



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

March 1, 2019



**Sunday Services**  
**10:30 AM**  
**6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton**

## March 3

*Our Truth: Tales of Companionship*

Worship will be led by youth Joy Haugland, Sean Jackson, Jaret Gold, and Simi Jackson. Their thoughts on partners, friends, family, and pets will speak to the truth of our human need for companionship.

-Led by SWUU's Mighty Youth

Worship Associate: Rev. Kristen Rohm

Focus Collection: Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio



## March 10

*Search for Truth and Meaning*

Our Unitarian Universalist faith places a strong value on seeking truth. We also enjoy a generous understanding of what religious truth might mean. Come share this exploration of the values and beliefs that ground us.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

## March 17

*Truth and Consequences*

We all agree that telling the truth is the right thing to do. But is it ever permissible to withhold the truth, or shade the truth, or outright lie? What are the circumstances when this would be acceptable? What are the limitations on doing so and what are the ethical considerations that must be taken into account?

-Led by Rabbi Edward Sukol, The Shul, Cleveland's Open Synagogue

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

## March 24

*The Power of Words*

We learn about and practice honesty, truth telling and little white lies throughout our lives. This morning we look at the Eastern guidelines of Ahimsa, Satya and Asteya to help craft a peaceful, ethical and authentic life.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Mark Jackson

## March 31

*Saying Goodbye Well*

This sermon topic, purchased by Deb Celinski at our Auction is timely and important for us all to consider. Come and let us explore what we need to do a good job with saying goodbye to each other.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Leslie VanKuren

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# The Forum

## Message from your Minister

### ***Truth***

*“When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of Truth and Love have always won. There have been tyrants, and for a time, they can seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall. Think of it—always.”*

- Mahatma Gandhi

Our theme for March is Truth. In these times when the very idea of truth has come under attack, it is important to explore the complexity of truth. One aspect is what are the facts of our natural world, things like gravity. Another is what are our deepest values, truths that give meaning to our lives. Another is our personal truth telling rather than engaging in white lies or large falsehoods.

Truth also has meaning in a religious context and has sometimes been used to hurt or exclude. One of the things I like most about Unitarian Universalism is our recognition of many truths over one Truth. We acknowledge a multiplicity of ways to experience the Mystery and many ways to find meaning. This month, you might ask yourself, what are the deepest truths that I live by?

One of the important qualities of truth for me is being authentic, showing up with what is real for each of us on any given day. One of the great gifts of our faith is that we are loved and accepted just as we are, each and every one of us. We don't need to wait till we get it all together, till we've worked through all our baggage to be loved and accepted. We already are. We can simply get on with the business of being human. Imperfectly. Messily. Beautifully. With joy and ease in being together. When we show up, really show up, in the truth of who we are, magic happens. Community happens. The Holy is present.

One of our current truths is that we are in a time of transition in our beloved community. Saying good-bye is never easy and it is an important life skill we will be practicing in the weeks and months ahead. I thank you all for your honest, heart felt and gracious response to my leaving. If you are struggling with this, reach out and we will find some time together. My calendar and my heart are open to you. Deb Celinski bought the ‘Sermon’ at our Service Auction and she has requested ‘Saying Goodbye Well’ which I will offer at the end of the month. I invite you to consider what you need and what you have to offer in the weeks ahead.

Let us remember to lean into each other, into this beloved community that means so much to us as we do this good, this hard, work – together.

Come and let us inhabit our truths this month.

Know that you are loved,  
Rev. Kristen  
805-452-9797  
[minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org)

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# The Forum

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## **Focus Collection for March: Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio**

by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

The March Focus Collection will support Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio, a vital organization working for healthy bodies and healthy communities by maintaining 19 health center locations in communities throughout North, East and Central Ohio. The vision of Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio is "to create a world where sexual and reproductive rights are basic human rights, where access to health care does not depend upon who you are, and where every woman has the opportunity to choose her own path to a healthy and meaningful life". Their mission is "to protect, promote, and provide empowered health care for generations of women, men and families across Ohio".

Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio is an affiliate of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Services are designed to help women, men and young people make lifelong informed choices that focus on responsibility, prevention of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and reproductive cancers. As a leading source of medically accurate sexuality education and information, they believe that sexuality education should begin at home, continue throughout life and be fact based. The Social Justice Committee appreciates your generosity in helping us maintain these important services in our community.

## **Urban Hope News**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

WOW...did Debby, Nancy, Denny and I feed a lot of hungry people the frigid Sunday of February 10. How lucky we were to have leftover Chinese food from the auction! It was a huge hit and devoured within the first half hour. We also had meatball sandwiches, veggie tray, fresh fruit, cheese, chips, granola bars, applesauce, cookies and cupcakes. No one left hungry. It is safe to say the crowd felt grateful and satisfied to have enjoyed warmth, camaraderie, and delicious food on a cold Sunday. Our next visit is Sunday March 10 The sign up sheet is in the lobby. Thank you for your continued generosity. We have depleted our stash, and all donations are welcome.

## **Is “New SWUU” for You?**

by Susan Paxson, Membership

For those of you who have been coming for a while and are wondering about getting more involved, we invite you to consider taking the next step on the path to membership. Twice a year, we offer a two session class called ‘New SWUU’ as 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, March 20th 7:00 to 8:30 pm and the second on Sunday, March 24th from 12:00 to 1:30pm. This class 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, the series will be offered again in the fall. If you would like to participate, please email me at [susan@paxson.us](mailto:susan@paxson.us) or call 440-888-3615. Child care will be provided. If you would like to take part, but are unable to make both sessions, then call or email me. We hope to see you there!

# The Forum

## Board Happenings

by Dan Paxson, SWUU Board President

As you all know, Rev. Kristen announced in mid-February that she will be resigning from SWUU, effective May 12. We are all sad about this news, and will need to both fully process it together and say good bye in the coming months. As disruptive as this may feel now however, it is important to remember that transitions are a part of healthy church life. “To everything, there is a season”. We’ve been through this before. We will go through it again. And each time we will grow.

Meanwhile your board has been quite busy doing what all boards must in this situation; namely, considering our options for finding our next minister at SWUU. We have met several times together. We have talked extensively with our Central East Region’s Congregational Life Consultant, Rev. Renee Ruchotzke. She has been immensely helpful, and even came to one of our meetings. We have had discussions with the UUA’s Director of Transitions, Keith Kron. We have even talked with the board president of another, similar sized congregation to us, who has gone through a ministerial transition recently (UU of Youngstown). And of course, we have been poring over all of the information we could find, or that was provided to us. Our goal was to make as informed a decision as possible on what we believe is the best path forward. This is always a challenge for two main reasons. First, because the decision must be made quickly. All of the options are time sensitive and need to commence in the early spring. Second, the environment of ministerial search is an ever changing one. There are variables to consider on which we may have trends, but which are ultimately unpredictable. How many ministerial candidates will there be? How many churches will be in search? How will our region, and a congregation of our size be viewed? The list goes on and on. This is not to say that there is anything wrong with the process. It’s just challenging. I believe that the board met this challenge with a can-do spirit, and with a dedication to our congregation that I found inspiring. I am grateful to be a part of such a team.

And so, after much deliberation, we have unanimously agreed that the right path for SWUU right now is one where we seek a full-time Consulting Minister (aka, a Contract Minister) with an option to call. This is a different path from the interim minister with a full settled minister search that we have followed previously. The board will establish a search committee, but one with a reduced scope, and time frame. They will assemble information on our congregation for prospective ministers to view, and they will conduct interviews and meet with ministers who express an interest in us. We will then extend an offer to the committee’s recommended choice. The established contract will be on a yearly basis, and can be renewed. After several years, if the fit is right, the congregation will vote to call the minister to a settled position.

We view this path as having a number of benefits that help keep us on a positive trajectory. We will have a full-time minister by this fall. The truncated search process is less taxing on precious human and financial resources (a full search can cost \$20,000, and consume all the available time of 7 leaders), yet may well produce a similar pool of interested ministers as a full search. We believe we will receive significant assistance in our search from the Central East Regional staff. The process ultimately gives the congregation more say in the actual call to settled ministry. And finally, this is the path that the UU church of Youngstown followed recently, and they are very pleased with the outcome.

We will provide you with more details on the process in the weeks to come. If you have questions about our decision, please feel free to talk to any board member. **Importantly, Rev. Renee Ruchotzke will be coming to meet with the entire congregation on March 17, after the service.** I would encourage everyone to attend. She knows this process far better than we do, and can explain it well.

Finally, I want to stress that although the Consulting Minister search process is short, it is both critical and substantial. We will be collaborating with our leadership development team to identify candidates very soon. If you are asked to participate, please consider prioritizing it for the spring and summer over your other activities at SWUU. It is that important.

We on the board are looking forward in the coming months to a healthy good-bye for Rev. Kristen, an energetic and successful search for our next minister, and continued growth (in every sense of the word) for our amazing community. We hope you feel the same.

# 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 in the calendar of each issue.

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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.

## Do you need to contact someone on the SWUU Staff?

Rev. Kristen Rohm (Minister)	(440) 390-3567
Dan Paxson (President)	(440) 463-0416
Sarah Barford (Music Director)	
Kathy Villwock (Office Assistant)	(440) 877-1686
Jennifer Papp (Director of Religious Education)	

### 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)

### Receive The Forum Electronically!

If you would like to receive The Forum via email, contact [forum@swuu.org](mailto:forum@swuu.org)

### Join the SWUUList

If you would like to join a newsgroup focused on issues of importance to SWUU, e-mail [connect@swuu.org](mailto:connect@swuu.org) and request to join the SWUUList.

### 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

## Staff Updates

### On a Sad Note

Kathy Villwock, our Office Administrator for the past 6 years let us know in January that the time for her to retire was fast approaching. She will be with us through the month of March. She writes, "I appreciate the wonderful growth opportunities I have been given during my time with SWUU. After 25 years of working for churches, I can truly say that I am awed by SWUU's wonderful, caring, and generous congregants." We will miss her cheerful spirit and 'can do' attitude. The Board has established a hiring team of Rev. Kristen, Lydia Avery and Hallie Davis who began work in February and will hold interviews next week. We will let you know how and when we will celebrate Kathy's time with us and send her on her way to more travel and time to relax with all our good wishes.

### On a Jubilant Note

February 27, 2019

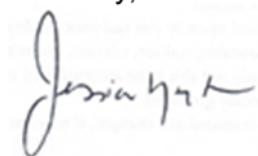
Dear SouthWest UU Church:

On behalf of the UUA Faith Development Office, we're delighted to notify you that Jenni Papp has achieved Renaissance recognition for completing 75 hours of Renaissance training. In addition to a certificate, Jenni will also receive a Renaissance pin to commemorate this milestone.

We hope that this accomplishment will be celebrated by the congregation. I encourage you to place a copy of this letter in Jenni's personnel file and to ensure that Jenni's accomplishment is shared broadly within your congregation and beyond.

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations greatly appreciates the support congregations provide for the continuing education of religious educators. Thank you for your commitment to strong religious education programming and for nurturing Jenni's leadership.

Faithfully,



Jessica York  
Co-Director of Ministries and Faith Development and Faith Development Director  
UUA



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# The Forum

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## **SWUU Auction Sets New All-Time Record**

by Susan Paxson, Fundraising

I was absolutely blown away when we calculated the total for this year's auction. Make sure you are sitting as you read this because it isn't a misprint. We have raised over \$9,900.00 so far. The last record was somewhere around \$8000. The generosity of both time and money is astounding. There was such a variety of creative things offered and lots of you signed up. There were too many volunteers who made the event run smoothly to name them individually, but we hope you know how much we appreciate all of your help!

By this time you should have received your bill. I hope no one is surprised but the amount. I may have made a few errors so please look it over and feel free to email me about discrepancies. We want you to be able to pay your bill in pieces or at a later date. The deadline is the end of the fiscal year which ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>. You can simply put your check in the collection basket clearly marked "Auction". OR if you prefer, you are encouraged to pay online at SecureGive. There have been flyers in the orders of service the last couple of weeks and they are also around at church. Here's a link to the site: <https://app.securegive.com/swuu>. If you need more instructions, please see Lydia, Leslie, or Anastasia.

As fun as the auction was, now is when the REAL FUN begins. You will be contacted by the person whose service you bought especially if the date isn't set yet. For the events, you should get a reminder email sometime before the event. If you are hosting an event with space available, you are welcome to use the SWUUList to advertise this and possibly get some more takers. These events are crucial for new people to be able to connect with us in more intimate groups, but they may be too new to have attended our auction so they might need to be invited! One of the things I love about our auction is that it is not only a successful money-maker; it also serves other purposes like giving us opportunities to connect and serve one another.

THANK YOU EVERYONE!!

## **Storm Damage Update**

by Dan Paxson, Buildings and Grounds

Some of you may have noticed that our church roof and steeple suffered some damage from the high winds we experienced on February 24. I'm happy to report that members of our remarkable community pitched in right away to take care of things. Ted Macosko found a roofing contractor (Thank you Chris Benedict!) who was able to come out on short notice and replace the approximately 20 square feet of shingles that were ripped from the main roof. Bruce Cady sprang to action and filed a claim for the damages with our insurance company. And, we have contacted the contractor who originally did the steeple renovation (Matt Sumutku). He gave us an estimate and approximate schedule for when it will be repaired. Thanks to all who helped. You are awesome troubleshooters!

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# The Forum

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## **Let's Say THANK YOU!**

by Sherry Spencer, Chalice Lighting Ambassador

For what you ask? For the generous \$20K Grant we received last year from the Unitarian Universalist Central Eastern Region Chalice Lighters that afforded us the repaired and renewed steeple that adorns our church building! Of course-upon receiving our grant monies, our formal letters of thanks from SWUU were sent. But there is another way to say thanks:

### **BECOME A CHALICE LIGHTER**

A Central Eastern Region Chalice Lighter is an individual/family who makes a commitment to respond to a call from the UUA Chalice Lighter Program to support congregational projects-like our own steeple repair project. These calls come out three times a year. The suggested commitment is \$20 per call or \$60 per year. However, gifts of any size are welcome!

The month of March will be SWUU's month to commit to this worthwhile program and help brighten flames of our faith throughout our Central Eastern Region. You can be an integral part of helping grow our Unitarian Universalist faith! We hope you will help SWUU say thanks for the sizable grant we were awarded:

### **PAY IT FORWARD!**

Sherry Spencer is SWUU's Chalice Lighter Ambassador and during the month of March, she will be more than happy to answer questions regarding this most worthwhile program. Be sure to look for the trifold presentation board at church. If you want to become a Chalice Lighter right away, follow this link: <https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicelighter/cerclsignup>

If you would like to see how SWUU was featured in the Chalice Lighter Newsletter, along with some of the other worthy causes that were supported by the program in 2018, please follow this link: <https://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/201805spark.pdf>

## **UU Common Read Book Discussion: April 7**

by Ellen Hansen-Ellis, Earth Alliance

Each year, a special committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association selects a book to recommend to all UU's to read together. The 2018-19 Common Read is "Justice on Earth: People of Faith Working at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Environment", edited by Manish Mishra -Marzetti and Jennifer Nordstrom (Skinner House Books, 2018). On Sunday, April 7, after the Sunday service, Rev. Kristen and I will lead a discussion of this book, and we are hoping that you will join us.

Justice on Earth explores the ways in which racial justice, environmental justice, and economic justice are intertwined. People and communities on the margins are invariably those most affected by climate disaster and environmental toxins. The book asks us to recognize that our faith calls us to work for justice for our human kin, for the Earth and for all life. It invites us to look at our current challenges through a variety of different perspectives, offers tools to equip us for sustained engagement, and proposes multiple pathways for follow-up action.

One copy of Justice on Earth is available for loan from the table in SWUU's upstairs lobby; a copy may be purchased at inSpirit: UU Book and Gift Shop for \$18. Please plan to read the book in March, and join us on April 7 after the service to delve into the links between various forms of injustice. The discussion will begin at 12:00; please bring a bag lunch if desired.



# March 2019

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

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3 <u>Our Truth: Tales of Companionship</u> -SWUU Youth	4 I:30 PM Medi- tation	4 6 9:30 AM Wednes- day Coffee	7 1:00 AM Membership	8	9 3:30 PM Wom- en's History	
12:00 PM COA		1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book	7:00 PM Spiritual Book Group @ Hallie's house			
10 <u>Search for Truth &amp; Meaning</u> -Rev. Kristen Rohm	11 I:30 PM Medi- tation	12 7:00 PM Board Mtg	13 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group	14 4:00 PM Social Justice Committee	15 2:00 Women's Group	16
12:00 PM Care Team			7:00 PM Earth Alliance	7:00 PM	SWUU Puzzle and Game	
12:30 PM COA			7:30 PM Cove- nant Group	Spiritual Book Group @ Hallie's house		
3:00 PM Snacks for Urban Hope						
17 <u>Truth and Consequences</u> -Rabbi Sukol	18 I:30 PM Medi- tation	19 7:00 PM Wor- ship Team	20 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group	21 I:30 PM Covenant Group	22 FORUM DEADLINE	23 7:00 PM Youth Group
12:00 PM Ministerial Search Info. w/ CER Congregational Life Consultant, Rev. Renee Ruchotzke			7:00 PM New SWUU #1		7:00 PM Men's Group	
24 <u>The Power of Words</u> -Rev. Kristen Rohm	25 I:30 PM Medi- tation	26	27 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group	28 7:30 PM Choir Rehears- al	29	30
12:00 PM New SWUU #2				1:30 PM Movie and Dis- cussion at Hallie and		
31 <u>Saying Goodbye Well</u> -Rev. Kristen Rohm						
12:00 PM Aging Well						
Week day meetings are held in the church unless otherwise noted.				All events are handicap accessible unless indicated by a **		
				For calendar adds/ changes/deletes/notify us at susan@paxson.us, or call 440-888-3615		

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# The Forum

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## Sharing and Caring

Susan's dad, Charlie West, recently had his first immunotherapy infusion. So far, he has no side-effects. This is the treatment he has chosen. He is feeling great and very positive in all respects!

\* 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.