



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

November 1, 2020

**Daylight Savings Ends**  
**Nov. 1**  
**Fall Back**

## Sunday Services

**10:30 AM**

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



### **November 1**

*United Nations Sunday!*

United Nations Sunday celebrates the work of the United Nations and your Unitarian Universalist Office at the United Nations. The 2020 theme is All In for Climate Justice: People, Power, Planet. Join us for a joyful service celebrating our beautiful mother Gaia and the great work that UUs around the world have been doing to heal her.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

Focus Collection: Greater Cleveland Food Bank

### **November 8**

*Healing in Action*

Regardless of the outcome of the election, we are entering into a time of collective healing together. All are welcome as we spend time in quiet contemplation of the ways that we contribute to one another's healing. We will revisit our church covenant and celebrate the founders and longtime members of this beloved community.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

### **November 15**

*Healing Our Neighbors*

In a month where the theme is Healing, we turn to those outside our community and inquire about how we can help. Who are our neighbors? How can we help the healing of our larger community?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Mark Jackson

### **November 22**

*TBA*

Please see our website later in the month for the title, description, and speaker of this service.

-Led by TBA

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

### **November 29**

*Gratitude as a Healing Power*

A few days after Thanksgiving, let's gather to remember that gratitude is one of the most powerful tools to healing that exists. Spirituality exists in small acts of gratitude throughout the day. How can you bless yourself with the gift of healing gratitude today?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

# The Forum

## Message from your Minister

### Healing

I know that I am not alone in having experienced an especially challenging September & October this year. Without warning, my household was besieged with health concerns, including my dramatic reaction to a routine medication and my wife's torn meniscus. As if 2020 wasn't stressful enough with COVID and the presidential election! My beloved mentor reminds me that health issues do not ask about our schedules, they come when they choose, and I have lived the truth of that statement.

If you also have grappled with health concerns lately, my heart is with you. Even if your own health is steady, we are all carrying added stress around COVID and the way that it is impacting our loved ones.

Thank goodness, then, that we have this beloved SWUU community to lean on. I cannot say from a scientific standpoint how the many cards I received from you aided my healing, I can only say that I know for a fact that I recovered more quickly every time your well-wishes came my way.

Our worship theme for November is "Healing." How appropriate! And in fact, it remains to be seen how very appropriate that theme will be, as we anticipate the presidential election. Regardless of the outcome, there will be hurt feelings, anger, and even anguish for some. For others there will be relief and jubilation. So how will we each direct our energies? It appears that every possibility offers an opportunity for healing, and that is what SWUU offers to all of us, my dear friends. I will be here with you as we process our joy, our grief, our rage. Will you hold my hand?

I would love to catch up with you! You can make a zoom or phone appointment with me by emailing me at [minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org).

With so much love,  
Rev. Meg

### Announcements From Rev. Meg

#### "Building Your Own Theology" Class Kicks Off

**When:** Starting Friday Oct 30 at 7 pm, lasting for 10 weeks, but skipping the Friday night every night when the Men's Group meets.

**Where:** Our SWUU Zoom room: <https://uuma.zoom.us/my/swuufamily>

**Cost:** FREE! You do not need to sign up, just feel free to drop in. The lessons build on each other, so it's good to try to go to as many as you can, but if you can only come to some of them, that's fine. I would like to encourage you, in lieu of payment for the class, to consider making a donation to SWUU. The suggested donation amount is \$5 per class.

**What now?** Put it on your calendar! It's going to be a fun class with plenty of open conversation. We will learn a lot about ourselves and each other! Don't miss it!

#### Rev. Meg is Now a Certified Prepare/Enrich Facilitator!

Prepare/Enrich is a fantastic marital (and pre-marital) counseling assessment tool that has been used by millions of couples over the last 35 years. You don't need to be having problems in your marriage for this tool to benefit your relationship! Contact Rev. Meg at [minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org) if you are interested in learning more about the Prepare/Enrich program.

## The Forum

### **Focus Collection for November: Greater Cleveland Food Bank**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

For as long as I can remember, the Greater Cleveland Food Bank has been the recipient of our November Focus Collection. I generally write about our food insecure neighbors, and how important it is to feed hungry people with nutritious food. This year is more important than ever as many partner programs have shut down. Since the Pandemic, the Food Bank has had a 30% uptick in need. It is one of the largest hunger relief organizations in Northeast Ohio serving people in Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake, Ashland, and Richland Counties. Using an outreach truck, the Food Bank has organized a Backpack for Kids program to feed students who relied on schools for breakfast and lunch. They have also used the truck to provide fresh produce to communities and have signed up for federal SNAP benefits. So far this year, the food bank has given out 47 million pounds of food, 9 million more than last year. Besides money, the volunteer program has been diminished with Social Distancing requirements and people generally afraid of contracting the virus.

Please donate if you can to support this worthwhile organization and to take care of our hungry neighbors. Donations can be sent to the church with a check or the Vanco GivePlus website. THANK YOU!

### **Urban Hope News**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Thanks to our generous congregation, we put together 30 great lunch bags Sunday, October 13. We still had cash, and I bought Chicken Drumsticks for Oven Fried Chicken, Chips and Rice Krispie Bars. Nancy made Hard Boiled Eggs, bought Clementines and provided a special treat of full size Malley's candy bars! Mary Brooks brought over bags of Nuts and Peanut Butter Crackers. Sara Jane brought individual servings of Ravioli, Beans & Franks and Applesauce. Those were put out as take-aways, and were very much appreciated. Sarah and Eleanor came over to help pack the bags and deliver them along with Debby & me. As you see, this is very much a group effort! Our next visit is Sunday, November 8. Any wrapped food item can be a wonderful addition to our lunch bags.

If you care to donate, items can be dropped off at either Jan Wehn's, Nancy Peltola's or Debby Gorencic's homes or we will pick any items up from your home. Of course, cash is always welcome and can be sent to one of our homes. Addresses are in the directory.

We are delighted to continue feeding our hungry neighbors. Thank you!

# The Forum

## **A Bit of Southwest UU History**

by Carol Jordan, Membership Committee

Laura Urbanic, one of SWUU's charter members, shares her memories of those days in 1987 . . . gathering in homes on Sunday afternoons to learn about the Unitarian Universalist faith, meeting in school rooms for UU services, and working together to create a Southwest Unitarian Universalist statement of beliefs. Along with 28 others, she signed the Membership Book on that Nov. 8 Sunday when SWUU officially became a UU congregation. She became a board member, serving for four years as vice president, and was in charge of dinners after the Sunday service at Strongsville middle school. Beginning our SWUU tradition, everyone brought dishes to share.

She very much remembers visiting our present church building when the growing congregation was considering it for its first home. "Oh, the awful smell of mold," she recalls. "And it was so dark downstairs," she adds. "It was not very pretty." She said members had looked at so many places, they were very glad to find one that would work. Ted Macosko helped them visualize what it could be. "In the school (where they were meeting) we had to store supplies in cupboards and we had to get everything out. We had a sink and used a rolling cart and there were two steps down to get the coffee."

Meeting in the middle school and then on the BW campus, SWUU was able to hold classes for children. She enjoyed bringing her grandchildren, Kim, Mike and Katy.

Like all of the SWUU community, Laura is pleased with our present building. "It is ours and life is easier. We have our own minister, we make our own decisions, and the members are wonderful" she said.

Laura is one of the seven current members who will mark the 33rd anniversary of SWUU on Sunday, November 8, the exact date of the charter signing. The others are Keith Mathews, Sherry Spencer, Judith Newell, David Newell, Kenneth Ellis and Ellen Hansen-Ellis.

## **SWUU Are You?**

by Adam Miller

Staying connected these days can be a challenge. The Committee on Ministry would like to propose a fun activity to give people a chance to interact with each other from home. During the next couple of weeks we encourage members and friends of the church to select a photo of themselves when they were toddlers (somewhere between 1 and 5 years old if possible) and send a digital copy of your selection to Adam Miller. If you do not have a digital copy of the photo you would like to use, Adam can even scan it for you. The deadline for photo submissions is December 1st.

The pictures will be compiled into a document that will be sent out to anyone interested in participating. The goal is to see how many people you can correctly match with their kiddie photos. You can contact individuals and ask them if your guess is correct or wait until the big reveal when the event is over. Participation is completely voluntary of course.

Even if you are not interested in playing the guessing game, you can enjoy seeing how cute everyone was as kids. If you have any questions or would like more information on the activity, please do not hesitate to contact Adam.

# 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

# The Forum

## **Under What Conditions Should In Person Services Begin and What Will They Look Like?**

by Dan Paxson

Right now might seem to be the wrong time to ask these and other questions. However, if you think a bit more, well...maybe not. The truth is that we can't really just wait until all looks rosy before considering such things. There will not likely be a precise moment in the near future when the coronavirus is suddenly vanquished and our services instantly revert to their pre-pandemic form. The much more likely path is that the risk of infection will gradually decline through various mechanisms until it is below a threshold that is acceptable. Meanwhile, the treatments for those who are infected will likely gradually improve. As such, the answers to these questions may be a bit murky.

Given all this, and with the Board's permission, I am seeking to form a task force that will collect information relevant to these questions. The goal is to collect and synthesize the information, then provide a recommendation to the Board. The Board, of course, will have the final say on what we do and when.

Some of the questions that I'd like to try and answer are:

- What are the infection rates that federal, state, and county health experts consider safe for in-person gatherings?
- What is the state of our local testing and tracing relative to what needs to exist?
- Do we have an effective vaccine, and is it in wide distribution?
- What are other UU churches doing in our area?
- What is the UUA recommending?
- How does the congregation feel about meeting in-person?
- If some feel safe and others don't, how can we respond?
- Does the staff feel safe?
- If only limited in-person attendance is an option, do we consider hybrid services (some in the sanctuary and some on Zoom) or just wait until we can all attend?
- If limited in-person attendance is an option, how do we handle R.E.?
- Could in-person committee meetings be considered before in-person services?
- What risk-reducing precautions are necessary, and what do they cost?

My hope is to convene a group of 4-6 people for this task force. If this is something that you would be interested in helping with, I would be thrilled to have you join! Please contact me at [dan@paxson.us](mailto:dan@paxson.us).

We don't know when we will meet in person again, but we do know that it will happen. The actions of this task force will hopefully help insure that it will be as safe, smooth, inclusive, and joyous a time as possible.

# The Forum

## “Getting to Know You” Interview by Susan Paxson

**Valerie Hura** says that Unitarian Universalism has impacted her life in so many ways. Most notably was the creation of lifelong friendships (family/ community) through Youth Cons, UU Young Adult groups and even a UU family in Minnesota taking her in when she had nowhere to live. Valerie was introduced to the UU church while attending Ohio University and for the first time found a religious welcoming community that felt like home. The UU belief in social justice and service to others influenced Valerie to become a social worker. She even participated in a UUSC Service Trip at Standing Rock Reservation in 1998.

Valerie grew up in Brookpark with her dad, who was from Cleveland, her mom who had grown up in Coshocton and her older sister, Laura. She recalls her mom’s passion for traveling and how every summer her mom, Holly, would plan a family road trip. Valerie and Holly carry on this tradition of annual trips with her own kids, 13-year-old Gavin and Avalon who is 10. Valerie’s love of nature and the outdoors comes from the time she spent with her grandparents in Coshocton. She appreciates the fact that she lived in a city but was able to spend summers and lots of weekends in the country.

At OU, Valerie studied Social Work and Spanish and she later received her Masters from OSU. She has worked as a child and adolescent trauma therapist, an organizer for the green party when in Minnesota, and for Templum House here in Cleveland. Her dream job is the one she has been doing for the last 15 years, as co-leader of Youth Outdoors through a partnership with Cleveland Metroparks and OSU as a 4-H Extension Educator. It combines her love of the outdoors and her social work background, serving inner-city youth by giving them opportunities to participate in adventures such as camping, horseback riding, fishing, and hiking. Her knowledge of Spanish comes in handy when working with some of the kids in the program. Sadly, due to Covid 19, her position was recently eliminated.

The loss of her job has given her a chance to focus more on her children. She says being a single parent is an adventure and she is proud of how she has risen to this challenge. Even though life is busy with the normal activities of school, working and spending time supporting her mom, she finds time to go camping and other getaways with them on weekends. It is obvious that her children share her love of being outdoors and her love of animals, especially cats. Their favorite family activity is creek-walking. They also find time to volunteer at Stay a While Cat Shelter in North Royalton.

Their full life makes it difficult to attend church every Sunday but Valerie values this community and she has volunteered in various ways including teaching yoga for the service auction and co-facilitating the “Coming of Age” Program with Dodi Lettus several years ago. She also attends the annual SWUU family campouts, and way back in 1998, shortly after joining SWUU, she participated in the Canvass Kickoff that year, Ellen Hansen- Ellis’s production called “Life is a Voyage”! Something you may not know is that for 4 years, Valerie skated with the Cleveland Burning River Roller Girls as Ms. Creant, her roller derby name.



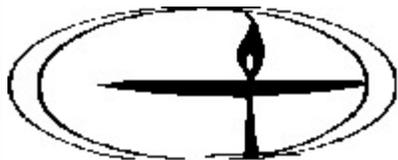
# The Forum

## Sharing and Caring

**Andy and Judy White** celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary on Halloween.

*\* 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.