



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

January 1, 2026

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



January 4

Turning of the Year

Join us for our annual service where we honor the events and transitions from the past year in our community and look ahead to the coming year together.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Kirk Jusko

Focus Collection: Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity

January 11

Church as Counterculture

How can our religious communities help us resist the harms of the modern world? In this service we will also welcome new members into our congregation!

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Sarajane Willson

January 18

A Case for Being Unrealistic

If a goal is unrealistic, is trying even worth it? Come this Sunday as we wrestle with this question together. In this service, we will also celebrate the blessing and dedication of Vivian Charity Peters in our congregation.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associate: Cynthia Mondia

January 25

Holding Faith from Cleveland to Palestine

Candice Huber and Shereen Naser are two organizers in Cleveland fighting for Palestinian liberation. As a Pagan witch, activism, resistance, and interconnectedness are core tenets for Candice. As a Palestinian Christian, Shereen's heritage and faith fuel her belief that a better world is possible. Both Shereen and Candice will share how they envision movement toward the dream of a fully liberated world right here in our own communities.

-Led by Candice Huber & Shereen Naser

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

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Message from your Minister

Resistance

Beloveds,

The poet and essayist, Ross Gay, is an expert on delight and joy. He has written a couple books that chronicle his pursuit of delight as a spiritual practice. In these books he shares daily essays that he wrote, each about a specific thing that delights him.

One of these essays is simply titled “Loitering.” In it, Gay writes about coming across a “No Loitering” sign and realizing that the concept of loitering delights him. He says:

The Webster’s definition of loiter reads thus: ‘to stand or wait around idly without apparent purpose,’ and ‘to travel indolently with frequent pauses.’ Among the synonyms for this behavior are *linger, loaf, laze, lounge, lollygag, dawdle, amble, saunter, meander, putter, dillydally*, and *mosey*...All of these words to me imply having a nice day. They imply having *the best day*.

He goes on to point out that loitering gets its negative connotations from the fact that it is an *unproductive* and *nonconsumptive* activity and he relates this to another synonym for loitering: *taking one’s time*.

For while the previous list of synonyms allude to time, *taking one’s time* makes it kind of plain, for the crime of loitering, the idea of it, is about ownership of one’s own time, which must be, sometimes, wrested from the assumed owners of it, who are not you, back to the rightful, who is.

As I revisited Gay’s essay recently, it occurred to me that *taking our time* is an act of resistance in a world full of demands for our time and attention – jobs that purport to own our time, a culture that convinces us we should always be producing something or consuming something, an internet full of companies that profit off of our attention, an economy that treats humans as commodities. Taking our time and slowing down, then, is a radical reclamation of our own selves and our own lives. In our fast-paced world, this knowledge makes me want to slow down.

Our worship theme for the month of January is “Resistance.” Gay’s essay leaves me wondering – What might be other small or unexpected acts of resistance?

May we work together to resist any force that ignores or undermines the sacredness of life, beloveds. And, like Ross Gay, may we find delight in those acts of resistance, both big and small.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

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Focus Offering for January: Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

SWUU has proudly supported the work of Habitat during January for many years. During that time, Habitat has added new and exciting services to their many offerings. Volunteers build new homes, renovate and upgrade efficiency of existing homes, provide Critical Home Repair, and even modular homes.

Families partner with Habitat to contribute service hours by working with volunteers, while taking classes in finance, home maintenance, and budgeting to prepare for home ownership. A 2025 survey confirmed that Habitat continues to transform lives, with new homeowners responding positively about their financial and home maintenance knowledge, stability, security, and confidence caring for their families.

If you feel called to support the work of Greater Cleveland Habitat, contributions can be made by check (made out to SWUU with Habitat on the memo line) or use the Vanco Give Plus app. Your generosity is always appreciated.

Urban Hope Update: December 14th by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Nancy & Debby Peltola, CJ Warren, Mick Stentz and I had a great day at Urban Hope thanks to our generous Congregation. The temperature was cold but the atmosphere was warm. Our guests thoroughly enjoyed the Fried Chicken, Salads, Rolls, Fruit, Cheese, Takeaways, and Scrumptious individual pies!

Everyone left with a warm hat, socks and hand warmer. It was a perfect day of community. Our next visit is Sunday, January 11. All donations gratefully accepted!

SAVE THE DATE!

Hello Beloveds!

Please save the date and plan to attend our mid-year State of the Church meeting after the service on Sunday, February 1st.

Members and friends are welcome - The Board will share updates on church happenings, finances, and what's coming up the rest of the church year.

In joy,

Adrienne

SWUU Board President

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 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 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.

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



Saturday, February 28, 2026

Starting at 4:00 pm

**Join us for an evening of fun, food and friends
Featuring the annual service auction, raffle and potluck**

The Service Auction is our biggest fundraiser of the year. You can expect fun activities for the whole family, including kids! If you have attended the auction before, please spread the word and help new people understand how it works.

Important details to keep in mind as we start auction planning:

- Interested in donating to our cash and carry area? We have some new ideas for this area and want to be sure all contributions are considered! The cash and carry area features multiple, smaller items like cat toys, jewelry or candles. Please reach out to Danelle Miller
- We will be collecting donations for the raffle. If you've received a gift that isn't quite right for you or have other gently used items you'd like to contribute, please reach out to Lois Veraguth
- The SWUUber ride service will be back for those who need transportation to the event!



Stay tuned for more details soon to come!

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Membership News

by Susan Paxson, Membership Committee

Happy New year! The membership committee is pleased to announce that we have 5 people who have chosen to sign the book at our New Member Joining on Sunday, January 11th. I hope you will have a chance to get to know **Angela Harnest** and her daughter, and **Victoria Belfiglio, Eric Kramer**, and **CJ Warren**. If you have completed our classes in the last several years, you are invited to sign the book as well, if you are interested. Just let me or Rev. Ali know and you can be included in our ceremony in a couple weeks.

The Welcoming Renewal task force asked if there was a way to include preferred pronouns in the directory, so I called PowerChurch Support. Doug said he had never been asked this question but he said he thought there was a way to do it. After a few phone calls, he came up with an idea, that will serve this purpose. Now we have a question for all of you who are in the directory. Are you ok with having your pronouns listed as Dan's and mine are? If you aren't please let me know that you would like to OPT OUT of this. Please understand that no response assumes you do not have a problem with is. I will use the nametags to help me with this, if I am not sure of someone's preferred pronouns.

Wednesday Book Group

by Sue Davis

For many years a SWUU group has been meeting every Wednesday to read books about religion, spirituality, social justice or whatever we want. We meet online on the church zoom link every Wednesday afternoon from 1 until 3. We usual socialize for the first half hour. We always welcome new participants. We read the book aloud and then discuss it. This format works for us since it means no homework. We will be finishing our current book in the next week or two. We will then start a new book. If you're interested, this would be a great time to join us.

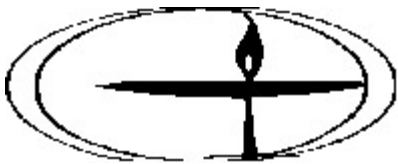
Our new book is, "The Originalist Trap, How Extremists Stole the Constitution and How We the People Can Take It Back" by Madiba K. Dennie. If you wish to join the book group and want more information, please contact Sue Davis.

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Sharing and Caring

**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.