



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

October 1, 2023

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



### October 1

#### *Finding Out at Mee-maws Age: A Heritage of Coping Skills*

Having been recently diagnosed with ADHD and Autism at the age of 60, Jacquie Zarley shares her journey; the absurdity of such a late diagnosis and her discovery that ADHD and ASD are both highly heritable (60–93%). This is, indeed, a great heritage. It is not simply a brain that works differently; a disability, but a vast resource of creative, courageous, and downright ingenious coping skills.

-Led by Jacquie Zarley, Candidate for UU Fellowship, Intern minister, North Unitarian Universalist Church

Worship Associates: Rae Brewer

Focus Collection: Front Steps Housing and Services

### October 8

#### *What We Inherit*

When we are brought into this world, we all inherit characteristics, practices, beliefs, cultural customs, systems, and institutions from those who came before us. What do we do with this inheritance? Are there parts that are useful and life-giving? Are there parts that hold us back? How do we move forward with wisdom, compassion, and creativity? Come this Sunday as we wrestle with these questions.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

### October 15

#### *The Whole Self with Welcome and Love*

Welcoming and loving our whole self can be challenging. Let's explore our heritage of Love as we look inwardly at self, at our institutions and ultimately our interconnection.

-Led by Rev. Will Humphrey, minister, East Shore UU Church

Worship Associate: TBA

### October 22

#### *Remembrance Sunday*

As Halloween and All Souls Day approach, we remember those who came before us in life and have passed on to whatever happens after death. This Sunday, you are invited to bring a picture or a small token or reminder of a loved one who has passed on. You will be welcome to place these at our altar of remembrance during the service.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Adrienne Ellis

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October 29

*The Boldness Within – A Special Visit from Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell*

In all of our lives there are those whose legacy of work and ideas shape our own lives. I have been blessed by generations who shaped me. There are others, whom I never met, whose lives have shaped my life in unexpected ways. Rev. Antoinette Louise Brown Blackwell was one such person. I learned of her determination and tenacity while researching a paper for a history class. I discovered a woman who was a force of nature, and I began to admire her greatly. For more than two decades she has walked beside me as an inspiration. Revisiting her life reminds me about continuing to learn and to engage with all of the world

-Led by Rev. Beth Marshall

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

## Message from your Minister Heritage

Dear Ones,

This month in worship, we are wrestling with the theme of Heritage. Often, when I think of my own heritage, I fondly remember a picture of some of my elder relatives standing together dressed up as the Swedish flag. This was a picture that adorned the front of a family reunion invitation from my childhood – my mom’s side of the family is full of VERY proud Swedes!

But, as much as I love Swedish meatballs and rice pudding, when I think of heritage as a spiritual theme in our lives, the concept becomes so much bigger and deeper and richer. I want to share with you excerpts of a letter from the writers of Soul Matters – a UU resource-sharing series that we subscribe to here at SWUU. I love the way they dig into this theme of heritage:

*Some people are your relatives, but others are your ancestors, and you choose the ones you want to have as ancestors. You create yourself out of [their] values.*

— Ralph Ellison

Be on the lookout, friends. The ghosts are on their way! After all, you can’t talk about heritage without talking about - and encountering - ancestors.

And we’re not talking about relatives here. As Ralph Ellison points out, there’s a big difference between relatives and ancestors. Relatives give us our brown eyes and bowed legs; ancestors bestow a legacy. Relatives are those we tell stories about; ancestors call us to carry stories forward. Relatives live on in our DNA; ancestors live in the whispers of our hearts. Our relatives allowed us to be here; our ancestors tell us why we are here. The difference comes down to values. Values we use to construct not just our stories but ourselves.

...Ancestors don’t just remind you that they came before; they remind you of those who will come after.

Another way to put this is to say that ancestors remind us that we are part of something larger...

Which of course also means that our hands are connected. Our ancestors handed precious projects to us. We are asked to hand those precious projects on to those who follow. And they will hopefully continue the sacred chain.

And in the end, maybe that’s what this heritage thing is all about: seeing ourselves as part of a sacred chain. We are not small. Our lives are not insignificant. Our lives aren’t even entirely our own. Every choice we make has consequences for others. Every word we write with our lives twists and propels a plotline that began before we got here and will continue after we are gone.

It all helps us see that it’s not just relatives and ancestors that differ. Heritage & history do too. History may rightly shout, “It’s important to know where we came from!” But heritage says, “You matter! Even more than you know.”

You matter! Even more than you know, beloveds.

With love and gratitude,  
Rev. Ali

# The Forum

## **Focus Collection for October: Front Steps Housing and Services** by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

The October Focus Offering will benefit Front Steps Housing and Services, a long time partner and recipient of SWUU's support. Front Steps is a nonprofit, 501(c) organization dedicated to ending the cycle of homelessness in Cuyahoga County through permanent supportive housing and services.

Located in Cleveland's Ohio City, Front Steps Housing and Services is rooted in the near west side community and recognizes the potential of the men, women and children they serve. Their mission is to provide individuals and families who are mentally disabled and/or economically disadvantaged with permanent, supportive housing and lifelong solutions to increase self-sufficiency and independence. They realize their mission through safe, affordable housing; client-centered comprehensive case management; and supportive services including life management, work force training, financial literacy and individual programs. Their facility has 60 housing units, all equipped with a kitchenette and individual bathroom. Residents are referred by homeless shelters through the Cuyahoga County Central intake process.

Donations may be made by check at a Sunday church service or by mail to SWUU, 6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton, OH 44133. Please indicate Focus Offering on the memo line. The Vanco GivePlus Website can also be used for Focus Offerings. Thank you for your support of this important community resource.

## **Urban Hope Outreach Update** by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

The Urban Hope Storefront was closed the month of August. We resumed our services welcoming and feeding guests Sunday, September 10. Although SWUU provided the food, members of the other churches took our place. We will return to full service on Sunday, October 8. As usual, thanks for your support and all donations are welcome!

## **UU 101 and SWUU 101** by Susan Paxson, Membership

We at SWUU are so pleased to see new faces coming through our doors and returning again and again! You are welcome here. Would you like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism and this church? Does SWUU feel like a place where you belong? Are you curious about getting more involved? Are you wondering about what it means to become a member?

Two times a year, we offer a series of classes for people who might be new to UU or even people who have been coming for quite a while. In UU 101, we will share a bit about our spiritual journeys, talk about the highlights of Unitarian Universalist history and theology, and look at how our faith continues to evolve today. In SWUU 101, the second class, we will talk more about our congregation, ways to get connected, and what it means to be a member of Southwest UU Church.

We are inviting everyone to attend both classes. UU 101 will be held on Sunday, November 5th from 11:45-1:15 pm and SWUU 101 will be the following Sunday, November 12th at the same time. These classes are offered by our Membership Committee and will be facilitated by Rev. Ali. Attending them 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 fall, this series will be offered again in the spring. If you would like to attend UU 101 or SWUU 101, please RSVP to me. Child Care will be available. We hope to see you there!

# 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 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](http://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](mailto: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](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

## **Board Happenings**

by Deb Celinski, Board President

Boo! Happy Halloween! Okay, I'm a bit early, but it is that time of year for ghost and goblins, and apple cider and pumpkin spice everything!

One of the highlights of the month will be our annual Fall Fest, which will occur on October 21 starting at 1:00 pm (see article in this Forum). There will be lots of activities for the entire family, so please join us for some seasonal fun!

Your Board had a very productive meeting in September.

We updated our Committee on Ministry policy, so it is in line with our practice and approved two members, Ken Ellis and Sarajane Willson. Also on the committee are Mike Gold and Pat Woodside.

We also established a library policy to guide SWUU's acceptance of books after it was suggested that we create a space for lending out books.

You've probably noticed how wonderful the music has been at services over the past year. We can thank our fantastic Music Team, which comprises Ellen Hansen-Ellis, Susan Paxson, Lydia Avery, and Katie Maslar. The Board has formalized the new structure. As the Bylaws allow the Board to "establish task forces or new committees as deemed necessary," we have officially designated the Music Team as the Music Committee.

You may have also noticed that our website, [www.swuu.org](http://www.swuu.org), has been spruced up a bit. Thank Rev Ali and our DRE/Office Admin Carolyn Stevens for that! Rev. Ali reports that some pages are still under construction, but the redesign looks great so far. Check it out!

Finally, I'd like to put a bug in your ear about volunteering to teach RE this year. Carolyn has made it super easy, as she has written lesson plans for the next couple of months. All you need to do is spend time with the young ones among us! Please consider service in this way, as our kids are the future of our UU movement. Please contact Carolyn at [office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org) to volunteer!

## **Would You be Willing to Help?**

by Katie Maslar, Zoom Team

Our Sunday service Zoom team is looking for a few more people to join our team. Hosting our Zoom platform during the service is a fairly easy job. You need to be at church around 9:45 am to start the computer, and start the meeting, and you can leave at a normal time. Most of the work is done at the beginning of the service, and the greeter may ask you to help with collection. You'll use the church laptop, and we have a handout and some notes on what to do. I am also happy to guide you through the process as many Sundays as you'd like. If you have any questions, please reach out to me.

## **Evening Book Group**

by Hallie Davis

We are starting a new book: **THE BLIND ASSSSIN** by **Margaret Atwood**. The book is available at the library or you may purchase the book. Half-Priced books is local. [www.Thriftbooks.com](http://www.Thriftbooks.com) is a great site for books and reasonably priced. On Mondays, October 9 and 23, we will meet from 7-8:30 pm on the SWUU Zoom link. When we meet on October 9th we ask that you read pages 1-35. We'll discuss and do some reading together.

All are welcome to join us. If you have any questions, please contact me. Looking forward to a great read with you!

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## **Wednesday Book Group** by Sue Davis

On Wed., 9/27, the book group starts a new book: Gods of the Upper Air; How a Circle of Renegade Anthropologists Reinvented Race, Sex, and Gender in the 20th Century by Charles King. The book describes how a college professor, Franz Boaz, and his female anthropology students fought to prove that racial and cultural categories were biological fictions. Margaret Mead was one of those students. The lives and works of Margaret Mead and the other female anthropologists are examined. The book is described as a "narrative history of radical ideas and passionate lives." We meet on the church zoom site every Wed. from 1 until 3. We always welcome new attendees, but the beginning of a new book is the best time to start attending. Feel free to contact me for more information.

## **Saving Democracy and Issue 1** by Carol Thombs

Saving Democracy is something that we all need to be focused on as we think about elections. Peace, liberty and justice for all are a centerpiece of beliefs as UU's and of our democracy. As members of SWUU, it is imperative that we vote and that our votes reflect those important beliefs.

Issue 1 is being promoted by some as a pro-abortion issue. This simply is not true. Issue 1 is about rights and democracy. As written, it preserves a woman's right to contraception, fertility treatment, continuing her own pregnancy and health care during a miscarriage. A "no vote" deprives women of this right to make appropriate decisions that will affect them and their families and loved ones. Doctors, too, need to have the freedom to protect the health of their patients as they practice medicine and to do so without fear of being sued or losing their licenses. These decisions may have major impacts, either positive or negative, on the physical, economical and emotional well-being of women and of the doctors who treat women and those in other medical fields that may be impacted.

A "no" on Issue 1 has potential for far-reaching effects. Some important dermatological, cancer and other medications may be removed from tools that doctors may use because they may effect fetuses. Preteen and teen girls who have been raped need to be supported, not forced to become a mother before they have even completed their own childhood. Not providing reproductive health care during difficult pregnancies, may have long term effects on a woman's health, her ability to have future pregnancies, or even her survival. Women should not need to struggle financially and emotionally to provide for their families when they do not have the resources to provide sufficiently for their children. Economically, the defeat may result in further burden on citizens. Without certainty of availability of contraception and of abortions may result in potential increases in the numbers of children and the inability of all women/parents to provide for those children.

All our rights and democracy are so important to us as individuals and collectively as a society. Issue 1 is a democracy issue. Please vote, and when you vote, vote for democracy. Be a part of saving our democracy.

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### **“Getting to Know You”**

Interview by Dodi Lettus

Caring, curiosity, and commitment—these were recurring themes in my conversation with **Carol and Bill Thombs**. They worked for many years as educators. Bill taught math, was a guidance counselor, a secondary school administrator and principal at Cloverleaf High School. Carol was a comprehensive science teacher and a gifted education teacher for grades K-12. She also taught Conceptual Chemistry for teachers at Kent State University. They both have a strong commitment to making the world a better place and preserving our environment.



They worked on a coral reef project in Belize and a turtle rescue in Costa Rica. They support the Arc of Appalachia, a project to preserve the beauty, balance, and biodiversity of wildlands in Appalachian Ohio. Carol and Bill live on a lake and their property is a certified national wildlife refuge filled with native plants and pollinator plants.

The turtle rescue project took place in Costa Rica, involved the 6-foot-long leatherback turtle, and was sponsored by the Baltimore Aquarium. This project benefitted not only the turtles, who were endangered, but also provided a new economic base for the former poachers who increased their income by 500% by safeguarding the turtles while maintaining the health of the environment.

Carol and Bill were members of the UU Church of Akron for many years before coming to SWUU. In addition to their environmental activism, they are politically active, working to preserve democracy through supporting liberal causes and candidates. Bill is a precinct captain in Chippewa Lake, where the couple now lives. Carol is the president of the Medina chapter of SOAP—Saving Our Adolescents from Prostitution—which provides information monthly about missing children to hotels with the goal of preventing or interrupting the trafficking of children.

At one time Carol and Bill had an alpaca farm. A standard alpaca produces about 4 pounds of high-quality fiber and an equal amount of coarser fiber. Carol told me this led to her interest in fiber arts and felting. She and Bill also enjoy hiking and traveling. While raising their family, they were able to take 6-week camping trips with their three children, visiting the western National Parks and Canada.

Carol and Bill also enjoy cross-country skiing in Vermont and had a memorable camera safari in Africa. They have 8 grandchildren. Their children have followed in their footsteps. Their daughter is a social worker with the PEP program (Positive Education Program) for at-risk youth. One of their sons is a teacher and coach. Their other son lives north of Montreal, Canada and is a medical researcher at McGill University. Welcome to SWUU Carol and Bill!



# The Forum



The Stewardship Committee, Stewardship Friends,  
and the Hospitality Committee are pleased to host

## **SWUU Fall Fest**

When: Saturday, Oct 21<sup>st</sup>, 1-4 PM (Raffle drawings at 3 PM)

Where: North Park in Brunswick where we held it last year.  
3595 Grafton Rd., Brunswick, Ohio

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

Fall Fest will include outdoor socializing, pumpkin decoration, warm apple cider and hot chocolate, halloween costume contest, craft activities, potluck snacks, raffle, and so much more.

**Great News – It's Free!** No charge to attend. Except for the raffle, there is no charge for any activities, including the potluck snacks.

**Voluntary Donations:** We will provide a donation box if you wish to support our church with a voluntary donation. You will not need cash. We will have donation forms, and we will bill you.

**Raffle Tickets:** You won't need cash if you want to buy raffle tickets. We will bill you for the tickets you sign up for. Tickets will be \$1 each.

**How can you help?** To make this a successful event? Here's some things you might like to do:

- **Potluck Snacks.** The hospitality committee will be providing warm cider and hot chocolate. If you wish, bring some of your favorite snacks to share. Since we'll be outside, please individually wrap pieces or portions of your snacks. (For example, two cookies wrapped or bagged.)
- **Halloween Costumes.** Wear a fun costume. If you wish, participate in our costume contest. Many categories will be awarded fun prizes.
- **Raffle.** Bring an item or small group of items for our raffle. We would like to see items for kids, adults, and families. Sarajane Willson will be coordinating the raffle. Please contact Sarajane Willson to ensure we don't have duplicates:



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### Sharing and Caring

Please keep **Eli Butler** in your thoughts and cares this week, as their dog was very sick and had to cross the rainbow bridge. If you'd like to send a card, their address is:

**Valerie's** mom, **Holly Hura**, fell and broke her hip. She is recovering from surgery at The Avenue of Strongsville. She could use our healing thoughts and support. Cards can be sent to her at:

Please keep **Susan Paxson's** stepmother, **Beverly Cree** in your thoughts and prayers. She and her friend Terry were in a car accident on Wednesday evening. Although neither of them was seriously hurt, the car was totaled and they were pretty shaken up.

\* *Please 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.