



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

September 1, 2023

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



September 3

Be a Croissant, Not a Doughnut

What does it look like to be a welcoming community? How is our welcome connected to our faith? And what does all this have to do with baked goods? Come and find out!

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Sarajane Willson & Cynthia Mondia

Focus Collection: Minister's Discretionary Fund

September 10

Ingathering Water Celebration

The first worship service of each program year, in mid-September, is our multigenerational "ingathering" service, when we re-gather after the summer may have taken some of us in different directions. We mark this ingathering with our annual water celebration ritual. On this Sunday, you are invited to bring some water from a place that is significant to you (whether that be your kitchen sink or a far off stream). Come as we join our waters together in community during this service for all ages!

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

September 17

Welcoming Change

"The only lasting truth is change" writes American science fiction writer, Octavia Butler. Come this Sunday as we wrestle with how to welcome change into our lives, into our hearts, and into our faith.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Carter Porter

September 24

A Whole Note in Common Time

Everything takes up space. The space which music occupies is measured in units of time. How do we measure a welcome?

-Led by Jared Hammond, Music Therapist, Member, East Shore Unitarian Universalist Church

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

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Message from your Minister

Welcome

Dear Ones,

Our worship theme for September is “Welcome.” As I wrestle with this theme and all it can teach us, I find myself thinking about everything in life that I don’t feel welcoming toward. Those things, feelings, people and experiences that I struggle to welcome. Sometimes with good reason (like when something causes harm). Sometimes because I just simply feel resistant.

But welcoming can be a spiritual practice.

I’m very grateful to my beloved colleague at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland, Rev. Randy Partain, who shared with me a guided meditation that they adapted from a Jesuit prayer. It serves as a great practice of welcoming – and of the letting go that welcoming might require.

I invite you into this practice with me. Find a comfortable position, wherever you are. Settle into your body. And follow along:

Welcoming Reflection

First, we feel whatever emotions we feel completely—including their connection with our physical feelings.

We don’t judge or try to change them.

We just feel them.

Second, we say:

Welcome. Welcome. Welcome.

I welcome everything that comes to me today, because I know it is useful to me in my journey.

I welcome all thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

I welcome all persons, situations, and conditions.

I welcome reality as it is in this moment, even as I welcome the possibility for change.

Then, we let go:

I let go of my attachment to power and control.

I let go of my attachment to affection and pleasure.

I let go of my attachment to esteem and approval.

I let go of my attachment to survival and security.

I let go of my attachment to how change must happen.

I let go of my attachment to how I must change.

I open to the presence of love and wholeness within me.

Last, we open:

I open to the connection of my innermost being and I open to the guidance of my deepest, life-affirming values.

Amen and Blessed Be.

May we cultivate this practice of welcome, dear ones. May we let it transform us.

With love and gratitude,

Rev. Ali

PS. I hope to see you on September 10th for our annual Ingathering Water Celebration! Our water celebration is a treasured Unitarian Universalist ritual where we invite you to bring water from someplace that is significant to you so that we can join all our waters together in community. Bring some water from your favorite lake or creek or from your kitchen sink! We hope to see you there!

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Focus Collection for September: Minister's Discretionary Fund

by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

During the month of September, we will collect monetary offerings to benefit the Minister's Discretionary Fund. This fund is used by the minister to assist our own members and friends of SWUU to meet their basic living needs such as buying food, paying a utility or medical bill, or helping to pay for transportation.

In addition, the fund may be used to provide financial assistance with church-related expenses such as paying for an event registration or fees for someone to represent our church. A private appointment may be made directly with Rev. Ali to confidentially discuss a special monetary need.

Donations may be made by check at a church service or by mail to SWUU, 6320 Royalton Rd., North Royalton, OH 44133. Please write Focus Offering on the memo line. Or you may use the Vanco GivePlus app and just check Focus Offering. As always, thank you for your generosity.

Urban Hope Outreach Update

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

The Urban Hope Storefront was closed the month of August. We resume our services welcoming and feeding guests Sunday, September 10. Although SWUU will be providing the food, we will not be serving. Fortunately, members of the other churches will take our place. We will return to full service on Sunday, October 8. As usual, thanks for your support and all donations are welcome!

A Year of Music

by Katie Maslar and Susan Paxson, Music Team

Can you believe our music team has been hard at work for a year already? We help Rev Ali and other guest ministers choose hymns for Sunday worship, coordinate special music, and work with our collaborative pianist, **Marina Kerze** as well as our choir director, **Janet Williams**.

Some of you may not be aware of this new process for creating music at SWUU. We realized that it was difficult to find someone to do everything we wanted a music director to do in a ¼ time position, so we brainstormed other options. When we asked the board to let us try something new, they agreed. We hope you are as happy as we are with the results.

As our first year draws to a close, we'd like to thank both Marina and Janet for their excellent work. We could not have done this without them; we've certainly had a year full of wonderful music! If you are interested in learning more about how you can join our music team, sing in the choir, or even perform special music on your own, just email music@swuu.org, or talk to one of our members, **Ellen Hansen-Ellis**, **Susan Paxson**, **Lydia Avery**, or **Katie Maslar**. We look forward to creating much beautiful music in the year ahead.

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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.

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

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Board Happenings

by Deb Celinski, Board President

Happy September! It's hard to believe that summer is nearly over!

One of the final events of the summer for SWUU was our successful participation in the North Royalton Community Festival on Saturday, August 26 and Sunday, August 27. A big thank you to Mike and Sharron Gold, who spearheaded the effort. Also thank you to all who staffed our table, including Don Bryant, Steve Doucette, Carol Baker, Dodi Lettus, Candy Poissant, Sherry Spencer, Gayle Doucette, Lydia Avery, Sue Wraight, Sharon Eckert, Gaye Cady, and Kirk Jusko.

One of the highlights of the fall will be our annual Fall Fest, which will occur on October 21, at North Park, 3595 Grafton Rd, Brunswick, OH. Mark your calendars now!

You'll soon be noticing some new signs around the church: one to point visitors to the KeyBank Lot for Sunday parking, another to designate a space in the East parking lot for parents with small children, and one to establish a space for nursing parents to use during services.

The Board is working to establish a library policy to guide SWUU's acceptance of books after it was suggested that we create a space for lending out books.

As always, Board meetings are open to members of the congregation. Meetings through December are scheduled for September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.

Upcoming Potluck Lunch

by Candi Poissant, Hospitality Committee

There will be a potluck lunch in the fellowship hall after the service on Sunday, September 17.

We hope to have some yummy food, good conversation, and fun. Plan to bring something and join in. There is a sign-up sheet outside the sanctuary.

To save on cleanup, this will be a bring-your-own-tableware event. Of course, if you forget, a plate and silverware will be provided.

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Save the Date for SWUU Fall Fest

by Steve Doucette

When: Saturday, Oct 21, starting at 1:00 PM.

Where: North Park, 3595 Grafton Rd., Brunswick, Ohio

What to Expect: Fun – Family and Kids Activities – Socializing
– Beautiful Fall Weather (Keep Your Fingers Crossed)

*Mark your calendars and watch for further announcements
regarding details.*

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Introduction to West African Drumming

by Julie Evonna

Come and learn to play the djembe! Let's connect & have fun!

Instructor ~Julie Evonna

Dates ~Thursdays: September 14 - October 19 from 10-11:30

No experience is necessary. We'll begin with the basic sounds of the djembe and learn multiple traditional West African rhythms.

Class drums provided or bring your own djembe.

For more information and reservations, please call~Julie Evonna

Please RSVP by 9/7

"Drumming is the simplest thing that we can do to bring us together." ~ Babatunde Olatunji

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Sharing and Caring

Kathy O. Smith is asking for healing thoughts and prayers to be sent to her son Brandon Smith. He is recovering from a recent motorcycle accident. Brandon has had a tough life, and this setback will be another challenge. All your positive thoughts and prayers are appreciated. Here is his address if you want to send him a card, in which you should mention SWUU!

Ellen Hansen-Ellis and **Ken Ellis** recently welcomed home their oldest son, Jordan, after a one-year deployment with the Ohio National Guard to Syria and Iraq. Jordan is in great spirits, and the family (including brother Troy and “baby” sister Adrienne) is overjoyed to have him home safe and sound.

**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.