



July 2026

Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

Table of Contents

[Worship in July](#)

[Worship and More](#)

[Message from the Minister](#)

[From the Board](#)

[Radical Welcome](#)

[Green Space](#)

[Spiritual Growth](#)

[Connecting Within](#)

[Connecting Beyond](#)

[Save the Dates](#)

[From the Editor](#)

[July Calendar](#)

[Staff Schedules](#)



The modern hospice movement was founded by Dame Cicely Saunders. A nurse, social worker, and physician, she revolutionized end-of-life care by focusing on compassionate pain management.

This month we are Letting Go & Holding On

Are we a people of holding on or of letting go?

Holding on to rigid ideas or

Letting go and opening our minds and our hearts, to something new;

Holding on to certainty of how things should be or

Letting go and living with the uncertainty of new ways of being in the world;

Holding on to what makes us comfortable or

Letting go so we may grow which can be uncomfortable;

Holding on to what makes us safe or

Letting go to make room to help others feel safe?

With this flame, this symbol of our religion,

Let it be a symbol of burning up the ties that hold us back from being our true self and reaching our true potential;

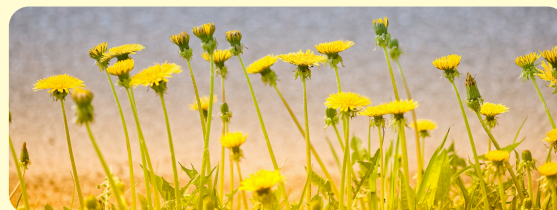
Let it be a symbol of lighting a new way for us into a better tomorrow;

And let it be a symbol of letting go

Because holding on too long and too tightly is never good for the soul.



- **Letting Go** by Jay Wolin



Worship in July

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: Letting Go & Holding On

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



July 5th

Our Hands of Freedom

Before there were fireworks, there was a choice. This Independence Day weekend, we explore how freedom begins when we release certainty, embrace possibility, and choose what is worth carrying forward.

Candice Carver (she/her), Worship Leader

July 12th

Hold Me While I'm Here

Our time together is finite. From brief encounters to lifelong companionships, we will inevitably part. We must make this precious time matter. What does it mean to acknowledge the limits of this life? What do we owe each other while we are together and when we part? Let's explore these questions together.

Ian Van Sice (he/him), Worship Leader

July 19th

The Dreams We Can Release, the Essence We Will Hold

Sometimes, for years, we carry around a dream or expectation about what our life is meant to be, about what goals we really should accomplish if we want to feel fulfilled. Usually our lives don't work out quite so neatly. What happens when we let go of one dream and allow a new purpose to unfold? What curiosity, courage, and compassion do we need then?

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

July 26th

Tossing the Coin or Picking Sides

Deciding what to let go of can help when deciding what is worth holding on to. If you are ready to think more about transitioning or stabilizing your journey this week's discussion might give you the inspiration you need to move forward without extra baggage better left behind.

Lydia Patrick (she/her), Worship Leader

Programs

Sundays at 12:30pm

1st Sunday, 7/5

- Potluck Lunch

2nd Sunday, 7/12

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts

3rd Sunday, 7/19

- Tarot for Teens
- Resisting Fascism Team

4th Sunday, 7/26

- "Good Trouble"
- Green Space Nature Activity





Worship and More

The Altar of Compassion



An "Altar of Compassion" in Unitarian Universalism is a dedicated sacred space within a sanctuary where congregants can engage in personal meditation, grief, or celebration. Individuals are typically invited to visit the altar before or during a service to light a candle, symbolizing their personal joys, sorrows, and hopes.



WORTHY NOW
prison ministry network

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 third quarter of 2026 is:

[Worthy Now Prison Ministry - The Church of the Larger Fellowship.](#)

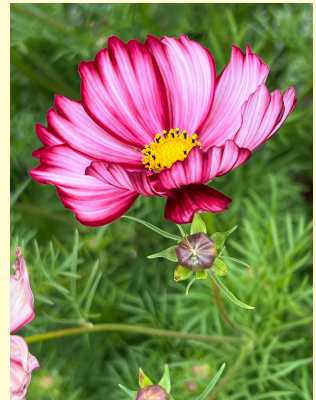
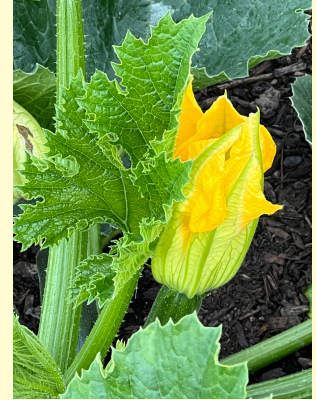
The Worthy Now Prison Ministry is a program of the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship (the CLF). This organization supports a life-saving ministry that provides nearly 2,000 UU's experiencing incarceration with worship, pastoral care, spiritual resources and community, all grounded in our UU values. In addition, they have an active Pen Pal program that matches UU's with incarcerated members of the CLF. The Worthy Now Prison Ministry believes that every person is worthy of love and justice just as they are; no one is disposable. The ministry works to overcome the isolation and dehumanization of our prison system.

Message from the Minister

Images of Love

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

Images from Pride Weekend in Sequim, Washington and
Rev. Nancy's Vacation!



From the Board



A New (Program) Year of Love at the Center

by Ian Van Sice, Board of Trustees President

It feels a little strange to write about a new year when we are halfway through 2026, but that's the way the program year falls! We will soon announce our Vision of Ministry for the program year. Our leadership team will engage in thoughtful discussions July 10-12: we will review the last program year, evaluate the survey results, and plan for the year ahead. I look forward to seeing the fruits of that effort shared with everyone in the coming months. For now, I'd like to lift up some items for your consideration.

We have not yet secured a tenant.

Friendship Forest's time with us is officially concluded. Another long-term tenant is desired. We have had a few inquiries, but we welcome additional referrals and suggestions. The Board has made great strides to secure UUCG's financial stability. Finding a good values-match in a long-term tenant is an important part of that long-term stability.

The Board of Trustees has three vacancies.

We are in need of a Vice President and two additional At-Large members. With the recently updated bylaws revisions, Board membership does not require a commitment to move into an Officer Role (Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President or President). Being an At-Large member means you attend monthly board meetings, serve on some committees, and have an opportunity for your voice

and your talents to contribute to the congregation. Speak to the Nominating Committee if you have interest in joining the Board.

The 2026-2027 Program Year is a time of significant transition.

We have one new Board member (so far!) and three new Lay Ministers, we will have a new Choir Director, our membership is growing, and this is our last Program Year with Rev. Nancy as our Minister. This feels like a lot! As we move into this new year, let us offer one another grace, gratitude, and compassion.

I would also like to recognize the sheer exhaustion I know many of us carry in so many forms. We live in hard times. Togetherness might not be a complete solution, but it is the only way forward. The Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly 2026 was titled "Meet the Moment: Together Everywhere." There are moments to meet every day. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett is where and how and with whom we will meet these moments. Care for, mentor, listen to, provide companionship to, and be actively in relationship with one another this year.

With Love at the Center,
Ian Van Sice
President, UUCG Board of Trustees

Financial Report Summary for First Quarter 2026

		Q1	Budget	Variance
Income	Pledge Income	\$63,413.91	\$30,501.00	\$32,912.91
	Rental and Land Use	\$9,994.23	\$11,487.00	-\$1,492.77
	Misc.	\$242.58	\$5,961.00	-\$5,718.42
	Total Income	\$73,650.72	\$47,949.00	\$25,701.72
Expense	Staff	\$36,796.05	\$41,787.00	-\$4,990.95
	Bldg Maint & Ops	\$5,268.30	\$4,003.00	\$1,265.30
	Programs	\$1,124.49	\$1,008.00	\$116.49
	Association Dues	\$0.00	\$75.00	-\$75.00
	Office Eqp & Supplies	\$2,906.80	\$1,830.00	\$1,076.80
	Total expenses	\$46,095.64	\$48,703.00	-\$2,607.36
Summary	Total Income	\$73,650.72	\$47,949.00	\$25,701.72
	Total Expense	\$46,095.64	\$48,703.00	-\$2,607.36
	Balance	\$27,555.08	-\$754.00	\$28,309.08

Our first-quarter financial reports are all in. This summary shows the current versus budgeted positions for the major income and expense lines. Pledge income is very high because some members and friends choose to pay their entire pledge up front. Otherwise, the numbers are generally in line with the budget. We will share another update with the second-quarter reporting summaries when they become available.

Additional information is available from the [Treasurer](#) or at monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees. If this interests you, perhaps consider serving on the Board of Trustees. Reach out to the [Nominating Committee](#) for details.

Ministry of Radical Welcome

Pride Month

by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome



Creating a welcoming and inclusive community requires education, understanding, and a commitment to supporting all people. The Transforming Hearts Collective plays a vital role in helping communities grow in these areas by offering trans inclusion workshops that foster empathy, awareness, and meaningful dialogue. These workshops provide valuable opportunities for individuals, organizations, faith communities, and leaders to learn how to better support transgender and gender-diverse people. Our two hosts bring so much experience and information to present ways on how to show up for the trans community.

A trans inclusion workshop is important because it helps address misunderstandings and misinformation that often contribute to discrimination and exclusion. Participants gain a deeper understanding of gender identity, respectful language, and the challenges transgender individuals may face in everyday life. Through education and conversation, community members can build stronger relationships based on dignity, respect, and mutual understanding.

The Transforming Hearts Collective emphasizes the importance of listening to lived experiences and creating spaces where everyone feels valued and heard. They provide a great resource that helps to

inform our trans inclusion workshop. Their workshops encourage participants to reflect on their assumptions and develop practical skills for fostering inclusion in workplaces, schools, congregations, and community organizations. This knowledge helps create environments where transgender people can participate fully and safely without fear of judgment or discrimination.

In addition to benefiting transgender individuals, trans inclusion workshops strengthen the entire community. When people feel accepted and respected, communities become more connected, compassionate, and resilient. Inclusion promotes collaboration, reduces conflict, and helps ensure that everyone has equal opportunities to thrive.

By bringing a Transforming Hearts Collective workshop to our community, we take an important step toward building a culture of belonging. Education is a powerful tool for change, and these workshops provide the guidance needed to create a more welcoming environment for all people. Investing in trans inclusion is ultimately an investment in the well-being, unity, and future of our community.

Thanks!
Carol Underwood

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 organizing the offerings brought for Coffee Hour
- Set out items on the coffee cart
- Wash mugs
- 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*



Tending Our Grounds June 6

These Greenies did a lot of work in June.

Steve Smith dropped and cut up a dangerous, dead oak tree that was leaning over the "Oak Grove". Shout out to Steve for this great effort!



Peggy, with style, adding coleus to liven up these beds.



Karen and Xoey working on the ground planting beds left by Friendship Forrest.



Look at what's blooming on UUCG grounds.

Carolina Petunia is a native plant. You will see them scattered around the grounds.



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

by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space



Monthly Activity June 28, Mosquito Bucket of Doom!

We have had rain and the mosquitoes are out and about, looking for blood. After a good meal, female mosquitoes find a place to lay eggs. They like still water, a little on the scuzzy side for this purpose. The larvae hatch and start eating algae and infusoria in the water.

The larvae grow and metamorphose to become more blood sucking adults. But no! That is where the “Doom” part comes into play. The water is treated with mosquito dunks that release BTI. BTI is an abbreviation for a long latin name (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*).

Anyway, BTI is a bacteria that kills mosquito larvae. No poison! BTI does not attack any other organism. This solution is non-toxic, unless you are mosquito larvae and in that case you are probably not reading this.



Materials provided:

- 5 gallon plastic bucket
- 1 mosquito dunk, divided into 4 pieces and placed in a plastic bag (one piece lasts a month)
- A stick as an escape ladder for anything that falls in, or bees wanting to drink. This is also useful for any dragonfly larva that want to climb out and metamorphose

Added at home:

- Fill 1/3 full of water
- Some leaves or grass clipping to make the water biologically active.

Empty all standing water in containers or whatever around your residence. Then, egg laying critters will head for the provided bucket.

The buckets we used were plain white without logos and with a don't dunk your child warning. To identify these as being mosquito traps, we painted things on it, using the same set of paints we used on the toad abodes. We want the bucket to indicate meaning, and not another thing of water to dump out.

Green Team Movie Night August 28, 7PM - Saving Juliette

Juliette, Georgia, is a super cute, super small town. It is best known for the Whistle Stop Cafe where they filmed scenes from *Fried Green Tomatoes*. The town is on the bank of the Ocmulgee River.

Head north toward Flovilla and you can visit Indian Springs, which indeed does have a nice spring. People were filling water jugs believing the water was better than tap water. Hmm, there may be some truth to that as the movie will show.

While you are touring that area, head east and you can see Sac-O-Suds, which was the crime scene in the movie *My Cousin Vinny*.

A mile or so north is a very dramatic Lloyd Shoals

Dam, best viewed from the fishing pier. OK, so it was not in a movie, but it is really neat.

I enjoyed my little tour of this scenic rural area. Back on topic, head south to Juliette. There is Lake Juliette, nice for fishing, boating, camping, and cooling a massive power plant. Georgia Power Plant Scherer is the largest coal fired power plant in the U.S. and the largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the country. I have not seen the movie, *Saving Juliette*, however a huge coal powered power plant is environmentally nasty.

Saving Juliette is a local public television program presented by GPB.

Monthly Activity Schedule

These are held on the 4th Sunday of the month in the Treehouse, or on the deck if weather is nice.

- **July:** Frog Houses - short pieces of PVC pipes that tree frogs like to hide in.
- **August:** Water Sprouting Plants in Jars - Avocado, sweet potatoes, or cuttings from coleus or other plants.
- **September:** Native Plants - Share and learn. Karen Smith will be our knowledge expert.
- **October:** Bug Snug - A cozy arrangement of sticks and leaves that provide a place for bugs to overwinter.

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Thoughts for July

by Lydia Patrick, Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth



I, Lydia Patrick, will be stepping down from the position of Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth at the end of June. Stepping into this wonderful role for our beloved community will be our very own Dmitri Novak, who brings with him a new set of skills and wonderful ideas for guiding us as we continue to walk together and work on our principles of faith. It has been a joy to walk beside everyone at UUCG as we have explored what faith means to us and through us all. Every song, every response, every reading and reflection have given me seeds for my

own growth and journey in the faith we share. We Unitarian Universalists are determined to live with Love at the very center of our being and doing. Love is our fuel, our compass, it sustains and supports us, both in community and as individuals. Our core values of generosity, pluralism, interdependence, justice, equity, and transformation are the channels through which our love flows. And here at UUCG we use Curiosity, Courage, and Compassion to keep our Love open and grounded and growing.

-May it be so.



Choir Rehearsal

UUCG Covenant Choir Rehearsal will be on hiatus for the summer from June 2 through July 28. They will return to the Sanctuary on August 4.

Sweet MUUSIC Rehearsal

3rd and 4th Thursdays
6:30pm

The UUCG House Band, Sweet MUUSIC, will rehearse to support upcoming Sunday worship services. Musicians and singers of all skill levels are welcome to join, regardless of whether they wish to serve on Sundays. Bring your instrument of choice and make mUUSIC with us.

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

JULY PAGAN GUIDE



SUMMER KEEPSAKE

Collect flowers on your nature walks and from your garden. Commemorate your journey by drying them and framing them.

STORM, MOON, AND SUN

Here are some ways to use your nature blessed water:

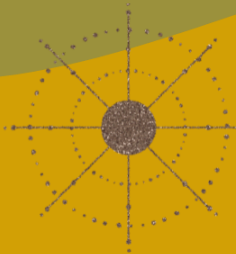
- as an offering
- to water your plants
- in your workings/spells
- in painting
- to propagate



** please don't drink if gathered outside**

SUN WHEEL

Create a sun wheel using 8 sticks of similar length. Put 4 sticks into a cross form and place the other 4 across the spaces to create a circle (see image on the left). Weave twine between each stick, creating stability and tying the wheel together. Decorate with dried herbs and flowers and use in your working or place near your altar.



SIMMER POT

- Strawberries for love and luck
- Blueberries for healing and peace
- Lemon for purification and the sun
- Mint for wealth and energy
- Vanilla (optional)



CUUPS at UUCG

CUUPS meets to discuss and experience many different pagan paths, while Sylvan Sanctuary delves deeper into the Druidic path. The two groups often work together and have much crossover in membership. CUUPS also joins with Sylvan Sanctuary to celebrate the eight solar holidays.

Check the [UUCG Calendar of Events](#) page to find our upcoming CUUPS events.

Please contact us for more information:
cuupsteam@uucg.org



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

Reach out to sharedministry@uucg.org.

Ministry of Connecting Within



It's a Process...

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within

"Some of us think holding on makes us strong; but sometimes it is letting go."

~ Hermann Hesse



I've been busy letting go lately. Over the years, I've filled my house with too many things. Perhaps this is not a problem for you, but I grew up with a mother who collected antiques. Our Saturdays were spent wandering around old dusty shops looking for hidden treasure. Having a home filled with countless, albeit sometimes useless, objects was completely normal to me. I've never quite achieved my mother's level of collecting, but I've given it a good try.

Even so, I find myself in the process of letting go. Oh, I've downsized before moving, and given away things that I no longer needed, but this feels different. This purge is driven from within. It's a desire for change, for space and for order. Repeatedly, I find myself wondering, "why am I holding on to this item?" The answers vary from sentimental to practical. I mean, surely, I'll need this thing someday.

Here at UUCG I'm also letting go. I'm stepping down from the Shared Ministry Council and the Coordinator for Covenant Groups position. I'm happy to say Lauren Greenway has agreed to serve as the Lay Minister for Connecting Within for the next two years. I know we will all benefit from her ministry. Thank you Lauren! The Coordinator position is still available, so if you have a desire to fill this need, please let Lauren know. The rotation of leadership is important for the health of our community. It's a visible way to draw the circle wider and even wider. Our congregation belongs to all of us, so I urge you to find a way, large or small, to help our community grow and flourish.

After all the purging, sorting, and disposing, the process of letting go leaves us with what we find essential in our lives. It's a hard process with great rewards, for, in the end, it leaves us with what is most valuable.

With Joy,
Lisa

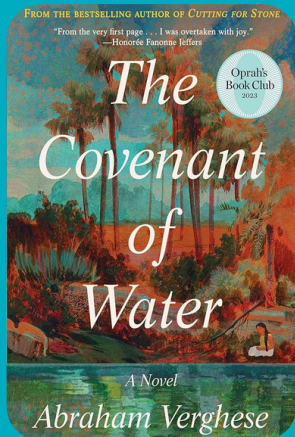
Book Group

Wednesday, July 22
at 7:00pm

[Online via Zoom](#)

July Selection:

The Covenant of Water
by Abraham Verghese



A shimmering evocation of a bygone India and of the passage of time itself, *The Covenant of Water* is a hymn to progress in medicine and to human understanding, and a humbling testament to the difficulties undergone by past generations for the sake of those alive today. It is one of the most masterful literary novels published in recent years.

[Read more here...](#)



Are you seeking an additional way of being present with our Beloved Community? Covenant Groups may provide the opportunity you are looking for! Small groups of eight to ten people who meet, create a sacred space, explore our monthly themes, listen and talk together are all a part of Covenant Groups. Trained, experienced facilitators are a part of every group meeting. Sound interesting? [CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

Ministry of Connecting Within

The Strength of Connection

Update for UUCG Zoom Users

Several groups and programs at UUCG use Zoom in order to connect with their members. **Due to recent security updates, their video meeting rooms now require either a waiting room or for users to enter a passcode in order to join.**

We will be switching most Zoom meetings to use the passcode **UUCG**. If you are experiencing any difficulty with using the Zoom meetings or have any questions, please email admin@uucg.org.

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.



If you need someone to talk with for emotional or spiritual support, please do call our Pastoral Care Voicemail Box: 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
July 1 & 15
10:00am



LOVE IS LOVE

ALPHABET SOUP
Monday, July 6
6:30pm



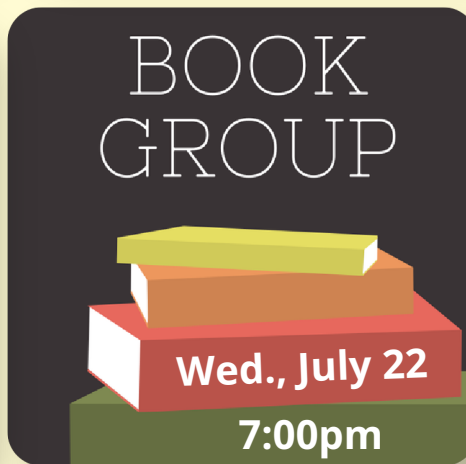
UUCG Men's Group

Saturday, July 11
9:00am



TAROT FOR TEENS

Sunday, July 19
11:30am



BOOK GROUP

Wed., July 22
7:00pm



Green Space Nature Activity

Sunday, July 26
12:30pm

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 - Currently on break and will resume in September.

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

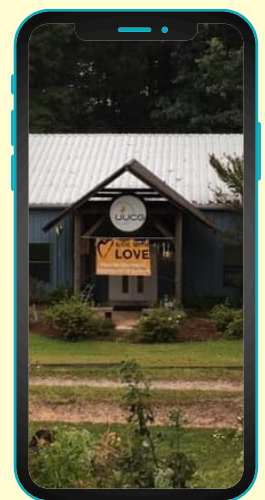
QUUest - Online: 3rd Fridays at 6:30pm, campaign for Adults

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

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

Yarns from the Heart - In Person and Online: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 10am
<https://zoom.us/j/98096623472>

**FOR MORE INFO CHECK OUT THE
CONNECTING WITHIN BULLETIN BOARD
LOCATED BESIDE THE LIBRARY ENTRANCE!**



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



RADICAL REIMAGINING

Reclaiming the American Dream

July 5 @ 8pm ET / 5pm PT
7pm CT • 6pm MT/AT • 4pm AKT • 2pm HT

Livestream via Zoom

Learn more + register:
[Ink.bio/s/uumfe/radical](https://ink.bio/s/uumfe/radical)



LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OP COMMUNITY FOOD BANK MINISTRY

Most Needed Food Items:

- Canned fruit/applesauce
- Cereal
- Snacks for summer lunch
- Pasta and pasta sauce
- Rice
- Corn
- Canned chicken
- Instant potatoes

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](#)

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

**The Co-Op will
be closed
June 27 - July 5**

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Widening Our Circle

 SIDE WITH LOVE



The Gathering

Fortifying Ourselves for the Long Road Ahead

ON HIATUS UNTIL AUGUST 10

As this country marks 250 years, we will examine the limits and possibilities of American democracy and our sacred call to shape a multiracial, interdependent democracy where everyone can thrive at Side With Love's monthly event to strengthen your spirit, make sense of the threats to democracy, and take meaningful action alongside others!

[Register to strengthen your spirit!](#)



The Woodlands

An all ages, monthly,
Trans* Spiritual Care Program

ON SUMMER SABBATH
UNTIL SEPTEMBER

- 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



Pilgrimage to the Grave of Wilfred Owen: Antiwar Bard and Poster Child for War's Waste

by Stephen Babb, *Resisting Fascism Team*

Recently, JoAnn and I visited the grave of arguably the greatest English-language antiwar poet of all time, Wilfred Owen.

Owen was killed a week before the Armistice at the age of 25 in an assault that was an exercise in bloody-minded stupidity even by World War One standards. Just as he had hit his stride as a poet and discovered his great theme in the colossal futility, waste, and needless suffering caused by war.

Owen had been ordered to lead his men in laying down a pontoon bridge across a canal – about the width of a swimming pool – in the teeth of withering, point-blank machine-gun fire from a German emplacement on the opposite bank.

Owen was killed while encouraging his men as they attempted to carry out this suicide mission.

Owen wanted badly to survive the war, which everyone knew was close to its end. He loved life, and the world lay open before him like an oyster.

Owen had gotten his great break when he met Siegfried Sassoon, a mentor who was everything Owen was not – aristocratic, tall, athletic, a published poet, a decorated war hero, and a debonair fox hunter and polo player. They met in a Scotland psychiatric hospital treating officers suffering from what we now call PTSD.

Sassoon, a brilliant, fierce antiwar poet in his own right, recognized Owen's poetic genius and encouraged him to apply it to baring the ugly reality of the obscene suffering that soldiers of all nationalities were enduring in the trenches – a reality most civilians didn't want to hear.

With Sassoon's encouragement, Owen composed about two dozen of the most scorching, heartbreaking antiwar poems that have ever been written. Sassoon also connected Owen with London literary movers and shakers, and lined up a publisher for an anthology of Owen's poetry. Owen even composed a preface for this book. He was on the verge of realizing his greatest dream – to be

recognized as a poet and to have a public platform for making his antiwar message widely heard.

Then, in a cruel twist of irony, Owen became the epitome of the waste of war which he wrote about, and this dream was snatched from his grasp. But Owen didn't die in vain. Sassoon published his anthology, and Owen's poetry drew a passionate following, which expanded dramatically during the worldwide movement against the Vietnam War.

The four-mile trail we took to visit Owen's grave began and ended at the humble "Forester's Hut", where Owens passed his last night with his men and wrote his last letter to his mother. The top floors of this hut have been converted into a beautiful memorial, but the basement remains as it was when Owens slept there. The trail follows the death march Owens took on his last day to the spot on the canal bank where he and his men were slaughtered.

Owen's body is buried beneath a modest headstone in Ors, France, alongside 59 of the fellow officers and enlisted men whom he loved as brothers and felt a deep responsibility towards – all snuffed out in a hail of bullets within minutes.

These are the last lines Owen wrote his mother:

"Of this I am certain – you could not be visited by a band of friends half so fine as surround me here."

Owen's mother received his death notice as Armistice bells began to toll.

We can honor Owen's memory by redoubling our efforts to ensure that NO mother ever receives such crushing news about their beloved child again as a result of a war of choice, whether that child is a soldier or a Gaza babe in arms.



Save the Date...



Association for **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MUSIC MINISTRIES**

July 29 – August 2, 2026
First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

**Let's make music together
in MILWAUKEE!**

Our host church is the beautiful and historic First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee. You should plan to arrive in Milwaukee by mid-day on Tuesday, July 28 or Wednesday, July 29 and plan to depart late afternoon-early evening on Sunday, August 2.

The conference will kick off with our Opening Celebration on Wednesday evening and sessions will begin Thursday morning, July 30. AUUMM Conference participants will take part in closing worship on Sunday, August 2.

**Click this page for conference
details and to register**

From the Editor



Know When to Hold 'Em...

by Jason Pfeffer, Office Administrator

When I initially saw this month's theme of Letting Go & Holding On, I was struck by the inherent contradiction of these two acts. If I'm letting go of something, then by definition doesn't that mean I'm not holding on anymore? The logical part of my brain loves picking apart philosophical ruminations.

I sat with it for a while, though. What experience in my life could possibly fit the idea of letting go and holding on?

The loss of a friend or loved one? No, I can't honestly say I ever really let go in that case. The pain of them leaving my life wasn't something I released...I just learned to accept it as part of me. And I cling to their memories greedily.

What about leaving childhood for adulthood? That's something more conceptual and open to an existential interpretation. But still no. I didn't leave childhood. I was forced out of it, kicking and screaming. There are plenty of childish things I do to thumb my nose at Father Time and his insistence I grow up.

This is a tough one. How can I write an article that delves into my own history to highlight this month's

theme when I'm clearly so bad at letting things go, while still maintaining some sort of grip on it? What's my jaw?

And like a candle in the dark, there's my answer.

Philadelphia.

I spent a good portion of my life trying to put my hometown behind me. The moment I became a legal adult, I searched for ways to escape. Philly and I were never on the best of terms. The pervasive sports atmosphere, the need to call out anyone for even the smallest social infraction, the near pride in keeping things dirty and smelly. There were many things the city of my birth and I did not see eye to eye on.

However, even living in a different state, I have not been able to fully shed my Philly skin. The moment I learned about a restaurant serving authentic Philly cheesesteaks, I made it a priority to go there. My periods of road rage still inspire enthusiastic hand gestures and loud vocalization of my thoughts on the quality of their upbringing.

So, Philadelphia. With one hand, I let you go. But the other is still holding on for that soft pretzel.

Attention Given to a National Crisis

July is filled with several important observances: Disability Pride Month, World Population Day, International Non-Binary People's Day. But there is one that is frequently overlooked...National Cell Phone Courtesy Month, founded in 2002 by Jacqueline Whitmore, a manners expert from Palm Beach, Florida.

























There's an epidemic of being subjected to one side of someone else's conversation while in a public space. Or, even worse, the phone is on speaker mode, with the volume turned up very loudly, and it's possible to hear everything!














Celebrate with these tips for cell phone etiquette:

- When with others, don't check your phone constantly for texts and emails. Concentrate on the people you are with.
- Set your cell phone to silent or vibrate when in a courtroom, theater, or any public venue.
- If you need to make a call which you know is going to get intense and emotional, save it for when you are somewhere private.
- Check your personal volume control. Everyone in your vicinity will appreciate your good manners in avoiding "cell yell"!

July 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	31	

	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
	Tending Our Grounds	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/Online
	Green Team Event	Environmental Justice-focused group, all are welcome.	In-Person/Online
	Sylvan Sanctuary	Oak Grove Sylvan Sanctuary Druid Ritual celebrating the Sabbats.	In-Person
	Book Group	Monthly book discussion.	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
	QUUest & QUUest Jr.	Dungeons & Dragons campaigns (adult & youth), registration required.	In-Person/Online
	"Good Trouble"	Put your UU Values and Faith in Action to effect change in society.	In-Person/Online
	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	Social Justice-focused discussion group, all are welcome.	In-Person/Online
	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
	Tarot for Teens	Engage with tarot as a creative tool for self-reflection and decision making.	In-Person

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

Jason Pfeffer

Office Administrator

admin@uucg.org | 770-717-7913

Tuesday (on-site): 10:00am-2:00pm

Wed. & Thu. (remote): 1:00pm-4:00pm

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

Third Sunday (on-site): 10:00-12:00pm

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

LaTreisha McKay

Bookkeeper

lmckay@uucg.org

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