



December 2025

Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

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During the winter in the Northern Hemisphere, many parts of Africa are experiencing the dry season. Animals like gnus are often found in areas that have water, but not much fresh grass, so they migrate to find food.

Choosing Hope

As winter approaches, days grow shorter, and the world around us changes. This month is a wonderful time to notice the light that shines in ourselves and in others, even when the days feel dark. In Unitarian Universalism, we believe hope is a choice we can make, a choice that helps us act with courage, kindness,

and curiosity, and helps us stay connected to each other and the world around us. Hope, as they say, is a beacon.

With the challenges and worries we face on an almost daily basis, hope can feel like the most difficult of choice to make. Questions plague us. But hope is one of the most important things we need to keep moving forward and bring about the change we want to see in our world. To quote Christopher Reeve, "Once you choose hope, anything's possible."

I choose hope. I choose to believe that anything is possible. That if enough of us are determined to keep our lights burning bright and strong, then the change we want and need will be inevitable.



Worship in December

Sundays at 11:00am
Theme: Choosing Hope
Join us in-person or via Zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/565460176>



December 7th

Choosing the Hope That Moves!

Maybe hope isn't a feeling or an attitude, after all. Maybe hope is an engine that comes pre-installed in each life, and our job is to remember how to make that engine run. How does choosing hope help us move through this season?

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

December 7th

In the Circle of Warmth: Our Blue Christmas Service

Come join us 'round our imaginary campfire for this year's Blue Christmas service. We will honor whatever feelings and experiences we each are carrying this season, and we'll open all our senses to the warmth of being held in Love. Come join this circle of warmth for comfort, grounding, and reassurance.

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

December 14th

Light a Candle

It is not a simple coincidence that finds this time of year full of spiritually significant celebrations that take place around lighting candles and tending fires. It is core to who we are as human beings--creating light in the cold darkness of winter time.

Bob Patrick (he/him), Worship Leader

December 21st

Light in the Longest Night

We celebrate the Winter Solstice this Sunday, exploring the depth of reflection that the longest night invites and celebrating the joy of the sun's return! How do these practices help us to choose hope this season? In this multigenerational service, we welcome UUCG's newest members, and we create sun-focused mementos that we can use at home.

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

Wednesday, December 24th at 7pm

An Inclusive and Defiant Love: The Message of Christmas Eve

In a wonderful blend of traditional carols and fresh takes on the old story, we celebrate the lasting message of Christmas Eve for Unitarian Universalists and all our beloved kin.

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

December 28th

"A Rose in the Wintertime"

The idea of a rose blooming in winter, a symbol of miraculous origins, has found its way into a popular UU hymn chorus: "Come Sing a Song With Me," by Carolyn McDade. It celebrates how our shared experiences nurture hope: "I'll bring you hope when hope is hard to find. I'll bring a song of love and a rose in the wintertime." Following Carolyn McDade's theme, we will consider Brene Brown's definition of hope as an expression of love through a process of discernment, planning, persistence, and belief in our abilities.

Bill Benshoof (he/him), Worship Leader

Programs

Sundays at
12:30pm

1st Sunday, 12/7

- Potluck
- Congregational Conversation
- Resisting Fascism Team
- Blue Christmas

2nd Sunday, 12/14

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts

3rd Sunday, 12/21

- Congregational Meeting
- Tarot Sunday





Give Away the Plate



Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's mission is to educate, advocate and secure the protection and stewardship of the Chattahoochee River, including its lakes, tributaries and watershed, in order to restore and conserve their ecological health for the people and wildlife that depend on the river system and in recognition of the important ecosystem functions provided throughout the region and planet.

They ensure there is enough clean water in the Chattahoochee River now and for future generations by:

- Teaching students, homeowners, businesses and policy-makers the importance of clean, plentiful water.
- Conducting research, patrolling the river, collecting and monitoring data, reviewing permits, and holding polluters accountable.
- Advocating for water protection legislation and promoting sustainable water plans and policies.

Worship and More



Message from the Minister



How to Choose Hope: Your Mileage May Vary!

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



“Action is the antidote to fear!”

I’m not sure exactly when I first heard this hopeful phrase, but I know it immediately had the ring of truth for me. Fear, anxiety, nerves—they can have a paralyzing effect. In fact, when I feel stuck and helpless for too long, the fear sometimes spirals down into full-on hopelessness.

Instead, when I find even one “next right thing” to do, I’m lifted out of that hole and set back on my path. There I always find companions who are also seeking the next right action that will help us move toward the relationships and the world we long for. And now there’s joy in the journey again!

This has been my main strategy for “choosing hope” in hard times: Find something to DO, find people to do it with, and things will be better. Over the years, that method has brought about some amazing transformations, learnings, and relationships. I still believe in it.

But it also taught me to measure my worth by my doing, instead of by my being. The culture of capitalism and profit are happy to reinforce this way of valuing and devaluing ourselves.

Now, I’m noticing a shift. Instead of feeling that I have to be the first to leap into action, I’m learning to pay attention to who has the energy and the vision to take action right away. I’m finding myself more deeply embedded in community when I listen to what others’ fears and experiences are. I’m choosing hope when I trust that we will find our way together.

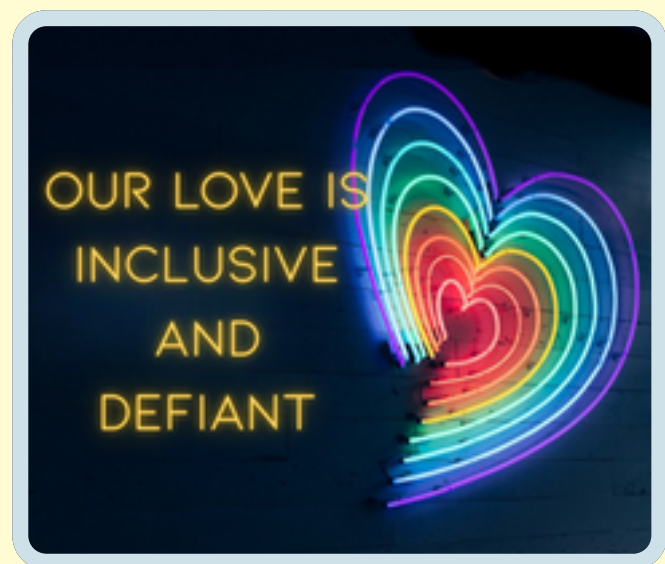
To borrow an old famous phrase: I’m growing less afraid of fear itself, more willing to be honest and humble. I’m ready to recognize that we each bring different gifts to whatever problems we face—and each of our gifts, our very presence, is valuable. The only way I turn away from hope is when I withhold the gifts that I might bring, just by showing up.

What makes it possible for you to choose hope? Does action give you access to renewed energy and stirring companions? Or do you choose hope by renewing the quieter practices of listening, affirming, companioning, and supporting?

YMMV—your mileage may vary! How good it is that our different ways of being and moving in the world are all so valuable!

With Love at the center,

Rev. Nancy



Reflections from Rev. Nancy

Our Gratitude Tree: A Source of Hope for the Season



Even in hard times, naming what we are thankful for can reenergize our sense of connection to Life and to Love. So, in worship on November 16, we created a Gratitude Tree overflowing with ornaments. Each ornament names one thing a congregant is grateful for. Looking at each of these ornaments brings joy, hope, courage, and a little more sparkle to the season.

You can add your gratitude to the tree throughout December by filling out the pre-cut ornaments in the entryway to UUCG, or, if you can't make it in person, send a note to Christiana and she will add an ornament for you: cmcquain@uucg.org.

Here are some pictures to ignite that spark of hope in you!



The Minister's Discretionary Fund: A Chance to Choose Hope

At our Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, December 24, we will take up a special collection, as we do each year, for the Minister's Discretionary Fund (MDF). Funded exclusively by your contributions, the MDF is a confidential resource for UUCG members and attending friends in times of stressful need.

This year, thanks to your generosity, we have helped folx pay their mortgage or rent, buy gas for their car, purchase food, pay for medical insurance, and so much more. People simply reach out to Rev. Nancy (revnpj@uucg.org) and she then offers some financial help. We strengthen this community through our mutual care!

You can make a donation via [PayPal](#) (@uucg) or [Venmo](#) (@UUCG-Gwinnett), just write Minister's Discretionary fund in the note section.

Thank you for your loving generosity and connection to UUCG!

It's Time to Get Ready: Let's Participate in Social Change Now!

Whoever we are, whatever time and energy we have or don't have, we have a part to play in creating the good and loving kind of social change that we and our neighbors need! Please join Christiana and Rev. Nancy in a study-action group on this year's UUA Common Read: "Social Change Now: A Guide for Reflection and Connection," by Deepa Iyer. The six 75-minute sessions meet by Zoom on first and third Sundays at 3:00 pm starting January 4, 2026. Copies of the book are in—please let Christiana know if you need one: cmcquain@uucg.org.

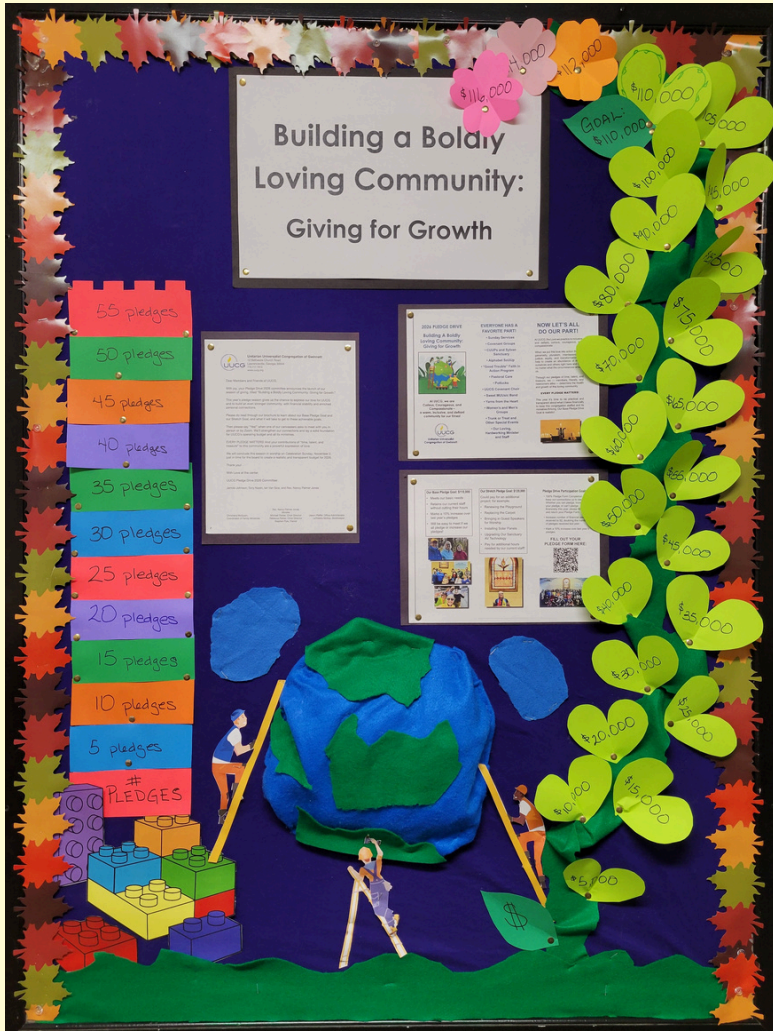
Please register ASAP at this link:
[Social Change Now Registration](#)

From the Board



Pledge Drive 2026 Final Report

by Ian Van Sice



Pledge Drive 2026 is officially over, and what a resounding triumph for UUCG! Just a few months ago, the Pledge Drive Team recognized the need for a strong attempt in engaging the congregation in stewardship through pledging. The number of pledges and total dollars pledged were down over the last several years. This is an unsustainable trend. Through your incredible generosity and the concerted effort of the Pledge Drive Team and canvassers, we exceeded our stretch goal. Please join me in thanking Jerrold Johnson, Tony Nastri, and Reverend Nancy Palmer Jones, all integral parts of this year's Pledge Drive Team.

Now, consider these figures:

- \$122,500 pledged
- 68 Pledge responses
- 20 pledges from individuals and families who had not pledged in any of the last 3 years
- Over 300 points of contact from the canvassing team including emails, phone calls, text messages and in-person connections.

This Pledge Drive reverses the trend of dwindling pledge numbers and brings us closer to realizing a balanced budget.

Beyond these superlative accomplishments, what struck me most during this canvass was the incredible connection afforded by our efforts to speak with every member and friend individually. We spoke with new members, longtime friends, folks who support the congregation from out of the state, and so many stalwart in-person and Zoom attendees. The love for this congregation, its members and friends, and the community in which it resides, was palpable and alive. The active pledge work is over, but you can still submit a form if you haven't yet done so. The link to the [Pledge Form](#) will remain open through the end of the year.

It is a great privilege and an honor to be a part of this delicate and important work. I look forward to seeing how, together, we continue Building a Boldly Loving Community in 2026.

Ian Van Sice

Ministry of Radical Welcome

Sharing the Journey

As we welcome our newest members this month, its time to talk again about Sharing the Journey.

Sharing the Journey is a 4-session program that takes place Sundays after Worship Service for both newcomers and long-time members of UUCG to experience “deep listening and sharing practices” in a small group setting.

The 4 sessions begin with an opportunity for you to share your personal spiritual journey and tell how it led you to Unitarian Universalism, then travel through the historical journey of UUism and our own congregation, arriving at an exploration of the shared journey that we travel together as Unitarian Universalists. This shared journey is made up of three fundamental and distinct UU spiritual practices: listening to one’s deepest self, opening to life’s gifts, and serving needs greater than our own.



Whether you are a long-term UU or are new to our faith, we invite you to join us to explore the experience of small group ministry in four sessions.

The dates for each 90-minute session during the spring 2026 cycle are: March 13th, March 29th, April 19th, and April 26th.

Registration will open in January. Check the weekly eNews for updates.

Come re-engage on your path within Unitarian Universalism and UUCG. Reignite the fire of commitment!

Holiday Season Potluck Sunday

December 7 at 12:30

Join us after service to enjoy some cherished company and some delicious food. The Board of Trustees will also be presenting our projected budget for the coming year.



Carol Underwood serves as the Lay Minister for Radical Welcome

Ministry of Green Space



UUCG 2025 Green Sanctuary Recognition

by Gary Kiel & Terry Welsher, UUCG Green Team

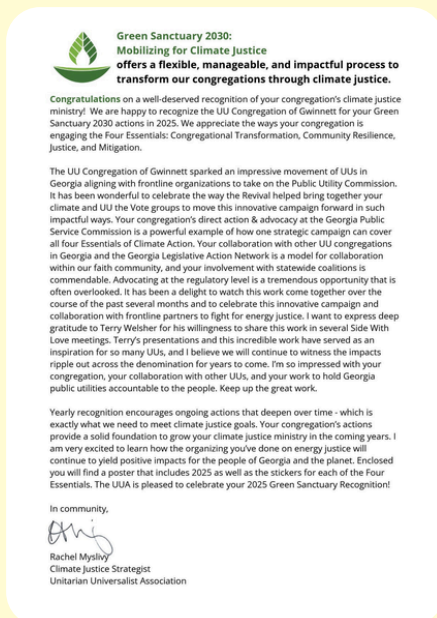


As many of you know, in the months since the Climate Justice Revival held in September 2024, UUCG has been actively involved in leadership, action, and advocacy for a better energy plan for Georgia. This work involved mobilization of UUs across Georgia and the forming of many new partnerships with climate and social justice organizations. This work will continue into 2026 and beyond as we begin to leverage the influence and power we have established. In the meantime, it is also a time to pause and celebrate. As part of that, we can celebrate the recognition of our work by UUA Side with Love and Create Climate Justice groups. You can click on the images to read what UUA Climate Justice Strategist, Rachel Myslivy, said in her letter informing us of this recognition.

While this justice and advocacy work has received this broad attention, UUCG has also continued with projects which also fit into the Green Sanctuary recognition.



- **Congregational Transformation:** Working together to improve the ways we organize and collaborate. UUCG has ongoing Social Justice (Good Trouble) and Green Space meetings. We also hosted the Climate Justice Revival which was the starting point for energy justice work this year and held “Movie Nights” to raise awareness.
- **Community Resilience:** Cultivating communities of care to prepare for and respond to climate disruption. UUCG cares for people with contributions to the food bank, Pastoral Care phone line, and most recently the Little Food Bank (thanks Lorena and Lydia).
- **Justice:** Partnering with those most harmed by climate change to build thriving communities. The Claim Our Power campaign included a Get Out the Vote for the Public Service Commission election, successfully elected two environmentally aware candidates, and established enduring partnerships with front line organizations.
- **Mitigation:** Reducing emissions from energy usage, transportation, waste, & consumption. UUCG replaced the 2 old air conditioners with new, efficient Heat Pump systems. Green Space maintains a compost recycling keyhole garden.



UUCG was awarded the 2025 Recognition for our actions and is poised to continue those action into 2026 and beyond. A major part of the 2025 activity was facilitated by Dr. Terry Welsher and Barbara Stahnke, combining the efforts of the Green Space and Social Justice groups. Special thanks are due those two and all who contributed to these activities this year.

Ministry of Green Space



Keeping it Green

By Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space

Tending Our Grounds

Saturday, Nov. 1st

Steve and Karen Smith were the rangers tackling the grounds. Karen also is performing a rescue operation for a potted plant from Reverend Nancy's office.



Karen provided a list of actions for the next work day - a lot of tree pruning is in store.

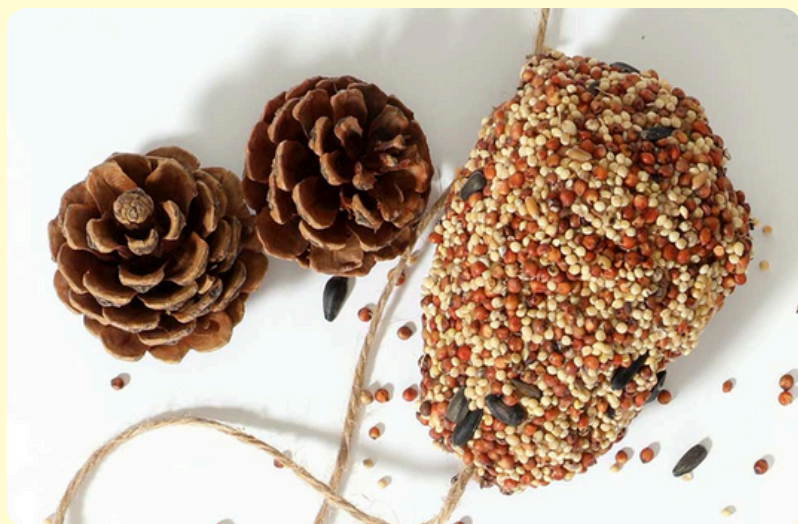
Next Tending our Grounds is December 6.



Winter Gardening Suggestions

In January, Atlanta gardeners can plant cool-season vegetables and herbs. This is also an ideal time for dormant planting of bare-root fruit trees and shrubs, and for pruning summer-blooming shrubs. Examples include:

- Kale
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Turnips
- Parsley
- Cilantro
- Sage



Pine Cone Bird Feeder Project in January!

UPCOMING GREEN TEAM EVENTS

- **December 6 9:30am:**
Tending our Grounds at UUCG
- **December 20 9:30 - 11:00am:**
Green Team Zoom meeting. This meeting occurs every 3rd Saturday.
- **January 3 2026 9:30am:**
Tending our Grounds at UUCG
- **January 2026 TBD:**
Pine Cone Bird Feeder activity
- **February 7 2026 9:30am:**
Tending our Grounds at UUCG
- **February 14 2026 11:00am:**
Brunch and planning workshop
- **March 2026 TBD:**
Field trip to Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Choosing Hope

by Lydia Patrick, Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth



If you have been down the hallway at UUCG recently, you may have noticed that the Spiritual Growth Bulletin Board is a busy one... Just take a look...



We are in that time of year when the 'Holi-Days' begin all over the world. As a child, I knew what we would celebrate as a family and little else. Now I see a world of 'celebrations' and as a Unitarian Universalist, I honor our interconnected web of life. With inclusive and defiant love at the center, I find myself seeking Justice, Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, and Generosity everywhere I go and with all the people I encounter. It is too easy to see despair and desperation, and uncertainty. Social Media is full of it. Society seems to feed off of its energy, and it is too easy to get out of balance and afraid. So, for this month of December, I will choose Hope. I've got to. Join me in that. Our calendar this month is filled with opportunities to share hope and fellowship. Take a good look at the articles in this month's GNUUS and see where you connect with Hope. For me, it's Sunday worship - I look forward to seeing you there.

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

Reach out to 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 Friendsgiving 2025



Choosing Hope

Faith
Development
resources
for exploring
Choosing Hope

Check out Choosing
Hope - Soul Matters
December Play list on
[YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).



Words of Wisdom?

We invite you
to journey with us...

This year's CUUPS Annual Friendsgiving Dinner had an amazing turn out. It was great to see so many of our beloved community show up to enjoy our Welcoming Place. And our extra special thanks go to Sherree Bailey and Billye Welburn for spearheading this celebration.



UUCG Covenant Choir



UUCG's Covenant Choir is singing especially beautiful songs this month, and we would love to have **YOU** join us for the Holiday Season!

Rehearsals are on Tuesday nights at 7:00pm and Sunday mornings at 9:30am here in the Sanctuary.

To be added to the mailing list, send your request to admin@uucg.org.

Faith Development UU GA LAN Conference

by Barbara Stahnke

UUs from Across Georgia attended the UU GA Legislative Action Network 3rd Annual Conference in Savannah GA, November 15-16th. I learned and internalized that we have work to do to **SAVE** our **DEMOCRACY** in Georgia, as we continue to develop our skills in supporting our partners.

As one should do after a conference, I looked at my notes and reflected on memories. Guess what?!? This is a bunch of UUs - so there is so much fun, with so much learning, with so much work to do afterward.

I hope that many of you will attend next year and **MAYBE** - we can host!!!



*Intersectional Power and Engagement Panel
(Bad Picture of Super Learning)*

Important things I learned from the collaborations that occurred in Savannah:

1. **CONNECT** with partners and follow the lead of those most harmed and oppressed.
2. **CONNECT** across divides. Our Values are others' Values. We may not agree on every action, but we must work together across divides to achieve the basics of a livable future.
3. **WATCH** for the signs of oppression: limiting information, restricting belonging, and shifting power away from marginalized communities.
4. **BE CURIOUS** about your partners and their needs, as we are all fighting for ourselves and our communities. We must remember that our communities can be broader than we might believe.
5. **REMEMBER** that some folks need us to mask for their safety and that this is a sign of **WELCOME. MASK INDOORS.** This is part of Disability Justice.
6. **RESIST** against those who are oppressive and **FIGHT** for a world where our values are manifest.

Liberty for ALL! Every Vote Matters and We Must Ensure all Votes are Enabled!

Who attends - Engaged UUs.

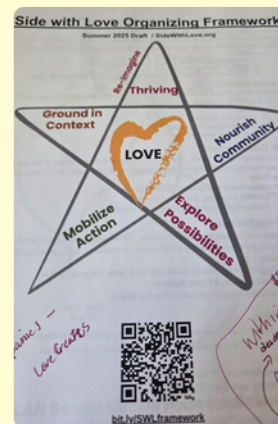
What happens - Learning how to apply our values in OUR community for Georgia Legislation.

When we do this - Typically the second weekend of November.

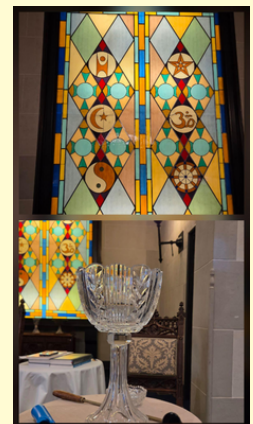
Where we do this - A UU Congregation in Georgia that wants to support engagement with other UUs, helping fellow congregations to continue this work.

How we do this - Provide support for 1 weekend a year: Worship connection and welcome; snacks and meals; facilities set-up and clean-up; Minister support; IT and Web support for remote attendees; coordinating local events showcasing the community; coordinating local speakers showcasing UU values in the community.

Why we do this - because when we connect with other UUs we can make a difference across the state of Georgia.



*Side with Love's
Organizing Framework*



UU Church of Savannah

*Beach cleanup
at Tybee Island*



Ministry of Connecting Within



Breadcrumbs

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within

Hope has holes in its pockets. It leaves little crumb trails so that we, when anxious, can follow it.

Hope's secret: it doesn't know the destination— it knows only that all roads begin with one foot in front of the other.

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer



Book Group

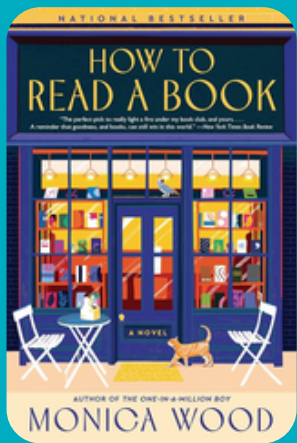
Wednesday, Dec. 10

7:00pm

Online via Zoom

December Selection:

How to Read a Book
by Monica Wood



A young female ex-con, a widower who was collateral damage, and a woman who runs the prison book club – three indelible voices... remind us that life is full of mysteries...and second chances.

As the Lay Minister for Connecting Within I have the privilege of co-facilitating sessions of the newcomers and existing members group, Sharing the Journey. This program falls under the umbrella of Radical Welcome, but as with many of our programs here at UUCG, there is an overlap of focus between Connecting Within and Radical Welcome. I've been involved with Sharing the Journey since we re-entered the building after the pandemic, and I have seen this program grow stronger just as our community has grown stronger since Covid-19 left most of us feeling hopeless at times.

For many of us who sheltered in place, with UUCG streaming Zoom services from Rev. Jan's spare room, we learned to hold hope for one another during dark times. We went to Covenant Groups online, CUUPS rituals online, Yarns from the Heart online, Book Group, and Sharing the Journey. The list goes on and on. As a community, we refused to believe that we could not continue to build connections between our members even if we could not meet in person.

I know, right now, hope is beginning to feel in short supply as the culture surrounding us conflicts with the culture we work to create within our walls. We may be feeling pretty hopeless this holiday season. And yet, I see new folx in the building regularly and, joyfully, I often find them in our Sharing the Journey sessions. Repeatedly, what draws folx to UUCG is a desire to connect with others who share similar values and to feel seen and accepted. When newcomers come to us it's like they're following tiny breadcrumbs of hope and are often surprised to find themselves feeling at home in a Unitarian Universalist church. It takes a lot of strength and courage and hope to walk through the doors of a building where everyone is a stranger. So, this season, take time to introduce yourself to our newcomers and welcome them in to share in the hope we hold together.

With Joy,
Lisa

Ministry of Connecting Within



ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES



Alphabet SoUUp - In Person and Online: 1st Mondays at 6:30pm, potluck served!



Book Group - Online: Special Winter date of Dec. 10 at 7pm

<https://zoom.us/j/144736833>



Covenant Groups - **Registration Remains Open!** **Group A:** 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7pm Online; **Group B:** 2nd Wednesdays at 7pm In Person; **Group C:** 2nd Thursdays at 10am Online (*waiting list only*)



Game Night - In Person: 1st Fridays at 6:30pm, all ages welcome!



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



QUUest - On hiatus until January 16

QUUest Jr. - In Person: 2nd Fridays at 7pm, campaign for Youth



Spiral Scouts - In Person: 2nd Sundays following Sunday service



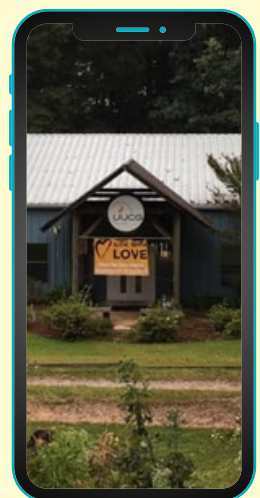
Women's Group: The Open Circle - Canceled until January



Yarns from the Heart - In Person and Online: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 10am

<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



Reclaiming Each Other

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

Rev. Sean Parker Dennison says that “the danger of hopelessness is not only the fear it stirs inside us, but the way it can push us apart. When worry takes hold, it becomes easy to see threats everywhere. It becomes easy to forget that our neighbors are not our enemies and that generosity creates more safety than hoarding ever could. When we begin to lose trust in one another, we lose one of our greatest sources of strength. We lose each other.”

There
is Hope

At UUCG, our vision of ministry calls us to live a love that is inclusive and defiant. A love that refuses to shrink in the face of fear. A love that insists on connection even when the world encourages isolation. Choosing hope is one of the most powerful ways we practice this vision. Hope does not promise tidy outcomes. Instead, it invites

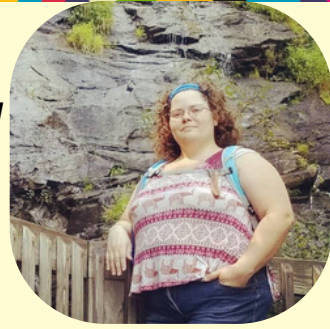


us to stay present, stay grounded, and keep reaching toward one another.

Our vision this year reminds us that hope grows through action. We respond to these times by caring for our community, by extending our outreach, and by exploring diverse paths of spiritual growth. These efforts nurture belonging and remind us that we are part of something larger. They help us connect beyond ourselves, beyond our routines, and beyond our worries, toward a wider circle of compassion and possibility.

Choosing hope is choosing connection. It is choosing to trust that we can build relationships stronger than fear. It is choosing to believe that each act of service, each shared moment, each gesture of kindness helps repair the world. When we connect beyond our comfort, our assumptions, and our individual concerns, we reclaim the very thing hopelessness tries to take from us. We reclaim one another.

And in one another, we find hope again.



LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OP
COMMUNITY FOOD BANK MINISTRY

Most Needed Items

Shelf stable milk	Soup/stews
Applesauce	Canned fruit
Canned tuna/chicken	12 or 18 ct egg cartons
Size 3 and up diapers	Feminine Pads

FOOD DISTRIBUTION HOURS

MONDAY 5-7pm
WEDNESDAY 9am-noon
FRIDAY 9am-noon
*BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



* Scan QR Code to
Schedule Appointment

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Choosing Hope: Upholding Universal Human Rights in 2025

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

As we gather this December under our theme of Choosing Hope, we at UUCG are called to reflect not only on the individual dignity and worth of each person, but on our shared responsibility to one another, a vision rooted in our annual vision: “Our love is inclusive and defiant.” In a year marked by both chaos and possibility, let us renew our commitment to universal human rights and solidarity as expressions of love, justice, and transformation.

The global landscape of human rights this past year has been complex. The latest edition of the Amnesty International “The State of the World’s Human Rights” report points to increasing repression of dissent, growing discrimination, and the misuse of new technologies to challenge rights and freedoms. ([Amnesty International](#)) Similarly, the Human Rights Watch “World Report 2025” documents systematic rights violations across more than 100 countries. In the U.S., the report highlights structural racism, attacks on the rights of migrants and asylum-seekers, and renewed threats to LGBTQ+ rights. ([Human Rights Watch](#)) As we have been witnessing in despair.

Against this backdrop, hope can feel fleeting... yet it is precisely in these hard times that our hope must be put into action. We MUST “choose hope” to refuse despair; we must actively engage in the work of justice, equity, and interdependence; to say with our lives and actions that love is inclusive and defiant in the face of injustice.

One powerful moment for this commitment comes on International Human Solidarity Day, observed each year on December 20. This day, endorsed by the United Nations, invites reflection on our common humanity and the ways that solidarity, (our shared responsibility) can help dismantle poverty, reduce inequalities, and build partnerships across borders.

At UUCG, celebrating International Human Solidarity Day offers an opportunity to embody hope in concrete acts:

- We affirm that the inherent worth and dignity of every person demands that we uphold human rights everywhere and within our own community.
- We deepen our commitment to Justice & Equity, Transformation, Pluralism, Interdependence, Generosity, and Love; the warp of our communal tapestry, by weaving in the weft of individual stories, commitments, and actions.
- We practice solidarity by reaching beyond ourselves: supporting local and global human rights efforts, engaging with neighbors whose voices may be marginalized, and lifting up the concerns of persons whose access to basic rights is imperiled.
- We choose hope by acting: volunteering, advocating, educating ourselves, making connections between our shared ministry at UUCG and the broader human rights landscape.



(continued on next page)

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Choosing Hope

(continued from previous page)

I invite you to act for UUCG and our wider community by doing some of these simple things.

- Commit to one “solidarity act”: Choose one concrete action for 2026. For example: support an organization working for migrant rights, write to your elected officials about human-rights legislation, mentor someone new in our congregation, or start a monthly discussion group on global justice issues.
- Donate to a relief organization working to lift people out of poverty, both locally and globally.
- Look for meaningful ways to support those experiencing poverty in our community; from volunteering to direct assistance.
- If you are someone who has plenty, consider what you can donate to those who have less, whether material goods, time, or resources.
- Seek out like-minded people committed to justice and compassion, and join together in projects that uplift those in need. Like our Resisting Fascism group and Good Trouble.
- Spread hope and the message: Post on social media or share our post about International Human Solidarity Day and share a short reflection on human rights and hope, and invite others to join us in solidarity.

In this season of Choosing Hope, we remember that human rights are not abstract ideals—they are lived realities for people around the world and among us. At UUCG, we embody hope when we stand for justice, reach across division, and love with defiant boldness. Let us choose hope together, in solidarity, and live as a community where “our love is inclusive and defiant” and where the inherent worth and dignity of every person is upheld.



December is Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month



Each year, millions of Americans are affected by this condition, which brings on significant mood changes in response to the changing of seasons. But you don't have to go through it alone.

988
LIFELINE

THE
TREVOR
PROJECT

TRANS
LIFELINE

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Calling all UUCG Congregants



WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE!



The Give Away the Plate Committee Seeks Nominations and a Volunteer

The committee requires your nomination suggestions for 1st and 2nd quarter recipients to our Give Away the Plate. Are you curious how you can help?

Who can nominate a charitable organization for GATP?

UUCG members, youth, the minister, and staff may nominate an organization.

What are the requirements for an eligible entity?

- The organization is recognized as a nonprofit charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and said status is verified. Individuals, trade associations and lobbying organizations are not eligible.
- The organization's work aligns with the Unitarian Universalist Principles and Purposes.
- A non-UU entity is eligible to be a GATP recipient 12 months after its last award.

Desired characteristics of potential recipients:

- The organization has a history of significant achievements and shows signs of future success.
- The organization has volunteer or engagement opportunities for UUCG members and friends.
- The organization has local impact.
- UUCG member(s) are or have been actively involved on a regular basis.

Also, if you're interested in joining the team, the committee wants to hear from you!

You can email your nominations or offer to volunteer to giveawaytheplate@uucg.org and a member of the Give Away the Plate committee will contact you.



The Communications Team is Looking for Volunteers



The Communications Team serves a vital role in keeping the congregation informed about what is going on at UUCG. From the weekly and monthly newsletters, to our Facebook page and website, they help determine what, how, and when our message reaches you. And they are now looking for volunteers to join the team! If you are interested in getting involved with this decision-making group, please send an email to communications@uucg.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Widening Our Circle



The Gathering

Fortifying Ourselves for the Long Road Ahead

Creative Lament: Art for Grief and Rage

Monday, Dec. 8 at 8 ET • 7 CT • 6 MT • 5 PT • 4 AKT • 2 HT on Zoom




The Woodlands

An all ages, monthly,
Trans* Spiritual Care Program

December 7, 2025
4:00pm

- Saplings - Trans Youth (13+/HS)
- Sycamores – Trans Adults (18+)
- Sequoias- Parents/Caregivers (attending solo)
- Sequoias Jr. – Parents/Caregivers (attending with kids)



THE PAGAN DECEMBER GUIDE



SIMMER POT

- Cranberries
- Cinnamon sticks
- Clove
- Orange
- Apple Juice



NATURE'S GIFT

Traditionally, yule logs are eternal symbols of hope! They are gifted from nature. This year, save yours!

- keep remaining wood to light next year's
- save ashes to sow with spring seeds



LIGHT THE WAY

Create lanterns in glass jars by layering mod podge and pressed flowers! Add a tea light when dry and light up the darkness!



BRIDGE THE WORLDS

Stars are symbols of hope, guidance, and connections to the past and future. Use twigs you find in nature to create stars and tie them together with twine. Hang in your windows, over your bed, or on your tree!



HOLY HOLLY

- Keep holly hanging until Imbolc to welcome Brigid in.
- Use a holly cane or walking staff for protection in your travels.
- Hang holly by the door to keep unwanted guests out.

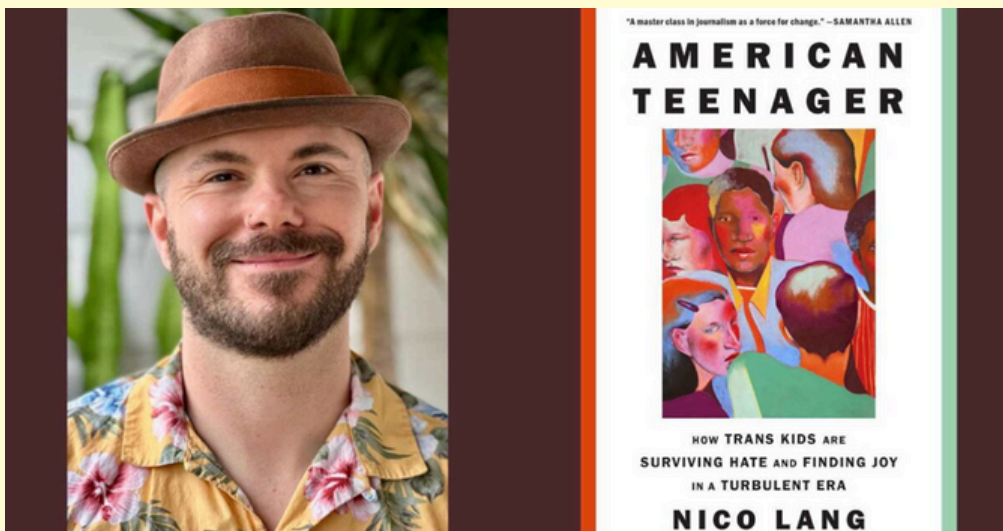
Save the Dates



Nico Lang Book Reading & Signing Event
















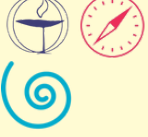













**Wednesday, February 4th
5:30PM**






















PFLAG will be hosting the author, Nico Lang, at UUCG for a book reading and signing event. This will be open to the public and the UUCG congregation is invited to attend. More details will be available soon.



December 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 	31			

	Food Bank Donations Days	Food collection for our members in need and the Lawrenceville Co-op.	In-Person
	Potluck Lunch	Sign up to volunteer; bring a dish to share; come break bread together.	In-Person
	Board Of Trustees	Congregational Conversation, Board Meeting, or Business Meeting. All members and friends of UUCG are invited to attend.	In-Person/Online
	Alphabet 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.	In-Person/Online
	Music Night	Musicians of all skill levels gather to play together.	In-Person
	Property Beautification	Monthly indoor/outdoor workday. All skills and abilities are welcome.	In-Person
	Oak Grove UUCG CUUPs	Oak Grove UUCG Covenant of UU Pagans Gathering, all are welcome.	In-Person
	Belief Explorers	Explorers of world philosophies, faith traditions & religions.	In-Person/Online
	Spiral Scouts	All-gender scouting group for ages 3-12.	In-Person
	Covenant Groups	Small group ministry. Registration required.	In-Person/Online
	Men's Group (inclusive)	Male-identified people gather for discussion.	In-Person
	Tarot Classes	A learning space for all who are interested in the tarot.	In-Person/Online
	Green Team Meeting	Environmental Justice-focused group, all are welcome.	Online
	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
	G3T	Grand Green Get-Togethers: Movies and more with the Green Team.	In-Person/Online
	Worship Services	Sunday Morning Worship Services at 11:00am weekly.	In-Person/Online
	Family Game Night	Board and card games in community - all ages welcome.	In-Person
	QUUest & QUUest Jr.	D&D campaigns, registration required.	In-Person
	Good Trouble	4th Sundays after service at 12:30PM.	In-Person
	Women's Group	All who identify as women are welcome to join us in this safe space for sharing & connection.	In-Person
	Resisting Fascism Team	Discussion group.	In-Person
	Special Event	Unique event/holiday taking place at UUCG.	In-Person

Staff Schedules

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Minister

revnpj@uucg.org | 678-558-4834

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday:

10:00am - 4:00pm

1st & 3rd Saturday: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Christiana McQuain

Coordinator of Family Ministries

cmcquain@uucg.org

Tuesday (remote): 9:00am-4:00pm

Friday (on-site): 9:00am-2:00pm

Most Sundays (on-site): 8:30am-2:30pm

Jason Pfeffer

Office Administrator

admin@uucg.org

Tuesday: 10:00am-2:00pm

Friday: 9:00am-2:00pm

Third Sunday: 10:00-12:00pm

LaTreisha McKay

Bookkeeper

lmckay@uucg.org

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

Michael Parker

Choir Director

choirdirector@uucg.org

Tuesday (on-site): 1:00pm-6:00pm

Becca Parker

Choir Director

choirdirector@uucg.org

Sunday (on-site): 9:00am-12:00pm