



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

January 1, 2025

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



January 5

Turning of the Year

Join us for our annual service where we honor the events and transitions from the past year in our community and look ahead to the coming year together.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Kirk Jusko

Focus Collection: Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity

January 12

Fact and Fiction

Storytelling is an ancient art and a key part of the human experience. What can this practice of storytelling teach us about truth?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

January 19

Hidden Stories

What stories do we tell about ourselves and others without realizing it? How do these hidden stories shape our lives? How might uncovering these stories become a joyful act of liberation and possibility?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

January 26

TBA

Check our website or the SWUU News later in the month for details

-Led by Faten Odeh, Council on Arab Islamic Relations

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

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Message from your Minister

Story

Dear Ones,

Our worship theme for the month of January is “story.” January is such a rich month for digging into this theme together, if you ask me. Not only does the cold of the winter invite us inside to snuggle up with a good book, but January is also a time of threshold – of looking at the past and toward the future at the same time. What stories have shaped our past and brought us to this moment? What story is ready to be written in front of us?

I feel so grateful for this piece written by my UU colleague, Rev. Scott Tayler, that invites us to reflect on the beauty of our stories and the ways they move and unfold together.

“Wooed into this World ”

by Rev. Scott Tayler

Who dreamed you into being?

What stories sat in their heart

as they imagined what you would become?

Who helped you imagine your story?

Who helped you see your place in the story of the world?

*And what maybe matters the most: who helped you understand
that you could be the author of your own unfolding?*

All of which is a way of asking, “Who listened?”

Who listened until you could hear yourself speak,

until you trusted the voice that is your own?

*And now that you know what it is like to have the tale of yourself be heard into being,
how might you midwife the story of another into existence?*

You know the kinds of stories I’m talking about:

Those kept in cramped spaces of silence

for fear of how hard and narrow this world of ours can be.

Who needs your listening so their story can be set free?

Whose story needs held in your heart

so it knows it is worth entering into the world?

We say it is about listening,

but really it’s about love.

It is through affection that our stories are born.

They are wooed into this world.

Never forget that.

Nor this: It is through loving the stories of others

and the stories of our own

that we discover

they love us back.

So be it. Amen

May we woo each other’s stories into this world, beloveds. And in doing so, may we know the larger story we are all a part of.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

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MID-YEAR STATE-OF-THE-CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 19th, 11:45 a.m.
(right after the service)
Don't miss it!!

Focus Collection for January: Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity by Nancy Peltola , Social Justice Committee

SWUU has proudly supported the work of Habitat during January for many years. During that time, Habitat has added new and exciting services to their many offerings. The volunteers build new homes, renovate and upgrade efficiency of existing homes, and provide Critical Home Repair. Most recently, they found a creative way to accomplish their goals within the timelines set by Habitat and its supporters: Modular Homes!

These homes are being built elsewhere in Ohio while the foundations are being prepared in the Cleveland area neighborhoods. They have full basements and the ability to add solar power later. Each affordable home is 3-bed, 2-bath, 1350 sq. ft., and is ENERGY STAR certified. How's that for preparing for Cleveland's future?! Families partner with Habitat to contribute service hours by working with volunteers, while taking classes in finance, home maintenance, and budgeting to prepare for home ownership. If you feel called to support the work of Greater Cleveland Habitat, contributions can be made by check (made out to SWUU with Habitat on the memo line) or use the Vanco Give Plus app. Your generosity is always appreciated.

Urban Hope Update by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

On Sunday, December 8, a lovely meal was served to our many guests at the Urban Hope storefront by Jan Wehn, Laurie from the Shaker Hts. UU Church, along with Denny Peltola and me. We served turkey and rice casserole made by Jan, three huge green salads (some guests said the food was "restaurant quality"), clementines from the Paxsons, grapes, granola bars, cheese crackers, trail mix sleeves, small bags of chips, and Angela, as always, provided her spectacular desserts. This month she made tiny mint cheesecakes, gingerbread squares, and a toffee-chocolate-cracker creation. Some guests were heard saying she should open a bakery! Jan brought in much appreciated underwear, socks, and gloves to give to guests in need.

We had a calm, rewarding experience with many people expressing love and gratitude. Please consider joining us or contributing to this outreach on January 12, 2025 from 3-5PM.

Help Needed in the Java Department by Sherry Spencer, Hospitality Committee

With the new year, we have a slew of open slots to help prepare and/or cleanup coffee for Fellowship hour following church services!

Members of the hospitality committee already sign up on a regular basis and most certainly appreciate the help of our volunteers to date!

Could we use a few more helpers? Of course...to keep that service flowing we could use a few more! A most appreciative crowd awaits that fresh brewed coffee on Sunday mornings!

The sign up sheet can be found next to the coffee cups downstairs in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you in advance for signing up to help out.

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RJAM Donates Lena Horne Stamp on Behalf of SWUU by Adrienne Ellis, Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (RJAM)

Just in time for the holidays, our Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (RJAM) donated a large, framed stamp poster of African American actress, Lena Horne, to the



North Royalton Post Office to include in their Hollywood Forever Stamps series. Don Bryant, a retired USPS employee, noticed this Fall that the North Royalton Post Office only had white actors displayed. He brought the small but impactful idea to RJAM and Rev Ali to see if we would support donating a stamp of a person of color, and we did. The members of RJAM have raised the funds, to add to the remainder of the window decal collection, and four of us delivered it on December 23rd. In this small way, we hope to uplift Black identities and promote representation of people of color.

Christmas Caroling at the Danbury by Susan Paxson

On the Saturday before Christmas, a group of SWUU members and friends from 7 yrs on up brought joy to some residents at the Danbury Assisted Living Community in Brunswick. The event was coordinated by Carol Thombs and me. Carol suggested the location since Valerie's mom, Holly Hura, and our SWUU friend, Diane Rasey both live there. It is always nice to go where you have a connection. Ellen played the keyboard while the rest of us sang about 15 carols, and a lot of the residents also sang along with us. Frank, is even in our photo! Sherry and her granddaughter are not in the picture, but they came as well. The staff and residents were very appreciative and I hope to do this again next year!



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 by Thursday morning of each week.

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

The Forum is published on the 1st day of each month. Submissions should be sent to 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

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 and tell us which you want.

Sermons

If you would like to receive sermons via email or by mail, contact office@swuu.org

Board Minutes

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

Editorial Team

Dan Paxson
Susan Paxson

The Forum

SWUU 2025 SERVICE AUCTION



**Annual Service Auction
Saturday, February 22, 2025
Starting at 4:00 pm**

The Service Auction is our biggest fundraiser part of the year. You can expect fun activities for the whole family, including kids! If you have attended the auction before, please spread the word and help new people understand how it works.

As we start the planning process:

- We will be collecting donations for the auction. If you've received a gift that isn't quite right for you or have other gently used items you'd like to contribute, please reach out to Lois Veraguth.
- We will also be bringing back the dessert dance! If you'd like to contribute a cake or other baked goods for this activity, please contact Susan Paxson.

Stay tuned for other details soon to come!

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You're invited
to a

Baby Shower for Rev. Ali & Justin

Sunday, February 2, 2025

All are welcome to join us downstairs after the service for a potluck shower. Recommended contributions are slider-sized sandwiches, sides, fruit, or handheld desserts. Cake & beverages will be provided by the Hospitality Committee. Look for the sign-up sheet in the lobby.



To create the baby's first library, we encourage everyone to bring their favorite children's book, unwrapped and inscribed with a personal message for the baby.

Those who wish may contribute to a larger congregational gift from Ali & Justin's registry. Please contact Gayle Doucette, Candy Poissant or Sharron Gold to make a contribution.

Hope to see you all there!

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Sharing and Caring

Please keep **Valerie Hura's** mom, **Holly Hura**, in your thoughts and prayers. Her best friend, Marlene McConnell of 60+ years passed away rather unexpectedly and it was impossible for them to get there to say goodbye.

**Please send your joys and sorrows to 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.