



Gadding About

Sabbatical time for ministers is unique to each minister. We each have to follow our hearts and souls toward what is calling us forward in this time of rest, renewal, and reflection. Recently I listened to a guided meditation containing affirmations “to help you switch on the happiness button in your brain and have a magical day.” One of the affirmations is “I make plans that are flexible and open to the surprises life has in store for me.”

I made plans to backpack on the Appalachian Trail for 30 days ... really serious plans! There are countless details that have to be considered for food, shelter, clothing, and so forth. I embarked on my journey on Easter Sunday, starting with an ascent of over 3,000 feet in elevation change over very challenging terrain. Over the next four days I hiked more difficult ascents, navigated steep descents, walked through pouring rain, and found my way through dense fog. I saw great beauty, the devastating effects of humanity where whole forests and mountaintops were burned to the ground, and found hope in the new life emerging in those spaces.

I felt strong, capable, and agile. And, a knee injury I sustained last year kept nagging me all along the way. After four days, four nights, and 30 miles, I came to the realization that if I continued to hike for 26 more days, this could be my last hike. I'm young(ish)! I want to hike for 20 or 30 more years! So, I said, “Yes!” to a future of hiking and came off the trail. I am making a commitment to myself to go on day hikes and overnight hikes several times a year so I can regularly connect with the earth and keep my body strong.

Spiritually, this hike was extraordinary. I can't wait to share some of the stories with you when I return. I encountered over 270 people hiking north as I hiked south from the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, NC. I had deep conversations with several people, and with each person I encountered, however briefly, I felt the divine spark of connection. I walked with a bigger smile, a lighter step, and a song on my heart after each encounter. It was a great joy to have this experience. I am full of gratitude.

On another note, there is much happening in our UU faith in the past couple of months. Emotions are high as deep wounds from many decades are being exposed, wounds that lay hidden or ignored for too long. I expect many of you are tuned in, and perhaps wondering where we are going. I have a deep and abiding faith in Unitarian Universalism and I am excited for our future ... we are finding a new way towards being the multicultural, multigenerational, spiritually pluralist faith many of us dream about. I hold you all in my heart with compassion as we navigate the journeys of our faith, with all the ascents, descents, sunshine, downpours, and fog. Hope to see some of you in New Orleans for General Assembly or at SUUS!

Reverend Jan

Congregational Meeting May 21 after service

Annual Reports, General Assembly & Elections

Sundays at UUCG

10:00 am Faith Development

11:00 am Worship Service

May Theme:

Open the Window

May 7: *When You Open the Window, What do You Expect?*

Bob Patrick, Service Leader
Miriam Patrick, Worship Associate
Devon McQuain, Worship Associate
Lydia Patrick, Pianist
UUCA Youth Group Visiting
Town Hall Meeting after service
Choir Practice before service

May 14: *Flower Communion*

Rev. Charlotte Arsenault, Service Leader
Carol Richardson, Worship Associate
Bryan Bishop, Pianist
Flower Communion
Choir Practice before service

May 21: *Kissing the Dove*

Daniel Bailey, Service Leader
Lydia Patrick, Worship Associate
Bryan Bishop, Pianist
Congregational Meeting
Potluck Lunch
No UU 101 nor UU 102
Choir Practice before service

May 28: *Open the Window*

Paige Varner, Service Leader
Evan Varner, Worship Associate
Lorena Griffin, Pianist
Michael off. No choir practice.

*May plate contributions are shared
equally with El Refugio
ElRefugio.org*



Announcements for the June newsletter are due by May 25. Announcements for the weekly e-newsletter and Order of Service are due on Tuesdays at noon. Send announcements to “announcements@uucg.org”. Contact Ldecastro@uucg.org to subscribe to newsletters.



Faith Development at 10:00am

It is our goal to provide you with inspiration and resources to help you live deeper into your UU faith throughout the week. Come join us at 10:00 on Sunday mornings for fellowship and learning, and opportunities to live into the questions as you search for truth and meaning. Childcare will be available. Upcoming programs include:

May 7 - Faith Development Forum: Open the Window, Let Equity In. An open discussion on the monthly theme. Facilitated by Nathalie Bigord & Karen Smith

May 14 – Spiritual Practices: Our topic this month facilitated by Sherree Bailey is Using Tarot to Create a Daily Affirmation and Focus for Meditation and Prayer. There will be Tarot cards available but you can also bring your own!

May 21– Social Justice: Bending the Arc – If we wish the arc of the moral universe to bend toward justice, it is we who must do the bending. Come share with others the ways you are engaged and involved in working toward change, or to learn about opportunities for engagement. Together, indivisible, we make a difference. Hosted by the Faith Development Team



Special Service Rituals This May

Flower Communion on May 14

Bring your favorite flower to church as we celebrate the annual Flower Ceremony. Nearly 94 years ago, Rev. Norbert Capek created the service, which is dedicated to our sixth principle: We covenant to affirm and promote the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

Bridging Ceremony on May 21

We recognize our graduates and other life milestones.



An Invitation from Nathalie Bigord with Book Club

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon by David Grann
May 23 at 7:00pm

In 1925, the legendary British explorer Percy Fawcett ventured into the Amazon jungle, in search of a fabled civilization. He never returned. Over the years countless perished trying to find evidence of his party and the place he called “The Lost City of Z.” In this masterpiece of narrative nonfiction, journalist David Grann interweaves the spellbinding stories of Fawcett’s quest for “Z” and his own journey into the deadly jungle, as he unravels the greatest exploration mystery of the twentieth century.

We welcome new members and visitors to join us for our discussions each month, whether you have read or finished the book. Light refreshments will be provided.



CUUPs Gathering

June 3 at 7:00pm

You're invited to come for a meditation and experience on power animals.

Programs at The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center

The spring and summer at The Mountain is packed with great camps and retreat programs for all ages. The full calendar of events and links to MountainCamps and Retreats are on The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center website at www.themountainrlc.org including:

- Memorial Day & Homecoming Weekend, May 26-29
- Youth Advisor Training, (UUA Southern Region), June 1-3
- MountainCamps, June 11- July 22. MountainCamps are available for children and youth from Elementary through High School age--and registration is currently underway. Campership applications are also found in the MountainCamp section of the website.
- Intergenerational Family Camp, July 23-30
- Cultivating Presence & Connection Through Companionship, August 14-18
- Total Solar Eclipse, August 18-22 (Sorry, SOLD OUT!)
- Southeast UU Fall Institute (SUUFI), October 1-6
- Thanksgiving Weekend, November 22-26.
- Fall Youth CONferences, November 3 - December 3

The Mountain is also a host site for great Retreats organized by outside groups that welcome new attendees too. People of all ages love this special place we call The Mountain.

A Message About MountainCamp

Our MountainCamp program is very intentional and is the foundation for building our community and enhancing our camper's experiences. While we'd all like to think that it is easy for children and youth to make friends, have fun, and be part of a community, it really is a skill that we have to teach them like math or science.

At MountainCamp, we create an environment in which our campers can thrive, by offering programs like STEM in which our campers are given certain challenges and must use team work to find the best solution. In Aquatics and Sports, our campers are learning healthy competition, sportsmanship, and how and to be a leader. In Self Expression workshops, our campers are not only making deeper connections with themselves but also learning perspective and empathy when hearing other points of view. Our Outdoor & Nature program is teaching our campers how to interact with the natural world around them and also rely on friends to help complete tasks like building a fire for warmth or a forest fort for shelter. Our Appalachian Studies program teaches our campers the legacy of the people and cultures in our region and the respect we must give to those who came before us. Our Arts & Crafts program allows our campers to complete the process of creation.

Lastly, we balance all of these fun learning experiences with our cabin families. Our cabin families share more than just their space with each other a week at a time--they share their hopes and dreams, their hardships and challenges, and by the end of their time together, our campers have made connections with people who will forever be held in their hearts for many reasons.

So what do campers do while they are here? They have fun, make friends and build a community.

Good afternoon!

My name is Sydney Donohue, and I attended the youth programs at UUCG until I left for college! One of the greatest opportunities I had through the youth programs was The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center, a place in Highlands, North Carolina that runs UU summer camps! I attended MountainCamp for 4 summers and loved it so much that I now return to work there as a camp counselor! MountainCamp is truly a remarkable place because you get to meet UU kids from all around the southeast! It is a place full of love, adventure, creativity, and friendship!

I noticed last summer that there weren't many kids from UUCG at camp. I would love to see more campers from my home church, and I would love for every kid to hear about this incredible opportunity! UUCG bringing me MountainCamp has played a huge part of who I am today, and I think UUCG bringing kids to The Mountain is a tradition that should continue! Therefore, I would greatly appreciate you sharing information on MountainCamp with the congregation and the youth groups! Registration closes June 1st. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have!

Elections At UUCG

As of the date of submission to the GNUUS our slate for 2017-2018 is:

- President (elected) open
- Vice-President (elected) Bill Benshoof
- Secretary (elected) Steve Smith
- Treasurer (elected) Barbara Stahnke
- Member-at-Large (elected) Ally Perras
- Youth Associate (2 open)
- Leadership Development (2 open)



Theresa Waldrop will continue in her role on the Board of Trustees as a Member-at-Large as well Denise Benshoof on the Leadership Development Committee. Additionally, the board has someone who has volunteered to take on the Member at Large position that is currently vacant. We are voting on the appointment via email as we go to press. If you have a youth who is looking to see what it is like to govern we would be grateful to have them join us.

As you can see we have a need for someone to step up to take on the position of President of the Board of Trustees. If you have been a member for at least two years, are interested in developing your leadership skills, and growing in your UU faith, please consider stepping up to this position. As you can see from the slate, you will have some experienced board members and passionate UUs to support you. Contact Barbara Stahnke (president@uucg.org) if you have questions about what it is like to serve in this role. Contact Denise Benshoof (herstoryian@yahoo.com) if you are willing to serve.

Please attend the Congregational Meeting on May 21st directly after service to vote for our Board of Trustees and Leadership Development Committee.



Elections At General Assembly 2017

General Assembly (GA) is the international gathering of Unitarian Universalists. This year, GA is relatively close - New Orleans. 2017 GA includes the election of a new President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. There are pre-GA racial justice training workshops too. Get updates by liking UU New Orleans on Facebook or visit www.uua.org/ga.

UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY Bryan Stevenson to deliver the 2017 Ware Lecture at GA

Bryan Stevenson is the founder and Executive Director of the Equal

Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama. Mr. Stevenson is a widely acclaimed public interest lawyer who has dedicated his career to helping the poor, the incarcerated and the condemned. Under his leadership, EJI has won major legal challenges eliminating excessive and unfair sentencing, exonerating innocent death row prisoners, confronting abuse of the incarcerated and the mentally ill and aiding children prosecuted as adults. Mr. Stevenson has successfully argued several cases in the United States Supreme Court and recently won an historic ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court banning mandatory life-without-parole sentences for all children 17 or younger are unconstitutional. EJI has also initiated major new anti-poverty and anti-discrimination efforts challenging the legacy of racial inequality in America. Mr. Stevenson's work fighting poverty and challenging racial discrimination in the criminal justice system has won him numerous awards including the ABA Wisdom Award for Public Service, the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship Award Prize, the Olaf Palme International Prize, the ACLU National Medal Of Liberty, the National Public Interest Lawyer of the Year Award, the Gruber Prize for International Justice and the Ford Foundation Visionaries Award. In 2015, he was named to the Time 100 recognizing the world's most influential people. Recently, he was named in Fortune's 2016 World's Greatest Leaders list. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government, has been awarded 26 honorary doctorate degrees and is also a Professor of Law at the New York University School of Law. He is the recent author of the critically acclaimed New York Times bestseller, *Just Mercy*, which was named by Time Magazine as one of the 10 best books of nonfiction for 2014 and has been awarded several honors including the Carnegie Medal by the American Library Association for the best nonfiction book of 2014 and a 2015 NAACP Image Award.

Luck of the Community

If you missed the Auction night fun, there's still time to join a FUNdraiser party and show your support of UUCG. To sign-up just make a generous donation of your choice to UUCG, write the name of the item you want on the memo line or envelope OR visit www.uucg.org and select "Register for Events". These parties are a great way to meet other congregants too. Events include concerts, hikes, family outings, and craft workshops. Visit www.uucg.org and select "Upcoming Events" for details.



Ladies Morning Coffee on May 6, 2017 at 10:30am

Ladies, get together a carpool and come on over to Athens for morning coffee. We'll also have mimosas, juice, fruit, bagels, danish, sausage balls, and other goodies. Party is a "go" and more welcome. Contact: June Warfield at 706-395-6132 or jlw@wittsend.com. At Warfields home in Athens, GA.



Bowling for Community on May 13, 2017 at 4:00 pm

Bowling fun with snacks in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Shoe rental included. Contact: Theresa at 770-931-0501.



Moonlight & Music on May 20, 2017 from 8-10:00 pm

A live outdoor music event. Barbara and Will provide the live music and the mimosas. Ally providing snacks. Childcare available with reservation a week in advance. Contact: Barbara Jenkins at 770-466-9160. Event held on UUCG Deck.



Music Recital on Sunday, June 4, 2017 from 3-5:00pm

An afternoon of music featuring violin, guitar, flute, & piano of Evan Varner, Sam Varner, Bryan Bishop, Barbara Stahnke, and Jen Garrison. Organized by Barbara Stahnke.



Women's Night on June 24, 2017 at 7:00pm

A Ladies' Night In, to include food, drink, and games! Relax and have fun as we enjoy the company of friends both old and new. Hosted by Theresa Waldrop (770-931-0501).



Indigo Dyeing Workshop coming Summer 2017

We will set up an indigo dye vat and talk about shibori and other methods, then dye tea towels/muslin fabric (or you may supply your own t-shirt). Contact: Lorena Griffin at 770-962-5105
Summer 2017 TBD from 1 - 5pm
at Lorena's Home in Dacula, GA 30019



Harbins Hike

6 mile moderate hike in the woods. Picnic lunch will be provided. Contact Wally at 678-463-4652
Date: TBD



Growing a Beloved Community

Barbara Stahnke, President

This year the board is in preparation for strategic planning. We are reading a short book *Growing a Beloved Community* because it inspires, informs and connects us to our vision. We are asking ourselves key questions that we developed at the Board Retreat in August that can help us understand the best ways to govern for our vision to be achieved. I adapted this month's question to reflect the current denominational issues around UUA hiring practices <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/critics-challenge-uaa-hiring-practices> : “How

do we support our congregation during troubling times?” The Chapter we read was “Look back, Around, Ahead”.

As I reflect this month on the question and our communities' and board's guidance, I am focused on our mission – Courage, Curiosity, Compassion. Our day to day work is our mission. When I consider that our larger denomination may not have provided the dreamed for leadership in hiring practices, I was feeling very judgmental. When Rev. Morales resigned <http://www.uuworld.org/articles/peter-morales-resigns> , I was angry that he did not provide leadership in how we do this thing called justice and equity in human relations. I began to doubt that Unitarian Universalism was the path to wholeness that I was trusting to guide me in my path as a white, anti-racist, woman. I was worried that UUism didn't really have the willingness to help me walk my path.

The board discussion, as well as conversations and listening with members and staff and reading a diverse series of articles about our UU history with racial justice, have helped me understand that for my spiritual wholeness, this is the work I am called to do on my journey. We have history (looking back) both positive and negative around racial justice; we have a vision (looking ahead) that calls us to welcome and connection; we have a present of committed people doing work day to day (looking around). ‘We’ is the collective denominational and congregational we. I am afraid that I will not be enough – yet I recall our mission of Courage. I am afraid that I will not remember to learn – yet I recall our mission of Curiosity. I am afraid that I will not have enough Love to hold this pain – yet I recall our mission of Compassion. Most of all – I recall our Community - our Courage, Curiosity, Compassion that has forgiven my failings and loved me on this path. Yes, I feel like I can face anything with my UUCG community. I am inspired and grateful.

I hope you will join the Board of Trustees in listening to the messages from worship, attend and learn at workshops and participate in congregational meetings with your whole self – body, mind and heart (and for those who believe in one – spirit.) Let us, in the words of Connie Goodbread, “lean in” to these challenging conversations – right now, and always.

Summary of the month from the board: How do we support our congregation during troubling times? Stay in conversation both listening and talking. Don't give up. Keep showing up. Remember our principles in all we do. Be real. Show up. Remember compassion in our dealings with each other. Remember courage to keep up the conversation. Remember curiosity in expanding our knowledge on all sides of an issue.

This is our mission as a local congregation of a larger denomination. To stay in conversation– accepting our humanness and our differences. We know our connection is our UU principles and purposes and most importantly our community; the love we have for each other. Let us grow this beloved community together.

From Rev. Taddeo (on sabbatical):

- Photo of Jan outside the Wayah Bald Shelter getting ready to hike a 10 mile day in the rain; as it turned out, it was one of the most beautiful days of all! No rain!
- The shelter by itself photo is the Cold Spring Shelter, the oldest on the AT — built by the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) in the 1930's.
- The photo of the campground has my hammock tent in the foreground — this was my last morning on the trail.



Visitor Orientation

UU 101 June 18 at 12:45pm

CURIOS – If you are new to Unitarian Universalism or just new to UUCG, this class should answer some of your questions. **COURAGEOUS** – Join us in the library on third Sundays immediately following the service.

COMPASSIONATE – We hope the information and discussions will help you on your spiritual journey.

Childcare and lunch provided. Sign up on the bulletin board by the nametags, visit www.uucg.org and select “register”, call the UUCG office at 770-717-7913, or just drop in. For more information, contact Peggy at membership@uucg.org.

New Member Class

UU 102 June 18 at 12:45pm

If you have taken UU 101 and feel ready to move on to the next step, please join us. UU 102 meets in the Lounge. Childcare will be available and lunch provided. Sign up is available by selecting “register” on the www.uucg.org website, through the office at 770-717-7913, or through email to membership@uucg.org. After completing UU 102, you are eligible to become an official member of UUCG at an upcoming signing ceremony.

Signing Ceremony

If you are considering becoming a member of UUCG, please contact membership@uucg.org, to participate in the next ceremony. Ceremonies take place quarterly in the Pastor's Parlor, with next ceremony on May 21.



Dear Greta . 2/18/17
 Karen and I have arrived
 in Managua, Nicaragua
 and I looking forward to
 our big adventure!
 ¡ Es un país muy bonita
 Me love Adventure & sharing



UUCG

Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Gwinnett
12 Bethesda Church Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30044
www.uucg.org
770.717.7913 

Building Open

Sunday: 9:30am-12:30pm
Tuesday: 10:00am-3:30pm
Friday: 10:00am-2:00pm
By Appointment: 770-717-7913

Staff

Rev. Jan Taddeo, Parish Minister

RevTaddeo@uucg.org
Our Minister is on sabbatical through July 31. Contact Staff or Board at the numbers below or our Pastoral Care Associates at 770-847-0566.

Laura de Castro, Administrator

Ldecastro@uucg.org
Office: 770-717-7913
Our Administrator is in the building on Tuesdays, Fridays and 3rd Sundays and available through email 12-3:30pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Appointments suggested.

Christiana McQuain, Program Assistant

cmcquain@uucg.org

Michael Parker, Choir Director

choir@uucg.org

Board of Trustees

Barbara Stahnke, President

president@uucg.org

Ben Lower, Vice President

vp@uucg.org

Steve Smith, Treasurer

treasurer@uucg.org

Ally Perras, Secretary

secretary@uucg.org

Board Members at Large

Sara Heath
Theresa Waldrop
Phoenix Lastinger
Vacant



Planning for Summer Joy Project on May 13 at 10am

This summer, UUCG will engage in a Summer Joy project to repair the mailbox island at the sidewalk entrance. Nancy Jacobsen planted annuals and perennials in this island and the funding to repair it comes from a bequest from Nancy Jacobsen's estate. Members, friends, family, etc. who are interested in participating in the planning are welcome to participate in the planning meeting to be held May 13 at 10:00am in the Library at UUCG. Let us plan for some fun work this summer making UUCG as beautiful as Nancy J.s spirit.



Curiosity. Courage. Compassion.

*We are a radically welcoming sanctuary in a green space.
We foster spiritual growth as we joyfully nurture connections
and community within our walls and beyond.*