

# **The Confluence**

**News of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta, Ohio**

**January 2026**

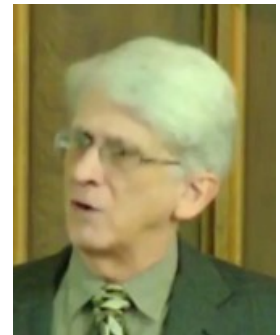
[tedgoertzel@gmail.com](mailto:tedgoertzel@gmail.com) editor

FUUSM office hours: 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday. The office is in the Religious Education (RE) building, the white house next to the church at 232 Third Street, Marietta, OH 45750. Email Dawn at [fuusm.office@gmail.com](mailto:fuusm.office@gmail.com), or call (740) 373-1238.

[Click Here for information on Becoming a Member](#)

## **Reverend Evan Young to Begin His Ministry with FUUSM**

As the new year begins, FUUSM is pleased to announce that the Reverend Evan Young will be serving as minister. Reverend Young preached a sermon on “[Our Time](#)” at the November 23 service, and the Board approved his appointment as a half-time contract minister. He will be offering twenty-six worship services each year, beginning with a January 4 sermon on “Looking and Moving Forward.” This will lighten the workload of the Worship and Music Committee, who have planned and conducted the services for the past year. [Click here](#) for Reverend Young’s background.



[Click here for a letter from Vic Elam, the President of our Board of Trustees, that explains Reverend Young’s role and schedule.](#)

## **Worship Services**

In the sanctuary at Third and Putnam streets, Marietta, Ohio.  
Also streamed live on the FUUSM Facebook page & via [Zoom link](#).

### **January 4 “Looking and Moving Forward”**

In last week’s Fire Ceremony, we were invited to say goodbye to the old year through a ritual of releasing, expressing hope, and setting intentions for the new year. In this service, we honor Janus’s other, forward-looking face by exploring what we choose to carry forward from last year into this year, what we expect to be seeking, and how we can encourage ourselves and each other to be open to new and unexpected possibilities.

Worship Leader: The Reverend Evan Young



### **January 11 “Involving All for Community Strength”**

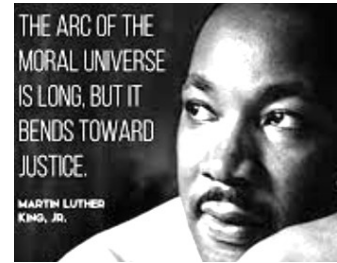
Tiffany Neill, representing Washington County Board of Developmental Disabilities/WASCO/ Ewing School will expand our understanding of inclusiveness and highlight inclusion opportunities in our community.

Worship Leader: Betsy Liller

Guest Speaker: Tiffany Neill

### January 18 “. . . and Justice for All”

In his “letter from Birmingham Jail,” the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously wrote that “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” On Monday, January 19, we will observe the federal holiday our nation dedicated to him. It was first proposed in 1968, signed into law in 1983, and finally recognized by all 50 states in 2000. On this Sunday we will look closely at justice and injustice. We will explore what “justice” meant to him, what it means to us, and what we might use as a template for our own work toward removing injustice and shaping a society that affirms and promotes justice everywhere.



The FUUSM Choir, under the direction of Martha Webster, will perform “Good Trouble,” by Thomas Keesecker

Worship Leader: The Reverend Evan Young

### January 25 Finding Our Sense of Purpose in Life

On this day of Big Questions/Deep Conversations, Stephanie Thomas will share what experience helped her discover her purpose in life. In small groups or pairs, we will then share our stories of finding our purpose or, perhaps, of our ongoing seeking.

Worship Leader: Martha McGover.

## Calendar of Events

**Thursday, Jan. 1: Happy New Year! Kwanzaa ends. FUUSM OFFICE CLOSED**

### Sunday, Jan. 4

- 9:30 a.m., **Choir practice**, sanctuary.
- 9:30 a.m., **Today's Issues discussion** to discuss [The Strange Death of Make America Great Again](#). RE building parlor
- 11 a.m., **Sunday service**, *Looking & Moving Forward*, with Rev. Evan Young
- 12:15 p.m., **Coffee hour!** Ends at 1 p.m.



### Monday, Jan. 5

- 1 p.m., fire inspection with Captain Steve Hill
- 2 p.m., **Caring Committee** meeting via Zoom
- 6:30 p.m., **FUUSM Board of Trustees** meeting, RE parlor

### Tuesday, Jan. 6

- 3:30–6:30, Girl Scouts in social hall
- 4:30, private use of RE parlor (Roger Kalter)

**Wednesday, Jan. 7**

- 11 a.m., **Worship & Music Committee** meeting, RE parlor.
- 5:30-8 p.m. MOV Indivisible (Lori Flis)

**Sunday, Jan. 11**

- 9:30 a.m., **Choir practice**, sanctuary.
- 11 a.m., **Sunday service**, sanctuary.
- 11 a.m., MOV Friends, Quaker meeting, RE parlor
- 12:15 p.m., **Coffee hour**, social hall

**Tuesday, Jan. 13**

- Noon, **UU+ Women's Book Group**, Parkersburg Country Club
- 3:30-6:30, Girl Scouts in social hall
- 4:30, private use of RE parlor (Roger Kalter)

**Wednesday, Jan. 14**

- 6 p.m., **Women's Group potluck**, social hall

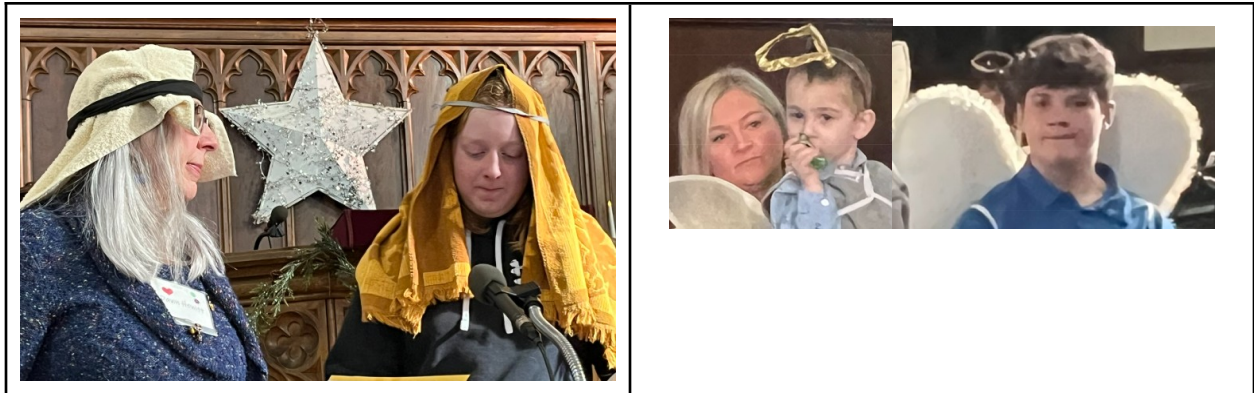
[Click Here for the Full Month's Calendar, Regularly Updated](#)



"Angels We Have Heard on High," words: Earl Bowman Marlatt; music: French carol; performed by  
**Nohl Johnson** [VIDEO](#)



"Candlelight Canon," words & music by Andy Beck; performed by the FUUSM Choir, under the direction of Martha Webster [VIDEO](#)



### Service Recognition Award: Suzyn Mills

Since she first blew in from Chicago-land, Suzyn Mills has been a vital presence in the life of FUUSM. She has shared her musical talents through participation in Choir and small group performances. Her theatrical background has been an asset, too, as she has stepped into the roles of Worship Associate and Worship Leader and has designed creative worship services. She is a most valuable member of the Worship & Music Committee. A warm and out-going person, she builds relationships and strengthens both our congregation and the larger community. As a community member, she is an active volunteer with Zonta and supports many music, theatre, and art organizations. Also, she has connections with a diverse group of singer/songwriters and is well-known for hosting house concerts. We are pleased to honor Suzyn Mills for her many contributions, her steady dedication, and the generosity of spirit she brings to our congregation. She embodies the values of shared ministry and community that are the heart of our Unitarian Universalist tradition.

Sent by Martha McGovern

### Pledge Drive to Begin in January

#### Don Poole Returning to the Area



The 2026 Pledge Drive will begin in January. Our treasurer, Don Poole, has graciously agreed to assist with this iteration of the Pledge Drive. Don is ending his full-time work in Houston in the first week of January and is anticipating returning to his original home in Washington County. Our operations budget relies largely on the revenue from our Pledge Drive, and in previous years FUUSM members and friends have responded generously. As we begin 2026 with our new minister and renewed enthusiasm, we are optimistic that the 2026 Pledge Drive will be successful and will provide a strong foundation for our budget in the next fiscal year, beginning on July 1 2026.

George Banziger



## Martha Webster: Choir Director:

by Nancy Luthy



After attending Nancy Novak's memorial service and learning of her many accomplishments, I realized how much I regretted not getting to know her better.

Another unsung hero is our beloved Choir Director, Martha Webster.

We know how well she directs this diverse group, inspiring remarkable performances from them. We have also heard her sing many times and can attest to her vocal talents.

After attending her Christmas concert at Belpre Elementary School, I was in awe of her many talents still uncovered. I witnessed how successfully she managed and directed a multitude of antsy 3rd through 6th graders...in chorus and in band. No small feat.

The 4th grade band had only been on their chosen instruments for 3 months. How does she do it? She can play scales on all beginning band instruments. I have seen her play guitar, drums, piano and clarinet. She also admitted she can play oboe and trumpet and is now learning the banjo. Her son Thaddeus plays the tuba and is learning the guitar.

Martha has a Bachelor of the Arts: Music Education and has an undergraduate degree in Music Therapy. In addition, she has two graduate degrees; one in Education: Instructional Design and one in Music Education.



Martha teaches K-6 general music, directs the elementary choir and band(s), is the Assistant Marching Band Director for the Belpre HS Band, is the founder of HMB Music Therapy, LLC and currently does music therapy at Rockland Ridge nursing home. She is the 4-H Camp Director for Washington County and is also an Adjunct Professor at Washington State College of Ohio, where she teaches Music Appreciation.

In her spare time ... what spare time??... Martha loves to craft and is currenting re-teaching herself how to crochet. She is also a distance runner/walker, having just completed a 10K and is now training for her 17th half marathon.

FUUSM is blessed.

## Remembering Nancy Novak



Nancy Novak, age 83, passed away peacefully on November 19, 2025 in Kennett Square, PA. Nancy met her husband Ernie in high school chemistry class in 1957, and later joined him at Oberlin College. They were married in 1962.

They were active members of FUUSM for many years while Ernie worked as a chemical engineer and after his retirement. Nancy believed in making the world a better place and was an avid volunteer. She was most active with the League of

Women Voters, serving two terms as President of the West Virginia League. In the Unitarian Universalist Church, she directed the church choir, served as a board member, regularly attended the meditation group and organized many other activities, especially the Marietta Garden Tour and Plant Sale, which raised significant funds for the maintenance of our historically significant building. She was also the facilitator of two book groups, one of them the ongoing UU+ Book Club. At the time they moved closer to family, she and Ernie gifted FUUSM with a fund that has enabled us to expand our choral and keyboard music library.

Nancy always loved music, books, cats, travel, movies, good food, and gardens. She was an exemplary hostess. In West Virginia, she had a large flower garden that was frequently on the local garden tours. Daffodils were her favorite flower, and her garden had thousands of daffodil flowers each spring. Her favorite recreation was downhill skiing in locations around the world; her favorite was Snowmass-Aspen.

In her quiet, competent, and caring way, Nancy enriched and expanded the lives of many individuals, and in doing so strengthened all the communities of which she was an integral part. She was a force for Good in all aspects of her life.

[Click Here for a 2022 Video from Ernie and Nancy](#)

## Board Briefs

December 1, 2025

Board Members present: Vic Elam, Ron Rees , Darryl Ting, Robin Bozian, Lloyd Elliot, Betsy Liller, Shari Ballantyne

November minutes stand as published.

Treasurer's report accepted as sent by Don Poole.

New Business:

1. The Board and congregational feedback are overwhelmingly in support of hiring Evan Young to fill our part-time minister position. Robin will set up a meeting to iron out the details of his contract.
2. Nancy Luthy from the personnel committee presented some proposed minor changes to their mission statement and evaluation dates which were accepted by the board.
3. Randall Kidder is actively participating in music for our services. Board proposed that he be compensated for his work. We will ask the W & M committee for a recommendation for fair compensation.
4. Discussion about whether FUUSM might join with other churches to open our social hall for the homeless to have shelter on particularly cold nights. While board members want to help in a meaningful way, Ron Rees looked into insurance for providing this service and it is cost-prohibitive
5. It is time for holiday gifts to staff. The personnel committee will get the appropriate allocation to Jennifer to get checks mailed out.
6. Service Recognition Award: Suzyn Mills. Shari will do the write-up and send a card.

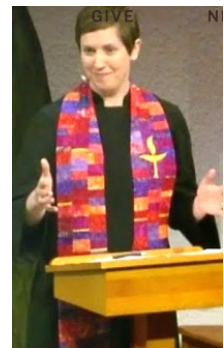
Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy Liller, Secretary

## A Christmas Story

Adapted by Adeline Bailey from a [sermon by Rev. Beth Dana](#)

We recall the story of the first Christmas because in hearing the words of scripture and watching the holy family, the angels, the sheep and shepherds, and the wise people, we find truths that speak to our lives and are reflected in our world today, and each year it resonates with us in a slightly different way.

As Unitarian Universalists, we focus on the humanity of Jesus and we celebrate his unique ability to see and uplift the humanity of



others. His love in action, his faithfulness, his message, and commitment to love your neighbor as yourself. Unitarian Universalists rather than upholding a religion ABOUT Jesus, return to our roots and uphold the religion OF Jesus with love, the quest of truth, service, peace, and fellowship, and the end that all souls shall grow in harmony with divine LOVE remaining at the center.

We must plead for peace and hope for unity even when it seems impossible because we care about each other and we care about our world. In these times, we know our hearts need comfort and our souls need resolve to honor our Unitarian Universalist values. May we all strive to hold these values front and center in our lives. Let us carry this prayerful hope with us into the days ahead.

### GUEST AT YOUR (OUR) TABLE



Guest at Your (Our) Table has been a Service Project of UUA for over 50 years; a successful multigenerational project serving over 20 countries.

This year FUUSM will participate throughout the holiday season, with **boxes and donations due on Sunday,**

**January 11th.** Please call the church office if you would like a box delivered to your home.

Placing a box on your table encourages all members of the family and all guests to contribute. It is also a visual representation of one of the many ways FUUSM serves the wider community.

If paying by check, please make your check payable to UUSC and write GAYT in the memo. Envelopes are available near the boxes (foyer) and may be placed in the collection plate, donation box (Fellowship Hall), or given to Dawn or me. Do not seal the envelope. Since all checks and donations will not be sent to UUSC until January, please date the check for January 11, 2026.

I will be documenting all gifts; however, this donation will not appear on your FUUSM statement.

Nancy Luthy

### Join UU's for Winter Institute February 13-16, 2026

Winter Institute is a long held tradition of gathering over President's Day week-end for a mid-winter retreat at Salt Fork State Park in Cambridge, Ohio (one hour north of Marietta). In these difficult times, we are reminded how sacred it is to be in community, raising our voices in song, sharing meals together, and enjoying togetherness. The WI Planning committee is delighted to invite you to join us. Registration is open and is a 2 step process. Hotel reservations are due by January 15, early bird rate for WI registration is also January 15. Learn more at the [Central East Region website](#).





FUUSM Choir performing "A Yuletide Greeting" [Click for Video.](#)