

The Free Congregation of Sauk County  
A Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

## Free Thought Forum

March 16, 2025

# Setting a New Paradigm for Land Care

Guest Speaker Ann Calhoun  
Driftless Area Resilience Manager  
The Nature Conservancy

Ann will share an overview of The Nature Conservancy's work in Sauk County over the past 50+ years, and will take us on a brief journey into the forests of the Baraboo Hills to highlight a few current and ongoing land stewardship projects, along with some interesting research being conducted to help monitor and understand the effects of oak woodland restoration over time – specifically on bird and insect communities. From learnings and perspectives gained through experiences in these projects, Ann will conclude the presentation sharing some reflections for how we might approach caring for and sustaining biodiversity harbored in these special places we love into an uncertain future, balancing the reality of land use pressures and changing climate.

Welcome and Announcements	Fritz Parks
Speaker introduction	Annette Kuhlmann
Presentation	Ann Calhoun
Congregational Dialogue:	All

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[www.freecongregation.org](http://www.freecongregation.org)

## A Little About Us,

This congregation began as the Freie Gemeinde (The Free Congregation) in 1852. Its founders—most of whom came to the United States from the German states and principalities after the failed liberal revolutions of the 1840s—were seeking freedom to practice their beliefs, express their thoughts, and search for the truth without interference from government and church. Park Hall, still known locally as Freethinkers Hall, was constructed in 1884, designed by Sauk City born architect Alfred Clas.

Of the many Free Congregations established in America by free-thinking German immigrants in the 19th century, most did not survive the First World War and the pervasive anti-German prejudice that accompanied it. Only a dozen or so Free Congregations survived World War II. In 1955, faced with declining numbers and an aging membership, our congregation affiliated with the American Unitarian Association, a movement for liberal religious thought and practice. In 1961 the Unitarian Association and the Universalist Denomination merged, and we took on the name that we bear today: The Free Congregation of Sauk County—a Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Our values and the diversity of our heritage are reflected in the programs and services that we hold at Park Hall. The 2nd and 4th Sunday programs generally follow a UU order of service. These include reflections by our Speaker, a visiting UU minister, or other guest. The first Sunday of the month we hold a roundtable Spiritual Reflection Hour on a variety of topics. The Third Sunday is our Free Thought Forum, in which a guest presenter engages an historical, cultural, philosophical, or social issue of special significance to this free religious community. Child care is provided every Sunday.

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## Upcoming Sunday Programs

Date	Program	Speaker	Topic
Mar 23	U.U. Program	Rob Brink	When It's OK to Quit
Mar 30	5th Sunday	All invited	Work Day
April 6	Spiritual Roundtable	All attending	



We are proud to support our LGBTQ members and friends.