



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

August 1, 2025

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



August 3

How Can I Keep From Singing?

Come this Sunday as we lift our voices in celebration of hymns that move us!

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

Focus Collection: Nothing this month (see page 3)

August 10

Overcoming Racial Exclusion

How it feels growing up black in America. A personal story of finding personal power in a culture that tries to take it away.

-Led by Cynthia Mondia, SWUU Worship Associate

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

August 17

What Even Is Unitarian Universalism?

Whether you are new to our faith movement or whether you have been a UU your whole life, come this Sunday as we explore together what it means to be Unitarian Universalist in this day and age.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

August 24

Question Box Revisited

During July's "Question Box Sunday" we celebrated questions and curiosity by giving you the opportunity to submit questions for our minister, Rev. Ali, to respond to. Come this Sunday for part two, when Rev. Ali will tackle your questions she wasn't able to get to in July's service.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Kirk Jusko

August 31

TBA

Please see our website or our weekly news later this month for details about this service.

-Led by Eli Butler, SWUU Worship Associate

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

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Message from your Minister

Trying Softer

Dear Ones,

I've been grieving the death of my favorite poet, Andrea Gibson. They died on July 14, 2025.

I've always appreciated poetry here and there, but Gibson is the poet who really made me get poetry – why it is important, how beautiful it can be, and how it can bring us to truths deeper than we knew were possible. Their work is soulful and generous and honest and full of love. And they aren't just *my* favorite poet – their life and their work has meant so much to so many people. On the day they died, my newsfeeds and algorithms made it feel like the entire internet was grieving along with me.

In the weeks since their death I have been re-reading their work and sharing pieces of theirs with loved ones in tribute to them. Their words have been living on my heart and, right now, these particular words from their poem, "The Year of No Grudges," keep coming up for me:

*I know most people try hard
to do good and find out too late
they should have tried softer.*

I wonder, what might it look and feel like for you to "try softer," beloveds? Where can you inject softness into your life?

May we all experiment with trying softer. With so much gratitude to those who, like Andrea, have lovingly modeled that softening along with the power and wisdom that comes with it.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

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No Focus Offering for August!

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Dear Friends,

We decided not to propose a Focus Offering for August. You have all been so generous the entire year, particularly with Urban Hope. We will resume in September and have a couple of new organizations in mind!

The following is a list of the monies collected from June 2024 - June 2025:

June 24	LGBT	\$685
July 24	Cuyahoga Valley National Park	\$601
August 24	Seeds of Literacy	\$598
September 24	Minister's Fund	Confidential
October 24	Boys and Girls Club	\$498
November 24	Greater CLE Food Bank	\$590.25
December 24	UUSC	\$543 collected in church but many donations were sent directly to UUSC
January 25	Habitat for Humanity	\$683
February 25	Journey Center	\$590
March 25	Planned Parenthood	\$796.10
April 25	US Committee for Refugees	\$674.42
May 25	Greater CLE Food Bank	\$717.00
June 25	LGBT	<u>\$632.00</u>
GRAND TOTAL		<u>\$7607.77</u>

WOW!!! Remember, this does not Include donations for Minister's Fund and money sent directly to UUSC.

I am very proud to be a part of such a generous church! Thank you all for supporting worthy, non-profit organizations in our community.

Urban Hope Update, July 13, 2025

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

This was our last summer Sunday, as we take August off and resume in September. It was a hot but great day. Nancy and Denny Peltola and Mick and Anne Stentz joined me in serving about 50 hungry guests.

We had a Chicken Pasta Salad, Corn Soufflé, Watermelon, Oranges, plenty of take aways and delicious desserts. Guests were appreciative and satisfied.

We resume our service on Sunday, September 7th. I'm hoping a couple of volunteers can join me to bring food and serve. Since we didn't have the Memorial Day Picnic, we are having a Welcome Back Picnic. I will supply hotdogs and buns but would appreciate Pasta or Potato Salad, Watermelon cut in triangles, and any other picnic food. Plus, take aways are always needed...chips, crackers, nuts, etc. Please let me know if you can volunteer and donate food (or cash)! Thank you for everything!

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Greater Cleveland Congregations Update

by Susan Paxson, Delegate

Yesterday was our monthly Engage GCC meeting at Olmsted Community Church (the newest member of GCC). It was rather nice to be on the west side, although, from Parma Hts, it still took me almost a half hour to get there. It was not quite as convenient as the meeting in June at our own space in North Royalton. GCC is growing slowly, and more west side churches are joining. If you have a good friend who belongs to a church around here, reach out to them. Tell them about GCC, especially if they are interested in Social Justice. They could contact me if they want to find out more, and they could attend a meeting with me to see for themselves!

Some of the updates they shared at this meeting are :

Pretrial Justice: working to identify individuals with expertise in conducting relational meetings. The team's research has shown that the way the justice system is working with these individuals is not lessening the time that people are incarcerated before they even have a trial. Also, they are planning a fall action and invite judicial candidates. I will let you know about that date, ASAP, because usually they want a lot of people to attend these actions. If you have an interest in getting involved in pretrial justice, contact me and I will put you in touch with members of the team.

Crisis Diversion Center: There is a new behavioral Health and Addiction Center which will open in 2026. This means that the Cuyahoga County Diversion center that GCC advocated for starting almost 10 years ago, will close. The new center will have all of the services of the old one, but will include law enforcement drop-off without a prescreening. GCC has always advocated for this, and is very much in favor of the new center. It will include 24-hour crisis intervention, longer term stays, pharmacy, adolescent urgent care, detox, and more, all in one place. It also will have the capability for stabilization in a locked unit which is rarely needed, but beneficial, because law enforcement is more likely to use it, which will keep more people out of jail.

Battle For Democracy: Cleveland lost two wards in the last census, so there will be some important city council races this fall. The team is planning an action around two specific races, where two incumbents will be competing for the position. One of these wards is the Lee-Harvard neighborhood where we are working on our healthy blocks initiative. Presently this initiative is on hold as they secure funding after the current administration's federal cuts to medicaid.

The next GCC meeting will be the fourth Thursday in August (August 28th at 7 pm) and I would love to have someone attend with me! It will be at Forest Hill church in Cleveland Heights. Finally, if you cannot participate in any of the initiatives the GCC is working on, due to time constraints, or distance away, they can also use our financial donations. This is another way that we can support social justice issues in the city of Cleveland. GCC, like any other non-profit organization runs on a tight budget, and they spend their money to keep their organization going, just like our own church!

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SOUTHWEST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

5-9
pm

AUG
15TH
2025

JOIN US FOR OUR AFTER
HOURS RE CELEBRATION

Join us for a fun filled evening of dinner,
games, creativity, mindfulness, and friendship!

RSVP to

CAROLYN
OFFICE@SWUU.ORG

SWUU

6320 Royalton Rd., North Royalton, OH 44133

+440-877-1686

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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

Grab Your Popcorn for Another Movie with RJAM!

by Adrienne Ellis, Chair RJAM

The Racial Justice Accountability Ministry is hosting another movie screening on **Sunday, August 10** after the church service (around 11:45am). We'll stream "Summer of Soul," a documentary about the 1969 social and political landscape during a big concert, the Harlem Cultural Festival. Feel free to bring your lunch or a snack, and we hope you'll stay for a short discussion after the film.

A Brief History of Our Memorial Garden

by Sherry Spencer

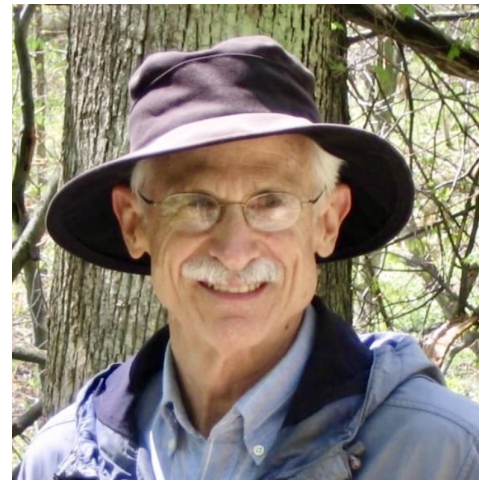
The Who, When and Why of our beautiful garden was the vision and crafting of our beloved member David Slawson. Known worldwide as a master Japanese garden designer/architect extraordinaire.

One of David's gardens of fame is located right here in Cleveland at the Botanical Garden! His creative work there was just honored in their summer 2025 publication of Forest & Gardens.

"The Japanese Garden has been delighting visitors for 50 years."

"The design concept came from three sources, but it was David A. Slawson's proposal that captured the spirit of the project."

-Forests & Gardens, Summer, 2025



David was a devoted member of our SWUU community...and a longtime partner of Sylvia Banks! Many of us in the congregation were fortunate to have developed wonderful friendships with him. I knew him best as a soft spoken, thoughtful, talented and a very funny guy!

To our delight when we invited him to share his vision for a memorial garden-a place of beauty, a place for reflection for members, friends, and the community-he accepted enthusiastically!

It was May 2010 when ground was broken on what was to become SWUU's home. The actual construction and planting of the Memorial Garden began in the Fall of 2011.

(continued on next page)



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David's beautiful vision has certainly become a landmark high on the hill in North Royalton...a thing of beauty, a joy forever!



Sharing and Caring

Carol Jaggers shares, "The second and final surgery to fix my broken leg last week was a success. Screws and plates hold the tibia in place; I wear a boot to support the fibula and ankle while they mend on their own. Currently keeping weight off of the leg for the next couple weeks and keeping it elevated. I have a follow up appointment with the orthopedic surgeon on August 5 to find out how the bones are healing and when I can start physical therapy."

Congratulations to **Gavin Hearst, Valerie Hura's** son, who graduated from Lakewood HS, and will be heading off to Bowling Green State University in the fall.

**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.