
The Forum

A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

February 1, 2022

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



February 6

Widening the Circle

This month we will begin our Congregational Read of the book "Widening the Circle of Concern." Our worship theme this month focuses on the theme of Widening the Circle. How do we challenge ourselves to be an ever more welcoming community?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: anastasia birosh

Focus Collection: Journey Center For Safety and Healing

February 13

Side With Love

In order to Widen our Circles, we must choose to Side With Love. This Sunday, join us as we explore the inspiration and challenge of the UUA's Side With Love Campaign.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

February 20

Life on the Margins

This morning's service centers on Fr. Gregory Boyle's ministry with The Delores Mission, and their shared work with a population in south LA who have recently been released from prison, or who are trying to leave gang life. Much of their efforts are driven by these words by Fr. Boyle: "We must try and learn to drop the burden of our own judgements, reconciling what the mind wants to separate, the heart should bring together. Judgement, after all, takes up all the room you need for loving."

-Led by Rev. Beth Marshall

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

February 27

Circle Round For Freedom

As February comes to a close, we take stock of our circles of influence. What great things can we accomplish when we Circle Round For Freedom?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

To Sign Up for In-Person Attendance Follow the Link Below:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lckrUXANbJUOWiaCCNHfoW61gsuhHPL5oZKAJZhSpYU>

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Message from your Minister

Widening the Circle

Dear SWUU family,

Recently, the Worship Team at SWUU has begun offering a “Land Acknowledgement” at the beginning of our Sunday Worship Services. This practice is new to us at SWUU, but by doing a spoken Land Acknowledgement, we are joining a larger trend of UU churches who are taking steps to de-center white voices in our congregational life.

The UUA released an Action of Immediate Witness in 2020 which invited all of us to “[Address 400 Years of White Supremacist Colonialism](#)” - no small task! This sort of work - addressing the ways that white supremacy is embedded in our culture - can bring up many reactions, including feelings of being overwhelmed, shame, guilt, helplessness, and hopelessness. To combat these unhelpful emotions, I would offer two thoughts to keep in mind:

- 1) Perfectionism is part of White Supremacist Culture. The idea that we must get things correct or not do them at all is a false dichotomy. We, as participants in a living tradition, are lifelong learners. As we learn, we know better, and when we know better, as Maya Angelou said, we do better. When we step out of our comfort zones, we will inevitably make mistakes.
- 2) Not one of us is ever alone. We are in this together. As we go through the process of learning and stepping out of our comfort zones, as we inevitably fail and learn to do better, we are supported in a loving embrace of beloved community.

During our most recent Worship Associate Team meeting, it was decided that the Sunday morning Land Acknowledgement would take place on the first Sunday of each month. This decision was based on our own ongoing learning about how to properly give a respectful amount of time to the Land Acknowledgment.

I am excited to announce that we will be returning to limited in-person worship starting February 6, so we will be able to celebrate these Land Acknowledgements (and much more!) in the sanctuary and on Zoom! As always, please do not hesitate to email me even just to say hello!

With so much love,
Rev. Meg

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Focus Collection for February: Journey Center For Safety and Healing by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

For the last several years we have made this organization out February Focus. It used to be known as Domestic Violence Advocacy for Women and Children, but changed the name to encompass more issues. To quote: *"At Journey Center for Safety and Healing, we believe providing basic education on topics relating to domestic violence, dating violence, and child abuse is critical to building awareness and addressing these public health crises in our community."* I have developed a positive e-mail relationship with Director Carol Carbary and was scheduled to visit the facility, but the weather changed our plans! We are planning to reschedule, and I will let you know after I visit.

Each month there is a different focus and workshops and information are geared to reach those affected. January was National Stalking Awareness Month and February is Teen Dating Awareness Month. Workshops are provided for anyone interested in learning about topics and to volunteer. There is a 24 hour hotline, and referrals for those in need can be made by any health professional, educators or friends. I would encourage you to check out the website journeyneo.org.

Please contribute to this worthwhile organization that benefits many needing protection from negative circumstances in their lives.

Send a check to SWUU 6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton OH clearly marked February Focus Collection or it can be taken out of your Vanco Account. Thank you for your consideration and generosity.

Urban Hope Update

by Jan Wehn, , Social Justice Committee

First of all, a huge THANK YOU for the many financial contributions. It is a help for us to continue packing lunches and taking a few extra items each month. Our Urban Hope Steering committee applied for a grant last year. Part of it is designated to buy clothing and other essentials for the guests. Needs vary depending on the season. For this reason, we have not been asking for any other donations to provide this service.

Our last visit was January 9. It was a cold, gray day, and many people were in line for lunches and showers. We can only allow seven 15 minute showers each Sunday which is frustrating. The community may also come in to use the bathroom and plug in their phones. It is disheartening that we are not available as a warming station. It is the policy of the Storefront to only allow people in for the basics. It is difficult to say "no," and some people get angry, but we need to stick to rules set by the Storefront and consistency is the key. Most of those who come are very appreciative and friendly, and it is a pleasure to serve them. Those of us who work truly miss the community dinners. As usual, we make 30 bags that include a sandwich, hard boiled egg, chips, fruit, granola bar, dessert, and drinks. We are also serving coffee and buying disposable cups. We are so grateful to be supported by our congregation, and your generosity is well served and appreciated. Our next visit is Sunday, February 13.

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Our Service Auction Opens Feb 1st for your Donations of Services and Items

How to Donate

- Go to our Auction Website at <http://togetherauction.com/swuu>
- Follow the Log In directions on the Website.
- Directions about how to donate are just below the Log In directions.
- Have questions or need assistance? Please e-mail us through the link provided on the auction website.

Why Donate and Participate

Not only is this a critical fundraiser for our congregation, but it's also fun and a wonderful way to Reconnect in a time of Disconnection!

What you might Donate

Some examples: Lead a hike. Host a game night. Host a casual dinner. Host a lunch. Host an afternoon game event. Host a BBQ. Offer handyman services. Teach a group how to do something...art project, garden design, musical instrument, etc. etc. Share a hobby. Bake a special dessert. Lead a tour. Lead an activity. Auction or sell artwork, handmade jewelry, or baked goods. Offer to make a raffle basket. Note: if interested in making a basket, please contact Susan Paxson, our basket coordinator.

When you can bid/buy services and items

- The Auction website opens for bids/buys on Saturday February 12. Note: You can continue to donate after February 12.
- The Auction closes on Saturday, February 26.

If you are somewhat new to our church

Please contact any of the following volunteers who are working on this event to learn how the service auction works. As an added benefit, you might get to know someone better. When I was new, I certainly needed an explanation! Here's who you might call or email to set up a call:

Adrienne Ellis
Candy Poissant
Lydia Avery
Sarajane Willson
Sharon Eckert
Sharon Abbey
Steve Doucette
Susan Paxson

This event is organized by The Stewardship Committee and Friends

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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

Get Connected!

If you would like to receive The Forum via email, or if you would like to join a newsgroup focused on issues of importance to SWUU, or if you would like to receive our weekly newsblast, e-mail connect@swuu.org and tell us which you want.

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

Reflections on Racial Justice

by MaryAnn Chee

Racial justice is a complex and multifaceted issue. It encompasses criminal, economic, educational, climate and environmental, and reproductive justice. It intersects with gender, sexual identity, socio-economic, ethnic minority, and religious equality issues. While racism is a worldwide problem, some of the current racial equality challenges are specific to the US, given its shameful legacy of slavery, genocide of indigenous populations, and the exploitation of indentured Asian and African labor.

A well recognized challenge to addressing racial injustice is how to meaningfully engage with individuals, especially those with privilege and/or power, regardless of their race or ethnicity, who are hostile or disengaged (i.e., those who deny, minimize, and are indifferent) to the causes and consequences of racial injustices as well as ways to achieving racial equality.

For those who are interested, there are already resources and information available on racial justice, including information on the UUA website, books, and podcasts. The causes and consequences have been widely studied. A range of individual, legal, systemic, and organizational solutions have been proposed, and some have been implemented.

I wonder how effective it would be to have any more commissions, conferences, or studies by the privileged on racism in creating real changes beyond more documentation and confirmation of racial injustices and some progress made.

Racial justice is a moral issue for many. For those who are hostile or disengaged, the moral argument is likely to be not enough. Some might be amenable to becoming aware and engage in racial justice actions when there are personal, financial, political, and/or legal reasons to do.

Unless they choose to do so, people of color, especially those who are or were experiencing racial injustice, are not obligated to educate others on racism nor should they be shamed or blamed for being disengaged.

A positive development is the increase in the range of activism and advocacy actions taken toward achieving racial equality. People of color running for office and being elected are examples of such actions. Technological tools can provide powerful ongoing evidence of where systemic changes are needed and where positive changes are made. Social media and other technological advancements give people of color ways to be heard and seen instead of remaining invisible and insignificant.

Is New SWUU for You?

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

For those of you who have been coming for a while and are wondering about getting more involved, we invite you to consider taking the next step on the path to membership. Twice a year, we offer a two-session class called 'New SWUU' as an opportunity to meet with other new friends and some of our members. We will share what brought us to SWUU, and talk about the highlights of Unitarian Universalist history and our spiritual way of life. It is also a chance for you to ask us any questions you have about our church.

The first session will be held on Tuesday, February 22 from 7:30 to 9:00 pm and the second on Sunday, February 27 from 11:45am to 1:15 pm. We hope you can come to both sessions. They will be facilitated by Rev. Megan. This is one of the steps toward membership for those considering joining, but it is also just a way of finding out more about us. If you are unable to attend this spring, the

series will be offered again in the fall. We are hoping to have these classes in person; however, if you would rather attend via zoom, we can make that option available, similar to our Sunday services. If you would like to attend, please email me. Also, please let me know if you would need child care. We hope to see you there!

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Roadmap for Adopting the 8th Principle at SWUU

by anastasia birosh (they/them) on behalf of the Antiracism Task Force

On Sunday, January 16th, the SWUU Board of Trustees honored the Antiracism Task Force (ARTF) by allowing us to give a presentation about adopting the 8th Principle.

At the time of the presentation, 145 UU congregations across North America had adopted the 8th Principle. At the time of this writing, just ten days later, the total has increased to 150 UU congregations. Fortunately, there seems to be increasing momentum to adopt the 8th Principle.

During our presentation (mostly put together by Adrienne Ellis, co-chair of the ARTF), we addressed what the 8th Principle is, what it seeks to do, and why individual congregations need to adopt the Principle before the UUA can formally include it.

Other issues addressed include: “Why Now?” ,the Living Tradition of our religion, and some of the next steps. I like to call it “The 8th Principle Roadmap to Adoption.” Below, are the parts of this roadmap.

8th Principle Statements

The ARTF will continue presenting 8th Principle Statements every other week. We invite interested people to make a 3–5-minute statement supporting SWUU adoption of the principle or explaining why the 8th Principle is important to you. Contact Adrienne Ellis or me if you are interested in presenting.

Congregational Survey

Check your mailbox (virtual and physical) for a congregational survey sometime in mid to late March 2022. It’s vitally important that we hear from everyone in the congregation. The answers to the survey questions will be instrumental in determining if Cottage Meetings are necessary for April and May of 2022.

Congregational Read

The task force has chosen *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change* as the SWUU congregational read. The Commission on Institutional Change was established in 2017 by the UUA Board of Trustees “to conduct an audit of white privilege and the structure of power within Unitarian Universalism, and analyze structural racism and white supremacy culture within the UUA.” *Source: Unitarian Universalist Association website*

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The reasons for our choice of *Widening the Circle of Concern: Report of the UUA Commission on Institutional Change* as our congregational read include:

- The UUA sanctions the Report and its findings
- The Report includes Recommendations and Actions that can/should be enacted by individual congregations and the UUA
- Essentially, this congregational read can provide a roadmap for what happens after adoption.

The discussions begin on March 9th, 2022, and conclude on May 26th, 2022. They are all on the SWUU website event calendar, listed as “Congregational Read Discussions” everyone is invited to participate. The “syllabus” will appear in the March 2022 Forum.

In closing, I’d like to tell you a bit about the work members of the ARTF have undertaken thus far. One of the first things we did was read “me and white supremacy” by Layla F. Saad. This powerful book facilitated a straightforward, honest look at myself, how I was “tone policing” in my thoughts, and good at “optical allyship,” but hadn’t a clue about how to live it. I am rereading the book. We also wrote our own Antiracist Mission Statements.

My mission statement has changed and grown as I have changed and grown, so I am sharing my mission statement with you as an act of covenant.

To use my white privilege in the active dismantling of white supremacy culture, structural racism, and other oppressions. I will do this work one conversation and one person at a time to build a beloved community here on earth and make needed reparations to BIPOC and other oppressed and marginalized people on behalf of myself and my racist ancestors.

Being an antiracist is a life-long journey, and the Antiracism Task Force hopes you will join us as we work to adopt the 8th Principle. The next meeting is February 24th at 7:30 pm in the customary Zoom room. Please join us as we move forward on our congregational life journey.

Girls' Night "In"

or

Girls, Grins, and Giggles (AKA Ladies' Monthly Pot Luck Dinner)

by Susan Paxson

Many thanks to **Valerie Hura** for hosting our fun dinner last night. The weather was cold and snowy and Val lives in Lakewood, so only four of us ventured out, but we had a great time! We didn't even end up getting any games out because we were having such an interesting conversation! The way it works is that one person hosts the gathering on the fourth Friday of the month at the time of their choice, usually 6:30. The host handles food sign-up and that's about it. The other decision the host can make is her vaccination requirement. The last few hosts have chosen to require this, but it is up to the host to make that call and let people know. The name of the event has been evolving over time, as the title of this article highlights, but no matter what you call it, we always have a good time together. Anyone who identifies as female or gender nonbinary is welcome to take part. Would you be interested in hosting in February? Please let me know and I will put your info in our calendar for February 25th.

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Sharing and Caring

Lydia Avery is home recovering from foot surgery. She is doing fine, but she cannot drive for a month. She is grateful that Deb Celinski was able to loan her a scooter so she can get around her house.

** 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.