



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

April 1, 2019

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton

April 7

A House for Hope

Salvation is an important part of our Universalist religious heritage. Let's explore what it meant then and more importantly what it might mean to us today about the power of our shared faith to remind us of our own goodness and generosity.

Join us for UUA Common Read, Earth Justice Discussion following the service.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

Focus Collection: Berea Community Learning Farm



April 14

How to Change the World

There are a lot of problems in the world that need our attention. The trick to creating lasting change is to first know where the world is located. Through this Sunday message, we'll explore "How to Change the World."

-Led by Tom Beck, Member UU Church of Akron, Guest in Your Pulpit Speaker

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

April 21

Celebrating Wholeness

This Easter morning, like the green shoots of spring, we will celebrate the ways we find hope and return to wholeness after the dark of winter and the dark times in our lives. Come celebrate life and all of creation in our unique Unitarian Universalist way.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Mark Jackson

April 28

Who's Saving What and Why?

This morning we explore pieces of the puzzle of salvation from many wisdom sources. Our Unitarian Universalist faith returns us to a place of wholeness, and then calls us forth to save our communities from fear and prejudice and our earth from degradation.

Come and meet Ryan Bergeron, our new Music Director.

-Led by Rev. Kristen Rohm

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

The Forum

Message from your Minister

Salvation

“Salvation is really a state of wholeness, of health. It occurs in this lifetime when we are at peace with ourselves, united with one another and in harmony with nature.”

- Rev. Forest Church

How nice it is to reach April and to be heading into spring. The longer hours of daylight and the first green shoots are here; growth and change are in the air! We are saying good-bye to Kathy Villwock and Sarah Barford and are welcoming Kristen Cimera as our Office Administrator and Ryan Bergeron as our Music Director. We are in the midst of transition and times of transition can feel unsettling. Some of us find them energizing, as the possibility of new ideas and ways of doing things opens up in front of us. Others of us feel sad. Some are a bit overwhelmed by all that needs doing, others by the prospect of tried and true ways changing. Some may have the urge to step back until the dust settles. However you are experiencing transition, let it be OK. And do what you can to stay engaged with your friends here at SWUU. Because the one thing you can all know with certainty is that you matter. Your presence here matters. Your gifts and challenges, what you think, feel, and believe is important and needs to be shared for this congregation to continue to thrive. Let us all remember that we are held by a love that has never broken faith with us and never will. Our shared community makes that love manifest in our weekly life. So come, come, be loved and be made whole.

This is one way to talk of Salvation, which is our theme for the month. Some of us have a negative reaction to the word, based on how it has been presented in our culture. And, it is a big part of our shared history, since the Universalists are named for their theology of universal salvation, their certainty that all of humanity was loved and worthy of being saved by a radically loving god. So as modern day Unitarian Universalists, let us re-define what salvation means to us and bring this term into the present. Wholeness is one way that I like to describe what salvation means to me. And that is the other half of our theme for the month. I invite you to notice, to make notes about what salvation brings up for you, and what it might mean for you now. And then to ask yourself what helps you to be whole.

We are also embracing generosity as we enter our annual pledge cycle, when we ask members and friends to make their financial commitment to the community for the year ahead. This enables us to create a budget to keep all the vital ministries of our congregation thriving. Please be considering how SWUU has been important to you, how it has held you in hard times, helped you deepen your spiritual journey, encouraged you in becoming more compassionate, and engaged you in working for justice to create the world we are longing for.

I have plenty of time to meet with you if that would be helpful in this time of transition. Reach out and we'll get together.

Know that you are loved,
Rev. Kristen

The Forum

Staff Update

We are pleased to announce that we have a new Music Director, Ryan Bergeron, who will start with us on Sunday, April 28th. We will be saying good-bye to Sarah Barford, appreciating her two years with us, on her last Sunday, April 14. On Sunday, April 7 we will have papers for all who would like to write her a note of thanks.

Focus Collection for April: Berea Community Learning Farm

by Mary Brooks, Social Justice Committee

This April we are sponsoring Berea Community Learning Farm, a volunteer run organization helping people grow their own food and donating organic vegetables to those in need. 1600 pounds of veggies were shared with food banks and other local organizations this past growing season. 51 gardeners were supported in growing plots with 1/3 using free plots due to senior status or financial challenges. A goal to install a new gate to the garden was also achieved.

New goals in 2019 include sponsoring a 4H group planning to bring honey bee hives to the farm, planning a fence expansion to include space for more garden plots, utilizing new raised beds built by a local Boy Scout troop, and continuing to help with weed and pest management techniques. Community outreach activities continue with Quarrytown, Grindstone Elementary's Environmental Fair, Berea Arts Fest, Baldwin Wallace University's Wellfest and Berea Library presentations.

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

Urban Hope Updates

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

We had a worthwhile and wonderful visit to Urban Hope on Sunday, March 10. Nancy, Denny, Debby, Jan & Scott took the food and served. We were very lucky to have a group of 8 students from Creighton University in Omaha Nebraska! It is a Jesuit Roman Catholic University, and the students were participating in an alternative spring break and working with different organizations serving needy people in Cleveland. They actually stayed on the 2nd floor of the Storefront. They were not only incredibly helpful, but interacted with the guests. We eavesdropped on some interesting conversations and were impressed with the students' comfort talking and LISTENING to our Cleveland neighbors. Mac & Cheese casserole, fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts, snacks and desserts were devoured. There was a true feeling of camaraderie throughout the afternoon.

Our schedule is different for April and May. We will not be NOT be serving the 2nd Sunday in April but please mark your calendars for Sunday, April 28 when we host the dinner. We will not be serving at the Storefront in May, although Jan, Debby and Scott will attend the Memorial Day Cookout on May 26. Urban Hope will be the recipient of our May Focus Collection. Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

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Board Happenings

by Dan Paxson, SWUU Board President

Well...it has been quite a March, indeed. It certainly came in like a lion. At one point, I think SWUU might have been in record territory in the transition department. For this past month found us simultaneously in search of a new office administrator, a new music director, and a new minister! Needless to say, the board goals that we established at our retreat this past fall have gone by the wayside, and we've turned our focus to the unexpected tasks at hand.

Fortunately, our church community is a healthy and resilient one, and it seems that most everyone is dealing well and chipping in to help out as we navigate the coming months ahead. Transitions can be difficult, but they are almost always opportunities for growth. I believe that when the dust settles we will find that this one is no exception.

We actually have much good news to report along these lines. As you may have read in Rev. Kristen's article on page 2, we have found a new office administrator, Kristen Cimera, who will officially start work with us on April 1. We also have a new music director, Ryan Bergeron, who will start on April 28. Let's all be sure and give them a warm welcome to our great community, even as we are saying goodbye to Kathy and Sarah.

In the ministerial search department, we have formed a search committee, and they are already hard at work. For evidence of such, and to find out who the members are, please see their great article on page 6. The ministerial search committee was appointed by the board, as recommended by the UUA for the contract minister process that I described last month. The UUA also recommends that two of the committee members be board members; a suggestion which we've followed. The other four members were chosen from a list of nearly 20 candidates developed by the board and our Leadership Development Team, and in consultation with Rev. Kristen. Naturally, the candidates were all great because that's the way SWUU rolls. So, our choice of whom to ask was difficult. We strove for a group that is representative of our congregation, and all that it does in the world, yet also has the skills, background, and energy to do a formidable amount of work required in a relatively short period of time. On behalf of the entire board (and congregation, I'm sure), I'd like to express my gratitude to the six folks who said yes to our ask (again, see page 6).

We also invited Rev. Renee Ruchotzke, our CER Congregational Life Consultant, for a minister search process Q&A session on March 17 after church. Most of the board was at the meeting, and it seemed to go quite well. If there are lingering questions or concerns that you may have about the process, please feel free to contact me at president@swuu.org.

Of course, all of this transition effort doesn't mean that we can just drop everything else and focus on it alone. There are critical activities that must be maintained, and among them is our annual pledge drive. It begins in April, and I encourage everyone to read our Finance Committee chair, Lydia Avery's excellent description of our goals for 2019-2020 on page 6. In addition, and as somewhat of a circle back to transition, it is worth noting that salary range offered is one of the first items that prospective ministers learn about our congregation as they peruse our posted information. That range is almost entirely determined by the success of our pledge drive. So, no pressure or anything, but... :-)

On a personal note, I'll confess to having been initially overwhelmed at the prospect of all this sudden change and the associated effort required to move forward. However, the fabulous response of the congregation (and my fellow board members) has transformed me. Though I am of course sad at the ending of SWUU's chapter with Kristen, Sarah, and Kathy, I am feeling pretty excited about the new chapter coming up. I hope you feel similarly.

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 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.

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 issues of importance to SWUU, e-mail 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

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

April is Pledge Month at SWUU GIVE UNTIL IT FEELS GOOD!

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 SWUU healthy and welcoming.

I personally can't imagine not having SWUU in my life, for so many reasons. First, because it is a place where I feel spiritually filled and find peace. Second, because I continue to learn so much from our minister, our guest speakers and our wonderful friends and members. And, third, because I feel truly welcome, safe and loved here just as myself. Wil and I have been members since 1990 and we can't imagine belonging to another faith tradition.

The goal of the Finance Committee, along with being good stewards of your money, is to maintain our healthy financial foundation. The best way to continue that is to pay our employees fairly, continue excellent programming and increase our Legacy Fund (rainy day fund). To reach these and other goals, we need to increase our overall pledges by about 8%. So we ask you to consider what SWUU means to you and **"give until it feels good!"**

Please mark your calendars for: **Saturday, April 27, at 5:00** for a SWUU Celebration of Generosity Potluck to deliver our pledge cards, celebrate 30+1 years of SWUU, talk about generosity and celebrate ourselves.

An Update From Your Ministerial Search Team

by Susan Paxson, team chair

In case you were not at church to know who we are, the board appointed us to work on finding our next minister for SWUU. We are Adrienne Ellis, Mike Gold, Ellen Hansen-Ellis, Suzy Matlack, Susan Paxson, and Pat Woodside. We are a diverse group of members in age and time spent in the church. Some of us have experience with other UU Churches which is also a plus. We are working well together collaboratively and do not anticipate any issues once we start making important decisions.

There are some great things about how the contract minister search process works. We have a shorter search and the person we hire will start out with a one or two year contract. At the end of that term, there will be the option to call them as a settled minister if we and they are happy with the arrangement. If we do call them, it will require a congregational vote, and usually, 90% of the members have to give a thumbs up. But that is getting ahead of ourselves. Right now we are focused on the first stage of the process; namely, assembling a description of SWUU for prospective ministers to view.

To that end, we have completed the "Congregational Record" and posted it to the UUA's official search website. The congregational record is a somewhat brief picture of our church which tells a bit about our congregation, the history, some important milestones, the North Royalton and Cleveland area, and membership and finance numbers. Of course it also includes information about what we would like our minister to do for us, and how much we are willing to pay. Our next step is to work on a more detailed description about us which is called a "Ministerial Search Packet". The packet will only go to ministers who express an interest in the position. Luckily, our search team from the last, more in-depth search saved their info which can be used as a guide with some possible changes and additions.

Please know that our goal is to find someone whom we feel is the best fit for our church. To give everyone a chance to participate in the process, we will be sending out a brief, anonymous, online survey. This will help us discern what is most important to our members and friends in our next minister. Watch for it in your Thursday Email Blast. We will try to keep you updated as we go, but feel free to ask questions if you are concerned or want more information about this important process.

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SWUU Summer Camp

by Ken Ellis

This year's exciting camp-out will be at Hocking Hills State Park. We have a group camp reserved for two nights. The dates are Friday, July 26 & Saturday, the 27th. It is about 3 hours from North Royalton.

I urge you to look at the website for Hocking Hills State Park. There is more to do there than I can explain in one paragraph. It is a beautiful natural area with deep gorges, high cliffs, and waterfalls. There are many miles of hiking and other activities. Pets are permitted.

The total fee is \$100, divided between campers. So, if we have 20 campers this summer, it will only be \$5/camper. What a deal for so much excitement with great people.

For those who are new to this yearly activity, we have been camping every summer for 30 years. It is a wonderful way to be together with fellow outdoor enthusiasts. It is tent camping. Everyone brings their own gear and food. We cook over a fire pit or camp stoves and Ken & Dan compete for who makes the best morning coffee! There is always pleasant and interesting conversations and laughter.

This is a great way to introduce children to nature. I hope you will join us in the fresh air, under the green canopy, with the night sounds of crickets and katydids, wake up to the songbirds, smell the coffee wafting in the morning air, and enjoy the company of fellow campers in nature.

Contact Ken Ellis for details.

Wednesday Book Group Reads "Just Mercy"

by Sue Davis

A SWUU group meets every Wednesday to read books about social justice, religion or spirituality. We are unusual in that we meet at the home of Keith Mathews in Strongsville. We meet every Wednesday afternoon from 1 until 3. We always welcome new participants. We socialize for the first half hour and then read the book aloud and discuss it. We will be starting a new book on April 3. If you're interested, this would be a great time to join us.

Our new book is, "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption" by Bryan Stevenson. As a young attorney the author founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice that defends the poor and wrongly accused. The book presents the case of Walter McMillian, a man sentenced to death for a murder he didn't commit. Reviews have compared the author to the fictional Atticus Finch of "To Kill a Mockingbird."

If you wish to join the book group and want more information, please contact Sue Davis.



April 2019

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

All events are handicap accessible unless indicated by a **

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 9:30 AM Wed. Coffee 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group 7:00—9:00 PM Ministerial Search Team | 4 7:00 PM Evening Spiritual Book Group @ Hallie's house | 5 | 6 9:00 AM-3:00 PM UJO Spring Gathering at Akron UU Church- |
| 7 A House for Hope -Rev. Kristen Rohm 12:00 PM UU Common Read Book Discussion | 8 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation | 9 7:00 PM Board meeting | 10 1:00-3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group 7:30 PM Covenant Group | 11 4 PM Social Justice 7:00 PM Earth Alliance 7:00 PM Spiritual Book Gp. Hallie's | 12 7:00 PM SWUU Puzzle and Game Night | 13 3:30 PM Women's History |
| 14 How to Change the World -Tom Beck 12:00 PM COA | 15 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation | 16 10:00 AM Membership Team | 17 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group | 18 1:30 PM Covenant Group | 19 2:00 PM Women's Group | 20 |
| 21 Celebrating Wholeness -Rev. Kristen Rohm | 22 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation | 23 | 24 1:00—3:00 PM Spiritual Book Group | 25 FORUM DEADLINE 1:30 PM Movie and Discussion at The Davises' | 26 7:00 PM Men's Group | 27 9:00 COA Retreat-off site all day 5:00 PM Celebration Pot Luck 7:00 PM Youth Gp. |
| 28 Who's Saving What and Why? -Rev. Kristen Rohm 12:00 PM Aging Well 4:00 Urban Hope Meal | 29 1:30 PM In-sight Meditation | 30 | For calendar adds/changes/deletes notify us at susan@paxson.us, or call 440-888-3615. | | Week day meetings are held at the church unless otherwise noted. | |

The Forum

Sharing and Caring

** 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.