



September 2025 Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

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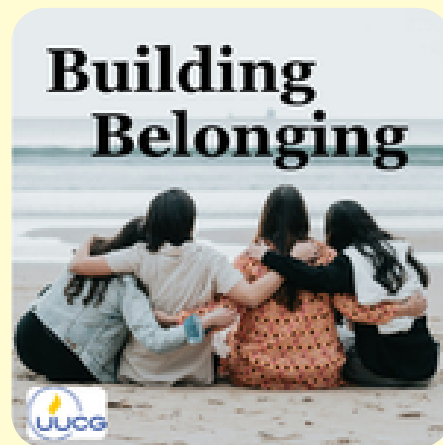


GNUs are not known to perform mass, seasonal migrations; rather they join the Great Wildebeest Migration, a massive annual trek of over a million wildebeest (which are not buffalo), zebras, and other antelopes. This circular journey follows rainfall patterns to find fresh grazing land, with the animals moving clockwise through the landscape, facing predators, and crossing rivers to reach new pastures.

Building Belonging

“Our longing for community is so powerful that it can drive us to join groups, relationships, or systems of belief that give a false impression of belonging. These places of false belonging grant us conditional membership, requiring us to cut parts of ourselves off in order to fit in.”

~ Toko-Pa Turner



We understand this distinction between fitting in - which often requires hiding some aspects of yourself or leaving parts of who you are on the other side of the threshold - and true belonging - which doesn't require you to leave any aspect of yourself behind.

It is this kind of belonging that Unitarian Universalism aspires to embody. This profound degree of radical welcome we strive to create in our spaces.

Through September we explore the ways that we can build the kind of belonging that meets each other where we are and welcomes all of who we are.

We invite you to join us this month as together we Build Belonging with and for each other.

Worship in September

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: Building Belonging

Join us in-person or via Zoom

<https://zoom.us/j/565460176>



September 7

Ingathering: We Belong to Each Other

Belonging to each other is written into our DNA! So let's defy our current culture's efforts to divide us and instead embody the ways we recognize and cherish each other's gifts and vulnerabilities. For our Annual Water Ceremony, please bring a small container of water from home, your travels, or other source. You'll add your water to our communal resources, and fill out a card describing the water's meaning for you. All ages are encouraged to participate! Come, let's lay our burdens down by the "river that will never run dry!"

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her), Service Leader

September 14

The Flame of Belonging: Honoring Rev. Jan Taddeo

This Sunday in a special ritual, we confer the title of Minister Emerita on UUCG's former minister Reverend Jan Taddeo, and we hear her reflection on our inclusive and defiant Love! We explore how the "flame of belonging" that we build at UUCG can spiral outward to warm and embrace communities beyond our own. Please join us!

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her), Service Leader

September 21

Becoming Thresholders of Change

In a world constantly shifting, we are invited to deepen our connections—not by resisting change, but by embracing it. This service, inspired by Karen Hering's book *Trusting Change*, explores how building belonging is not static but formed and re-formed through transformation. Together, we will cross the threshold of change into an inclusive and defiant love for the changes around us.

Candice Carver (she/her), Service Leader

September 28

Belonging to the Earth

Opening our hearts to loving, savoring, and preserving the web of life.

Daniel Bailey (he/him), Service Leader

Programs

Sundays
at 12:30pm

1st Sunday, 9/7

- Potluck Lunch
- Sharing the Journey

2nd Sunday, 9/14

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts

3rd Sunday, 9/21

- Board Meeting
- Sharing the Journey
- Tarot Sunday

4th Sunday, 9/28

- "Good Trouble"





Worship and More



Sharing Our Gifts Through Give Away the Plate

UUCG shares quarterly plate offerings with an external organization chosen by the congregation through our Give Away the Plate program.



During the third quarter of 2025 (through September 30), we will share the Sunday morning offering with Mosaic of Georgia, whose mission is to provide unwavering support to victims of sexualized violence. Learn more on the [Mosaic Georgia website](https://www.mosaicgeorgia.org/).

Ingathering Service: Water Ceremony

Sunday, September 7th

Let us welcome one another back to blessed community.

Bring a small container of water to add to our bowls for North, East, South, and West before the service. Come ready to share the water's symbolism during the ceremony!



Saturday, Sep. 13th

Northwest UUC
1025 Mt Vernon Hwy NW
Sandy Springs, GA 30327

The Ordination of

David
Morgen



to the Unitarian
Universalist Ministry



JOIN US FOR A SPECIAL SERVICE
ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
HONORING REV. JAN TADDEO

The Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Gwinnett will
confer the title of Minister Emerita
on UUCG's former minister.



Message From the Minister



Longing to Belong

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



Almost every time I arrive at a gathering where the group is new to me, I'm convinced that I won't really belong. Is this surprising? Maybe we extroverts look like we're at ease in any group; we get so much energy from being around other people and we're often good at talking to strangers. But just like most of us in our culture, in the beginning I too feel like the oddball, the one that others won't understand or accept.

Toko-pa Turner, in her wonderful book *Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home*, says that at the very heart of our ache to belong "is the longing to be recognized for one's gifts, to be welcomed in love and kinship, to feel a sense of purpose and necessity to our community." Yes, that's it! Deep down, our bodies and souls know how much we need each other. This longing to belong is written into our very DNA. No wonder it feels so painful, and sometimes life-threatening, when we feel left out.

But it's more than just a personal problem. When profit and wealth are more highly valued than living beings, then the culture has to create in its people a fear of not being or having enough. This leaves us all in an epidemic of alienation, of "unbelongingness," as Turner says. So what are we to do?

Well, Turner suggests that belonging is not a place where we find our beloveds, our people. Rather, it's a skill that we need to remember. It starts with looking honestly at this ache we share, with grieving and retrieving those parts of ourselves that we've tried to cut out so that we could fit in. It starts with belonging to ourselves again, the way we were born.

And it starts with building a community where all of our gifts and our imperfections are recognized and welcomed, where we get a chance to grow together, to become more ourselves both individually and as a community. Turner says that then maybe we can "open to the sacred dimension of our lives, [can] feel in service to something noble, [can] live in magic and wonder."

It's funny, but the first time I really recognized this pattern of feeling like I didn't belong in a new group was the first time I went to the Unitarian Universalists' General Assembly. Who were all these serious-looking people wearing comfortable shoes, carrying tote bags laden with books, walking or rolling with all due speed toward the next workshop, and mostly keeping to themselves? Coming from the world of theater, I didn't see myself in this crowd. But with some time and some risk taking, through talking with strangers with as much curiosity, courage, and compassion as I could muster, I began to remember that I too am as serious as I am wild, as scared and as brave as that person passing by me, and as much in need of comfort as I am of adventure. These Unitarian Universalists and I? Once we began to open ourselves beyond the boxes we'd been trained to occupy, we realized that we need each other's gifts, and we cherish each other's vulnerability.

This is how we'll Build Belonging at UUCG, too, beloveds. Welcome to this month, and here's to a new year of boldly loving ourselves, each other, and the friends and kindred we have yet to meet.

With Love at the center,
Rev. Nancy

Message From the Minister

Blessing of the Animals

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



SAVE THE DATE:

Saturday, October 4, 2025

10:30 a.m. to Noon

UUCG Back Deck

Please bring your beloved animals (those who won't be stressed by the experience), your pictures of beloved animals, and/or your favorite stuffed animals for this drop-in Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, October 4, on UUCG's back deck. Rev. Nancy and Christiana will officially open this ritual at 10:30 a.m. and close it at noon, but please feel free to drop in at any time during this service for the blessing of your beloved more-than-human companions.

UUCG 2025-2026

Annual Vision of Ministry

"Love is patient, Love is kind..."
Yes - and deep, meaningful love is also so much more. Love that has the power to change the world draws its circle wide *and* holds its boundaries.

This year, we at UUCG endeavor to live into this bold vision, this paradox that invites and challenges us to love the world in ways both soft and loud.

How can we grow, lead, and live into this bold, visionary way of being?

Our love
is inclusive
and defiant.



From the Board



The New Roof is (Still) Coming!

by Dan Kelly, President, UUCG Board of Trustees

Beloved Community,

The roof work had to be delayed for circumstances beyond our control.

We understand how disappointing, and even frustrating, this may be. We appreciate your grace as we continue all best efforts to get this important work done.

At this time, we have requested the work begin after September 15th to avoid interfering with our annual Ingathering on September 7th and Ceremony of Minister Emerita for Reverend Jan Taddeo on September 14th. Please plan to join us for these special Worship Services!

As always, questions may be directed to president@uucg.org

In faith,
Dan Kelly
President of UUCG Board of Trustees



From the Board

Pledging: A Promise and a Plan

by Ian Van Sice

Pledge Drive Season is upon us! This year, our vision is Building a Boldly Loving Community: Giving for Growth. Throughout September and October, we take a bold and loving look at the spiritual practice of supporting and growing this congregation through our financial giving and through the personal connections that this season's conversations create.

All our members and friends contribute to our congregational life in different ways, and every contribution matters. In this season, we look honestly at our financial giving. Money can be a sensitive topic, but as a congregation, we must face our needs boldly so that this loving community continues to grow in every sense.

Monetary giving is the primary way our congregation supports its staff, ministries, building and grounds, and everything else. To that end, we have set a Pledge Goal of \$110,000 with a Stretch Goal of \$120,000. Our Pledge Goal is a 10% increase over last year, and if met, it will allow us to meet our budgetary obligations without operating in a deficit. The Stretch Goal allows for UUCG to invest in much-needed projects that will help us grow for the future.

The committee for this year is packed with familiar faces and is supported by our wonderful staff members, Christiana Fernandez-McQuain and Jason Pfeffer, and by Board President Dan Kelly. Committee members are:

- Jerrold Johnson
- Tony Nastri
- Ian Van Sice
- Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Over the next two months, you will hear from the Committee and other congregants in print, from the pulpit, and in face-to-face conversations. Please do say "Yes!" when we ask for some time to talk with each other. These are wonderful opportunities to check in and create deeper connections, as well as to practice our core value of generosity.

Each Pledge is a promise. Each promise improves our ability to meet our current needs and future growth. I invite each of you to consider your own means and needs, to ask if you can increase your pledge or make a first-time pledge, and then to give generously to support UUCG. Thank you for all that you bring!



Unitarian Universalism calls us to the ideal of becoming a transformational force in each other's lives, in our communities, and in the world. Because we aspire to live into our faith beyond Sunday mornings, we are privileged to invest our time, energy, and resources in support of this greater mission. This is what stewardship is about.

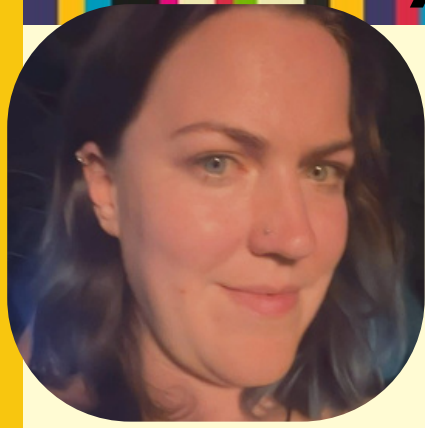
You can contribute by mailing a check gift made payable to UUCG, [making an annual pledge](#), or with a credit card, Venmo, or PayPal. We appreciate your generous gifts and commitment to helping fund our growth



Ministry of Radical Welcome

Sharing the Journey

by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome



Sharing the Journey is beginning in September! This is a group that meets every couple of weeks where we learn the

origins of our UU congregation, share our particular spiritual journeys, work on deep listening practices, and find ways of connection to the congregation that inspires you.

We will be joined by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones on the first meeting where we will share our particular faith journeys as a group.

On the second meeting we will go through an abridged history of the UU church, and learn more about this particular church.

On the third meeting we will be joined by Christiana Fernandez-McQuain who is the Coordinator of Family Ministries that will lead us on deep listening exercises.

Finally, at the last session we will learn about the different ministries we offer as a congregation. You will also learn about the Shared Ministry Council where there are five different lay ministers who help coordinate all the different ways to be involved in the Congregation. We do ask that you can commit to all four sessions, but if you have concerns just let us know. We offer this in person and on zoom. We will send the link to the zoom room the morning of the session. Each session is 90 minutes long, and you are welcome to bring food from the potluck into those sessions. You're also welcome to bring a lunch or snacks. We will have some snacks provided. Come and join us on your journeys through life and making meaning each step of the way.

Know You are Not Alone and Discover the Way Our Voices Rise

by Rev. Gretchen Haley

*For this one moment
Know only that you are loved
That you are safe, and whole and loved
Know that you belong here
Here among us, here upon this earth
In your body
However tired, or broken
Your heart may be
Whatever fear, disappointment, anger
you carry
For this hour know you are not alone
Feel the presence of others
Surrounding you,
Breathing beside you, and with you,
Discovering together the way our voices rise,
and fall together
In harmony, in hope
Claim here a resilient freedom
The choice for love, for light, to live with joy
and gratitude and praise
as a form of resistance*

Ministry of Radical Welcome

We Love Our Volunteers! Thank You for Sharing Your Time & Talent!

Are you seeking your niche? Looking for a way to serve, but not quite sure what will suit your particular interests and talents? Look through this newsletter, or reach out to SharedMinistry@uucg.org to get connected. And join us on September 7th at 12:30pm for the Love in Action Expo!

Coffee Hour Invitation

Help us make our Coffee Hour after Service even more welcoming by bringing snacks to share!

Please label your container with your name so we can offer our gratitude.

While we love sweet treats, we also welcome:

- Fresh fruits & veggies
- Gluten-free options
- Vegan & vegetarian items



Your contributions help create a nourishing and inclusive space for all. Thank you!

Help Show Your Love: Join the Hospitality Team!

We are especially in need of folks to assist with clean-up following Coffee Hour

- Bring treats to share
- Make coffee
- Assist with organizing the treats brought for Coffee Hour
- Set out items on the coffee cart
- Wash mugs
- Put away coffee cart
- Launder tablecloths or hand towels
- Assist with potluck on first Sundays
- Or any of the many other ways to serve!

Which of your gifts can you share with the UUCG community as we Tend the Commons with and for each other?

Love is the power that holds us together and is at the center of our shared values.

We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of Love.

Inseparable from one another, these shared values are:

**Interdependence
Generosity
Justice**

**Transformation
Pluralism
Equity**



Ministry of Green Space



Great Green Get Together Sep. 19 7:00-9:00pm

by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister of Green Space

Movie Night - yes, this extravaganza will feature a showing of the movie **"2040 - Regenerators"**.

This is hosted in the UUCG Sanctuary and also on Zoom. Check the UUCG Website's Event Calendar page for details.

It is free and fun - come on!

From the film website

<https://theregenerators.org/2040/>:

"2040" is a hybrid feature documentary that looks to the future, but is vitally important NOW! A story of hope that looks at the very real possibility that humanity could reverse global warming and improve the lives of every living thing in the process.



Survey Says - More Family-Friendly Activities

The congregational survey suggested the Green Team should have more family friendly activities. Right on! That is a great suggestion.

What can we do and when do we schedule these activities?

The Spiral Scouts stepped up and offered their timeslot for joint green activities.

Soon our bugs will be "snug as a bug in a bug snug". Bug snugs and seed bombs are just two of the ideas for activities!

Property Beautification Report: Saturday, August 2

I missed it. Also, the building preparations were occurring simultaneously. Kudos to Steve Smith who I know worked on the grounds.

Next Property Beautification Day is September 6.

Compost Bucket Brigade - repeat, any helpers?



Are you interested in helping the hungry worms? We are looking for volunteers for the bucket brigade. The task is:

1. Take the compost bucket from the kitchen.
2. Climb the hill to the keyhole garden, and empty the bucket in the compost hole.
3. Feel the vibes from the happy worms celebrating the new food!
4. Rinse out the bucket using the hose next to the front entrance. That must be turned on inside the building, used, then turned off.
5. Put the bucket back in the kitchen.

Contact Gary Kiel or send an email to GreenTeam@uucg.org.

Upcoming Events

- **September 6** - 10 am til: Property Beautification
- **September 19** - 7pm: Movie Night, showing "2040" an uplifting movie of the future.
- **September 20** - 9:30 - 11 am: Green Team zoom meeting. This meeting occurs on the 3rd Saturday.

Ministry of Green Space

Did You Know There is a Georgia State Amphibian?

Don't tell McFly, but he is not the state amphibian! That honor belongs to the Green Treefrog.

See the story about how a 4th grade class made it happen.



Warty McFly says, "Hi!"

Georgia State Amphibian

Green Treefrog *Hyla cinerea* Adopted: May 9, 2005



Georgia State Amphibian: Green Treefrog

Photograph: Jane M. Rohling, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

An idea that originated in a 4th grade classroom at Armuchee Elementary School, in Rome, has finally been rewarded.

It was 2002 and the Armuchee School 4th graders, studying science and government with teachers Ruth Pinson and Marilyn McLean, discovered that the State of Georgia was not represented by an official amphibian.

In 2003, House Bill No. 256, designating an official state amphibian, was sponsored by Representative Barbara Reece, of Menlo.

Rep. Reese, a retired schoolteacher, could not get the bill passed by the House of Representatives. In 2004, House Bill No. 365, again sponsored by Rep. Reese, was introduced. This time, the legislation made it through the House of Representatives but failed in the Senate.

On January 24, 2005, Senate Bill No. 41 was introduced and read in the Georgia State Senate for the first time. In his bill, Senator Preston Smith of Rome proposed, for the third time in as many years, that the green treefrog be made the official amphibian of the State of Georgia.

The third time is the charm! This year, the tiny, 2" green treefrog was a shoe-in. In about two months the green treefrog garnered the approval of both houses of the Georgia General Assembly. It was forwarded to the governor on April 13.

It took the governor a little bit of time to get around to signing Preston Smith's legislation into law. But sign it he did. On May 9, 2005, Governor Sonny Purdue signed Senate Bill No. 41 into law making the green tree frog the "official Georgia state amphibian.

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Faith Development: Tending the Flame

By Christiana Fernandez-McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries



This year is positively flying!

There are open opportunities to serve in the area of Faith Development that will enable us to provide deep welcome and learning programs for our Families. We are looking for:

- **Childcare Volunteers** - without whom we cannot provide care for our littlest UUs on Sunday mornings
- **RE Program Leaders** - learn and grow along with our young people
- **O.W.L. Program Facilitators** - necessary training will be provided

After a summer off, programs for children are set to resume this month.

- **Spiral Scouts** will meet on second Sundays at 12:30pm, beginning Sept. 14th.
- **Spiritual Exploration Groups for children** will gather on first and fourth Sundays (during the Worship Service), beginning Sept. 28
- **Coloring Outside the Lines**, a children's program hosted by members of Alphabet SoUUp focusing on issues of gender justice, plans to resume soon!

If you haven't already, [please register here](#) to participate in programs and get on the list to receive the Faith Development newsletter and other resources for living into your UU faith & values beyond Sunday morning.

With gratitude & grace,
Christiana

Building Belonging

Faith
Development
resources
for exploring
Building
Belonging

Check out Building
Belonging - Soul Matters
September Playlist on
[Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#).



Words of Wisdom?

We invite you
to journey with us...

LOVE IN ACTION EXPO

Sunday, Sep. 7 at 12:30pm

UUCG Groups, Teams, and Committees will have tables to share information and crafts highlighting all the opportunities that are available for you to engage with our congregational community!



Ministry of Spiritual Growth



Building Belonging

by Lydia Patrick, Lay Minister of Spiritual Growth



Recently I was at a store checking out and the very nice cashier asked if "We would be using our store credit card today." I had to look around as I left the house by myself and had not picked up anyone else along the way. I was alone. There was no 'we'.

I responded as nicely as they asked, "No, we will not be using our credit card today." Not deterred by that (too much), they asked if "We would be rounding up our total to give money to support the starving folks in (insert 3rd world country) today." Again, I said "No we will not be doing that but thanks for asking. We do all of that through our church and know exactly where the money goes each and every time." At this point I was hoping they would ask for details and I could elaborate on our Give Away the Plate practice and our monthly Lawrenceville Co - Op collections.

However, at this point the sales person was done with me and ready for the next customer. They had let go of the comradery goal and were now focussed on completing my transaction and moving on to the next person.

The month of September is about building belonging. Not the kind of community belonging where one fulfills a need and in doing so gets acceptance for a time being. We are building beloved community and that is vastly different.

In the piece entitled, "Come Into Our Circle" Rev. Michael Collins says:

*Come in from the margins. Come into our circle.
Here, we stretch wide a doorway of belonging.
No need to polish your edges or hush your truth.
We gather not in sameness, but in shared seeking.
Take a breath. Set down what you carry.
You are welcome, wholly and wildy, in this place.*
(Shared with permission from Soul Matters)

This month in every service and gathering in our building we will be looking for ways of shared seeking and opening the doorway of belonging as wide as we can.

Join us!



Join Us!

Volunteer
Opportunities
include:

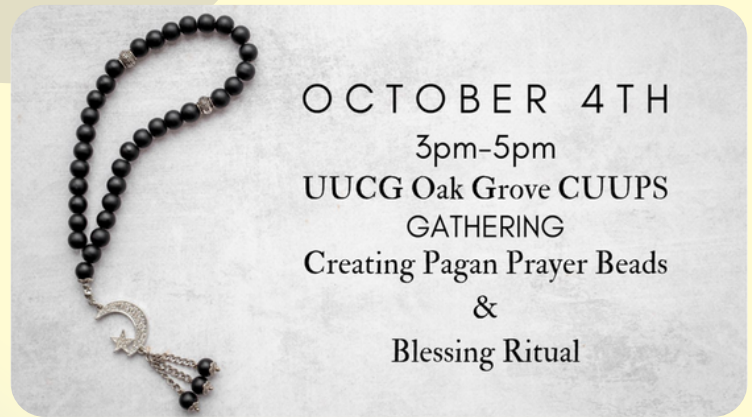
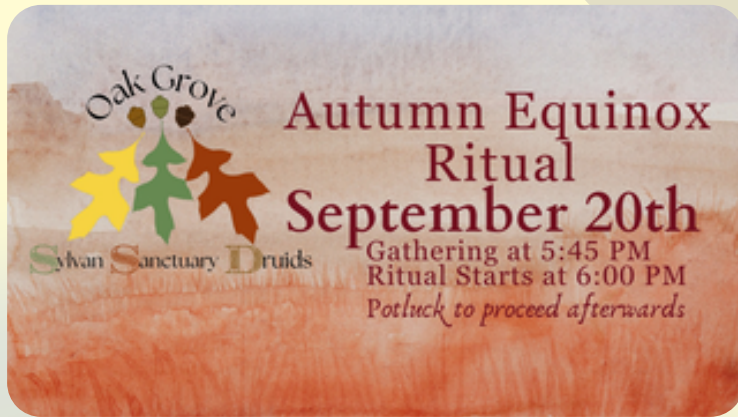
Beacons, Worship
Associates, Service
Leaders, Covenant
Choir, Sweet MUUsic,
and Faith Development
Programs

We look forward to
serving alongside you!



[Click HERE](#)

Ministry of Spiritual Growth



By Candice Carver

As the wheel of the year turns to the Autumn Equinox, join Sylvan Sanctuary in honoring the balance between light and dark, harvest and rest. Together, we will celebrate Mabon—a time of gratitude for the abundance we've received and reflection on what we release as we enter the waning year.

Our ritual will weave together seasonal symbolism, sacred offerings, and the calling of the directions to honor the turning of the seasons. We'll gather in sacred space to share in the blessings of the community, give thanks for the fruits of our labor, and open our hearts to the lessons of balance and reciprocity.

All are welcome—whether you are new to Pagan practice or have walked this path for years. Bring an open spirit, an offering to Mother Earth, and drums or instruments for the ritual. More information to come.



Join us for a hands-on workshop inspired by Magic and Meditation with Pagan Rosaries: Pagan Prayer Beads by John Michael Greer and Clare Vaughn. In this class, you'll learn the art of creating your own set of pagan prayer beads—tools for meditation, devotion, and magical practice. We'll explore bead patterns, symbolism, and ways to weave intention into your design, transforming your beads into a personal spiritual companion.

All materials will be provided, though you're welcome to bring special beads or charms to incorporate into your set.

After the workshop, you'll have the opportunity to step into the sanctuary for a guided consecration ritual, blessing your beads and dedicating them to your chosen purpose.

Whether you're seeking a new tool for meditation, a meaningful craft, or a way to deepen your connection with the divine, this experience will guide you from creation to consecration.



Ministry of Connecting Within



Hispanic Heritage Month, Building Belonging, and Baseball

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within

Sometimes, we think the world is not reflective of our values, but sometimes it is. If we're not careful we'll miss the opportunity to join with others also practicing our values. After all, we didn't invent interdependence or equity, we just believe these values centered in love are essential to our faith.



Recently, Gary and I went to a Gwinnett Stripers game at Coolray Field on a hot and humid Wednesday night. We found our seats, got some drinks and suddenly our players were on the field, sporting colorful jerseys with "Xolos" across the front. Gary and I were a bit confused until the announcer announced that on Wednesday nights our team adopts the name of Xolos de Gwinnett in honor of our Hispanic Community here in Gwinnett. Who knew you could go to a ballgame and celebrate some UU values? Well, I certainly didn't.

After a quick Google search, I found out that "Xolos," short for Xoloitzcuintli, are the National dog of Mexico. In Gwinnett County, we have an Hispanic community of almost 200,000 individuals, the majority of whom are from Mexican descent. It goes without saying, these are frightening times for this community. Yet, I'm sitting in a baseball stadium with baseball players proudly wearing jerseys celebrating Hispanic Heritage. Here was a clear example of building belonging, while standing up for the rights of others to live, work and play in our community.

Building belonging can be as visible as a baseball team embracing the diverse heritage of its community. It can also be celebrating Hispanic Heritage this month by participating in one of the many events being hosted around the metro area or taking time to think about all the ways our Hispanic neighbors contribute to our communal life. Finally, here at UUCG, how exactly do we build belonging and how do we defend the right of others to belong? Our Connecting Within groups are a good place to start. Engaging with others and learning more about their thoughts and ideas about belonging can help us embrace diversity and draw the circle wider. Welcome to a new program year at UUCG, may we all find true belonging here by building belonging for others.

With Joy,
Lisa

**UUCG
Book Group
Wednesday
Sep. 24th
at 7:00pm**

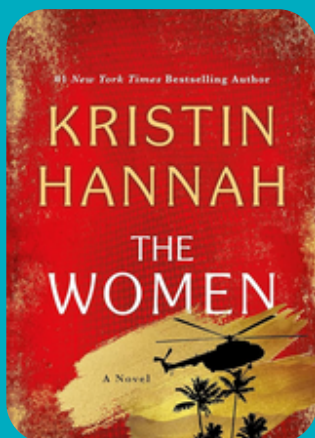
Online via Zoom

**Sep. Selection:
*The Women***

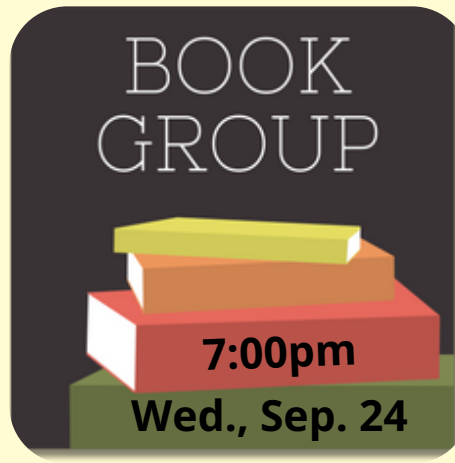
by Kristin Hannah

This novel explores the experiences of women in Vietnam, highlighting their resilience and the lasting impact of the war on their lives, while also shedding light on the societal disregard for their contributions.

[Learn more here...](#)



Ministry of Connecting Within



ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES



Alphabet SoUUp - In Person and Online: 1st Monday at 6:30pm, potluck served. <https://zoom.us/j/99002444085>



Book Group - Online: 4th Wednesday at 7:00pm <https://zoom.us/j/144736833>



Covenant Groups - Registration is now open!

<https://www.uucg.org/connectingwithin/small-group-ministry>



Game Night - In Person: 1st Friday at 6:30pm. All ages welcome!



Men's Group - In Person: 2nd Saturday at 9:00am



Music Night - In Person: every Thursday night at 6:30pm



QUUest - Adults: In Person-4th Friday at 6:30pm

QUUest Jr. - Youth: In Person-2nd Friday at 7:00pm



Spiral Scouts - In Person: 2nd Sunday at 12:30pm



Women's Group: The Open Circle - In Person: 4th Saturday at 10:00am



Yarns from the Heart - In Person and Online: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 10:00am. <https://zoom.us/j/98096623472>

CHECK OUT THE CONNECTING WITHIN BULLETIN BOARD



Connecting within starts with presence—pausing to breathe, reflect, and truly see the beauty around us. As you walk through the doors of UUCG, capture the moments that bring you joy and share in the collective appreciation of this sacred space.

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Building Belonging in Times of Change

by Candice Carver (she/her), Lay Minister for Connecting Beyond



As the seasons shift and our lives flow through the inevitable currents of change, the idea of belonging can feel both grounding and elusive. At UUCG, our September theme of Building Belonging invites us to reflect on how we nurture connection—not just within the walls of our sanctuary, but beyond, into the wider world. This work feels especially urgent as we live into our annual vision of ministry: Our love is inclusive and defiant.

Change is the constant rhythm of life, and yet, it often challenges our sense of place and connection. Whether it's a personal transition, a shift in our community, or broader societal changes, we can feel unmoored. As Lay Minister of Connecting Beyond, I see this as an opportunity to live into the call of inclusive, defiant love. Belonging isn't about everyone being the same; it's about creating spaces where differences are honored, voices are heard, and people are welcomed without pretense or judgment.

True belonging, in this sense, is radical. It requires us to show up authentically, even when it's uncomfortable. It asks us to extend hospitality beyond those who look, think, or act like us. It challenges us to resist the forces that would isolate, divide, or exclude. In practicing this kind of love—this inclusive defiance—we signal to each other that no one is on the outside of our care, our respect, or our commitment.

At UUCG, Connecting Beyond is a living embodiment of this principle. My role is to create and nurture pathways for engagement, ensuring that the bonds of community stretch not just among those already here, but also to those who may not yet feel they belong. This work is both joyful and demanding. It's joyful because it affirms the richness of our diversity and the beauty of shared discovery. It's demanding because it asks each of us to confront our assumptions, to welcome discomfort as a teacher, and to embrace the uncertainty inherent in change.

One of the ways we practice building belonging is by listening. Listening deeply, with curiosity and care, to the experiences of others, especially those whose journeys differ from our own. In doing so, we weave a tapestry of understanding that allows us to move forward together, even in moments of disagreement or difference. Listening opens the door to empathy, and empathy is the soil in which trust—and ultimately belonging—grows.

Another essential practice is visibility. Defiant love shows itself not only in private acts of compassion but in public gestures of inclusion. It manifests in welcoming new faces, amplifying marginalized voices, and intentionally creating spaces where all feel invited to participate. These acts are small yet profound. They send the message that our community is not static, not reserved for the few, but alive, responsive, and expansive.

As we reflect this month on Building Belonging, I invite each of us to consider our own role in cultivating connection—both within UUCG and beyond. How do we reach out to those who feel unseen? How do we support each other through the transitions that life inevitably brings? How do we practice love that is at once inclusive and defiant, daring to embrace the unfamiliar while holding fast to our shared values?

Belonging is not a destination; it is a continuous practice. It asks for courage, presence, and patience. It is nurtured in moments of welcome, in acts of listening, and in the willingness to embrace change without fear. At UUCG, our love is indeed inclusive and defiant—and that love is what allows each of us to find our place, our voice, and our sense of home, even as we navigate life's ever-shifting landscape.

This September, may we all lean into the challenge and the promise of building belonging—recognizing that in doing so, we not only connect with each other but also participate in the greater work of connecting beyond.

Ministry of Connecting Beyond

Update on Familias Juntas

by Lorena Griffin



Thank you all for your recent support for Familias Juntas through the second quarter Give Away the Plate program. Familias Juntas is a coalition of concerned Gwinnett County individuals and faith communities, whose goal is to assist immigrants in danger of or affected by family separation, due to inhumane immigration policies.

The organization came from our church and The Nett Church (the United Methodist Church, also on Bethesda Church Road). We have gathered a group of lawyers, notaries, and interpreters to enable immigrants (undocumented and otherwise) to obtain a "Power of Attorney for Care of a Minor Child." This document allows parents to name who would care for their children if they are detained or deported. Otherwise, those children are in danger of becoming wards of the state.

First, we educated ourselves through attending multiple training programs, offered by the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. Then our head lawyer, Jane Thorpe, organized a training program for attorneys. There she met attorneys from another organization, Atlanta House of Hope, who were doing the same work that we are.

Since then, we have been in close contact and cooperation with Atlanta House of Hope. We assisted at some of their document clinics, held at Catholic Churches in metro Atlanta. We have held our own workshops at an Episcopal Church in Lawrenceville and at a Latino-serving library in Athens.

This week, the two organizations coordinated to hold our first document clinic at the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta. This venue provides us with a ready population and a safe space. We anticipate holding regular workshops there and then moving out to other Consulates in the area.

In addition to these POA workshops, we want to financially assist families affected by separation. Fortunately, family separation has not affected many families yet, but we were able to offer assistance to one local family who lost their father. We anticipate this aspect of our services to increase in the near future. The US now has approximately 60,000 immigrants in custody and is working hard to build additional retention centers (concentration camps). This is more than at any other time in American history.

From our congregation, I especially want to thank notaries Jenn McCutcheon and Peggy Averyt, as well as Sue Ann Soloway for her administrative support. We can still use attorneys, notaries and interpreters, whether members of the congregation or not. We can also use your prayers and good intentions, plus your willingness to stay educated and to advocate in your circles.



The Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry has been serving the citizens of Gwinnett County, Georgia since 1995, that seeks to care for those in the Lawrenceville and Dacula communities. We are an emergency food bank helping those in need by providing food, personal care items and connections to other helping resources. One of our primary goals is to help clients get back on their feet.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION HOURS

MONDAY: 5-7 pm

WEDNESDAY: 9 am-noon

FRIDAY: 9 am-noon

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
(See QR code)



Ministry of Connecting Beyond

Announcing the Launch of the UUCG Resisting Fascism Team

by Steve Babb

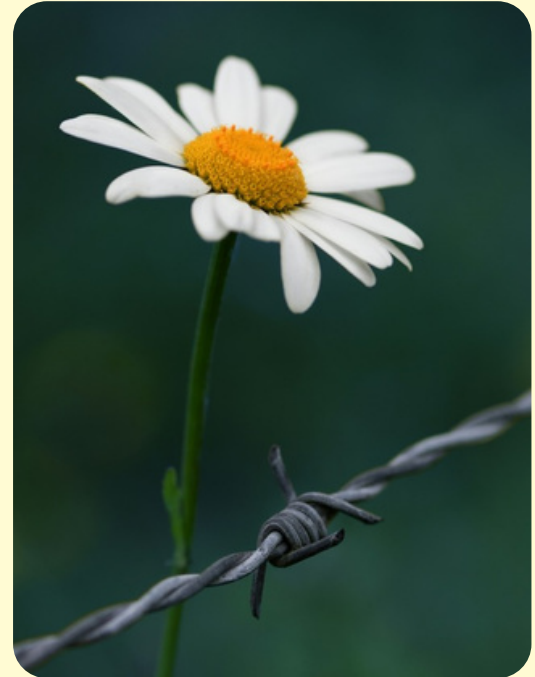
We are excited to announce the kickoff of the UUCG Resisting Fascism Team!

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the torrent of bad news and gut-punched by the nonstop onslaught of hateful rhetoric and retrograde, intentionally cruel policies?

Are you looking for actionable ways to defend our democracy and to live out our antifascist UU values in your daily life in this dark time?

Are you yearning for opportunities to stand up nonviolently but resolutely in solidarity with the oppressed and on the side of justice and love in the proud tradition of our UU history, but at a loss for where to start?

Resisting fascism begins, not with bombastic words, but with small, concrete, compassionate, empowering deeds. This Team can help you identify these actions and begin taking them. We will provide UUCG members with a menu of actionable opportunities for folks to select from based on their individual comfort levels, issues of choice, skill sets, and passions.



We will work closely with existing UUCG programs such as “Good Trouble” and Belief Explorers and with other initiatives such as Familias Juntas to avoid duplication and maximize efficiency and impact.

Our prophetic witness has never been needed more urgently. Working and learning together, we can forge a path where there appears to be no way.

More information about the Resisting Fascism Team to come soon!



I believe every inch of America is sacred, from sea to shining sea. I believe we make it holy by who we welcome and by how we relate to each other.

Eboo Patel

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



The UUA is thrilled to announce the launch of The Woodlands, a new all-ages virtual pastoral care program for trans people and their families, beginning this fall.

The Woodlands is a monthly online gathering designed for trans children, youth, and adults—as well as the parents and caregivers of trans people.

Go to the article on the UUCG Website for more details:
<https://www.uucg.org/the-woodlands>

Atlanta Pride is right around the corner, but the UU North Georgia Cluster has been busy planning and making arrangements. We have released the UU Pride Market Place Booth Shift Sign-up. We are looking for folx to be at the booth to greet people and do tarot readings. There is also availability to march in the parade or ride a float seat. Click the links below to sign up!

[UU Pride Market Place Booth Shift Sign-Up](#)

[UU Marchers and Float Seat Sign-Up](#)



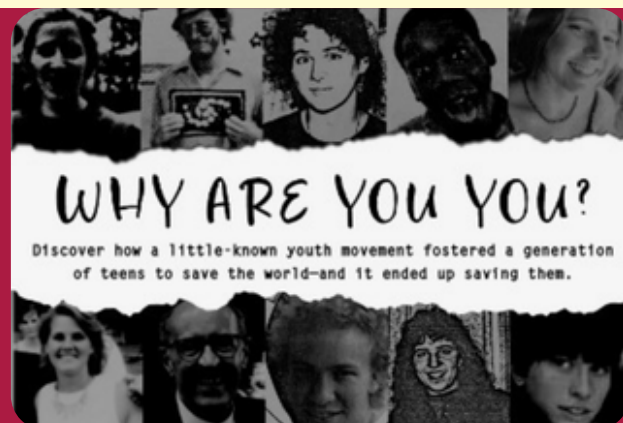
Join us for The Gathering on Monday, September 8, 2025 8:00pm. This is a monthly virtual event from Side With Love designed to offer Spiritual Grounding, Political Analysis, and Collective Action.

We kick off the church year with live music from Parker Woodland and a conversation about Solidarity with Side with Love's Nicole Pressley and Deepa Iyer, author of this year's [UUA Common Read Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection](#).

You can find more information and register at [this site](#).

The Emerson UU Congregation of Marietta is pleased to invite all to a screening of the newly released documentary, **"Why Are You You?,"** about the Youth Movement, YRUU, of the UUA. This will take place on Saturday, September 13 at 5:30pm.

For more information, the address, and to register for the screening, click on [this link](#).



Save the Date



UUCG presents

TRUNK OR TREAT

on Halloween night

Friday, October 31st

more information coming soon



November 15-16, 2025
Savannah, Georgia

SAVE the DATE

CONNECTING FOR A BRIGHTER GA FUTURE

Unitarian Universalist Georgia
Legislative Action Network
3rd Annual Conference

NETWORKING

SKILL BUILDING

INSPIRATION

ACTION

REGISTRATION AND MORE TO FOLLOW

.....

LIVE MUSIC 🍁 CRAFTS 🍁 ARTISAN MARKET

Harvest festival

8 November/Saturday
10 AM-4PM

Unitarian Universalists Congregation Of Gwinnett
12 Bethesda Church Road., Lawrenceville, GA 30044



September 2025

for more information about any of these events,
please [visit our online Calendar](#)



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6  
7    	8 	9 	10 	11  	12 	 
14   	15	16 	17 	18 	19 	20  
21    	22 	23 	24 	25 	26 	27 
28  	29	30 				

	Food Bank Donations Days	Food collection for our members in need and the Lawrenceville Co-op	In-Person
	Potluck Lunch	Sign up to volunteer; bring a dish to share; come break bread together	In-Person
	Board Of Trustees	Congregational Conversation, Board Meeting, or Business Meeting. All members and friends of UUCG are invited to attend	In-Person/Online
	Alphabet SoUUUp	Discussion group for Queer-identified folx	In-Person
	Choir	Rehearsal for performance during Worship Services	In-Person
	Yarns from the Heart	Creates prayer shawls and baby blankets for members and friends	In-Person/Online
	Music Night	Musicians of all skill levels gather to play together	In-Person
	Property Beautification	Monthly indoor/outdoor workday. All skills and abilities are welcome	In-Person
	Oak Grove UUCG CUUPs	Oak Grove UUCG Covenant of UU Pagans Gathering, all are welcome	In-Person
	Belief Explorers	Explorers of world philosophies, faith traditions & religions	In-Person/Online
	Spiral Scouts	All-gender scouting group for ages 3-12	In-Person
	Covenant Groups	Small Group Ministry. Registration Required	In-Person/Online
	Men's Group (inclusive)	Male-identified people gather for discussion	In-Person
	Tarot Classes	A learning space for all who are interested in the tarot	Online via Zoom
	Green Team Meeting	Environmental Justice-focused group, all are welcome	Online via Zoom
	Sylvan Sanctuary	Oak Grove Sylvan Sanctuary Druid Ritual celebrating the Sabbats	In-Person
	Book Group	Monthly book discussion (contact administrator for link to join)	Online via Zoom
	G3T	Grand Green Get Togethers: Movies and more with the Green Team	In-Person
	Worship Services	Sunday Morning Worship Services at 11:00am weekly	In-Person/Online
	Family Game Night	Board and card games in community - all ages welcome	In-Person
	QUEST & QUEST Jr.	D&D campaigns, registration required	In-Person
	Good Trouble	Sunday After Service at 12:30PM	In-Person
	Women's Group	All who identify as women are welcome to this safe space for sharing & connection	In-Person
	Resisting Fascism	Discussion group centered on the book On Tyranny, by Timothy Snyder	In-Person
	Sharing the Journey	4-week program for both newcomers and long-time members of UUCG	In-Person

Staff Schedules

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones *Minister*

revnpj@uucg.org | 678-558-4834
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays:
10:00 am. - 4:00 pm
First & Third Saturdays: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Christiana McQuain *Coordinator of Family Ministries*

cmcquain@uucg.org
Tuesdays (remote), 9:00 am-4:00 pm
Fridays (on-site), 9:00 am-2:00 pm
most Sundays (on-site) 8:30 am-2:30 pm

Jason Pfeffer *Office Administrator*

admin@uucg.org
Tuesdays, 10am-2pm
Fridays, 9am-2pm
Third Sundays, 10:30-12:30pm

Becca Parker *Choir Director*

choirdirector@uucg.org
Sunday mornings (On-site), 9:00am-12:00 pm

Michael Parker *Choir Director*

choirdirector@uucg.org
Tuesdays (on-site), 1:00 pm-6:00 pm

LaTreisha McKay *Bookkeeper*

lmckay@uucg.org
Mondays (remote), 5:00 pm-8:00 pm