



# The Forum



A Southwest Unitarian Universalist Publication

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

December 1, 2019

## Sunday Services

10:30 AM

6320 Royalton Road, North Royalton

### **December 1**

*The King's Loaves*

The theme for December is compassion. We begin the month with a playful look at how compassion builds our community with a Bread Communion. This multigenerational service will be based on the ancient Hebrew story of "The Queen's Loaves." (There will be childcare provided for little ones.)

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Jarret Gold

Focus Collection: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)



### **December 8**

*The Worth and Dignity of Our Furry Friends*

Continuing our monthly theme of compassion, we look today to our animal friends. The First Principle Project suggests our 1st UU principle, "the inherent worth and dignity," should extend to all life. What can the animals around us teach us about worth and dignity?

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Mike Gold

### **December 15**

*A Solstice Welcome!*

As we venture ever deeper into the dark of winter, Solstice is nearly upon us. Join us for a pagan-themed worship service as we open our arms to welcome our newest members!

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Leslie Van Kuren

### **December 22**

*Holiday Cheer*

Join us for an interactive Hanukkah-themed service as SWUU Religious Education Director Jenni Papp brings the fun for all ages!

-Led by DRE, Jenni Papp

Worship Associate: Mark Jackson

### **December 24**

*Christmas Eve Service*

Come, come whoever you are to our annual Christmas eve service. Held at 5:30 pm, we will sing carols, hear traditional readings from a variety of faiths, and light candles. Absolutely everyone is welcome.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

### **December 29**

*Self-Compassion*

In the midst of the whirlwind holiday season, join us for a calm, meditative Sunday service. After all of the giving and socializing, this is the time to recenter. Rev Meg will offer a service of compassion toward the self.

-Led by Rev. Megan Mathieson

Worship Associate: Deb Celinski

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## Message from your Minister

### Compassion

Happy December! There is so much going on at SWUU, now is the perfect time to jump in and get involved.

A few weeks ago, Sherry Spencer shared with the congregation about the Chalice Lighter's Grant, a generous financial award from the UUA that SWUU has benefitted from several times through the years. One of the requirements for the grant is that 20% of the congregation's members participate as donors to the Chalice Lighter's Program. The suggested donation is only \$60 a year. More information can be found online here: <https://www.uua.org/central-east/programs/chalicelighter/clfaq>. You can contact Sherry at: [septs Spencer@yahoo.com](mailto:septs Spencer@yahoo.com).

Did you know that SWUU has a Young Adults Group? The new group, open to any self-identified young adults (generally aged between 18-35, but we aren't asking for IDs!) had its first meeting recently. If you are a young adult who is interested in connecting with others over coffee and conversation, with a focus on liberal spirituality and social change, now is the perfect time to jump into the newly forming group! The next meeting will be Jan 19 after the service. Contact Rev. Meg at [minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org) in order to get on the email list and into the group text!

May these words by the Quaker writer Parker Palmer warm your heart in this cold season:

*"In the Upper Midwest, newcomers often receive a classic piece of wintertime advice: "The winters will drive you crazy until you learn to get out into them." Here, people spend good money on warm clothing so they can get outdoors and avoid the "cabin fever" that comes from huddling fearfully by the fire during the long frozen months. If you live here long, you learn that a daily walk into the winter world will fortify the spirit by taking you boldly to the very heart of the season you fear.*

*Our inward winters take many forms—failure, betrayal, depression, death. But every one of them, in my experience, yields to the same advice: "The winters will drive you crazy until you learn to get out into them." Until we enter boldly into the fears we most want to avoid, those fears will dominate our lives. But when we walk directly into them—protected from frostbite by the warm garb of friendship or inner discipline or spiritual guidance—we can learn what they have to teach us. Then, we discover once again that the cycle of the seasons is trustworthy and life-giving, even in the most dismaying season of all."*

Blessings,  
Rev Meg  
[minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org)

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## **Focus Collection for December: Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)** by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

SWUU will continue its support to The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). The program is also known as Guest at Your Table. Families are encouraged to have a giving box set up during dinner, and families can make daily donations while sharing a meal together. UUSC works in over 20 countries with over 60 Grassroots partners. Each year a different theme is the focus. The 2019-2020 theme is Women Leaders, Strong Communities, and the money will be used in supporting women in leadership roles. Contributions of \$125 or more will be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. Donations of \$40 or more will earn you a UUSC membership. Checks can be made out to SWUU or UUSC. All the checks will be mailed together in January. This is our opportunity to support the UUSC in their efforts to support causes over the world. Thank you for your generosity.

## **Urban Hope News** by Jan Wehn, Social Justice Committee

Sunday, November 10 was an especially wonderful day at Urban Hope. Debby, Jan, Carol, Jim and Glenda volunteered, and we were busy the entire time! There were too many guests to count, and with our abundance of donations, not a single drop of food was left. The mood was chipper, and the crowd was appreciative for the Mac&Cheese, veggie platters, fruit, popcorn, cheese crackers, cupcakes, and TONS of leftover Halloween candy. Our next visit is Sunday, December 8. We are planning on Meatball Sandwiches, and would love to have some salads to complement them. If anyone wants to donate some hamburger buns, please sign up and let us know how many, so that we can buy accordingly. As usual, fruit, fresh veggies and desserts are always needed and appreciated. Contact Jan Wehn or Nancy Peltola if you need more information on joining Social Justice Committee or visiting Urban Hope.

## **December Donations for Urban Hope** by Debby Gorencic, Social Justice Committee

As we have done for the past several years, the Social Justice Committee is sponsoring a special Donations Drive for the Urban Hope community. We are requesting the items most needed during the coming winter months which include men's and women's socks, hats, gloves and scarves as well as men's underwear and T-shirts (M, L, XL) and women's underwear (M, L, XL). Additionally, while we collect travel size toiletries on an ongoing basis, there is a particular need for razors, women's hygiene products (pads and tampons) and washcloths.

When you are preparing for the holiday season with family and friends, please consider our neighbors at Urban Hope, many of whom do not have a home for the holidays. Donations can be placed in the basket in the lobby throughout the month of December and are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued generosity.

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## **The Service Auction is Coming!** by Steve Doucette

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Saturday, February 15, 2020**  
**Starts at 5 pm.**

What in the world is a service auction? If you are new to SWUU, you might not know what this is. It's a popular fun event for all members, friends, and children. Nominal cost includes dinner and activities for all. It has been our biggest fundraiser for many years. The best part of it is that you spend money on things you would pay for anyway— fun nights out, repair services, outings, movie nights, to name a few. The auction services are offered by members of the congregation. In addition to services, we will be looking for donations of baskets for a raffle and desserts. All the money goes to our church. The auction is silent so there is no pressure to bid on anything. Just come and sign up for the things you could use or would enjoy. And it's a great way to build relationships with other members!

If this is confusing or you want to ask some questions, contact Susan Paxson ([susan@paxson.us](mailto:susan@paxson.us)) or Steve Doucette ([stephendoucette@gmail.com](mailto:stephendoucette@gmail.com)).

## **Holiday Family Fun at SWUU** by Susan Paxson, Membership

Here at Southwest UU, we have a long-held tradition of baking cookies together around the holidays. Everyone brings their own dough or batter, and we work together to bake lots of different kinds of cookies. At the end of the party, everyone goes home with a variety of cookies instead of the one kind they started out with. We usually save some for our Christmas Eve Service as well.

While the bakers are working on the cookies, others can work with Ken Ellis on putting up and decorating the SWUU tree. We hope you will join in this fun intergenerational gathering on **Saturday, December 14th from 2-5 p.m.** . It is a wonderful way to unplug from all of your devices and have some good old fashioned fun. We know it is a busy time of year, but if you can't be there the whole time, come when you can! Please email Susan for more information at [susan@paxson.us](mailto:susan@paxson.us) Hope to see you there!

## **SWUU Women's Group Christmas Lunch** by Sue Davis

The SWUU Women's Group will have their annual Christmas lunch at D'Agnese's Italian Restaurant on **Friday, December 13, at 1p.m.** D'Agnese's is located at 1100 West Royaltown Road (route 82) in North Royaltown. Men and women are invited to attend. Since reservations are required, please email Gay Cady at [cadygay@gmail.com](mailto:cadygay@gmail.com) by December 10 if you plan to attend.

The Women's Group will not be meeting on December 20 but will resume their traditional meeting schedule in January

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## **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)

## **Receive The Forum Electronically!**

If you would like to receive The Forum via email, contact

[forum@swuu.org](mailto:forum@swuu.org)

## **Join the SWUUList**

If you would like to join a newsgroup focused on issues of importance to SWUU, e-mail [connect@swuu.org](mailto:connect@swuu.org) and request to join the SWUUList.

## **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

## **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 dates listed in the calendar of each issue.

The Board of Trustees meets once per month. Check the calendar in each Forum 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?**

<b>Rev. Megan Mathieson</b> (Minister)	(443) 370-6669
<b>Hallie Davis</b> (President)	(440) 532-3328
<b>Ryan Bergeron</b> (Music Director)	
<b>Kristen Cimera</b> (Office Administrator)	(440) 877-1686
<b>Jennifer Papp</b> (Director of Religious Education)	

[minister@swuu.org](mailto:minister@swuu.org)  
[president@swuu.org](mailto:president@swuu.org)  
[music@swuu.org](mailto:music@swuu.org)  
[office@swuu.org](mailto:office@swuu.org)  
[dre@swuu.org](mailto:dre@swuu.org)

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## **Board Happenings**

by Hallie Davis, SWUU Board President

November 12th Board meeting highlights:

- Solar panels – Revisiting roof solar panels with a smaller energy output footprint.
  - Service Animal policy – Approved Service Animal Policy. Forwarding info to Membership to inform greeters.
  - Fire Inspection – P ASSED!
  - Board member resignation – Stay tuned for announcement.
  - 2020 budget – the board needs to provide the Finance team with a recommendation.
  - Our website – Dan will touch base with current contributors and seek a review from a web developer to determine cost to upgrade and develop easier access on mobile phones.
  - SWUU personnel policy being reviewed and updated as warranted.
- Let me know if you would like to receive the board minutes.

## **Season of Giving**

by Lydia Avery, Treasurer

As we enter the season of giving, let us remember this wonderful, life-affirming community where we come to worship together. As we prepare to celebrate the wonder and mystery of our lives, please remember SWUU when you think of where to extend your generosity. We are over one third of the way through our fiscal year and a bit shy of our income goal. This season would be a great time to catch up on pledges or simply donate what is in your heart. Happy Holiday season, it's great to celebrate with all of you!

## **Ladies' Night Out**

by Susan Paxson

Deb Celinski is organizing the Ladies' Night Out for December. It will be on Friday, December 27th at Sittoo's at 5870 Ridge Road in Parma. Sittoo's Middle Eastern cuisine should be a nice change of pace after the turkey or ham dinner you might be eating at your holiday gatherings. All people who identify as women are welcome to attend! Contact Deb to let her know you are coming at [deb@celinski.org](mailto:deb@celinski.org).

**SAVE THE DATE**

**January 12, 2020**

**Congregational Meeting**

**(after church)**



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## **A Hospitable (but urgent) Message From The Hospitality Committee**

by Gail Doucette, Hospitality Committee

### **The Hospitality Committee Needs Volunteers!**

As most of you know there's a monthly sign-up sheet that sits on a table outside of the sanctuary. The month is divided into weeks of Sundays and each Sunday is divided into categories:

- Snacks (cookies, fruit, e.g)
- Coffee Set-up
- Flowers (for the altar)
- Clean-up (washing coffee pots, wiping tables)

Ideally, members of our congregation periodically volunteer for one of these tasks.

Recently, however, our volunteer list has shrunk to the same few people signing up over and over again. There have also been Sundays when the Hospitality Committee has had to scramble at the last minute to make coffee and/or (using committee money that really should be saved for larger events) to run out to buy snacks.

So, please take a look at the monthly sign-up sheet and consider if you can assist with one of the activities that keeps our Sunday operations running smoothly. (In fairness to all, on weeks when there is no volunteer for snacks, we will enjoy our coffee without sweet morsels, and you'll see a sign on the snack table announcing: "No Snacks Today". )

Thank you, everyone! We certainly appreciate your help!

### **Pay it Forward; Be a Chalice Lighter**

by Sherry Spencer, SWUU Chalice Lighter Representative

YOU can be instrumental in kindling the future flame of Unitarian Universalism! How you ask? By saying Yes and Thanks!

SouthWest UU Church has been the fortunate recipient of grant funding by the Central Eastern Region Chalice Lighter Program. Two grants provided monies for:

1. Construction and installation of our street sign (2009, \$3.5k)
2. Repairs and renovations to our church steeple (2018, \$20k)

By offering a yearly donation of \$60 (suggested) to the Chalice Lighter Grant Program, yours and the collective donations across the region will make it possible for other Unitarian Universalist congregations to be awarded grant monies. Ultimately, the programs goals are to encourage new and existing congregations to grow, both in terms of numbers and in their efforts to increase justice, compassion and spirituality through projects and programming.

SouthWest Unitarian Universalist has much to be grateful for and I hope you might consider it possible for each of us to "pay it forward" for that which WE have received! It's easy to become a Chalice Lighter, just go to <http://www.uua.org/central-eastprograms/chalichelighters> for information and to make a pledge.

Questions? Contact Sherry Spencer our representative at 216-410-8641

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*Ellen & Ken  
Cordially Invite You to Our*

## **ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY**

**December 31  
8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.**

32 Manning Dr.  
Berea, Ohio

No R.S.V.P. necessary  
Bring finger food/ beverage of choice if desired  
kellismtn@gmail.com  
440-234-7034



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## **Sharing and Caring**

Please send warm wishes to Ken and Ellen's son, **Jordan Ellis**, who is in North Dakota for two weeks of Army leadership school.

**Cathy Plude** has moved to a different assisted living facility. She says she really wants to get home, but she has to get stronger. Cards would be appreciated. The address there is Sunrise Senior Living, Apartment 210, 7766 Broadview Rd, Parma, OH 44134

*\* 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.