



# James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation

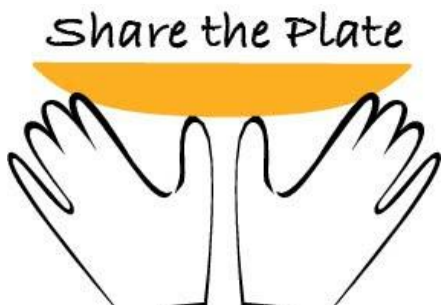
Weekly News for 12/27/23 - 1/02/2024

**This Sunday, December 31, 2023 at 10:00 am**

**"The Mystery of this Moment" with Susan Podebradsky, Jennifer Hedstrom and Genevieve McPherson-Shambarger**

Today's service will be a multigenerational fair offering several opportunities to practice mindfulness of the present moment through music, movement, and meditation. [Service website](#)

[Zoom Link for Service](#)



The Share the Plate recipient for Dec. 17 and 31 is [Middle East Children's Alliance](#), a nonprofit humanitarian aid organization focused on supporting the lives of children in the Middle East. They are working in Gaza to provide emergency assistance to families who have fled their homes and to get emergency medical supplies to hospitals and clinics. They were nominated by Jennifer Hedstrom.

Please [nominate a local organization](#) for our Share the Plate Program!

**Next Sunday:** [Burning Bowl Service](#) with Deb Myrbo, a multigenerational service with a fire communion ritual to center ourselves, seal our intentions, and lose our hesitations, as we move into the New Year, as individuals and in community. Worship will be followed by religious exploration sessions for all, including the next conversation on reparations with Rev. Bowie Kling-Garcia (see below).

## Our December Theme: The Gift of Mystery

Our December theme reminds us that we can't possibly know everything, and invites us into the spiritual practice of being okay with that. In this space, you'll find a new invitation into reflection every week.

**Check-in question: What's the most unprovable thing you've placed your faith in?**

Those who dwell among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life.

-- [Rachel Carson](#)

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## Ministry Connections

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### Minister's Musings for December

From Rev. Karen Armina



Dear Ones,

From January 1 until May 1, I'll be away on sabbatical leave. I'm so pleased and excited that our time together has been long enough that it's time for me to take a second sabbatical! Our shared ministry is the longest one you've gotten to experience, and I'm proud of how we've grown together this past decade. I returned from my last sabbatical in the midst of a global pandemic, and we've spent the four years since then learning how to rebuild community in this new normal. We've navigated many challenges in our work to build momentum back up since then, and I think it's accurate to say that, while there are still areas that could use some more energy, we're living

into our mission with intention and vigor!

I know we'll continue to learn and grow during our time apart. I'll be in Madison during some of my sabbatical, learning again to relax into the rhythms of my body and spirit. I'll spend time with my teenager, who's leaving for college (!) in August, and in nature, where I find solace. And I'll travel a bit too, to learn about the place my teen will spend the next four years, to spend time with loved ones, and to discover how some other UU congregations are recreating their ministries and momentum. You'll continue to welcome new people of all ages, all genders, all abilities, all backgrounds, and change with every person who arrives in your midst. You'll keep serving our community, radiating your love and compassion and activism out, and you'll find new ways to do this as well. You'll keep worshiping, singing, praying, celebrating your accomplishments and joys, and accompanying each

other through your sorrows and fears. And through it all, you'll widen your horizons, pay attention to new thoughts and ideas, and deepen your ministry.

I'm grateful for all of you, for your big hearts and your care for each other and our world, for this community that is so grounded in love and justice, and for your understanding of how vital it is to offer your minister time to disconnect and reflect. I'm excited to have a great lineup of guest and lay preachers to offer you while I'm gone, and grateful for the staff and leadership of our congregation, who will carry various new responsibilities while I'm gone. I'm looking forward to hearing what you discover about yourselves in my absence, and your dreams about we'll do next, when I return. And even though I won't be here, I'll be thinking of you all with love and care. Blessings!

In faith and love, Karen

### Minister's Availability

**Rev. Karen will be away on sabbatical leave from January 1 until May 1, 2024**

There is information about what's planned for both Karen and Reeb during this time, including names and contact information for people responsible for various areas of ministry, in a brochure that's available in the foyer. You can also [click here for complete information](#) about her leave and who to contact in her absence.

### Music Ministry

**From Jennifer Hedstrom, Music Director**



There will be no Sacred Breath Choir rehearsal this Thursday December 28. If you're interested in joining choir in the New Year, choir will resume on Thursday January 4.

Palestinian-Chilean singer-songwriter, Elyanna, shared the song "[Olive Branch](#)" on social media when she announced the postponement of her North American tour, which was set to take place in November. This emotional song, written with the help of her mother and brother, expresses the pain of witnessing what is happening in her homeland from afar. I've watched both the original video and the [heartwrenching live performance](#) she gave at the opening ceremony of the El Gouna Film Festival. Since first listen, her melody has stuck in my mind. And when I am transfixed by a song, my first impulse is

to learn to play it. I admit, the piano cannot entirely capture the emotion of this piece. It lacks the expressive subtleties of Elyanna's voice and the way she pours her words onto the melody. But learning to play a song always helps me feel closer to it. And since I learned it, I want to share it with you. I'll be playing my arrangement during offertory on Sunday. I hope you'll take a moment this week to listen to the original and read the lyrics.

Come join your fellow Reebers for folk music and singing on select Saturdays in December! Bring your voice and/or instrument and [click here to RSVP](#). Mike Stimson will email everyone who RSVPs by the Friday evening beforehand to let them know if there are a sufficient number of interested people to meet that Saturday. The next folk music gathering is scheduled for Saturday December 30 at 11:30am.

This Week's Shared Music:

#59 (Voces) "El botón es flor mañana"

#1031 "Filled With Lovingkindness"

### Religious Education and Family Ministry

From Genevieve McPherson-Shambarger, Director of Religious Education



**This Week:** This week will be a very special interactive fair style service focused around meditation with different activities throughout the building. Join us for a morning of mindfulness and fun as we look to ring in the new year.

**Next Sunday:** Next Sunday will be an intergenerational service with RE for everyone after the service. Children and youth will meet in their classrooms and adults are invited to join in adult RE discussion led by Rev. Bowie on reparations and land acknowledgment (see below).

**Youth Mini Con:** Our friends at First UU Milwaukee have invited all interested youth aged 13+ to join them for a mini youth conference from Sunday Jan 14th at 4 pm- Monday Jan 15th at noon (MLK weekend). Food and transportation will be provided, email [re@jruuc.org](mailto:re@jruuc.org) for more information.

### Small Group Ministries

Offering and Receiving Connection, Support, and Spiritual Practice

[Read more here](#)

**Meditation With Friends** - Wednesdays, 6:30 to 7 p.m. (Beginners Welcome) - [Zoom Link](#)

**Sacred Breath Choir** - No practice Thursday December 28th. Usual practice is Thursdays, 7 to 8:30 p.m., contact Music Director [Jennifer Hedstrom](#)

**Folk Music Gatherings** - Saturdays, meets next on 12/30 at 11:30 am, contact [Mike Stimson](#)

[Zoom Link for Meditation](#)

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## Our Congregation and Community Calendar

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### Folk Music Group Meets Dec. 30 at 11:30 am

Please join us for folk music and singing. Bring your voice and/or instrument, and [RSVP to Mike Stimson](#) so we can confirm a critical mass for gathering. Mike will email everyone who RSVPs by Friday evening beforehand to let them know if there are a sufficient number of interested people to meet on Saturday. We will meet in the sanctuary, multipurpose room, or music room, whichever is available, Saturday, December 30 at 11:30am.

### Religious Exploration Series for Adults with Rev. Bowie Kling-Garcia

#### Reparations and Land Acknowledgements

#### Next session is Sunday, Jan. 7

The next religious exploration offering for adults will be a continuation of the congregational conversation started in the Dec. 3 workshop on reparations and land acknowledgements. This session will be held after the service on Sunday, Jan. 7, and Rev. Bowie will facilitate. This is part of a series of conversations in which we reflect on the spiritual grounding for reparations and consider concrete actions we might take as a congregation. You can click on these links to find [notes from past sessions](#) and the [slide show](#) we're using for the conversations.

**Please come whether or not you've participated in earlier conversations.**

### Congregational Conversation on Israel and Palestine - Coming Soon

The Justice Ministry will host a Congregational Conversation on Israel and Palestine on a date to be determined after services (11:30-12:30). We hear you that this topic is alive for many members of the congregation right now. This will be an opportunity to share what is on your heart and what you need from your spiritual community in this moment - and offer your energy towards any action plans that emerge. Hybrid format.

## Ojibwe Storyteller Meetings in January

The Racial Justice Action Ministry learned recently that four wonderful Ojibwe storytellers are lined up for this January through the Wisconsin History Project. The meetings are virtual via Zoom, Tuesday evenings, January 9-30, 2024 from 7:00 – 8:00 pm. This series is free and open to the public, but registration is required. This year, you only need to register once and you're automatically signed up for all four storytellers. The zoom link you receive will be good for all four events. Registration is now open. [To register, please visit this link.](#)

The storytellers include: Sirella Ford from Lac Courte Oreilles on January 9th, Tina Van Zile from Sokaogon on January 16th, Tinker Schuman from Lac du Flambeau on January 23rd, and Liz Arbuckle, Northern Outreach Coordinator, Wisconsin Historical Society on January 30th. For more information, contact Jeanette Clawson at [rjam@jruuc.org](mailto:rjam@jruuc.org).

## Save the Date

Jan 21 - Community Meal after service

Jan. 28 - All Reeb Read Workshop after service

Feb 2 – [Games Night at Reeb](#)

Feb 4 - Adult RE after service

Feb. 18 - Community Meal After Service

Feb. 18 - All Reeb Read Workshop (12:30)

March 2 – [Membership Exploration class at Reeb - click for more info](#)

March 2 – [Poor People's Campaign Action - click for more info](#)

March 23 – [Outdoor potluck/fire at Burrows Park shelter](#)

April 7 – [Joining Sunday at Reeb](#)

[See our Online Congregational Activities Calendar Here](#)

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## Congregation News & Announcements

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### New Deadline for the Weekly Newsletter Submissions, Tuesday 10 am

Please send your submissions to [news@JRUUC.org](mailto:news@JRUUC.org) by 10 am on Tuesdays, so we have time to get them in the newsletter. Remember to include relevant event and announcement information, such as date, time, location, links, contact information, and how long you would like the information included in the newsletter.



### **Winter Solstice Celebration Gratitude**

Thanks to all who made our wonderful Celebration come to life on December 23rd, including everyone who brought friends and family to share the darkness and light, and those who brought treats. [Please click here](#) for the order of service (including names of songs and readings) and a complete list of participants. A special thank you to our wonderful Music Director, Jennifer Hedstrom, who shared such patience and joy. She truly made her first Reeb Winter Solstice a treat to remember.

### **Winter Solstice Follow-up - "Snow Lottery"**

If you love being out in the fresh air and new snow, why not sign up to help with snow removal on our grounds? You can win the "Snow Lottery" if it snows during your week and you get to spend time outdoors! [Sign up here](#), or from the "Calendar" tab on our website.

### **Website Errors or Improvements? Contact [web@jruuc.org](mailto:web@jruuc.org)**

If you notice an error or something important missing from our website, please let Susan Podebradsky know by sending an email to [web@jruuc.org](mailto:web@jruuc.org). It helps if you send a link to the specific page in question. You can also let us know if there is something you can't find, something new you would like to see, or something you really like. Thanks!

### **Check Out the New Racial Justice Action Ministry Page**

The members of the Racial Justice Action Ministry are pleased to announce that our webpage is now streamlined and up to date. We invite all Reebers to consider the page a main tool for knowing about upcoming events and activities related to racial justice. The site can be reached by going to the JRUC website and clicking on the "Justice" menu option at the top of the page then "Racial Justice Action Ministry." We will endeavor to keep the activities up to date and also offer links to books and organizations that can be useful to our anti-racism journeys.

[Click here to go directly to the page](#) and see a listing of what's coming up in the next month or so at Reeb and beyond. The Racial Justice Action Ministry (RJAM) will be updating this page about once a month with details about news and events like these:

- All-Reeb Read - On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends
- Class from SURJ on Zoom "White Anti-Racist Spirituality"
- Upcoming Black History for a New Day class, articles, and information session

Ongoing work related to land acknowledgment and reparations

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## **UUA News & Connections**

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## Final Proposed Revision to Article II

The final version of the proposed revision to Article II of the UUA Bylaws is now available! The UUA Board will officially receive the revision at the next board meeting, November 13, 2023, but it is available to you now. The deadline for submitting an amendment is 11:59 p.m. ET on February 1, 2024. All qualified amendments will be considered at the 2024 General Assembly. [Read the Proposed Article II here](#)

### General Assembly 2024 Theme Announcement: Love Unites, Stories Ignite

The 63rd General Assembly will take place **virtually** Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024. Participants will receive:

- Memorable, high-impact content for faith formation, with an easy and accessible experience
- Sense of belonging in the online community, with flexible approaches for a variety of needs
- Renewed connection to the wider faith of Unitarian Universalism.
- Inspiration and support to carry forward to your local congregations and beyond



[Click here](#) to learn what you can do to work for justice along with our national association



[Click here](#) to learn how you can get involved in getting out the vote

[More UUA Updates](#)

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[See our website for more information - jruuc.org](http://jruuc.org)

Please submit articles for the newsletter to [news@jruuc.org](mailto:news@jruuc.org) by Tuesday at 10:00 am.