

The BUC Big Picture

December 2025



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December 7

“The Practice of Hope”

Hope is not the same as optimism. Hope is not a feeling, it’s a decision to act to make a difference.

December 14

“Christmas Choir Sunday”

The BUC Chalice Choir, accompanied by Mira Walker on piano and under the baton of Co-Director of Music Ministry Abha Dearing, brings to life a rich collection of classic carols arranged by famed British composer John Rutter. The choral music will be woven into the service with words provided by several elves, reminding us how joy and poignant moments are woven together into our lives, perhaps especially during the holiday season.

December 21

10:30 am: “Creating Winter’s Wonder: A Pageant We Build Together”

Have you always wanted to be a star—literally or figuratively? Now’s your moment! Join us as we bring the story of The Snow Tree to life and celebrate the wonder and beauty of winter. No rehearsal, no pressure—just joyful, all-ages fun. Costumes, props, and simple stage directions will be handed out on the spot. Come ready to play and be part of the magic!

December 21

5:00 pm: Winter Solstice Celebration

Our annual Winter Solstice celebration, hosted by the Pulver Family. Refreshments indoors followed by singing, dancing, rituals, and spells around a roaring fire outdoors in the courtyard to help encourage the Sun to return to us again.

Wednesday, December 24 - Christmas Eve

6:00 pm: "Each Night a Child is Born is a Holy Night" candlelight service

A traditional Unitarian Universalist Christmas Eve service, with stories, music, carols, and candle lighting.

December 28

"Comfort and Joy"

It's been a rough year. It's been a cold December. Yet we are still staring down the long, dark winter ahead as we head into what will likely be another trying year. What we could all use right now is some comfort and joy. We will examine the restorative—even defiant—practice of embracing comfort and joy in our lives. So, for this service, please come dressed in whatever makes you the most comfortable, and be thinking of a message of joy you'd like to share with someone during our special activity (yes, that means our indoor "snowball" fight!)

December Plate Sharing

BUC Emergent Needs Fund

The recipient of our plate sharing in December is the BUC Emergent Needs Fund. This fund is used to provide direct support to people experiencing financial difficulty. This includes both people from our congregation who have experienced a loss or hardship and people from the community who have contacted us to request assistance. We typically ask for contributions to this fund in anticipation of increased need during the winter. Requests for assistance are welcome year-round.

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 drop-down) or [Venmo](#) (send payment to @BUCMI and note "Plate Collection").

Staff “Who to Contact” List / Office Hours

Do you have an idea, question, or concern and need to know where to direct it? Wondering which staff member handles a particular area? The answers are in our staff [“Who to Contact” list](#), also linked on our [home page](#) in the “Learn About Us” box in the middle of the page. This list has contact information for the minister and staff members responsible for pastoral, financial, worship, program, membership, administrative, and communications issues. **Church office hours** are also included at the top. These hours reflect when the office is open for church business and do not reflect the operating hours of the building as a whole. We kindly ask that you restrict church business (by phone and in person) to the office hours. The working hours of individual staff members, which do not necessarily match the office hours, and are listed on the [Minister & Staff page](#) of our website.

Minister’s Message

Rev. Connie Grant

Fun and Games

After I made the comment to a staff member at a previous congregation that I don’t like games, he reported to other staff members “Connie doesn’t like fun.” I protested that I do actually like fun, it’s just that games are not my idea of a good time. I think that part of the problem for me is that I don’t know how seriously to take board games, or card games, or video games. I do want to understand—and follow—the rules, but I don’t really get the competitiveness or the deadly seriousness of some players. I also don’t really understand the rules, or even the concepts, of psychological games like passive aggressiveness or gaslighting, but I know I don’t want to play them.

My idea of fun—not exactly a game—is an activity that Sara Constantakis and I have been using at Getting to Know UU sessions for prospective members, called the Four Corners exercise for short. I didn’t make this one up, but I’ve used it and

adapted it over the years. We invite participants to move around the room in response to a series of questions about their beliefs.

The first question is “What kind of ice cream is your favorite?” The “four corners” are chocolate, vanilla, some other kind, or no kind. Then I ask people to say a little bit about why they have chosen the place they have. You might be surprised at the passion that some people have for their favorite flavor! Of course, the point is that these differences of opinion are things we can talk about, or even change our minds about.

Then we go on to questions about their theological (or a-theological) beliefs and their orientations to the world, choosing a corner, a point on a continuum, or a side of the room. Are you a theist, agnostic, humanist, or atheist? What do you think will happen to you when you die: heaven, becoming one with the universe, nothing, something else? Which is more active in your life, fate or free will? As with so many things, the answers depend on how you think about them, and how you define the terms. And the underlying question is how people of diverse beliefs come together in one congregation. (A hint: it’s the willingness to be in covenantal relationship with and a curiosity to learn from others who have differing ideas.)

The next sessions of GTKUU are planned for February. Even if you are a longtime member of the congregation, you are invited to participate. You might learn something about yourself, each other, and this UU way of faith. It might be fun.

In faith and hope,

Rev. Connie Grant

Religious Education Musings

Shannon Snideman, Director of Religious Education

As the congregation prepares for the search for our next minister, many of our program groups, teams, and committees are taking this moment to re-envision their work and update their charters. The RE Team has been meeting with Rev. Connie to review our existing charter and discern changes that will best support the whole Religious Education program. In this kind of work, I'm especially grateful for the ability to lean on my fellow religious educators—to learn how they structure their teams, incorporate best practices, and sustain thriving programs. And since we have spent the last month practicing gratitude, I want to express my deepest thanks to two colleagues who mean so much to me: Diane Melvin and Eva Leventer.



(L to R) Eva, Shannon, Diane

I have known Diane since I was in my youth. Fifteen years later, she is still serving her congregation and nurturing a vibrant Religious Education program at People's Church in Kalamazoo. She has long been a pillar of the Heartland area, and I am so fortunate to draw from her well of wisdom. In recent years she has been instrumental in continuing the Middle School Retreat at Mystic Lake each fall, and she has also taken the lead in organizing the spring retreat for Heartland-area religious educators. Whenever we gather—especially during our recent time at Mystic Lake—we talk shop: swapping activity ideas, reminiscing about CONs and retreats of years past, and sharing strategies for strengthening our programs. I learned so much about how their Religious Education team functions, from clearly defined roles to streamlined procedures. I am looking forward to bringing these ideas to BUC's RE Team to create a scaffold that supports the Religious Education program at BUC.

I am also deeply grateful for my colleague Eva, who serves both Northwest UU and the First UU Church of Detroit. We stepped into our roles around the same time, and over the past three years we've celebrated the joys and weathered the storms side by side. Together, we have built a wonderful collaboration between our youth programs. We've been able to offer OWL (Our Whole Lives) programs for middle- and high-school youth from congregations across Metro Detroit—including Beacon UU in Troy—and as our programs continue to grow, we hope to expand OWL offerings across the lifespan. Eva and I have also partnered on Teen Nights, which are always so fulfilling; it's a joy to create spaces where youth can build community and simply have fun. BUC has been a partner in the Peace Camp that Eva leads each summer at Northwest, and together we co-hosted a Passover Seder in April. Collaborating to build a multigenerational UU community has been a gift, and we're excited for more opportunities ahead. We were really looking forward to the Bread Communion service! While we were grateful not to weather that particular storm, we are looking forward to future gatherings with our dear friends—for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Motor City Pride in June, and beyond.

I am eternally grateful for my dear colleagues and the friendships that have taken root and flourished. They make this work not only possible, but joyful.

Music Memos

Steven Dearing, Co-Director of Music Ministry

I understand that the concept of change is something that a lot of people dread, so much so that any small notion of the act of undoing something that's been a "given" for some time causes anxiety. I feel empathy for those that suffer.

But as someone who gets bored with predictability, I crave change. I have been pegged for moving the furniture around (even in the middle of the night) just because "a look" is getting old and kinda stale. I almost never drive the same route to and from any given destination.

Mixing things up can be invigorating, as change allows for a new view/environment/vibe, or plain energy that you are living in at any given moment.

The best part of programming and executing music for the BUC community is that it allows for change; change of genre, change of timbre, change of medium, etc.

At BUC we are as diverse in music as we are in opinion, and we are blessed to have great talent such as Mira, my co-director Abha, and a number of musical congregants willing and able to execute quality music for any given worship topic.

Looking forward, we on the Music Team are always on the prowl for those who want to show their support of Abha and my vision for music at BUC, joining us for an hour once a month on a Wednesday evening. Please let Bette Moen or Kaye Rittinger or myself know if you would like to join our mighty, little team.

It's a bit incredible to say that we will soon round out 2025 with holiday music by the Sound Messengers on December 7, featuring Craig Stroup and Dave Uricek on vocals, followed by our annual Music Sunday on December 14, featuring our beloved Chalice Choir. It'll soon be Christmas Eve, and music will have a large part in the service.

As we officially enter the holiday season, I hope all of you have a wonderful end-of-year full of love and grace.

Membership Matters

Sara Constantakis, Director of Congregational Life

"I was so shocked to learn that the opposite of belonging is fitting in. Because fitting in is assessing a group of people and changing who you are. But true belonging never asks us to change who we are. It demands we be who we are."
—Brené Brown

I'm a collector of quotes—some inspirational, some meaningful or poignant. If it makes me think, or gobsmacks me, it's going in my collection. The above quote

from Brené Brown really struck me as a way of thinking about membership and engagement in faith communities like ours. Sometimes, to join a group or community, we feel we need to change ourselves in some way—add something in, leave something out—to be accepted and more like the rest of the group; in other words, to fit in. But Unitarian Universalist communities are different. UU congregations ask that we bring our whole selves to our beloved communities, and demand—as Brené puts it—that we be who we are.

That's the type of belonging we are trying to foster here at BUC. Our congregation is a place where you can be who you are and find people who will not just accept but celebrate you. This idea of belonging is what's behind our welcoming of LGBTQIA+ individuals and families, and it helps us find like-minded people with whom to put our passions for social justice to work in the world. It's also about finding the sometimes quieter ways to connect with one another, over a shared meal or a craft or board game. At the foundation of it all are relationships and weaving the threads that sustain our interconnected web at the times when our lives and the world can feel shaky, sad, or hard. One of those times is around the holidays, when community becomes even more important for a variety of reasons. It's at these times especially when we need and want to feel not that we just fit in, but truly belong.

Here at BUC, there are many opportunities for belonging that you can read about in the pages of this newsletter and that will hopefully help sustain you during this holiday season. Our two new monthly fellowship groups, the Craft and Chat Group and the Gaming Group, are meeting in the next week, and we'll celebrate birthdays as a community after service this Sunday, December 7.

Small groups are a proven path to belonging, so in January, we're planning to showcase our small group ministry a bit and potentially open up some new groups with a "Taste of Small Groups" session.

Be sure to read on in this issue for a special article and photos by Valerie Phillips about our recent Thanksgiving potluck. And—spoiler alert—a Christmas Day gathering is in the works!

These opportunities are how we foster true belonging at BUC, and they're why new people visit us every single Sunday and newcomers continue to deepen their engagement with our community. After our November 22 Getting to Know UU session, six potential new members are on the path to membership, with three others planning to attend our next GTKUU in February.

May the warmth of true belonging fill you this holiday season at BUC and everywhere you go.

Board of Trustees Update

On November 16, the congregation approved revised and restated Bylaws that reduce the size of the Nominating Committee and Board of Trustees, as well as update other language and procedures. The Town Hall meeting also provided updates on strategic planning and the minister search. Thank you to the 82 people who attended! Thank you to the Policy and Bylaws work group of Art Hillman, Marilyn Kelly, Brian Schandavel, Sylvia Whitmer, and Randy Safford who provided legal review.

In the past, Stewardship Committees would generate a pledge goal that was mostly aspirational and based largely on past goals. Beginning last fiscal year, the Board recognized that this goal-setting would be better informed by actual budget needs. This helped us achieve a balanced budget and the practice will continue. This means the Budget and Finance committee will begin work in December on the 2026-2027 annual budget so that by January it can be used to plan Stewardship pledge drive targets. The committee also continues to work on a three-year budget projection to provide continuity in fiscal planning.

The minister search team is working hard on the Congregational Record, which describes our congregation, the community we're in, and other information for minister candidates to learn about us. It will be finalized December 19. The team will begin reading candidate information in January.

In this holiday season, the Board would like to extend a thank you to every member and friend for the many ways that you participate in our community. We appreciate all who volunteer for our program teams—Welcome, Pastoral Care, Religious Education, and other roles. We also appreciate you if it takes all you've got to put on your shoes and come to church on Sundays, or connect via Zoom, to calm or energize your spirit. Thank you to people who are learning about BUC and adding to the fabric of this community. Thank you to Rev. Connie and our staff members for their good work, creativity, and guidance. May our spirit of gratitude bring light during this holiday season and into the new year.

Your BUC Board of Trustees for 2025-2026

President Mary Jo Ebert, Vice President Harper West, Treasurer Keith Ensroth, Secretary Bill Fox, Trustees: Donna Cunningham, Art Hillman, Claudia Kocher, Tanya Nordhaus, Brian Schandavel

Spotlight: BUC Revenue Committee



Craig Stroup (Chair)
Mary Masson (Auction/Rummage)
Tanya Nordhaus (Board)
Pat Butkiewicz (Congregant at Large)
Max Kort (Budget and Finance)
Sarah Sullivan (Revenue)
Soren Andersen (Stewardship)

Mission

- Review and coordinate BUC fundraising activities
- Recommend new fundraising activities
- Build a list of potential participants

Our committee is here to help you with your needs in organizing and promoting your current fundraiser.



We need your help to develop new fundraising ideas. All funds generated support the needs of our BUC budget. Please share with us any fundraising ideas you have seen in the past or any great new ideas of your own. We can work together to develop them.

Contact: Craig Stroup at (248) 227-0346 or craigstroup@gmail.com

Meet BUC's Flamekeepers

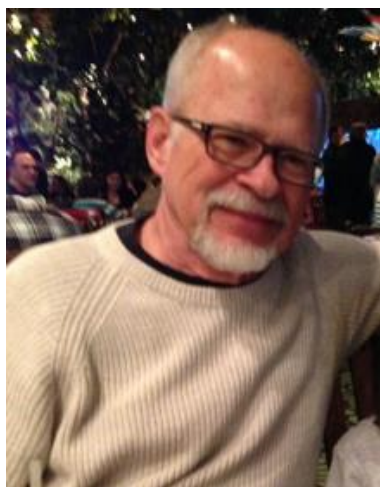
By Tanya Nordhaus

As many of you know, I have been interviewing congregants about their connection to BUC and their lives. If you haven't done a Zoom interview with me, I encourage you to get on my schedule via [this link](#). More dates are added every Monday. And if you would prefer to interview in person, we can do that, too.

Each month I will be introducing you to three congregants. This month I introduce you to Josephine Sheppard, Tom Cranston, and LuAnne Holder.

Thank you, MAMA's Coffeehouse, for bringing to us **Josephine Sheppard**. She has come to BUC on and off for about 17 years, but is more on now than off. A "driftarian," to steal a word from Ben Ensroth, Josephine has explored many different religions. But when she attended her first service at BUC, she felt a warmth from the congregants. Josephine is a practitioner of meditation and non-violent communication. She is also a human and animal rights person and an environmentally conscious person. Josephine has her doctorate in religious counseling. As if that wasn't enough, she's also a certified Reiki master teacher, a certified flexologist with extended study in body reflexology. In her career, she provides holistic personal and spiritual development, gives speaking engagements, and teaches. Josephine would love to meet you, you, and you. When you see her, please ask her about her breakdancing days.





Tom Cranston has been a fixture at BUC since 1988, when he and his wife, Jean, joined the church. Their daughters, Liz and Katie, grew up in the BUC's religious education program. Tom's claim to fame at BUC is being the longest-serving GUUSH advisor and being a darn great one at that. He worked with our high-school youth and UU youth throughout the state for 25 years! His impact was so profound that the UUA honored Tom with the very first continental-wide Outstanding Youth Advisor Award. Tom

has had the pleasure of traveling quite a bit through Europe. While he thoroughly enjoyed the art museums, getting to see the English countryside through the eyes of four different farmers allowed him to witness a beauty many of us will never see. Tom likes machines and racing. Speaking of racing, you should race over to Tom when you get a chance. He is interesting and very much a people person, so he would love to talk to you.

LuAnne Holder initially explored Taoism and Buddhism before finding BUC. Drawn by our welcoming atmosphere and respect for individual spiritual paths, LuAnne joined BUC in 2008, alongside her husband, David, who decided to try BUC after doing tai chi here. While LuAnne has done several things at BUC, such as teaching and helping people with their resumes when South Oakland Shelter was



housed here, her heart is with the Living by Heart group, which she has been part of since 2012. She is inspired by the founder of Living by Heart, Penny Hackett-Evans, who reignited LuAnne's love of poetry that she had had since she was a little girl. LuAnne took over co-facilitating the group when Penny moved to California. Through Living by Heart, she was opened up to crafts and art, too. Beyond Living by Heart, she has a blended family with four children, who live throughout the world. She enjoys cooking, gardening, lifting weights, and creating greeting cards, all of which she would love to talk to you about.

Program News & Info

Thanksgiving Potluck 2025

By Valerie Phillips

My personal adventure in organizing and volunteering started months ago with several ideas I had rolling around in my head. I shared these ideas with Rev. Connie, not as a staff member or a representative of BUC, but as a volunteer and congregant of our beloved community. The results were two new fellowship groups formed by Shannon Snideman and myself: a Craft and Chat Group and a Gaming Group. With the idea of



community and connection on my mind and in my heart, in the middle of organizing these new groups I suddenly decided we needed to have a Thanksgiving potluck again. Many of you may remember Carol Winslow, who organized similar holiday dinners years ago and how when we lost her, we lost the tradition. And that is how the 2025 BUC Thanksgiving potluck got scheduled. So how did it turn out?

I have never created or organized events like this before. I went in with enthusiasm, support, and a few goals in mind. I wanted a place for people to gather together and enjoy each other's company, and for Thanksgiving, I wanted people to be able to share a meal together. I promised attendees a place to be and let them know "We will eat." Was there some chaos and confusion? Absolutely, but when you come together and support one another, you will find your way through the muck and the mess, often with laughs at the ridiculousness of it all.





Taylor Phillips cooked TWO turkeys in BUC's convection oven! Here she is taking a break from the kitchen to join in a gingerbread house-making craft.

Exploring traditions and events of the past and thinking about what we want and need today is a good reminder of the living tradition of our UU faith. We do not need to recreate what has been done before. Whatever happened this year doesn't have to happen in exactly the same way next year. There is so much

room for others (yes, you!) to lead, organize, help, and bring new ideas to our church community. Traditions grow and evolve with the people who pick them up.

The Thanksgiving gathering was a success because of each member of the community who came together to be a part of it. You generously brought wonderful food to share, warmth, and the spirit of community. Even the people who had other plans or called to get more details also participated by voicing their support of the event.

Rebuilding traditions, trying new things, stepping a little out of our comfort zones—these are all ways we live our values together. And in that spirit, I'm happy to say that I'll be hosting a Christmas Day gathering at BUC on Thursday, December 25! I don't have all the details finalized yet, but stay tuned—they're coming soon.



BUC UUs for Justice in the Middle East

A Big Win for Michigan Divest

Michigan Divest, a statewide coalition of Michigan residents, human rights activists, and active and retired public employees led a campaign to divest Israel Bonds from public pensions. After a year-long statewide divestment campaign led by Michigan residents, the Michigan Department of Treasury has dropped all State

of Michigan Retirement System (SMRS) investments in Israel Bonds. Read the full press release from Michigan Divest [here](#).

Congressional Resolution Recognizing the Genocide of the Palestinian People in Gaza

On November 14, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib (MI-12), alongside 20 other Members of Congress, introduced H.Res.876 – Recognizing the Genocide of the Palestinian People in Gaza. This resolution officially recognizes that the Israeli government has committed the crime of genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza and calls for the United States to take immediate, concrete action to fulfill its binding legal obligations as a party to the Genocide Convention to prevent and punish the crime of genocide. Read the full press release [here](#), and please call your Member of Congress to ask them to support this resolution.

Upcoming Events



BUC Craft and Chat Group

Friday, December 5
6:00-8:00 pm
Green Door

Looking for a place to get crafty and connect with others in our community? Join us **THIS FRIDAY, December 5 from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Green Door** for

the next meeting of the Craft and Chat group—a relaxed, all-skills-welcome group where we gather each month to make art, swap ideas, share stories, and laugh together. Whether you have a project in hand or simply want to soak up inspiration, you're warmly welcome. Contact Valerie Phillips (valerie.phillips@bucmi.org) for more information.

Join us in Hodas Hall **THIS SUNDAY, December 7 during coffee hour** for our monthly all-ages community birthday celebration! If your birthday is in December,



you're invited to come forward for special recognition. There will be cupcakes!



Join us on **Wednesday, December 10 from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Purple Door** for the next meeting of the BUC Gaming group—an all-ages monthly meetup of fun,

laughter, and connection. With rotating themes like board games, card games, puzzles, and pen-and-paper classics, there's always something new to play and great people to play with! Whether you're a seasoned strategist or just looking for a lighthearted way to connect, there's always a place for you at the table. Contact Shannon Snideman (shannon.snideman@bucmi.org) for more information.

BUC Family Holiday Giving 2025



**Drop off gifts at church
Sunday, December 14**

sponsors who has gifts for our families, please deliver them (wrapped, please) to church on Sunday morning, December 14 between 10:00 am and 12:30 pm. The intake elves will be ready to check in your red and green bags.

(If you need more bags, there are some in the front lobby of the church; please take what you need. We will also take back any extra big bags or zip lok bags to use again next year.)

Questions? Please contact Jane O'Neil at janeAoneil@gmail.com.

It's almost time to deliver the gifts. This year while we had fewer families, some of them were quite large and we are able to make the holidays brighter for many children.

If you are one of the very generous

MAMA's Coffeehouse

a monthly acoustic music concert series



Jan Krist **Katie Geddes** **Jo Serrapere** **Kora Feder**

Bobby Pennock **Michelle Held** **Jen Cass** **Mike Ward**

 **Benefit Concert**
MAMA's Coffeehouse
December 13, 2025 7:30 PM 

Admission: \$20 regular | \$18 student/senior
No advance sales; cash or check at door only

P.O.W.E.R. (a Peaceful Organization for Wellbeing, Empowerment and Resilience) is a community of artists and musicians who have come together to create and fund opportunities for vulnerable members of our community to receive self-defense training, and situational awareness training, at no cost, from expert instructors. They hope that these efforts will help prevent victimization. P.O.W.E.R. is partnering with Kitsune Defense.

Eight accomplished Michigan performers are donating their time and talents to the evening's event: **Jen Cass, Jan Krist, Jo Serrapere, Kora Feder, Mike Ward, Katie Geddes, Michelle Held and Bobby Pennock.**

Upcoming events

January 17: Still being confirmed!

February 21: Cobill – Shari Kane & Dave Steele/Rochelle Clark and Jason Dennie

BUCers at the Theatre

BUCers at the Theatre invites you to Drama in the D! This legendary arts venue in the heart of the city has a lobby bar, cocktail lounge, café, and union theatre professionals—all in an art gallery setting. BUCers can join together to

carpool or meet up at Detroit Repertory Theatre for afternoon matinees. Sign up for our email list during coffee hour, or contact Maryl Kacir Huntington at (313) 407-4377 to receive email alerts.

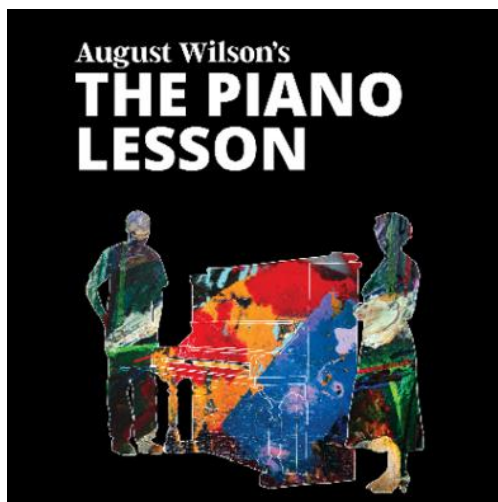
Tickets: \$21 general seating with BUC discount (\$35 at the door)

1:00 pm: lobby, art gallery, and café/cocktail bar open (vegan options available)

2:00 pm: curtain opens promptly

Reserve by text or email to Maryl Huntington at (313) 407-4377 or

marylk@live.com. Pay by check made out to the DRT at the show, or pay Maryl in cash/Venmo (@Marylynn-Huntington)



The Piano Lesson by August Wilson

BUC date: Sunday, January 18 at 2:00 pm

Winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for Drama

It is 1936 and Berniece and her brother Boy Willie fight over the fate of the family piano. She treasures it as a precious connection to their ancestors, and he means to sell it for a more prosperous future. This fourth installment in Wilson's American Century Cyle is a haunting play about legacy.



REGISTRATION IS FULL!
**Workshop dates: January 12 & 19,
February 2, 9, & 23, March 2
7:00-9:00 p.m on Zoom**

Living the Pledge To End Racism Workshop
Facilitated by trained members of the BUC Racial Justice team. No registration fee.

WORKSHOP GOAL

To help participants integrate the Pledge to End Racism in their daily lives by:

- Learning how to confront racism and bias in everyday encounters;
- Recognizing and challenging systemic racism; and
- Making a personal commitment to help end racism in their community.

Participants will develop a community of support and an understanding of how to use this support to deepen their work in building a just and equitable multicultural world.

WHO IS THIS WORKSHOP FOR?

- People who've had previous anti-racism training and want to take their understanding and competency to a deeper level. This class will provide an opportunity to grow their knowledge and commitment for more effective anti-racism work.
- People who've never taken a class about racism and are willing to invest in their learning with additional reading and other activities. This class will provide an opportunity to start on the road to anti-racism competence.

SCHEDULE

- January 12: Module 1 – Foundations for Understanding
- January 19: Module 2 – Recognizing and Confronting Bias
- February 2: Module 3 – Speak Up Against Microaggressions
- February 9: Module 4 – Structural and Institutional Racism
- February 23: Module 5 – The Movement for Black Lives
- March 2: Module 6 – Personal Commitment to Ending Racism

Participants are asked to prepare for each session by reading articles and watching videos that address the major topics of the module. Each session includes presentations and Q&A with the full group, as well as small group discussions.

(continued next page)



The Pledge

The Living the Pledge workshop is based on a pledge developed in 1997 by Jim Rotch, a young white attorney in Birmingham, Alabama.

I BELIEVE that every person has worth as an individual.

I BELIEVE that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.

I BELIEVE that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

Therefore, from this day forward I WILL strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

I WILL discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

I WILL treat all people with dignity and respect;

I WILL commit to working with others to transform this community into a place that treats people of all races, ethnicities, and cultures with justice, equity, and compassion, and

I WILL strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.

WHAT BUCers ARE SAYING ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

This workshop was developed by members of First UU Church of Richmond, Virginia, and this is our fourth offering of it at BUC. Following are reflections from BUC participants about their experience.

The workshop is flexible and allows people to move forward from wherever they are when they start.

I gained a broader and deeper understanding of how pervasive and intentional racism is in this country.

The workshop caused me to think more deeply about the experiences of people of color.

You'll be enlightened about personal interactions. You may be surprised at how your well-intended words and actions may be experienced differently than you expect.

It helped me understand the wide range of individual actions that can make a difference and provided the framework for personal participation in racial justice activities.

It's a welcoming, honest, brave space where we're all in the same boat and there to support each other in what can be an uncomfortable but transformative experience.

I am more aware of how I answer questions about race and feel more confident to speak out about those issues.

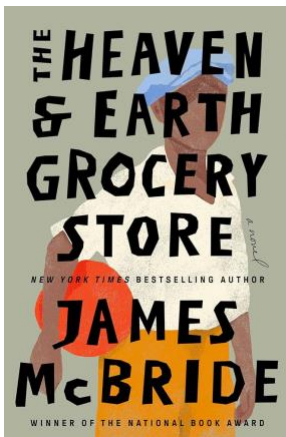
Informative, thought provoking, personally challenging.



BUC Racial Justice Book Club

The BUC Racial Justice Book Club began with alumni of the Living the Pledge workshop and is a way learn more about racism as we continue our individual and group work to end racism. All are invited to join the discussions on the second Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30 pm. Zoom links will be on the BUC calendar.

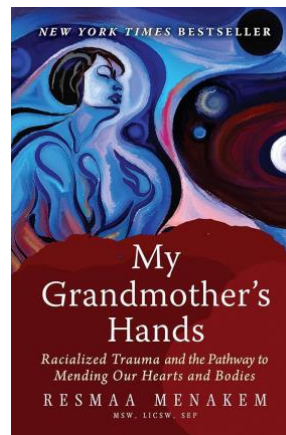
The club voted to skip reading a book in December as we all have a lot on our plates over the holidays. January and February were also omitted from our schedule due to overlap with the Living the Pledge workshops. SO...you have a long time to get ready for our March, April, and May meetings!



March 9

The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store

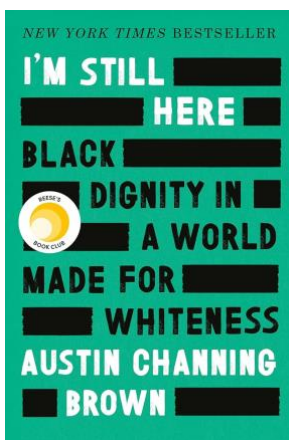
by James McBride



April 13

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies

by Resmaa Menakem



May 11

I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness

by Austin Channing Brown

We look forward to seeing you on Zoom and discussing these wonderful books next year! Happy reading! For questions or more info, contact Mary Masson at mmasson@wowway.com or (248) 568-6544.