



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

August 1, 2024

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton  
In-Person and On Zoom



### **August 4**

*You Shall Appoint Judges and Law Givers*

We will consider, without delving into politics, what justice really means in today's America.

-Led by Rabbi David Horowitz

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

Focus Collection: Seeds of Literacy

### **August 11**

*In Flux*

Both wanted, and unwanted changes are part of our human experience here on planet Earth. How do we stay grounded during times of change and transformation? As we change/transform ourselves, do the ways we ground ourselves change?

-Led by anistasia birosh

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

### **August 18**

*Question Box Revisited*

During July's "Question Box Sunday" we celebrated questions and curiosity by giving you the opportunity to submit questions for our minister, Rev. Ali, to respond to. Come this Sunday for part two, when Rev. Ali will tackle questions from you that she wasn't able to get to in July's service.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

### **August 25**

*Agape: This is the Way*

The focus will be on defining "agape" which is a Greek word for love which has at its essence good will, benevolence, and an act of will.

-Led by Brian Taylor, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Brecksville

Worship Associates: Kirk Jusko & Mike Gold

# The Forum

## Message from your Minister

Beloveds,

As many of you know, our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations has voted to officially update our by-laws in order to articulate our shared UU Values. We've talked about these values a lot, but I want to make sure you have a copy of the statements of values and covenant as they are so beautifully written, so I share them with you here. I invite us to sit with them – perhaps one value at a time. Study them. Reflect and pray on them. Learn them by heart. Wrestle with them. Talk about them with each other. Carry them in our pockets like a compass. Let them guide us and then see where they take us.

### **Values and Covenant**

As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant, congregation-to-congregation and through our Association, to support and assist one another in our ministries. We draw from our heritages of freedom, reason, hope, and courage, building on the foundation of love.

**Love** is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love.

Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:

**Interdependence.** We honor the interdependent web of all existence. With reverence for the great web of life and with humility, we acknowledge our place in it.

We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation. We will create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice. We will work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

**Pluralism.** We celebrate that we are all sacred beings, diverse in culture, experience, and theology.

We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning. We embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

**Justice.** We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all thrive.

We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression. We support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.

**Transformation.** We adapt to the changing world.

We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically. Openness to change is fundamental to our Unitarian and Universalist heritages, never complete and never perfect.

**Generosity.** We cultivate a spirit of gratitude and hope.

We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources. Our generosity connects us to one another in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

**Equity.** We declare that every person is inherently worthy and has the right to flourish with dignity, love, and compassion.

We covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities

May we carry these values with us in who we are and all we do.

With love and gratitude,  
Ali

# The Forum

## **Focus Collection for August: Seeds of Literacy**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

The August Focus Collection is going to benefit a non-profit Agency we have not used before but was suggested by Adrienne Ellis. Once I looked up Seeds of Literacy, I could tell it was a great match for living up to our UU Principals: particularly our 1st promoting the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the 8th using our actions to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions...

Seeds of Literacy's Mission Statement is to provide free, personalized education to empower adults to thrive in our community. Trained Tutors provide basic education and GED prep to adults in the Cleveland area. The goal is to break a basic root of poverty: illiteracy. Donations are used as follows: to purchase paper, Algebra packets, Customized Curriculums, High School Equivalency practice test, laptops and software. Please think of donating to this organization to help achieve the goal to help adults to continue to grow and learn. Cash or checks can be put in the collection basket clearly marked "August Focus Collection," or you may use your Vanco Account. All cash donations the first Sunday of the month are designated for the Focus Collection. Thank you for your generosity.

## **Urban Hope Outreach Update**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

WOW....were we ever busy this past Sunday! Debby Gorencic, Nancy & Denny Peltola, Mick Stentz and I never stopped from 2:45 until 5pm.

It was hot and humid in the Storefront, even with 5 fans turned up to high. Guests arrived hungry at 3 pm sharp, and they never stopped coming until 5. We were out of salad and hard boiled eggs by 3:30 but fortunately had plenty of Fried chicken, some oranges and crackers and chips to take us through the afternoon although we were not providing any second helpings. Angela's gourmet cupcakes were the perfect treat. Mick said he was the most popular person there as he was handing them out. Denny has dishpan hands as he never got a break from washing! We were a little concerned that the high temperatures might affect tempers to rise, but the guests remained positively cheerful and were very grateful. Thank you for the contributions to help us feed this deserving crowd. Our next visit is not until Sunday October 13 The Storefront is closed the month of August and September is a short month. We are out of everything including cash, and so we would like to start receiving donations starting in September. Thanks so much for contributing. It is a great experience to be a part of Urban Hope.

## **New Book for the Wednesday Book Group**

by Sue Davis, Coordinator

On Wednesday, July 17th, the book group started a new book, "Prequel, An American Fight Against Fascism" by Rachel Maddox. If you have never attended book group before and want to check it out, now is a great time to do so. We meet on zoom every Wednesday afternoon from 1 until 3. We socialize the first half hour and then take turns reading aloud and discussing what we have read. I will warn people we spend a lot of time discussing, so we take the book rather slowly. Our new book traces the fight to preserve American democracy back to World War II. If interested, please contact Keith Matthews or me. Or just join us on the church zoom link any Wednesday.

# The Forum



## Would you like to submit something to The Forum?

- ◆ Write as if the reader is new to SWUU
- ◆ Include first and last names, and area codes
- ◆ Include a contact person, phone number, and email if possible
- ◆ Include the city in which the event is located
- ◆ Avoid or explain insider terms and abbreviations
- ◆ Explain Who, What, Where, and When (How and Why are often helpful as well.)
- ◆ Encourage volunteering and participation gently.

Submission guidelines apply to articles and Order of Service announcements. Order of Service announcements may be sent to [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org) by Thursday morning of each week.

Articles are edited minimally, only to ensure that these guidelines are met.

The Forum is published on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month. Submissions should be sent to [forum@swuu.org](mailto:forum@swuu.org) by the dates listed on our website calendar.

The Board of Trustees meets once per month. Check the calendar on our website for the specific date. Everyone is welcome to attend. Minutes from the meetings will be available for members upon request to the Board Secretary.

### SWUU on the Web

For general information about SWUU, services, sermons, committees and the most up-to-date calendar of events, visit our website at:

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

### Get Connected!

If you would like to receive The Forum via email, or if you would like to join a newsgroup focused on issues of importance to SWUU, or if you would like to receive our weekly newsblast, e-mail [connect@swuu.org](mailto:connect@swuu.org) and tell us which you want.

### Sermons

If you would like to receive sermons via email or by mail, contact [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org)

### Board Minutes

If you would like to receive the Board Minutes via email, contact [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org), and put "Board Minutes" in the subject line

### Editorial Team

Dan Paxson  
Susan Paxson

# The Forum

## News from the Membership Team

by Susan Paxson

For those who might not know, we welcomed 6 new members to our community in June: Drew and Kristen Campbell, Janet and Steve LaBonne, and Kimberly and Mike Vincent. Our community is growing. We also have two new people who have joined our committee! For those of you who don't know, we are Lydia Avery, Dodi Lettus, Carol Jordan, Sherry Spencer, Kimberly Vincent, and myself. It is always nice to have a couple more people who are looking out for new people and checking in with our members and friends. Are you interested in being more engaged with visitors, friends, and members? You need not join our committee; you can be a greeter! Being a greeter is a way to meet other people in our community, both long time members and newer folks. If this sounds like an opportunity you might consider, then you can come to a greeter training on **Sunday August 11th** before church at 9:30. We will talk about what you would be signing up for, and how we can make sure we are welcoming **all** of our visitors in a way that makes them think they could see themselves as a part of our community. You will also have a chance to talk to the people who are greeters already about greeting. We would love to have some of our families sign up to greet. A team of a parent and a child could be really welcoming to a new family coming through our doors, and we can learn a lot from children about being welcoming to all. If you are not available to attend the training, but would like to be a greeter, please let me know so one of us can meet at another time which works for you.

Another one of the membership team's activities is sending out letters of recognition to people on their anniversaries of when they joined. Carol Jordan came up with this idea, and she has taken it on singlehandedly. All I have to do is sign the special letters. Maybe you have gotten one of these. **Bruce Melville** joined our church 30 years ago, and when he got his letter, he decided to reflect on his participation in our community over the years. It was really interesting to us, so we decided to share it with you. Enjoy....

### **My Three Decades as part of the SWUUC Community**

by Bruce Melville

As I think back over all those years, more and more memories come to mind. Yes, back in 1994 it was just showing up on Sunday morning in that band room at the former Strongsville Middle School. I had not been a church member anywhere for 30 years. For a while, I just sat in the back row with Jim Turner (remember that former Cleveland Press writer?) He was simply a listener: never sang. But for me,... one thing led to another, as it often does. I'm relating all of what follows as an example of all the ways a SWUUC member can go beyond just showing up.

Soon I was part of our once-substantial choir. We sang Christmas carols at Transitional Housing (then in that converted Travelodge on West 25th). Once I was part of the SWUUC crew which did that one-room-a-summer renovation at THI. Susan and I (and others?) tutored there for a while.

Mary Grigolia was trying to establish a UU congregation in the city. That showed promise for a short time, then became a double storefront near St. Ignatius which we called Urban Hope. That wasn't sustainable either. Fortunately we found once-a-month space at the Catholic Worker's storefront further up Lorain. I m/c'd Urban Hope's annual fund-raisers four times, once at SWUUC. I served on the Urban Hope Steering Committee for quite while. Fortunately, Jan Wehn and Debby Gorencic took my place.

In 2001, the UUA 40th GA was held in Cleveland. I attended at least the opening evening, sat with John Purcell up in the balcony of Public Auditorium. That was the most UUs I'd ever experienced in one place! I can't recall if it was related to GA, but Bill Sinkford addressed a gym full of UUs around that time. Where was that?

*(Continued on page 6)*

# The Forum

*(Continued from page 5)*

Several of us participated in one of those pop-up musical events, bursting into the Hallelujah Chorus at the West Side Market. I think that was organized by West Shore UU. Our choir came together on other occasions, once with other area UU choirs at Trinity Cathedral and another time Ellen got us to join the First UCC of Berea choir in their final service before their building became part of BW's conservatory. I now play the tuba regularly in that same space as part of the New Horizons Band program.

I had just retired from CMHA when I found myself as SWUUC's rep on the Board of InterAct Cleveland (full name: Greater Cleveland Interfaith Partners in Action, I think). Six challenging years followed. Administering the food pantry (part of the Greater Cleveland Hunger Network) operating out of Emanuel Episcopal drained IAC's resources, diminished in the aftermath of 9/11. I oversaw its relocation and renovation. IAC was also then the primary organizer of the Homeless Stand-Down.

Some of us attended Bill Avery's Racial Harmony discussion group at First UU several time. We were present at the Common Threads program at First UU at least once. Over the years I held each of SWUUC's elected offices. I assisted Sue Szabo for a time and was volunteer bookkeeper later. I was part of our amazing Capital Campaign. I've been a Worship Associate, served on the Social Concerns committee, which changed its name to Social Justice. To avoid stumbling through the dance-and-kick routine at our annual Canvass Kick-Offs, I served as narrator a few times.

And then there were the SWUU Movers. I was one of them, and they moved me once. In 2014 Leslie and I teamed up to get training for and conduct the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program, collaborating with East Shore UU. I accompanied other SWUU members in at least two big downtown rallies. I was part of the Parma protest in June 2020 and spoke at a rally in Broadview Heights a few years ago.

And how many memorial services have we attended to honor the memory of SWUUs no longer with us? SWUUC is a very special community and has been such a big part of my life.

*Editor's Note: Bruce was also our 9th SWUU Board President, somewhere around 2000.*

## **It's Social Soda Time w/UUs Together at SWUU**

by Don Bryant and Valerie Hura, UU's together

This year we are hosting the annual "UUs Together Gathering". The 2022 UUs Together gathering was hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland and the 2023 gathering by West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church, so it is our turn to show off our church to members of the other congregations. Let's expand our UU network as Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church invites our sister and fellow UUs across Greater Cleveland to be in community and share old fashioned ice cream floats. The program will consist of introductions, a brief overview of SWUU, a tour of our small but mighty church and of course, the yummy sharing of our creative ice cream floats. Please bring your favorite ice cream/soda to share. We will also have a brief tribute to Joseph Schafer, co-founder of UUs Together who passed away earlier this year.

This year's gathering will be Sunday, August 18th at 1:00 here at SWUU from 1-3 pm. Let us know if you are able to join us. There will be a RSVP list on the table in the sanctuary lobby or email Valerie or Don to sign up.

# The Forum

## Sharing and Caring

**Monica MacDonald** is recovering from gall bladder surgery. And her husband, **Joe**, had a fall and broke his ankle and shin bones. He is currently being treated at Metro-Main Campus. Good thoughts would be appreciated for their family.

**Nancy Matsko** would appreciate support and healing love sent her way as she continues to heal from the effects of covid, including fatigue.

*\*Please send your joys and sorrows to [forum@swuu.org](mailto:forum@swuu.org) for inclusion in the next issue.*

**Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church  
6320 Royalton Road  
North Royalton, Ohio 44133**



We are happy to mail The Forum to anyone who would like to receive it.