



September 2026 Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

Table of Contents

[Worship in September](#)

[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](#)

[September Calendar](#)

[Staff Schedules](#)



Born into slavery in Georgia, Susie King Taylor escaped to Union forces in 1862, became the first Black army nurse, taught literacy to Black troops, and later penned the only memoir by an African American woman on the front lines.

Welcome to our exploration of Beginnings

Beginning is a big word in our culture. It comes with a lot of pressure. We are expected to be a hero of sorts: Clear about where we are going and courageous enough to get there on our own.

The beautiful life, the enviable journey, is the one that is mapped out from the start and never veers off track.

Mary Oliver, gets into this game of bold and brave beginnings when she asks, “What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” Though it’s a question that can sometimes feel more intimidating than invitational.

But what if we began our journeys differently? What if we allowed ourselves to start off with humility, not heroism? With our doubts rather than our certainty? What if it was ok for us to say out loud: “I’m not sure where I’m going? And I’m not sure I can get there on my own?”

Consider this: if we are brave enough to own our fear and need at the start of a journey, then we make space to experience that journey as our friend.

This lens opens space for us to imagine (or is it remember?) another possibility: that our most sacred journeys begin with a question, not a destination.

This is fundamentally different from our culture’s “keep your eyes on the prize” perspective. This is an orientation that believes the journey is about wholeness and unfolding, rather than striving and winning.



Worship in September

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: Beginnings

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



September 6th

From the Beginning

We love a good backstory. Whether it's an origin story, a creation story, or a prequel, our curious minds hunger for more. Why are these stories so important and what can we learn from them today?

Ian Van Sice (he/him), Worship Leader

September 13th

We Begin with Water:

Ingathering and Water Ceremony

So much begins with water! This Ingathering Sunday we celebrate Nourishing (our spirits), Transforming (our connections), and Blooming (together), all aided by water. Our Covenant Choir returns, and we welcome home a precious new gift. For our Annual Water Ceremony, please bring a small container of water from home, your travels, or other source. You'll add your water to our communal resources, and fill out a card describing the water's meaning for you. Is it about how you have grown or hope to grow this year? Is it in honor of a particular person or place? All ages are encouraged to participate!

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

September 20th

Faith Development is All We Do

Leaning into our identities as lifelong seekers and learners, this week we open our hearts and minds to the experience of exploring what we mean when we say that *everything* we do is Faith Development.

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

Christiana Fernandez McQuain (she/her), Worship Leader

September 27th

Begin Again

We often find ourselves facing new beginnings along our journey. Sometimes it is a job change, a new spice added to our list of favorite taste experiences, a new pair of walking shoes, a new drama series, or a new book. Some changes are easy and the startup is a positive one. Some new beginnings are a challenge and involve re-examining who we really are. We can also learn from our beginnings and let the fear of a new start dissolve in the process.

Lydia Patrick (she/her), Worship Leader

Programs

Sundays thru September

1st Sunday, 9/6

- Food Bank Collection

2nd Sunday, 9/13

- Potluck
- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts
- Volunteer Fair

3rd Sunday, 9/20

- Tarot for Teens
- Town Hall
- Resisting Fascism Team

4th Sunday, 9/27

- "Good Trouble"
- Green Space Nature Activity





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 [Worthy Now Prison Ministry Network](#).



WORTHY NOW
prison ministry network

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. The Worthy Now Prison Ministry believes that every person is worthy of love and justice just as they are; no one is disposable.



Ingathering Service: Water Ceremony

Sunday, Sep. 13

Let us welcome one another
back to blessed community.

Bring a small container of water to add to
our bowls for North, South, East, and West
before the service.

Monthly Potluck Lunch

After Worship Service on
Sunday, September 13

Our monthly potluck lunch
is being rescheduled to the
2nd Sunday in September.
Please save the date!

We will still have our Food
Bank Collection on
Sunday, September 6th.



VOLUNTEER FAIR

September 13
After Worship Service

Learn about this year's programs and events, and get connected
with opportunities to engage and to serve.

Already serving as a lead or contact for a group or program?
Reach out to cfm@uucg.org to let us know that you'd like table
space to share your info with the congregation!

Message from the Minister

Let's Begin with Purpose and Joy!

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)



"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

-- Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

Our bodies carry a lot of wisdom, and I'm on a quest to listen more carefully and trustingly to what my body has to tell me. So when my body unfurls like a blade of grass every time I remember my sense of purpose in a given situation, I believe it's saying, *"Yes, that's the path for you. You don't have to do it *all* in the midst of a hard problem, but you do have *this* to offer. Give it clearly, simply, passionately—and you'll feel joy as you live among all the others who are giving what they can."*

So here's a list of what makes me come alive, a list of my hopes and intentions for this year as your part-time parish minister:

1. How I **am** is as important as what I **do**. I want to bring awe and gratitude and savoring to this ministry of Love. I intend to be authentic and boundaried and transparent in all the good ways.
2. When I make mistakes, I want to be honest and humble, as well as curious, courageous, and compassionate. I envision a literal and figurative space we can create together where we will all be accountable for our mistakes and will welcome the growth they generate.
3. I intend to help you build a shared ministry system for pastoral care, so you are connecting and caring for one another more deeply and inclusively, and so you're not relying on just a few to offer this support.
4. I will bring my long experience and my big love for UUCG into supporting you and your Search Team as you seek your next minister.

5. I want to companion you as you claim UUCG's **identity** for these times. Is UUCG a sanctuary, a resting place? Is UUCG an engaged participant in our larger Unitarian Universalist movement? Is UUCG a community passionate about doing its bit for the good of the wider world through individual or collective actions? Is it one of these things, or more? And how do you want to live into this identity?

6. In the winter and spring, I plan to open a group of all different ages to look at Aging as a challenge, an opportunity, and a spiritual practice.

7. By the end of this congregational year, I want you to know that you are a Singing Congregation, eager to learn and happy to participate in music making in many different ways (including listening). In addition to helping our search team find UUCG's next choir director, I hope that we all encourage the growth of music among us as a way to embody not just our faith, but Life itself.

Having this (flexible, revisable!) clarity about my purpose lights a path through the dark woods of the unknown and uncertain that we're all living in. It sparks the joy of knowing why I am here.

This is what I wish for all of us this year, beloveds! A sense of purpose and the joy that comes with it. **Clarity about who we are and what is ours to do.** And trust in the deep wisdom we carry in our bodies, individually and collectively.

I love you!

Reflections



Preparing for the Water Ceremony, Sunday, September 13, 2026

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

The Water Ceremony is a much-beloved Unitarian Universalist ritual that originated with a gathering of women from all over the world, combining small contributions of water from each of their origins to signify the new community they were building.

Here at UUCG the Water Ceremony symbolizes the ingathering of each of our unique selves to launch our shared congregational year, like this:

1. We each—all ages!—bring a small amount of water from home, a place we have traveled, the UUCG kitchen sink, or other source. What really matters is what the water represents for you. Which of these descriptions of the Directions holds the most meaning for you right now?
 - **East:** New beginnings, birth, creation, inspiration / Direct experiences of transcending mystery that open our hearts and renew our spirits
 - **South:** Emotions, trust, faith, passion, playfulness, vulnerability / Sacred, secular, and scientific understandings that help us make meaning
 - **West:** Abundance, harvest, maturity, strength, transformation / The diversity which enriches our faith by which we are enlivened
 - **North:** Clarity, wisdom, death, silence, peacefulness / The religious ancestries we inherit

2. Bring your water to UUCG on September 13, or gather some when you arrive. Before the service or during the Music for Reflection, pour your water into the pitcher for the Direction you have chosen, and take an index card in the color of that Direction. Online participants, you can request that we pour water for you.

3. Write **LEGIBLY** on the index card, or for online participants, record the meaning of your offering in the chat:
 - Source of your water: _____
[**examples:** home, kitchen faucet, garden hose, place you visited, UUCG bathroom]
 - My water belongs in the _____
[Direction you have chosen] because it represents _____ [**examples:** something you have experienced; something you have learned; something that is most alive or present in your life right now; something you are bringing to this congregation this year]

4. When it's time in our Ingathering service, we will gather the cards and the chat and read them aloud.

This is what we bring to Beloved Community this year! This launches a new year dedicated to Nourishing Spirits, Transforming Connections, and Blooming Together.



From the Board



Message from the Board

by Ian Van Sice, Board of Trustees President



Summertime has turned the starwheel, and autumn is upon us. Autumn is a busy period for congregational life at UUCG. We have Ingathering, Pledge Drive Season, Budget Planning, the Ministerial Transition search, holiday events and lots of activities. As a member of this congregation, as a service leader, and as a musician, I look forward to our time together in worship, and to savoring all the wonderful opportunities to connect this new program year brings. As the President of our Board of Trustees, my attention has been thoroughly focused on our finances. As always, the Board's goal is transparency and clarity in all areas, but especially in our stewardship of the congregation's financial resources. To that end, I'd like to share with you an outline of the different activities over the next few months and an overview of what it takes to keep our "Blue Boat Home" afloat.

Keep an eye out for more specifics in the weekly eNews, Call to Connection, Facebook posts, and email alerts.

September 13th - 2027 Pledge Drive officially launches during Ingathering

September 20th - Financial Status Town Hall

October 4th - Congregational Business Meeting on Financial Status

November 1st - 2027 Pledge Drive officially closed

November 8th - 2027 Budget Town Hall

December 6th - Congregational Business Meeting on 2027 Budget

We've got a busy Autumn!

What does it take for UUCG to break even? Our budgeted expenses annually are pretty straightforward. We have the expenses associated with our Staff & Minister, those related to our building & grounds, and the costs that come from our programming. Here are what we have averaged so far this year in those areas each month:

	Monthly	Annualized
Staff/ Minister	\$12,837.20	\$154,046.40
Building/ Occupancy	\$2,013.00	\$24,156.00
Programs/ Operations	\$1,282.00	\$15,384.00
Expenses Total	\$16,132.20	\$193,586.40

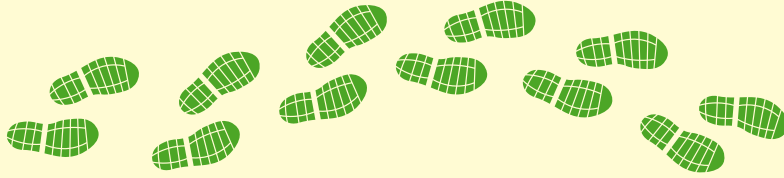
Congregational leaders will share so much more about these Goals and our Annual Vision of Ministry in the coming weeks. Each of these Goals has a few subthemes that will guide us in their pursuit. For our members and friends, I invite you to reflect on these Goals. The survey indicated a real hunger for additional programming in some areas. New programming is possible but it needs group leaders, program facilitators, etc. These roles are not solitary. Our staff and Lay Ministers provide invaluable support in developing and sustaining programming. If you feel strongly about a new program or group, perhaps you are the person to lead it!

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

Ministry of Radical Welcome

Sharing the Journey

by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome



One of the most profound and meaningful experiences I've had in this congregation is sharing my experiences. My personal journey wading through the waters of time and space and experience finding my way here with all of you is a wonderful thing. I feel so much of the love that happens in this congregation, where there's radical welcoming no matter who or what you believe in. You're still in a place where you are accepted.

I remember when I went to Sharing the Journey right after becoming a member and I remember sharing that I was at one point Christian, but then learned more about paganism and felt the call towards learning as many different things as I could. I love writing ritual.

Sharing the journey helped me find the course that I wanted to follow in my life - to make this congregation part of my journey. Part of doing that

is expressing, not only my journey, but also listening to the others that surround me. Which is why I adore being part of something so profound. I get to hear about everyone expressing where they are and where they're going to be and what they want to do. I'm so excited about this coming session.

The Sharing the Journey program is something I am excited to share with you, whether you be a new member or longtime friend or even a founding member. This can be something that I hope will inspire you to consider your journeys in many new and interesting ways, and how you can move your journey further as you share within community.

In November, when we have our potluck, we will begin the Sharing the Journey program with the congregation as a whole. We have so much opportunity to learn about each other and I am so excited to be part of it.

Sharing the Journey

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

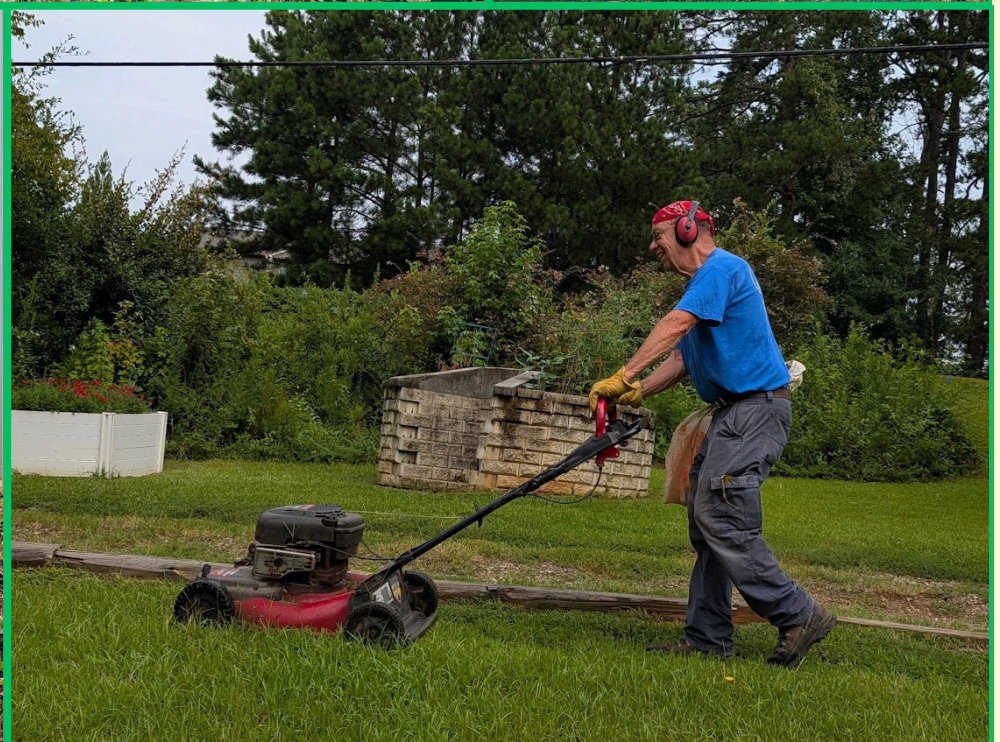


Keeping it Green: a Green Space Ministry report *by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space*



Tending Our Grounds August 1

Good turnout for Tending Our Grounds. Look at all these hardworking people!
Many thanks to all who participated!



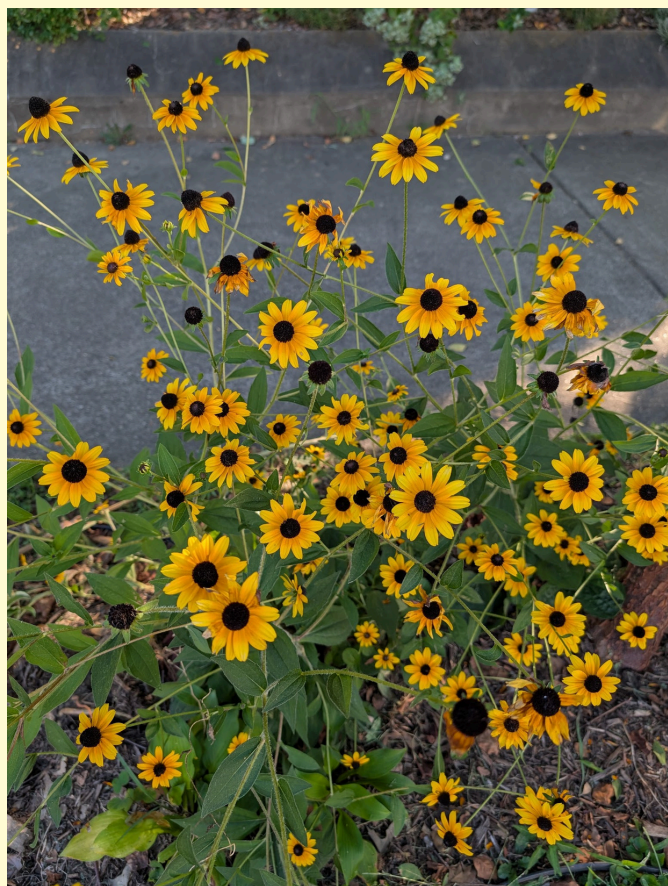
Ministry of Green Space

by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space



Look At What's Blooming in Louisville, KY

Not what is blooming at UUCG this month. I am on a trip. However, I did find a very pretty, native Brown Eyed Susan here



August activity: That's the Pits

Did you know you can sprout avocado pits in water to grow a nice house plant?

Lead by Karen Smith, we performed an experiment to learn about rooting things in water, seed starting, and other propagation tips.

I hope someone captured some pictures. If so, please send them along to greenteam@uucg.org.



Native Plants.....what?

by Karen Smith

Join us Sunday, September 27, for a discussion about native plants. Karen Smith will have a brief talk about what defines a native plant, the difference between a cultivar and a 'nativar', and why not all pollinator plants are created equal. Bring your questions and ideas for a lively discussion.

Fall is the best time to put in native plants for the following spring, so let's get started!

Tending Our Grounds 2026 Dates

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • January 3 | • July 11 |
| • February 7 | • August 4 |
| • March 7 | • September 5 |
| • April 4 | • October 3 |
| • May 2 | • November 7 |
| • June 6 | • December 5 |

Monthly Activity Schedule

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

- 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 good place for bugs to overwinter.
- November - no activity
- December - no activity

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

2026-2027 Program Year

UUCG is engaging with a new curricular series called **Woven Faith**, developed by the UUA and consultant religious educators. Provided in a monthly theme-based ministry format, the resources provide a wide array of ways we can engage around each theme. This curriculum is designed to engage the whole congregation and strengthen our connections to each other. We have faith this curriculum will help us ground in our UU values and theologies, help us hone the skills for right relationships in our congregation, and aid us as we do the work of justice in our wider community.

During this inaugural year, Woven Faith themes will focus on our shared Values. At UUCG, we will be integrating these themes with the Soul Matters monthly themes, allowing us to explore each more expansively as we live into our vision of Nourishing Spirits, Transforming Connections, and Blooming Together.

2026-2027 Monthly Themes

September: *Beginnings* (*Interdependence*)

October: *Courage* (*Living the Questions*)

November: *Healing* (*Covenant*)

December: *Awe* (*Pluralism*)

January: *Thresholds* (*Courageous Love*)

February: *Commitment* (*Equity*)

March: *Balance* (*Transformation*)

April: *Emergence* (*Generosity*)

May: *Play* (*Expressing Our Faith*)

June: *Horizons* (*Justice*)

We are
Nourishing Spirits,
Transforming
Connections,
and
Blooming Together

Curiosity. Courage. Compassion.



Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Faith Development: Tending the Flame

by Christiana Fernandez McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

Early in the summer you all were invited to fill out a survey asking for your thoughts on what you feel is going well at UUCG and what you would like to see change, grow, or be introduced. **Among the top responses to that latter question was mention of Faith Development programs - with a particular emphasis on RE (Religious Education for children & Youth).** I'm sure it will come as no surprise that I wholeheartedly agree!

A robust RE program is a sign of a growing church that values the participation of families. A thriving RE program contributes to the fostering of spiritual growth in our young ones, and serves to support the development of UU identity and deepen understanding of our shared Values.

Beginnings

Faith
Development
resources
for exploring
Beginnings

Check out Beginnings -
Soul Matters
September Playlist on
[YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).



I agree with all of you who have expressed that this is a priority for you, and should be for our Congregation. And, I need your help to make it happen here.

Since we share the belief that it is imperative that we create a welcoming environment and an age-appropriate learning space for all of our children and families, I invite those of you who are interested in working with our 5 – 7 year-old UUs to reach out to me at cmcquain@uucg.org.

A robust, thriving RE program cannot happen without the commitment and engagement of the entire congregation. I look forward to working together to build a program that serves all of us and the Congregation itself as we nurture the youngest generation of UUs.

O.W.L. Update

OWL at UUCG has been postponed until spring 2027.

In order for the program to run, we require at least 6 participants to be registered. Unfortunately we fell short of that threshold this season, and so will be postponing the start of the program until January of 2027.

Please watch this space in next month's GNUUs to see the new dates once they are scheduled and find a link to register.

If you know anyone who you believe might be interested in learning more about OWL with an eye toward having their age 12-15 year-old child participate, please share the information with them. A family does not need to be affiliated with UUCG in order to participate.

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.



Ministry of Spiritual Growth

On the Fool

by Shelby



When I first started reading tarot, The Fool struck me as a funny card. Numbered 0, which is in itself a little weird, the Fool card depicts a happy-go-lucky figure, accompanied by a yippy little dog at their heels, admiring the sky while they wander right off a cliff.

Facilitating the Tarot for Teens group has me thinking a lot about myself as a teenager. When I was 18 years old, I was sure I would marry my high school boyfriend. I knew I would be a theatre major and become an actress. I was vaguely certain that, like my mother, my grandmother, and all my aunts, I would be married to a man by 23 and have three kids by 30.

One quick look at my life at 32 makes it obvious that none of this came to pass. And thank goodness. I didn't fail to achieve my dreams - my dreams changed.

We like to think of most beginnings as shiny and intentional. We step into new school years, new jobs, and new homes with purpose and think that is where things start. We forget, almost universally, that the beginning of one thing is always the end of something else first.

The version of my life where I would be married to my high school sweetheart ended when I realized I didn't actually like him all that much. The version

of my life where I would be a professional actress ended when I realized I wanted (and still want!) to get old someday. The version of my life where I would become a wife and mother before I could rent a car ended when I realized I don't want to have babies.

Every beginning brought me new possibilities that I'm still exploring, and every ending had me grieving something: certainty, predictability, parental approval, a Tony Award (look, a girl can dream). But the grief was always better than the consequences of continuing. How many people end up married to spouses they don't like?

Realizing something isn't right for you can feel like stepping into the air. There's the glory of realizing you have new knowledge, and then the dread of realizing

you have to use it. The beginning isn't always the shiny new thing. The beginning is often the messy three-day breakup, the tearful visit to your RA's dorm room to change your whole class schedule, the gradual switch in your diary from lists of baby names to lists of cities to visit. Sometimes, the beginning is looking up from the bottom of the canyon and wondering where you go from here.

Whatever you're beginning this month, I hope you're holding yourself gently through the ending. Whether you're falling off a cliff by surprise or paragliding with purpose, I do hope you're admiring the sky.



Nurturing the Seeds of Spiritual Growth

Engagement Opportunities include:

Beacons, Worship Associates, Covenant Choir Singers,
Musicians, and Faith Development Program Facilitators

Click [HERE](#) to volunteer

We look forward to serving alongside you!

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

September Pagan Guide

Create a fall garland

Apples for wisdom
Oranges for positivity
Write your intention on bay leaves
Cranberries for resilience
Cinnamon for protection



September Self Love Simmer Pot

Add something you love about yourself with apple
Add something you hope for with allspice
Protect yourself with cinnamon
Remind yourself that you are resilient with cranberry



Create a kitchen witch!

This European tradition brings luck and protects your home. Make a poppet witch out of fabric, felt, yarn, or other materials and hang her in your kitchen.



Apples, apples, everywhere!

Apples have long been symbols of magic. Consider utilizing them in pies, soups, and other tasty treats. Did you know that apples:

- Are gateways to the Otherworld?
- Are connected to Freya and Aphrodite?
- Can be used in divination?



Creative offerings

1. Make a bouquet of leaves
2. Paint an acorn
3. Use felt and a pinecone to make a poppet or animal doll
4. Create a special herb blend
5. Make an extra cup of your favorite hot beverage



Alban Elued Saturday, September 19 6:00pm

The Autumnal Equinox, called Alban Elued, occurs around the 21st of September. Alban Elued refers to “Light of the Water” (OBOD). This is the second harvest festival and marks the end of the harvest. Night and day are equally balanced as the darkness of winter begins to move in. This is also the final sacred day in the Wheel of the Year.

Join the Sylvan Sanctuary for our annual Alban Elued ritual. For each ritual, considering bringing your staff or wand, an instrument, and an offering for Mother Earth.



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

Reach out to sharedministry@uucg.org.

Ministry of Connecting Within



Beginnings

by Lauren Greenway, Lay Minister for Connecting Within



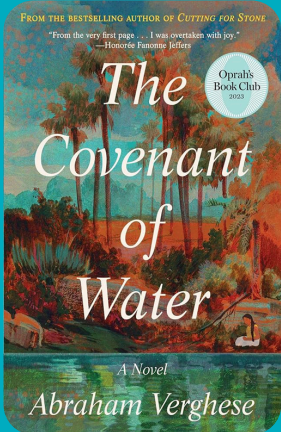
The theme for worship for September is Beginnings. Beginnings seem to me to be a starting point and are usually associated with a positive connotation. Beginnings are associated with new jobs, new schools, new homes, new friends, new life, lots and lots of new. It can be about change, growing up, growing older, finding yourself, and finding your community. To me, beginnings can be about all the opportunities and possibilities that newness brings. There's so much freedom in beginnings. The world can be your oyster, full of hope, joy, and life. They can bring energy to your soul that maybe you didn't even know you needed.

Book Group

Wednesday, Sep. 23
at 7:00pm

[Online via Zoom](#)

This month's 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.

[Find information about the current month's selected title here.](#)

But I think there is also a dark side to beginnings. We don't talk about that side as much. When people ask us how the new job is going, we say, "Great! I'm so happy to be making more money or to be doing something new." But we don't talk about the uncertainty that can come with beginnings. We don't discuss the ambivalence we may have about our new boss or the imposter syndrome we might feel upon getting promoted. Sometimes beginnings also mean leaving behind the "old." New beginnings can be about saying goodbye to something else, old jobs, old schools, old homes, old friends, old lives, lots and lots of the known and familiar. Sometimes those goodbyes are welcome and sometimes they stab you in the gut. Maybe you chose the goodbye and maybe you didn't. Maybe the beginning afterwards is much needed, but other times that new beginning can be unwelcome or even resented.

What does this mean for our insight on beginnings? Well, I think it means that we are able to hold both the light and dark side of beginnings. For me, I strive to understand that my loved ones may have mixed feelings about the "new" in their lives and that's ok. I may have that ambivalence about the "new" as well and that's ok. What matters the most is acceptance and the naming of our feelings during times of transition.



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. We're also looking for volunteers to fill our ranks of facilitators!

Sound interesting?

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

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.



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.

Stewardship

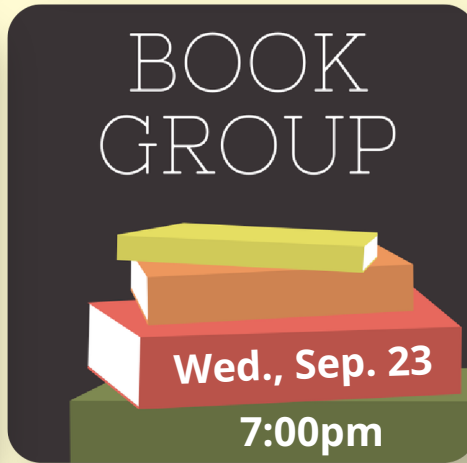
Unitarian Universalism calls us to the ideal of becoming a transformational force in each other's lives, in our communities, and in the world. Because we aspire to live into our faith beyond Sunday mornings, we are privileged to invest our time, energy, and resources in support of this greater mission. This is what stewardship is about.

Individual and congregational contributions are a gift to support UUCG, as well as the overall growth of Unitarian Universalism in the Southern Region.

You can contribute with a check gift made payable to UUCG, or with a [Venmo](#) or [PayPal](#) donation.

For more information, visit our Stewardship page at <https://www.uucg.org/connectingwithin/donate>.

Making Connections



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

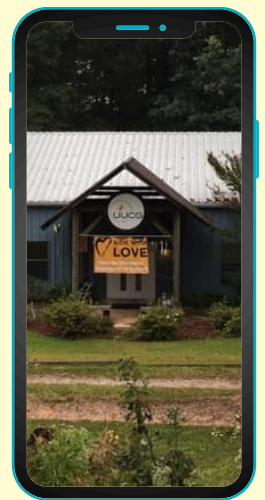
QUUest - Online: 3rd Fridays at 6:30pm, campaign for Adults

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



The King Center Presents: Beloved Community International Expo



Join The King Center September 12th, from 11am-5pm ET, for an experience you won't forget! The 2026 Beloved Community International Expo (BCIE) will be an all-encompassing experience for global citizens to unite in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the Beloved Community, where peace, belonging, and justice (realignment with love) can be achieved through Kingian Nonviolence (Nonviolence365).

In collaboration with the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Park and the Atlanta Consular Corps (representing more than 35 countries and other key stakeholders), The King Center's historic campus will be transformed into a "World House!" People of all ages can travel around the world without leaving "Sweet Auburn Avenue."

The Expo celebrates global culture by showcasing captivating performances, curated creative works, politics, food, music, dance and more, from societies around the World!



LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OP COMMUNITY FOOD BANK MINISTRY

Most Needed Food Items:

- Canned fruit/applesauce
- Canned tuna
- Cereal
- Instant potatoes
- Snacks
- Corn

FOOD DISTRIBUTION HOURS

MONDAY 5-7pm

WEDNESDAY 9am-noon

FRIDAY 9am-noon

***BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**

Most Needed Personal Care Items:

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

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

UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST

SIDE WITH LOVE

**the
gathering**

fortifying ourselves for the long road ahead

Declarations of Democracy - Solidarity

Monday, September 14
8pm ET / 5pm PT / 2pm HT

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 returns **SEPTEMBER 6**

BELONGING **JOY** **SPIRITUAL CARE** **REST**

New
this year: **SWEETGUMS**

A dedicated space for the partners
and spouses of trans people.

**The Woodlands is a monthly online spiritual
community rooted in Unitarian Universalist values**
for trans, non-binary, Two-Spirit, gender-expansive,
intersex, gender-blessed, and gender non-conforming
people – and those who love them.



5 p.m. Eastern
2 p.m. Pacific

Get more info & register:
bit.ly/uua-woodlands

[The Woodlands](#) is a monthly online gathering designed for trans children, youth, and adults —as well as the parents, caregivers, partners, and spouses 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.

[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



Inviting Our History's Ghosts To Breakfast

by Stephen Babb, Resisting Fascism Team

JoAnn and I recently visited memorials at two former Nazi concentration camps in Holland, Kamp Amersfoort and Orange Hotel. During World War Two, these camps held thousands of prisoners, including Jews, Soviet POWs, members of the Dutch resistance, Communists, and hostages, many of whom were deported to concentration camps or executed on the spot.

Both memorials raise unsettling questions, including:

- Why did some Dutch citizens collaborate with the Nazis?
- How would we have behaved in their shoes?
- What risks would we run to resist fascism?
- Where do you draw the line in compromising with evil?

This got me thinking about how poor a job the US does in memorializing OUR atrocities.

Take the Andersonville National Historic Site. It was belatedly established over the bitter opposition of Lost Causers on land that was only preserved thanks to local slave descendants. To appease neo-Confederate sensibilities, it's framed as a memorial to ALL American POWs in order to deflect attention from the specific atrocity that the Confederacy perpetrated at Andersonville, where nearly 13,000 Union soldiers perished in an open-air concentration camp in fourteen months from conditions strikingly similar to those in Gaza today.

A nearby obelisk erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) honors Captain Henry Wirz, the Andersonville prison commandant and sole Confederate official executed for war crimes.

Or take Stone Mountain. When we moved here, I found it bizarre that an allegedly kid-friendly amusement park doubled as a shrine to a triumvirate of traitors who instigated an insurrection designed to make slavery eternal which cost hundreds of thousands of American lives and nearly destroyed their country. I was even more shocked when I learned that the modern Klan was birthed on Stone Mountain's summit, that the Klan and the UDC were instrumental in bringing this white supremacist Valhalla to fruition, that the park included no factual historic exhibit to refute this propaganda, and that the park's status as a Lost Cause theme park was locked in permanently by

state law. It's like putting a family laser show at Kamp Amersfoort.

In her essay "Nothing Bad Has Ever Happened," the late Ukrainian writer/activist Victoria Amelina reflects on the shadow that Nazi and Stalinist atrocities cast over Ukraine's "bloodlands": "If gruesome murder were all it took to create a haunted house, then, where I come from, we'd have haunted villages, haunted cities, haunted countries."

That's equally true of America.

Amelina ends the essay on a hopeful note: "No city is doomed to be haunted forever. We break the spell, not when we banish the ghosts, but when we invite them to breakfast. A true home is a place where you have neighbors you know by name. This includes those who were killed and those who helped kill them, those who survived and those who risked their families' lives to rescue the hunted."

To get to this place, we have to grapple with the skeletons in our closets.

We've got our work cut out for us.

The Gwinnett Remembrance Coalition's memorialization of the 1911 Lawrenceville lynching of Charles Hale provides one potential model.

If we'd had honest memorials in place at Andersonville and Stone Mountain, we might have avoided Unite the Right and January 6th.

If we'd erected a Nakba memorial, commemorated Nakba Remembrance Day, and visited the Srebrenica Genocide Memorial in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we might not need a Gaza Genocide Memorial today to commemorate an even bloodier massacre of Muslims.

If we believed that Haitian and Syrian refugees' lives matter as much as Afrikaners', Stewart Immigrant Detention Center's population wouldn't be overwhelmingly nonwhite.

Without acknowledgment and accountability, our past sins will continue to roil our present and to jeopardize our children's future.

Save the Date...



UUCG

TRUNK TREASURES & TRADES

Date:
October 3rd
8AM-4PM

Location:
12 Bethesda Church Rd.
Lawrenceville, GA
30044

Community Sellers

Food Vendors

Crafters & Vendors

Volunteers

Register Here To Sell



SAVE THE DATE! UUCG TRUNK OR TREAT

Saturday, October 24th
6-9pm

Sign up here



From the Editor



Building a Beginning

by Jason Pfeffer, Office Administrator

Beginnings. There seems to be an endless supply of them. Just when you think you have your life settled, along comes another beginning, knocking on the door and asking if it can move in. As others have pointed out in this newsletter, some of them we invited over, while others can be unwelcome guests.

My personal collection of beginnings would make for quite an extensive list. However, my daughter (who fills several slots of that list) has asked that I write an article about her. Many of you have probably met Diana and are surprised that such an humble, soft-spoken individual would request having the spotlight turned upon her. Those who know her would also be aware of just how much sarcasm was packed into that last sentence. So, with the timeless wisdom of “be careful what you wish for” hanging in the air, here are my thoughts on a meaningful beginning she has experienced.

Like many of the youths in our congregation, Diana has already been through several new beginnings. Moving, changing schools, friends coming and going... these are things common to just about all of us. So none of them would be worth my effort to write about, or yours to read. Instead I will share a story that fills me with pride.

I’ve mentioned before how I’m basically just a large child with many years under my belt. One piece of evidence to support this is how I still love putting together Lego sets. When my daughter was barely out of toddler years, she would see me putting them together and beg to let her help me. I was hesitant, as I’m quite serious about my constructions, but I’d relent and give her some easy parts to assemble. Eventually, she began asking for her own sets, which delighted me to no end.

It began with Superhero Girl sets, cheerful little cafe shops, and other such banal types. Then she discovered that one of her loves, Harry Potter (problematic creator aside), had numerous collections. Soon she was requesting massive builds, different scenes, and even venturing out to include some Star Wars sets. Needless to say, my joy knew no bounds at this point. Our display spaces, on the other hand, were becoming few.

Thus we filled our home with another beginning (in this case bother literally and figuratively). While it seems like such a small thing, it’s one that is bright and decorative and helps keep our daughter disconnected from a screen for a while. The kind we can always do with more of.

A Note from Staff

by Christiana Fernandez McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

As you know, we have migrated our email system - including all staff emails and group email lists - to a new service. **There are some changes that we feel you all as users should be aware of.**

On the new email system, each group list is required to have an “owner” who receives all messages sent to the list. Jason and I, as administrative/program staff serve as “owners” on all lists, which enables us to moderate messages and filter out SPAM as necessary. The email addresses we use as “owners” serve as an archive - in other words, we are not monitoring communication or reading all of the emails that are received; they do not come directly to our main

inboxes. We do want you all to be aware, however that - and this is what is different - **we will have the ability to see all messages that are sent through the UUCG group email lists.**

In the interest of full transparency we thought it important that you be notified of this change in the system.

If you have any questions, concerns, or want to offer feedback, please reach out to either of us at any time. Thank you.

[Email Jason](#)
[Email Christiana](#)

September 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 SoUUup	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
	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	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
	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

Christiana McQuain

Coordinator of Family Ministries

cmcquain@uucg.org

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

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

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

Jason Pfeffer

Office Administrator

admin@uucg.org | 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

Janese Bradley

Facilities Maintenance

Friday evenings

Sunday afternoons

LaTreisha McKay

Bookkeeper

lmckay@uucg.org

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