



# April 2026

## Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

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Maria Tallchief was America's first major prima ballerina and the first Native American to hold the rank. She is widely considered to have revolutionized American ballet.

### This month we are Embracing Possibility

Of all our themes this year, Embracing Possibility is arguably most central to our faith. It has distinguished Unitarian Universalists from our beginning.

Historically, when others saw depravity and sin at the core of human identity, we saw potential. When many were preaching that this world is fallen, we fell in love with the possibility of heaven on earth. Theologically,

you might say we were the people who believed that God hadn't given up on us and so we shouldn't give up on each other or this world.

Psychologically, it's led to us being a people of "why not?" Why not give people another chance? Why not fight what seems like a losing battle? Why not risk a little failure? Or forgiveness? Why not trust in the possibility of a new dawn?

So that's our religion. But what about us personally? How open have you been recently to "Why not?" How's your faith in possibility doing?

As we honor our religion's unwavering faith in what's possible, how do we allow space for the reality that trusting possibility isn't so easy for many of us?

Join us this month as we explore the joy and the complexity of Embracing Possibility in this paradoxical moment. We are so grateful to be on this journey together.



# Worship in April

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: Embracing Possibility

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



## April 5th

### ***Coming Back to Life***

On Sunday, April 5, we celebrate Easter \*and\* the Flower Ceremony, two deeply meaningful traditions from our religious past. What joy and hope can they bring us now? Come be surprised and embraced by our inclusive and defiant Love. Online or in person, please bring a flower or sprig from your garden or park (or elsewhere) to contribute to the ritual!

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

## April 12th

### ***The Power of Our Embrace***

What are we holding in our arms right now—physically, emotionally, mentally? If we set down despair, might we have more room to embrace the tangible possibilities that Love brings? Let's remember, in our bodies and our souls, that hope is alive in and through us!

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

## April 19th

### ***Deep Possibility***

What is Earth's future? As Unitarian Universalists, we value interdependence and respect the living web of existence. What might it mean for Earth if humans embraced the possibilities of less human-centered worldviews? Join us as we explore this and experience an Earth-centered ritual.

*Ian Van Sice (he/him), Worship Leader*

## April 26th

### ***Earth, Sea, and Sky: Three Embraces for What Can Be***

The three realms are an ancient way of ordering how we perceive and work with our lives. In this service we will explore three types of embrace available to all of us as we consider various futures for ourselves, our community, and the world.

*Bob Patrick (he/him), Worship Leader*

# Programs

## Sundays at 12:30pm

### **1st Sunday, 4/5**

- Potluck Lunch & Easter Egg Hunt

### **2nd Sunday, 4/12**

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts

### **3rd Sunday, 4/19**

- Congregational Conversation
- Resisting Fascism Team

### **4th Sunday, 4/26**

- "Good Trouble"





# Worship and More

## Give Away the Plate



Each quarter the Give Away the Plate Committee selects an organization that embodies UU values and is helping to build a world of freedom for all, and share our weekly collection with them.

The Give Away the Plate recipient for the second quarter of 2026 is GAIN, [Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network](#).

GAIN's mission is to protect and empower immigrant survivors of crime and persecution. They do this by providing free immigration legal services and connecting their clients with the additional legal and social services they need to build safety, stability, and self-sufficiency.



GEORGIA ASYLUM AND  
IMMIGRATION NETWORK

Founded in 2005, GAIN has provided free legal support to thousands of individuals from over 120 countries, while connecting families with the holistic resources they need to not only survive, but thrive.

## Flower Ceremony & Easter Service

Sunday, April 5th  
11:00am

Please bring a flower or sprig from your garden or park (or elsewhere) to contribute to the ritual!

## JOIN US FOR AN OSTARA EGG HUNT

APRIL 5, 2026  
AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE

Brought to you by CUUPS

## EARTH DAY SERVICE



SUNDAY  
APRIL 19  
11:00AM

WHAT MIGHT IT MEAN FOR EARTH IF  
HUMANS EMBRACED THE POSSIBILITIES OF  
LESS HUMAN-CENTERED WORLDVIEWS?

# Message from the Minister

## Making Room to Carry What We Need

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



For some reason, when I first got out of college, I didn't use my car to go to the grocery store, even though I lived halfway up Russian Hill in San Francisco, and the grocery store was blocks away at the bottom. I must have thought it was "good for me" to get the extra exercise and save on gas, since that was a time of gas shortages too.

Mostly walking worked out, if I didn't buy too much at one time, and I grasped the paper bag firmly at the bottom with both hands. (We didn't have plastic bags or paper bags with handles then—can you believe it?)

But one day when the bag was particularly heavy and I was tired, I flung my wallet into the bag without thinking, so it rested on top of the bread and veggies. Sure enough, someone came racing past, snatched my wallet from under my nose, and took off at speed. I shouted that there's "barely any money in there!" But no amount of yelling was going to bring back my driver's license or favorite photos.

It's a bitter lesson—a rite of passage about paying attention and making good choices. Today the memory comes back to me as a metaphor for how much we're all trying to carry, and what we might lose when we grow too weary and weighed down. When, where, and how do we have choices about what we carry?

And that leads me to April's spiritual theme, Embracing Possibility.

I pick up some fresh insights from the etymologies of these words. To embrace—em or in + brace or braccia—is "to put into two arms." We call an embrace a hug (which are essential to many, unsettling to others, depending on our backgrounds and nervous systems). We can embrace a person, an idea, a moment by literally or metaphorically drawing something to our heart with both arms.

And possibility—from posse, to be able—is about something that can be done or that might happen.

So to have room in our arms to embrace the possibilities of what can be done when we put our minds and hearts to it—we need to let something go. What if this month we explore letting go of despair, maybe even of cynicism?

What if, instead, we make sure we're carrying what actually sustains us, and what helps us to create more love and liberation in our world?

What if this month we and everyone who joins us, on any day for any activity, catch a sense that we're no longer trying to walk up a steep hill carrying a heavy bag all alone? Then we could face disappointment and loss, and know that others' care will help us heal. Then we would embrace—together—the possibility of new hope and a world drawn closer in Love.

Drawing you to my heart with both arms,  
Rev. Nancy



# Reflections from Rev. Nancy

## Are You Ready to Become a Member of UUCG?

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

Are you ready to become a member of UUCG? Through spending time with this community, participating in our activities, groups, worship, or more, have you come to feel that UUCG is your spiritual home, and you'd like to "make it official"?

Our next New-Member Ceremony is on Sunday, May 3, 2026, and we would love to welcome you into membership! If you are interested, please reach out to me ASAP: revnpj@uucg.org

What does membership mean?

As members, we enter into covenant with each other—that is, we make promises with each other about how we will behave and the values we share in order to keep this community and each other healthy. You can find our Covenant of Right Relations on our

website here: <https://www.uucg.org/about-us/our-governance/covenants/congregational-covenant/>

Members get to vote in our congregational meetings, helping to set the direction of UUCG. And members can hold certain leadership roles, like being on the Worship or Pastoral Care Teams, or serving on the Board or Shared Ministry Council.

In the fall, we will offer our four-session Share the Journey course, which is a wonderful way to understand Unitarian Universalism and UUCG more deeply. We will also offer a condensed version to accommodate people's schedules.

If you want to join now, please do reach out to me as soon as you can!

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## OurSong Presents "Choral Quest: Sounds of Adventure"



In Choral Quest, OurSong explores the worlds of gaming, adventure, and imagination through song! Whether you gravitate towards fantasy or science fiction, or if you immerse yourself in games like Civilization, and Skyrim enjoy being transported to those other worlds through the beauty and magic of choral performance.

The first half will focus on movies including Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, KPop Demon Hunters, Hunger Games and more, followed after intermission by inspirational music from popular game titles, all with on-screen visuals. Whether you enjoy exploring imaginative worlds or imaginative music, there will be plenty to enjoy.

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)

*OurSong Atlanta is an LGBTQIA+ choral group with a rich history and a strong commitment to promoting acceptance, diversity, and social justice through music. Founded in 2002, OurSong inspires hope and acceptance in our hometown of Atlanta, GA and beyond. Our repertoire spans classical, contemporary, and folk music, demonstrating significant versatility and artistic range.*

# Reflections from Rev. Nancy

## The Heart of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett is All of Us



## Images from SOUUL Summit 2026: Living Liberation, Leading Change

Hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, SOUUL Summit is an open, interfaith-welcoming annual gathering for leaders, seekers, and changemakers called to build courageous, justice-rooted communities. This year's Summit was held on March 19-22.



"Emotionally Mature Congregations" panelists, from left: Rev. Dr. Qiyamah A. Rahman (Abundant LUUV), Gary McDaniel (Spiritual Assembly of West Cobb County), Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (UUCG), Rev. Christina Branum-Martin (Emerson UU)



At left:  
Rev. Duncan Teague  
(Abundant LUUV),  
Christiana

At right:  
Rev. David Morgen  
(UUMAN), Chloe  
Morgen, Rev. Nancy



# From the Board



## Opposing the Proposed Detention Center

*by Lorena Griffin, Board of Trustees Secretary*

The UUCG Board voted this month to adopt a resolution opposing the proposed immigrant concentration camp in the town of Social Circle, GA. The following will be shared with other Gwinnett County churches and individuals for their signatures, then forwarded to elected officials and the media. The text is patterned after a similar resolution that was circulated in Athens.

### **Resolution of Faith Leaders and Organizations Opposing the Proposed Detention Center in Social Circle**

Whereas, our faith traditions call us to welcome the stranger, protect human dignity, and stand with the vulnerable, values shared across the diverse religious communities of Gwinnett County; and

Whereas, mass incarceration based solely on immigration status disrupts the lives of individuals, families, and entire communities; and

Whereas, mass arrest and detention of immigrants undermine our religious activity as faith organizations carrying out the spiritual practice of sanctuary; and

Whereas, immigrant detention practices have been widely documented as inhumane and harmful, often subjecting detainees and their families to trauma and prolonged suffering; and

Whereas, many immigrants are housed in warehouse-like conditions that lack privacy, provide inadequate nutrition, suffer from poor sanitation, and offer limited access to appropriate medical care; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Homeland Security is seeking to establish a large-scale immigrant detention facility in Monroe County, which abuts Gwinnett County; and

Whereas, the proposed detention center, designed to hold 8,500 or more individuals, in Social Circle demonstrates a troubling disregard not only for detained immigrants but also for the residents of Social Circle, whose community identity, public resources, infrastructure, and moral voice would be profoundly affected without meaningful local consent or consideration; and

Whereas, the jobs created for guards and others who will work at the proposed facility in Social Circle are damaging to the mental health of these workers, resulting in additional needs for social services and support; and

Whereas, the City of Social Circle has repeatedly and formally objected to this facility, stating that its water and wastewater infrastructure cannot accommodate the demand this facility would generate, and that no proposal presented by DHS has adequately addressed those concerns; and

Whereas, the speed and secrecy with which this facility has been planned and the dismissal of local objections reflect a troubling disregard for both the rights of those who would be detained and the democratic voice of the affected community; and

Whereas, migrants are being detained for profit by private corporations that the taxpayers are responsible for funding, including the more than 100 million dollars in profits paid to the company selling the facility in Social Circle to the Department of Homeland Security;

Therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned faith organizations and individuals strongly oppose the establishment of a mass immigrant detention facility in Social Circle, Georgia, and call upon the Department of Homeland Security to halt its plans; and

Be it further resolved that we call upon Georgia's congressional delegation, state officials, and local government leaders to use all available means to oppose this facility and protect both the rights of immigrants and the wellbeing of the Social Circle community; and

Be it further resolved that the undersigned affirm our commitment to human dignity, compassion, and justice for all people regardless of immigration status, and pledge to accompany and support immigrant families in our communities who are affected by current federal immigration enforcement policies.

# Ministry of Radical Welcome

## Stress Awareness Month

by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome



April is stress awareness month. Stress is something we have all the time. Good stress can push you forward, and too much stress you can start having health issues. Currently there is much stress around the world. Everything feels on fire for many people. There is just too much from the shock and awe our current administration stresses us with. Spiritual practices can help focus us to reduce stress from the bad part of the equation into the good stress. Connecting with the community can really help as well.

I know when I get stressed it can cause me to forget to do things or feel helpless with regular tasks I do easily on days that I'm not stressed. These stressful things happen especially while doom scrolling on the internet or listening to the news. This is a stressful time because the administration is so unpredictable that it can feel overwhelming. But, that is what they want from you. So stressed out that you feel you can't do anything. I feel like that a lot especially while raising an almost four year old with everything else going on. Many days feel overwhelming and stuff sometimes remains undone. I try to carve out time for meditation or walks outside, but it feels like there is so much that we cannot escape from.

Let us bring awareness to the things that stress ourselves out with and then embrace the possibilities that turn our bad stress to good stress. Use your skill of creativity. Expression of self through art or spiritual practice can help transform our point of view.

One thing you can do is game plan some of the things causing you stress. When you can enumerate them onto a page it can make it feel much more manageable. It also can make you realize what you can do verses something that is out of your control. Since I haven't had much quiet time to journal recently, I use a speech to text app for notes on my phone. It helps makes everything real and easier to put into a type of schedule. Give yourself some grace to also prune some tasks back that truly can wait, and try to use your creativity to make ideas into reality. Use the skill of mindfulness to check in with

reality. We don't have to all be superheroes. Try to find the most important things that can be conceivably done with your particular work load.

Repeated stress, over and over, can lead to burnout. Many folx have experiences that create this issue. You could even be burned out right now. Sometimes we feel like we cannot escape and our creativity is completely out. Try to find a way to take a short break. Leave the less important things undone. Just because the world is on fire, doesn't mean that you are no longer allowed time to yourself to recharge. Just try to find a rhythm in what you do. Give yourself the grace between resting and inspiration by checking out the spiritual practices that give you momentum again. I find that reading poetry and playing my violin are tasks that bring me great inspiration to be creative in finding ways get my responsibilities done. Moving that bad stress to good stress, then releasing what holds me back. If you don't know what to do try out different things to see if any of them speak to you. You might be surprised what can feed your creative energy.

### The UUCG Hospitality Team

**We are seeking folks to assist with clean-up following Coffee Hour, and...**

#### **Other ways to contribute:**

- Bring treats to share
- Make coffee
- Assist with plating and setting out the offerings brought for Coffee Hour
- Set out items on the coffee cart
- Wash mugs & other dishes
- Put away coffee cart
- Launder tablecloths or kitchen linens
- Assist with potluck on first Sundays
- Or any of the many other ways to serve!

Which of your gifts will you share with the UUCG community? Reach out to [Carol](#) to learn more about how you can contribute to UUCG's dedication to a ministry of Radical Welcome.

# Ministry of Green Space



## Keeping it Green: a Green Space Ministry report

by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space

### Movie Night was hosted on March 20

The Green Space ministry had a movie night showing “**The Chickadee’s Guide to Gardening**” by Doug Tallamy. It was a very interesting film. Dr. Tallamy is an entomologist, and he explained the importance of caterpillars. He notes 96% of birds feed caterpillars to the fledgelings as the primary food. The immature birds cannot eat hard things like seeds or beetles. Caterpillars and some spiders are a good diet (relatively speaking). Caterpillars are soft and nutrient dense.



As an example, Chickadees’ young stay in the nest for 14 days. Each day, the parents bring 400 - 500 caterpillars as food. To raise a brood of chickadees to a mature ½ ounce takes 6000 - 9000 caterpillars. Wow! And the birds continue to gobble them up throughout their life.

Where do all these caterpillars come from? Native Oak trees and Cherry trees are large providers. Native plants are the key to creating a caterpillar and hence bird friendly environment. Nature is often a battle. Here plants do not want to be eaten and they develop defense mechanisms. Caterpillars evolved techniques and enzymes to allow them to eat the plant. However, the caterpillars evolved to eat a few very specific native plants. Non-native plants are not good hosts for caterpillars. That is why a variety of native plants are needed to create this bird food chain.

The movie is available to [view on YouTube](#).

## Upcoming Events

- **April 4: Tending Our Grounds** 10am-2pm - UUCG grounds maintenance and improvement.
- **April 18: Green Team Monthly Meeting 9:30-11am** - A Saturday zoom meeting discussing past and future activities. We also cover environmental news and updates from UU Ministry for the Earth, GIPL, and Citizens Climate Lobby.
- **April 19: Earth Day Service 11am** - in the UUCG Sanctuary.
- **April 26: Seed Bombs Activity 12:15pm** - after the Service.

## Tending Our Grounds 2026 Dates

• ~~January 3~~  
• ~~February 7~~  
• ~~March 7~~  
• April 4  
• May 2  
• June 6



• July 11  
• August 1  
• September 5  
• October 3  
• November 7  
• December 5

# Ministry of Green Space



## Connecting with Nature: Bird Nesting Materials - March 22, after the Service



Bird Nesting Materials and woven container ready for assembly



Finished Bird Nesting Materials stash. A nice assortment ready for birds to collect.

**For the birds!** March 22nd, we provided bird nesting materials.

*This is a time travel article. The activity has not happened as of this writing, but will have happened before this GNUUs edition is published. :-)*

*Does anyone remember the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy where grammar experts were working on the proper verb tense for something you intended to do, but now you time traveled to the future and don't know if you did it or not? Kind of what this nesting materials activity is like.*

Bird nests are built in layers. The first stage is to use sticks and twigs to create a frame. A second stage is to use smaller stick, pinestraw, or whatever the bird chooses to finish the nest. The third stage is to make it cozy. Soft materials are used to line the nest. The soft materials protect the eggs and baby birds. Soft materials also act as insulation to keep the nest warm.

We provided nesting material in a woven container. The birds can pluck the materials through the holes in the container. The container should be suspended to keep the materials clean and dry.

## Earth Day Service - April 19



The Green Space ministry will assist with the Earth Day worship service. Ian reached out to the team, and Terry and Hannah enthusiastically agreed to do reflections. We all look forward to celebrating earth. It is my favorite planet.

## Join us for the Seed Bombs Activity on April 26

Are there good bombs? Yes! Guerrilla gardeners use seed bombs.

Seed bombs are small balls of clay, soil, or compost, with wild flower seeds mixed in.

Make a bunch. Then find a spot that could use some improvement, a ditch, ravine, bare ground, and deploy your bombs!



Here are some seed bomb mages from the internet



Look at these happy plants sprouting from a seed bomb

# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

## Where the Sidewalk Ends

by Lydia Patrick, Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth



One of my favorite poems by Shel Silverstein is "**Where the Sidewalk Ends**", from the book of the same name.

*There is a place where the sidewalk ends  
and before the street begins,  
and there the grass grows soft and white,  
and there the sun burns crimson bright,  
and there the moon-bird rests from his flight  
to cool in the peppermint wind.*

*Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black  
and the dark street winds and bends.*

*Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow  
we shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow  
and watch where the chalk-white arrows go  
to the place where the sidewalk ends.*

*Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
and we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,  
for the children, they mark, and the children, they  
know,  
the place where the sidewalk ends.*

The theme for April is 'Embracing Possibility'. Some days we might be hard-pressed to find any 'possibility' around us. The change we want/need seems far away and hard to reach. During the month of April our Worship Team will help us work on just that - through time spent in beloved community together each Sunday morning we will ponder understanding what it means to walk with a walk, measured and slow, through the cool peppermint wind, past all of the black smoke blowing, to the place where possibility begins. I look forward to seeing you there.

Blessed be.

Ask what's possible,  
not what's wrong.  
Keep asking.

Margaret J. Wheatley



## Planting the Seeds of Spiritual Growth

Engagement Opportunities include:

Beacons, Worship Associates, Covenant Choir Singers,  
Sweet MUUsic musicians, and Faith Development  
Program Facilitators



Click [HERE](#)

We look forward to  
serving alongside you!



# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

## Faith Development: Tending the Flame

by Christiana Fernandez McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

As we welcome spring and all of the possibility inherent in this season, I am making time to be outdoors. Taking long moments to breathe in the fresh air, clear my mind, and simply be. This is a practice that I find immensely valuable and I encourage you - if it is not already a regular practice of yours - to do the same. Set an intention to allow nature to work its healing magic on your spirit.

For the past two months, the ministry of Green Space has been creating opportunities on fourth Sundays for our young people to connect with nature through activities and projects designed to be of service to our wildlife community. This month on **April 26**, they will be teaching how to **create seed bombs** that will serve to both beautify our surroundings and provide oases for our pollinator friends. All families are invited to participate in this program of making and learning. (If your children are over the age of 7, and you would like to attend “**Good Trouble**”, you are welcome to drop them off to learn with their peers, while you learn with yours.)

Faith  
Development  
resources  
for exploring  
Embracing  
Possibility

Embracing Possibility

Check out Embracing Possibility - Soul Matters April Playlist on [YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).



### Other goings on for families, children, and Youth in April:

- **Easter Service and Flower Ceremony** on April 5
- **Ostara Egg Hunt** after the Service on April 5
- **Faith Exploration: Imagine What's Possible** (R.E.) for kids ages 5 and up during the Service on April 12
- **Spiral Scouts** after the Service on April 12
- **Enchanted Forest Spring Auction** on Saturday, April 25
- **Green Space Nature Activity** after the Service on April 26

## O.W.L. Update

Due to summer travel schedules of a few of our families, it has been decided to offer this year's OWL in the early fall. Zack Parris and Crystal McAlpin, our OWL facilitators, will host an **informational meeting on Sunday, May 3rd at 12:30pm for parents who are or may be interested in enrolling their child(ren) in the upcoming OWL program .**

If you are interested in OWL for your age 12-15 child, or have any questions at all, please plan to attend this meeting. Feel free to reach out to Christiana at any time for more information.

Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives (OWL), a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education program for level 7-9 here at UUCG.



Our love  
is inclusive  
and defiant.



# Ministry of Spiritual Growth

## APRIL Pagan Crafts

### Flower Memory Book

Collect flowers on walks and adventures and press them. When they are complete, glue them to cardstock pages and make a memory book of your adventures.



### Welcome to the Bug Hotel

Reuse an old milk carton, bottle, or box. Stuff it full with natural fillers: pinecones, dried leaves, bark, straw. You can even use old toilet paper rolls! Place in your garden or yard for local friends.

### Heart of Wands

- Gather long grass and tie at the base.
- Split in half and fold the top back and secure to create a heart.
- Attach to a stick of your choice
- Decorate with seeds, stones, and flowers



### Leaf Impressions

Collect local flowers and leaves and press them into your favorite clay. Create offering bowls and cups, and other spiritual designs. Imbue your intention into the design with the flowers and leaves.

### Simmer Pot

- Blueberries for wisdom and luck
- Lemon to cleanse and uplift
- Mint for prosperity and abundance
- Vanilla for inner peace and calm



## CUUPS GATHERING

# OSTARA RITUAL

APRIL 4, 2026  
2PM-4PM

Join CUUPS on April 4th, 2026, 2-4pm for a joyful Ostara gathering filled with story, creativity, and community. Together, we'll explore the tales of the Spring Goddess, reflect on the season's renewal, and take part in a hands-on ritual. Candice and Daniel will guide us as we dye eggs in vibrant colors and prepare them for Sunday's Ostara Easter egg hunt after service Easter Sunday. Come celebrate the turning of the season and create some truly *eggtacular* magic!



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

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

# Ministry of Connecting Within



## Weathering the Storm

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within



*I can use the term conscious community and islands of sanity as pure synonyms because they are. We have to feel that without this group I will not be able to do my work in this chaotic, confusing world... I cannot do meaningful work of the quality I know I am capable of unless I am in conscious, committed relationship with these others.*

Margaret J. Wheatley

## Book Group

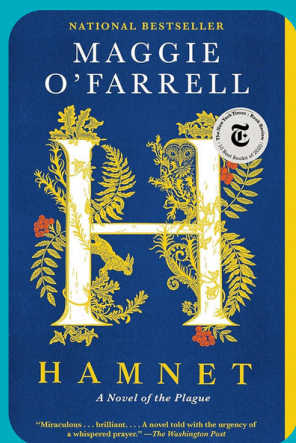
Wednesday, Apr. 22  
at 7:00pm

[Online via Zoom](#)

April Selection:

*Hamnet*

by Maggie O'Farrell



The bestselling author of **The Marriage Portrait** delivers a deeply moving novel about the death of Shakespeare's eleven-year-old son, Hamnet, and the years leading up to the production of his great play. The book is now a major motion picture.

[Read more here...](#)

When my leaky boat shipwrecked years ago, I landed on the shore of this community. Carrying grief, I had struggled to find a community until I found UUCG, my own safe port. I was welcomed, cared for and listened to in ways I had been yearning to experience. Over time, this community became my community, and I began to realize there were plenty of folk out there that needed UUCG as much as I did, so I became involved in trying to give back to the community that had given me so much. Being with caring people had helped me heal in ways I just couldn't manage on my own.

These days, all our boats are rocking in the turbulent seas of politics, disinformation, and fear. It feels like one devastating wave after another threatens to capsize us. Never have we needed community more! Instead of sailing alone, cursing the storm, we desperately need what Wheatley terms "islands of sanity," or "conscious" communities. Intentionally building community is not a solitary job. It is the work of many hands and hearts. Working together to build community invites all of us to imagine more and more possibilities. When we encourage one another, we also encourage ourselves. Impossibilities don't seem quite so impossible when we're not problem solving all alone.

When you look around UUCG what possibilities do you see? Where and how can we join together to strengthen our own "island of sanity?" How would you like to give back or become involved? Every group here at UUCG started with a glimmer of a possibility, the possibility that others might want to share their stories and ideas. Thank you to every leader and every participant in every group who embraced that possibility!

With Joy,  
Lisa



# Ministry of Connecting Within

## The Strength of Connection

### Community Pantry



When the government shut down this past fall, some of our members lost food stamps. Others were furloughed from government jobs. We created an in-house pantry to help with their needs. Now the government has reopened, but we've decided to keep the pantry. Now it's a resource for all of our members & Friends.

Maybe you're a working parent, who stayed late for a meeting and didn't have time to get to the store. Feel free to pick up tomorrow's breakfast. Maybe you just made the best cookies ever. Gather the ingredients, along with the recipe, and leave for a member to find. Of course, if you need help making ends meet, the pantry is for you. Give and take at will.

Together, we're stronger. Together, we share.

pastoral  
care



**If you need someone to talk with for emotional or spiritual support, please do call our Pastoral Care number: 770-217-7848.** Christiana and Rev. Nancy check the messages on this line daily, and they will strive to connect you with someone who can help.

If you need practical help, our [UUCG Facebook group](#) is a great place to find people willing to lean in. And if you have a pastoral emergency—an illness, loss, or crisis for which you need Rev. Nancy's care—please do call the minister's cell phone at 678-558-4834. We are encouraging all of us to take part in this caring ministry, by checking in with neighbors, newcomers, long-timers, friends, and friends-to-be. This is a Community of Care sharing an inclusive and defiant Love. You are not alone.

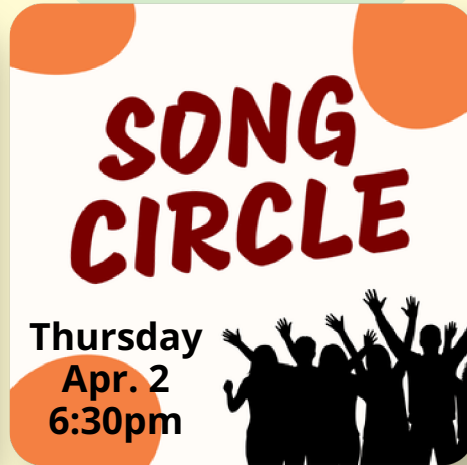


# Making Connections



*Yarns from the Heart*

Wednesdays  
Apr. 1 & 15  
10:00am



**SONG CIRCLE**

Thursday  
Apr. 2  
6:30pm



LOVE IS LOVE

**ALPHABET SOUP**

Monday, Apr. 6  
6:30pm



**GAME NIGHT**

Friday, Apr. 3  
6:30pm



**UUCG Men's Group**

Saturday, Apr. 11  
9:00am



The Open Circle

UUCG Women's Group

Saturday, Apr. 25  
10:00am

## ONGOING ACTIVITIES

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

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

**Covenant Groups - Registration Remains Open!**

**Group A:** Online - 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7pm

**Group B:** In Person - 2nd Wednesdays at 7pm

**Group C:** Online - 2nd Thursdays at 10am (*group full - waiting list only*)

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

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

Online: 3rd Wednesdays at 7pm <https://zoom.us/j/93844952618>

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

**QUUest** - In Person: 3rd Fridays at 6:30pm, campaign for Adults

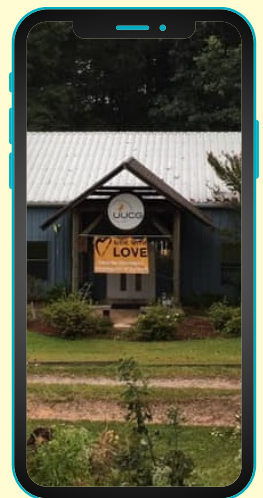
**Spiral Scouts** - In Person: 2nd Sundays following Worship Service

**The Open Circle: UUCG Women's Group** - In Person: 4th Saturdays at 10am

**Walkers** - In Person: 2nd Wednesdays and 4th Thursdays at 11am (*per the weather*)  
email [admin@uucg.org](mailto:admin@uucg.org) for contact information

**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



## Helping Libraries - It Doesn't Have to Be Hard

by Shelby Bouck

It's no secret that libraries are under attack in the United States. Funding is getting cut. Book bans are rampant. Bills are moving through legislatures in many states, including Georgia, that would criminalize librarians for letting minors check out books containing any reference to queer identity, sex education, or sex as an event in human life.

Protecting institutions is a major part of the fight against fascism - but it's also a tall order. To make things less intimidating, here's how you can aid your local public library in three easy steps:

- Walk through the doors.
- Allow the doors to close behind you.
- Walk out.

Librarians justify continued library funding by presenting statistics to our local and federal governments. We track numbers of everything, including items checked out, library cards issued, and, yes, simple door counts. More is always better. Entering the building helps your local library, even if you do nothing else.

For extra credit, here are some other free ways to help us out:

- Get a card. If you have one, renew it.
- Check out a book - or 50. It's okay if you don't get time to read them before they're due. There won't be a quiz.
- Borrow digital resources like ebooks, audiobooks, music, or streaming videos. (You can do this one from home!)
- Attend a program. Make a craft, discuss a book, or learn something new.
- Specifically check out books about queer lives and queer characters.
- Libraries decide which books remain in the collection based partly on usage. By checking something out, you are ensuring it will be there for the next person who needs it.
- Email your library's board. Thank them for serving their entire community through LGBTQ+ representation in the collection. It helps when our leaders and funding bodies hear from people who appreciate us - and not just from folks who'd like to burn us down.



## LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OP COMMUNITY FOOD BANK MINISTRY

### Most Needed Food Items:

- DESPERATE NEED - SNACKS: granola bars, individual chips, crackers, etc.
- Ramen noodles
- Vienna sausage
- Small microwave canned pastas
- Shelf stable milk
- Canned fruit
- Applesauce
- Canned tuna/chicken

### Most Needed Personal Care Items:

- Diapers-size 1, 2, 5 and up (*they have size 3 and 4*)
- Feminine pads

### FOOD DISTRIBUTION HOURS

MONDAY 5-7pm  
WEDNESDAY 9am-noon  
FRIDAY 9am-noon

\*[BY APPOINTMENT ONLY](#)

**They will be closed  
April 3 & April 4  
opening again April 6**

*The Lawrenceville Cooperative Ministry is a Christian organization providing food for people in need in Lawrenceville and Dacula.*

# Ministry of Connecting Beyond



## Widening Our Circle

 SIDE WITH LOVE



### The Gathering

Fortifying Ourselves for the Long Road Ahead

Creating Hubs of Resilience

Monday, Apr. 13 at 8:00pm ET / 7:00pm CT / 6:00pm MT / 5:00pm PT

In the midst of extreme weather and climate disruption, our congregations and communities can be powerful hubs of care, connection, and critical infrastructure. Rachel Myslivy, Side With Love's Climate Justice Strategist, will break down what we mean by "hubs of resilience" that are adaptive to and grounded in their context.

[Register to strengthen your spirit!](#)



## The Woodlands

An all ages, monthly,  
Trans\* Spiritual Care Program

April 12, 2026

4:00pm

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



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

Each session will begin with a shared message and grounding ritual, followed by breakout rooms tailored to different communities within the circle, and then come back together for a release. Sessions will be about an hour and a half.

Each breakout room—co-facilitated by two chaplains—will offer space for meaningful check-ins where we can honor our grief, celebrate our joy, and support one another. The spirit of each room will reflect the people within it.

[REGISTER TO JOIN](#)

All of those on the UUA staff who helped bring The Woodlands to life hope you'll find meaningful community and support in this shared space.

# Ministry of Connecting Beyond



## Community Activists Protest ICE's Plans for Social Circle Immigrant Detention Center

by Stephen Babb, Resisting Fascism Team

Hundreds of people gathered on the green of the Walton County Courthouse in Monroe on March 8th to protest ICE's plans for opening a huge immigrant detention center capable of holding up to 10,000 detainees in the nearby small town of Social Circle by early April.

Their message was clear: "Detention Center NOT Welcome here!"

The speakers at the protest, which was convened by local Indivisible groups, included community activists, local elected officials, immigrant rights advocates, organizations serving detainees and their loved ones, and relatives of detainees who had been abused and died in ICE custody.

They called out the barbarity of immigrant detention, the xenophobia and racism driving the crackdown on immigrants, and the negative local impacts the facility will have, including lost tax

revenue, traffic congestion, and increased demands on local law enforcement, fire departments, and water and sewer systems. Speakers also highlighted DHS's lack of transparency – community leaders learned about the planned facility through a news article.

Several speakers emphasized that they wished to welcome immigrants to their community as neighbors, instead of having them warehoused there as detainees.

Others called on Congressman Mike Collins, whose district includes Social Circle, to intercede to stop the facility.

After the protest, I drove by the warehouse which ICE shelled out \$128 million to purchase so that it could convert it into a 1.2 million square foot holding pen – the equivalent of 20 football fields. Here are my reflections on what I saw:

### Do-Over

*Thoughts on driving past the future site of the Social Circle immigrant detention center*

I drove past pod on barren pod  
Of vacant warehouse space --  
The sites of future segregation cells  
And scenes of pending crimes  
Already in the planning stage

They stretched on endlessly  
And made me contemplate  
Our infinite capacity  
For inhumanity –  
All of the thought and sweat  
And treasure we've misspent  
To multiply the sum of human misery  
As if we needed more of it

They made me think of the stockade  
A few hours away at Andersonville, where  
Gaunt Rebels held emaciated Union prisoners at bay  
Beneath the broiling sun and pouring rain  
Without a bivouac to shelter them  
Or any source of drinking water but

The creek they did their business in  
While sentries trained their guns on them  
And watched them waste away

What would I give to have the chance  
To nip such horror in the bud  
And to avert such needless suffering  
On such a massive scale

ICE says they plan to squeeze  
Ten thousand human souls inside  
This latest, greatest model of  
A cost-effective modern penal colony  
Which is explicitly designed  
To maximize the cruelty  
And to dehumanize the detainees

Now is our chance to intercede  
So our descendants will not need  
To dedicate a monument  
In order to commemorate  
The victims whom  
We could have saved  
And to redeem the guilt  
We might have spared ourselves  
And won't be able to escape

# Save the Dates...

# Spring Events

## Say NO to Endless, Lawless War!

Peaceful Vigil at 6PM to 6:30PM - Sundays  
At the Corner of Ronald Reagan and Hwy  
124 on the Public Sidewalk (Verizon Side)  
Stand and Sing for Peace and Democracy



Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Gwinnett

Sustaining a Community of Love Through Trust, Compassion, and Inquiry

## Volunteer Work Day

Saturday, April 11 @10:30am



Helping hands needed! Dan and Ian are hosting a work day to check tasks off the "Congregational To-Do List." Today's work will focus on changing ceiling tiles and cleaning windows in the sanctuary.

## ALL ATLANTA AREA UU CONGREGATIONS PICNIC!

- Bouncy House
- Face Painting
- Potluck Lunch
- Fellowship with Atlanta Area UU Congregations

Each congregation is asked to send a few volunteers 30 minutes before and after to help with setup and clean up. Thanks for your participation!

May 9th  
11 am - 2 pm

at Emerson UU  
Congregation  
4010 Canton Rd.  
Marietta, GA 30066

## Resisting Fascism Movie Night

the 2014 film

# "PRIDE"

snacks and discussion

included!


May 9th

doors open at 6:30  
movie starts at 7:00

12 Bethesda Church Rd.  
Lawrenceville, GA 30044

at the unitarian  
Universalist  
Congregation at Gwinnett

# Save the Date...



## Enchanted Forest UUCG's Annual Spring Auction Saturday, April 25 • 5-9pm

### Donating to the UUCG Auction is as easy as A, B, C

Agree to be an auction sponsor  
Bake a cake  
Crochet an afghan  
Deliver a home-cooked meal to the highest bidder  
Entertain a child while parents have an afternoon out  
Figure out a tax return  
Groom a dog  
Help organize an office  
Install a flower bed  
Just plan your favorite meal and put it up for bid – your house or theirs  
Kvetch over coffee with friends, old and new  
Loan the use of your pickup truck  
Make décor for a child's room

Nail down loose boards or clean out a gutter  
Open your home for drinks and games  
Play music at a winning bidder's party  
Quilt a wall hanging  
Repair an appliance  
Speak a foreign language? Understand math?  
Offer tutoring sessions  
Teach an ethnic cooking class  
Undo a computer glitch  
Virtually any service or social event will bring big bucks for UUCG  
Watch a cult movie in costume with a gang of high bidders  
X-spect to have great fun at the Auction  
Yipee! The Auction is almost here!  
Zip on over to the Auction on April 25th.

Click this image for more details. Donation information must be submitted by April 4 for inclusion in the Auction Catalog and to be entered into a drawing for a magical prize. All donated items should be delivered to UUCG on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> or Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup>. Questions? Contact [Auction@UUCG.org](mailto:Auction@UUCG.org)

What will you donate to the auction this year? The mushrooms want to know.



# From the Editor

## The Stress of Embracing Possibility

by Jason Pfeffer, Office Administrator



This month's theme of Embracing Possibility started me reminiscing about all the decisions I've made over the years which worked to shape my life and bring me to where I am today.

If someone had told me 30 years ago that I would be living in Georgia, married to an amazing woman with a successful career, raising a feisty daughter who is surprisingly globally-aware, and working for a socially-conscious church, I would have wondered which mental health facility they were on a day pass from. (Already my new community is having an effect on me, as Jason from 30 years ago would have said, "which loony bin did they escape from?")

There have been many unusual, and questionable, steps that lead me along the winding path to my current life. After high school graduation, the urge for spontaneity and scoffing at common sense was my guide. Thankfully, a sense of responsibility and self-preservation eventually kicked in somewhere along the line. Which began my trajectory towards financial stability and getting my act together, eventually rewarding me with finding Kim.

Thus, I come to the tale which the title of my article refers to. How embracing possibility can be stressful. It is not my tale, but my wonderful wife's, where I play the part of the devil on her shoulder. Or maybe the angel...I'll let you be the judge.

On what was an otherwise average day in the Pfeffer household, Kim was given what could be considered a once in a lifetime opportunity. A corporate headhunter contacted her, asking if she would be interested in interviewing for a very lucrative position at a rather prestigious university. The catch was...we lived in Pennsylvania at the time. The university was in Georgia.

That night, in a rather joking manner, I was informed of what happened. "It's ridiculous. We'd have to pack up our whole lives, sell our house, move Diana to a different state, we'd be away from our families. Even though it's a lot more money, I can't accept the offer."









































And that's when the horns began to sprout from my head. Or it could have been a halo. The details have grown hazy. My response was, "Why not? We're still young. Diana is little and more than able to adapt to somewhere new. A majority of the house is paid off, we could sell it for a profit. That money alone could cover moving expenses, put us up in an apartment while we look for a house, and still leave enough left over for a good-sized down payment. Our families would support our choice, knowing we're doing it to provide a better life for our daughter." Etcetera. Ad nauseum. I can be quite persuasive when I'm of a mind to be.




























There was still a bit of debate after that. The decision to move to a distant state is not an easy one. The logistics of making the travel arrangements was ulcer-causing in itself. Many decisions would have to be made on faith, with us being unable to tour things in advance. Locating an apartment close to Kim's new job. Finding a pre-K for Diana. Figuring out an area where we'd be comfortable and could also afford a house.

It was a period of anxiety, tension, and wondering if we did the right thing. But embracing this possibility, accepting a major change into our lives, turned out to be one of the best decisions we ever made. Despite all the worry and doubt, we found a home where we feel like we belong, and a community that, even after a relatively short time, we can't imagine not being a part of.

# April 2026

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	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
	Sweet MUUSIC Rehearsal	Musicians of all skill levels gather to play together.	In-Person
	Song Circle	Join us for a fun and restorative evening of communal song.	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
	Sharing the Journey	4-session program to experience "deep listening and sharing practices"	In-Person/Online

## Staff Schedules

### Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Minister  
 revnpj@uucg.org | 678-558-4834  
 Tuesday thru Thursday:  
 email or text for appointment  
 1st & 3rd Saturday: 10:00am - 2:00pm

### LaTreisha McKay

Bookkeeper  
 lmckay@uucg.org  
 Monday (remote): 5:00pm-8:00pm

### 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

### Michael Parker

Choir Director  
 choirdirector@uucg.org  
 Tuesday (on-site): 1:00pm-6:00pm

### Jason Pfeffer

Office Administrator  
 admin@uucg.org  
 Tuesday: 10:00am-2:00pm  
 Friday: 9:00am-2:00pm  
 Third Sunday: 10:00-12:00pm

### Becca Parker

Choir Director  
 choirdirector@uucg.org  
 Sunday (on-site): 9:00am-12:00pm