



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

August 1, 2020

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

~~6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton~~  
Join Us On Zoom!



### August 2

*Water*

The theme of the month is Creation. Today we will look at the holy element of water and its restorative powers. We are one with the water around us, and therefore we are one with each other. All are welcome!

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Jaret Gold

Focus Collection: SWUU General Operating Fund

### August 9

*The Challenge of Being Green*

An environmental service illustrating how we are all part of the interconnected web of life, causing us to reflect deeply upon our relationship to Mother Earth

-Led by Ron Boyd, member UU Congregation of Greater Canton, Guest in Your Pulpit speaker

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

### August 16

*Fire*

Continuing our monthly theme of Creation, we celebrate the holy element of fire and all that it represents. Fire both creates and destroys. This Sunday we will continue the creation of our beautiful community.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

### August 23

*Creation & Creativity: Becoming Better Builders*

Creation is an ongoing process, both outwardly and inwardly. Ven. Shih Ying-Fa, Abbot of CloudWater Zendo, the Zen Center of Cleveland, will present a Buddhist perspective on the process of creation in daily life.

-Led by Ven. Shih Ying-Fa, Abbot of CloudWater Zendo

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

### August 30

*Air*

On our last Sunday this August, we honor the holy element of Air. Traditionally, the element of air represents the ephemeral and the spiritual. Join us as we dive into the mysteries of the holy invisible that surround us.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

# The Forum

## Message from your Minister

### Creation

Hello there!

I hope that you haven't wilted too much from the summer heat!

During my time off this summer, I've been reading a lot of Thomas Berry, the great eco-theologian. His words of warning from 10, 20, and 30 years ago ring more true today than ever.

As we all find ways to live in a prolonged time of pandemic, as we adjust to the idea that this "new normal" will continue much longer than we had hoped, many of us turn to our dear Mother Gaia for comfort. She is there for us in a way that we are rarely there for her!

Thomas Berry said, "The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence." Mr. Berry has found, in this quote, a way to describe the way that social justice issues and environmental issues not only intersect but are absolutely at one. When we harm the Earth, we harm ourselves.

And it works both ways. Strife between humans inevitably harms our environment. How much of our Mother Gaia is scarred and scorched due to war? Even on a (slightly) smaller scale, the Earth is harmed by our prison industrial complex, what Michelle Alexander calls "The New Jim Crow."

So let us, as the summer begins to wane, reconnect to the larger sacred community of the natural world around us. The theme of our worship services this August will be Creation, and we will spend our Sundays re-connecting to the four sacred elements of water, earth, air, and fire.

I look forward to worshipping with you!

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

## The Forum

### **Focus Collections for July, August, September:**

by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

It has long been the custom of the Social Justice Committee to select a local not-for-profit organization to be the recipient of our monthly Focus Collections. During the past year organizations the congregation supported included the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, Front Steps, Planned Parenthood and most recently the LGBTQ Community Center.

After thoughtful consideration and consultation with Rev. Meg, the Social Justice Committee made the decision to handle the Focus Collections for the months of July, August and September differently than in the past. Based on communications to the SWUU community from the Stewardship Committee we know that since the onset of COVID-19 and the change to virtual services and meetings in late March, the church's income has taken a hit. Therefore, since this is an especially financially difficult time for SWUU, we are changing our usual proceedings in order to provide an opportunity to support our own congregation and help keep it sound. All Focus Collection donations made during July, August and September will go to the SWUU general operating fund.

Focus Collection donations can be made to SWUU through the Vanco Give Plus Website or by mailing a check to the following address: SWUU, 6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton, OH 44133. Thank you for your generosity.

### **Urban Hope News**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Debby, Sara, Eleanor and I took brown bag lunches to Urban Hope Sunday, July 12. Because we had leftovers from the last time and generous checks sent to us, we did not require any other donations. The bags were full of individually wrapped items and some fresh fruit. They were even heavy! Plus, Nancy donated 10 masks which were needed as several people were not wearing them.

Urban Hope will be closed during the month of August as the Storefront needs repairs and another thorough cleaning. I have a Steering Committee meeting in August to determine what will be happening in the fall. Stay tuned! Thank you for your continued and generous support for our Cleveland neighbors in need.

# The Forum

## Board Happenings

by Ellen Hansen-Ellis, Board President

### UPDATE ON SWUU OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

As many of you know from my announcement to the SWUUList last week, our office administrator Kristen will be changing the scope of her work here at SWUU. Upon her request, she will be transitioning to an independent contractor handling financial matters for the church. She will no longer have any administrative duties. We appreciate all Kristen has done for SWUU, and are fortunate that she will continue to offer her strong skills managing our financial systems and processes. She will work closely with Lydia Avery, our Treasurer.

In response to this change, the Board decided to postpone hiring a new administrator until after the pandemic is over and we return to using our church building. I am pleased to report that a number of volunteers have stepped up to take on the various tasks normally handled by the administrator. There are still a few details to iron out, but the following has been set in place, effective Saturday, August 1:

- Susan Paxson will manage the SWUU calendar, located on the church website. This will be the only calendar in use, and will be one-stop shopping for meetings, Zoom account usage, and building access scheduling. Please check this calendar when planning events or to visit the church, and then contact Susan at [calendar@swuu.org](mailto:calendar@swuu.org) so she can add your event. Take a look: <http://www.swuu.org/events/>
- Phyllis Hall will monitor and respond to [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org). She will respond to requests either personally or by linking you with others who can help you.
- Sherry Spencer will respond to voice mail left on the church phone.
- Steve Doucette will send out a modified Thursday news “blast” each week, which will be simplified to contain the following: information about the upcoming Sunday service, our Zoom link, a link to the website, info. about the SWUUList and how to join, and a link to the Church Directory. All other news that you wish to share should be submitted for the monthly Forum, or posted on the SWUUList.
- Rev. Meg will produce the order of service for Sunday mornings, now somewhat simplified.
- Several other volunteers will be taking on smaller tasks, as needed.

I know we all greatly appreciate these individuals’ willingness to step up during this uncertain time. As soon as we feel close to resuming all church activities in person we will begin a search for a paid administrator. Until then, I hope you will all find ways to help keep everyone connected and the church running smoothly.

As always, please reach out to me if you have questions or concerns.

Be well!

# **The Forum**

## **Southwest UU History** by Carol Jordan

As we all stay at home and feel the stress of distancing, a little history may help us strengthen the ties that bind us in our SWUU community.

Our present location is new for the church, but SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Church had its beginnings in 1987 when 26 members signed the charter in November. Charter members include our present members: Keith Matthews, Sherry Spencer, Judith Newell, David Newell, Laura Urbanic, Ellen Hansen-Ellis and Kenneth Ellis. West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Rocky River provided major personal and financial support. After meeting in several locations, we purchased the present building in 2009 using all of our \$80,000 building fund. The building fund had been initiated years ago after a successful "Miracle Sunday" drive that raised \$22,000.

Our current building, built in the late 1800s, had been a church, a Masonic Hall and had several other uses. The late Ted Macosko, an architect and long time member of SWUU, designed major renovations, including addition of many windows, an elevator, and a foyer. Our welcoming church, so visible on the hill in North Royalton, was dedicated in May 2011 as the home of SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Church. With major financial support by many members through a 2009 capital campaign, it is debt free.

We welcomed our present minister, Rev. Megan Mathieson, in 2019. Under the direction of our Religious Education Director, Jenni Papp, youth from infants to high school students participate in Sunday classes and activities to help them understand UU principles and develop their own beliefs. Ryan Bergeron is our Music Director. Ellen Hansen-Ellis is president of the Board of Trustees.

## **Connecting and Coordinating with our Calendar** by Susan Paxson

As Ellen mentioned in her piece, during the interim time while we are going without a paid administrator, I will be the "Keeper of the Calendar". I have done this in the past so this is not really new for me, but it will be utilized even more than it has in the past. Please check it out on our Website. Many of our events are virtual, and they are labeled as such in the description. Also on the calendar, though, there will be times listed when volunteers or staff will be in the building. For everyone's safety, we try to only have one person there at a time.

The important job of everyone in the church, member, friends, and staff alike, is to please keep me informed so that the calendar can be accurate and up-to-date. The sooner you schedule your ZOOM meeting or time at church, the more likely you will be to get your desired time. I cannot emphasize this enough. The calendar can be accessed by going to: [www.swuu.org](http://www.swuu.org) and clicking on "event calendar" up at the top of the home page. Check it out! I have tried to update what was already on there but if you see something that is either changed or cancelled, please send a message to [calendar@swuu.org](mailto:calendar@swuu.org). Hopefully this will allow us all to stay informed about what is going on at SWUU!

# 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 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](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

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# The Forum

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## “Getting to Know You”

Interview by Susan Paxson

You may recognize **Don Bryant’s** name from some of his facebook or swuulist invitations to join him in social justice demonstrations for marginalized populations in the Cleveland area. He definitely models our second UU principal: to promote justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Although Don was born in Maumee Ohio, his father, who worked for the Internal Revenue Service, moved their family to a nice house in Broadview Heights. He lived there with his three older brothers, Allen, Jesse, and David and his younger sister, Anita. They played together picking raspberries, playing “swingball”, which they thought they invented, where you kick the ball from the swing, jump off and run the bases. They also had an above ground pool and went on fun vacations in the summer. He describes himself as a shy child, who liked to be close to his stay-at-home mom,

He learned the value of work early in life with a paper route, and helping weed the garden, and later as a dishwasher at a local restaurant. It was also during this time that he became interested in social activism which is still his passion today. He remembers being a hippy along with his brothers in the late 1960’s and his first protest was at junior high school when they protested the school dress code so they could wear their hair long. He said he participated in his first official social justice action when he joined the national Vietnam War Moratorium by wearing a black armband in 1970 at Brecksville High School.

He married and had a daughter, Sallie early in life and raised Sallie as a single parent from the age of two. Between raising his daughter and working for the US Postal Service, it is amazing how Don was able to continue his volunteering and social justice work. As a community leader with the Nuclear Freeze Movement, he and other parents created a huge beautiful float with their children sitting and marched in the Proud of Parma parade. He helped organize the “Save Our State from Radioactive Waste” campaign and “beat city hall” by petitioning suburban city councils and talking to state and federal representatives and using the research provided by the Sierra Club to oppose the US Department of Energy plan to transport and bury nuclear waste in the International Salt Mines under Lake Erie. He also served three terms as an elected supervisor with the Soil and Water Conservation District working with students in gardening, stream life monitoring and conservation.

Other interests include biking, gardening, cooking, reading, and spending time with his two granddaughters and two grandsons who live in the area and have all spent some time living with him. Don found us quite a while ago but the time was not right for him to continue attending. He returned a couple of years ago after running into Sue Szabo when they were both leading independent discussion groups on *The New Jim Crow; Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-Blindness* by Michelle Alexander. Here at SWUU, Don has taught Religious Education, brought homemade snacks, and worked with the gardening team. He even joined us on one of the SWUU Campouts.

About SWUU, Don says, “I have learned so very much from other members of SWUU, young and old alike - from David Slawson, I learned about vegetarian cooking and how to prune a tree and from our youngest member, Bodie, I learned about observation and innocence of a child, when he randomly, and probably boldly, asked me after a Sunday service, pointing out of the widow, "why is there a nail on the sidewalk?" I could barely see it as he repeated his question, pointing through the window at a small roofing nail that lay on the stone sidewalk outside the church window. You can bet I went and picked it up when I left from coffee hour that Sunday, chuckling to myself about the innocence and the grace of youth.” We are glad he has joined our community.



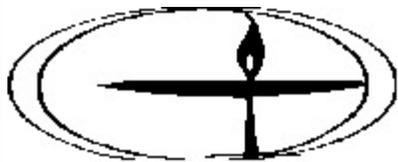
# The Forum

## Sharing and Caring

♥ **Jan and Scott Wehn** are pleased to announce the birth of their grandson, Ethan Scott Jacobson, who was born on Sunday, July 26th. Jessie, Dave and big brother Dylan are doing well.

♥ \* *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.