



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

April 1, 2020

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton  
Join Us On Zoom!



**April 5**

*The Laughing God*

The theme for the month of April is God or the Divine. Each of us can easily describe the gods that we do not believe in, such as a man on a cloud or someone who sends people to hell. But what is divine? And does the divine have a sense of humor?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

Focus Collection: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

**April 12**

*Easter Joy!*

Easter is a time of celebrating rebirth and regeneration. On this Easter Sunday we meditate on the hope and joy that springs forth during this time of uncertainty.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

**April 19**

*The 50th Earth Day*

This Wednesday will be the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. A lot has changed during that time. Join with us in celebration of our mother Gaia and all that she does for us.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

**April 26**

*Youth Led Worship Experience via Zoom*

As our lives are changing in dramatic ways on a daily basis, we invite you join this worship led by youth in our congregation. This will likely be a defining event in their life and in their futures. But we do not yet know what that will be. They will be working this month to create a worship service to share with the congregation. We will share more information as we create it together.

-Led by DRE Jenni Papp and SWUU's youth

# The Forum

## Message from your Minister

### God or The Divine

There is not one of us whose life hasn't drastically changed since the last time you received a copy of the monthly SWUU Forum. We are facing something unknown, with the apprehension of a town that watches a mighty tsunami rear up before them.

And yet here we are. Here we are as a community, and as a congregation. As a group of people who intentionally make time and space in our lives to create this holy thing that we call SWUU. As we hold one another in our hearts, we are no less interconnected than we ever were.

The unknown tsunami looming ahead pulls at our attention and attempts to take us away from what really matters: the present moment. The Buddhists among us know this truth: the present moment is the only moment. Fear comes from the unknown: the future. But the future is not here and will never be here. You always only have the gorgeous, luscious reality of the present moment.

As you hold your dear SWUU community in your heart, you are actively connected. That connection manifests in ways that human science has not fully understood and yet that our own faith tradition has suspected.

We are actively holding one another. We cannot even understand the holy bond that connects and protects us.

May this poem by Wendell Berry not only comfort you, but provide your heart with the strength to comfort itself and to reach out and comfort others as well:

*When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

With so much love,  
Rev. Meg  
[minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org)

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## **Focus Collection for April: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless**

by Debby Gorencic, Nancy Peltola, and Jan When, Social Justice Committee

Generally our April Focus Collection is designated to Berea Learning Farm. Due to the COVID-19 Crisis, we have decided to change the recipient to benefit the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH). They have plans in place to support our homeless and food insecure population, because many local resources, including Urban Hope are closed. Please visit the website [NEOCH.ORG](http://NEOCH.ORG). Donations can be made through the website or a check sent to NEOCH at 3631 Perkins Ave., Cleveland OH 44114. Please check out the website for a list of items that can be donated. On the website, there is a number to call to arrange a donation drop off, We will not be collecting items for Urban Hope through May. We will keep you updated as the situation changes. Thanks for your continued support.

## **Urban Hope News**

by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

Thanks to the wonderful generosity of our SWUU congregation we had another great afternoon at Urban Hope on March 8. Nancy and Denny Peltola, Mary Poldruhi and Debby Gorencic were joined by five students from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska who were spending a week at the storefront to congregate with and learn more about the homeless and food insecure populations in our community. The students jumped right in to help serve a hearty meal which included meatball sandwiches, pasta and sauce, potato salad, fresh fruit and veggies, cheese and crackers, delicious desserts and an abundance of takeaways. We had a large number of guests who truly enjoyed and appreciated the meal from the minute we opened the doors until the time we left.

## **What happened to Cooks Night Out?**

by Susan Paxson

Cooks Night out has been a tradition at SWUU for quite a long while. It is one of those activities that ebbed and flowed based on interest and availability of people willing to organize and set up the event. Ken Ellis did it for quite a while and I have done it the last couple of years. When I got more involved in organizing Ladies' Night, I kind of dropped Cooks' Night Out. Basically, all that is required is to choose a restaurant, pick a date, get the details out for the forum and calendar, handle the RSVP's, and make a reservation. Even though we do have Men's Group and Ladies' Night out on the fourth Friday of the month, it might be nice to have an event that is gender neutral. If this is something you might be willing and interested in organizing, please let Susan know. We will be going out again, someday!

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## **Pledging in the Age of COVID 19: Pledge Drive Postponed Until May** by Steve Doucette, Stewardship (formerly Finance) Committee

Previously we had planned to conduct our annual pledge drive in April. That was before the current pandemic. We now plan to conduct it during May, but in a different way. Unless circumstances change dramatically, we'll conduct the campaign by mail, e mail, and online.

The pledge drive is vital to our financial health. Over 80% of our income comes from member and friend pledges. The remainder comes from fundraisers, Sunday collections, and periodic individual member gifts. You will be receiving detailed information as we get closer to May. In the meantime, we invite you to think about what is important to you about our church and how you can help keep SWUU healthy and welcoming. Questions? Contact Steve Doucette or Lydia Avery.

## **LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!!!** **New Group looking for YOU!** by Deb Celinski

SWUU's LGBTQIA Group will be meeting on the 1st Friday of each month from 6pm till 730pm at SWUU in the sanctuary (or on Zoom until the virus concerns abate). Pizza will be provided, but feel free to bring your own, or share snacks, etc. if you wish...

Who is this group for? Almost anyone:

L=Lesbian; G=Gay; B=Bisexual; T=Transgender; Q=Queer; I=Intersex;

A= Allies, who are: anyone who supports this minority group. Perhaps you or someone you know has a family member or friend who belongs to the LGBTQI community. We want to stress that Allies are welcome at these meetings.

Topics will range from sharing a pertinent Ted Talk, or short video on issues facing this community. For example, did you know it is STILL legal in Ohio for a person to be denied employment and/or FIRED for belonging to this group? However, some meetings will just be a friendly gathering for conversations and understanding...

For any questions/concerns AND to RSVP, please contact Mary Poldruhi OR Deb Celinski.

One way to know if this group is something you may benefit from is by watching this 3min. 20sec. video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGIhHs>

THANK YOU MUCH! Hope to see you all soon!

## **Getting to Know You** by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

The Getting to Know You book is a work in progress. It was started in 2005 by Sylvia Banks. At that time, she was doing most of the interviews and articles. It is usually somewhere on one of our tables, either upstairs in the lobby or on the small table in the fellowship hall. If you have not taken a look at it, I encourage you to check it out. If some of the people look different now, remember that a lot of things can change in 10 years! The project is continuing as new folks join our community. I am always looking for new volunteers to help with the interviewing and writing, so if this is something you enjoy, please email me. We have lots of people yet to appear in the book. I look forward to working on this project and getting to know some of you better in the process.

# 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.

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](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

## **Board Happenings**

by Hallie Davis, Board President

The Board held a special meeting, on March 18th, to decide how to maintain services and staffing as we face the uncertainty of the coronavirus. At this Zoom meeting the Board decided to continue services. We approved a motion to fund additional internet capacity/speed if necessary.

Holding church services on-line is a new adventure for us and requires many hands and computers all while maintaining safe social distancing. Please thank our SUPER STAFF, Kristen, Jenni and Ryan, and Dan Paxson for the many hours they spent working to make our on-line service possible. We also thank Rev. Megan for keeping us connected with chalice lighting and daily reads on Facebook and Friday check-in at 7 pm. Please know that you can also call in. The telephone number for the meeting is listed in the e-mail.

With reports of the corona virus staying on surfaces the Board is limiting access to the building. Please contact me should you need to get into the building. Currently, Rev. Megan, Kristen, Jenni, Dan and Sherry (plants) have access to the building to conduct service, maintain the office function and check on the building. People meeting with Rev. Megan for pastoral care do not need permission.

We are updating our Personnel Policy, Conflict Resolution Policy and By-Laws. The Finance Committee wishes to become the Stewardship Committee. This change requires a change to the By-Laws and a vote by the congregation at the SWUU Annual meeting tentatively scheduled for June 28th.

Samuel Prince, Oberlin UU and UUJO consultant, attended our February meeting. He discussed the "UU the Vote" program for the November election (voter education and registration) and updated the board on UUJO activities.

The Finance team members, Steve Doucette (chair) and Lydia Avery (treasurer) presented the timeline for the Annual Pledge Drive. We need to have a budget in place for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020. It troubles me as this is the worst possible time to ask for pledges.

The Green Sanctuary program has begun monthly meetings. See more info within these pages or speak with Ellen Hansen-Ellis.

The Building and Grounds team are researching a workable communication notification system to connect the lower and upper levels of the building. If you have a suggestion send your thoughts to Dan.

Dan is working with our computer consultant to improve our website and make it mobile phone friendly.

Please know that all are welcome to attend the Board meetings held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm. The Board will continue to meet via Zoom until further notice.

Please continue to reach out to others during these difficult times.

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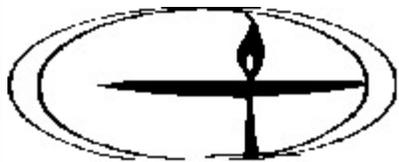
## Sharing and Caring

**Pat and Brian Woodside** write:

We are so grateful for all the warm thoughts, cards and other loving gestures we have received during the last few months. It has been quite an adjustment for us both and it has made such a difference knowing that we have been in your thoughts. We have felt so cared for! What a wonderful community we are part of. In this newly difficult time for us all, we send our love to all of you.

*\* 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.