



# REACH

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTHFIELD



**January 2025**



## Monthly Theme: Practicing Resistance

**Sunday, January 4th**

**“Question Box Sunday: Curiosity as a Practice of Resistance”  
with Rev. Sara Smalley and Audrey McCann**

Our service starts with a time for all ages with Audrey McCann that involves a surprise treat, then includes time for a Question Box Sunday after children go to their religious exploration class. Bring your questions about Unitarian Universalism, theology, spirituality, and more, and the answers to these questions become the sermon. In other words, instead of a sermon written out ahead of time, Rev. Sara will take your questions and answer them off the top of her head and from the bottom of her heart.

**Sunday, January 11th**

**“Our Mission in the Midst of Change: Community as a Practice of Resistance”  
with Rev. Sara Smalley**

Amid the turmoil of life, what is it we can hold on to? To what do we dedicate our lives? Join Rev. Sara as we continue to reflect on the questions raised at our congregational retreat on January 10th, as well as questions of our own personal grounding and transformation.

**Sunday, January 18th**

**Rabbi Michaela Brown with Rev. Sara Smalley**

Rabbi Michaela Brown is the Associate Chaplain for Jewish and Interfaith Life at both Carleton and St. Olaf colleges. Her work and study in non-denominational Jewish settings have shaped her pluralistic approach, focusing on the needs of both individuals and communities. She is passionate about social justice and community organizing. We look forward to welcoming her to UUFN!

**Sunday, January 25th**

**“Mourning Democracy and Accounting for Ourselves”  
Dr. Elías Ortega with Holly Kelchner**

Our guest speaker, Dr. Elías Ortega, President of Meadville Lombard Theological School and Professor of Religion, Ethics, and Leadership, will be in town to speak at UUFN on Sunday and at Carleton on Monday. A committed advocate for justice-making and civic engagement, Dr. Ortega has played key roles in Unitarian Universalist initiatives, including serving on the UUA's Commission on Institutional Change. Dr. Ortega's leadership at Meadville Lombard – a Unitarian Universalist seminary in Chicago – reflects his vision for theological education that integrates intellectual rigor with spiritual practices to prepare leaders for a complex, multicultural world. It is Dr. Ortega's belief that lifting the Universalist heritage can inspire us to do the necessary work to realize a better tomorrow.

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Much has changed in the past few years for our congregation: moving to a new building in 2018, hiring a new minister in 2021, weathering a global pandemic, completing a major building addition, resisting rising authoritarianism, and creating a growing multigenerational community.

Given all this change, it's time to reflect on who we have become, consider how we articulate what our work to do in the world is now, and dream about a future we want to create. Our current mission statement says that UUFN is "an inclusive community that nurtures spiritual and intellectual growth, and fosters ethical and social responsibility." We need you to help inform what we think our mission is now, and where it should guide us in the coming years.

Therefore, all members and friends of UUFN are invited to a morning of reflection and sharing as we begin preparing our next mission statement. Through exercises, conversations, and learning, we'll consider the stories that got us to today, the values that shape our congregation, and what UUFN is and hopes to be in the world. The work we do at this retreat will inform the task force that will craft the wording of the updated mission.

**Do join us – your experiences and imagination are what we need!**

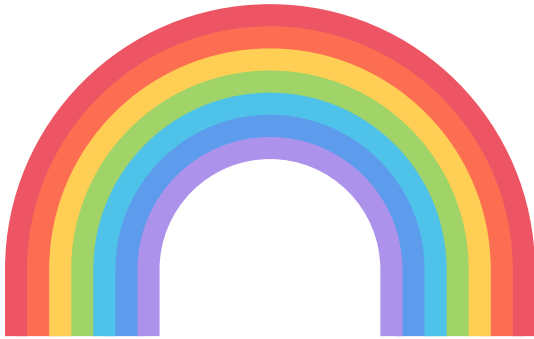
This retreat will be facilitated by Rev. Jim Foti, a Minnesota-based Unitarian Universalist minister who has served congregations ranging from thirty to a thousand members. Jim is currently a Congregational Life Adjunct serving with the MidAmerica Region of the UUA.

***We need volunteers after the retreat as well.*** If you are interested in being a part of the working group that will take the information gathered at the retreat and turn it into a poetic, inspiring mission statement, please contact Rev. Sara at [revsara@uunorthfield.org](mailto:revsara@uunorthfield.org). This group will do much of its work in January and February, with some smaller tasks in the spring.



## REjoicings!

A Religious Exploration Update  
from Audrey



Happy 2026!

In January, our worship and religious education will focus on the theme of "Practicing Resistance". Specifically, we'll talk about resisting the pressure to fit in, the allure of unhealthy habits like too much screen time, the everyday harms of racism, and other things that distract us from our values. (This could be a useful lesson plan for most adults, too—myself included!)

If you are interested in getting more involved with children's RE at UUFN, please fill out [this form](#) or [email Audrey](#). If you have young ones who may attend RE at UUFN, please fill out [this registration form](#) so we have safety information on file.

—Audrey McCann, Director of  
Children and Family Ministries



## Monthly Play Fellowship

*Connect with other UUFN families with children at a casual drop-in play date on Saturday mornings. We'll generally meet on the third Saturday of the month from 10am to noon.*

*January 17 @ the Gerber's home  
February 21 - location TBD  
March 21 - location TBD  
April 18 - location TBD*

**[Please RSVP here](#)** if you plan to attend the January event:

*Please contact Laura Gerber if you're interested in hosting a play fellowship at your home during the winter months.*



## A Note From the Welcome Team

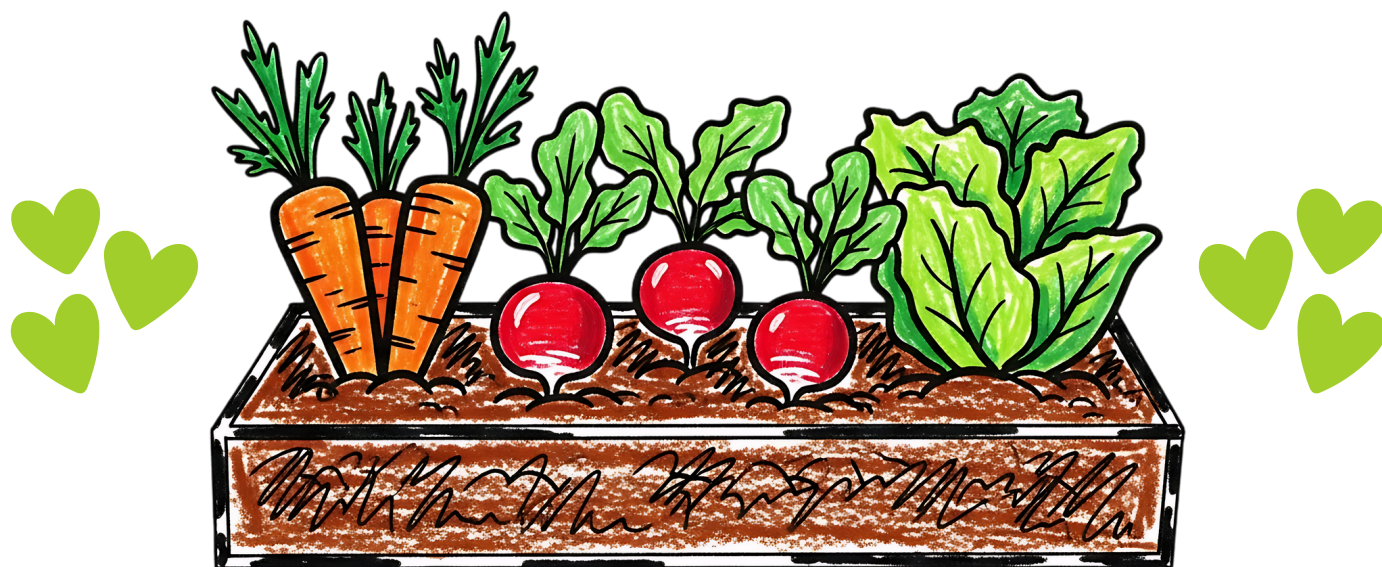
*Brynda M., Bill M. Carol S.  
and Jen H. are happy to  
welcome Claire Rafferty to  
our Welcome Team.*

*We all feel she will be a  
great addition to our team.*



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# A Message from the Green Team



Interested in Vegetable Gardening at the UUFN?  
Here's the Plan!

Several members of the UUFN have indicated an interest in vegetable gardening. The Green Team agrees that locally grown vegetables lead to a healthier diet, a better understanding of the connectedness of nature, and to a greener planet. In consultation with the Gardening Team we have come up with a three tiered plan.

The Green Team will take responsibility for this plan as the Gardening Team has plenty of other work to do.

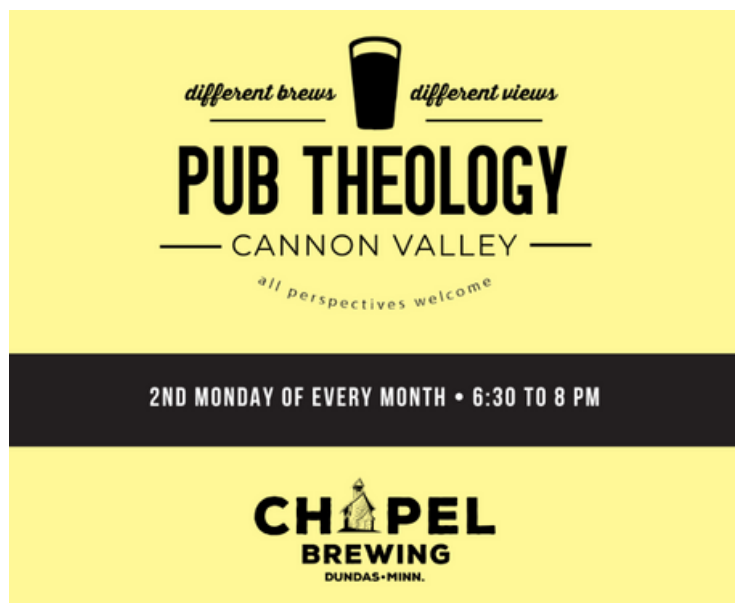
**Tier One:** The Green Team will help people learn how to garden with pots at their own home.. This spring we will hold a workshop to help members learn the basics.

**Tier Two:** A raised garden bed is planned for under the kitchen window at UUFN. This can be used by the RE program to help our children and interested adults learn about gardening. Mary Davidson has volunteered to monitor this garden bed taking care of watering, etc.

**Tier Three:** Larry Vorwerk has a large garden on his property outside Northfield. He is happy to allow UUFN members to garden with him, learn from his expertise, and take a portion of the harvest bounty.

If you have further questions on this, feel free to talk to Larry Vorwerk, Mary Davidson, Bill Jokela, Mary Jane Lipinski, or Sue Coleman.

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Join us for **Pub Theology** at Chapel Brewery in Dundas every second Monday from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm! Our next gathering will be **Monday, January 12th**. Come bring your questions and your curiosity and pull up a chair.

Chapel Brewery has both beer and nonalcoholic beverages including lemonade and root beer on tap. Come a little early to get a drink and a seat before we begin at 6:30.

These gatherings are open to the wider community, not just UUFN members and friends, so help **spread the word!**



## UUFN is Turning 60!

On March 6th, 1966, the founding members of UUFN held their first Sunday service.

On **March 6th, 2026**, we'll gather for a party at **Armory Square Event Center** to celebrate this beloved community's 60th Anniversary.

More information will be shared soon.  
For now, save the evening of Friday, March 6th on your calendars for UUFN's Party Through the Decades!



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# January Share the Plate Recipient: DRUUMM



*Our share the plate recipient this month is Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM).*

*DRUUMM is a Unitarian Universalist People of Color Ministry and anti-racist collective. It is the oldest and largest Unitarian Universalist People of Color ministry and anti-racist community organization based in North America.*

*As an all-volunteer ministry, DRUUMM creates space for youth, young adult and our families of color to heal and work collectively. DRUUMM organizes community building events, leadership trainings, and is an advocate within the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.*

*DRUUMM is committed to movement-building within Unitarian Universalism—supporting BIPOC leadership while inviting white allies into deeper, sustained practice. Our contributions support their vision of an anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural Unitarian Universalist Association!*



The Care Team thanks the many people in our community who joined the Care Team in its mission of “providing care and support for people needing help and encouragement during a stress-filled life transition.”

Many congregants showed up in December at various times of the day to help Rollie and Mary during the month long effort to provide daily support after Rollie’s discharge from Abbott Northwestern hospital to home. Even the UUFN choir showed up, offering holiday cheer to the long journey of healing.

The Care team thanks all who have been offering presence and support for Mary and Rollie. Support will continue until January 8.

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## ● ● ● January Events with MUUSJA ● ● ●

**Hands-on Solidarity:  
Concrete Ways to  
Respond to Immigration  
Enforcement**

An online informational session for people looking for how and where they can plug in and help.

**Wednesday, January 7, 2026  
6:00 - 7:30 PM | Online**

 **MUUSJA**



**Wednesday, January 7, 2026  
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm**

<https://secure.everyaction.com/upYjhj89EkKRnjRczP19Ow2>



ICE is terrorizing our communities and abducting our neighbors, coworkers, students, and friends. Learn concrete and effective ways you can act in solidarity with those directly impacted. This workshop is for folks newer to this work who want to explore different avenues for involvement, from showing up in the streets or taking on other vital roles.


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**The Fight for Equality**


Learn about the movement to pass an Equal Rights Amendment in Minnesota  
A webinar for people of faith

**Tuesday, January 13, 2026  
6:00 - 7:30 PM | Online**



Scan to register or visit  
[mmusja.org/calendar](https://mmusja.org/calendar)



**Wednesday, January 13, 2026  
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm**

<https://secure.everyaction.com/IMXitFw0wUCbzzmRUBiyDg2>

Equality has no qualifiers. Minnesota's proposed ERA bill intersects with issues UUUs are already committed to—gender justice, reproductive justice, trans refuge, disability justice, and anti-racism. Now is the time to rise up for robust equal rights. Learn how you can be part of this historic constitutional effort! Rev. Sara will be one of the panelists.

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Calling all local crafters, sewists, tinkerers, and repairers of all kinds! This winter, Rice County is putting on two Fix-It Clinics in partnership with FiftyNorth and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield.

In these events, members of the public can bring in broken clothing and small appliances for volunteers to help fix, keeping still-useful goods out of landfills and saving money and resources that would otherwise go to replacing them. This wouldn't be possible if not for volunteer experts such as yourself being there and helping out.

If you are at all interested, please take a moment to fill out the survey linked below. If you know anyone who might be interested, feel free to send this survey to them as well. The more the merrier!



[SurveyMonkey Link](#)

Thank you so much for taking the time read and fill this out, and for lending your expertise to help our community and the planet!

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**JOIN THE**  
**UUFN CHOIR!**  
*ALL voices are welcome*



**MEETS WEEKLY in the SANCTUARY**  
**TUESDAYS 6-7:30 PM**

QUESTIONS? EMAIL TAYLOR WESSELN AT [music@uunorthfield.org](mailto:music@uunorthfield.org)

The UUFN Choir meets weekly on Tuesday nights from 6:00-7:30 PM under the direction of Taylor Wesseln, UUFN Music Director. These rehearsals will include exploring your voice as an instrument, expanding your musical ear, singing a wide variety of genres, and making music with some stellar UUFN-ers.

The choir will sing a featured anthem on the third Sunday service of every month, while also leading hymns from within the fellowship. No audition is required to join! All voices are welcome!!

Please email Taylor Wesseln at [\*\*music@uunorthfield.org\*\*](mailto:music@uunorthfield.org) for any additional information or general questions.

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP  
OF NORTHFIELD

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**Director of Children and Family  
Ministries:**

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**Music Director:**

Taylor Wesseln  
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**Nursery Teacher:**

Julie Bailey

**Board Members:**

Mairi Doerr (Co-Chair)

Lisa Ebert

Sabina Peters-Daywater

Don Stager (Treasurer)

John Thwing (Co-Chair)

Kimesha Winn

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