
The Forum

A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

February 1, 2025

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



February 2

How to be a Good Person

Come this Sunday as we wrestle with what it means to be a good person. Is it possible that our fervent desire to be "good" can sometimes get in the way of love's calling to us?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Ken Ellis

Focus Collection: Journey Center For Safety and Healing

February 9

Our Black History

Unitarian Universalism is a faith that fights for justice in the public square and believes in the worth and dignity of all. We believe in the value of diversity and welcome all. And yet our denomination, despite all of our efforts is still predominantly white. Why don't we see more diversity in our congregations? Rev. Walter Clark talks about the "Black Empowerment Controversary" during the 1969 General Assembly and the lessons it has to teach us about how we approach welcome and diversity.

-Led by Rev. Walter Clark, Minister, Universalist Fellowship of Wayne County

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

February 16

The "Why" of Inclusion

Why is inclusivity something to strive for in our communities? Come this Sunday as we explore this question that may be bigger than we realize!

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Eli Butler

February 23

TBA

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

-Led by SWUU Worship Associates Deb Celinski and Sarajane Willson

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

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Message from your Minister

Story

Dear Ones,

I cannot stop thinking about Bishop Mariann Budde and her inaugural sermon at Washington National Cathedral in January. As you've likely heard by now, at the end of the sermon, she pleaded directly with America's new president. She pleaded for mercy for those who are frightened by the harms he and his administration have promised, specifically naming the fear among LGBTQ children and immigrant communities. Her direct plea was a simple and heartfelt call to compassion. Coming from an Episcopal Bishop, it seems so very clear how her words were so deeply grounded in her Jesus-following tradition. Which makes the backlash she has received from critics who also proudly claim the banner of Christianity feel so baffling.

It has me reflecting once again on the vitally important role of religious communities in the context of states and empires – a role that can often get lost within conversations around the separation of church and state or within societal rules that deem politics as impolite conversation. I'm so grateful for the words of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr on this matter, in this excerpt from his sermon "A Knock at Midnight." If you have a chance, I encourage you to read or listen to the sermon in its entirety – so much of his work still speaks to our context today.

The church must be reminded once again that it is not to be the master or the servant of the state, but the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state,—never its tool. As long as the church is a tool of the state it will be unable to provide even a modicum of bread for men at midnight. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal and cease to be an echo of the status-quo it will be relegated to an irrelevant social club with no moral or spiritual authority. If the church does not participate actively in the struggle for peace, economic and racial justice, it will forfeit the loyalty of millions and cause men everywhere to know that it is an institution whose will is atrophied. But if the church will free itself from the shackles of a deadening status-quo, and, recovering its great historic mission, will proceed to speak and act fearlessly and insistently on the questions of justice and peace, it will enkindle the imagination of mankind. It will fire the souls of men and imbue them with a glowing and ardent love for truth, justice and peace.

Beloveds, as we navigate this anxious and unsettling time in our country, may we as a congregation hold close these words of Dr. King. May we as Unitarian Universalists embrace that role of "conscience of the state" with a bold and fierce love. May we prioritize care for each other and ourselves amid the never-ending news feeds that can so easily paralyze us with exhaustion and burnout and overwhelm. May we ground ourselves in community and connectedness, wrapping the most vulnerable among us in protection. May we nourish our souls as we listen for what concrete actions love calls us to during this time. May we remember that we are not alone in this. You are not alone.

May it be so.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

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Focus Collection for February: Journey Center for Safety and Healing by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

One of our reoccurring requests for our February Focus Offering is the *Journey Center For Safety and Healing*. It is impossible to explain all of their good deeds in a short article. February is *Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month*. They supply a "*TDVAM*" tool kit for groups with information about healthy relationships, dating violence and supporting anyone impacted by an unhealthy relationship. Support groups are offered all year round and frequently for anyone who has been impacted by an abusive relationship.

If anyone is involved with the Cleveland Marathon on May 17-18, 2025, Journey Center is a Charity Partner. When registering use the discount code **JCS20**. The Center receives a portion of the registration fee. Please pass the word to runners!

Please check out the website Journeyneo.org for complete information on the Center. Donations can be made through Vanco, cash or check. Please designate February Focus Offering. Thank you for the continued support. All of our Focus Offerings represent our UU values and missions.

Urban Hope Update by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Nancy and Denny Peltola, Mick and I had a delightful afternoon on a Frigid January Day. Nancy made comfort food consisting of a Chicken Stuffing Casserole, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy. It was a hit. Ann made her famous Corn Soufflé and Angela treated everyone to her gourmet cupcakes...Key Lime and Oreo! There was a tossed salad, oranges, grapes, and plenty of take aways. It is safe to say that no one left hungry. Thanks to your generous donations, we had plenty of T shirts, underwear, warm socks, gloves and hats. As usual, our guests were very appreciative, and it was a very calm afternoon I am thankful to say that I have 4 volunteers for Sunday the 9th! All of your donations -- financial, food and clothing meet the needs of many deserving people. Thank you so much!

Multigenerational Game Night by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

If you like to play games, and also want a chance to meet our young people, please join us on Friday Feb 7th at 6:30 for a multigenerational game night. Anyone is welcome to join us. Bring your favorite game and a snack to share and meet at the church for some informal fun! For more information please email Jessica Tad-y at jessicatady@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

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RJAM Updates

by Steve LaBonne, Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (RJAM)

RJAM aims to provide the congregation with opportunities for learning and action around our 8th Principle commitment to antiracism. The results of our recent survey of the congregation indicated that watching and discussing films about racism would be a popular option. Thus after the service on Sunday, Jan. 26, we hosted a showing of the acclaimed James Baldwin documentary "I Am Not Your Negro". We were very encouraged by the attendance and by the thoughtful discussion afterward. We will be considering other possible films to show in the future, and we welcome suggestions from all of you.

In other news, we're famous! That means RJAM's Lena Horne portrait donation to the North Royalton Post Office made the Royalton Recorder newspaper. Below is a scan of the actual article.

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Church donates portrait to NR Post Office

The North Royalton Post Office and the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church (SWUU) worked together to enhance the postal lobby display with a printed portrait of Lena Horne of the Black Heritage Postage Stamp Series. The portrait was donated by SWUU's Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (RJAM). The Horne portrait joins Lucille Ball, Humphrey Bogart, Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne, and stars of the Hollywood Legends Series in the North Royalton Post Office lobby.



From left: SWUU RJAM Members, Adrienne Ellis, Susan Paxson, Steve LaBonne, Don Bryant, and Postmaster Reggie Croom, Manager N.R Post Office

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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

Do you need to contact someone on the SWUU Staff?

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SWUU 2025 SERVICE AUCTION



SWUU's Annual Service Auction
Saturday, February 22, 2025
In-Person Event Starts at 4:00 pm

Join us for the Fill Your Bowl with LUUV service auction to celebrate your love and support for SWUU!

Some important dates:

- **Saturday, February 1** Congregants can start to enter their offerings on our auction website as we have done for the past few years. You will receive directions via SWUUList and SWUU News.
- **Saturday, February 22 at 4:00 pm** In person auction. Those unable to attend may appoint a proxy.
- **Monday, February 24** Auction opens virtually for one week. At this time, you can sign up for unsold services and bid on biddable items.

During the event, we will be hosting a raffle with baskets and other fun items. If you have gently used items you'd like to contribute, please reach out to Lois Veraguth at loisveraguth@hotmail.com or 440-390-8063 to discuss details. Lois would like to receive raffle items by February 9.

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Why Donate and Participate?

The Service Auction is our biggest Fundraiser event of the year. It's a wonderful way to make new friends and strengthen current relationships. You can expect a great potluck dinner, and fun activities for the whole family including kids! PLEASE, if you have attended the auction in the past, spread the word and help new people understand how it works. Not only will this be fun; it's also a critical fundraiser for our congregation. Watch for further details coming soon via SWUUList and other channels.

How it Works

SWUU raises money while providing social opportunities. Members and friends decide on an event they would like to organize and host, or a service they can provide. These events include hikes, dinners, game nights, backyard BBQs, concerts or singalongs at your home or at church, computer service, movie nights, airport deliveries, cleaning, baked goods, repairs, haircuts, teaching a skill, artwork or framed photos created by the donor. At the auction, people sign up for or bid on these services/items. All money raised goes to the church. No cash changes hands at the auction itself. Once the auction is over, you receive an invoice for your purchases.

What you can do right now

Before the website even opens, you can think about what you might offer as a service or item.

If you are new to our church

Please feel free to contact any of the following volunteers who are working on this event to learn how the service auction works. As an added benefit, you might get to know someone better. Here's who you might call or e-mail: receive raffle items by February 9.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Danelle Baker-Miller</i> | <i>bakemill@brightdsl.net</i> | <i>440-864-1554</i> |
| <i>Steve Doucette</i> | <i>stephenbdoucette@gmail.com</i> | <i>216-798-8820</i> |
| <i>Lydia Avery</i> | <i>lydiacavery@outlook.com</i> | <i>440-221-6474</i> |
| <i>Sarajane Willson</i> | <i>sassyjw@gmail.com</i> | <i>440-503-6363</i> |
| <i>Sharron Abbey</i> | <i>abbeygold@ameritech.com</i> | <i>440-391-8688</i> |
| <i>Susan Paxson</i> | <i>susan.w.paxson@gmail.com</i> | <i>216-543-9387</i> |
| <i>Janet LaBonne</i> | <i>janet.griffing@gmail.com</i> | <i>330-416-0914</i> |
| <i>Candy Poissant</i> | <i>candy.poissant@aol.com</i> | <i>440-570-8329</i> |

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AUCTION POTLUCK UPDATE THE BOWLS ARE BACK!

Remember the SWUUber Bowl potluck at our Service Auction potluck last year? **We're bringing it back!** If you've eaten at Chipotle or Panera Bread, you're familiar with the concept. It is a bowl filled with a combination of distinct, diverse and different ingredients. Our version, however, is a little different...you get to create it yourself. When you build your own bowl, you choose from a variety of grains, greens, protein and toppings to create your own unique **Bowl of LUUV**.



This is a BYOB event. Bring your own Bowl! We'll have silverware and some bowls available at the dinner, but we strongly encourage you to bring your own bowl. Additionally, the Hospitality Committee will provide beverages and some garnishes and condiments. There will be sign-up lists in the area outside of the sanctuary, where you can sign up for the ingredients you would like to bring. At the auction event itself, you'll have the opportunity to make a \$10 donation (\$20 max for families) to help support our event. The Hospitality Committee would also appreciate your support in setting up and cleaning up after this event! Please consider signing up to help!

**Need a ride to the service auction on February 22?
Willing to give others a ride to the service auction?**

Consider the new SWUUber ride service!



We know that driving to evening events poses challenges for some of our members and friends, so the Stewardship Committee has launched this new carpooling opportunity for those who might not otherwise be able to participate in this fun event.

Please contact **Deb Celinski, SWUUber Reservation Agent**, to place your request for a ride or to offer rides to others!

Deb can be reached at dacelinski@gmail.com or (216) 925-8722.

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Sharing and Caring

Please send love and healing thoughts to **Nancy Matsko** as she heals from fractured wrist after a fall.

Cynthia Mondia reports that she is still in the hospital but she is getting better, and she hopes to be home soon. If you would like to send a card, here is the address:

Metrohealth Medical Center
Cynthia Mondia(patient)
2500 Metrohealth Drive
Cleveland, OH 44109

** 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.