



NOVEMBER 2026

PARISH NOTES

Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist
Church of Concord

Why My Heart Is Here: Freedom to Experiment

by Lorraine Ellis

One of our interim ministers was fond of asking, “Can we treat this like an experiment?” At the time, I was a member of the predecessor to our Board of Trustees—the Prudential Committee— which did a whole lot more micromanaging than the current Board does.

A new thing would be proposed. The Pru members would all look at each other, eyes wide. Like deer. Someone would venture, “That seems kind of big. Will we get pushback from the congregation? Is it too much? Too fast?” She would ask “Can we treat it like an experiment? It wouldn’t be cast in stone.”

The first such experiment that I remember clearly was to move the pulpit from the right side of the chancel to the left, so that speakers would not be blinded by sun coming through the windows at certain times of the year. I don’t remember why we were so hesitant. I do remember the minister’s patient encouragement.

Looking back, I ask myself, “We’re a liberal religion, open to change and evolution, so why was this so difficult?”

Maybe it had something to do with conflict avoidance. This all took place before we’d had exposure to non-violent communication and conflict resolution.

The pulpit changed sides and I don’t remember anyone batting an eyelash.

“Can we treat it as an experiment?” became a tool in my own leadership box. Knowing that decisions are almost never permanent was freeing, at home, at church, at work. Even when experiments haven’t worked out as hoped, I’ve felt far less self-blame, anxiety and disappointment than I’d expected.

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...and so much more!

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sunday Worship is at 10 am

IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAM AT WWW.CONCORDUU.ORG/LIVE

11/1/2026 “Visions of Healing” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

At a time of deep political division, when disagreement too often gives way to contempt, how might we begin to heal the wounds within ourselves and between one another? As we approach Election Day, we'll explore how compassion, accountability, and a renewed sense of agency can help us move beyond fear and helplessness toward hope. We may not be able to heal the whole world, but together we can begin creating the world we long for.

11/8/2026 “Now... What?” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

Regardless of the election outcome, there will be a need for healing and humility, a need to tend to what is bruised and hurting, a need to be together to remember the humanity we share, our fears and tears, our loves and hopes, and the longing for joy and acceptance.

11/15/2026 “What's in Your Backpack?” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

We all carry invisible backpacks filled with memories, expectations, disappointments, wounds, and gifts gathered along life's journey. Some of what we carry has become so familiar that we hardly notice how it shapes our lives and relationships. As we explore our monthly theme of healing, we'll consider how the courage to look inside our backpacks—with curiosity, honesty, and compassion—can be an important first step toward healing and wholeness.

11/22/2026 “Setting Down the Backpack” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

Once we begin to recognize what we're carrying, another question emerges: What might we be ready to set down? Drawing on Buddhist teachings about non-attachment, we'll explore how holding tightly to old hurts, expectations, resentments, and even our stories about ourselves can keep us from living fully in the present. What might become possible when we learn that healing doesn't always mean changing what happened, but changing our relationship to what we carry?

11/29/2026 “Small Joys & Gratitude” Rev. Jim Curley & Donna Moore

A bird's song, the wag of a dog's tail, crisp Fall weather, the gentle touch of a loved one, a 'perfect' stone found at the pond's edge. Small joys, but so vital to our personal experiences. We'll explore the small joys in life and why they matter. And there will be Thanksgiving weekend gratitude.

The image at the top of most pages in this issue is our Youth Group making a “Human Knot.” The Youth Group gathers three Friday evenings per month, along with occasional field trips or overnights. We emphasize building relationships, having fun, developing leadership skills, and serving the community within and beyond the congregation. New high school youth are always welcome! For more info or to join, contact Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger at michael@concorduu.org.

Our theme for
November is
Healing.



Why My Heart Is Here: Freedom to Experiment

by Lorraine Ellis, continued from cover page

Many of you know I've worn a lot of hats at church over the years. What you may not know is that several of those hats have been experimental. I've turned down some requests for help or project leads, accepted others at once, and approached still others as experiments.

What has stunned me is the acceptance I've found even when an experiment hasn't worked out as I'd hoped. Most recently, I stepped down from the Operations Leadership Team mid-term because the role was bringing me more anxiety than fulfillment. Michael graciously accepted my resignation. I could then say to myself, "Interesting experiment. I've learned some things about the church and about myself, but now I need to move on." And I did—guilt-free. My commitment wasn't cast in stone.

It's marvelous to see how much experimentation I've been able to do over the past 27 years - some on the "front end" of church life, and some on the less visible "back end." Much of it has worked out, but some has not. The "no judgement zone" is real.

That freedom isn't something I found on my own. The permission to try, and the acceptance when something hasn't worked out, have helped me give myself permission, too. I'm not suggesting we all starting taking on responsibilities capriciously. Commitments deserve serious consideration. But here, I've learned I can take my commitments seriously without feeling trapped by them. That's what this permission-giving atmosphere has meant to me: room to contribute, room to learn, and room to change course.

I've shaped my spirituality here, judgement-free and experiment-full, and I've shaped my character as well. The permission I've found to experiment has become something I can share. It's been a joy to encourage others to experiment and watch them grow in response. That freedom has been a true gift, and one of the many reasons my heart is here.

"Why My Heart Is Here" is an occasional column for church members to share a bit about their church engagement: how the church enriches their lives and in turn, how they enrich the church with their gifts. Send your thoughts about why YOUR heart is here to parishnotes@concorduu.org and maybe it will be featured in a future issue.



Connect, Grow, & Transform Retreat on Leadership

Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger will facilitate a leadership retreat to create connections among our church leaders, grow leadership capacity, and transform ourselves and our community through our leadership as UUs. The two-part Retreat will be on **Saturdays, November 7 and December 5, from 9am to 2pm.**

- Do you want to grow your leadership skills, whether at church or in other areas of your life?
- Have you been in leadership without enough guidance?
- Do you want to start something new at church?
- Do you want to learn how to spread the word at Concord UU and beyond?
- Do you know how to access resources like money, space, and staff support?
- Do you want to expand the volunteer pool for your program?
- Would improving your communication and listening skills help at church, or in your personal or family life?

We'll provide a continental breakfast and lunch. Childcare will be available.

Whether you're a current leader, an aspiring leader, or just curious, please come, enjoy the companionship of other change-makers, and expand your leadership potential.

To sign up go to: uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/leadretreat

To protect our congregants from scams, we do not publish personal contact info in this newsletter. You can look them up in the print church directory, in the Breeze online directory, or email office@concorduu.org to get their contact info. If you would like a Breeze account to look people up, email breeze@concorduu.org.



Everybody's Birthday Social Time with Trivia Sunday, November 1 @ 11:15 am

Please join us to wish you, and everyone else, a Happy Birthday! Fellowship Hall will be set up with tables, each representing one or two months of the year. You will be invited to sit with others who share the same birthday month as you to mingle and enjoy decorating and eating cupcakes together.

We will also have our 2nd Annual Trivia Competition! Celebrate your birthday and test your knowledge with new friends. We will have prizes for the first and last place teams!

Come be celebrated, and celebrate one another. Bring your favorite cake topping to share!

If you would like to help with supplying cupcakes or frosting, please reach out to Amelia!
amelia@concorduu.org



All-Church Fall Cleanup Sunday, November 1

Come one - come all!

Our all-church fall clean-up is just around the corner, on November 1st, with the foul-weather date of the 8th. Take part in this family activity to prepare our grounds for the long winter - ready for spring. All are welcome, young and old. We have "jobs" for everyone, and a light lunch will be provided. (Bring work gloves and any familiar tools from home.)



Games & Chocolates Halloween Party Friday, November 6 at 6:30 pm

Submitted by Bianca Rivera-Berry

Keep the sweet treats coming at our belated Games and Chocolates Halloween party! Don a costume and feel free to share in festive (or the traditional) games!

Songs for the Spirit: Saturday, November 7 5 pm to 6 pm

Submitted by Elm Tree Sheys

Join us in the UU chapel for Songs for the Spirit, an hour of singing, reflection, and connection. Come lend your voice, listen, and share in the comfort of music together. No singing experience is needed—all are welcome!

Acoustic instruments welcome!

[Click here for the Songs for the Spirit Spotify Song List](#)

(Print readers - contact Elm for the link. You can look her up in Breeze or email office@concorduu.org to get her contact info.)



Tree Honoring
during Second Hour
October 11, 2026



Mystery Match Reveal Party Nov 14 | 9am to 11am

If you are matched with a mystery friend as part of our Fall 2026 Mystery Match, remember to join us on Saturday, November 14th during Pancakes, Play, and Planting Peace for the Mystery Match Reveal Party!!!

Matches will be revealed and invited to eat pancakes, learn more about one another, and even make friendship bracelets to celebrate this new connection!

Afterwards, all are invited to join the youth group for a fall work day over at Lewis Farms from 11:00am - 1:00pm.

200 Year Anniversary Planning

Interested in helping to imagine and plan our 200 year anniversary celebration?

Brainstormed ideas so far have been organized into six focus areas:

- Commemorating for Future UUs
- Theatrical & Artistic/Music Ideas
- Impact on the Community
- Acknowledging Our Roots
- Launching the Next 200
- Sharing Our Joy

Sign up to get involved by adding your name to our [Anniversary Planning Sign-up Sheet](#).

(Print readers: email office@concorduu.org to get access to this sign up form.)



Dedication of a bench in memory of Loren Hill, September 19, 2026.



Outreach Phone-a-thon

Our annual phone-a-thon is a unique opportunity to make a connection with a church leader. The Operations Leadership Team, Board of Trustees, and Pastoral Care Associates will try to call each and every Member and Friend just to say Hi! There is no agenda to the call - they aren't asking for your opinions about church, and they aren't asking for money. Whether you attend church every week, or are feeling disconnected, whether you are having a fabulous year or are burdened by health or financial troubles...this call is just to ensure you know that you are a cherished part of our community. This year the phone-a-thon happens on November 18 and 19, though some of the callers might call on other days. When you see an unknown number on your caller ID or you get an unexpected email, please open your heart to a connection that can be so hard to find in our divided and isolating world.

Feedback and Ideas Forum

Tuesday, November 17 at 6pm

Each year we set aside at least one focused opportunity for you to share your feedback, ideas, hopes, suggestions, kudos, or concerns with the minister and staff. Again, this year we're combining it with Tuesday's Welcome Table on November 17. Come for the weekly vegan meal at 6pm, and bring your thoughts to share.

Right: Alice White, Bobbie Herron, and Martha Mae Emerson prepare the Chain of Connection for the October 4 Engagement Fair.



MY
HUMANITY IS
BOUND UP
IN YOURS,
FOR WE CAN
ONLY BE
HUMAN
TOGETHER.

– KAY KGAGUDI SELOANE
(UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY)



No Country for Mothers

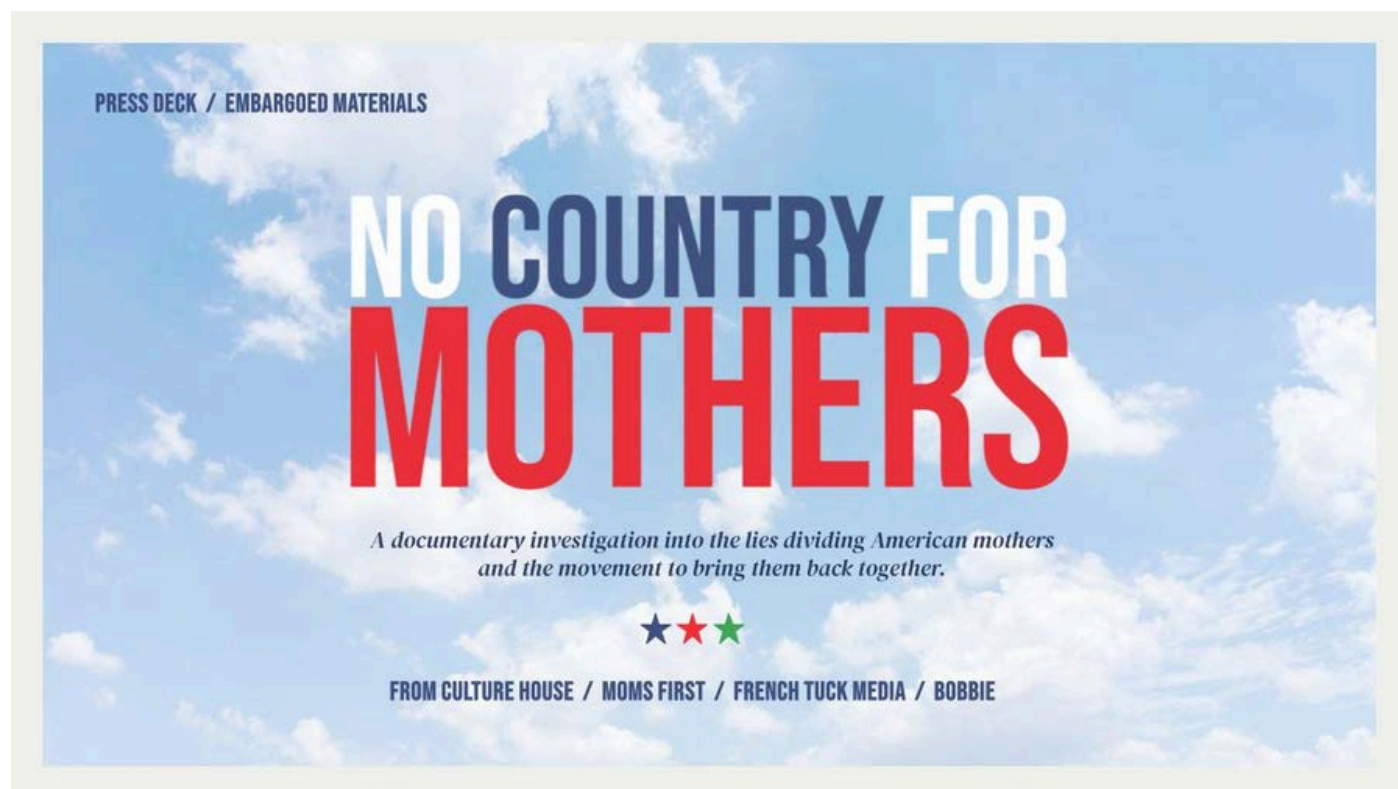
Free Moving Screening | Wed, November 18 | 6 pm to 8:30 pm

Submitted by Bianca Rivera-Berry

Join us for a free community screening of No Country for Mothers, a thought-provoking documentary exploring the challenges of motherhood in America, from childcare and paid leave to the need for stronger community support. Through shared experiences across political and cultural divides, the film invites us to consider how we can build a community that better supports mothers, caregivers, and families.

Free and open to the public, including complimentary childcare. All are welcome!

A community conversation will follow the screening. If you need to leave earlier for little ones, we understand! The film itself is only 1 hour and 18 minutes long. Please register at www.mobilize.us/momsfirst/event/1063246





Thanksgiving Dinner with your Church Family Saturday, November 21

Please join us for our annual Thanksgiving gathering with your chosen family! Social hour begins at 5:30 PM, followed by a sit-down dinner at 6:30.

This is one of our biggest social events of the year! We'll provide the turkey and gravy. YOU provide the side dishes and desserts! Do you have a secret family recipe for sweet potatoes? Do you make the BEST chocolate pecan pie? Do you hate to cook but would be happy to support a local bakery by buying a delicious dessert? Can you set the tables, wash the dishes, or clean the linens?

Buy your dinner ticket, and let us know what you can bring or how you can help at uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/Thanksgiving2026. You can also buy tickets in person after the worship service starting November 1st.

The suggested price to cover costs is \$10 for adults, \$3 per child. We welcome all, regardless of ability to pay.



Our Food & Fellowship Targeted Appeal is not over yet!

Do you want to show your gratitude for the many ways that food brings us together in community? Thanksgiving is the perfect time to make a special donation to ensure events like our Thanksgiving dinner, Tuesday's Welcome Table, and Community Lunches are available for everyone, regardless of their financial situation. If you appreciate these delicious opportunities for connection, give now at concorduu.org/targeted-appeal or mail a check with "targeted appeal" in the memo line.



Honor Samhain Sunday, November 1 | 7pm

Join the Concord UU Earth Centered Spirituality Group for Samhain, the final harvest of the year, a time for gathering, remembering, and shifting. During this sacred time, the veil between the worlds is thin, allowing us to honor our ancestors, connect with the abundant support of the season, and explore our inner spirit.

We'll be honoring our ancestors of various forms and taking a meditative journey to work with them. Please bring a silver coin (a dime or quarter will do) for the gatekeeper. We invite you to bring a memento of a dearly departed for the ancestors' altar (you will be taking it back). We will make a blessing and offer healing for us and our ancestors.

To Parents: This can be a rather intense service, dealing with the departed and journeying to the underworld, and is one of the few that children may not be able to handle well.

Elder Circle with Lunch Second Fridays at 10:30 am

Gather on Friday, November 13 for this monthly opportunity to reflect and check in as we age together. Facilitated by Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger.



Laughter Yoga 1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 5pm

submitted by Betsy Kennedy

Come, come whoever you are, to Laughter Yoga on Tuesday November 3 and 17. Bring your big thankful appetite for laughter on the 17! I am continuing with the same schedule, first and third Tuesdays at 5pm in the chapel. But wait! There's more!! I am now retired, so I am open to suggestions for another day/time. Come learn how to incorporate more healing laughter and Yoga breathing exercises to your day.

HO HO HA HA HA! Very good!! Very good!
YAY!



Spanish Conversation Group | 3rd Sundays at 11:30

Did you have some Spanish classes or speaking experience in the past? Would you like to hear and speak it again? A small group of UUs gets together on the third Sundays during Second Hour to practice their Spanish skills. November's conversation will be about "Thanksgiving or holiday traditions". All are welcome.

Christmas Elves Needed

If you'd like to make the church look festive for the holidays, please be in touch with Lea Smith, lea@concorduu.org. We have plenty of decor in need of elves to set it up (and put it away after the holidays.) You would have complete freedom to do as much or as little as you like, at any time that is convenient for you.

Start thinking about the Auction!

Our Annual Silent Auction will be Feb 21 to March 7 culminating with the Live Auction on March 7. Start thinking about what you'd like to donate: a home-cooked meal for 8 church friends, a weekend at your vacation condo, one dessert per month for a year, a few hours of gardening or handyman services. This year the auction will include a 50/50 raffle!

Chris & Linda's theme this year was an Irish Pub meal. Everything from scratch from pretzels with beer cheese to cottage pies to Irish Bread Pudding!

We are thankful for their generosity of spirit and community year after year!

--Christy & Peter Bartlett





November Special Events

Bold, colored events are perfect for families and kids!

Nov 1 | Sun | Haunted House by the Youth Group, for the Young Explorers @ 10:15 am

Everybody's Birthday Social Time with Trivia @ 11:15 am

All-Church Fall Grounds Clean-up (Rain Date Nov 8)

Samhain - Earth Centered Spirituality Group @ 7 pm

Nov 6 | Fri | Games & Chocolate Halloween Party

Nov 7 | Sat | Connect, Grow, and Transform: Retreat on Leadership from 9 am to 2 pm

Nov 13 | Fri | Youth Group Overnight @ 7pm

Nov 14 | Sat | Mystery Match Reveal Party at Pancakes Play and Planting Peace @ 9 am

Nov 17 | Tues | Feedback & Ideas Forum during Tuesday's Welcome Table @ 6 pm

Nov 18 | Wed | No Country for Mothers Film Screening @ 6pm

Nov 18 & 19 | Outreach Phone-a-Thon

Nov 21 | Sat | Thanksgiving Dinner @ 6:30 pm (Social Hour at 5:30 pm)

Nov 22 | Sun | Exploring Membership: Making a Home at Concord UU #3 @ 1 pm

Nov 26 & 27 | Office is Closed for Thanksgiving



*Scenes from
2025 UU
Thanksgiving
Dinner*



2026-27 Recurring Events

Concord UU offers many opportunities for connection beyond Sunday mornings. Check out some of the activities below. **Bold, colored events are perfect for families and kids!**

Special Worship Services

Taize at Concord UU - every 1st Sunday @ 7pm, October through April

UU Worship at Havenwood - every 4th Thursday @ 1pm, Sept through May (not in Nov or Dec)

Earth Centered Spirituality Rituals - on or near solstices, equinoxes, and cross-quarter days

Contemplative Events

Daily Silent Morning Meditation - Daily @ 7am Zoom Only

Thursday Morning Meditation Group - Thursdays @ 7am Zoom Only non-church link

UU Yoga - 1st, 3rd and 5th Mondays @ 6:30pm

Mindfulness Practice Group - 2nd and 4th Mondays @ 6:30pm

Food, Fellowship, & Faith Events

Tuesday's Welcome Table - Tuesdays @ 6pm

Games and Chocolate - 1st Fridays @ 6:30pm

Art & Appetizers - 2nd Fridays @ 6pm

Pancakes, Play & Planting Peace - 2nd Saturdays @ 9am

Knitting Group - 1st Saturdays @ 10am

Family Covenant Group - 3rd Fridays @ 6pm (please contact organizers before attending)

Youth Group - 1st, 2nd and 3rd Fridays @ 7pm (please contact Michael before attending)

Elder Circles of Healing & Wholeness - 2nd Fridays @ 10:30am, October through May

Covenant Groups - monthly small group ministry (open enrollment in January)

Senior Singles Group weekly and monthly events - see their biweekly email schedule

Musical Events

Choir Rehearsal - Thursdays, 7pm to 8:30pm

Choir Warm Up - Sundays when choir is singing @ 9am

Drum Circle - 3rd Sundays @ 2pm

Blue Moon Music House - 2nd Tuesdays @ 7pm

Songs for the Spirit - 1st Saturdays @ 5pm

Outreach Events

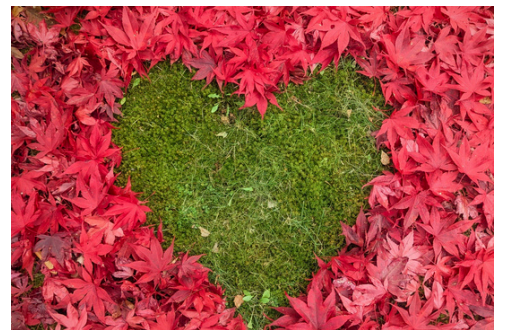
Friendly Kitchen prep and serve day - 1st Wednesdays @ 3pm

Healing & Helping Events

Support Group for People with Parkinson's and their Care

Partners - 1st Tuesdays @ 10am

Laughter Yoga - 1st & 3rd Tuesdays @ 5 pm





Parish Notes Deadline

Nov. issue: November 15

Submit to parishnotes@concorduu.org by 2pm on the day of the deadline.

Do you create art, poetry, or prose that says something about our church or your faith? Send it to parishnotes@concorduu.org.

Officers

Custodian of Investments | Jack Wakelin
Financial Secretaries | Lorraine Ellis, Ann West

Moderator | John Tobin
Clerk | Ann Hoey

Board of Trustees

Chair | Susi Nord
Vice-Chair | Larry Davis
Secretary | Beeler Lile-Sexton
Bank Signatory | Steve Elgert
Anna Morrison
Anne Meyers
One vacancy

Staff

Senior Minister & Choir Director

Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger
603-715-7557 (cell) michael@concorduu.org

Director of Finance and Operations

Lea Smith
603-224-0291 ext 3#
lea@concorduu.org

Church Administrator

Becky Bosse
603-224-0291 ext 1#
becky@concorduu.org

Music Ministry Coordinator

Heather Maconaghy
heather@concorduu.org

Family Engagement Coordinator

Amelia Borgus
amelia@concorduu.org

Custodian/Facility Manager | Joe Bonavita

Children's Program Assistants

Bayshay Bruss, Riley Carr & Chloe Testa

Board of Trustees: Highlights from October meeting

submitted by Beeler Lile-Sexton, Board Secretary

- The BOT is sorry to see Arthoen Wolf go, but we are excited to have appointed Larry Davis as the new Vice Chair.
- The BOT continued its monitoring work by reviewing the executive limitations monitoring reports.
- The BOT planned the board auction dinner with the theme of "Flavors of Fall".

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

