



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

September 1, 2021

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Roylton Road, North Royalton  
Limited In-Person and On Zoom!



### **September 5**

*Ancient Egyptian Origins of Bible Teachings*

While UU's may recognize many religious sources and paths, the teachings of Ancient Egypt is not one of them. In fact, until the hieroglyphs were deciphered around the year 1800, much of this knowledge and wisdom was lost. Even today, this knowledge is probably only common in academic circles, and the general public is largely oblivious to its insights and influences. Join us on this intriguing journey.

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

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

Focus Collection: Believe in Dreams

### **September 12**

*Failing to Move Forward: Wise Advice on Leaning Into the Unknown*

The sermon is inspired by a commencement address delivered to the 2014 graduating class of Naropa University by Pema Chodron titled "Fail. Fail Again. Fail Better." Pema Chodron is a Buddhist teacher, author, nun and mother.

-Led by Mike Gold

Worship Associate: anastasia birosh

### **September 19**

*The Hero Path*

We all look up to our own personal, inspiring heroes, whether they be religious, political, or otherwise. We'll explore what it means to embrace the possibilities in your own life to step up to the calling of being a hero in today's society.

-Led by Rae Brewer

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

### **September 26**

*My Non-Linear Approach to Finding my Faith Home*

I've heard it said that religion is for people who don't want to go to Hell, and Spirituality is for people who have already lived through it. Living, surviving and thriving after hardship and illness clearly illustrate my inherent worth and that of others. I wandered through a Spiritual Desert for many years before finding a religion and a church where I can fully be myself. I'd be honored to have you hear my story.

-Led by anastasia birosh

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

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## Message from your Minister

### Possibility

My dear SWUU family,

I am writing to let you know that I will be undergoing a non-emergency surgery at the end of August. My recovery is expected to take at least 4 weeks, so I will be out on sick leave (as well as using some vacation time) from Aug 23-Sept 20.

I will be sorry to miss this exciting time with you as SWUU steps back into in-person services! However, I would like to assure you that I will be back in the pulpit on October 3rd for a belated but joyous Water Communion service.

In the meantime, you are supported by many wonderful volunteers and two fantastic new staff members. Mei-Ti Mao and Carolyn Stevens, our new staff members, will be fully trained and available during my absence.

Our Worship Team is also fully prepared for my absence, with great ideas for the upcoming services.

For other issues or questions, feel free to contact the SWUU Caring Team via Gay Cady, or Dodi Lettus, the President of the SWUU Board of Trustees.

I look forward to returning to you in October!

Much love to you,

Rev. Meg

[minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org)

## The Forum

### **Focus Collection for September: Believe in Dreams**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

When reading the Metro Section of The Plain Dealer, Sunday August 15, I was impacted by the article "Something they could never imagine." It is about a Non-Profit Cleveland Charity called Believe in Dreams. Their mission statement is "To fulfill dreams of economically disadvantaged youth who have survived non-medical adversity by providing access to enriching opportunities, connection to community and hope for the future. The average age of "dreamers" is between 6 & 14. Dreamers are nominated by teachers, counselors, coaches or others who work with children. It is humbling to think that 1 in 6 dreamers ask for a bed. Most requests are for what most of us consider basic needs. The nominators conduct the interviews and coordinators work on "developing the dream based on interests or favorite things." Since it began seven years ago, 400 dreams have been granted at an averaging cost of \$3000. The organization raises money through fundraisers or as simple as telling the "dreamers" story. It certainly worked on me! I encourage you to check out <http://www.believeindreams.org>. Also, look for the above mentioned article in the Plain Dealer. Please think about donating to this worthwhile charity to enhance a child's life. A check can be sent to the office or put in collection marked September Focus Collection or through the VancoGivePlus Website. Thank you for your generosity.

### **Urban Hope News**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Urban Hope was closed the month of August for some repairs to the Storefront, As of today, there is no set date for going back to sit down meals. We will continue packing 30 bagged lunches, and the showers and bathrooms will be open for those in need. As is well documented, many homeless are reluctant to get the vaccine. Fortunately, the guests who do come for lunches and showers are willing to wear masks. There is too much unknown to know when it will be safe to have community dinners. SWUU is still planning on taking lunches the 2nd Sunday of the month although we will be going the September 19 next month. Any financial contributions or pre packaged food is welcome. Please contact Jan Wehn, Debby Gorencic or Nancy Peltola. Thank you for your consistent giving.

## The Forum

### **Contact People for the Month of September** by Dodi Lettus, Board President

During Rev. Meg's absence on medical leave, her e-mail will not be monitored, but we will have a UU Minister assisting the Care Team with any pastoral care needs that may arise. Please contact Gay Cady for assistance in any such matters.

For any non-pastoral care needs, you may contact Carolyn Stevens, our new Office Administrator/DRE at the Church phone number 440-877-1686 or [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org).

For anything else, please contact Dodi Lettus, Board President

Kristen Cimera will be leaving our staff here at SWUU at the end of September. She has been working full time as an accountant for the Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Kristen was first hired in March of 2019 as our Office Administrator and later in August 2020 transitioned into her current role of Finance Specialist.

We wish Kristen well and thank her for sharing her skills and expertise with us! If you would like to send a card to Kristen, please send it c/o SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Church, 6320 Royalton Rd., North Royalton, OH 44133. Emails can be sent to [finance@swuu.org](mailto:finance@swuu.org) until September 30.

After that date, we will no longer be using the [finance@swuu.org](mailto:finance@swuu.org) email. Financial duties will once again become part of the Office Administrator role. Our new OA/DRE, Carolyn Stevens, has 10 years of experience as a Church Administrator. With Kristen's help, I am sure Carolyn will learn Power Church quickly. Carolyn can be reached at [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org)

We thank Kristen for her willingness to work with Carolyn to make this a smooth transition for all involved.

# The Forum

## **What's Going on at SWUU???**

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

A new church year is beginning. Things are starting to open up and church is feeling somewhat more normal, and yet there is still some uncertainty in the air. Some of our small groups will be able to meet. Some may continue to meet virtually, but others may be in person. For each group or committee (with a couple of exceptions), I have listed the contact person so if you are interested in finding out more or possibly joining that group, you can give them a call. Please consider doing this, as the best way to get to know people at church is to participate in ways other than attending services. Here's the list:

- Adopt a Highway - Susan Paxson
- Aging Well - Gay Cady
- Antiracism Task Force - Adrienne Ellis and anastasia biros
- Board of Trustees - Dodi Lettus
- Buildings and Grounds - Dan Paxson
- Caring Team - Gay Cady
- Choir - Mei-Ti Mao
- Earth Alliance - Open
- Evening Book Group - Hallie Davis
- Facebook Pages - Joan Rizzo
- Finance Matters - Lydia Avery
- First Wednesday Coffee - Hallie Davis
- Forum Newsletter - Susan and Dan Paxson
- Game Night - John Goga
- Garden - Sherry Spencer
- Girls' Night Out - Susan Paxson
- Hospitality - Candy Poissant
- Leadership Development - no chair - Susan Paxson, Adam and Danelle Miller
- Meditation - Gay Cady
- Membership - Susan Paxson
- Men's Group - Mark Jackson
- Poetry Group - Hallie Davis
- Religious Education - DRE - Carolyn Stevens
  - Middle Years - Adrienne Ellis
  - Youth Group - open
- Social Justice - Jan When
- Stewardship Committee - Steve Doucette
- Swuulist Moderator - Deb Celinski
- Website - Joan Rizzo
- Wednesday Afternoon Book Group - Sue Davis
- Women's Group - Hallie Davis
- Women's History - Sue Davis
- Worship Team - Deb Celinski

# 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

## **News from the ZUUM Team**

by Dan Paxson , ZUUM Team Member

I'm writing to you on behalf of the ZUUM team that does the behind the scenes work of our services each week. Specifically, I'm writing for the so-called Gaffer part of the team. We do the audio/visual/video parts of the service which include images, hymn lyrics, screen sharing, and the video operations.

There has been some feedback that the hybrid services we are currently doing are difficult for some (though by no means all) people to hear when listening on Zoom. I wanted to explain the situation, describe what we're doing, and provide some ideas that you might try if you are one of those people. This is going to be a bit long. But it might be good for everyone to understand what we are trying to accomplish.

When we were in the thick of the pandemic and doing services exclusively on Zoom, we were using the platform exactly as it was intended. Rev. Meg was in the sanctuary and had a microphone directly in front of her. That microphone was able to use some sophisticated software that is built into Zoom which automatically filters out background noise and is specifically tuned to highlight a single human spoken voice. The music was pre-recorded, so you would hear it via Zoom's screen and sound sharing feature as the gaffer for a given week shared the Powerpoint presentation from their computer. The worship associate was sitting in their home and joined the service through their own Zoom connection.

With the hybrid scenario, we still have Rev. Meg in the sanctuary. However, we also have the piano live in the sanctuary (thanks Mei-Ti), and we have congregants singing hymns in the sanctuary (quietly and with masks, of course). All of this has to be picked up by the same microphone that used to only have to pick up Megan. To do this, we've had to locate the microphone away from the podium, and we've had to remove all of that spoken voice filtering software. Obviously, this is a compromise. The end result is that you can indeed hear everything on Zoom, but it's all a bit quieter, the spoken words aren't quite as crisp, the reverb of the sanctuary is evident, and there is also some extraneous noise when people in the sanctuary walk around or rustle their programs. We will continue to try and optimize this setup, but we are pretty constrained.

I and others have listened to the recordings of the past few services and, with the exception of our guest speaker (who was very quiet) and someone speaking with a mask, was able to hear them pretty well.

Most people who have had trouble hearing seem to be listening on devices like tablets, or small laptops, which do not have the greatest sound systems. I would suggest that you first try adjusting the volume (you can turn it back down after the service ends). If that doesn't work, you might try headphones or earbuds. If it still feels unworkable, please feel free to contact me. I am happy to work with you from the sanctuary to see if there might be some settings that will improve your experience.

I apologize for the difficulty that some are experiencing. There are technical ways to resolve this, but they require money and time that we don't currently have. On the other hand, I hope it is appreciated by all that a live service, with people playing, speaking, and singing at the very moment that you are listening, is special. A little reduction in sound quality is not a huge price to pay for such a gift.

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## Sharing and Caring

**Rev. Meg** got home last weekend and is doing well with her recovery. Cards and letters may be sent to her home

**Pat Mellott** will be having surgery on September 8<sup>th</sup> so please keep her in your thoughts and prayers. She said she will keep us posted on her progress afterwards.

**Susan Paxson** shares that our family is finally celebrating her dad's (Charles W West Jr) life at a place he loved, The Mountain in Highlands North Carolina.

*\* 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.