

# THE BEACON

Newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Binghamton

## January's Sunday Services

ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT 10:30AM

### Making the World a Better Place

January 7, 2024 [Taylor and Cooke](#)

This morning in the service we will share the results of a special challenge we gave to a handful of UUCB families – we asked them what they might do to make the world a better place, and we gave them some resources to follow through with their ideas. Join us for our First Sunday Workshops following the service.

### Martin's Letter as Biblical Epistle

January 14, 2024 [Rev. Douglas Taylor](#)

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Many progressive liberals hold the words and deeds of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr as prophetic and of continued relevance today, well more than 50 years after his death. Perhaps they are especially relevant given the threats we see to our democracy and our common spirit today.

### Credo

January 21, 2024 [Rev. Douglas Taylor](#)

This fall we had a Credo class in which participants worked on writing a statement of personal beliefs. In the class we explored many questions, moving around the room in 'four-corner games' which prompted a lot of good conversation about our beliefs and values.

### Thus Do We Covenant

January 28, 2024 [Rev. Douglas Taylor](#)

The concept of 'Covenant' is deeply counter-cultural. There are few examples in our society's shared experience we can point to that demonstrate how a covenant works. We have lots of examples of what it is not: it is not a contract, rule, or a way to judge who is right and who is wrong. While it is sometimes helpful to talk about what it isn't, it is better to learn what it is.

### STAFF:

Minister: Reverend Douglas Taylor

Board President:

Jim Dwyer

Director of Family Ministry:

Dylan Cooke

Music Director: Vicky Gordon

Office Administrator and

Membership Coordinator:

Karen Manzer

### HOURS:

Office Hours: 9:00am to 1:00pm M-F closed on Wed

Worship Services: Sundays at 10:30am

Children and Youth

Programs: Sundays at 10:30am

Nursery Care during services

### HOW TO CONTACT US:

183 Riverside Drive  
Binghamton, NY 13905

Phone: 607.729.1641

Fax: 607.729.1899

Email:

[office@uubinghamton.org](mailto:office@uubinghamton.org)

[www.uubinghamton.org](http://www.uubinghamton.org)

Beacon Newsletter Deadline:

Noon on the last Friday of each month.



## Children and Youth this Month

### Theme Based Curriculum

What is “Soul Matters”? Each month, our services and children’s Faith Development activities are devoted to a theme, like “Cultivating Relationship” or “Opening to Joy” or “Healing.” We approach these general themes from several lenses and angles throughout the month. And we explore the themes in Sharing Circles, small groups of adults committed to deeper exploration with regular companions.

These groups offer the gift of spiritual connection, where we listen to each other, to our lives, and to our deepest selves. We are encouraged to experience the themes, not just analyze them, and to offer each other the gift of listening.

Our UUCB Youth group is for our high-school age members and currently meets once a month for meeting and activities.

Contact Lynne Theophanis or Christine McWhirter for more information.



Contact our Director of  
Family Ministry  
Dylan Cooke  
at  
[dfm@uubinghamton.org](mailto:dfm@uubinghamton.org)  
for more information  
about our programs, or to  
find out how you can  
become involved with  
this ministry.

### **2024 Themes: The Gift of...**

**January: Liberating Love**  
**February: Justice & Equity**  
**March: Transformation**  
**April: Interdependence**  
**May: Pluralism**  
**June: Renewal**

# It Happened in December

## THE HOLIDAY ART AND GIFT SALE

The Holiday Art & Gift Sale was very successful! Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the event, donated food items for the Holiday Cafe, and supported the fundraiser and local artisans by shopping at our much loved annual tradition.

Here are some fun facts about the event:

- There were 38 vendors.
- There were 464 individual sales.
- Approximately 25 - 30 congregants donated food items, baked goods, or soup/chili.
- Approximately 35 congregants volunteered for cashiering, dishwashing, food prep, kitchen help, set up, and cleanup.
- The fundraiser brought in \$6,584.69 total. Of that amount, the Holiday Cafe brought in \$2,562.69 and 20% of the vendor sales brought in \$3,549.00. Also, \$473 was raised during the event for Family Ministry through soup bottle sales and cash donations.

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We received many compliments from vendors and attendees about our welcoming community and our building. This was truly a team effort and we thank you for working with us to help financially sustain our beloved community.

With gratitude,  
The Holiday Art & Gift Sale Planning Team  
(Lynne Theophanis, Shawn Steketee, Niki Olivo, Christine McWhirter, Lisa Sienkiewicz, Kathleen Cooke, and Karen Manzer)

## SPONSOR A FAMILY 2023

We had a successful Sponsor a Family season! Thank you so much to everyone who participated by donating gifts, money, buying soup bottles, or providing the time and effort to make it happen.

We were able to provide holiday gifts for seven local families in need, both identified by Mothers and Babies and identified within our own UUCB community. In addition to gifts to meet wants and needs each family also received a gift card to cover a holiday meal or any other last minute holiday needs.

We all worked together to brighten the holiday season for all!



# UUCB News and Info

## ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE ASSISTANCE

The Endowment Committee is pleased to announce that it has given the church a grant totaling \$18,362 for the 2024 calendar year. This is divided into \$5,000 forgiveness of the interest due on the loan made to the church, \$10,000 given to the church's operating funds, and \$3,362 in forgiveness for the endowment loan principal.

## TOWN HALL MEETING

Join us after the service on Sunday, January 21 for our regular town hall meeting. Get updates on all that is happening and coming up at UUCB including stewardship plans, outreach ideas and more.

## COVID UPDATE

Last January our area had a significant Covid-19 infection spike. Trends indicate that this coming January will have a more significant spike, likely associated with holiday gatherings and travel as well as new variants. The Board is monitoring the situation but has not re-activated our Covid policy at this time. People are encouraged to get the current vaccine booster, wear masks, and take extra precautions at this time. If the Board re-activates our policy to restrict eating and singing, it will be to alleviate risks to the vulnerable among us. If you have any questions or concerns on this topic, please seek out a member of the Board or our staff.

## THE CHURCH MOUSE KNOWS



That [Hope Post](#) and [Renee Taft](#) decorated our building for Christmas.

That [Christine McWhirter](#) donated a beautiful new lighted Christmas tree to UUCB.

[Ron Clupper](#) has been changing the sign each week and keeping the flags out front current.

[Ann Foard](#), [Tim Wolcott](#), and [Hope Post](#) have been welcoming visitors on Sundays.

[Tracy Hollands](#) and [Carl Cohen](#) staffed the info table during the Art and Gift Sale.

[Moe Manzer](#) cleans the sidewalks and fills the birdfeeders on Sunday mornings.

[Christine O'Donnell](#) has been sending cards to congregants and folding the orders of service on Sundays with [Kate Thorpe](#).

# Ongoing Events

## UUCB Community Drum Circle

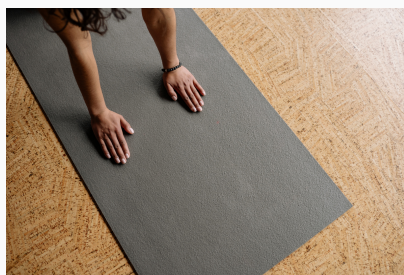
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 14, 6:30PM  
(NO DRUM CIRCLE IN JANUARY)

Create a sense of community by joining in our all ages drum circle. The drum circle offers equality because there is no head or tail. It includes people of all ages. The main objective is to share rhythm and get in tune with each other and themselves. Bring your own drum or borrow one of ours. Contact Jim Dwyer for more information.

## Beginner Yoga

MONDAYS 5PM

Yoga instructor Irena Trubnikov leads us in a yoga class each Monday. All are welcome. Bring a mat or towel, a water bottle and wear loose comfortable clothing.



## Role-Playing Tabletop Games

SATURDAYS 4-7PM

Join us for exciting and fun role-playing games (similar to Dungeons and Dragons) with Dungeon Master Peter Steketee. We meet in the classroom at the end of the hallway.

## Belly Dance with Pixie and Bonita

SUNDAYS 5:30- 6:30PM

Belly Dance is exercise for the body and mind which is enjoyable for all ages, body types, and abilities.

Students should dress comfortably and consider wearing clothing that hugs the body to show subtle movements. Hip scarves are optional and will be available for purchase. Water is recommended.

Cost is \$15 per class and cash, venmo, PayPal, cashapp are accepted  
Contact Bonita Graham [bgraham@wesleyan.edu](mailto:bgraham@wesleyan.edu) for more information



The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) is an organization dedicated to networking Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists (UUs), educating people about Paganism, promoting interfaith dialogue, developing Pagan liturgies and theologies.

Meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at UUCB at 6:30pm.

## Depression Support Group

Mondays at 6pm  
Anyone who is affected by depression is welcome to join us.



## Last Sunday Lunch

SUNDAY JANUARY 28 11:45AM

Join us this month for soups and breads.  
bring a dish to share.



## Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser

SATURDAY JANUARY 27 5PM

Join us in the social hall for a fundraiser dinner of  
baked potatoes and all the fixins. Contact Lisa  
Sienkiewicz for more information.

## Cranberry Coffeehouse

Friday, January 20 7:30PM

John and Trish Miller

As part of an annual tradition, John Kirk (North American Fiddler's Hall of Famer, on fiddle, mandolin & more) and Trish Miller (banjo, guitar and fancy footwork) will open the Cranberry Coffeehouse's first concert of the year. This married couple has worked and taught in upstate New York for over three decades. Old time music is the basis for their repertoire, mixed in originals, Celtic, early country songs, humorous selections and Appalachian clog dancing. Much of their music is rooted in the local lore of the northeast woodlands. Their story-telling songs and poetic pieces make their shows fine entertainment for all ages.

Performer web page:

[johnandtrish.com](http://johnandtrish.com)

More info at  
[cranberrycoffeehouse.org](http://cranberrycoffeehouse.org)



## Introduction to Lyceum

Sunday, January 14th at noon  
in the chapel, presented by  
George Lohmann and Art Law.  
Affiliated with Binghamton  
University and National Road  
Scholar, this institute for  
lifelong learning has over 350  
local members.

Many in our UU congregation  
already belong to Lyceum.  
Volunteer course leaders are  
usually retired specialists,  
university faculty, retired  
teachers, members who have  
pursued interests in some  
depth, or knowledgeable  
community members. Attend  
this meeting to find out more  
about Lyceum, upcoming  
classes, and how you can join.



# Adult Programs

## Tools for Managing Anxiety, Stress and Depression

Tools for Managing Stress, Anxiety and Depression  
A free workshop Series  
With Jan Fiore—Holistic Health Practitioner

Saturdays, January 13, 20, 27, 2024  
10:30AM– Noon at UUCB

There is help and hope for anyone who has struggled. This series is an opportunity to learn about the different forms of anxiety that are often linked to depression. Sign up on the bulletin board near the main office or speak to Jan Fiore for more information.

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## Postponed Until Spring: At The Root of Sexual Identity Workshop

Workshop led by Catherine Magdala, in person at UUCB has been postponed until the Spring.

In our dynamic culture, keeping up with the language that we use when talking about our sexual identities can feel very overwhelming. In this workshop, Catherine will use a social constructionist, queer theory, and transformative justice framework to nuance and critique how sexual identity has predominantly been used in US mainstream society.

Catherine hopes to offer participants new perspectives when looking at sexual identity. If you are interested in the workshop or have questions, contact [CATHERINER1312@GMAIL.COM](mailto:CATHERINER1312@GMAIL.COM)

## Advanced Planning for End of Life Care

Lisa Schuhle from Action for Older Persons will present a program on Advanced Planning for End of Life Care (APEL) on Sunday, January 28 at 1:30 in the chapel. APEL helps individuals learn about what advanced directives are, their purpose, who needs to fill them out, and how to fill them out. APEL informs individuals on how to start conversations about healthcare proxies and wishes regarding medical treatments with family members and health providers. The program provides guidance on what to keep in mind when appointing a health care proxy and filling out a living will and provides health care proxy forms and living will booklets, including the very popular Five Wishes. Advanced registration is not required, but it would be helpful to let the office know if you plan to attend.

BRIGHAM YOUNG



## Sweeping in the New Year

Come help us get our building looking its best for the new year!

Starting at Noon with no hard end time. Come when you can, do what you can. We'll have the list of chores posted so you can sign up for the things you want to do. Contact our custodian Rebecca Rayne for more info.

## First Sunday Workshops for January 7

“How to Explain UU to Your Friends and Family” with Rev. Taylor in the Sanctuary and on Zoom. Unitarian Universalism is hard to explain for many of us, not because we don't understand our own faith but because it is rather different from most religious communities. The usual "What do you all believe?" is an example of how it gets tricky for us. Join me to learn some effective ways to answer the question.

“Light the Way With Love” with Shawn Steketee and Nicole Olivo in the Social Hall. Find your inner light and join us in making love-themed luminaries, while learning about Side with Love and their 30 Days of Love 2024. All ages welcome!

“Introduction to Qigong” with Rick Gridley in the Chapel. Want to try something new for the new year? Join us for this introduction to Qigong (pronounced “Chee Gung”). Qigong is an ancient healing art integrating slow movements with controlled breathing and focused intention that helps to heal and create balance physically, mentally and emotionally. Besides improving the immune system and countering the effects of chronic stress, tension and pain, qigong’s gentle movements produce many benefits, including greater range of motion, increased stamina and improved balance. No previous experience needed. Open to all ages and abilities. Rick Gridley, the presenter, is a certified qigong instructor, yoga teacher and school librarian at Broome Tioga BOCES.

## First Sunday Workshop Leader Opportunities

Do you have a passion or a skill or a fun idea that you’d like to share with other congregants as a workshop on one of our 1st Sundays?

Multi-generational workshops are encouraged, but workshops targeted for adults or mainly for children are also welcome.

They can be, but need not be, related to our monthly Soul Matters themes – upcoming themes are February: Justice & Equity, March: Transformation, April: Interdependence, May: Pluralism. For more information, or to discuss or offer to lead a workshop, please contact Debby Herman.

# Get Connected

## Easy Ways to Get Involved at UUCB



**Focal Point:** Sign up to decorate the focal point in the sanctuary on a Sunday. It's easy, fun, and you can be creative! The sign-up sheet is on the "Get Involved" bulletin board in the hallway, or you can contact Renee Taft for more info.

**Friendly Faces:** Would you like to help greet visitors and help them find their way around UUCB? Talk to Hope Post to find out more.

**Family Ministry:** Get involved on the ground floor and make a difference in our new ministry format. Talk to Dylan Cooke to learn more.

**Social Action:** Our Social Action HUUB is looking for your interest and talent! Contact Catherine Magdala at [catheriner1312@gmail.com](mailto:catheriner1312@gmail.com) to be on the UUCB social action mailing list.

**Aesthetics Team:** Do you like decorating for holidays and making sure things look their best? Join our new aesthetics committee! Ask Hope Post or Renee Taft for more details. We could use fresh ideas!

**Sunday Service Associates:** We always need new folks to help make the worship service run smoothly. Talk to Kate Thorpe if you would like to help out on a Sunday morning.

**Social Hour Hosts:** Do you like coffee and getting the snacks first? Then you may be the perfect person to help with the social hour on a Sunday! Ask Carl Cohen or Ron Clupper for more info.

MAID (MEDICAL AID IN DYING) LETTER WRITING PARTY AT UUCB

WHEN: SUNDAY JAN. 21, 2024 AFTER THE SERVICE

WHERE: SOCIAL HALL

WHAT: WRITING PERSONAL LETTERS TO YOUR NYS LEGISLATORS IN SUPPORT OF PENDING LEGISLATION.

WRITING PAPER & ENVELOPES WILL BE PROVIDED.

QUESTIONS: CONTACT CHRIS NISKANEN, [CHRIS6NISK5@YAHOO.COM](mailto:CHRIS6NISK5@YAHOO.COM)