the Stewardship drive. We hope to see you there.

In Faith,

Your Board of Trustees



What Has Happened So Far? Groundbreaking Sunday, February 16, kicked off our Stewardship campaign for July 2025 through June 2026. Mother Nature's snow kept many at home but did not dim the spirit of our service, brunch, or community activities. Creative juices were directed to bead work, winter seed sowing, and communicating with elected officials. Singing, origami, and speed chats rounded out the activities. Don't worry if you missed these! More options for fun will be available on March 2 and 9. "Housewarming Sunday," March 16, will include many yummy desserts as we celebrate Building Our BUC Community.

Why Pledge? This is an opportunity to support our congregation during a critical time of growth and challenge. BUC is a home for spiritual growth, social justice work, friendship, and so much more. The pledge goal of \$530,000 is ambitious and needed. Paying for utilities and maintenance isn't glamorous, but it is very necessary. This income also supports our staff and programs. A pledge campaign that runs short of this goal may mean further reductions.

When to Pledge NOW! March 16 is the end of the pledge drive. This timing allows the Board to set a solid budget based on the \$530,000 goal or to make needed cuts. Pledging NOW is the best "insurance" for a robust future.

How to Pledge Use [this link](#) to easily make your pledge. Emails have been sent with your previous pledge amount, communication from the Board, and a giving guide. Email valerie.phillips@bucmi.org if you prefer a paper pledge form.

What Has Been Pledged to Date? At the time of publication, 89 of 218 pledges have been received, representing \$275,392 or 51.96% of the \$530,000 goal.

In faith,

Your Stewardship Committee: **Bob Clement**, *Co-Chair*; **Paul Vachon**, *Co-Chair*; **Mary Dunn**, *Assistant Co-Chair*; **Jane O'Neil**, *Assistant Co-Chair*

Program Events & Information

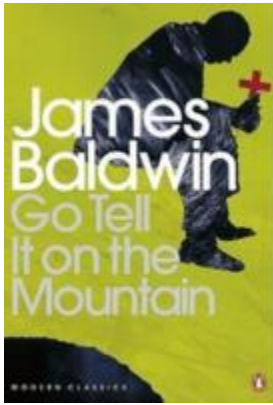
The poster for the film 'Til Kingdom Come' features a central yellow Star of David with a cross inside it, set against a background of people with their hands raised in prayer. The title 'TIL KINGDOM COME' is at the top in white. Below the poster, the text reads: 'Til Kingdom Come', Film screening, Sunday, March 9, 12:30 pm, Sanctuary, Presented by BUC UUs for Justice in the Middle East.

'Til Kingdom Come
Film screening
Sunday, March 9, 12:30 pm
Sanctuary
Presented by BUC UUs for Justice in the Middle East

Join BUC UUs for Justice in the Middle East (UJME) on **Sunday, March 9 at 12:30 pm in the Sanctuary** for a screening of the documentary film *'Til Kingdom Come*. We as Americans have a huge responsibility for the conflict in Gaza and ever expanding into the West Bank. We do the work of peace in the Middle East; we must understand our own role.

About the film: Millions of American Evangelicals are praying for the State of Israel. Among them are the Bingham, a dynasty of Kentucky pastors, and their Evangelical congregants in an impoverished coal mining town. They donate sacrificially to Israel's foremost philanthropic organization, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, because they fervently believe the Jews are crucial to Jesus's return. This film traces this unusual relationship, from rural Kentucky to the halls of government in Washington, through the moving of the American Embassy in Jerusalem and to the annexation plan of the West Bank. With unparalleled access, the film exposes a stunning backstory of the Trump and Netanyahu administrations, where financial, political, and messianic motivations intersect with the apocalyptic worldview that is insistently reshaping American foreign policy toward Israel and the Middle East.

For questions and/or more information, contact Sarah Redmond (sarah.redmond2007@gmail.com) of BUC UJME.



BUC Racial Justice Book Group

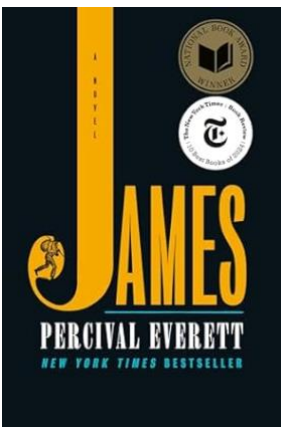
March discussion:

Go Tell It on the Mountain by James Baldwin

Monday, March 10

6:00-7:30 pm

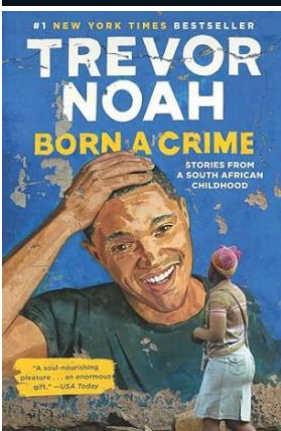
The Racial Justice Book Group is a project for BUCers who are striving to understand and work to eliminate racial prejudice from our community and ourselves. All are invited to join the discussions. The group meets on Zoom on the second Monday of the month in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May. Zoom details are on the [BUC calendar](#) and shared in the weekly update email the week prior. This month's discussion of *Go Tell It on the Mountain* by James Baldwin will be on **Monday, March 10 from 6:00-7:30 pm**. For questions and/or more information, contact group coordinator Mary Masson at (248) 568-6544 or mmasson@wowway.com. The remaining book selections and meeting dates are:



Monday, April 14

James

by Percival Everett



Monday, May 12

Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood

by Trevor Noah

BUC Alliance

Tuesday, March 11
12:00 noon
Pavilion + Sanctuary



Carol Lee on “The Lone Ranger” radio show

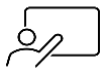
Who was that masked man?

...From out of the past come the thundering hoofbeats of the great horse Silver—the Lone Ranger rides again. Hi yo, Silver, away! Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear...

Join the BUC Alliance for their next program on **Tuesday, March 11 at 12:00 noon** when Carol Lee will be presenting on “The Lone Ranger” radio show. Come hear Carol, niece of the Lone Ranger’s creator and daughter of one of the show’s cast members, share her recollections from behind the scenes of this iconic radio drama, from sitting in the control room during broadcasts to being entertained by the lively actors in her home. You will hear little-heard anecdotes of the genesis of radio broadcasting in Detroit.



Bring-your-own lunch in the Pavilion (coffee, tea, and cookies provided)



Program in the Sanctuary

For questions and/or more information, contact Carole Wiseman (586-446-0165) of the Alliance.

BUCers at the Theatre

Sunday matinees at the Detroit Repertory Theatre

BUCers at the Theatre invites you to the Detroit Rep's 68th season! BUCers can join together to carpool or meet up at the [Detroit Repertory Theatre](#) for a Sunday matinee. This legendary arts venue in the heart of Detroit has a lobby bar, cocktail lounge, café with vegan options, and a professional show—all in a beautiful art gallery setting.

Detroit
REPERTORY
T H E A T R E



Attend any one or all of the shows. Sign up any time before each date or all at once:

Sunday, March 16: *Hysterical!* by Elenka Stauffer. Based on true events, high school cheerleaders in the best year of their lives have everything under control—until they don't.

Sunday, June 8: *Covenant* by York Walker. Two years after he disappeared, a struggling guitarist returns to his small town a blues star, sparking rumors he made a trade with a devil.

Tickets - \$18 general seating with BUC discount (\$30 at door)

1:00 pm - lobby, art gallery, and café/bistro open

2:00 pm - curtain opens promptly

Reserve by text or email to Maryl Kacir Huntington:

(313) 407-4377 or marylk@live.com

Pay Maryl in cash/Venmo or by check to DRT at the show



UU Values Open Forum

Brought to you by the Humanists of BUC

Sunday, March 16

7:00 pm on Zoom

Kimber Bishop-Yanke

Founder, Kids Empowered on the Move
Co-Chair, Oakland County Task Force
on Poverty and Homelessness

MAMA's Coffeehouse

a monthly acoustic music concert series

Income from MAMA's
Coffeehouse (after operating
expenses) benefits BUC

Saturday, March 22

Sally Rogers

Maggie Ferguson opens

doors open at 7:00 pm

concert begins at 7:30 pm

Admission: \$17 (\$15 student/senior)

Cash or check at door only



Sally Rogers began her career as a full-time touring musician in 1979, after encouragement from Stan Rogers, the legendary Canadian singer-songwriter. That was followed by an invitation from Garrison Keillor to appear on *A Prairie Home Companion*. She appeared more than a dozen times on that show, in the wake of 14 recordings. Her travels have taken her to Europe, China, Hungary and Poland, and across the United States. Much of Rogers' time is spent teaching music in public schools as an artist-in-residence. Her gorgeous singing voice, boundless energy, and good humor are welcomed from coast to coast.

Maggie Ferguson has worn many hats in the music world as the host of a long-running music series and a folk-oriented radio disc jockey, but she really shines as a performer. Maggie possesses a beautiful alto voice, lovely guitar-playing skills, and a powerful spirit. She brings a fresh take to folk classics and obscure gems alike.

Upcoming shows:

April 19: Badass Women Band

May 17: Mustard's Retreat 50th Anniversary concert



Introduction to Microaggressions
Sunday, March 23, Noon-1:30 p.m.
Red Door

What is a microaggression?
Why do microaggressions occur?
How to respond?

In this workshop, participants will develop an understanding of microaggressions and where they come from, then practice techniques for responding either as a target of, or a bystander to, microaggressions.

Presented by BUC Racial Justice team
Facilitators: Mary Masson & Bruce Webber

★ Light lunch will be served for in-person participants

Register at bit.ly/Microaggressions_Workshop

Specify in-person or Zoom attendance





Greeter Training

**Sunday
March 30
12:00pm**

Large Conference Room & Lobby

New and experienced greeters invited!

- **Learn all about the greeter role**
- **Ask questions**
- **New scripts for greeting**

Snacks provided

Bring a friend!



Mark your calendar!

The BUC Rummage Team is happy to announce the dates for the spring Rummage sale:

Donation intake: April 27-29

Sorting & pricing: April 28-May 1

Sale days: May 1-3

This year's sale will look very different due to the presence of the Montessori school. The Green Door, Red Door, and Blue Door rooms will not be available for selling, but for the first time we will be using the Sanctuary as a sales area. There will be less space overall, so we will need to focus on quality rather than quantity for item donations.

As always, the time and talent of many BUCers will be needed to ensure a successful sale. Watch for more information on volunteering in future communications. In the meantime, please begin gathering your high-quality donations. A good rule to follow: ***If you wouldn't buy it, we probably can't sell it!***