



# June 2025

## Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

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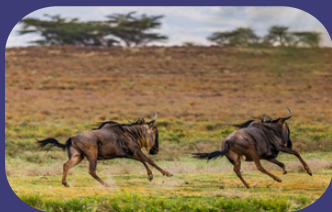
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Gnus roam free in the wild, particularly across the savannas and grasslands of eastern and southern Africa.

### Living Love Through The Practice of Freedom



There is a dilemma when it comes to freedom. Freedom is more than the absence of oppression. It is about the ability to thrive – to speak and live and *be* without fear. It's not so much about running *away* from something as it is about being able to run *toward* something.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith gets this. At its best, it never simply asks us, what do you need to get away from? No, it pushes us to ask the deeper question of, what is it that you want to run toward? And mature freedom is never about the absence of all constraints; it's about being able to commit yourself to the things that have your heart, limited only by the constraints of your own choosing.

This month we are invited into the *practice* of freedom. What does that mean for you? What is it that you want to use your freedom for?

# Worship in June

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: Living Love through the  
Practice of Freedom

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



## June 1st

***Using Our Freedom For...:***

***Honoring the Gifts of Service***

Let's launch our exploration of Living Love Through the Practice of Freedom with these questions: "Where do we find our freedom now? And how are we to use our freedom? What is it for?" On this Volunteer Appreciation Sunday, we look at the ways we can use our freedom to create a Culture of Care.

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

## June 8th

***Living Love Through Liberating the Heart and Mind***

Join us on Sunday mornings for Worship Services that weave together our own thoughts and experiences with music, beauty, poetry, and words that both comfort and challenge. We come together to be inspired, and to be awakened to our own capacities to make a difference in each other's lives and in the world.

*Daniel Bailey (he/him), Worship Leader*

## June 15th

***Toward the Daylight of Freedom:***

***How Juneteenth May Guide Us***

How do we carry a message of freedom to the world that we touch and that touches us? How do we follow the guidance of teachers past and present who point to a deeper freedom for all? Through this celebration of Juneteenth and more, Rev. Nancy and the worship team sum up the work of this program year and lift our spirits for the work to come.

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

## June 22nd - ONLINE ONLY

***A Collective Spirit:***

***Sunday Morning Worship from the UUA General Assembly***

This morning we will gather online as we stream the Worship Service being presented at General Assembly in Baltimore. Join together with thousands of UUs from across the country to experience the largest annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists in joyful, inspiring worship.

## June 29th

***The Summer of Our Discontent***

The days of the red cards. The audacity of hope. Strength to love. We consider paths forward for those of us despairing because we do not seem to know our country nor our neighbors. We consider the ways the spiritual discipline of love empowers us to resist domination and oppression.

*Bill Benshoof (he/him), Worship Leader*

Programs

Sundays at  
12:30pm

**1st Sunday, 6/1**

- LUUV Fest

**2nd Sunday, 6/8**

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts (pre-registration required)

**3rd Sunday, 6/15**

- Congregational Conversation
- Board Meeting

**4th Sunday, 6/22**

- "Good Trouble"

**5th Sunday, 6/29**

- Resisting Fascism





# Worship and More

Worship Services

Sundays at 11:00am

June Theme:

Living Love through The Practice of Freedom

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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

In Worship

Worship Service  
on Sunday, June 15  
at 11:00am

*Toward the Daylight  
of Freedom:  
How Juneteenth  
May Guide Us*

Join us for further  
exploration of  
The Roles We Play.

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones,  
Worship Leader



## Special Services:



Oak Grove  
Sylvan Sanctuary Druids

### Summer Solstice Ritual

June 21<sup>st</sup>  
6:00pm

Potluck  
to follow

Freedom is actually a  
bigger game than power.  
Power is about what you  
can control.  
Freedom is about what  
you can unleash.

Harriet Rubin





# Message From the Minister

## What a Year It Has Been

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



In the life of a Unitarian Universalist congregation—and of the minister who serves it—the month

of June is the culmination of a yearlong journey that begins anew in late August. As part of our covenant with each other, we travel together through a year of living and loving, learning and growing, grieving and celebrating, accompanying and making meaning with all that Life brings us. We keep figuring out how to Create a Culture of Care, this year's explicit theme.

And what a year this has been! We have welcomed new life and new members. We have said goodbye to beloved members and friends. We have tried on new roles and activities, and we have relished traditions that continue to nurture us.

We have lived through, and are living through, a turbulent and sometimes terrifying time in the face of government actions and policies that betray our core values and threaten some of us with physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual harm. We have responded, and are responding, with curiosity, courage, and compassion as we continue to discern what is ours to do, as a community and as individuals, and as we do what we can and what we must.

Through it all, we have stayed together, always learning to live with Love at the center of all we say and do.

When I look back at the sweep of themes our Soul Matters collective has offered us this year, I see two major stages in our journey:

From September through December, the practices we've explored—invitation, deep listening, repair, and presence—are all about the process of **opening**

**our hearts and minds.** These practices ask us to break open our hearts and stretch wide our minds so that they can hold new experiences, new voices, new perspectives, new thoughts and feelings. When you think back on this year, how have your mind and heart grown?

And from January through May, the practices of story, inclusion, trust, joy, and imagination have asked us to **envision just what kind of community we are promising to create.** How much inclusion, trust, joy, and imagination does the story we are writing together contain?

And now we move into this culminating month, exploring the **practice of freedom.** I can already feel my heart breaking and my mind opening as we focus on this theme and travel across the threshold into this month of June. Don't we need every single one of the practices we've explored this year—invitation, deep listening, repair, presence, inclusion, trust, joy, and imagination—to create a real and lasting freedom for all? How will we learn and grow, grieve and celebrate, accompany each other and make meaning in these precious weeks to come?

Let's find out!

I love you and am grateful that we are on this journey together!

Rev. Nancy

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<sup>1</sup>In July and early August each year, we don't stop traveling together! Our journey takes on the feel of a transition, a bridge from the themes and explorations of the previous year to those of the coming one. Our theme for July is "Tending the Commons" and for August, "Strengthening the Circle." Be sure to join us for worship and all our other summer activities as we continue to live and love, learn and grow together!



# Practicing Freedom...

## Will You Join a Listening Circle on a Tough, Tragic Issue?

*an invitation from Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones*

At the Unitarian Universalist Association's online General Assembly in 2024, a majority of delegates voted for an Action of Immediate Witness (AIW) titled "Solidarity with Palestinians." This AIW begins by affirming our faith's commitment to the safety of Jewish people and decrying the violence enacted by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Then the AIW focuses on the devastating harm and tragic losses experienced by Palestinians through the ongoing war in Gaza. It calls on UU congregations to take one or more of these actions—witnessing; educating; organizing and advocating—with specific requests listed for each.

Also last year, a majority of delegates voted for a Responsive Resolution expressing "UUA General Assembly Support for October 7 Hostages," seeking to balance the focus on losses on both sides of this conflict.

Increasingly, as your minister and as a human being, I feel a pressing moral responsibility to help UUCG engage with this tragic and traumatic issue.

**Will you join me later this summer for a Listening Circle centered in Love that would make space for our thoughts and feelings about this devastating war, and open a path to considering whether and how we might respond to the AIW?** (This war is only one of many in that very region, but it is the one most supported by United States funds and ammunition.)

**Please express your willingness to engage in this Listening Circle by sending an email to me before June 15 at [revnpj@uucg.org](mailto:revnpj@uucg.org).**

**Be sure to put "AIW Listening Circle" in the subject line of your email.**

With a broken-open heart,

Rev. Nancy

**Read the full Action of Immediate Witness here:**

<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/solidarity-palestinians>

**Read the Responsive Resolution in support of October 7 Hostages here:**

<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/uua-general-assembly-support-october-7-hostages>



PEACE WITH JUSTICE  
IN PALESTINE/ISRAEL  
FREEDOM \* EQUALITY \* DIGNITY



# From the Board



## Beyond These Walls

by Dan Kelly, President, UUCG Board of Trustees

***How do we as a congregation live into our shared  
UU values in our daily lives in the larger world?***

The May Congregational Conversation focused on an Open Question that explores our relationship with the community around us. As we face these challenging times in our society, we must ask ourselves: **How do we engage in the broader world that protects, even celebrates, the core values that we uplift as Unitarian Universalists?**

Our Conversation took place in small groups as we pondered the Values Flower and asked ourselves:

- What are we doing currently?
- What have we done in the past that we want to uplift?
- What can we do in the future?

Below is a sampling of the answers from these groups. This is, by no means an exhaustive list. It is not intended to be. The purpose of this exercise is to show how we are making a difference, and to inspire ourselves to continue to make a difference.

Currently, we exemplify JUSTICE by providing notaries for immigrants with Familias Juntas, supporting families through El Refugio, and practicing Good Trouble. We seek EQUITY through our Trans Inclusion Workshop and the GA Legislative Network. We support TRANSFORMATION by supporting CUUPS, working with the Interfaith Alliance, and attending Pride Events. We encourage PLURALITY by hosting the Peace Festival, supporting Tarot and Meditation groups, and holding Alphabet SoUUp, QUUest,

Trunk or Treat, and other events. We encourage INTERDEPENDENCE through the Climate Justice Revival and Green Team Film Screenings. We celebrate GENEROSITY through the collections for the Lawrenceville Food Co-Op, Corley Elementary backpacks, and the Give Away the Plate program. And always with LOVE at the center.

We have done some things in the past that may inform us in our development of ideas. These include the practice of Greet Your Neighbors; inviting other faith traditions to “swap” a service; Coming of Age/OWL programs; the Gwinnett Remembrance Coalition; marching in the Atlanta Pride Parade; participating in the MLK Day Parade; and our founding members providing this building as a home for these values.

As we think about what we “can do,” our vision opens wide and far. We hope you will think about other ways we can live our values through community engagement!

Some ideas that were presented during our Conversation included: a Trans Inclusion Seminar for the public; a Community Garden; obtaining a Certification for the property as a Pollinator or Wildlife Sanctuary; Music Performance opportunities; Skill-Sharing Workshops for the public; organized appearances at town halls, protests, or other public spaces; and more outreach to other religious affiliations and marginalized communities.



*continued on p. 7*

# From the Board

## Beyond These Walls

*Continued from p. 6*

As the Board of Trustees and the Shared Ministry Council, in partnership with our Minister and Staff, look to planning for the 2025-2026 program year, we encourage you to consider how the UU Values Flower can blossom in our community, and to plant those seeds with us.



*“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”*

*~ Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

In covenant,  
Dan Kelly  
President of the UUCG Board of Trustees

## Happy Birthday!

Thank You for recent Birthday Club donations to the Endowment Fund from Carol Pinto and Diana Dice.

Birthday donations are one of the best ways to support the long term financial stability of UUCG.

As we have done for many years, the Endowment Fund will be providing a grant for attendance at the UUA General Assembly meeting this summer.

In addition to donations by check, we now can accept donations by Zelle at [uucgef@gmail.com](mailto:uucgef@gmail.com).

If you have questions about donations, memorials or bequests, please talk to Doug Beers.

## School is out for the summer!

The Friendship Forest School is on their summer break and will not be using spaces in the building until the last week of July, when they will return for the 2025-2026 school year.

Give Away the Plate



The Give Away the Plate recipient for the second quarter of 2025 is Familias Juntas





# From the Board

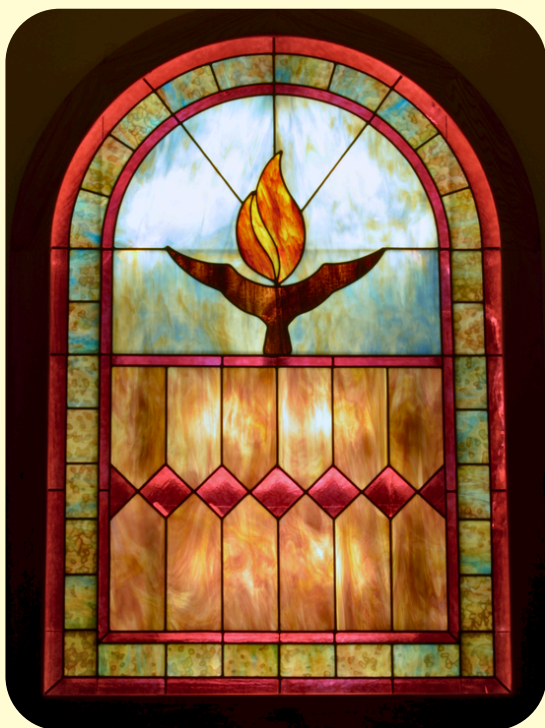
## Report on the Spring 2025 Congregational Meeting

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, UUCG held its annual Spring Congregational Business Meeting, at which the congregation voted on the following items:

### **Resolution #1:**

Having witnessed David Morgen's ministry with UUCG as Intern Minister from 2021-2023, and acknowledging the breadth and depth of his preparation for the ministry as represented by the award of his Master of Divinity degree and by his admission to ministerial fellowship by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship Committee, we, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett, vote to ordain David Morgen as a Unitarian Universalist minister and call him into loving ministerial service to our faith.

**Resolution #1 passed with 94.6% of the Congregational Vote**, which included 3 abstentions and 0 Nays



### **Board of Trustees for 2025-2026:**

President:

President-Elect: Jenn McCutchen

Treasurer: Jerrold Johnson

Secretary: Lorena Griffin

At-Large: Chris Shull

At-Large: Hannah Thompson

At-Large:

Whereas a qualified candidate for President is unavailable to step into the position, in accordance with the UUCG By-Laws (Section 6.3.9), the current President, Dan Kelly, would remain in office until such time as a candidate is qualified and prepared to fill the position.

**The slate for the Board of Trustees for 2025-2026 passed with 98.2% of the Congregational Vote**, which included 1 abstention and 0 Nays.

### **Nominating Committee for 2025-2026:**

Jen Garrison

Candice Carver

Gary Kiel

Xoey Kelly

Ladonna Pacer

**The slate for the Nominating Committee for 2025-2026 passed with 98.2% of the Congregational Vote**, which included 1 abstention and 0 Nays.

Faithfully presented,  
UUCG Board for Trustees

# Ministry of Radical Welcome



## Radical Welcome and the Power of Freedom

*by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome*



In our beloved community, we have the call to love boldly and welcome radically. We show up again and again to hold sacred space for others. We greet the weary, the marginalized, and the hopeful with open arms. This is the great work of freedom to live love as a liberating force. Yet, even love, when poured without rest, can leave us empty.

Living love in the practice of freedom asks that we embody justice in how we show up. This is not only for others, but also for ourselves. As helpers, we often forget this second part. We extend grace outward without drinking from the well ourselves.

Burnout is not a failure. It is the body's wisdom whispering, or even sometimes shouting. The spirit needs care. Helpers often internalize the myth that exhaustion is proof of commitment. But there is no freedom in that! When we overextend, we lose the ability to respond with joy. We may grow resentful, cynical, or numb. When we find ourselves approaching that point, it can be helpful to think of these feelings as an invitation to take a breath and return to our center.

Remember to ask yourself, am I loving myself with the same radical welcome I offer others?

Radical welcome is not a one-time gesture. It is a daily, deliberate choice to live love as freedom. When we live this way, we model a justice that is welcoming and a hospitality that transforms. Remember, the beloved community includes us too.

So may we continue in this love not endlessly, but sustainably to build a world where all are free, all are held, and all are home.

### Help Create a Culture of Care: Join the Hospitality Team!

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

Other ways to contribute:

- 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 Create a Culture of Care with and for each other?



# Ministry of Radical Welcome

## June is Pride Month



### Community & Belonging

*by Jen Garrison*

We are celebrating Pride this month! Our times are quite uncertain, especially for the LGBTQ+ community. This makes being together in covenant and community all the more important. I want to share my experiences with being in the community of Alphabet SoUUp at UUCG.

We are a group of peers within UUCG who gather once a month (on the first Monday evening), sharing a potluck meal, fellowship, and an LGBTQ+ community-related topic for discussion.

I personally have enjoyed getting to know my peers of our community within UUCG, and I am learning a lot about our culture and history along the way. I feel safe with my peers enough to share my coming out story, and my emotional struggles in the years since coming out as a lesbian.



Alphabet SoUUp is open to anyone age 18+ who identifies as LGBTQ+ (queer or questioning). We meet at UUCG and online via Zoom on the first Monday of every month from 6:30-9:00 pm. If you are part of the LGBTQ+ community, or are questioning and want to talk with others who have been on a similar path, please join us!

### The DIY Nature of Pride

*by Aline Harris*

In 1978, a few months before June, 30 people joined together to make from scratch something that had not existed before. They took over 1,000 yards of white cotton, huge trash cans full of dye, and a laundromat down the street and they created the first gay pride flag.

In 1981 the marketing team for a multinational corporation that would later sell for \$8.9 billion bought an ad in The Advocate (an LGBT publication).

Corporations have been trying to co-opt the community and DIY spirit of the queer community for at least that long.

But the community has been creating the world we want to exist in since before then.

More recently, in 2023, a popular chain store caved to bigoted pressure to remove their Pride collection, revealing that the company never cared about supporting the queer community or celebrating gay pride, only taking our dollars.

This year for pride let's return to the DIY spirit we started with.

So many things exist in all the colors of the rainbow. Do you know all the amazing things you can make out of duct tape? Out of beads, yarn, markers, LEGO bricks?

Don't have a particular skill? Trade with friends, learn something new, or support a queer artist. This year, let's think outside the box store when shopping for Pride gear.





# Ministry of Green Space



## Keeping It Green

*By Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space*



### Property Beautification Last Month

May 3<sup>rd</sup> - Some rain dampened our efforts. Jerrold and his weed whacker cleaned up the front area especially along the front of the building in preparation for pinestraw!

We had a donation of 50 bales of pine straw which was spread throughout the beds in front of the building. It looks great and should help keep the weeds at bay.



**Our next  
Property Beautification  
Day is June 7th.  
You are invited  
to join us!**



### **Green Sanctuary 2030:**

The Green Sanctuary program, sponsored by UUMFE, has been revised. The requirements are simplified. Also, the requirements show annual growth instead of a one time effort. Our team is researching the new requirements.

### Upcoming Green Team Events:

- **June 7 - Property Beautification Day**  
10:00am
- **June 14 - Green Team Meeting** via Zoom - note the change of date! This meeting has been moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday to avoid conflict with General Assembly

# Ministry of Green Space

## Flora & Fauna at UUCG

### Have you seen our “Dwarf Mouse-ear Tickseed Coreopsis”?

I did not know there was such a thing. This dwarf coreopsis is a native plant. It is not fussy, spreads by stolons (runners), is drought tolerant - an all around good plant.

As I said, I did not know about it. Ignorance caused it to be cut back and covered with pine straw. The good news is that it is coming back under the pine straw. I did not know this plant, and now I love it!

If you see some of these small oval leaves in the bed in front of the portico, please push the straw aside.



### A Surprise Visitor Last Sunday



A Box Turtle decided to visit the playground. Children and adults were happy to see this adorable wild animal.

This turtle has red eyes which indicate it is a male.

### New Trees Coming Soon

Candice donated some trees to plant on the grounds. The trees are 1 Red Bud, 3 Dogwoods, and 1 Hawthorn. They are currently growing in a pot and will be planted next spring.

### I Have a Name!!!



My name is officially Warty McFly.  
It is nice to be known.



# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

by Lydia Patrick, Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth

## Voices of Freedom:



For me Freedom is a feeling of open - mindedness. I can decide how my life will look one day at a time. I can decide how to live and love, how to play and rest, how to be with others and be by myself. There are no maps to my journey. There are just lessons and memories and love that is learned, accepted, and returned.

And I see the same in others.

## Lay Ministry for Spiritual Growth... Lydia is Diving in Again!

**Next steps for Lay Ministry for Spiritual Growth for the 2025 - 2026 church year will see Lydia serving as a Lay Minister for one more year.** Although a long and thorough search ensued this past year for a new Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth, there was not anyone willing/able to step up just yet. Rather than leave the role empty Lydia has agreed to serve one final year in-keeping with the current protocol for a maximum 4 year term. She will not remain in the role after this year whether it is filled moving forward or not. She is looking forward to one more year of growth and exploration with Beloved Community.

Lydia says, "the current team of Lay Ministers are all such wonderful compassionate UUs - it is a joy to be part of the team!"



**Are you interested in learning more about serving in Lay Ministry at UUCG?**

**Reach out to [sharedministry@uucg.org](mailto:sharedministry@uucg.org).**

## Planting the Seeds of Spiritual Growth

Opportunities include:

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



Click [HERE](#)

We look forward to  
serving alongside you!





# Faith Development

## Tending the Flame

by Christiana Fernandez-McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

The Worship Service on May 18<sup>th</sup> was created, planned, and brought to life with Rev. Nancy in collaboration with the children and Youth of the congregation, and it was such a delight to be a part of that process! All who participated brought their ideas, creativity, and talent to create a Service infused with the joyful spirit of imagination and possibility. Creating Services like this gives kids an opportunity to learn and understand what goes into creating Worship, and gives us all a chance to experience and celebrate the ways that the vision of our children & Youth contributes to all of our spiritual growth. Thank you, Families, for supporting this effort. We plan to create services like this a couple times a year moving forward.

During the Summer months of June, July, and August, children's Sunday Faith Development programming takes a holiday and all Services are multigenerational. I encourage our families to engage with the resources offered [here](#) - which will be added to over the course of the summer - to engage with our themes together, whether traveling or at home.

With gratitude & grace,  
Christiana

## Adult Faith Development New Program!

Our Democracy is on life support; denial is not an option. Where do we have agency? What can we do?

Join this discussion, facilitated by Steve Babb and centered on the book *On Tyranny*, by Timothy Snyder.

**Session dates:**  
**Sundays at 12:30**  
**June 29, July 20,**  
**August 3, August 17**  
No registration required.

Faith  
Development  
resources  
for exploring  
The Practice of  
Freedom

Check out The Practice of Joy- Soul Matters June Play list on [YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).



### Words of Wisdom?

We invite you  
to journey with us...



### Resisting Fascism

a 4-session  
discussion group  
program

*based on Timothy Snyder's  
On Tyranny*

# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

## OWL Returns to UUCG



UUCG is looking for a few good people to facilitate the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program this fall.

OWL is a well-respected, comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education program, developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. This fall's offering at UUCG will be focused toward youth, ages 12-15 (or grades 7-9). There will possibly be a second class in the future, geared toward a younger group.

Training is required for facilitators and will be available in August either online or on-site in Raleigh, NC. Please contact Lorena Griffin at [lorenagaygriffin@gmail.com](mailto:lorenagaygriffin@gmail.com) for additional information.

## Programs and Events



### Sunday Tarot Gathering Online

Sunday evening,  
June 1st  
from 5 - 7pm

bring your cards and your questions to this listening & learning space



### Working With the Labyrinth June 7th 4PM-6PM

Bring light refreshments for after the meditation.



# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

## Good Trouble: Climate Justice

*by Barbara Stahnke*

**UUCG will be involved with  
Climate Justice and Voting  
all Summer.**



**Claiming  
Our  
Power**

On April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup> UUCG participated with UUs from across Georgia, the UU GA Legislative Action Network (UUGALAN), and Side with Love to learn, practice and implement advocacy for our values in public policy. You can watch the recordings of the sessions and make public comment [here](#). UUCG members and friends attended the Public Service Commission (PSC) meeting to make verbal public comment on the Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) on March 28<sup>th</sup> – look for a report on this next month.

### **Get involved. Important dates this summer:**

#### **June 17<sup>th</sup>**

Vote in the PSC Primaries. Don't let the District Commissioner concept fool you. These primaries and the election for the District Commission Seats are voted on by everyone in the state of Georgia. Let others know about this important primary.

Plan to vote November 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Save the Date - Rally at the Public Service Commission offices downtown with the UUGALAN and Side with Love.

This is the beginning of the Rebuttal period on Georgia Power's IRP.

As of this writing – UUGALAN is still awaiting the analysis of the recent announcement that there will be no rate case hearings this summer. This does not mean that your costs will remain the same; Hurricane Helene and other storm related damage costs are still being assessed by Georgia Power. These costs are anticipated to be submitted to the PSC in 2026 for approval.





# Ministry of Connecting Within



## Lifting Together

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within



*“the days are all too heavy;  
and then we lift together”*

~ adrienne maree brown

Do your days feel “all too heavy” right now? It is not a political statement to say that politics of late are at odds with our shared values as Unitarian Universalists. Trying to live into our Unitarian Universalist values while being out in the world right now may feel like an impossible task. It is hard to not stumble under the weight of what we are all carrying.

So what can help us navigate the fear, uncertainty and anger we may be feeling? adrienne maree brown reminds us to “lift together.” When we are able to come together, bringing our diverse gifts, we are stronger. We grow as we learn from one another, and most importantly, we are not left to lift our heavy days all alone.

Within our community there are opportunities to

come together in small groups that strengthen our connections to

one another. If you are a leader of one of these groups, you are doing valuable work. If you are a participant, thank you for your willingness to share your gifts with others. What is heavy for us to carry alone becomes lighter when we work together. This is the blessing of being in community with one another.

Please remember if you need extra support right now, we have folx available from 9 am to 9 pm, seven days a week, to listen to your feelings and concerns. Do not hesitate to call the Pastoral Care Team at (770) 217-7848.

With joy,  
Lisa



# Ministry of Connecting Within

## Yarns From the Heart Update

by Sara Heath

The Yarns from the Heart group has been meeting to knit and crochet together at UUCG for over ten years. The original group included Gretchen Cuthbert, Gretchen Appleberry, June Warfield, Pearla Kennedy, Judy Teelon, Karen Duktig & Marla Keating with Rev. Jan Taddeo's guidance. Since COVID we have been meeting on Zoom.

Last month we started gathering dual-platform, both in-person and via Zoom. It's an experiment to see the best way to proceed.

Items like lap throws were originally made by this group, but over time it has expanded to prayer shawls, baby blankets, and winter caps and scarves. The items are given to people within and outside our church who are ill, bereaved, celebrating a birth, or simply needing a bit of warmth. There is a blessing of the donations at church before they are distributed, and we add love to each stitch as we create.

Our group is dwindling, and we need others to join us. If you like to

create these kinds of items, you are welcome to join us. There is always lively conversation as we knit, crochet, and sew. (If you are not available to be present with us but would like to donate items that you make, please let us know.)

To be added to our group email list to receive reminders of dates and times we meet and to receive the link to join by Zoom just email [admin@uucg.org](mailto:admin@uucg.org). Our usual schedule is first and third Wednesdays from 10:00 AM till 12:00 Noon. If you have questions, my email is [healthyheath@msn.com](mailto:healthyheath@msn.com).



Freedom is a pretty strange thing. Once you've experienced it, it remains in your heart and no one can take it away. Then as an individual you can be more powerful than a whole country.

Ai Weiwei



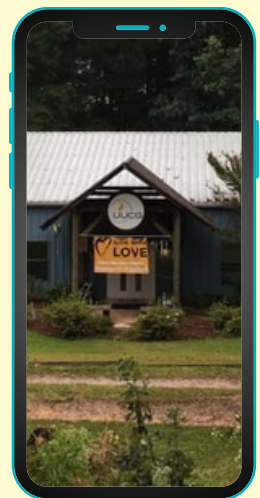
# Ministry of Connecting Within



## ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

-  **Alphabet SoUUp** - In Person: 1st Monday at 6:30, bring a dish or snack to share
-  **Book Group** - Online : 4th Wednesday from 7-9 pm  
<https://zoom.us/j/144736833>
-  **Covenant Groups** - on hiatus for the summer. New groups will begin in September
-  **Men's Group** - In Person 2nd Saturdays at 9 am
-  **Music Night** - In Person every Thursday night starting at 6:30
-  **QUUest** - Adults: In Person-4th Friday at 6pm
-  **QUUest Jr.** - Youth: In Person: 2nd Friday at 7pm
-  **Spiral Scouts** - In Person 2nd Sunday following Sunday service
-  **Walkers** - 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 11 am, for location information,  
email [admin@uucg.org](mailto:admin@uucg.org)
-  **Women's Group: The Open Circle** - 4th Saturday at 10:00am
-  **Yarns from the Heart** - In person and online 1st and 3rd  
Wednesdays, <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



## Becoming Who We're Meant to Be

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



As a child, I believed freedom meant no rules. I longed for it in the way many children and teens do—aching for space, voice, autonomy. But my yearning came with extra weight. My father was deeply controlling and emotionally oppressive, and I felt like my spirit had been carefully folded down into something small, something silent. When he passed away, I experienced a strange and shocking release. There was grief, yes—but also something electric. I was free in a way I had never been before. And it was both invigorating and terrifying.

In the face of that fear, I rushed to something familiar and safe—I married my high school sweetheart, thinking that maybe love could be the container for all this uncharted space. But for ten years, I played a role I didn't recognize. I looked in the mirror and saw someone shaped by obligation and the old voices still echoing in my head. That kind of false safety doesn't hold for long.

When I divorced, it was like the veil lifted again. I

began the slow, sacred work of weeding through years of internalized shame, fear, and silence. I reached back to find the joyful, vibrant me I had lost—and this time, I didn't do it alone. I connected with people who saw me clearly. I volunteered with nonprofits that aligned with my values. I found myself in community, in service, in spiritual grounding. My wellbeing became a priority, and through that care, I started to bloom again.

This is the heart of Connecting Beyond—not just reaching out to others, but returning to ourselves through relationship, through purpose, through love freely given and freely received. Practicing freedom through love doesn't mean living without boundaries—it means choosing the ones that honor who we are. It means remembering that we are not here to shrink, but to live fully, connected, and true. In freedom, we remember who we are—and in connection, we become who we are meant to be.



Each summer the Lawrenceville CoOp partners with Village of Hope to make sure that students in our area who are in need of food get the support they require. They are starting to collect food for this program and could use our help.

Can you pick up:

**Microwaveable Rice or Pasta Packets - Canned Pasta  
Pop Tarts - Canned Tuna, Chicken, or Vienna Sausages  
Individual Cereals - Peanut Butter and Jelly  
Snack items**

You can find more information and drop-off locations by visiting the Lawrenceville Co-Op website at:  
<https://lawrencevilleco-op.org/donate/>

## Opportunities to Serve

Two upcoming events where your help is needed:

- **Trunk or Treat** – Friday, October 31st
- **Autumn Festival** - November 17th

Both are playful, purposeful ways to Connect Beyond - and there's room for your creativity in every part of them.

Reach out to [ConnectingBeyond@uucg.org](mailto:ConnectingBeyond@uucg.org) to volunteer to assist.

And if your imagination runs wild with new ideas?  
Even better. Let's dream together.  
Let's Connect Beyond.

# Ministry of Connecting Beyond

## Opportunities to Connect with Our Wider Community



PLAY4PEACE ATL  
FAMILY PEACE FESTIVAL  
June 7th Peace Walk & Interfaith Festival

Let's come together as one community, united in diversity! Our Peace Walk & Festival will be an amazing day of celebration, connection, dialogue, and movement toward a more peaceful world – starting right here in our own communities. Every step makes a difference – walk with us!

Saturday, June 7th  
1pm - 5pm  
Central Park  
400 Merritts Ave NE  
Atlanta, GA 30308

**SIGN UP HERE!**



Thank you to our partners and sponsors:



Visit us at [thesfayc.org](http://thesfayc.org), or email: [info@eagleseconomiccdc.org](mailto:info@eagleseconomiccdc.org)

**Call to ACTION!**  
Rise up With UUCG for  
PRIDE Month!  
Lilburn Pride Date TBD  
Gwinnett Pride - June 21<sup>st</sup>  
Atlanta PRIDE Oct 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>

Looking for volunteers to help with planning, executing, marching and working one or many of the three PRIDE events. Let us know by registering here:



## Give Away the Plate Nominations are Open

Do you know of a local non-profit cause that could use support? Each quarter UUCG shares our plate offering with a non-profit organization doing good work in our local community, nominated by members of the congregation.

This year's first quarter recipient was Second Helpings Atlanta, an organization that redistributes leftover food from grocery stores and restaurants to people in need. The current recipient is Familias Juntas, a group assisting people in danger of family separation, due to inhumane immigration practices.

The Give Away the Plate Committee is currently accepting nominations to consider for both the third and fourth quarters of this year. Please submit nominations to [GATP@UUCG.org](mailto:GATP@UUCG.org). (For those who have already submitted, thank you. Your submissions are under consideration.)



# June Events

## LUUV Fest

(Living Unitarian Universalist Values Festival)

Learn ways to create a world that recognizes the importance of the core values of the UU community!

Sunday, June 1, 2025 - 11 am to 1:30 pm Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Gwinnett 12 Bethesda Church Rd Lawrenceville GA 30044

**BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION!**

Nobody's  
free until  
everybody's  
free.

Fannie Lou Hamer



## The Gathering

♥ Fortifying Ourselves for the Long Road Ahead ♥

Second Monday of Every Month  
8pm ET / 5pm PT

♥ SIDE WITH

**The Gathering is a monthly virtual event from Side With Love, designed to offer:**

- Spiritual Grounding – Strengthen your heart and spirit for the work ahead.
- Political Analysis – Understand the threats to democracy and justice.
- Collective Action – Organize with others to block anti-democratic forces and build a just and loving world.

**Join us every Second Monday of the month at 8pm ET / 5pm PT.**

- June 9
- August 11

[View recordings](#) of previous The Gathering sessions.

From June 18–22, 2025, the 64th UUA General Assembly participants will gather to worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy decisions for the Association through a democratic process. GA will be a multi-platform event, with the main stage hosted at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland and hundreds more joining online.

[Click here to learn more about participating and engaging with the business of our UUA.](#)







































**UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
BALTIMORE • JUNE 18 - 22, 2025



# June 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  	13 	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 and Online via Zoom
	Alphabet SoUUp	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	Online via Zoom
	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 and Online via Zoom
	Spiral Scouts	All-gender scouting group for ages 3-12	In-Person
	Covenant Groups	Small Group Ministry. Registration Required	In-Person and Online via Zoom
	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 and Online via Zoom
	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		

## 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 & Fridays, 9am-2pm

Third Sundays, 10:30-12:30pm

**LaTreisha McKay**

**Bookkeeper**

lmckay@uucg.org

Monday (remote), 5:00 pm-8:00 pm

**Michael Parker**

**Choir Director**

choirdirector@uucg.org

Tuesdays (on-site), 1:00 pm-6:00 pm

**Becca Parker**

**Choir Director**

choirdirector@uucg.org

Sunday mornings (On-site),  
9:00am-12:00 pm