


The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

June 1, 2023

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



June 4

The Power of Play

All too often we think of play as being something for kids, and not as much for adults. But play can be a nourishing and connective spiritual practice for all ages! Join us this Sunday as we unlock the power of play.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: anastasia biros

Focus Collection: The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland

The SWUU Choir will sing in this service

June 11

The Duty of Delight

As we strive to live lives of purpose and meaning in a world with so much heartache, delight can easily sound like a frivolous pastime. But what if delight is more crucial to that purpose and meaning than we realize? Join us this Sunday as we explore the duty of delight.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

June 18

The Stirring of Song

Join us this Sunday as we lift our voices in celebration of hymns and songs that move us and delight us. We hope you will stay after the service for our annual congregational meeting.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

The Annual Congregational Meeting will take place after the service (see page 6)

June 25

Darn Delightful!

What delights you? Join us this Sunday as we revel in delight.

-Led by Worship Team members Sarajane Willson, Leslie VanKuren, Deb Celinski

Worship Associates: Sarajane Willson, Leslie VanKuren, Deb Celinski

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Message from your Minister

Creativity

Dear Ones,

In June, our worship theme is Delight. Someone who teaches me so much about delight is the poet, Mary Oliver. In that spirit of delight, I offer you this excerpt from Mary Oliver's poem "To Begin With, the Sweet Grass":

II.

Eat bread and understand comfort.

Drink water, and understand delight.

*Visit the garden where the scarlet trumpets
are opening their bodies for the hummingbirds
who are drinking the sweetness, who are
thrillingly gluttonous.*

For one thing leads to another.

Soon you will notice how stones shine underfoot.

Eventually tides will be the only calendar you believe in.

*And someone's face, whom you love, will be as a star
both intimate and ultimate,
and you will be both heart-shaken and respectful.*

*And you will hear the air itself, like a beloved, whisper:
oh, let me, for a while longer, enter the two
beautiful bodies of your lungs.*

This is one of those passages that I like to read over and over and over and over and over whenever I come across it. I keep re-reading it until it feels like a prayer that moves me through my day. Perhaps you may want to try letting it do the same for you and see what happens.

And I hope you will join us in worship this month as we explore this theme of delight!

Yours in faith,
Rev. Ali

PS. Do you have a favorite hymn from one of our hymnals? Or perhaps a favorite song to sing that feels spiritually significant to you? Let me know by emailing minister@swuu.org! On June 18, our worship service will be centered on hymns and songs that move us or delight us and we want to try to include your picks!

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Focus Collection for June: The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

The LGBT Community Center is a leading non-profit advocacy, service and training center located in the Gordon Square neighborhood on the west side of Cleveland. Executive Director Phyllis Harris notes that its mission is to “enrich the lives of LGBTQ+ people through support, advocacy, education, and celebration.” SWUU has been proud to dedicate our June Focus Collection to the Center for many years.

Center outreach includes providing social/emotional support to community members, providing training workshops to over 700 participants, connecting individuals with health care providers, legal aid, nutritional services, and so much more. They are dedicated to establishing a safer, accepting, and just environment for all people, which is in close alignment with several UU Principles.

On June 3, 2023 Pride in the CLE will be an in-person march and festival as efforts continue to ensure that NEO has a Pride event that celebrates the LGBTQ+ Community, and advocates for the equitable and just treatment for all in our community. SWUU is registered to march, so please join us as we celebrate our vibrant diverse Cleveland community. Contact Deb Celinski if you’re interested in joining the fun. You can learn more about the Center and its many impressive programs by visiting www.lgbtcleveland.org.

Your Focus Collection donation to support equity and inclusion can be sent by check to SWUU, 6320 Royalton Rd., North Royalton, OH 44233; please write LGBT Center on the memo line. Or use the Vanco mobile app and indicate Focus Collection. Much love and gratitude for your generosity!

Urban Hope Update by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Sunday, May 7 was a peaceful and enjoyable day at Urban Hope. The temperatures were mild and the Guests were feeling good. Debby Gorencic and my daughter in law, Jessica joined me in serving Chicken Nuggets, Potato Salad, Cheese sticks, hard boiled eggs, an assortment of bars, crackers and chips, and delicious homemade cupcakes. Although we had plenty of food, it was all eaten! We were able to give seconds which is always nice. We will be joining the other UU churches in providing a Memorial Day Picnic on Sunday, May 28. Our next scheduled visit at the Storefront is Sunday, June 18. Again, thanks for all donations! It is a huge help.

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Board Happenings

by Mike Gold, Board President

Author and garden writer Jean Hersey said that “June is the gateway to summer.” So it is. In our backyard, the wisteria and peonies are beginning to bloom and our summer hydrangeas are growing fast.

As summer begins, our church year is drawing to a close, which means our annual meeting is upon us. Please mark Sunday, June 18 on your calendar (see agenda elsewhere in the Forum). We need your attendance and participation in approving a new Board of Trustees, the Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (formerly the Anti-Racism Task Force), a revised Land Acknowledgment, and our 2023-24 Budget. Let us also gather to celebrate what a wonderful year this has been now that we are back together in person. We have a dynamic new minister in Reverend Ali, an amazing RE Director/Office Administrator in Carolyn, a pianist in Marina, who fills our sanctuary with heavenly sounds, and a choir led by Janet Williams that also fills our halls with beautiful music. And how fortunate are we to have so many volunteers donating time to groups and committees and caring and hospitality and grounds maintenance and Sunday services, both in person and online? When I hear the stories of how so many UU Churches are struggling post-Covid, I count the blessings we have here at SouthWest UU.

In other news...

SWUU has participated in Cleveland’s Pride Day for many years. Deb Celinski is organizing our participation for the Saturday, June 3 march downtown. If you are interested in joining in, please contact Deb. We have a new banner that will be rolled out for the event donated by Deb and designed by Deb and Sharron Abbey. This is a great opportunity to celebrate and support our LGBTQ+ community and promote fair and just treatment for all. Rev. Ali is also organizing a group of folks to participate in the Brecksville-Broadview Heights PrideFest on June 10. Please contact Rev. Ali if interested.

The Board of Trustees has adopted a budget for next year that is expected to run a deficit. While we have the reserves to cover this, there is hope that cost savings and increased pledges and membership will grow in the years ahead. Despite our tight budget, the Board approved a 6% cost of living increase for our minister and staff. We felt it important to show support for who they are, what they do, and help out with the rising cost of living. Many thanks to our Treasurer, Steve Doucette, on his work in preparing and presenting the budget.

The UUA General Assembly, which is the UUA’s Annual Meeting, is June 21-25 in Pittsburgh. We will be represented by Rae Brewer and anastasia birosh, as well as Reverend Ali. One of the major discussions will concern revisions to Article II. Rae and anastasia have held a couple meetings to explain the revisions and hear feedback. Please contact them if you would like to know more.

The Racial Justice Accountability Ministry conducted two inspiring discussion sessions on the UUA’s Common Read, *Mistakes and Miracles: Congregations on the Road to Multiculturalism*, by Nancy Palmer Jones and Karin Lin. The book shares the experiences of five diverse congregations as they journey to create multicultural, anti-racist Beloved Community. Even if you missed the discussions, the book is compelling reading and an excellent way to learn about the challenges and value of working to achieve one’s mission.

In Religious Exploration news, Carolyn, Rev. Ali and others are taking the Coming of Age class on a field trip to Cincinnati on June 2 to visit the Holocaust Museum and Freedom Center. Carolyn and Rev. Ali are also working on plans to set up a kids play area in the sanctuary.

In closing, I want to celebrate and remember the amazing services we had in May, beginning with the Music, Poetry and Art Sunday organized by the SWUU Music Team. That was followed by the service led by Rae Brewer and anastasia birosh on “Imagining a Future for Our Faith,” where they presented the ideas of the UUA’s Article II Study Commission. On May 21, Rev. Ali led us in a “Flower Ceremony,” marking the 100th anniversary of this tradition begun by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek. Finally, Chaplain Ian Anderson presented a service on how creativity and expression contribute to the infinite expansion of our universe. Let us all celebrate what has been and look forward to what is to come.

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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 on our website calendar.

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.

Do you need to contact someone on the SWUU Staff?

Rev. Ali Peters (Minister) (440) 305-0631
Mike Gold (President)
Carolyn Stevens (Church Administrator) (440) 877-1686
Carolyn Stevens (Director of Religious Education)

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

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The Forum

SWUU Annual Congregational Meeting June 18th (immediately after the service)

Agenda:

Welcome

Opening Prayer

Recent news and updates

- Sunday services on Zoom
- Security
- General Assembly

Confirmation of a quorum

- 19 members required

Collection of any proxy forms*

Election of new Board members and officers

Approval of new Board

Presentation/Approval of RJAM and Land Acknowledgment

- See following page for details

Presentation of the 2023-24 Budget

Approval of the Budget

Closing words

Closing prayer

*Voting can be done by proxy if you are unable to attend the meeting in person or by Zoom.

To designate a proxy, you must designate in writing:

- The date of the meeting for which the proxy is granted
- The name of the substitute voting member
- Indicate name and date

Send via email or hand deliver to Board Secretary Sharron Abbey (abbeygold@ameritech.net) prior to the meeting.

Your proxy MUST be a voting member. A voting member “shall not serve as a proxy for more than two other voting members at any one meeting” so please check with your intended proxy before you designate them to vote for you.

Cake and coffee will be available in our Fellowship Hall following the meeting. All are welcome.

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Annual Meeting Ballot Items

Anti-Racism Task Force Becomes Racial Justice Accountability Ministry

On the ballot for the upcoming Annual Meeting is a proposal to affirm the Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (formerly known as the Anti Racism Task Force) as a congregational committee.

The Anti Racism Task Force, formed in 2020, fulfilled its mission to have SWUU adopt the 8th Principle. Because a task force is meant to be short term, they would like to continue this work as a permanent committee approved by the congregation to help SWUU live into the 8th Principle. The Racial Justice Accountability Ministry (RJAM) hopes to do this through education, discussion, and an audit of our policies, by-laws, and practices that will hopefully lead toward a more multicultural, antiracist, and just beloved community.

The Board of Trustees has voted to support the adoption of RJAM as a committee. It is the hope of the Board that the congregation will also vote to support this.

Land Use Acknowledgement Becomes Fully Congregational

The following statement is read monthly at the beginning of our Sunday services. At the annual meeting there will be a vote on adopting this land use acknowledgment as a congregation. Until now, it has been a statement adopted only by SWUU's Worship Associate team.

Land Use Acknowledgement

We, the members of Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church, acknowledge that our building sits on land in the state now known as Ohio. We are guests of the traditional stewards of this land.

Ohio is the traditional territory of different indigenous tribes and nations, including the Delaware, Lenape ([Len-a-pee], which roughly translated means The People), Shawnee, Wyandot, Miami, Ottawa, Potawatomi [Pot-a-watt-a-me], Erie, Eel River, Munsee, Mingo, Sauk, including the Annishnabe aka Ojibwe or Chippewa, Kickapoo, Wea [Why-a], Piankashaw [Pie-ank-sho], and Kaskaskia [Kas-kas-kia], Catawba, and Tuscarora. Later the Seneca and even the Cherokee made their way to Ohio - which, by the way, is based on a Shawnee word.

Indigenous people are still here despite ethnic cleansing, forcible removal, unrecognized sovereignty, and outright denial of their existence. Land acknowledgment is just a first step towards healing. Colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to be aware and build mindfulness of our present participation in it.

SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Church members and friends gratefully acknowledge Philip Yenyo, Executive Director of the American Indian Movement of Ohio for his guidance in correcting this Land Acknowledgement.

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Women's Fellowship Gathering by Susan Paxson

Carol Jagers has offered to host our gathering in June. She lives in Strongsville at 10791 Gate Post Road. She is going to have it be a salad bar potluck with everyone bringing something to put on top of a salad. I would provide the lettuce, dressing and beverages. Toppings could be anything from tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, cheese, radishes, avocados to nuts, salmon, tofu, chicken, etc.--whatever people like on their salad.

The gathering will be on Friday, June 23rd starting at 6:00 PM and anyone who identifies as female is welcome to attend. Please RSVP by texting 440-666-7433.

A Day of Zen **Hosted by CloudWater Zendo** **Saturday, June 24 9am - 3pm** **Southwest UU Church**

CloudWater Zendo, the Zen Center of Cleveland, presents "A Day Of Zen" at Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church on Saturday, June 24th from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Activities will include meditation instruction, seated and walking meditation, chanting, Dharma Talks by Senior Monks, discussion, and Internal Arts exercise. A vegetarian/vegan lunch will be provided. FEE: \$10. To register with CloudWater Zendo, one may access the Zendo's Begging Bowl link: <http://www.cloudwater.org/index.php/the-begging-bowl>. The registration deadline is Tuesday, June 20th.

Shih Ying-Fa, abbot of CloudWater Zendo, is the day's organizer. He has been a guest speaker at SWUU several times and has always been well received. If you are interested in learning more about Buddhist practice, meditation and Buddhist teachings, you will love this. Half of your donation will go to SWUU.

For more information, contact Mike Gold at mikeyg2452@icloud.com.

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Sharing and Caring

**Please 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.