



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

April 1, 2021

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



April 4

Becoming Ourselves

For Christians, Easter Sunday is a day of celebration of that which has been given a second chance at life, or resurrected. Today let's celebrate our own personal resurrections as we move into a hopeful future.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Jaret Gold

Focus Collection: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

April 11

Becoming and Change

Unitarian Universalists claim to be part of a "living" faith, meaning that we are open to change and progress. Today we look at some of the changes that we are facing as our faith moves toward the future.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

April 18

What is the Earth Becoming?

In a month with the theme of "Becoming," we pause today to consider our dear Mother Earth and what our actions are encouraging her to become.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Anastasia Birosh

April 25

Unitarian Universalists of Tomorrow

Join Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal for a reflection on his time in youth and young adult ministry—and how young people have a lot to show us about overcoming incredible odds and moving our denomination forward into the years to come.

-Led by Matthew Pargeter-Villarreal, M.Div.

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

The Forum

Message from your Minister

Becoming

Beloveds,

The worship theme for the month of April is “Becoming,” and with that theme, we have the opportunity to think about what it means for us, as Unitarian Universalists to be a people of becoming. As the hymn goes, “Where do we come from? Who are we? Where are we going?”

In her memoir, “Becoming,” First Lady Michelle Obama asks, “Do we settle for the world as it is, or do we work for the world as it should be?” For us, as a people of becoming, the answer is clear: we never settle.

Becoming, as a theme, is about looking toward the future with intention. We do not settle for the world as it is but rather continue working for the betterment of all. At SWUU, the “Beloved Community” is not so much something that we are, but rather something that we are intentionally becoming.

One step in our becoming is to begin having conversations around the 8th Principle. You can find more information on the 8th Principle at <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>. I would like to invite you to come to our weekly conversations on the 8th Principle which will be held on Friday nights, beginning April 16 at 7 pm in our usual SWUU zoom room: <https://uuma.zoom.us/my/swuufamily>.

And as always, absolutely everyone is welcome to join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 10:30. Share with us in this time of joy and love! I hope to see you there.

With so much love,
Rev. Meg
minister@swuu.org

8th Principle Conversations: Friday nights at 7!

Starting on April 16, SWUU will be having weekly conversations about the 8th Principle. We will discuss what it means to "adopt" or vote on it, as well as discussions around SWUU's role in the racial justice movement in general. Mark your calendar and be there for lively and informative discussion!

The Forum

Focus Collection for April: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

The April Focus Collection will support the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH). Begun in 1988, NEOCH works to find solutions to the root causes of homelessness from a systemic viewpoint rather than a band-aid approach. This nonprofit is a true coalition, bringing together various religious and political groups as well as people experiencing homelessness and those who have had difficulty paying for utilities and rent.

Your donation to NEOCH will allow them to raise the collective voice of homeless Clevelanders to advocate for changes they would like to see. NEOCH educates others about housing issues through outreach collaboration, speakers' bureau programs, shelter advocacy, policy and political action, and training workshops.

Focus Collection donations can be made by mailing a check made out to SWUU and mailed to SWUU, 6320 Royalton Rd., North Royalton, OH 44133 or through the [GivePlus](#) website. After the end of April one check will be presented to NEOCH from our church family to support their essential services.

Urban Hope News by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Debby, Nick, Eleanor and I packed and delivered sandwich bags for our Urban Hope Neighbors March 14. It was a beautiful day, and the attendance was good. Debby and I stayed for a couple of hours to pass out the lunch bags and supplies. Jean Kosmac, our fearless leader works for NEOCH. The Storefront becomes her office as she tries to find housing for guests in need. We had the usual sandwiches, chips, fruit, hardboiled eggs, granola bars, cheese sticks and a special Easter treat. We are still in great shape financially to buy supplies for the lunches and will not be asking for donations. That being said, we are always happy to take small juice bottles or other prepackaged items that can be saved. Thank you for your generosity. We will return April 11.



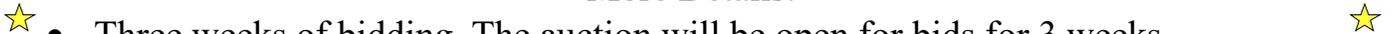
★ Our Service Auction Opens for Bidding on Thursday, April 1st at 7 pm! ★



★ This is our second most important fundraiser...and a great opportunity to ★
★ build relationships. So, check out all the great offers and start bidding! ★



More Details:



- ★ • Three weeks of bidding. The auction will be open for bids for 3 weeks. ★
- ★ • April 22nd. The auction will close. ★
- ★ • April 25th. We will conduct the raffle portion of the auction at the Sunday ★
★ service. ★



The Forum

Poetry

by Hallie Davis

April brings the beauty of Spring and National Poetry Month. Our SWUU community has many poetry lovers, writers, teachers and listeners. Also, there are a few who want to develop an appreciation of the word *Poetry*. Some of us have expressed interest in a monthly “SWUU Poetry” group. Join our SWUU Zoom link on Monday, April 5th at 7 pm where we’ll identify group preferences and choose a monthly meeting time. Bring a short poem to share.

Consider joining the Cuyahoga County Public Library, “Read + Write 30 Days of Poetry”. The works of Ohio’s best poets and a daily poetry writing exercise designed to spark your creativity is sent to your email daily. Find the link on the first page of the *Library Insider* newsletter. It was sent via the swuulist 03/27/2021.

Looking forward to gathering on Monday, April 5th at 7 pm via the SWUU Zoom link. For more information contact Hallie.

Adopt-a-Highway!

by Susan Paxson, Coordinator

I am thrilled to announce that ODOT has finally lifted the suspension on the Adopt a Highway program and we are able to schedule clean-ups. If you have driven by the entrance and exit ramps connecting Pearl Road and I-71, you know that our clean-ups have been sorely missed. I, for one, cannot wait to get out there and beautify our green space which we have been taking care of for 15 years. We will definitely be following the SWUU protocol of being at least 6 ft away from those with whom we do not live. Because we are not planning to eat, we will not have to worry about the number of people who are involved. If you have never done a highway clean-up with us before, here is what you need to know. We meet at 9:00AM in the parking lot of the Islander Apartments which are located on the east side of Pearl road across from Sunnyside Auto dealership and just north of the I-71 Interchange. The turn is next to a Shell station.

Before we do the clean-up, we put on our vests, take a bag, and (new this year) sign a release form which ODOT requires for every cleanup. Our first clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, May 8th. We are usually finished in about an hour so you can still relax for the rest of the day! There is a short training for anyone who has never participated. If you would like to join us, just text or email and I will come early to do that with any new folks. I hope to see you there to do our part to take care of the earth and get some exercise at the same time!

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 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

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

News From The Board

by Ellen Hansen-Ellis. SWUU Board President

Welcome Spring, and the return of hope for better days ahead! I don't know about you, but this recent spell of warmer weather and the appearance of the first flowers of spring have lifted my spirits considerably. Add to that the availability of Covid vaccines for so many, and I feel as if a great weight has lifted. I hope you are feeling more optimistic these days as well.

As you may be aware, we are approaching the end of Rev. Meg's two year contract with us. In a normal year, we would now be undergoing a discernment process that would lead to a congregational vote on whether to approve her as our permanent, or called, minister. But of course, these are not normal times, and because of that, Rev. Meg (with the support of the UUA) has requested that we put that process on hold for a year, and instead extend her current contract through year three. The Board has unanimously approved this proposal. At the same time, in recognition of the excellent work Rev. Meg has done to maintain our beloved community, and to acknowledge her growth as a minister over the last two years, we have approved a 5% raise in salary. We wanted to send a clear message that we are grateful for the commitment Rev. Meg has shown, and are cognizant of the deepening of her ministerial skills. She happily accepted our offer!

On another note, you may recall that we brainstormed ideas at the Congregational Meeting in January for what more we could do during this time of "virtual" meeting. Many excellent ideas were generated, and I am happy to report that the Board is choosing one to proceed with. We plan to create and distribute another SWUU Cookbook (the first one dates back to the 90's). Look for more info. to come, when we ask you to supply your favorite recipes!

Other ideas that may already be in the works, or just need you to get them started:

- Dinner delivery for those folks that can't get out
- Start more Zoom get-togethers
- Encourage members to drop each other e-mail notes of encouragement, or have e-mail pals
- Create a small group that focuses on ways to enhance Zoom services
- Explore and adopt the 8th Principle
- Encourage more members to listen/subscribe to Rev. Meg's morning readings
- Create signs for SWUU windows or out front, offering positive, welcoming messages
- Install a Little Free Pantry, and/or Little Free Library, out front of SWUU
- Look for ways to market SWUU to the larger community
- Make our current YouTube channel more robust
- Create PR releases for local publications or e-zines, for upcoming services, Zoom events, or on what we've been doing during Covid times
- Do a Facebook Live event

See anything that sounds intriguing? Let other folks know on the SWUUlist, join forces with others that are interested, and let's move forward with hope!

The Forum

“Getting to Know You” Interview by Susan Paxson

Betsy Clark was born in Greenport, NY in northeastern Long Island. Although their family belonged to a Methodist church, she and her sisters attended Catholic school because her parents thought it was better. Her parents owned a seasonal restaurant called The Clam Bar, and this afforded them the opportunity to take family trips on the off season. Their teachers provided schoolwork for them to complete while they were gone. After a difficult transition in the middle of her 7th grade year to a new larger school further west on Long Island called Greenlawn, Betsy spent her middle and high school years participating in lots of music. She played a number of instruments in band, and she also played piano and sang in and accompanied the high school choir. For her BW audition, she played at Carnegie Hall.



She came to Ohio upon the suggestion by her band director who had also attended Baldwin Wallace College. Her degree in Arts Management led her to work briefly for the Cleveland Opera, but her later work included selling Mary Kay and working for a child care center while she was staying at home to raise her children, Taylor, 29, who lives in PA and Nick, 26, now living in AL. During the kids' early years, they moved around to Tulsa, OK and Dallas, TX, but eventually wound up in Berea, OH and her present position as the Office Manager of Christ United Church in Olmsted Falls.

Bernie Smith was the youngest boy of eleven children and their family lived out in the country in Fremont, Ohio- an hour west of Cleveland. He remembers that they grew a huge garden for their food, and they got meat from the local meat market by cleaning there as a family. He attended a Catholic grade school, but church was a source of conflict because his Lutheran mom had to convert to Catholicism before she married his dad. He also moved to a new school in seventh grade and went to a public high school in Columbia Station, where he learned to play the drums.

When Bernie left home, he worked in the restaurant business as a server and manager for about 10 years and has since been in the printing business for nearly 30 years. Interestingly, his current position is working for churches as a publication support specialist which helps churches produce their weekly printed bulletins. He has a daughter, Julie, who has a PhD in Research Pathology and has recently moved to Columbus, Ohio. He is also an avid photographer and was president of the SW Camera Club for 2 years.

Betsy and Bernie met about 8 years ago on the online dating site called “Plenty of Fish.” Bernie stood out to Betsy because he asked interesting questions that reflected that he had actually read her profile! Their first date was meeting for coffee at Panera, and the rest, and they hit it off right away. They now live in the southwest part of Cleveland just over the Parma border in Old Brooklyn. Both still working full time, they treasure spending their evenings and weekends together. They love exploring the city of Cleveland and Bernie has shown Betsy some of the less familiar areas she had never seen. They go to parks, concerts, festivals, and restaurants. Because covid has limited their ability to go out, they have both reconnected to their music by buying new instruments and practicing at home.

Betsy found SWUU first, probably through her daughter Taylor's friendship with Adrienne Ellis. Although Bernie needed a little coaxing, they both decided to join as they appreciate being in a place where people think freely, and choose what they believe. They also like the commitment to social justice that is so prevalent in Unitarian Universalism. Betsy sings in the choir and can't wait until we can sing together again, and maybe Bernie will play the drums!

The Forum

Sharing and Caring

Dan and Susan Paxson are thrilled to share their joy of their first grandchild. Rowan Sophie Flynn, 8 lb. 1 oz., was born to Katie and Jeremy on St Patrick's Day. The family is happy and healthy and home adjusting to their new life together and awaiting our first visit!

David Slawson is now residing in Holy Family Hospice after a sudden diagnosis of severe metastasis of prostate cancer . Since family will be coming, **Sylvia Banks** requests no other visitors at this time. Cards and letters will be most gratefully received, though. The address is 6707 State Road, Parma, Ohio, 44134. Please keep Dave and Sylvia and their family in your thoughts and prayers.

** 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.