October 2026
Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

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Rep. John Lewis experienced physical assaults and arrests while participating in civil rights demonstrations, including the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965. He helped shape the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965).

Welcome to our exploration of Courage



In addition to the heroic acts of courageous, prophetic people that alter history, there are also the daily choices that prevent history from altering *us*. Bending the arc of the universe toward justice deserves praise, and so does the ordinary work of integrity, of not allowing *yourself* to be bent. There is courage in doing, and there is also courage in being.

We need to make room on the stage for common acts of courage:

- The bravery of embracing your beauty even when it doesn't fit the air-brushed images surrounding us.
- The courage of calling out microaggressions that impact many of us daily.
- Resisting the persistent seduction of status and stuff.
- Turning down that drink one day at a time.
- Making yourself get out of bed when depression tells you to stay.
- Holding your partner's hand in public.

There are dozens of ordinary acts of bravery we embody every day.

The bravery that makes it into the history books may save the world, but it's our ordinary everyday courage that lends each other strength. Watching someone else make it through another day helps us endure. Witnessing someone else confront bigotry allows us to bravely be more open about who we are. Courage doesn't just arise from within; it also arises from the connections between us.

Together this month we explore the second "C" in UUCG's mission - Curiosity. Courage. Compassion.

Worship in October

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

October 4th
Courage in the Face of Uncertainty

From the moments we humans began to evolve, we have faced uncertainty about how we are to live and whether we will survive. This Sunday, we turn toward our fears with curiosity, we wrestle with one of the world's most devastating crises, and we find our way toward sustainable courage, hope, and action.

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

October 11th
Courage: Doing Our Heart
A Service of Compassionate Presence

Asking hard questions takes courage. As we gather around in a healing circle of Compassionate Presence, we ask: what kind of village will we be for each other.

Bob Patrick (he/him), Worship Leader

October 18th
We Are Already Brave…

In this participatory service for all ages, we rediscover all the places where we're already acting with courage–like the very fact that we showed up today! Let's see what happens when we link our courage to each other's!

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

October 25th
Again and Again: A Service of Courage, Remembrance, and Healing

Healing is not a destination. Grief is not a straight line. Courage is not a single act. Like water, we return. Again and again. Join us for our annual Ritual of Remembrance and Samhain Service.

Candice Carver (she/her), Worship Leader

Programs

Sundays at 12:30pm

1st Sunday, 10/4
- Food Bank Collection
- Potluck
- Congregational Business Meeting

2nd Sunday, 10/11
- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts

3rd Sunday, 10/18
- Tarot for Teens
- Resisting Fascism Team

4th Sunday, 10/25
- "Good Trouble"
- Green Space Nature Activity



Worship and More

Blessing of the Animals

Saturday, October 17
10:30am





Give Away the Plate

Each quarter the Give Away the Plate Committee selects an organization from among those nominated by the congregation 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 fourth quarter of 2026 is: **Science for Georgia**

Science for Georgia is a 501(c)3 non-profit that works to ensure Georgia understands, values, and engages with science.

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.

They are dedicated to bridging the gap between scientists and the public through training, outreach, and advocating for the responsible use of science in public policy. There are evidence-based best-practices that can create positive change around climate change, food security, health, etc. all of which disproportionately affect BIPOC communities. Some current issues they are actively engaging with include: the invasion of data centers into our local communities, rising electricity costs, gas pipeline expansions, and environmental health and justice.

Message from the Minister



Fear, Curiosity, and Courage

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

Last week, on one of my favorite podcasts, I heard a quotation that has stuck with me. When the podcaster asks this woman—she is in her 30s, has young children, and is living with cancer—what has changed in the five years since she was diagnosed, she says:

"Now when I feel fear [about the illness, about dying], I get curious."

Instead of the fear overwhelming her, this person turns *toward* the fear and asks: "What does this fear want to teach me?" Each time she changes her perspective on her fear, she calms her nervous system and reclaims her agency. She can't control everything, but she always has some choice about what to do and how to be. As a result, she feels a renewed connection to life and to everyone around her. What a wonderful practice for these times!



In recent weeks all the terrible things in our world caught up with me, and they left me almost drowning in fear. Most of us go through these cycles: We finally find our grounding, we focus on our path, we carefully limit the news we let in—and then something breaks through, and that tide of fear swamps us: The midterm elections. Fascism. Climate destruction. AI. Our children's future … our children's present! Ethnic cleansing, genocide. The personal stresses we're carrying. So much suffering. Am I doing enough? Am I doing anything? Just writing out this list activates my nervous system!

It takes courage to turn toward these fears and ask, with real curiosity and openness, What are you trying to teach me?

Here's what my curiosity has offered so far:

* Fear takes over when I feel stuck and powerless about any part of life. But—is it really true that I am stuck and powerless? When I turn the light of curiosity on just about anything, I too am reconnected with my creativity and agency. There's always a way forward. Especially if I know I'm not alone.
* My amygdala, with its all-or-nothing thinking, says that since I don't have the power to change the things that most need changing—war, climate destruction, fatal illnesses—then I'm fooling myself to think that any of my small actions matter. Do I really believe that? No. History, and my own experience, and our faith demonstrate that small actions, combined in and across communities, add up to big changes.
* The turn from despair to hope always comes when I connect with others—in person or through their stories. Stories of resilience—and the art being made—by those in the very midst of pain. Stories of communities forming, united by love and purpose.

This summer I made some art in response to my fears. As I worked with a square of linen, some bright acrylics, scissors, and thread, a story of survival began to emerge, a connection to humans' fierce determination to carry Life forward. You'll find a picture of this piece of art here in this GNUUs. It's called "Nothing Is Wasted."

I love you! Please join us in worship this month to explore how we, in community, can build our courage!

Reflections

September Memories

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

Even as we lean into the month to come, let's carry forward memories from the past month too. Here are a few photos of when UUCG lived this year's Vision of Ministry:

"We are Nourishing Spirits, Transforming Connections, and Blooming Together."













Top row, from left: At Ingathering, Doug and Pat Beers presented UUCG with a gorgeous new glass chalice;
For the Autumn Equinox, Sylvan Sanctuary brought its annual Spiral Ritual of Balance, asking what "balance" means for us as we move into the darker half of the year;
At the Celebration of Life for our member Bruce Leonard, we honored the wholeness of a life dedicated to peace, health, and the diminishment of suffering.
Bottom image: Members of the Muslim community showed up to celebrate their friend Bruce's life and to recognize UUCG's embracing of them.

From the Board

What Does UUCG's Income Look Like

by Ian Van Sice, Board of Trustees President



Our income sources include pledges, rentals, the cell tower lease, fundraisers, and half of the offering collected most weeks. The cell tower lease is a fixed amount. The others are variable based on what type of tenant we have, if any, and our congregation's capacity to pledge/donate/fundraise.

Reflecting on the last few years:

- The cell tower lease is fixed at just under $16,000 per year.
- 2026 Pledges were $132,000 and we are tracking close to that with $93,279 received as of the end of August.
  - 2025 Pledge Income was $105,000
  - 2024 Pledge Income was $112,000
  - 2023 Pledge Income was $103,000
- We expect $2,000-3,000 for UUCGs portion of the weekly offering.
- Fundraiser income is hard to anticipate. We currently have $6,000 set aside for 2027 from the Spring Auction.
- We don't currently have a long-term tenant relationship, so this will be unlikely to factor into our 2027 budget unless that changes.

Add these all up with 2026 Pledge numbers as a baseline and we get:

2026 Pledge	$132,000.00	Actual Pledge will vary, for example only
2026 Fundraisers	$6,000.00	Held for 2027
Cell Tower Lease	$16,000.00	
Offering	$3,000.00	Projected
Total	$157,000.00	Potential 2027 Income

Recall from last month's article that our 2026 Expenses are expected to fall in the $195,000 - $200,000 range. Maintaining our current form of congregational life will mean modest increases in overall costs due to rising costs in general: cost of living increases for staff, increases in utilities, etc. This leaves a projected gap of $40,000 - $50,000. A tenant alone will not bridge this gap completely. Our 2027 Pledge Drive Goal of $175,000 would meet these expenses without a tenant.

We want to find a tenant that is a good fit. That means a good values-match, an alignment of scheduling and space needs, and respect for our building and staff. There are priorities above the highest possible rent. The Board continues to search for a good fit and welcomes suggestions and referrals.

Over the next few months, we will propose a budget that reflects our anticipated income. Pledging is the primary method by which we can sustain the level of staffing we've enjoyed this year. The budget will be realistic. Reducing staff hours is the only way to significantly reduce expenses. This Pledge Drive determines if we can hire our next Minister at the beginning of the next program year. Stay tuned for additional communication as the months progress.

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

Nourishing Each Other - Blooming Together



UUCG 2027 Pledge Drive

October is National Book Month



In celebration of National Book Month, **members of UUCG's staff and leadership teams were invited to offer recommendations of books that they recommend to the congregation to read.** The criteria was expansive - anything from "your favorite book" or something you've read recently that you enjoyed, to a book related to the theme of the month or to Unitarian Universalist values.

Most of these suggested titles can be found at the Gwinnett Public Library. Happy Reading!

Staff recommendations

Rev. Nancy: *The Weight of Ink*, a novel by Rachel Kaddish:

In addition to the vivid writing that made me hungry to keep reading and glad that the book itself is hefty in length, I love this book for its belief in the power of words; its fierce female lead characters breaking boundaries in their fields; its time-traveling stories shedding light on modern-day academia and on the 17th-century Jewish community in London(!); and its portrayal of a spiritual journey that reminds me of our own Unitarian Universalist truth seeking and departure from mainstream religious dogma. This book satisfied me in mind, heart, body, and soul.

Jason: *The Girl with All the Gifts*, by M. R. Carey

I love a good zombie story. The well-written ones hold up a mirror to society and show us what it means to be human. The Girl with All the Gifts does this by blending sensitivity and compassion, while driving home the lengths people are willing to go to in order to "save the world".

Stephen: *The Comfort of Crows*, by Margaret Renkl

Fifty-two chapters that follow the creatures and plants in the author's backyard over the course of a year.

Miriam: *The Wizard of Oz series***,** by L. Frank Baum et al.

This has been my absolute favorite since I was a little girl and I reread all of the books every chance I get. The books are so much more complex than the movies, or musicals allow and there's a lot to learn and enjoy in them.

Janese: *Amelia Bedelia*, by Peggy Parish for children

Percy Jackson & The Olympians: Lightning Thief, by Rick Riordan for teens and adults

Leadership Recommendations

Ian Van Sice, Board President: *Martin Van Buren and the American Political System*. Cole, D. B. (1984). Princeton University Press.

I love US History, Politics, and Biographies. Though a little academic, Donald B. Cole's single volume biography of our 8th President, Martin Van Buren, is a personal favorite in these genres.



Recommendations from the Green Team

Xoey: *Something in the Woods Loves You*, by Jarod K. Anderson is an inspiring memoir and nature-writing blend that explores how the natural world heals emotional and mental pain.

And also, *Dungeon Crawler Carl,* a literary RPG with clever social observations

Laura: *Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth* is a powerful collection of essays edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee that connects our modern ecological crisis to a spiritual forgetfulness of the Earth's sacred nature.

Announcements

A Call to Lay Ministry: Opportunities to Serve

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

UUCG's team of Lay Ministers, with the support of the Minister and the Coordinator of Family Ministries, serve on the Shared Ministry Council. They help envision, coordinate, and grow the five main ministries of this congregation: Radical Welcome, Green Space, Spiritual Growth, Connecting Within, and Connecting Beyond. Lay Ministers make deep connections with each other and their teams; they grow in leadership and understanding of our faith; and they make an immense contribution to the health of our community.

UUCG has the healthiest Lay Ministry model of any congregation I've known in my 25 years of ministry!

We have two openings for Lay Ministers right now:

- Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth
- Lay Minister for Green Space

Our **Lay Minister for Spiritual Growth** will be someone who loves and wants to nurture the ways in which we help each other to grow spiritually through Worship Services, Faith Development programs, book discussion groups, and more.

Our **Lay Minister for Green Space** will be someone who loves our sacred grounds, cares deeply about environmental justice, and wants to foster a deeper love of the natural world in all ages.

Do you see *yourself* in either of these descriptions?

Serving as a Lay Minister means engaging in lively online monthly meetings, working with other volunteers, communicating with the congregation about upcoming events and opportunities, and being a part of creating the collaborative Shared Ministry that helps our congregation to thrive.

You can read more about these roles here: https://www.uucg.org/about-us/our-leaders/ministry-council/

If you are interested in one of the open Lay Minister positions, please contact Christiana at cfm@uucg.org, and we will tell you more!



Shared Ministry

UU Shared Ministry is centered on the core belief and practice that the work, leadership, and spiritual care of a congregation belong to everyone in the congregation.

Ministers, professional staff, and lay leaders (volunteers and Board members) work together as inter-dependent partners, supporting one another's spiritual growth and the health of the broader community.

Ministry of Radical Welcome



Looking Ahead

by Carol Underwood, Lay Minister for Radical Welcome

Sharing the Journey

We hold a workshop program seasonally to help interested seekers learn more about Unitarian Universalism, to understand the benefits of engagement as well as the privileges and responsibilities of membership at UUCG, and to help people find meaningful ways to become involved in the life of our congregation.





We will be hosting our **Community Thanksgiving at UUCG on Thanksgiving Day.** All are welcome to join us for this joyous feast.

Bring a dish to share with everyone. Doors will open at noon to allow for the food and space to be prepared. Dinner will be served at 4:00pm.

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 September 5

OK, so most people had better things to do on Labor Day Weekend and DragonCon!

Still, the grass was cut.

Next month, October 3rd, we will be planting some shrubs in front of the portico. We are planning on dwarf yaupon holly. North America's only native caffeinated plant! Yes you can make tea from the leaves. No, you cannot eat the berries.



Example of a yaupon holly

Tending Our Grounds Schedule

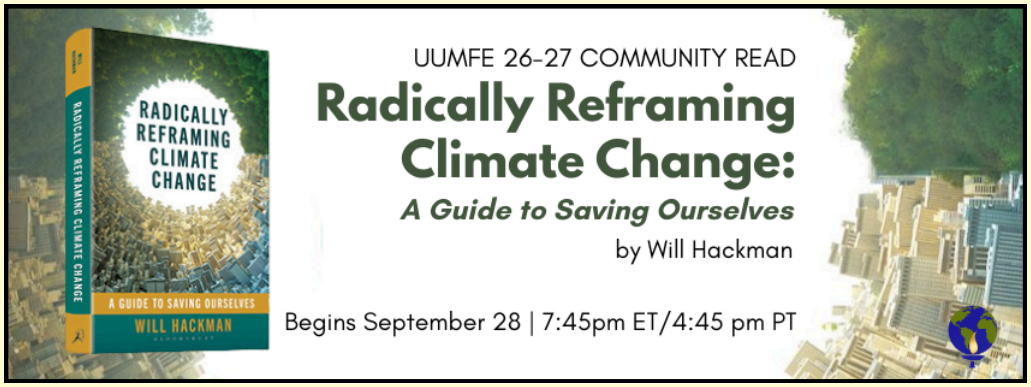
Oct. 3 - Nov. 14 - Dec. 5

Look What's Blooming



A Red Spider Lily. This plant is always a surprise, even called a surprise lily. There is no sign of the plant at all, then it just pops up in September with these amazing blooms. It is a non-native perennial. An unexpected treat.

UU Ministry for Earth



We're one week out from our first **Community Read** meeting and there's **still time to sign up**! We'll be reading *Radically Reframing Climate Change: A Guide to Saving Ourselves*, by Will Hackman.

SIGN UP HERE

September Activity 9/27: Native Plants...what?

Led by the extremely knowledgeable Karen Smith, this was a very good activity. Karen talked about native plants' why, how, and what. She also shared some seeds - plant knowledge and free seeds! There was 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. Fall is the best time to put in native plants for the following spring, so let's get started!

October Activity 10/25: Bug Snug

October will be the last Green Team activity for the year. We'll skip November and December so people can enjoy holidays and the Brave's playoffs.

For October, we will be doing "Bug Snugs". Yep, we want to give the tiny wild creatures safe areas to hibernate or whatever they do in the winter. This is a new concept for me, but Hannah will be leading the effort. The image is from a master gardener; so it's a real thing!



Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Faith Development

Christiana Fernandez McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

"We remember that holiness has never belonged only to the mighty or the certain,
but to the vulnerable, the weary, the seekers,
and to all who dare to love in difficult times."

~ excerpted from the prayer *We Are Bearers of Light*, by Rev. Aaron Payson

This month as we explore the theme of Courage, I invite you to *feel* for a moment.

I chose the above quote for reasons that are probably obvious - as Unitarian Universalists we are decidedly seekers, as human beings we are inherently vulnerable, as Americans we are undoubtedly weary, and certainly we are living in difficult times. I feel compelled to take this moment to remind you all - to remind myself - that holiness does indeed belong to us. Even as you may feel imperiled, knowing that you are whole and holy is your birthright.

Sometimes it takes courage to remember that. But, since you are remembering it now, I invite you to ask yourself, what is it that you dare to love? What is so deeply important to you that it stirs you to action in support or defense of it? And how does naming it make you feel?

I look forward to this month of exploration.

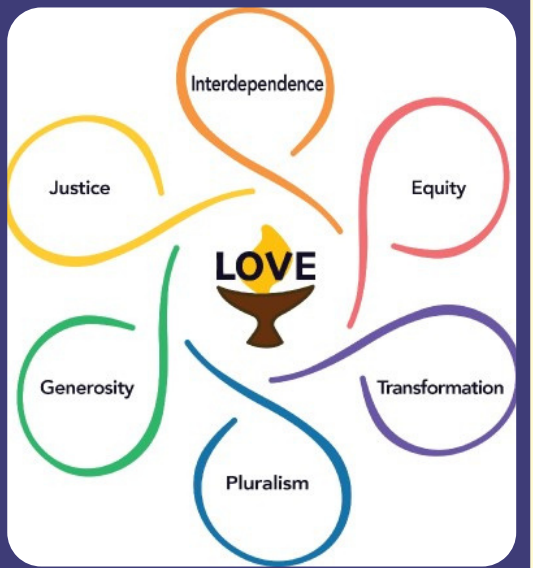
~ Christiana

Courage

Faith Development resources for exploring Courage

Check out Courage - Soul Matters October Playlist on YouTube or Spotify.

YouTube Spotify



Belief Explorers

Sunday, October 17th at 12:30pm
Cognitive Behavior Compassionate Training



Compassion is the warm-hearted concern that arises when we witness others' suffering and feel motivated to relieve it.

CBCT teaches us that we can tap into it wherever we are. Even ordinary objects carry meaning and associations that remind us of supportive moments and memories. They can serve as comfort when we feel upset or sick and bring joy or warm-heartedness to a difficult or average day. As we connect to compassion in this way, we can uncover its meaning, presence, and value in our everyday lives.

Come to our Belief Explorers gathering on Sunday, October 17th at 12:30 PM for a lively discussion on the importance of Compassion in our lives.

Facilitated by Barry Heath

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

Hecate at the Crossroads: A Pagan Reflection on Courage

by Candice Carver

Ah, October. Welcome cooler weather, pumpkins, pumpkin spice, and everything nice. Except for that little realization that somehow the year is already three-quarters of the way over. How did that happen?

For many Pagans, October is a season of reflection. As Samhain approaches; the Wheel has already turned toward its darker half, we naturally begin looking backward. What have we accomplished? What have we learned? What are we ready to leave behind?

But for me, it's the time of year when Hecate comes into view.

Hecate; the Greek Goddess associated with the night, the moon, magic, supernatural, and the crossroads, reminds me to look at the crossroads in my own life: those unsettling places where paths lead somewhere, but I cannot see where.

I find her presence deeply comforting and call on her for guidance more often during this time of the season.

There are many gods and goddesses associated with crossroads across the entire world. I find it fascinating that so many traditions recognize the crossroads as a place of transition and possibility. Hermes, the Greek god of travelers, roads, boundaries, and communication, reminds us that crossroads can be places of movement and connection.

The Roman god Janus, with his two faces looking backward and forward, embodies the threshold between what has been and what is yet to come.

In Yoruba tradition, Èṣù is associated with roads, crossroads, communication, and the movement between human and divine realms. In Haitian Vodou, Papa Legba is a gatekeeper between worlds, opening the way for communication with the lwa. Japan has several traditions surrounding crossroads and boundaries. Chimata-no-kami protected pathways, crossroads, and travelers.

In Chinese Folk Traditions, Shígan̆dāng is not a deity but a protective stone marker placed at intersections, corners, T-junctions, and other vulnerable locations to ward off harmful influences and misfortune.

Across all these beliefs and traditions, the crossroads becomes more than a place where roads divide or split. It represents the courage to make a choice; either physically, mentally or spiritually. It is a place where things change, and where we must decide which way we want to venture down next. This takes a lot of courage.

I often wish spirituality would simply tell me which road to take. I want a sign. A map. Maybe even a divine GPS.

Instead, I learn to appreciate the choices I have and the courage it takes to make them.

Perhaps Hecate doesn't need to point me toward the "right" path. Perhaps she simply reminds me to stop, look, listen, and recognize that I am capable of choosing, and knowing that spirituality doesn't always give us answers; sometimes it gives us the courage to live faithfully with the questions.

At a crossroads I may not know what comes next, but I can take the next step, and for now, that is enough. The year may be three-quarters over, but the wheel keeps turning.

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 Connecting Within

Courage

by Lauren Greenway, Lay Minister for Connecting Within



When I heard that the topic for worship for October was "courage," the first thing I thought about was the 12-steps. I'm referring, of course, to the 12-steps of Alcoholics Anonymous that has been adapted over the years for other types of addictive behavior as well, such as narcotics, sex, gambling, overeating, etc. In 12-step programs, there are principles behind each step that are supposed to help you consider the value or virtue that you are striving for while completing that step of the recovery process. "Courage" is the principle associated with Step 4, which is "Made a fearless and searching moral inventory of ourselves."

Courage isn't just about standing up to other people or injustices that you see in the world, but it can also be about looking at yourself. Courage is both an inward as well as an outward process. In the 12-steps, one is encouraged to look at their flaws, defects, and resentments towards others. The whole point is to face what you fear about yourself. And I really think at the core that is what courage is. Facing your fears, whether they are outward or inward. Standing up for what you think is right, even if it means facing down parts of yourself that make you want to run screaming.

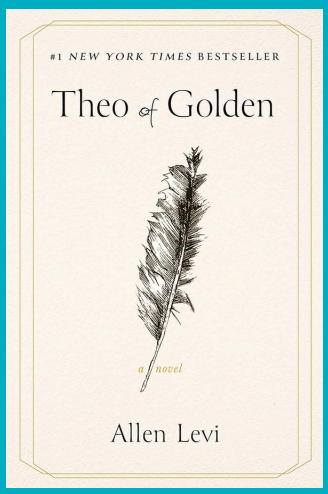
When I worked in an addiction treatment center, it became common knowledge that if someone was working on their Step 4 that they were going to be a bit raw emotionally. I can't count how many times someone told me that Step was "kicking their butt." So, in my role, I tried to be reassuring and supportive that looking at yourself was worth it in the end. And that there would be an "end" at some point. But in 12-step programs, you don't ever really stop working the steps. Yes, you may move from Step 4 to Step 5, but inevitably you work your way back around to each of the steps over and over again. Once you finish the 12th, you start over again at 1. You must have the courage to look at yourself multiple times, at different points in your life and sobriety. So that courage that is implemented in Step 4 circles back around several times if you have long-term sobriety.

And I think this process that is executed in 12-step programs is a perfect metaphor for life in general. Even if we aren't in recovery, how many of us have had to face our fears, our flaws, and our defects over and over to reach new levels of growth? Isn't it true that personal growth never really stops and there are always new things to learn? So that is what I invite you all to process and consider this month. The need for courage comes up over and over again in our lives because the path to enlightenment, personal growth, heaven, zen, whatever we want to call it, never really ends.

Book Group

Wednesay, Oct. 28
at 7:00pm
Online via Zoom

This month's selection:
Theo of Golden
by Allen Levi



A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, Theo of Golden is a beautifully crafted novel about the power of creative generosity, the importance of wonder to a purposeful life, and the invisible threads of kindness that bind us to one another.

Find information about the current month's selected title here.

Ministry of Connecting Within

The Strength of Connection

Congregational Communication Guidance

In 2026, the *Resisting Fascism Team* requested the *Communications Team* to provide guidance in non-partisan communication for UUCG groups. As we worked on this, we connected with UUCG staff, leadership at UUCG, and guidance documents from the UUA. The board took on the task of the legal requirements for what representing UUCG could mean as well and provided additional clarity in delineating roles. The linked document provides guidance for folks when representing UUCG in the wider community, and the *Communications Team* feels it also provides good guidance for all communications in the current political environment.

Please know we are not saying what you can or cannot say. It is something to keep in mind that we are a faith that does take on politics and power in much of what we do. Keeping in mind our values can help guide us, and this document just gives some aid in helping us live out those values.

Find the Congregational Communication Guidance document here

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.

pastoral care



Stewardship

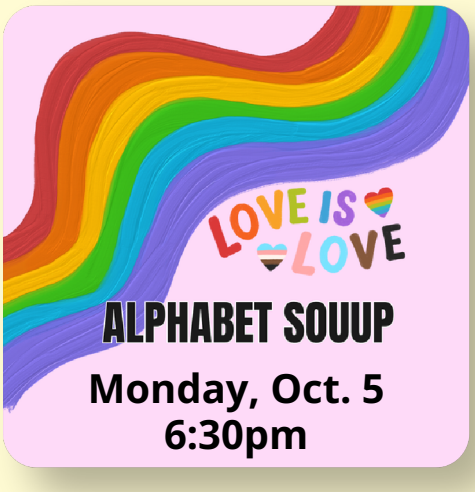
Unitarian Universalism calls us to the ideal of becoming a transformational force in each other's lives, in our communities, and in the world. Because we aspire to live into our faith beyond Sunday mornings, we are privileged to invest our time, energy, and resources in support of this greater mission. 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 informatio, visit our Stewardship page at https://www.uucg.org/connectingwithin/donate.

Making Connections

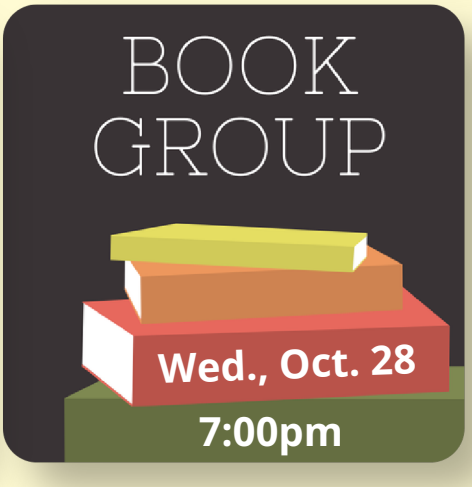












ONGOING ACTIVITIES

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 - **Registration Remains Open!**
Group A: Online - 2nd and 4th Mondays at 7pm
Group B: In Person - 2nd Wednesdays at 7pm (*TEMPORARILY CLOSED*)
Group C: Online - 2nd Thursdays at 10am

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

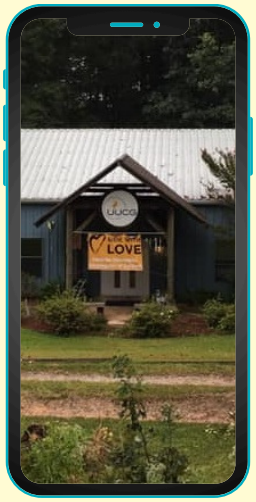
QUUest - Online: 3rd Fridays at 6:30pm, campaign for Adults

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

Widening Our Circle



10 years after the Water Protectors began their encampment at Standing Rock, Joseph McNeil (Dakota) joins us to reflect on energy sovereignty work today, the No Dakota Access Pipeline movement of 10 years ago, and longtime Dakota/Lakota/Nakota values and cultural practices. Rev. Clyde Grubbs (Texas Cherokee) will draw connections with UU involvement and the Doctrine of Discovery.

Register to strengthen your spirit!



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

Our Backing of Fascism Abroad Inevitably Comes Home to Roost

by Stephen Babb, Resisting Fascism Team

On September 21, 1976, an idealistic, brilliant 25-year-old woman named Ronni Moffitt was commuting to work through Embassy Row in Washington, DC.

She was accompanying the Chilean exile Orlando Letelier, a prominent critic of Pinochet's US-backed fascist dictatorship in Chile, to the offices of her employer, the Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive organization founded in 1963 that continues to pursue its mission of building a more equitable, peaceful society today.

Letelier had been Chile's US Ambassador under the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende which the Chilean military overthrew in a bloody 1973 coup.

Ronni had just gotten married and promoted. She had her whole life in front of her.

Pinochet had other plans.

He was determined to permanently silence Letelier's criticism of his regime's horrific human rights abuses.

And he couldn't care less about collateral damage. At 9:35am, a bomb detonated beneath Letelier's car, instantly killing him and mortally wounding Ronni. Ronni's husband, who was also in the car, was injured, but survived.

It was the most heinous act of foreign-sponsored terrorism on American soil before 9/11.

It wasn't perpetrated by an enemy, but by a close ally our government had played an instrumental role in installing in power.

Letelier's assassination had been personally ordered by Pinochet, and was carried out by his secret police with the help of a CIA agent and anti-Castro Cuban exiles.

The assassins have never been satisfactorily held accountable.

The assassination was part of Operation Condor, a US-orchestrated terror consortium which enabled Latin American dictatorships to collude in hunting down their dissidents when they took refuge in neighboring countries – a model Trump and Rubio are currently reviving.

Ronni's murder is a textbook example of blowback – the way that covert crimes we commit abroad have a way of coming home to roost.

Other examples of this phenomenon include links between JFK's assassination and his administration's assassination attempts on Castro, the Iran-Contra scandal, CIA drug trafficking to fund the Nicaraguan Contras, and white supremacist terrorism by radicalized veterans of our Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan forever wars, among them Timothy McVeigh.

Another example of blowback is our government's Draconian effort to muzzle criticism of the Gaza genocide, which imperils free speech and academic freedom more broadly.

Our government's bipartisan backing of this genocide is blowing back on us in other ways. Our politicians are deploying the same dehumanizing rhetoric and militarized occupation tactics against our domestic immigrant population that Israel deploys against its Palestinian population, while ICE agents receive training in ethnic cleansing from Israeli mentors and AIPAC subverts our democracy. In his eulogy for Ronni, her husband described her as "a doer of little things" who "knew that without little things, big things could never happen," and noted that Ronni's murder was a grim reminder that we can't afford to "shut our eyes to the realities of this world."

On the fiftieth anniversary of Ronni's death, let us recommit to fighting the fascist ideology Ronni was passionately battling, and which tragically truncated her life.



In October...


LOUDER & PROUDER
ATLANTA PRIDE 2026
OCTOBER 10-11 | PIEDMONT PARK
ATLANTAPRIDE.ORG


Blessing of the Animals
Saturday, October 17
10:30am


REGISTER NOW!
UUCG
TRUNK OR TREAT
Saturday, October 24th
6-9pm



In October...

★ WALDO'S COFFEEHOUSE PRESENTS ★

SONGS OF JUSTICE, HOPE & DEMOCRACY

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24 7:00 PM



RISE UP & SING!

★ GET OUT & VOTE! ★

The November 3rd midterm elections will be among the most consequential in modern American history.

This is a time to stay inspired, energized and hopeful—and to help lead our country away from hate and fear and toward a more loving, compassionate and inclusive future.

FEATURING THE MUSIC OF

BOB DYLAN • JESSE WELLES • CARSIE BLANTON • PETE SEEGER
TRACY CHAPMAN • BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN • WOODY GUTHRIE •
CAROLE KING • CRYS MATTHEWS AND MORE!

PERFORMED BY
THE MUSICIANS OF EMERSON WITH SPECIAL GUEST STARS

Proceeds from the event will benefit Emerson UUC and the Community Accompaniment Program with Asylum-Seekers (CAPAS)

Launched by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), CAPAS connects faith communities and local organizations with individuals and families seeking legal asylum in the United States.

EMERSON
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CONGREGATION

4010 CANTON ROAD
MARIETTA GA

For Tickets & Information

Or contact
waldos@emersonuu.org

Save the Date...



Celebration on Thursday, November 5, 2026 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center's parking deck lawn.

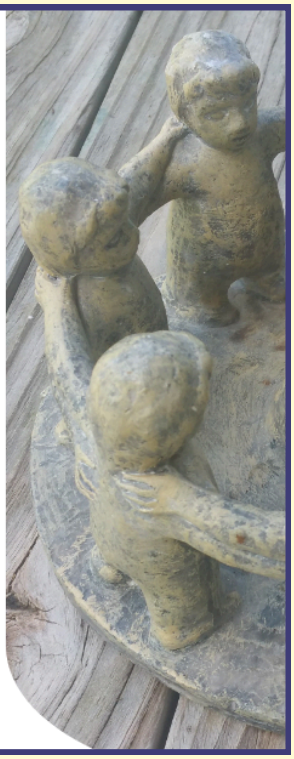
UUCG

Board of Trustees

Congregational Town Hall

After Worship Service
Sunday, Nov. 8

The Board will present the suggested budget for fiscal year 2027. Member voting will remain open until Dec. 6.



Unitarian Universalist Georgia Legislative Action Network

4TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Voices for Justice: Georgia UUs Rise Up

SAVE THE DATE!
GET INFORMED. GET ENGAGED.
GET READY for Georgia's 2027 Legislative Session.



ISSUES AT STAKE
- Data Centers/Energy
- Redistricting
- Voter Protection
- Human Rights

SIGN UP FOR OUR Action Alerts at UUGALAN.org.

SCAN TO SIGN UP

Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

UU Congregation of Gwinnett
Lawrenceville, GA
Lunch and parking provided

Unitarian Universalist Georgia Legislative Action Network

From the Editor

Tales of Courage

by Jason Pfeffer, Office Administrator

Acts of courage take place every day, all around the world. Most of them go unnoticed. Despair and fear bombard us from all the sources we use to get information. So I thought I'd share a few stories of regular people who were faced with challenges and responded, "Nah. We're gonna do things my way."

You can find these stories and others at Reader's Digest.

- **The Caped Crusader:** After driving past a local homeless shelter with his dad, then four-year-old Austin Perine wanted to do something to put a smile on the faces of those he had seen suffering. He used his allowance money to buy Burger King sandwiches to pass out to the homeless. He handed out each meal with a smile and said, "Don't forget to show love!"After dipping into his allowance to feed the homeless for a few weeks, his story went viral. Burger King heard about it and decided to chip in to help Austin's cause. Years later, Austin is still a philanthropist as well an athlete and actor. And he wants to be president. Go Austin!

- **The Five Fingers Club:** Jayce Crowder was born a little differently than his classmates—he only had one hand. Several years ago when Jayce's kindergarten classmates started teasing him, his mom didn't know how to help. She discovered Trashaun Willis, a then eighth-grader who was missing most of his left arm, playing basketball on the news one night. A couple of months later the boys met up, and Willis taught Crowder how to be confident with his differences.

- **The Doctor is In:** There are more than 770,000 homeless people across America, according to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2024 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress. Jim O'Connell, MD, an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, and his team are doing something to help them get the medical care that they need. Dr. O'Connell established the first shelter medical clinic in the country in 1985, and now serves as the president of the Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program.

- **The Boy in the Septic Tank:** After a two-year-old boy fell into a septic tank in Dublin, Ohio, his 13-year-old neighbor was the only person able to help, as the tank opening was too small for an adult to squeeze into. Without hesitation Madison Williams sprang into action and was lowered into the hole. After some struggle, she was able to pull the boy out, and adults who were standing by got the water out of his lungs. The boy's mother told local news that Madison was a hero.

Let Books Be!

In honor of National Book Month, I would like to present its companion observation…

Banned Books Week!

From October 4 through October 10 (though, in my humble opinion, this should be a year-round thing), a coalition of organizations dedicated to free expression seek to highlight the value of free and open access to information.

The week culminates with Let Freedom Read Day on October 10. It's asked that everyone take at least one action to help defend books from censorship and to stand up for the library staff, educators, writers, publishers, and booksellers who make them available!

Censorship is a national problem that happens at the local level. That means elections matter! The right to read — and democracy — depend on us.

To find out more about this essential week of awareness, including a list of the most challenged books from the previous year, you can go to the website bannedbooksweek.org.

October 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 EVENT
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 EVENT
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
	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
EVENT	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