



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

October 1, 2024

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



October 6

Listening Across Difference

In a world that feels so divided, listening can be hard to do. How can we harness the healing power of listening across difference, while also taking care of ourselves and holding our values close?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Eli Butler

Focus Collection: Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio

October 13

Prayer

When we think about prayer, it is easy to get stuck on questions around who or what we are praying to and whether our prayers will be answered. But what really is prayer? How might it be related to listening? What might it be able to offer our lives, regardless of our personal theological beliefs?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Ken Ellis

October 20

Covenant Circle Sunday

Join us to learn about the power of deep listening and the experience in covenant circles.

-Led by Worship Team members Sarajane Willson & Kirk Jusko

October 27

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 Associates: Deb Celinski

The Forum

Message from your Minister

Deep Listening

Dear Ones,

You may have noticed that I've gotten into the habit of using these Forum messages often as a chance to share some of my favorite poems and readings with you related to the month's worship theme. I've come to get excited about what piece I might get to share here each month and what it might offer us. It's also become a spiritual practice of my own to spend the month meditating on that one specific reading – returning to it over and over again. Finding different ways the spirit might be calling to me with each text. Perhaps you may join me in that practice?

For October, our worship theme is “Deep Listening.” As I reflect on this theme, there is one poem that grabs my heart and does not let it go.

“Sometimes” by David Whyte

Sometimes
if you move carefully
through the forest,
breathing
like the ones
in the old stories,
who could cross
a shimmering bed of leaves
without a sound,
you come to a place
whose only task
is to trouble you
with tiny
but frightening requests,
conceived out of nowhere
but in this place
beginning to lead everywhere.

Requests to stop what
you are doing right now,
and
to stop what you
are becoming
while you do it,
questions
that can make
or unmake
a life,
questions
that have patiently
waited for you,
questions
that have no right
to go away.

May we listen for those questions, dear ones. May we never stop listening for those questions that have patiently waited for us and that have no right to go away.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

PS. If you would like to dive even further into the spiritual practice of deep listening, I hope you will consider joining one of our SWUU Covenant Circles! Covenant circles are meaningful small group ministry experience that offer a chance to build relationships with others in the congregation while deepening our spiritual lives through reflection and deep listening. If you are interested in participating, I invite you to reach out to Sarajane Willson who lovingly coordinates this small group ministry.

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Focus Collection for October: Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

For the October Focus Offering the Social Justice Committee has selected a local, nonprofit organization that we have not previously supported. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio provides fun, safe places for kids ages 6-18 in Cleveland, Greater Akron, Lorain County and Erie County. Our selection was based on a recommendation from one of our SWUU members and the fact that the Clubs recently lost \$3 million in federal funding. Although they organized a Save the Clubs campaign and also received some reallocated support from the state, the funding gap has not been completely closed. As a result, only 32 of the 49 Clubs remain open this Fall.

The mission of Boys and Girls Clubs of Northeast Ohio is: "To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens". Kids who join a club receive opportunities in athletics, art, music, career readiness, college scholarships and leadership. They get a free meal each day as well as help from caring adult mentors. Families benefit because parents/caregivers can keep working with the knowledge that their children are in a safe, positive and cost-free place after school.

Donations may be made by check during a church service or by mail to SWUU, 6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton, OH 44133. Please indicate Focus Offering on the memo line. You may also use the Vanco GivePlus app and check Focus Offering. Thank you for your support of a great organization.

Urban Hope Update by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Our next visit to Urban Hope is Sunday, October 13. As of now, Susan and Dan Paxson have volunteered to help me serve. We could use 2 more volunteers. Please let me know if you are willing to attend. We can use all donations: prepared snack foods, salads, fruit, cash, or anything else that you think will be appreciated by the community. Thank you!

Consider Joining a Covenant Circle This Year by Sarajane Willson, Coordinator

Consider joining a Covenant Circle this year. A Covenant Circle is a spiritual practice in listening. The circles meet once a month at the convenience of the members. The topics for each session coincide with the themes of the sermons. The group focuses on listening. All words said are confidential and are not shared outside the group. Maximum seven people commit to attending all the meetings from October through May. A circle is not a discussion group. We are guided by a covenant. Each member has the opportunity to speak. Other members listen without interruption or feedback. Past members will attest to the power of listening and participating in a covenant circle. There will be more information regarding an initial meeting and scheduling the groups. Last year SWUU had three active circles. For the upcoming session, more circles and participants are anticipated. For more information, contact Rev. Ali or Sarajane Willson. Consider this opportunity to think more deeply, care more deeply and above all, listen more deeply.

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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

The Forum



The Stewardship Committee, Stewardship Friends,
and the Hospitality Committee are pleased to host the
2024 SWUU Fall Fest

When: Saturday, October 5th, 1-4 pm (Raffle drawings to be held at 3 pm)

Where: Neura Park, 4637 Center Road in Brunswick,
or at SWUU in case of inclement weather

What to Expect: Fun, Food, Family-Friendly Activities and Socializing

Fall Fest will offer outdoor socializing, pumpkin decorating, warm apple cider and hot chocolate, a Halloween costume contest, craft activities, snacks, raffles, and more. Neura Park also has a beautiful playground for our younger guests.

Great News – It's free! No charge to attend. Except for the raffle, there is no charge for any of the 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 don't need cash. We will have donation forms and 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 request. Tickets are \$1 each.

How can you help to make this a successful event?

- **Bring snacks to share.** The hospitality committee will provide warm cider and hot chocolate. If you can, bring some of your favorite snacks to share.
- **Wear a Halloween costume.** You can enter our costume contest or just enjoy being in character. Many categories will be awarded fun prizes.
- **Participate in the raffle.** The stewardship team has collected several fun, seasonal items for the raffle. Consider buying raffle tickets for \$1 each at the event or early if you prefer. Please reach out to Sarajane Willson at sassysjw@gmail.com or 440-503-6363 if you'd like to purchase tickets early. You don't need to be present to win!
- **Sing along.** Bring your guitar or other instrument to join the sing along.
- **Just show up.** Bring family and friends. Everyone is welcome!

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A Message From Your Board President

by Rae Brewer

Hello friends,

I am reaching out about an exciting upcoming event. As you know, we voted on installing Rev. Ali as our settled minister this summer. It is traditional to install a minister formally in an installation ceremony. This event is a joyful, celebratory affair similar to an ordination service. It will be a time for us to celebrate entering a new chapter of our shared ministry together.

Planning an installation service is no small feat - it can take a few months or more to plan. As they say, many hands make light work. There is a guide/installation manual from the UUA to guide us in planning this event. I am reaching out to you all, beloveds, to ask if you would be willing to join a task force to plan an installation service for SWUU. We will need participants and a chair willing to help us organize this joyful occasion for our congregation.

If you have any interest in helping out with this task force, please reach out to me directly so I can create a list of folks. I will reach out to everyone interested to organize a planning session to start us off. Depending on the number of folks, I may plan one in-person and one Zoom meeting in the interest of accessibility and availability.

Thank you, all!

UU 101 and SWUU 101

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

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, Nov 2nd at 11:45 AM and SWUU 101 will be the following Sunday, Nov 9th at the same time. We are holding the classes at church, and we hope that you might be interested in joining us. They 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 and/or SWUU 101, please email me or call. If you need child care, please let us know! We hope to see you there!

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GCC News!

by Susan Paxson, GCC delegate

This is something we can all get behind, ending Gerrymandering; the fight isn't over until we make sure it passes on election day! Save the date for October 10th at 7:00PM at Trinity Cathedral! Bring a friend, and show up with us for this action! Susan and Dan Paxson have a full car, but we can take two if necessary and no one else can drive. Please text Susan or Ellen if you are interested but need a ride, and we will see what we can do. If you do plan to go and are willing to drive, let us know that, too.

SWUU has shown up for the last few actions, and I know we can do it again! Won't it be interesting to see which politicians show up?

Hope you can attend. Additional information and the registration link are shown below. We need to know how many people will be there so they are prepared with enough seats in our section!

Stop Rigging the Game: GCC's Oct. 10 action to end gerrymandering in Ohio

Join us Oct. 10th at our Battle for Democracy (BFD) action on Issue 1 and our friend banking campaign to reach voters across Cuyahoga County! Sign up to attend GCC's Oct. 10 action [here](#).

WHO: You, GCC leaders, and invited public officials/politicians

WHAT: Action and friend banking (contacting our friend networks about voting). We want to make sure the people in our lives are involved in the big fight for democracy. Let's organize and tap into our own networks to reach friends and family that care about what we care about and take action!

WHEN: Thursday, Oct. 10, 7 pm (please arrive by 6:30 for parking and seating)

WHERE: Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, Ohio 44115

WHY: After collecting 13,000 signatures for this ballot initiative, it's time for GCC to act on its push to end politicians selecting voters versus voters selecting their politicians. Candidates for Ohio Supreme Court and Senate are invited to attend.

Issue 1 on Gerrymandering

by Carol Thombs

Several people have been asking about Issue 1, especially since the Ohio Supreme Court ruled on the ballot language. The ballot language, written by Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose was altered only slightly by the Ohio Supreme Court. The Ohio Supreme Court is made up of 4 Republicans and 3 Democrats. The important thing to remember is that if Issue 1 is passed, the language that will go into the Ohio Constitution will be the language of the petition not the ballot language. Important points:

1. Ohio is one of the 10 most gerrymandered states.
2. The gerrymandering in Ohio has been ruled unconstitutional 7 times.
3. Do not read the ballot language because that isn't relevant. Check the petition language citizensnotpoliticians.org, which is what will go on our constitution if passed.

Gerrymandering is drawing districts to give one political party an unearned advantage over the other. BOTH PARTIES use or have used gerrymandering to get this unearned advantage.

Gerrymandering affects voters' ability to have a real voice in elections. This November 15 districts are uncontested; that is, there will be only one major party candidate for the Ohio General assembly. Of the 84 districts with 2 candidates 62 of them have been drawn as safely Republican or Democratic seats, where the favored party can be expected to win with 55 percent or more. As a result, about 9.1 million Ohioans - 77 percent of the total population - live in districts that will be uncontested or uncompetitive. We have lost our ability to have a choice in choosing our candidates.

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Sharing and Caring

Sharon Eckert is home now for the second time and is doing well. She welcomes calls, cards, and visits.

Nancy Matsko would appreciate continued healing love and support as she moves through the healing process from covid fatigue.

**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.