



The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

www.swuu.org

April 1, 2026

Sunday Services

10:30 AM

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



April 5

Resurrection and Possibility

What might the Christian Easter story teach us about what is possible?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Sarajane Willson & Kirk Jusko

Focus Collection: NEOCH: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

April 12

Finding Joy in Community

Come this Sunday as we celebrate the joy that can be found in community! During this service, we will also kick off our annual pledge drive that helps make our church community possible.

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Mike Gold

April 19

A New Climate Story

In this age of climate anxiety, how might we find possibility and hope?

-Led by Rev. Ali Peters

Worship Associates: Deb Celinski & Valerie Hura

April 26

Imagining Our Future

"I believe in the future. I think you need to imagine a future and then live in it." This quote from Olga Ravn has inspired the SWUU Board, and will be the basis for our service. What possibilities exist for the future of our congregation? Let's imagine that future together

-Led by SWUU Board of Trustees

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Message from your Minister

Possibility

Dear Ones,

Despite all of the hard stuff that is swirling through the world around us, lately I've been finding myself excited for each day in a way that I haven't felt since I was a child. I guess that can come with being a new parent sometimes. Parenting is certainly hard – it's definitely not all rainbows and butterflies –but my one-year-old, Vivi, is growing and developing so fast that every day she is doing something new and experiencing something new and I find that I can't wait to see what new thing it will be next or what new experiences we will have together. As she discovers more and more about the world, it feels like I'm discovering it all anew with her. And that is bringing a sense of possibility to each new day.

“Possibility” is our worship theme for the month of April. And this newfound experience of possibility with my daughter has made me curious about how to cultivate that sense of possibility in other ways in my life as well. It brings me back to this poem written by Linda Pastan:

Imaginary Conversation

By Linda Pastan

You tell me to live each day
as if it were my last. This is in the kitchen
where before coffee I complain
of the day ahead—that obstacle race
of minutes and hours,
grocery stores and doctors.

But why the last? I ask. Why not
live each day as if it were the first—
all raw astonishment, Eve rubbing
her eyes awake that first morning,
the sun coming up
like an ingénue in the east?

You grind the coffee
with the small roar of a mind
trying to clear itself. I set
the table, glance out the window
where dew has baptized every
living surface.

May we learn to live each day as if it were the first, beloveds, with all of the wonder and possibility that comes with new life.

With love and gratitude,
Rev. Ali

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Focus Offering for April: NEOCH: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

As you may already know, SWUU has supported NEOCH for many years as one of our Focus Offerings. NEOCH is a Cleveland-based non-profit founded in 1987 that works to end homelessness through a 4-pillar approach: Advocacy; Education; Street Outreach; and Organizing, guided by those who have lived experience to address the root causes of homelessness. Services offered include housing clinics, linkage to services, & assistance with housing options. The Cuyahoga County Street Card is a free booklet full of contact addresses and phone numbers for Drug/Alcohol Services, Shelters and Housing, Meal Sites, Counseling, Mental Health & Other Health Services, Legal Aid, etc.

In January NEOCH opened a Seasonal Shelter in a former CSU dormitory. It can serve up to 45 people in a warm, low-barrier overnight shelter so no neighbor freezes overnight. Many of you at SWUU responded generously to our call for donations of coffee mugs, plates, bowls, silverware, TP, cleaning supplies, and food storage containers after Denny & I visited the new Shelter in January. We have since made two more trips there to deliver donated items and to see how the shelter is doing. We are pleased to say that we have met many compassionate, dedicated people working on-site and behind the scenes.

Please visit neoch.org for more information. Donations may be made using the Vanco online site, mailing a check made out to SWUU and sent to our church, or by putting a donation in the offering baskets during the April church services. Remember, on the first Sunday of the month (April 5) all money in the baskets not earmarked for another purpose will go to NEOCH. We appreciate your generosity.

Urban Hope Update by Nancy Peltola, Social Justice Committee

On March 8 our visit had a few unusual aspects. Because of Jan's recent heart attack, she could not participate - but fortunately she's following her doctor's order and is feeling better. Denny and I decided that we had to simplify our lunch offering similar to the way we served during the pandemic in 2020-2021. We made 50 turkey and cheese sandwiches; Susan Paxson put together 50 baggies of carrots and grapes; Kent Williams brought many fruit and applesauce cups; Angela Harnest made her always amazing cinnamon bites and cheesecake squares. Generous folks from SWUU brought in granola bars, trail mix sleeves, individual bags of chips and Doritos, and cash donations to buy other items we needed. An unexpected blessing was the presence of students from Creighton University who traveled from NB to be of service. They walked around offering food items that did not fit in the paper lunch bags and they chatted with our guests.

The afternoon was calm and cheerful until some women guests got into a loud argument. It escalated until Jean, the main person in charge, had most everyone leave and locked the door. One woman refused to leave; she overturned tables and chairs and tossed silverware all over.

The kind guests who stayed by the walls were horrified by the mess. They apologized for the woman's behavior and set everything back in order. One woman even cried because - she said - we could be at home and should not have to experience such disrespect. Most of our guests are really like her - appreciative and thoughtful.

Some of you know that Denny is having knee replacement surgery on April 2, so we have decided to permanently step back from our Urban Hope outreach. Jan will make her own decision about whether or not to return to Urban Hope. We thank you all for your generous support over the years. Jan will let you know more when she's ready. But it's safe to say that SWUU will not serve Urban Hope on April 12. If anyone at SWUU would like to take over this outreach please tell one of us.

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by Danelle Baker-Miller, Stewardship Committee Chair

Friends,

Our SWUU community is a spiritual home that continues to be a source of emotional support and joy. In this time of confusion and unrest, the joy we share **IS** an act of resistance!

SWUU's annual pledge drive will kick off on **Sunday, April 12**. As a fully self-funded church, we are responsible for all our expenses, and our pledge drive is our main source of income. Gifts from members and friends support our wonderful staff and services and enable us to maintain our building and continue the many activities we all enjoy.

As we know, everyday expenses are rising nationwide, and SWUU is not immune to this struggle. Our goal in our annual pledge drive is to secure the financial resources necessary to sustain our growing community.

When you consider your pledge for the upcoming year, we ask that you remember the gifts you've received from SWUU and pledge accordingly. The Unitarian Universalist Association recommends pledging 3-5% of income. Please know we understand that not everyone is able to make a pledge of this size. Your participation, regardless of the amount, matters and enables us to **Find Joy in Community**.

Pledge materials including pledge cards will be distributed before and after the service on **April 12**. If you don't attend this service, we will plan to mail them to you. Stay tuned for further details.

If you have not pledged in the past and have questions, please feel free to contact me or reach out to Steve Doucette, Treasurer.

Though we are a small congregation, we are abundant in both spirit and community. It is in this shared community that we find refuge and encouragement as well as joy, laughter and hope. Please join us as we continue to **Find Joy in Community** at SWUU.

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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 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

Religious Exploration Program



What is RE?

An accepting place for all children: from all kinds of families, from all cultures, genders, and backgrounds

A place to learn about ourselves and our world

A safe place for youth to explore their identities and share their lives

A place full of music, stories, songs, and laughter

A place to make friends

A place to learn and practice our Unitarian Universalist values of Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence and Generosity – all of these with LOVE at the center.

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Our congregation provides a nurturing environment for families of all kinds, and for children of all identities. We offer both age-specific programming, and multi-generational opportunities to build healthy and meaningful relationships. We have a pray-ground that children are welcome to hang out in at anytime in our sanctuary. On most Sundays, our young ones start in service and are sung out to class with a blessing. There are Intergenerational Services throughout the year, where children stay for the whole service. One Friday a month, we offer after-hours RE, where we share a meal, fun and friendship. We also have a staffed nursery area while there are Sunday school classes for our wee-est ones. We recognize that separation between parent and child, even for a brief time, is a milestone in the lives of both parents and children. Every effort is made to make it a comfortable transition for everyone.

Please contact Carolyn with any questions or if you re interested in volunteering! office@swuu.org

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2026 Service Auction is a Success!

by Danelle Baker-Miller, Stewardship Committee

It takes a great congregation to host a great service auction! The Stewardship



Committee is proud to report that the February 28 Service Auction yielded \$12,246 for our church! This is nearly the same amount raised last year and exciting news for our congregation. Those in attendance enjoyed signing up for events and services provided by SWUU members, a fantastic raffle, shopping in the Sign (formerly Cash) and Carry area, a potluck dinner, visit from Janet the Frog, music, dancing and general merriment.

Special thank go out to several people who made the auction a great event:

- Stewardship Committee members Steve Doucette, Lydia Avery, Sharron Abbey Gold, Janet LaBonne, and friends Lois Veraguth, Sarajane Willson, Candy Poissant, and Susan Paxson.
- For contributing their talents in various ways: Dan Paxson, Deb Celinski, Sherry and Garry Spencer, Wil Avery, Gayle Doucette, Carol Jordan, Valerie Powers, Adam Miller, Carolyn Stephens, Brian and Pat Woodside, Jocelyn Harnest, Will Warren and Blake Campbell.
- And, the Sign and Carry vendors for sharing their great wares, Makers Market artists Mike Gold and Angela Harnest, and everyone who contributed items, events and services to generate funds for our church. We are grateful!



New Book for Wednesday Book Group

by Sue Davis

The Wednesday book group will start reading *Teaching a Stone to Talk* by Annie Dillard on Wednesday, 4/1. The book is a collection of essays on the “mysteries and wonder of the natural world.” We meet every Wednesday from 1 until 3 on zoom. We read as a group with a lot of discussion of what we are reading. We welcome new members. Please contact me if you are interested and want more information.

The Forum
From The Stewardship Committee

Thank You ALL for a Fantastic
Service Auction & supporting **SWUU!**



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Sharing and Caring

Jan Wehn is continuing to feel better and more herself now, doing cardiac rehab and continuing to take care of herself.

Susan Paxson has come out of rotator cuff surgery with very little pain other than the first night. She may be reaching out for rides this month because she is wearing a sling on her right (dominant) hand, and cannot drive. If you want to call or stop over, this would be welcome! Thank you all for your cards, calls, and caring thoughts!

**Please send your joys and sorrows to forum@swuu.org for inclusion in the next issue.*

**Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church
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North Royalton, Ohio 44133**



We are happy to mail The Forum to anyone who would like to receive it.