



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

October 1, 2025

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



### **October 5**

*What's Your Ministry?*

At Rev. Ali's installation service in September, there was a lot of talk about our "shared ministry." How can we share the ministry? What is your ministry? **Stay after the service for our Connection Café to learn more about ministries and activities happening at SWUU!**

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Sarajane Willson

Focus Collection: Three Sisters Intertribal Organization

### **October 12**

*On Grasping and Compassion*

Buddhist teachings tell us that grasping is the root of suffering. What is this 'grasping'? How might releasing our grasp open us up to greater compassion? And what does any of this have to do with National Coming Out Day?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Kirk Jusko

### **October 19**

*Compassion in Community Ministry*

How is compassion expressed in community ministry? Join us this Sunday as we learn about accompanying seriously ill people with kindness and compassion.

-Led by Rev. Kristy Stuart, Palliative Care Chaplain in Cleveland, and Affiliated Minister with UCC

Worship Associate: Dan Paxson

### **October 26**

*Remembrance Sunday*

As Halloween, Samhain, 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: Deb Celinski

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## Message from your Minister

### Compassion

Beloveds,

Our worship theme for the month of October is “Cultivating Compassion.”

Wrestling with each month’s theme is a spiritual practice of mine that is built into my job as your minister. And I learned in seminary to never start by asking myself “What do I have to say about this theme?” That question will not quite point us toward the kind of deeper truths we seek as a faith community.

Instead, the questions I ask are “What struggles does this theme uncover for myself and for my congregation in this season of life?” and “What is God/Spirit/Love saying to us through this theme?”

When I asked both of these questions about this month’s theme, I was led back to this poem that we have used in worship before, but felt entirely new amid all that has happened in our world since we last read it.

“Because” by Rosemary Wahtola Trommer

So I can’t save the world—  
can’t save even myself,  
can’t wrap my arms around  
every frightened child, can’t  
foster peace among nations,  
can’t bring love to all who  
feel unlovable.

So I practice opening my heart  
right here in this room and being gentle  
with my insufficiency. I practice  
walking down the street heart first.  
And if it is insufficient to share love,  
I will practice loving anyway.  
I want to converse about truth,  
about trust. I want to invite compassion  
into every interaction.  
One willing heart can’t stop a war.  
One willing heart can’t feed all the hungry.

And sometimes, daunted by a task too big,  
I ask myself, What’s the use of trying?  
But today, the invitation is clear:  
to be ridiculously courageous in love.  
To open the heart like a lilac in May,  
knowing freeze is possible  
and opening anyway.  
To take love seriously.  
To give love wildly.  
To race up to the world  
as if I were a puppy,  
adoring and unjaded,  
stumbling on my own exuberance.  
To feel the shock of indifference,  
of anger, of cruelty, of fear,  
and stay open. To love as if it matters,  
as if the world depends on it.

Amid the overwhelming violence and sorrow in the world, may we practice loving anyway, beloveds. May we stay open. May we love as if it matters, as if the world depends on it.

With love and gratitude,  
Rev. Ali

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## **Focus Offering for October:**

### **The Three Sisters Intertribal Organization**

by Jan Wehn & Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

Indigenous People's Day is Monday, October 13. It aims to celebrate Native Americans and Indigenous Cultures and History. Therefore, we are pleased to commit to the Three Sisters Intertribal Organization for our October Focus Offering. As you read in last month's Forum, Mike Gold and Kirk Justo have an updated Land Acknowledgment that has been approved by RJAM. It is one of our church's priorities to "acknowledge with respect the various Indigenous peoples on who ancestral lands we worship". Mike Gold also explained The Three Sisters Intertribal Organization and their annual Pow Wow. Hence, we are pleased to offer financial support to demonstrate our commitment to promoting Indigenous Culture. Please support this worthwhile organization and cause.

## **Urban Hope Update**

by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Nancy & Denny Peltola, Mick Stentz and I took a meal to Urban Hope Sunday, September 7th which was the first week after the August break. It wasn't as busy as normal since the community will be getting back into routine. Hence, we had a quiet and super enjoyable day. The guests were treated to Fried Chicken, Macaroni salad from Nancy, a HUGE tossed salad donated from Leslie VanKuren, watermelon, grapes, and gourmet desserts made by Angela. It was a feast and no one walked away hungry! We didn't have many take aways but enough to make people happy. It was a great day. Our next visit is October 5th. We would appreciate any donations, financial or otherwise. It is rewarding to support our neighbors in need.

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

On Sunday, October 5 after the church service, we will be hosting our second **Connection Cafe**, where all are invited to learn about the many congregant-led committees and ministries SWUU has to offer!

Committee leaders have been contacted to identify a representative for their group, and we are inviting any of you to consider bringing finger foods/small bites so the event can also have a mini potluck feel.

Please contact Adrienne Ellis with questions or suggestions ([ellisa3214@gmail.com](mailto:ellisa3214@gmail.com)). We hope you will plan to attend!

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## **UU 101 and SWUU 101**

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

We at SWUU are so pleased to see lots of 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 9th at noon and SWUU 101 will be the following Sunday, Nov 16th at the same time. The classes usually last around an hour, and it is not too late to sign up! 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 at [susan@paxson.us](mailto:susan@paxson.us) or call 216-543-9387. If you need childcare, please let us know! We hope to see you there!



### **Birthday Open House!**

By Deb Celinski

I'm hosting a birthday open house on October 4 to celebrate my 60th birthday and my 20th year as a cancer survivor with all my family and friends! It will be held at the church, from 2:00-7:00 pm. For more details (and to RSVP if you wish to drop by) see this link: <https://forms.gle/2Ka8E2vHzc4NSRUi9>

# 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 23rd of the month unless otherwise noted.

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
Adrienne Ellis (President)	
Carolyn Stevens (Church Administrator)	(440) 877-1686
Carolyn Stevens (Director of Religious Exploration)	

### 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

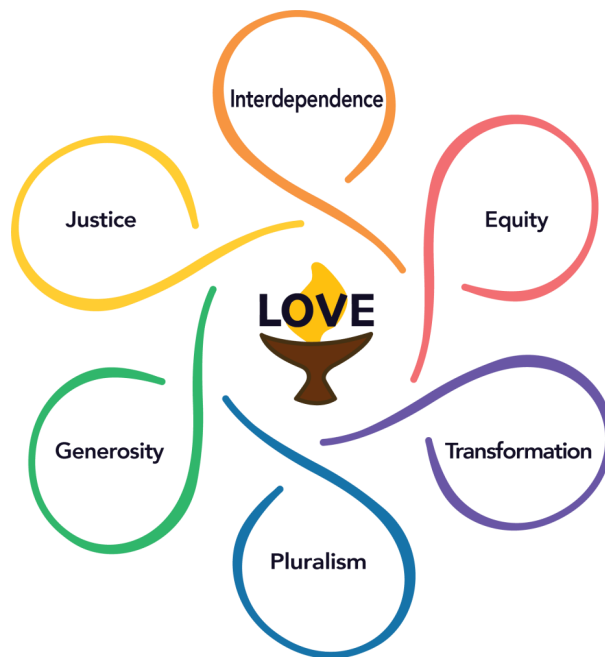
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## **Listening is an Essential Part of all of Our Values**

by Sarajane Willson

Consider joining a Covenant Circle this church 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. 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. For more information, contact Rev. Ali or Sarajane Willson, [sassysjw@gmail.com](mailto:sassysjw@gmail.com) or text to 440-503-6363. Consider this an invitation to an opportunity to think more deeply, care more deeply and above all, listen more deeply.



## **Women's Fellowship Gathering**

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

On October 24th, we will meet at CoreLife Eatery at 17917 Southpark Center Suite 130, Strongsville, OH 44136 for a healthy Bowl Style dinner. Here is the website for more information <https://www.corelifeeatery.com/> Think Chipotle with more of an Asian theme. The restaurant is not fancy but there are tables there and they never seem to be crowded. If it doesn't turn out to be enough room, we can take our bowls back to the church and eat there. Let me know you plan to come by emailing [susan@paxson.us](mailto:susan@paxson.us) or texting 216-543-9387. Hope to see you there!



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## SWUU Holds First Ever Installation

For those who were not able to attend Rev Ali's Installation as our called minister, these pictures submitted by Ken Ellis give you an idea of what a great event it was for all of us! There were no photos submitted showing our fellowship hall, but it was beautifully transformed for the occasion. It was a special time for our entire community with many people who made it happen. Thanks to all!



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The Stewardship Committee, Stewardship Friends,  
and the Hospitality Committee are pleased to host the  
**2025 SWUU Fall Fest**

**When:** Saturday, October 25th, 1-4 pm (Raffle drawings to be held at 3 pm)

**Where:** North Park, 3595 Grafton 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, apple cider, a Halloween costume contest, craft activities, snacks, raffles, and more! North Park has a fire pit, walking trails and other amenities for us to enjoy.

**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 cider. 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 items for the raffle. Consider buying raffle tickets for \$1 each at the event. Please reach out to Sarajane Willson at [sassysjw@gmail.com](mailto:sassysjw@gmail.com) or 440-503-6363 if you can't be there and would like to purchase tickets. You can also ask a friend to purchase tickets for you if you can't be there. You don't need to be present to win!
- **Just show up.** Bring family and friends. Everyone is welcome!



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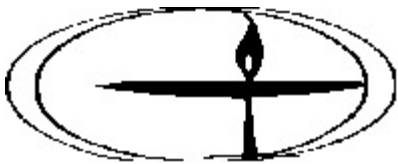
## Sharing and Caring

**Dan and Susan Paxson** are thrilled to share that Derek, Leah, and Arlo Paxson are going to be welcoming a little girl into their family in February, 2026.

**Carol Jagers** is looking forward to being able to start weight bearing physical therapy this month!

*\*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.