



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

April 1, 2018

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton

April 1

Celebration of Life

Come celebrate Easter in community as we explore how we as Unitarian Universalists might experience this day's meaning. Our theme of Transformation will help us harvest seeds of hope and rebirth after loss with the ancient story of resurrection.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

Focus Collection: Berea Community Learning Farm



April 8

The Hero's Journey

One way to understand transformation is to see it as the journey we are all on to grow our spirits, to deeply engage our humanity, to learn to live fully. Join us as we explore the nature of such deep change.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Bruce Melville

April 15

Putting God Second

Unitarian Universalism has had a complex and evolving relationship with the idea of God. While both sides of our tradition began with very clear conceptions of God, Unitarian Universalists embrace a wide range of theological beliefs. Today we will explore our theological diversity and pay special attention to the connection between belief and action, deeds and creeds, in Unitarian Universalism and other religious traditions.

-Led by Rev. Tim Temerson, Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron

Worship Associate: Leslie Van Kuren

April 22

The Future is Now

Please join the SWUU youth worship team as they lead our service on this day. The ideas and faith they will share with the congregation will no doubt show us again how our faith is being passed on to the future.

-Led by the youth-aged members of our SWUU community

April 29

The Seventh Principle: Saving the Web

Have you heard of Juliana v. The United States? 21 kids are in the process of suing the government for not doing enough to stop climate change so that they and future generations can *have* a future. As a follow-up to Earth Day, we look at that case, how we are all connected to each other and the earth, why it matters, and what we can do.

-Led by Worship Team members Adrienne Ellis, Mark Jackson, and Mike Gold

The Forum

Message from your Minister

Transformation

“We come to religious community with a deep yearning for more meaning, more connection. We come in search of a path and fellow pilgrims to accompany us. We come with a holy discontent and the desire for transformation.”

- Kirk Copeland

Transformation is a great theme, perfectly placed for April and Spring. The time when we most witness the changes in the earth around us, when we are so aware of the powers of life and regeneration. When you look at your life, when have you experienced times of change? When have you really made a shift in a deep and profound way? Would you call it transformation? What supported that, what caused it? What came next? These are good questions to be asking ourselves.

April is also the month of our Canvass, the time when we pledge our financial support to the congregation, which allows us to create a budget for the year ahead. A time when we focus on the practice of generosity which is one of the most powerful ways to grow our spirits, to transform ourselves and our world. For there is little that brings our growing edges into focus like talking about money! When we ask the crucial questions, does the way we spend our money follow our values? Are we being intentional in deciding what we do with our hard earned resources? Are they going to support what matters most to us? I encourage you to lovingly ask yourself these questions.

One important thing to remember as we explore transformation is that we are not trying to become someone else. Rather, we are recognizing something sacred already within us. Real, lasting change comes from self-love, self-acceptance. From believing in the goodness inherent in ourselves and each other; from expecting that goodness to sprout and grow.

If you are experiencing big change in your life, it can help to have a listening ear. For change is not always easy, it can bring anxiety and challenges.

My door and my heart is open, let's spend some time together.

Know that you are loved,

Rev. Kristen

minister@swuu.org

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Focus Collection for April: Berea Community Learning Farm by Mary Brooks, Social Justice Committee

This month we are sponsoring Berea Community Learning Farm, a volunteer run organization helping people grow their own food and donating thousands of pounds of organic vegetables to those in need. Key goals are: to educate families about nutrition, agriculture, and growing organic food; to educate children about plant biology and health; and to assist low-income residents in establishing home gardens for better health and nutrition. The farm rents garden plots to individuals and families. Amenities include: composted soil, drip irrigation, access to basic tools for gardening, an orientation program, and starter plants.

A few highlights of the farm's accomplishments in 2017 include:

- Expanded number of plot holders to 47 gardeners at the farm
- Worked with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Native Guides
- Partnered with Baldwin Wallace University to provide fresh greens for their Campus Kitchen project
- Donated 2,200 pounds of fresh vegetables to help alleviate hunger and improve nutrition for local families in need.

Visitors, volunteers, and growers from many area communities are welcome at BCLF located at former Riveredge Elementary School in Berea off N. Rocky River Drive. Please contribute generously to Berea Community Learning Farm.

Urban Hope News by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Our last visit to Urban Hope was Sunday, March 11. Debby, Nancy, Denny, Scott and I took 2 big casseroles of Macaroni and Cheese, fruit, veggie trays, nuts, cheese & crackers, applesauce and cupcakes. We can guarantee that there wasn't a drop of food left! Many guests were in attendance, and it was a mellow day. Everything was appreciated. There were a couple of young boys, and we had crayons and paper for them. April is a big month for Urban Hope. We have healthy snacks on the 8th and the semi-annual dinner on the 29th. Sign up sheets will be in the lobby. We will not be visiting in May, and so we hope you can contribute twice in April. Nancy, Denny, Mary and Tom are going on the 8th, and we will happy to have other volunteers for the 29th! Thanks in advance for your generosity.

SWUU Directory of Members and Friends by Susan Paxson

Did you know that we have an electronic directory with everyone's contact info? It even has pictures so you know who is who (a great resource for you if you are relatively new). If you have been coming for a while, but are not in our directory, we would like to give you an opportunity to be in it! This also means you will get a copy of the new directory when it comes out which may take a couple of months.

All you need to do is send the information and it will be done. Remember to send a photo and all relevant cell phone numbers and emails. If you are at all concerned about security, this is only distributed to SWUU members and friends. Please contact me if you have questions.

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April is Pledge Drive Month!

by Lydia Avery, Finance Committee

Just like spring flowers, we are asked to nurture and grow our generosity each year to support our mission and spiritual home.

This month, we ask ourselves what is important about our church and faith and decide how best to keep SouthWest a healthy, growing congregation. Our theme for this year's pledge drive is "**GENEROSITY... Poised for Growth.**"

SWUU is one of the most important things in my life. First, because it is a place where I feel spiritually healed and find peace. Second, because I love listening and learning from our Reverend Kristen as well as our guest speakers. And, third, because I feel truly welcome and loved here just for being me. I don't even want to think about not having SWUU or not helping keep it vital, effective, and present in the community.

Our goals as your Finance Committee, along with being good stewards of your money, are to build a strong base and a growing legacy. The best way to do that is to pay our employees fairly and increase our Legacy Fund (rainy day fund). We also need to hire a part time bookkeeper. To reach these and other goals, we need to increase the overall budget by about 5%. Our current budget is 87% pledges with the rest coming from fundraising and building rentals.

Please mark your Calendars for: **Saturday, April 28 at 5:00** for a **SWUU Celebration of Generosity Potluck** where we will celebrate 30 years of SWUU and talk about generosity and how we live our mission. That will also be the night we turn in our pledge cards so that we can celebrate the beginning of our next 30 years!

SWUU Service Auction is a Smashing Success!

by Susan Paxson, Fundraising Committee

The Tres de Marzo Service Auction on Saturday, March 3rd was a fun night of food, fellowship and FUNdraising! The fundraising team along with the hospitality committee worked well together to plan a great evening which was exceptionally well attended! Thanks so much to all of you for making it a success - those who donated raffle baskets, cakes and desserts, and especially all of your auction items. I would like to extend a very special thank you to some of our newer folks who submitted auction events and items. Even if you did not donate items, we appreciate your attending and buying items. Our total is ...(drum role please)... over \$8000.00! That's a new record. Thanks again!!

Now for the business end of the auction. You should have already received your bill via email which tells you what you owe for your dinner, tickets, cash and carry and the rest of your items. Please let me know if there is an error on your bill. You do not need to give your money to me; just put it in an envelope with your name and Service Auction written on it. If you write a check, it need not be in an envelope but should clearly say that it is for the auction in the memo line. Remember that you have until the end of the church year to pay, but we always appreciate it sooner if possible. Now it is time for you all to enjoy those events for which you signed up. Have fun!!

The Forum



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

Receive The Forum Electronically!

If you would like to receive The Forum via email, contact

forum@swuu.org

Join the SWUUList

If you would like to join a newsgroup focused on those issues of importance to SWUU, check out the SWUUList. Go to www.SWUU.org and click on SWUUList for details.

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

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 in the calendar of each issue.

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

The Forum

Board Happenings

by Dan Paxson, SWUU Board President

Money. There, I said it. Now please don't bolt to the next article before hearing (or reading, I suppose) me out. Many of us are uncomfortable talking about money in relationship to our church community. But talk about it, we must. For we would not exist, let alone thrive, without a healthy operating budget.

So, first things first. Go back two pages and really read Lydia's message about our pledge drive (I know you avoided it because it had 'Pledge' in the title). It's well-written, it gives essential details, and it presents a personal and powerful take on the why of pledging. Did you do read it? Good! Here is a bit more detail which I will divvy up into two sections that I'll call Nuts and Bolts, and My Personal View. Please read the former. Please feel free to skip the latter (unless other people's stories interest you).

Nuts and Bolts

The 5% increase in our operating budget that we are shooting for will put us just about in the middle in terms of salaries for minister and staff that are recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association for a church of our size and location. Given the outstanding job that our minister and staff do in creating, serving, and building our community, it seems fair to say that getting to the middle is the least we can do.

We are an exceedingly generous congregation in terms of average pledge per member or friend. However, when you look at the details, they show that more than 20% of our pledge income comes from just 4% of pledgers. This is a precarious situation which can (and has in the past) lead to trouble if circumstances should cause us to lose one of these super-pledgers. It flies in the face of our goal of financial stability, and it keeps us from thinking on a long term basis. As such, the preferred scenario for this year would be to see the bulk of our overall 5% increase come from the other 96% of our pledgers 'going big' and increasing by 6%, or even 7%. On the one hand this may seem like a stretch. On the other hand, this year has felt to me like one of exceptionally high energy, high hopes, and big dreams. I think we can do this!

Finally, we have a reserve of funds that we've been slowly tapping for several years to balance the budget when our pledged funds don't match our planned spending. A really successful pledge drive would allow us to instead put those funds toward other important things, like a professional bookkeeper. And these would in turn enable us to become all that we dream of being as a religious community.

My Personal View

The calculus behind my pledge is complex. I'm not even sure I understand it. What I do understand is that it's not transactional. Questions like "What do I get for my money?" or "What are you doing with my money?" are not part of the equation. I think of SWUU as a community with whom I have a deep, and utterly essential relationship. It is a relationship from which a fair amount of the meaning in my life is derived. And like any deep relationship, I can't put a monetary value on it's worth. It's priceless!

Still, as I said earlier, I know SWUU can't exist without funding. And so it comes down to asking myself what I can offer that will keep our great community vital and will balance with the other meaningful things in my life.

I realize that thinking like this comes from a place of privilege. Not everyone has disposable income. Not everyone has the luxury of being able to choose where their money goes. I am grateful for this unearned gift. And I'm utterly convinced that one of the best ways to say thank you is to put it to work in this wonderful place of love.

My hope in the end, is that all of you will choose to pledge what feels right for where you are in life, and in your relationship with SWUU.

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Adopt-a-Highway By Susan Paxson

SWUU has been participating in the Adopt-a-Highway program since 2009. Each year, we commit to cleaning up trash on the I-71 ramp next to Pearl Road four times, two times in the fall and twice in the spring. We meet at the Islander Apartments parking lot at 9:00 AM and spend an hour or so cleaning up the various areas around the ramp. In return for our efforts, we have a sign with our name on it! You should look for it the next time you are exiting I-71 onto Pearl Road.

This is a great opportunity to live out our 7th principle of taking care of the earth, while also getting some exercise, and getting to know some other members and friends! Garbage bags and safety vests are provided; boots and work gloves are recommended. Does this sound like something you might enjoy? We would love to have you join us on our first clean-up of the year on Saturday, April 21st. Remember that many hands make light work. If you have never done this before, you would need to come at 8:45 the first time you join us, for a brief safety training.

Our fearless coordinator, Shirley Kowalski has had to step down because of health reasons. We thank her for her efforts and wish her well. For now, I will be coordinating until someone else volunteers. If you are interested in participating with us please email me.

The Lucky SWUU Game Winner by Sherry Spencer

The Lucky SWUU game was a part of our Service Auction this year. Maybe you bought a number that night or Sunday at church. The game winning number was drawn at coffee hour on Sunday, March 18th. Erin Spencer (wife of Shane) had chosen the lucky # 24 and won the \$100.00 bill. Totally happy and surprised with her luck, both she and Shane, when hearing the news, simultaneously responded, "Donate it back to the church!"

So our Lucky SWUU Game brought in almost \$400.00, raising our record breaking auction total to around \$8200.00. Thank you to ALL who played along.

Is the New SWUU for You? by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

We are glad you've found SWUU! You are welcome here. Would you like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and this church? Does SWUU feel like a place where you belong? Are you curious about getting more involved? Are you wondering about what is involved in becoming a member?

Two times a year, we offer a two session class to give you an opportunity to meet with other friends along with a few of our long term members. We will share what brought us to SWUU, and talk about the highlights of Unitarian Universalist history and our spiritual way of life.

We are inviting everyone to attend both classes. The first session will be held on Wednesday, April 18th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm and the second on Sunday, April 22nd, from 12:00 to 1:30pm. If you would like to take part, but are unable to make both, then call or email me.

This class is offered by our Membership Committee and will be facilitated by Rev. Kristen. It is one of the steps toward membership for those considering joining, but it is also just a way of finding out more about us. If you are unable to attend this spring, this series will be offered again in the fall.

If you would like to attend the classes, please email me or call. Also, please let us know if you would need child care. We hope to see you there!

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SWUU Summer Camp Out: Oak Openings Preserve Saturday, July 14 by Ken Ellis

This summer's outdoor adventure will be at Oak Openings Park. This preserve is an oak opening savanna ecosystem. There are woodlands, creeks, wetlands, meadows, and vegetated dunes. The Nature Conservancy listed this as one of the "Last Great Places on Earth." There are prickly pear cactus, wild lupine, sand cherry, and wild orchids. This 5,000 acre park has 50 miles of hiking trails. It is a birders paradise with bluebirds, indigo buntings, whippoorwills, and lark sparrows.

Oak Openings is about 2 hours drive from North Royalton, 122 miles. We have two adjacent group camps that will accommodate up to 10 tents. There is running water and flush toilets, but no showers. The camp sites have picnic tables and a fire ring, and fire wood is provided.

Dogs are allowed to attend; however, there is a limit of only 4 dogs and we will need to register the dogs in advance with breed/ sex/ and up to date vaccinations. Make sure you have this information in order if you plan to bring your four-legged friends.

For those who would like to attend the outdoor activities, but not camp in a tent, there are some cabins still available. You will need to reserve these yourself. The cabins sleep up to 5 people. Call 419-407-9710 for reservations. I advise doing this NOW! if you are interested; cabins go fast.

This annual event is a wonderful way to connect with nature and get to know fellow adventurous congregants in a primitive camp setting. Campers are required to bring their own tent, sleeping bag, food, air mattress, cooking utensils, etc. The fee will be \$60, divided by campers, so if we get 20 campers, it will be only \$3 each.

We have been doing the SWUU Camp Out for about 30 years. It is a great way for children to experience nature. Days are usually spent hiking, and in the evening, we gather around the camp fire and relax. Camp is a good place to walk alone or read in the shade. S'mores usually happen if children attend. We (not including me; I'm not allowed) have been known to sing around the camp fire. The good spirits and laughter of campers make it a pleasant experience.

If you enjoy falling asleep in the fresh air with the sounds of katydids and tree crickets and awaking with the sound of songbirds and the scent of coffee wafting through the morning mist, there is a sign-up sheet at church. See Ken Ellis for details.

POWER

a poem by Cynthia T. Mondia

Darkness surrounds you
So you cannot see
Kindness eludes you
Because you are angry

Unmovable you become
Ideas in your head
To them you succumb
A hard heart you sport well
Unhappiness and hate is what you sell
Your taunting of a superpower
Might blow us all to hell.

The walls you steadily build are made of evil
Evil begets anger
Anger begets fear
Fear begets Life's Hate.

And just in time a woman
stands to tell her truth
and another and then another
In the dawn of truth, there is light

Then solidarity gives blinding light
Born of this lovely thing called Truth
So we stand on truth the solid rock of all ages.
Giving birth to life's Love again
Power to women of all ages

Change is here!!



April 2018

To contact the minister, Rev. Kristen Rohm, or make an appointment to see her, call or email: 440 877-1686, or minister@swuu.org

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p>1 Celebration of Life -Rev. Kristen Rohm</p> <p>5:30 PM Youth Workshop</p>	<p>2 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation</p>	<p>3 7:00 PM Evening Spiritual Book Group</p>	<p>4 9:30 AM Wed. Coffee 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 The Hero's Journey -Rev. Kristen Rohm</p> <p>12:00 PM Race and Resilience Conversations (Centering)</p>	<p>9 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation</p>	<p>10 7:00 PM Board meeting</p>	<p>11 1:00-3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group</p>	<p>12 10:00 AM Membership Team 7:00 PM Earth Alli-</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Putting God Second -Rev. Tim Temerson</p> <p>12:30 PM OWL Meeting</p>	<p>16 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation</p>	<p>17 7:00 PM Evening Spiritual Book Group 7:00 PM Worship Team meeting</p>	<p>18 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group 7:30 PM Covenant Group 7:30 PM New UU</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 2:00 PM Women's Group</p>	<p>21 9:00 AM Adopt-a-Highway 10:00 AM Covenant Group</p>
<p>22 The Future is Now -SWUU Youth</p> <p>12:00 PM New UU part 2 4:00 Urban Hope Meal</p>	<p>23 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation</p>	<p>24 7:00-8:30 PM Criminal Justice-GCC Action @ St. John AME Church</p>	<p>25 11:30 AM SWUU Walk at West Creek Reservation 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group</p>	<p>26 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal FORUM DEADLINE</p>	<p>27 7:00 PM Men's Group</p>	<p>28 9:00 AM—OWL Meeting 6:00 PM Pot Luck Dinner 7:00 PM Youth</p>
<p>29 The Seventh Principle: Saving the Web -Adrienne Ellis, Mark Jackson, and Mike Gold</p> <p>12:00 PM Memory Support Group</p>	<p>30</p>					

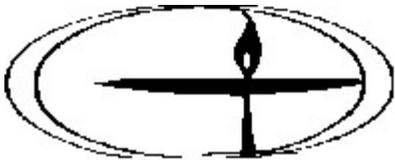
For calendar adds/changes/deletes notify us at susan@paxson.us, or call 440-888-3615.

All events are handicap accessible unless indicated by a **

Week day meetings are held at the church unless otherwise noted.

The Forum

**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.