



LCUUC NEWSLETTER

January 2026

Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church
W299N5595 Grace Drive Hartland, WI 53029

Phone: (262) 369-1703
www.lcuuc.org

Join us in the Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church sanctuary for in-person services. For an order of service, go to OOS. Sunday services are at 10am. Email joys and sorrows that you want shared aloud during worship to candles@lcuuc.org by 4pm on Fridays. Masks are welcome but not required. Contributions in the Sunday basket collections will be used to support LCUUC except for the 2nd Sunday of the month contributions which go to the designated charity/social justice program.

Sunday, Jan 4 “The Unscripted Sermon,” with Rev. Matt Aspin, LCUUC Minister

Sunday, Jan 11 “Question Box,” with Rev. Matt Aspin, LCUUC Minister

Sunday, Jan 18 Tom Shearman, Member Speaker

Sunday, January 25 “Questions from the Minister,” with Rev. Matt Aspin, LCUUC Minister

Worship Arts is looking to add a few more people to our Reader list for upcoming services. Readers are the assistants to whomever is in the pulpit on Sunday. You will be given a script to read a few days before Sunday so you can go over the outline and the readings. It's a great way to get a new perspective (literally) on Sunday mornings, and it's also a nice volunteer opportunity. Please contact Jane Johnson for more information jjnijohnson@aol.com.

REVEREND MATT'S MUSINGS: Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Wow. What a year.

Between the relentless news cycles and our own community challenges, it's been full of surprises. From the unexpected departure of a beloved Board President who struggled to align their leadership with our values, to missed policy guidance and inevitable human errors, we've made it to the end of another year.

Through it all, we've held onto the wisdom of one of our weekly service welcome messages:

"This church is a place where we come to learn more about being human... how to listen, forgive, be vulnerable, and create trust and compassion in one another."

In spite of challenges, I see **hope** growing within our community. Kara shared that we've been averaging almost **twelve kids per week** in Religious Exploration since September, and many parents report their children insisting on coming back. Hearing laughter echo through our halls again feels like a Christmas miracle.

And there's more:

- **Chris Rollins** has stepped into the role of **Office Administrator**, allowing me to focus on expanding the church's healing ministry.
- A **redesigned LCUUC website** will launch early next year, thanks to Tom Shearman, the Marketing Committee, and Michelle Lawrence.
- Betsy and the Welcome and Orientation team are enhancing **visitor onboarding**, helping newcomers connect, learn, and contribute.
- The **grounds transformation** led by Laurie and Bob Prestby continues to impress, thanks to countless volunteers.
- The **Social Action Committee**, now led by Fran Bills, continues to engage us in supporting vital causes.

This church is a place where we come to learn more about being human... how to listen, forgive, be vulnerable, and create trust and compassion in one another.

And let's not forget the unsung heroes: **Worship, Sound and Video, Finance, Caring Circle, Adult Enrichment, Facilities, and Leadership teams**—your tireless work keeps our community thriving.

Each of you **gives me hope**. Where there is hope, there is possibility. I can't wait to see what we achieve together in the coming year!

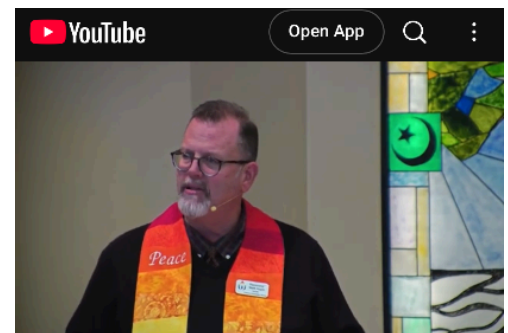
—Rev. Matt



Did you know?

In person is always best, but you can now watch or listen to any sermon you might have missed since the beginning of the year. Follow this link, subscribe to LCUUC's YouTube Channel, and never miss another informative and uplifting Sunday message.

<https://www.youtube.com/@LCUUC>



WE'RE ZOOMING!

Our Sunday services are viewable live during the service via Zoom call.

Being on site is always the best, but if you can't make it to church, check out the members only section of our website for a link and the password. To keep this option available, we need a group of people to help host the Zoom sessions, follow the service script and operate the camera during the service. If you are comfortable operating a computer and would enjoy making connections with those who are coming to our services online, we could use your help. Please stop at the Zoom table in the back of the sanctuary after the service and talk with us or send Tracy an email at tracywren@yahoo.com. Training and support will be provided. Scheduling is flexible.

By the way, be sure to check out the [Lake Country Unitarian Universalist Church YouTube channel](#) for recordings of each Sunday's sermons. ***While you're there, help us be more visible in the virtual world by liking the videos and subscribing to the channel!***

MUSICALLY SPEAKING

As we enter the coldest months of the year, I am warmed by the incredible generosity of some anonymous donors who made it possible for us to bring a 'new to us' piano into our sanctuary. Our previous piano, purchased when we moved into this building, was expected to last about five years. We kept it going much longer, but the cost of repairs became prohibitive. Our old piano has found a new home, and I'm certain our new piano will contribute to our services for many years to come. A huge **THANK YOU** to the donors and everyone—especially the board and finance committee—who helped with the logistics to make this happen.

I am also warmed by the joy of working with everyone who helped the **choir sing on December 21**. From those who learned their parts and attended early Sunday rehearsals, to **John Prestby** drumming with us

on *African Alleluia*, **Ellen Burgermeister** accompanying, and **Karen Haskell** directing—I am filled with gratitude. Thank you all.

Are you ready to try something new this year? On **January 18, 11:30–12:15 PM**, join me in the sanctuary for **drumming and chanting**. Bring your own percussion instrument or use one of ours, and we'll see where the music takes us. If there's enough interest, this could become a monthly gathering.

There are many ways to get involved with the **music program at LCUUC**. If you'd like to share your music or give input on the program, email me at music@lcuuc.org or talk with me after the service.

In harmony,
Tracy Moraine, Music Coordinator



SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE CALL TO ACTION

Social Action

Committee Members:

Theodora Compton

Terrie DeWalt

Kerry Duma

Meridan Flint

Claudette Hamm

Sara and Bud Hudson

Jim and Linda Kishline

Nancy Landa

Lisa LaBorde

Kathy Lopez

Lauren Lutz

John Prestby

Rose Presser

Brittany Rogers

Ashleigh Spitz

Chairperson: Fran Bills

Board of Trustees Liaison:

Gina Magnus

The Designated Collection on January 11 will support **Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin**, the largest hunger relief organization in the state. Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin operates food banks in Milwaukee and Appleton and works with a network of nearly 400 food pantries, meal programs, and shelters. Together, they provide healthy food to more than 500,000 neighbors in need across 35 counties in Eastern Wisconsin. Each year, the organization distributes more than 38 million pounds of nutritious food to hunger relief programs throughout its service area.

The Social Action Committee (SAC) is planning an **ICE Rapid Response Training** workshop in collaboration with **Voces de la Frontera** (Milwaukee) and the **SOPHIA Immigration Task Force** (Waukesha). More details and contact information are listed on the next page.

SAC is also organizing the **February 15, 2026, worship service**, Immigration: Side With Love, which will feature speaker Darryl Morin, National President and Chairman of the Board for **Forward Latino**.

Forward Latino is a nonprofit organization that empowers affiliates to engage communities, strengthen democracy, improve the lives of working families, protect the environment, and advocate for equality and civil rights. The organization focuses on the Latino community, working to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve the American dream.

Darryl Morin is President and CEO of Advanced Wireless, Inc., serving customers in 14 countries. He also serves as President and Chairman of the Board for Forward Latino. Beyond his professional work, Darryl is a member of St. Mary Catholic Faith Community in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, and is a proud husband and father of two sons.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

The LCUUC Board of Trustees welcomes you to the new year! May it be filled with good health and adventure!

The Board is happy to welcome Chris Rollins as our new Office Administrator. She will be a great addition to our staff. The board would like to thank the hiring team of Joanne Nelson, Rob Suhr, Tim Fuller, and Rev. Matt for their time and effort to fill this position. Also, thank you to Rev. Matt for covering the Office Administrator job for the past few months. He has been a person of many hats!

The new piano arrived just in time for its debut on December 21 to accompany our LCUUC Holiday Choir. The board would like to thank the generous anonymous donors who made the acquisition of the piano possible. Also, we are thrilled that a guest visiting LCUUC was willing to take our old piano. It is wonderful when music finds its home.

In the new year, you will be hearing more about the Healthy Relationships Team. When conflicts arise in our membership, what does one do? This team's purpose will be twofold:

- To facilitate the well-being of the LCUUC Community by fostering harmonious relations and mediating conflicts within the membership.
- To be visible and available as a listening ear so that when an interpersonal conflict arises, members can seek support and advice before the conflict grows.
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The board will be refining the policy, developing the team, and getting the team trained in the early part of the new year. Stay tuned for more information.

Respectfully, Rob Suhr

Immigration Action

Recent reports indicate that **ICE and the Border Patrol will soon be targeting Milwaukee and Waukesha County**. Our contacts in Chicago emphasize the importance of being prepared. Fortunately, **Voces de la Frontera**, located in Milwaukee and Waukesha, is one of the most knowledgeable and active organizations aiding immigrants and allies—including churches and community groups—in responding effectively to ICE actions.



The **Social Action Committee** has established an **Immigration Sub-Committee**, consisting of **Fran Bills, Rose Presser, Rob Suhr, Kim Suhr, Gina Magnus, and John Prestby**. This team is dedicated to developing strategies to assist and protect our immigrant brothers, sisters, and children. If you are interested in joining our efforts, please reach out to **Fran Bills**.

The Immigration Sub-Committee invites all interested **LCUUC members** to join us for **two upcoming events** designed to provide **Rapid Response Training** for those who would like to support our immigrant neighbors.

1. Voces de la Frontera Nonviolent Direct Action Training

Saturday, January 3, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM

New Voces Office

733 W. Historic Mitchell St., Milwaukee, WI 53204

This full-day nonviolent training prepares participants for organized protests and direct actions by teaching how to stay grounded, safe, and effective in tense or high-pressure situations. The training covers de-escalation techniques, how to interact with law enforcement, what to expect during civil disobedience (though participation is not required), and how to support one another as a disciplined, united group. Participants will gain a clear understanding of their roles, how to plan for safety, and how to take action in ways that align with shared values and protect the community.

To register, click the following link:

<https://secure.ngpvan.com/OftFGtks40qo3FTeq22jkA2>

2. Social Action Committee & SOPHIA–Sponsored Rapid Response Training

The **Social Action Committee**, in collaboration with **SOPHIA**, will be hosting a **two- to three-hour training session**. The event will take place either at **LCUUC** or **First United Methodist Church in Waukesha**. This workshop is designed for those who were unable to attend the January 3 Voces training but are interested in supporting **Voces Rapid Response Teams**. We will also be inviting our neighboring **UU churches**.

This training will provide an opportunity for LCUUC members to connect and explore specific actions Lake Country can take, as well as the possibility of joining SOPHIA and other interested groups to create a **Waukesha Rapid Response Team**. Our goal is to train as many individuals as possible and ensure we have a knowledgeable group ready to assist with a variety of tasks. **Your participation is valuable, even if you are uncomfortable interacting directly with ICE.**

The **specific date and location** will be determined soon, with **late January** as our target.

GOOD COOKIE AWARDS



Fran Bills

Fran Bills was the winner of the Good Cookie Award for December. Despite having never chaired a committee before, Fran raised her hand to lead the highly visible Social Action Committee when no else did. Despite her hesitations, she dove in head first and has brought passion and limitless energy to the role. Perhaps even more importantly, she has been open to coaching and feedback and has already picked up a few new skills.

Be like Fran. Be willing to stretch yourself, trusting that this community strives to provide support and encouragement to anyone that is willing to take on a new challenge. Who knows...you could be the next Good Cookie!

Fran is truly a **Good Cookie!**

Gerry and Esther



Gerry and Esther have contributed so much to our church over many years that it's hard to capture it all. While they are less involved today, their long-standing dedication has made a lasting impact.

Together, they worked diligently to maintain our church grounds, creating welcoming outdoor spaces for all. Gerry has also been instrumental in caring for the church building, leading efforts toward our Green Sanctuary designation, spearheading the solar panel project, and organizing the road clean-up for 25 years. He has also served on the sound team and been a strong supporter of the church's music program.

Esther has helped organize rummage sales, supported Family Ministry, and generously pitched in wherever help was needed.

Together, Gerry and Esther truly embody the spirit of service. They are our **Good Cookies**, and we are deeply grateful for all they have done. 🍪

On the third week of Advent,

our congregation was treated to a delightful and improvised Christmas pageant led by the children. With gentle guidance from Reverend Matt, who helped prompt lines and keep the story moving, the pageant reflected the joyful spirit of the season and added a lighthearted moment to the service.





CRAFT & CHAT Thursday, January 8th from 5-7pm

CRAFT & CHAT meets the first Thursday of every month. Bring your craft projects to work on and bring some topics to chat about! If you want to come and enjoy the space/time but don't have your own projects, there will be adult coloring books provided for anyone to use. There will also be some delicious tea provided. If you have questions, please contact Chris Rollins at crollinscareer@gmail.com.

LCUUC GAME NIGHTS

an opportunity to enjoy casual fun & fellowship

Friday, January 16 from 6:30-8:30pm

How it works:

We will have a variety of board games and decks of cards available. People can start up various games and you can join in on what appeals to you that evening. If you own a favorite game, please bring it along and teach others the game.



Bring a favorite snack to share with everyone if you are able and willing (think snack...not meal)

This is an ADULTS only event, so please get a sitter if you want a night out. (If families are interested in a game night, we can coordinate with the Family Ministry Committee to set up a separate event.)

Water will be available, otherwise Bring Your Own Beverages. Alcohol is allowed as this is adults only.

This event has no RSVP. Simply show up during the 6:30-8:30pm time to join in the fun.

Co-Facilitators are Chris Rollins (Adult Enrichment Committee Co-Chair) & Megan Fedders. Please contact Chris @ HYPERLINK "mailto:Crollinscareer@gmail.com" [chris_email](mailto:Crollinscareer@gmail.com) or cell 262-269-9787 with any suggestions or questions.



MOVIES THAT MATTER January 16 from 6-7:30pm

The Story of Fascism in Europe by Rick Steves

Offered by the Social Action Committee and the Adult Enrichment Committee, this screening explores the historical rise of fascism in Europe and its lessons for today. Light refreshments will be served.



KINTSUGI SANGHA

We meet **weekly to meditate together** and explore Zen as a way of life. While Zen differs from Unitarian Universalism in some ways, the two traditions share many values—making them surprisingly compatible. **Drop in and visit us any Monday, 6:30–8:30 PM.**

For the latest information, see the **Sangha page** on the LCUUC website under the *Community* dropdown, or go directly to: <https://lcuuc.weebly.com/kintsugi-sangha.html>.

Learn more about Kintsugi Sangha below.

Discover Kintsugi Sangha: A Zen Community at LCUUC

You may have heard that there's a sangha at LCUUC. *Sangha* is an ancient Sanskrit word meaning "community." I started the Kintsugi Sangha here in 2012. *Kintsugi* is a Japanese art form where broken pottery is glued back together with gold dust, transforming something damaged into a valued work of art. The cracks are highlighted, not hidden—often making the piece more beautiful than it was before.

I think about the human condition in the same way. Those who have faced adversity often carry scars—what I call "wisdom marks"—proof that we've been challenged and made it through. The growth that comes from such experience deserves to be valued and lifted up, not hidden. Kintsugi Sangha is a place where this wisdom is cultivated and shared.

We explore the human condition—often called ego or personality—through the lens of Zen, a non-devotional form of Buddhism. Zen grew from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince who lived roughly 2,500 years ago. After reaching enlightenment, he became the Buddha ("the Awake

One") and devoted his life to understanding and easing human suffering. If these ideas seem abstract, consider dropping in for a Monday night meeting, 6:30–8:30 PM, where they are explored regularly.

*We sit together
in stillness,
exploring ways
to ease suffering
and better
understand the
human
condition.*

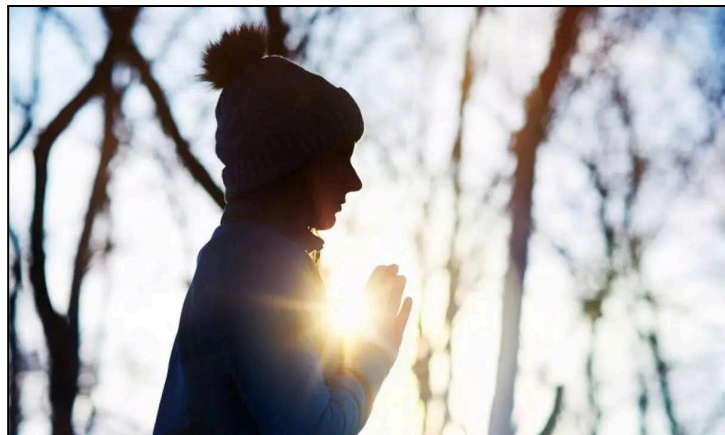
Some think Kintsugi Sangha is a church within LCUUC. In reality, Western Zen differs from most traditional religions: there is no God to worship, and questions about the afterlife are rarely addressed. Our sangha includes atheists, Christians, Jews, Pagans, and agnostics—anyone with an open, inquiring mind. We sit together in stillness, exploring ways to ease suffering and better understand the human condition. Bring whatever you believe—don't leave it at the door. Perhaps this is why Zen and UUism fit together so well.

Meetings include three short meditations: guided, walking, and seated, along with a mini-sermon and group discussion. We meet in the sanctuary every Monday that isn't a Federal holiday, 6:30–8:30 PM, and meetings are also available via Zoom. New visitors are always welcome.

For more information, contact Rev. Erich Moraine
emoraine108@gmail.com

MONTHLY (THIRD SATURDAY) NATURE MEDITATION on DECEMBER 20th at 9am

The monthly **Nature Meditation**, sponsored by the Kintsugi Sangha, is open to everyone. We will gather on **Saturday, January 17, at 9:00 AM** at the Retzer Nature Center.



The meditation begins with a short reading, followed by about 30 minutes of quietly walking or sitting and fully experiencing the outdoors through our senses. We then come together to share our experiences and read another short reflection before returning to our weekend plans.

The meditation takes place **regardless of the weather**, so please dress appropriately for the outdoors. Since this is a meditative experience, we ask that you leave behind anything that might be distracting to yourself or others (e.g., pets) and silence communication devices before the meditation begins.

Here is a link to the Nature Center: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/G7ZEbY9zGxgmmYSRA>. We will meet at the **east end of the parking lot**—see the point marked on the map.

2025 Winter Solstice Bonfire

Thank you to everyone who bundled up and joined us for this grounding and hopeful evening. Together, we honored the darkness, kindled light, and stepped into the season ahead with warmth and intention.

Guided by Mike and Lois, we shared a meaningful ritual, offering intentions to the fire—letting go of what no longer serves us and welcoming the new season, as sticks, pine cones, and written reflections fed the flames.



Book Swap & Share

Our first **Book Swap & Share** last December was a joyful success! Adults and children browsed the tables, discovered new favorites, and left with books they were excited to read as the sanctuary buzzed with conversation.

Thanks to everyone who contributed, dozens of books found new homes. Others were shared through our lending table, and remaining giveaway books were donated to Half Price Books, raising just over \$30 for the church.

Coffee, community, and a shared love of reading made this a memorable event. We're considering hosting another Book Swap & Share in the spring—let us know if you're interested!



Caring Circle



The Caring Circle offers short-term support for church members while long-term or professional services are arranged. Working with ministerial staff, we provide emotional and spiritual care. Services may include cards or calls, social visits, meals, grocery or prescription pick-up and delivery, and transportation for essential needs.

If you need support—or wish to help by providing meals, transportation, errands, or social visits—please contact **Claudette Hamm** at 414-708-8145 or claudette.hamm@yahoo.com



LCUUC BOARD MEMBERS

Mike McNett, President

Stephanie Tisoris, Vice-President

Rob Suhr, Secretary

Mike Campbell, Member

Gina Magnus, Member

Chris Peske, Member

Karl Timm, Member

Tim Fuller, Treasure (ex-officio)

Rev. Matt Aspin (ex-officio)

Rev. Erich Moraine (ex-officio)

MEETING WITH THE MINISTER

Want to meet with Rev. Matt? He would be glad to connect with you. To find a time that works for both of you, email him at minister@lcuuc.org. Please check the [Master Calendar](#) for his upcoming availability.

Rev. Matt observes a **Sabbath on Fridays**. If you have a pastoral care emergency while he is away, please contact the coordinator of the Caring Circle, **Claudette Hamm**, at claudette.hamm@yahoo.com. Claudette will reach out to Rev. Matt if needed.



Board Goals for 2026

1. Financial Sustainability

- 1.1 Develop and continually monitor strategies for financial sustainability, including options beyond growth and contributions.
- 1.2 Gather data on membership growth to inform future strategies.

2. Outreach, Diversity, and Growth

- 2.1 Increase outreach, community presence, and marketing to attract new visitors.
- 2.2 Assess the needs of visitors and new members to inform growth and retention strategies.
- 2.3 Assess the needs of long-term members to inform growth and retention strategies.
- 2.4 Explore ways to increase diversity within the church, especially age diversity.
- 2.5 Create opportunities to engage and bring in people from outside the church.

3. Organizational Strength

- 3.1 Assess and optimize the church's organizational structure for effectiveness.
- 3.2 Identify and match members' skills with appropriate leadership roles.
- 3.3 Create processes for leadership development (including possible non-traditional contributions such as subject-matter experts, remote participation, etc.).
- 3.4 Centralize documentation on SharePoint to strengthen institutional memory and improve efficiency.

4. Spiritual and Personal Growth

- 4.1 Offer opportunities for spiritual and personal growth.
- 4.2 Offer periodic non-traditional services and activities that promote spiritual and personal growth.

5. Strengthening Congregational Connections

- 5.1 Create regular opportunities for social connection across all age groups.
- 5.2 Develop a system to help new members integrate and connect within their first year.
- 5.3 Increase pastoral care by creating more opportunities for the congregation to minister to one another.

6. Family Ministry

- 6.1 Increase offerings for children, parents, and caregivers beyond Sunday religious education.
- 6.2 Identify ways the congregation can support families' changing needs (meals, babysitting, etc.).
- 6.3 Provide childcare at more events.
- 6.4 Encourage all committees to collaborate with Family Ministry to create more intergenerational events.

7. Social Action and Community Impact

- 7.1 Diversify social action opportunities by type (education, advocacy, direct support) and by age group (children, parents with children, adults, seniors).
- 7.2 Identify and implement actions to increase engagement within the congregation.
- 7.3 Connect with other churches and local partners for collaboration.
- 7.4 Create a safe space for vulnerable communities (e.g., Welcoming Renewal, gender, abuse survivors, ethnicity, dementia, neurodiversity).



OUR MISSION

LCUUC is a diverse religious community supporting one another in our spiritual searches for truth, meaning and compassionate connection. Based on the Unitarian Universalist Principles and the transforming power of love, we strive for positive change in the world.

OUR VISION

2020 LCUUC is an inclusive spiritual community that is diverse, growing, vibrant, and economically sustainable. We provide enriching lifespan education and a strong public presence supporting social justice.

The online LCUUC Church Calendar can be found [HERE](#)

LCUUC STAFF: All staff have mailboxes in the church office

Minister: Rev. Matt Aspin minister@lcuuc.org

Music Coordinator: Tracy Moraine music@lcuuc.org

Congregational Administrator: OPEN admin@lcuuc.org

Church Office Phone:
(262) 369-1703

Newsletter Editor:

Stephanie Tsois newsletter@lcuuc.org

Please submit articles by the 20th of each month.

VISIT LCUUC AT: [WEBSITE](#), [INSTAGRAM](#), [FACEBOOK](#)

This newsletter was edited with the help of AI.