

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF LITTLE ROCK

Monthly News & Updates

December 2025 | VOL. 74
ISSUE 11

Worship Services

- Dec 7: "Choosing Hope" - Rev. Paul
- Dec 14: "A Child in Palestine" - Rev. Paul
- Dec 21: **Winter Yule Service** - Worship Arts Team
- Dec 24: **"Lessons & Carols" Christmas Eve Service 5pm**
- Dec 28: **Kwanzaa Celebration** - Kendi Jensen-Loving



Holiday Hope Tree

Each year we support the work of [Holiday Hope Tree](#). This is a local organization that distributes gifts for children in the foster program. The deadline for all donations (including gift cards and cash gifts) is **Sunday, December 7th by noon**. Bring all items to the church office. If the office is locked, it is okay to leave them in the office hallway.

If you have questions or need assistance, reach out to Sue McDonald.

10 am Forum Topics

- Dec 7: **UU Shared Values** with Rich Roy
- Dec 14: **2nd Sunday Share the Plate**- This month's recipient is Literacy Action of Arkansas with special guest Dana Venhaus, Executive Director.
- Dec 21: **Remembrances of Christmas as a Child**
- Dec 28: **"What's on your mind?"** Hosted by Clyde Bailey

Outer Circle Deadline

NOTE: The deadline for submitting information to the January Outer Circle is December 30th.

Upcoming Events

- 12/5 Improv Games (2-4pm, Mehta)
- 12/5 Card Playing Night (6-8pm, Pehrson)
- 12/6 Paganism 101 (Closed Class, Pehrson)
- 12/7 Book Exchange & Recycling Sunday
- 12/9 Young at Heart Lunch (11:45am, Mehta)
- 12/10 Program Council Mtg. (5:15pm, Pehrson)
- 12/11 Program Council Mtg. (5:15pm, Pehrson)
- 12/14 Vegetarian Potluck
- 12/16 Our House Meal Serving
- 12/16 UUCLR Board Meeting (7pm)
- 12/19 Short Story Group (Noon, Pehrson)
- 12/24 Lessons & Carols Service (5pm, Mehta)



Young at Heart Luncheon

Come one, come all to our fabulous Young at Heart luncheon and program on December 9th at 11:45 in the Mehta wing! Good food, prepared and shared by volunteers under the leadership of Joanne Kriehn, will be followed by music of the season provided by Rich Roy, Margo and Chris, Jake Tidmore, Dave March and others. Participation by all will be welcomed and enjoyed.

A donation of \$10 to cover costs is requested. Please celebrate with us!

Selma Blackburn, Coordinator

View the online calendar to see times and locations of all the upcoming events - www.uuclr.org.

Christmas Eve Offering Kicks Off a Month of Giving Support for Food Pantry

Give a thought to the many families whom we help with food through UUCLR's McDermott Elementary Food Pantry. This is the first year that we have provided food at McDermott and they love us and the work we are doing. We are at capacity with 40+ families who depend on our weekly bags of meat, vegetables, and non-perishable food to help them get through the week.

The Christmas Eve offering is dedicated to this work, and we will continue the appeal for financial support throughout January. If you are unable to work at the food pantry, this is one way that you can help support the other volunteers.

The people who receive the food bags are grateful and express their thanks to the volunteers working the pantry. Please help with a donation marked for the food pantry.



REFLECTIONS: “Opportunities for Shared Reflection”

As the winter holidays rush in, I want to remind you about two quite different opportunities for shared reflection. One is our annual Christmas Eve service, which Kendi and I will lead on the 24th at 5pm.



The other is a series of conversations being organized by our Lay Ministry Team, starting in January: **INTERGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CARING**

UUCLR is a Caring Community. Each of us takes part in our shared ministry of friendship, offering care and support for others. In some situations, the Lay Ministry Team provides emotional and spiritual care to those in our community who request our assistance to walk beside them on their healing journey.

Sometimes asking for help can be hard. Many of us were brought up to feel that some topics are taboo. Some of us feel we should always be self-sufficient, never dependent, never overwhelmed. Naming our problems and reaching out may not come easily.

The Lay Ministry Team is planning opportunities for us to explore this aspect of life, and grow in knowledge and awareness of ourselves and each other. We hope to provide a quarterly series of conversations.

We propose to take an intergenerational approach, allowing us to learn also about the lifespan dimension of caring and helping. We will address how to understand and skillfully practice "appropriate" helping. In the process of these gatherings we will also have the opportunity to enrich and deepen our connections to our church family.

Our *first* Conversation on Caring will be January 24 from 10-12. At this gathering we will also choose themes together for the future quarterly Conversations.

Rev. Paul Beedle
Unitarian Universalist Church of Little Rock



Lessons & Carols
Christmas Eve Service

December 24th
5pm
Mehta Wing



**Intergenerational
Conversation on Caring**
Hosted by the Lay Ministry Team

January 24th
10am-Noon
RSVP to Rev. Paul



Board President's Message

I am so grateful for this congregation and for the board members you have elected to represent you this year. Our November board meeting included an energetic and forward-thinking discussion of our goals of prioritizing intergenerational community and exploring opportunities to create Third Space at UUCLR.

Board member Ginny Ashcraft had a great shorthand explanation for the guidelines/expectations for third spaces. I asked her if I could borrow them! Third Space hopefully means:

1. We aren't required to bring anything (other than ourselves!).
2. We aren't required to prepare anything ahead of time.
3. Only minimal cleanup is required when we leave.

Doesn't that sound amazing and relaxing? We have time to spend with each other without frantic cleaning ahead of time (my experience before friends visit!); we can show up empty-handed with no guilt; and we leave refreshed rather than exhausted.

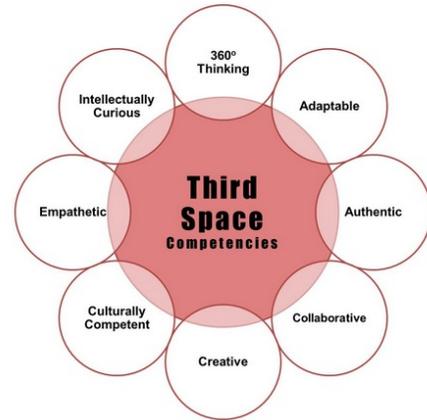
I would encourage you to watch our Friday emails and announcements in the Outer Circle and Sunday morning Order of Service inserts for these opportunities for fellowship. Or feel free to suggest your own Third Space gathering. My current favorite is the monthly card playing night, so mark your calendars for Friday, Dec 5, from 6-8pm in the Pehrson Room. Simply contact the office to reserve a space and time and we'll help you get the word out through church communications.

The board also considered meaningful ways to support our families with young children. I believe this will always be a top priority for our church, and I appreciate the ideas that were shared. The board is always hoping for input and suggestions from the congregation so that we can better serve you. Please reach out if you have ideas about supporting our families and expanding our religious education opportunities. This will be a recurring item on our board agenda to keep us focused on our priorities.

May your holiday season include moments of peace and calm.

With love,

Laurie Smith Prud'homme



November Board Meeting Summary

Following approval of the minutes, we heard reports from Rev Paul, Finance Committee, Program Council, Site Operations Council, and Executive Committee. We reviewed reports from the ad hoc committees including 8th Principle, Governing Docs, Technology, and OWL Feasibility. In old business, Debbie updated the board on the 75th church anniversary events. And Laurie reported that the church roof repairs have been completed and outdoor camera installation has begun. In new business, we agreed to move forward with the possibility of McDermott Elementary holding a farmer's market in our parking lot. The board approved the five new legislative proposals that the Arkansas Citizens First Congress will be working on during the upcoming legislative session. The board ended with a discussion of Adult RE and the recent Sunday Forum with the board.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, December 16th, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.



2026 UUCLR Buffalo River Trip

We are looking forward to the Memorial Day Buffalo River trip in 2026. UUCLR has been making this trip for over 40 years.

The group will begin to gather Friday, May 22 in or around the Buffalo Point Campground. There will (hopefully!) be a group floating the Buffalo River on Saturday, May 23 between Dillard's Ferry and Rush Landing. There will be a pancake breakfast Saturday morning, a potluck Saturday night, campfire singing and music, a spiritual service Sunday morning, and plenty of time for enjoying friends and family. The trip wraps up on Memorial Day, May 25. It's not necessary to attend every day of the trip.

If you like sleeping outdoors, camping is available at two group sites. Email uuchurchlr@gmail.com to reserve your camping spot. There are restrooms nearby and showers within a short drive.

If you like sleeping indoors, contact Buffalo Point Concession for lodging in the park (870-449-6206) or the Buffalo Point Inn for lodging right outside the park (870-404-8904). And there are many other lodging options nearby to choose from!

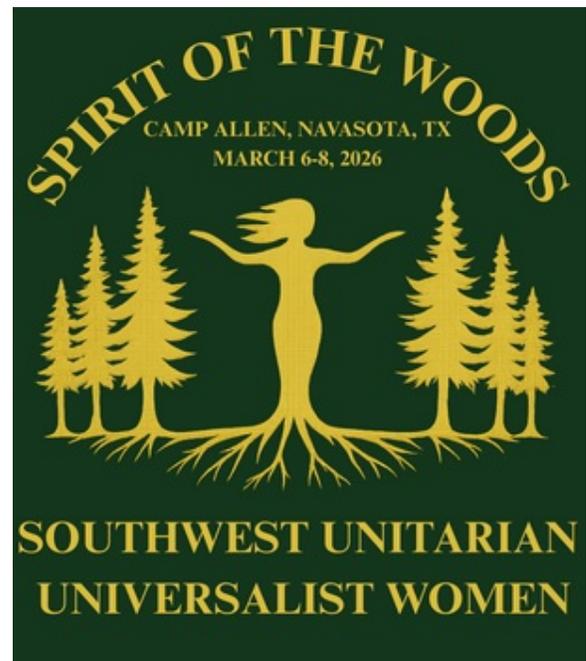
Please contact Zenyth (zenythp@msn.com) for more information.

SWUUWCon26 Women's Spiritual Retreat March 6-8, 2026 "Spirit of the Woods"

Registration is open!

Southwest Unitarian Universalist Women invites you to join us for SWUUWCon26! Come celebrate 39 years of Women's Spiritual Gatherings. Treat yourself to a fun, relaxing, and inspiring weekend at our annual women's spiritual gathering. We are delighted to announce our return to Camp Allen in Navasota, TX, about one hour Northwest of Houston. The event will take place Friday - Sunday, March 6-8, 2026.

We're honored to feature Natalie Briscoe, UUA's Director of Congregational Life, as our keynote speaker, along with Rev. Kiya Heartwood who will serve as both chaplain and song leader.



UUCLR is a Welcoming Congregation

Each of us has worth and dignity, and that worth includes our gender and our sexuality. As Unitarian Universalists (UUs), we not only open our doors to people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, we value diversity of sexuality and gender and see it as a spiritual gift. We create inclusive religious communities and work for LGBTQ justice and equity as a core part of who we are. All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome.

8th Principle News

Submitted by Margot Cameron, Facilitator

On Nov. 11, Rev Paul and I participated in a public dialog with Kwami Abdul-Bey, Coordinator on the Arkansas Public Policy Panel. The program called "Coming to the Table" is provided by the Minnesota Peacebuilding Leadership Institute. This month's subject was "Reinstallation of Confederate monuments. The diverse group participated in an intentional conversation, fostering understanding and building relationships. When the winter schedule comes out, we encourage others in the congregation to participate in these actions to improve inter-racial and inter-generational understanding in our community.

We hope our November 2 Sunday service on the 8th Principle was helpful and inspired some of you to learn more. We will not meet in December, but will reconvene January 27.



Bring an Ear of Corn!

In Kwanzaa, corn represents the love for children and the nurturing of their futures. Bring ears of corn to the 11am service on **Sunday, December 28th** which will be a celebration of Kwanzaa. The corn will display our commitment to the youth at UUCLR.

Caring Concern: Joan Crockett

Dr. Joan Bell Crockett, passed away on November 18th at the age of 94 at Presbyterian Village in Little Rock. She was a former member of this church and Jim Bell's sister as well as Ruth Bell's sister-in-law.

The funeral will be held at Ruebel Funeral Home on December 22, 2025 at 12 p.m. followed by burial at Pinecrest Memorial Park at 2 p.m.

[View the Obituary](#)



inTRANSitive Food Drive

The drive to collect food for InTRANSitive is complete. InTRANSitive is a local nonprofit serving the intersection of queer identity and immigration.

The need for food was so great that Tien Estell, their policy director, asked for help from Marie Mainard O'Connell, organizer of the Queer Collective. Marie turned to UUCLR, knowing that there would be an outpouring of support from us. And there was.

From Nov. 16 to Nov. 30, including Thanksgiving, we collected every thing from canned goods to dried pasta to toilet paper and menstrual supplies. A heartfelt thanks goes to all who donated. - Nell

*Thank you to everyone who supported this effort so generously.
And thank you to Nell Matthews for taking on the coordination!*



The Van, A Note from Cas Rifkin 12/1/2025

This week, eleven years ago, Sue McDonald and I visited The Van for the first time after hearing about it from Rhonda Reid. A couple of months later, UUCLR volunteers started working at the warehouse once a month. I think about 2019 we started going twice a month because they needed us. We were the only church that volunteered regularly at that time.



We volunteered at the old warehouse and the new one - on days when it was just as cold inside as it was outside (minus the wind!), and on days so hot that even fans and wet rags around our necks couldn't get us cool. We had the joy of working side-by-side under direction of several open hearted volunteer coordinators and later paid staff: Samantha, Sharon, Heather, Mike, Tim, Alex and more. In the early years we had to provide our own masking tape and markers. Some of us have made or delivered casseroles, created fundraising events, others delivered items donated by friends and neighbors, and then delivered what was not viable for the clientele to other non-profits helping others. We have sorted, sized, folded and hung clothes, sorted personal care items, made lunches, and laughed at items going on the "Wall of Shame". In eleven years, we have made a difference to more people than we can imagine. Our rippling effect has touched many lives and many from UUCLR have helped.

Today I let Aaron Reddin, the founder and director, and Alex, the current warehouse manager, know that we have reached an aging out point where we need to step back and end our regular volunteering as UUCLR. Everyone is still welcome to volunteer when they can on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 till 12:00. You can go to www.itsthevan.org and sign up as a volunteer for other opportunities. That is also the site for financial donations. For ordering off of the Amazon wish list, go to helpthevan.org

I'm so happy for what we have contributed over the years. Each of you made a difference and made this program a success to keep the momentum going and the fellowship alive. I am thanking all who have had a part. I am not thanking you for myself, as you did not do it for me, but thanking you for all of the people who appreciated what you did without knowing it was you. Thank you for every bit of heart, time, and energy that you have given to make the system run a tiny bit easier to help those without shelter. You have all warmed my heart and warmed other's bodies.

Wishing all of the best for each of you every minute forward,
Cas



UUCLR Friends and Family Night at AR Foodbank

Bring the family to show them the value of helping others in our community at the monthly Friends & Family Night event at the Arkansas Foodbank. 20 volunteers from UUCLR are invited to volunteer in the Volunteer Center, where donated food products are sorted, inspected and repacked for distribution to a network of agency partners in our 33 county service area.



Typical volunteer projects include preparing backpack kits for children in schools, making boxes filled with senior friendly food. Sorting, weighing, bagging, and boxing donated food items such as produce, breads, canned goods, packaged foods, and drinks. The Foodbank guidelines say that volunteers should be able to stand for extended periods of time and lift 30-40 pounds, but talk to Zenyth if you have concerns about this. There is usually a role suitable for everyone!

When: Tuesday, February 3 from 6 pm to 8 pm

Location: Arkansas Foodbank
4301 West 65th Street, Little Rock, AR 72209

Dress Code: Close-toed shoes are required at all times in the Volunteer Operations Center.

Age requirements: Volunteers must be at least eight (8) years of age to work in our warehouse. Volunteers 8-15 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Volunteers 16-18 years old do not require an adult to accompany them to volunteer in our warehouse.

Please [RVSP HERE](#) if you plan to participate. Email Zenyth (zenythp@msn.com) if you have questions. Thank you!!

*This event is being coordinated in honor of UUCLR's 75th Anniversary Celebration.
Have an idea to celebrate in a different way? YAY!
Please contact the office or Debbie Goolsby to get it in motion.*

Grateful for UU

The second annual Service of Gratitude was held on November 30th with nearly 100 people gathered in the Mehta Wing for the inter-generational, non-traditional 11am worship service.





Save the Date!

IIIUmination weekend is January 10th-11th, 2026.

Mark your calendars for a fellowship meal on Saturday evening and a special service on Sunday morning.

Are you getting all the news you need?

We have several ways of communicating!

Friday Email Blast
Sunday Morning Email Blast
Sunday Order of Service Insert
Bulletin Boards (Thomson & RE Wing)
Outer Circle - Monthly Newsletter
New! - Parent GroupMe Chat
Website - www.uuclr.org
Facebook - /UUCLR



So many beautiful people! If you'd like to take a photo for your directory listing, please contact the office. Thank you, Membership Team, for your work to keep our records up to date!

December Birthdays

December 1 Nan Bernardo
December 1 Cassandra Martin
December 1 Luna Stracener
December 7 Kate Dolan
December 7 Ron Gimblet
December 9 Terry Goddard
December 10 Laura Luce
December 10 Souren Reyes

December 12 Barbara Hill
December 16 Clyde Bailey
December 18 Rachel Etherton
December 20 Beatrice Robinson
December 25 Amy Stilts
December 29 Kay Morgan
December 29 Katy Roetzel

*See a birthday that is missing or incorrect?
Please let Membership or the office know!*



The Outer Circle is UUCLR's monthly newsletter. It is sent out at the beginning of each month through the email list and made available on the website and in print (in the main foyer). **The deadline for submitting information to the January Outer Circle is December 30th.**

CHURCH ADDRESS:

1818 Reservoir Road
Little Rock, AR 72227

WEBSITE:

www.uuclr.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesday-Friday, 8am-1pm

OFFICE CONTACT:

Rebecca Roetzel
Church Administrator
(501) 225-1503
uuchurchlr@gmail.com



MINISTER:

Rev. Paul Beedle
Contact for appointment.
(504) 458-2254
revpaulbeedle@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF RE:

Stephanie "Fin" Judkins
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MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Kendi Jensen-Loving

AV DIRECTOR:

Chad Loucks

WORSHIP ARTS TEAM LEADS:

Margot Cameron & Laurie Smith Prud'homme

FACILITIES TEAM LEAD:

Michael Roetzel

GROUNDS TEAM LEAD:

Joanne Kriehn

MEMORIAL WOODLANDS:

Margaret McLellan

CARING TEAM LEAD:

Sue McDonald

FELLOWSHIP TEAM LEAD:

Kater Reynolds

MEMBERSHIP LEAD:

Lisa Brents

FORUM COORDINATOR:

Jan Bowen

RE-QUESTORS COORDINATOR:

Joe Meehan

RECONNECTIONS COORDINATOR:

Zenyth Propst

CUUPS COORDINATOR:

Stephanie Webb

COMMUNICATIONS & RENTALS:

Rebecca Roetzel

HEALTH & SAFETY TEAM LEADS:

Phil Peters & Sherman James

TECHNOLOGY TEAM LEAD:

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