Virtual Sundays at UUCG

**10:00am Faith Development Online** 11:00am Worship Service Online



Go to https://zoom.us/join Or dial 646-558-8656 and enter our Meeting ID: 565-460-176

## **September Theme: Renewal**

September 6 at 9:45am Gather the Spirit of Renewal Hosting Emerson UU Rev. Jan Taddeo, Service Leader

September 13 Renewing Our Community Rev. Jan Taddeo, Service Leader

September 20 Renewing Our **Practices** Rev. Jan Taddeo, Service Leader

September 27 Renewing Our **Commitments** Rev. Jan Taddeo, Service Leader

**October 4** The Listening Companion Rev. Jan Taddeo, Service Leader

> Plate contributions are shared equally with El Refugio



**Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists** 

September 2020 Newsletter for UUCG



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

# **Fostering Spiritual Growth...**

## Online Worship Services, Sundays at 11:00 am, except September 6 at 9:45am



Go to https://zoom.us/join or dial 646-558-8656 and enter Meeting ID: 565-460-176

Our services are led by our minister, the Reverend Jan Taddeo, and our inspiring team of Service Leaders and Worship Associates. This is our sacred time to gather in our cherished space to recall our true selves, reflect on the meaning of our lives, and explore questions of ultimacy together. All ages are welcome in our virtual worship services. You may contact Reverend Jan Taddeo at RevTaddeo@uucg.org.

September 6 at 9:45am Gather the Spirit of Renewal Emerson will be joining us

The first source of wisdom we draw from is the direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life. What are the experiences of mystery and wonder that move you to a renewal of spirit? Where have you found the awe that reconnects you with the spirit of life? Rev. Taddeo, Service Leader

## September 13 Renewing Our Community

We kick off our pledge drive this year with our annual Water Ceremony. We turn to water to refresh us, cleanse us, and inspire us. We'll come together virtually to combine the sacred waters of life and celebrate the warmth of community and the fire of commitment. Please send photos of the waters that give you a sense of renewal to RevTaddeo@uucg.org to include in our annual Water Ceremony. Rev. Taddeo, Service Leader

## September 20 Renewing Our Practices

Has the pandemic interrupted or inspired healthy practices for mind, body and spirit? What are the possibilities for virtual communal practices to increase connection and spiritual growth? Rev. Taddeo, Service Leader

## September 27 Renewing Our Commitments

We make many commitments in our lives. It can be useful to reflect on these commitments and intentionally renew them, be they wedding vows, careers, ways of being, or commitments to causes and concerns. What in your life is calling for a renewal of commitments? Rev. Taddeo, Service Leader

## October 4 The Listening Companion

Companioning is a way of being with one another that allows for one's own wisdom to emerge. In this service we'll explore more deeply the power of listening and companioning one another in a radically welcoming community. Rev. Taddeo, Service Leader

# **Recordings of Services on YouTube**

Rev. Jan Taddeo has posted inspirational messages on our UUCG YouTube Channel. Also, our worship services have been recorded and are viewable on YouTube. Please visit bit.ly/UUCGYouTube to view our offerings and connect with us as you are able.

# September Theme: Renewal

Click Here for Virtual Intention Table Activities



# Sunday Morning Faith Development Programs

To access Faith Development Programs on Zoom, go to https://zoom.us/join or dial 646-558-8656 and enter Meeting ID: Adult Faith Development: 145-984-149 Elementary RE: 734-199-446

## **Adult Faith Development**

Sunday September 9 at 11:15am: Join Emerson for their programs:

Coffee & Conversation: Fellowship Time after the worship service

Worship Reflections @ 11:15am - Join us for a facilitated discussion of the worship service.

Suppressed: The Fight to Vote @ 11:15am - Screening of Robert Greenwald's documentary about the growing threat of voter suppression to our 2020 election. This showing kicks off Emerson UU the Vote activities to encourage high voter turnout on Nov 6th!Join us in viewing a portion of PBS's The Molecule that Made Us.

### Sunday, September 13 at 10:00am: Dreamwork

Join us for an exploration of working with dreams, as we share with each other, using Jeremy Taylor's book Dream Work as a guide. Program facilitated by Thomas Yun



### Sunday, September 20 at 10:00am: Return to the Wild

In this session we will tap into all our senses to engage with nature's restorative power. "Lay down among the wild things, and renew your senses..."

### Sunday, September 27 at 10:00am: Return and Repair

How is covenant at work in your life? Are there opportunities during this month of renewal to revisit some of your personal covenants and do the work of repair?

## **Elementary Religious Exploration**

Sunday, September 9 at 12:30pm: Introductory session Sunday, September 13: Religious Exploration at Home (no session, resources provided) Sunday, September 20 at 12:30pm: CartUUns Program Sunday, September 27 at 12:30pm: CartUUns Program Next we will be exploring the theme of Deep Listening



Family Faith Development Resources: During this unique period of social distancing and virtual programming, the UUCG Faith Development Team is committed to providing parents and caregivers resources to support you in navigating your faith journey from home. Please use this link for more information: https://www.uucg.org/ family-faith-development-resources/

## Come be Curious, Courageous, and Compassionate with us!

Please register all ages for Faith Development by going to this link: https://bit.ly/uucgregister. A vibrant faith development program only happens with You! We invite you to help us create an enriching experience of Faith Formation at UUCG. Use the above link to register as a volunteer.

# **Tending the Flame**

This month of exploration of Renewal is an opportunity for us to be thinking about what we commit our time and energy to. What are the things that call to us? What are the things we show up for? Are your answers to these two questions in alignment? What changes must you make to get them there?

The UUCG Faith Development Team is engaging with these questions, too, as we plan our programs for the unique situation of this upcoming season. There are many challenges in creating an entirely online program, but there are so many more opportunities. It is an exciting time to be innovating and transforming the way we have always done things, with an eye toward creating something new that serves us into the future of a changing reality.



Vibrant, thriving Faith Development doesn't happen without you. How will you make manifest the fire of your commitment?

Register for Faith Development to receive information about upcoming programs and monthly theme-focused resources to engage and explore your UU faith throughout the weeks, beyond Sunday mornings.

## **Children's Religious Exploration**

After meeting virtually with the parents of our UUCG children, we are planning to resume Children's RE on Sundays, in the time period *after* Worship. The program for Elementary-aged children (5-11 years old) is focused on exploring UU values through the Pixar animated short films. It has been designed to be facilitated in a virtual environment, and will take place via Zoom three Sundays a month at 12:30pm. In addition to these sessions, there will be resources provided monthly via email for children, teens, families, and parents; for engagement with our themes and to support your UU journey beyond Sunday mornings. All families are encouraged to submit a registration for Faith Development via this link.

# Give Away the Plate Donations— El Refugio



El Refugio provides critical support for detained asylum seekers and immigrants and their relatives. The organization is about a mile from the Stewart Detention Center, run for ICE by a private company, CoreCivic, in Lumpkin, GA. El Refugio's hospitality center provides free food and lodging for family members visiting their incarcerated loved ones. It helps those who have to struggle with the trauma of separation and the lack of resources, such as hotels and restaurants, in the remote town of Lumpkin. Click here for a video by JoAnn Weiss.

## Fire of Commitment

We are committed to continuing to provide Faith Development opportunities for you during the 10 o'clock hour and beyond. And we need you to show up. We need you to show up by sharing with us what it is that you would find valuable enough to show up for, and then we need you to show up by committing to lead one or more sessions during the program year.



# Gadding About...

# by Rev. Jan Taddeo

Our theme for September is Renewal. September is when many UU congregations celebrate the return from summer adventures and begin a new program year with renewed vision and energy. We begin this celebration with our annual Water Ceremony - a ritual that most, if not all, UU congregations honor each fall, much like our Flower Ceremony in the spring. And, like our last Flower Ceremony, I'm inviting you to virtually "bring" water for our Water Ceremony on September 13th by sending me images of water that are sacred to you, that help you to feel a sense of renewal, or represent a significant time, place, or transition in your life. This might be a waterfall, a lake, an ocean, a creek in your backyard, or the water from your tap. Please send images to me at revtaddeo@uucg.org no later than noon on Friday, September 11.

The fall is also a time when we renew our commitment to our beloved congregation. We invite people to consider serving the congregation in new ways each year. Specifically, we are seeking leadership for our Membership Team, new Pastoral Care Associates, and new Worship Associates. We also need people to assist with the many projects we have lined up to prepare our building and grounds for our return. Contact sharedministry@uucg.org to inquire about how your gifts of time, talent, and expertise fit with our current needs.



I invite you to reflect on how being a part of this community shapes your life. And, if you are someone who is not actively engaged in congregational life, maybe take some time to consider how important it is to you that this congregation is here for others, and here for you when you find you are in need of a supportive community.

I was reminded recently of Loyal Rue's teachings about the three primary purposes of religious community: 1) Social Cohesion, 2) Personal Growth, and 3) Sense of Purpose. Our commitment to become a radically welcoming community - one in which the gifts of all are equally needed, respected, appreciated, and engaged - is an example of horizontal social cohesion. It takes intention, education, and commitment to create such a counter-cultural model of community. This is where we can each grow personally - learning more about inherent bias, systems of privilege, and white supremacy culture that are so often invisible to those of us who were raised in the vertical social structure in the United States. Through that learning, we can be more effective in extending our welcome and our service to all corners of Gwinnett County and beyond. I look forward to another year of building community, growing our souls, and being in service to others with you.

With a grateful heart...

**Reverend Jan** 

# Letter from the Board

## Hello all,

As we move into fall, it's become apparent that COVID is not a quick inconvenience, but rather a long-term challenge. In order to work toward our vision, we must return to thinking about long-range plans and shift from a temporary mentality.

Your board held its annual retreat last month, joined this year by the five new Lay Ministers of the Shared Ministry Council. One important outcome of that retreat is the congregation's three "open questions" for the year. You will hear more about these in a future town hall meeting and be given the opportunity to participate in small group conversations to contribute your thoughts. This year's open questions are:

- How do we determine our steps towards post-COVID gathering?

• How can we be better stewards of our finances, building and grounds in service to our vision? • How can we share the story of Unitarian Universalism and our congregation with the larger community? Take some time to reflect on these as we work toward future sustainability.

I would like to take a minute to brag on you all. The congregation has shared its generosity in many ways this summer.



Nearly **2000 hand-sewn masks** have been made/distributed through UUCG to area hospitals, the Navajo Nation, a veterinary clinic, a personal care home, and individuals. These masks helped prevent the spread of COVID at a time when supplies of PPE were short.

**1032 pounds of food** was donated to the Lawrenceville Food Bank by our congregation over the past three months. Donations have helped feed families at a time when many have lost their livelihoods.



Approximately 54 back packs have been donated to the annual Corley Elementary backpack drive. As students return to the classroom this month, they will know that UUCG has "got their back."

Your contributions to the Minister's Discretionary Fund have enabled Rev. Jan to provide for the needs of UUCG members throughout this difficult time.

Thank you all for having your hearts where they belong.

Stay connected to the congregation via weekly enews, monthly GNUUS, Facebook, emails, care circles, and end-of-service announcements. It may take a little more effort to stay informed, but staff is working hard to keep communications flowing.

A few upcoming programs to be on the lookout for:

"Stone Soup: We Have Everything We Need," annual pledge drive **UU the Vote** – Ways to help ensure a fair and democratic election in November "Progress lies not in enhancing what is, but in advancing toward what will be."

Have a terrific month, Lorena Griffin, for the UUCG Board of Trustees **Board President** 

## **Open Questions**

• How do we navigate congregational life in the post-COVID world? What stays, what changes, and how?

## Generosity



# **Corley Elementary Backpack Drive**

So far, UUCG has donated 54 backpacks to Corley Elementary School! They were delivered August 25. Students start arriving for school August 26. In the past, the Corley Elementary School Backpack Drive would have ended about this time, but because of the consequences of the virus, we will continue collecting backpacks for the time being. Eighty-nine backpacks were collected in 2019. So, if you did not have time to drop off your donation, you still have time! The bin will remain outside of the church for your convenience. Thanks to each and every one of you for making this year's drive a success. The school is very grateful for your contributions!



# Eagle Scout Trail Project at UUCG



## By Landon Meyer, Life Scout

To earn the rank of Eagle in the Boy Scouts of America, a project demonstrating leadership and coordination of work teams is required. As a lifelong member of UUCG, I have chosen to contribute my project and time there. The project scope is to build a trail through UUCG's backyard to a contemplative site with benches. The cross given to UUCG after the Holy Week Pilgrimage for Immigrant Rights, with names of people who have been detained or deported, will be weatherized and placed there. The project will be completed this fall.

The trail has been staked out. The next step is to schedule workdays for laying down weed-preventing landscaping fabric, path edging, and the gravel path itself.

If you are interested in volunteering please email me directly. Also be on the lookout for an event on the UUCG Facebook page and a signup sheet. Social distancing and other safety practices will be in place.

Work days so far are September 5, September 12, and September 19. Facebook event link https://www.facebook.com/events/647988962760925/

# **UU the Vote**

The National Conventions have ended, and the 2020 election is on the horizon. Ready to help ensure that democracy happens? UU the Vote is a national non-partisan initiative to increase voter turnout and assure that every vote is counted. As one part of that effort, the Unitarian Universalist Association has signed on with Reclaim Our Vote, which targets people of color in select states (Georgia among them) with a history of voter suppression.

Reclaim Our Vote is organizing a postcard campaign, and they need our help. UUCG will be ordering initial supplies for 500 postcards. Postcards come pre-printed, but personal handwritten notes of encouragement have been shown to be effective. We're asking that you take a pack of 30 (or more), add personalized notes (following a specific script), affix an address label (also provided), and post. Stamps for postcards are \$.33, so mailing a pack of 30 will cost about \$10.

We'll be holding a zoom postcard writing event in the second half of September, but you can do your part at any time. Please send an email to president@uucg.org in order to receive your pack of 30. Indicate in your email if you are able to take more. Include your mailing address, and you'll receive your supplies in early September.

Want more information? Visit https://www.uua.org/liberty/electionreform and watch UUCG news for information about additional UU the Vote opportunities.



September is a season of homecoming for us UUs, and renewal is central to that. At the opening of each new church year, we renew our commitments to each other and our church community. We renew our energy for another year of journeying together.

It's also a time of renewing our renewal questions. Yes, that sounds odd, but it's essential to understanding the importance of this month, and the importance of our faith. You see, one of the less noticed roles of religion is its sneaky way of changing our lives by asking us to change the questions we ask. This is especially true when we talk about renewal.

In our culture and secular lives, the questions we ask about renewal focus mainly on health: "Are you drinking enough water? Are you getting enough sleep?"; and work/life balance: "Are you making enough time for family, play and rest?." Those are fine questions, but they don't take us very deep or push us very far. They don't enable the kind of transformation that religion wants for us.



And so along comes religion and it says, "Hey, look over here. There's a box with an entirely different set of renewal questions that nobody's opened yet." Questions like:

Are you sure it's your body that's tired, or could it be your soul?

Is it time to renew your responsibility to those who will come after you?

Is it time to renew your commitment to carry on the work of those who came before us?

What if you saw your daily living and loving as an opportunity (even a calling) to renew others' faith in humanity?

Could it be that continual self-improvement is not the path to renewal but instead compassionate acceptance of who you already are, warts and all?

What if renewing our common future isn't just about moving forward, but instead requires a return to an honest telling of the past?

And that's just the questions that are sitting on top of the pile!

So friends, this month let's dig in together. Let's remind ourselves that, indeed, we renew and change our lives by changing the questions we ask.

# **Nurturing Connections Online**

Visit our Calendar Online for more information and links to our Zoom rooms. For all of the following events, go to https://zoom.us/join or call 646-558-8656 and enter the Meeting ID

Choir Connection Tuesday nights from 7-8:30pm, Meeting ID: 646-248-750 email mparker@uucg.org

Congregational Check-In with Reverend Jan: Wednesdays, except September 2, from 2-3pm, *Meeting ID: 998-083-078* Join Reverend Jan for check-in and open conversation.



Virtual Happy Hour Thursdays 6-8pm, Meeting ID: 882-436-315

Open chat room for congregants to share what is on their heart with each other.

All Ages Virtual Game Night September 25 6-8pm Meeting ID: 860 5971 3632.

Yarns from the Heart: 1st and 3rd Wed.: September 2 and 16 10am-12pm Meeting ID: 994 7414 0257 Knitters and crocheters gather to create prayer shawls, baby blankets and other fiber gifts for members and friends of UUCG and the wider community. yarnsfromtheheart@uucg.org

Gwinnett Understanding Secular Truths (GUST): 2nd Mondays September 14 at 7:00 pm *Meeting ID: 311-901-332* GUST supports programs that explore atheism, skepticism, and secular humanism and works to encourage community and friendships. Contact Dylan at gust@uucg.org or visit http://brights.meetup.com/295





Women's Spirituality Group: 2nd Fridays, September 11 7-10pm, Meeting ID: 894-489-117 Please join us for ritual and deep sharing. Together we create sacred space to go deeper into the feminine. Led by Sharon Yun and Sherree Bailey. Please email womensgroup@uucg.org.

Belief Exploration: 2nd Sunday September 13 12:30-1:30pm, Meeting ID: 896-987-304 We explore the sources of world faith traditions. We invite you to join us if you have an interest in theological writings and would like to learn and share your views in an open, accepting environment. Speak to Carol Richardson or email beliefexplorers@uucg.org for info.



Spiral Scouts: 2nd Sundays, September 13 from 12:30pm-2:30pm For children ages 3-12 and their families, this earth-based scout program encourages young SpiralScouts people to co-create their programs. Contact spiralscoutsleaders@uucg.org for more info.

Book Club: 4th Wednesdays, September 23 7-9pm. Meeting ID: 144-736-833 A Brave New World by Aldous Huxley More info about the current book selection is on https://www.uucg.org/learning/adult-programs/book-group/



new to



Ritual with Sylvan Sanctuary Fall Equinox Ritual September 19 from 6-8pm, More info on the Sylvan Sanctuary, DOTR Facebook Page

## UU 101 Visitor Orientation Meeting ID: 709 584 522, September 20 12:30pm

Join us after the service. You will learn more about Unitarian Universalism and UUCG. After attending UU 101, you may attend UU 102. Please register: https://bit.ly/UUCGregistration

UU 102 Path to Membership Meeting ID: 520 702 428, September 20 12:30pm You will meet with Rev. Jan and learn what it means to be a member. Please register online.



CUUPS Workshop September 12 from 7-9pm Meeting ID: 400 036 556

# **Book Club in the Time of Corona**

The UUCG Book Club has been meeting since 2008. Over the years we've had book discussions with a full conference table or just two people across from each other. We've also • Annual Pledge. Our shared had to say goodbye to long time participants who moved out of our reach. However, like everyone, what we have come to realize is that the way things have always been done doesn't apply to COVID times. Since social distancing is the new norm, we have moved our monthly book meetings from the conference table at the UUCG Library to a Zoom Room.

While this change in venue may not serve well for other things it works great for Book Club meetings! We've gained members who hadn't been able to participate before for various reasons and have been rejoined by members who had moved to Athens, GA or out-of-state to Ohio and Colorado.



Something even more exciting than meeting in our comfy clothes, from the comfort of our homes happened in our August meeting. We were joined virtually by the author of the book we were discussing! She was actually also the author of our July book (oh yeah - we met through the summer because COVID, and no one is vacationing anyway). On her website, author Lisa See has a link that reads: "If you would like Lisa to • Amazon. join your book group, please send an email request." So, I did and amazingly enough she said yes!

When logged in to our Zoom Room at 7PM on August 26<sup>th</sup> we were giddy with anticipation and there was an audible wave of excitement

when we saw her name pop up on our screen. We had a great chat with her, we got the opportunity to hear about her research and writing process, her passion for the subject matter, and we even got to hear a little about her family and the inspiration for her upcoming book. We each had a chance to ask her questions about the books we've read and were very grateful that she was able to spend some time with us.

After she signed off, the discussion among the club members continued for well over an hour. A couple of us had taken screenshots during the conversation to share with the group (sorry, you had to be there to see them, we don't have Lisa's permission to publish them) and we made plans for our next meeting. In light of these gifts that COVID travel and gathering restrictions have given us, when we resume in-person gatherings we vow to continue making space virtually for all who want to join.

So, who will be the next new face on our screen when we meet on Wednesday, September 23rd at 7PM to discuss Brave New World by Aldous Huxley?

> Happy Reading! By Nathalie Bigord

Rev. Jan Taddeo, Parish Minister RevTaddeo@uucg.org Cell: 678-558-4834

Lorena Griffin president@uuca.org Sharon Yun admin@uucg.org Christiana McQuain cmcquain@uucg.org Michael Parker mparker@uucq.org Bryan Bishop Pianist, bbishop@uucg.org LaTreisha McKay Imckay@uucg.org





### **Building Closed** If you need assistance, Please call Pastoral Care: 770-847-0566

# **Stewardship**

## **Funding Our Vision**

- ministry is funded by the generous gifts of members and friends. Gifts of 2% or more of net income help UUCG in becoming a strong and vital faith community.
- Birthday Club. Give a dollar for every year you're celebrating on your birthday to grow our Endowment Fund. Write "Birthday Club" on the memo line.
- UUCG receives a percentage

of your pur-



chase when you designate Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett as your Amazon SMILES recipient. You will need to log onto Amazon each time using this URL: https:// smile.amazon.com/? \_encoding=UTF8&tag=u030-20 Bookmark this page!

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- UUCG Sales. Contributions for Equal Exchange Fair trade coffee, chocolate, and Cocoa, Books, and CDs from the Tech Team all benefit the UUCG operating budget. We deliver.