



Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists December 2024

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Living Love through the Practice of Presence

Engaging with Presence as a spiritual practice invites us to consider two different things:

How can we be present to the uncertainty and complexity – and perhaps even disillusionment and despair or joy and elation – of this moment, while also living in awareness of the transcendent Presence that is woven through all moments?

Even in the messiest moments, the world is shot through with unexpected gifts and grace. How can we cultivate a practice of Presence that allows them not to go unnoticed? Especially now, when we need them so profoundly?

Where is your attention right now? Perhaps the greatest gift of this holiday season is the awareness that our greatest gifts have been sitting here all along, waiting for us to be present to them.

**Join us this month as we explore
The Practice of Presence.**

Welcome to
the Practice of
Presence



The blue gnu, also called common wildebeest, has dark vertical stripes on the shoulders and back.

Worship in December

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme:

Living Love through the Practice of Presence

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



December 1

To be Present

We consider the practice of presence as an aspect of our practice of the spiritual discipline of love. To be present with, present for, or present in support - all are practices of planning and focus. To be present with others in the moment requires centering and focused attention on seeing and hearing the other person. To be present for others is to represent their interests on an issue at a particular time and place. To be present in support of others is to show up, follow their lead, and help their project to succeed.

Bill Benshoof (he/him), Service Leader

December 8

Grounded and Grateful: Being Present to Ourselves

In the lifelong dance of learning to care for ourselves and to care for others, we don't always get to choose which is our primary focus. Yet we know that both our inward- and our outward-turning are inextricably woven together. This Sunday we practice this weaving, recognizing the grounding that all our chaotic feelings can offer, sharing our (brief!) spoken Joys and Sorrows, celebrating new members, and thanking our Safety and Security Team for their ministry of care. Where will we direct our care this week?

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

December 15

Sacred Pause: Our Loving Presence on the Longest Night

This Winter Solstice Ritual Service honors the longest night of the year, we embrace the darkness as a time for reflection and renewal. As the sun retreats, we gather to connect deeply with ourselves; a sacred pause where we invite the warmth of love to emerge from within and radiate outward. This ritual service is a reminder that even in the darkest moments, light and love are always reborn, symbolizing hope and the cyclical nature of life.

Candice Carver (she/her), Service Leader

December 22

Creating a Web to Hold Us: Being Present with Others

Almost all of the December holidays have a similar theme at their very core: Belonging to a healthy, loving community replaces fear with hope and purpose. Where and how do we create micro- and macro-communities of care by showing up for others? And what joy will be reborn in us when we do? Come celebrate the gifts of this season simply through showing up for each other this week!

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

December 29

Living Love Through the Practice of Presence and Compassion

Think about a time in your life when the principles became real through your living experience. When did you receive or give life in a way that changed your life as well as someone else's?

LaDonna Pacer (she/her), Service Leader

Faith Formation Hour
Sundays
at
12:30pm

1st Sunday

December 1

- Congregational Conversation
- Potluck Luncheon

2nd Sunday,

December 8

- Belief Explorers
- Spiral Scouts (pre-registration required)

3rd Sunday,

December 15

- Sunday Tarot

No Programs on

December 22 or 29

Happy Holidays!



Special Services in December

Living Love through the Practice of Presence
Join us in-person or via Zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/565460176>

Share the Plate

**Our 4th Quarter
Give Away the Plate
recipient is
the Barrow County
Community Fund**

The Barrow County Community Fund, a 501(c)3 organization, has activated the Barrow Community Crisis Fund. Donations that are made to the Barrow Community Crisis Fund before June 25, 2025 will be designated specifically to support organizations that serve the needs of the people of Barrow County in the recovery from the tragedy that occurred at Apalachee High School on September 4. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.



Sunday, December 8, 2:00 PM

***Present Just as We Are:
Our Annual Blue Christmas Service***

We live in such turbulent times. For many, the holidays can bring more sorrow than joy, more anxiety than reassurance. Join us as we honor and make space for all emotions that can emerge during this season.

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

Saturday, December 21, 6:00 PM

Sylvan Sanctuary Winter Solstice/Alban Arthan Ritual

This year The Sylvan Sanctuary Druid Group will have their Alban Arthan Ritual on December 21st at 6pm, to call in the return of the sun. Please join us for ritual and pot luck afterwards. As always ritual attire is not required, please bring a dish to share, a donation to the Monthly Lawrenceville Co-op Food Drive, a wand or staff, and a noise maker. In Person only.

Sylvan Sanctuary Druids

**Tuesday, December 24, 7:00 PM
*Room for a Little One, Room for All!
The Heart of the Christmas Story
Christmas Eve Service***

We celebrate this Christmas Eve with a story that includes everyone—all the animals, all the children, all our own hearts and spirits. With story, song, and candlelight, we welcome this holy night afresh into the multicolored tapestry of our spiritual lives.

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



*Watercolor Painting by
Bob Patrick - 2020*

Did You Know: During the winter solstice, candles represent the return of the Sun, a symbolic act of inviting light into the darkest days of the year.



Finding the Essence of Presence

by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

When exactly did family holiday gatherings become so darned difficult?

I began noticing my discomfort and otherness much more after I moved from Texas to California at the beginning of my young adult life. The freedom I felt in my new home, and the restrictive expectations of my old home, began to chafe. It was the culture of my hometown as much as, or even more than, the individuals who made up my family. They were, mostly, trying hard to grow and change together. Still, I was on the forming edge of finding my authentic self, so going back to a place where “Nancy Palmer Jones” was not yet recognized and affirmed felt like a forced return to the role of that younger “Nancy Jones.”

It was hard to show up and be fully **present** in those days.

I also thought the problem lay simply in growing up. Don't all of us outgrow the childhood delight of holiday **presents** and vacation times? And then don't we spend the rest of our adulthood trying to recreate those joys or missing them? I thought my expectations were just too high.

Now I see truth ribboning through all these experiences. I was indeed coming into a different, fuller self that didn't fit so well in my old environment. And I also had idealized childhood memories that made it hard for me to accept the more complicated feelings that we humans have as we stumble and grope for new common ground in a difficult world.

This is why I have so much joy about moving into December with you here at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett!

Here we can bring all our complicated feelings and difficult experiences. Here we can show up and be authentic, caring in our own unique and profound ways for ourselves and for each other. Here we can affirm our ever-emerging identities, our new joys and our old wounds. Here we can laugh and empathize and wonder and argue and grow with discomfort and with ease.

Here we can rediscover the essence of real Presence, awake to this very moment in our difficult and glorious world. And what a gift that is! Happy Holidays, beloveds! A blessed December to us all, and to all the world.

With Curiosity, Courage, and Compassion,
and always, with Love at the center,

Rev. Nancy



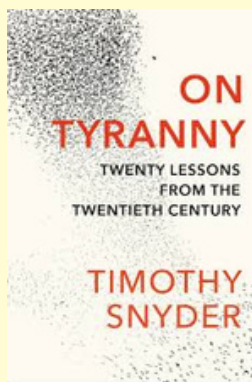


What Are We Reading, or Watching, or Listening to?

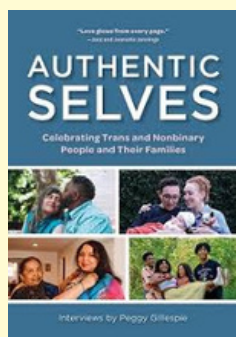
by Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones (she/her)

Last month, my main GNUUs essay, “A Starting Point for the Practice of Repair,” listed a few of my current teachers—writers, podcasters, commentators who help me to see the world and life in broader and deeper ways.

Starting this month, I’ll turn this practice into a regular GNUUs feature, offering a short list of what I’m reading, or watching, or listening to, and why I recommend them for our community. All these books will be in our library, available for checkout.



1. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, by Timothy Snyder (Crown, 2017): Many Unitarian Universalists read this book when it first came out, but as I listen to the new expanded audio version, I find it even more urgent today. From “do not obey in advance” to “be as courageous as you can” and many more specifics in between, these lessons ground me in simple but profound principles that can keep our free and loving communities—like UUCG—alive, even under pressure. I have also picked up Snyder’s newest book, *On Freedom*. More philosophical but still rooted in historical examples, this book reminds us of what we’re really fighting for. And its title might be more appealing than the shorter book during this holiday month! Either way, let’s be ready!



2. *Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families, Interviews* by Peggy Gillespie (Skinner House, 2023): *Authentic Selves* is the UUA’s 2024-25 Common Read! It is a colorful compilation of interviews that are touching, uplifting, and real. This book is particularly timely for our congregation as we create a community where trans, nonbinary, and gender expansive people are celebrated for the leadership and inspiration they bring. Dive into these stories, and then please join us for this winter’s Trans Inclusion in Congregations, which I will help facilitate!

Please do respond with what is bringing you wisdom, direction, joy, or the kind of discomfort that means we’re growing! Happy Winter Reading (and Watching and Listening)!

Don’t Click on Scam Email Links or Social-Media Invitations

In November, many UUCG members and friends received yet another fake email claiming to be from Rev. Nancy. In the past, some folks have received fake social-media friend requests from our minister, too.

Our minister will *never* use these means of communication to ask you to buy gift cards, to open a link that you are not expecting, or to disclose information. Her requests will always be fully explained, make sense in the context of our community life, and—although they may have the occasional typo—they will be basically grammatically correct. You know the sound of our minister’s voice; make sure the communication sounds like Rev. Nancy.

If you receive one of these emails or social-media fakes, please take these actions:

- Do double-check the email address from which the message comes by hovering over the sender’s name. Is it the email that Rev. Nancy uses for all UUCG work?
- Do not click on or respond to these emails or social-media requests.
- Do alert admin [at] uucg [dot] org that you have received one of these scams. It’s good to track how often they occur.
- Do delete the email and do report the social-media invitation once you are sure it is a fake.
- If you have any doubts about an email that might be legitimate, please do send Rev. Nancy a separate note asking if it is authentic.

Such scamming, initiated by bots or hackers, is part of the price of being in a relatively public position. Please do be cautious, and let’s stay as safe as we can!

From the Board



Congregational Vote – December 15th

Dan Kelly, Board President

The UUCG Board of Trustees will be hosting the annual **Winter Congregational Business Meeting** on December 15th at 12:30 pm to vote on the Operating Budget and other Proposals for Congregational Approval. The Board will host a Congregational Conversation on December 1st at 12:30 pm to review the Budget and the Proposals in detail. Please join us for both of these important meetings!

The proposed **2025 Annual Operating Budget** will be available for review by the full Congregation on December 1st, including printed copies to take home and review. It will include a year-to-date assessment of our 2024 Operating Budget to Actuals, and will demonstrate some of the options available to the Congregation.

Importantly, the 2025 Annual Budget will be closely tied to Resolution #2, as outlined below, and the Board will present versions of the Budget that reflect the passing or the declining of Resolution #2.

The Board will present the following Resolutions for Congregational Approval:

Resolution #1:

We, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett, hereby confer the honorary title of Minister Emerita to Reverend Jan Taddeo, in recognition of twelve years of faithful and devoted service to our congregation and community, from 2011 to 2023. The Congregation recognizes the spiritual growth that Reverend Taddeo fostered through guiding us in becoming a certified LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation and Green Sanctuary, nurturing the development of a Healthy Congregation Team, supporting active Faith in Action programs, and partnering to create our

Shared Ministry Council leadership model. As a truly Curious, Courageous, and Compassionate individual, Reverend Jan Taddeo exemplifies the core values of UUCG.

Resolution #2:

We, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Gwinnett, authorize the Board of Trustees to accept the Easement Agreement proposed by SBA, monetizing \$200,000 for approximately half of the lease's current value. Funds are restricted to usage for non-operational costs, and specifically allotted as:

- Payment for Roof Repair (appx. \$65,650)
- Endowment Loan Pay Off (\$15,696.29)
- Mortgage Loan Pay Off (\$52,437.58)
- Capital Expense Reserve Fund (remaining balance, appx. \$66,216.13)

The balance of the Lease remains in effect, continuing to generate a monthly income.

The Board looks forward to discussing these Resolutions and the 2025 Operating Budget with you in a positive and transparent manner that emphasizes our shared values as a Congregation.

In beloved community,
Dan Kelly
President, Board of Trustees

Note: view the budget document and the meeting recording via the links in the initial paragraphs of this column.



In The Know

Annual Pledge Drive
It is Possible!

\$138,000

CLICK HERE



\$120,000
Generosity

\$100,000
Interdependence

Pluralism
\$80,000

\$60,000
Transformation

Equity
\$40,000

Justice
\$20,000

JETPIG illustrated by Dmitri Novak

As we welcome a new year, we are filled with hope for the future of our community. This year, we are committed to making a difference by fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment where every person can thrive and contribute to Creating a Culture of Care. Our Annual Pledge Drive is more than a fundraising effort; it is the livelihood of our congregation.

Your contributions help us support the differences we strive to make in our community.

This year, we invite you to consider increasing your pledge by just \$1 or 5%, as you are able. Even a small increase can have a significant impact. Each contribution, no matter the size, makes a difference in what we can do. I ask everyone to remember that we are all stewards of this land, we are all responsible for the care of our building, our grounds, and most importantly, for each other. We value every gift of time, talent, and treasure. We ask that you pledge as your heart guides you and your finances allow.

~ Candice Carver, 2025 Pledge Drive Chair



Give
Away
the
Plate

NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

Appropriate organizations are 501(c)3 non-profit entities that share our core UU values and work to make a difference in our local communities.

email: GATP@UUCG.org

Ministry of Radical Welcome



Growing Together: A Journey To Trans Inclusion

by Carol Underwood (she/her), Lay Minister for Radical Welcome

Have you ever wondered how to better create a welcoming and affirming space for our Trans siblings? This January, we invite you to join us for our Trans Inclusion Workshop, a transformative six-session journey designed to explore how we can best support and nurture the Trans community. Together, we'll delve into the complex and often frightening realities faced by Trans individuals, while equipping ourselves to offer deeper solidarity and care.

The Trans community needs allies now more than ever. By participating in this workshop, you can lean into our UU values, committing to justice, equity, and compassion in action. Through guided discussions and reflective exercises, we'll challenge ourselves to grow, to listen, and to live into the truths of those whose experiences are often marginalized.

This is an opportunity to stretch, to be transformed, and to deepen your understanding. We encourage you to come with your perspective, your curiosity, and an open heart. Together, we'll navigate these waters with humility and hope, knowing that our efforts can help create a world where everyone belongs.

As Sophia Lyon Fahs reminds us:

"Some beliefs are rigid, like the body of death, impotent in a changing world. Other beliefs are pliable, like the young sapling, ever-growing with the upward thrust of life."

Let us choose pliability. Let us grow together, toward a world where every person can thrive.



Trans Inclusion in Congregations

6 sessions, in person
on 1st & 3rd Sunday afternoons
beginning February 2, 2025

A program of Radical Welcome

facilitated by

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

and

Carol Underwood

[Find more information here](#)

Registration is open now



Transforming Hearts Collective

Ministry of Green Space



Green Space Report

by Gary Kiel, Lay Minister for Green Space

Green Team Movie Night

The Green Team hosted the movie “*Crown Jewels*”. Sierra Club members, UU Metro Atlanta North (UUMA), and Citizens Climate Lobby people also attended. We had 16 people in person and 6 people on Zoom. Bonus - the Sierra Club brought refreshments!

Thanks to Dan and Allie for setting up the projection, zoom, microphones, and sound. It all worked flawlessly.

Afterwards, attendees discussed their favorite forests and perhaps a particular tree of influence. Interesting is the impact a single significant tree has on people. It was a fun, easy flowing discussion. I like that we bring in new people and non-members to the events and they contribute to the conversation.

This is a film worth watching! Even if you were unable to attend the screening, we encourage everyone to view the movie on your own.

Find it here.

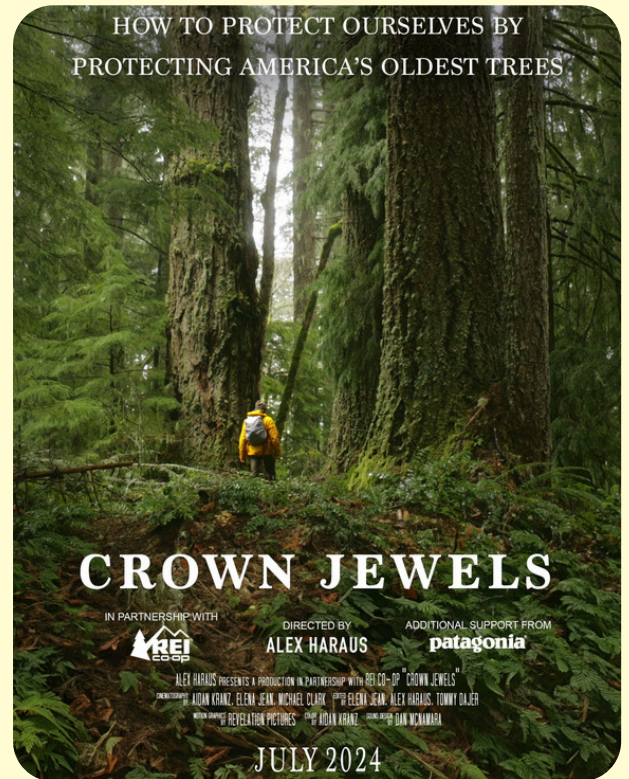
Green Team Movie Night is offered twice a year. Stay tuned for the announcement of the spring film & date!

Property Beautification

November 2nd, had a smaller turn out this month. Steve, Xoey, and Gary worked on the grounds. I think it snuck up on everyone as it was so early in the month.

Next workday is Saturday, Dec 7th. Extra help would be great as we have some projects to tackle. First project is to clean out the tool shed, organize, and repair the doors.

Second project is to repurpose the raised beds at the far end of the building, These beds do not get much sun, so not really a good location. Perhaps an additional compost pile, or vermiculture (worm) bed.



Ministry of Green Space

Assignment For All: Visit An Old Growth Forest

Old-growth forests provide places of cultural and ecological significance, and a perfect opportunity to practice Presence. They offer a unique and diverse ecosystem, providing a rich habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, stunning natural beauty, opportunities for outdoor recreation like hiking and camping, and play a crucial role in carbon sequestration and maintaining healthy water quality; essentially, they represent a vital part of our planet's natural heritage that is worth experiencing firsthand.

They can also inspire moments of sheer wonder. To walk among trees that have witnessed centuries of time is sublime! As we travel through, we become aware that there is something different and larger than ourselves on this planet.



Find information on all the old growth forests in the US, including a map of all locations here:

<https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/>

In Gwinnett County, our closest old growth forest is Little Mulberry Park.

Auburn Entrance:
3855 Fence Road, Auburn GA 30011

Dacula Entrance:
3900 Hog Mountain Road, Dacula GA 30019



Upcoming Events

Saturday

December 7

9:30am - 3:30pm

Property Beautification Day

Please come and aid in maintaining and improving the grounds.

Project of the Month

Shed cleanout and reorganize, tools are available on-site or bring your own.



Looking Ahead

January Planning

Meeting

Date TBD

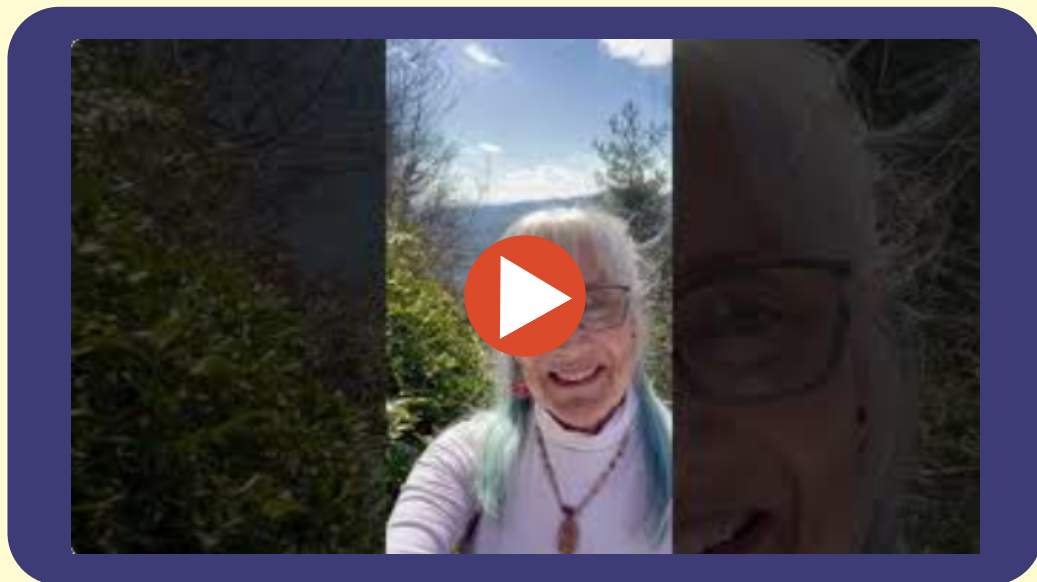
All are welcome to join us as we set the schedule and calendar our main events for the new year.

Ministry of Spiritual Growth

What's Happening in December

Lessons From The Mountain

a video message
from Rev. Nancy



Rev. Nancy's Schedule

- Study Break:
November 25 to
December 2
- Vacation:
December 25 to
January 1

For pastoral care,
please call our
Pastoral Care line:
770-217-7848.

Our team will reach out
to Rev. Nancy around
urgent needs, and Rev.
Nancy will have one of
her colleagues on-call
when she is out of state.

New Member Welcome
Sunday, December 8
during the Worship Service



*Blue Christmas
Service*

Sunday, December 8
at 2:00pm

Ministry of Spiritual Growth



Tending the Flame

Christiana McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries

As the calendar year comes to a close, I am looking back on what we've achieved in the past few months. I met with parents back in August to hear what kinds of programming would best serve our Families, and we've been able to implement a lot of what you all requested!

While the December schedule is atypical, still **twice a month we offer Sunday morning children's programming that pulls them out of the Worship Service** to explore the monthly themes through games and activities together with their facilitators, and **twice a month their programming is scheduled for just prior to or just following the Worship Service.** Both of these latter programs are innovative and somewhat unique to UUCG.

Spiral Scouts continues to meet on second Sundays after the Service. XoeY does amazing things with the group, exploring the principles of scouting from an earth-centered perspective with a program well-tailored to

our specific kids.

And the Alphabet SoUUup folx have created a wonderfully creative program that introduces our kids to concepts of **Gender Justice and Equity** that is providing a truly unique opportunity for exploration of these core UU Values.

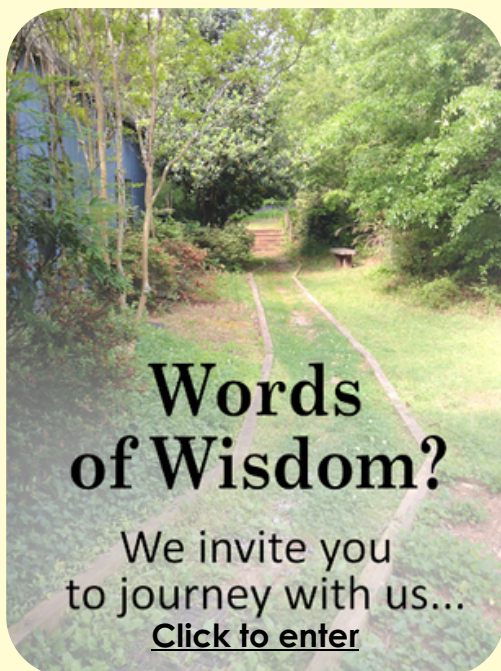
We are so looking forward to what is to come in the second half of the program your!

December

Children's Faith Development Schedule



- Sunday, 12/1:** Thanksgiving weekend - no programs
- Sunday, 12/8: during Worship** - Presence & Attention; **12:30** - Spiral Scouts
- Sunday, 12/15: before Worship (10:00am)** - Gender Justice
- Sunday, 12/22: during Worship** - The Gifts of Presence
- Sunday, 12/29:** Winter break - no programs



Words of Wisdom?

We invite you to journey with us...
[Click to enter](#)

Resources for exploring The Practice of Presence

[Faith Development resources for exploring The Practice of Presence](#)

Check out The Practice of Presence - Soul Matters December Play list on [YouTube](#) or [Spotify](#).



yule party

POTLUCK!!!

CRAFTS, GAMES, AND MORE!
12 BETHESDA CHURCH ROAD
LAWRENCEVILLE, GA 30044

Dec 7th 6PM

Get Ready for the
GRINCH GAME

BRING A GIFT OR
TWO AND SOME
FOOD TO SHARE!

The Simple Gift

Candice Carver

In the longest night,
the earth cradles us in her quiet.
The stars whisper their ancient truths:
the greatest gift is not gold, not treasure,
but presence.

To sit, hand in hand,
heart to heart,
to offer a love
that outshines the sun itself.

This solstice, we live love
by being fully here—
listening, breathing,
sharing the sacred warmth of togetherness.

In the stillness, connection blooms.
In the darkness, a flame awakens.
And as dawn rises,
so too does love—
renewed, rooted,
in the simple gift of being.



Ministry of Connecting Within



'Tis the Season

by Lisa Kiel, Lay Minister for Connecting Within

*“One of the best feelings in the world is knowing
that your presence and absence both mean
something to someone.”*

~ Anonymous

'Tis the season to feel over committed. Folx are traveling to be with friends and family. Children have holiday programs. Companies host parties. It is easy to spend the season running from one date on the calendar to the next. Then suddenly, it will all stop, and life will resume its more normal pace.

What do you want to experience during this season? If we don't make a plan, it's easy to simply go through the days and the events without being truly present. It's also healthy to remember that you can't do everything.

During this busy season, UUCG will continue to offer opportunities to connect. We are, after all, a family; and this season is all about celebrating the love we have for each other. If you need a break from the hustle and bustle, I invite you into our shared space.

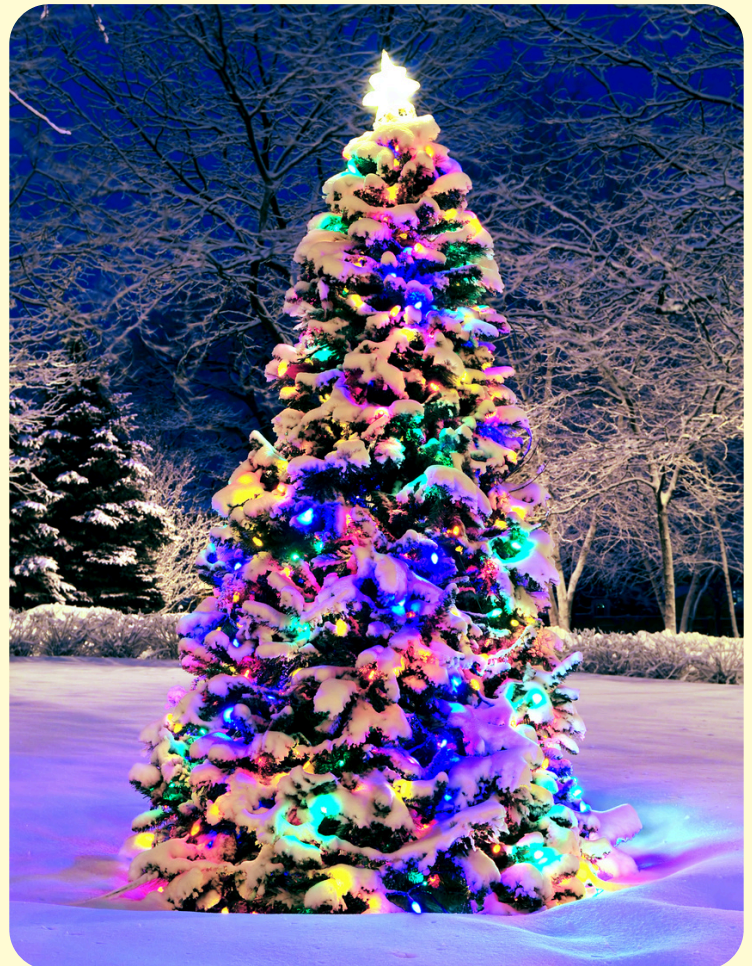
- The **Monday night Covenant Group** still has openings - register to join us on December 9th.
- Our new in-person **Game Night** will begin December 6th. If you enjoy playing board games with others, this is the group for you! The group will meet at UUCG at 6:30 pm, and all ages are welcome!
- The **UUCG Book Group** will meet online on December 4th. This month's selection is *When the Nightingale Sings* by Suzanne Kelman, and newcomers are always welcome.

These are just a few of the opportunities to gather with others during this season. Check through the GNUUs to see what is offered here at UUCG this December as you make your holiday plans.

Because your presence is a great gift to our community, I hope to see as many folx as possible enjoying this time of the year together here at UUCG. If, however, your commitments take you to other destinations or gatherings, please know your absence will be felt. It will “mean something” to all of us here at UUCG. We are all connected, and whether we are together or apart, our connection remains.

To everyone here at UUCG, I wish you a season of light and love,

Lisa



Ministry of Connecting Within

Ongoing Opportunities - December Schedule



Alphabet SoUUp - Monday, Dec. 2 at 6:30pm (in person)



Covenant Group - 2nd Monday, online 7-9 pm **Registration is open!**



Yarns from the Heart - no gatherings in December, returns 1/15
for Zoom link: email admin@uucg.org



Walkers - no gatherings in December
for location information, email walkers@uucg.org



Music Night - Thursdays, Dec 6 & 12 at 6:30pm
(in person)



QUUest - Adults: no December session
QUUest Jr. - Kids: Friday, Dec. 13 at 7pm
pre-registration required



Game Night - Friday, Dec. 6 at 6:30pm (in person)



Men's Group - Saturday, Dec. 14 at 9am
(in person)



Chalice Circle - monthly meeting set
by members

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

Book Group



Wednesday,
December 4th
at 7:00pm

A powerful and completely
heartbreaking WW2 novel.

1937, Europe and America.
Based on a powerful true story,
this extraordinary novel about
wartime courage and
extraordinary friendship, tells
how two women changed the fate
of the Second World War and the
course of history. [Learn more...](#)



**GAME
NIGHT**

**Friends,
Family,
Fun!**

Friday, December 6
at 6:30pm
in the Sanctuary
at UUCG

Ministry of Connecting Beyond



Looking Back to Look Forward

by Candice Carver, Lay Minister for Connecting Beyond

This year has been a testament to the strength and spirit of our UUCG community. Together, we've lived our values through meaningful events that brought us closer to each other and extended love and connection beyond our doors.

From the joy and creativity of the **Spring Auction** to saying "You are a Yes" at the **Lilburn Pride Parade**, from Barbara's tireless efforts with multiple **Produce Distributions** to the celebration of hope and harmony at the **Peace Festival**, and the delightful fun of **Trunk or Treat**, every event reflected our commitment to living love and building a better world.

These successes weren't just moments of celebration—they were acts of community. They were made possible by the dedication, passion, and hard work of so many people in our congregation.

As we look forward to the future, we invite you to dream with us. What events can we plan in 2025 that will strengthen our connections and expand our reach? How can we bring our values of love, equity, and justice to life in new and creative ways?

To make these dreams a reality, we need you. Your ideas, your energy, your presence. Planning teams are forming now for key events, including:

- **2025 Auction:** Help us create a vibrant and successful auction, possibly in the fall.
- **Summer Fundraisers and/or Community Yard Sale:** Imagine ways to engage and fundraise while connecting with our wider community.
- **Craft Bazaar:** Join the effort to bring back this beloved tradition, showcasing creativity and fostering connection.
- **MLK Day & Pride Events:** Do you have time to plan a march, booth or to just show up? Let us know so that we can show up in our community!
- **New Event Ideas:** Have a vision for something new? Let's make it happen together.

The holidays are a busy time, but they also remind us of the importance of community and shared purpose. As we reflect on the past year, let us also look forward with hope and commitment. Joining the planning team is more than just helping with an event—it's a way to deepen connections, share joy, and live our values in tangible ways.

What dreams do you have for our community?

The edges of darkness, of Winter, welcome the dance of sorrow. And our stumbles. And yearning. And howling that may even turn to laughter. It is all welcome. And it can be done in community.

- Anne Richardson

Join the Planning Team

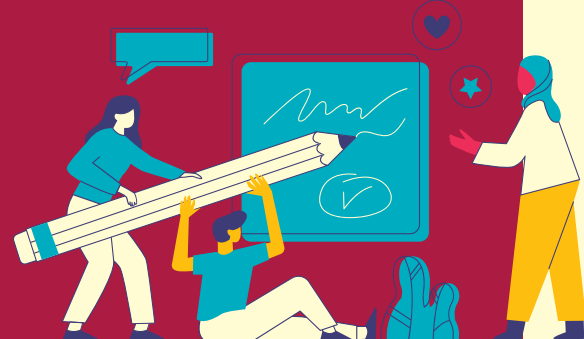
Our goal is to plan special events for UUCG to increase our presence in the community

Email

connectingbeyond@

uucg.org

for more information



Ministry of Connecting Beyond

Shaping the Future is Not a Possibility, It's a Responsibility!

by Barbara Stahnke (she/her)

“I have one life and one chance to make it count for something. My faith demands that do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have, to try to make a difference.”

~ President Jimmy Carter

This may seem like a scary time. It may *be* a scary time. But, just saying – right now, in this moment, the fear is engendered by those who want to make us afraid. I choose not to be afraid. I choose to plan and act. I choose to live out my faith. This means living out Justice, Interconnection, Generosity, Love, Pluralism, Equity, and Transformation in MY life.

My actions are tied to politics. Politics means, for me, the rights of citizens. I am going to stand up for my rights and others' rights, who don't have my privileges, AS LONG AS I HAVE BREATH.

After you have rested, please do not rest in fear, please start preparing to speak up and speak out. One way that you have is to prepare to connect with GA state legislators. We are unique from other countries in the world. States have much power. We must be prepared to connect with our legislators to use the power we have. The Unitarian Universalist Georgia Legislative Action Network (UUGALAN) has met (11/16/2024) and is preparing to act. We need UUs, and those who support our values to be ready for state action in January 2025.

Please read your eNews weekly for the *Legislative Action of the Week*, starting in January. If you are a regular at UUCG, attending worship either online or in-person, request access to the UUCG group (this is a moderated space.) Know that each UUGALAN action is designed to live out our values in OUR state. Local and State Actions are vital for a DEMOCRACY.



Save the Date!

Gwinnett Interfaith Alliance
**First Meeting of the
NEW YEAR!**

January 7, 2025; 7:30PM
**Temple Beth David in
Snellville and on Zoom**

Come plan and learn

“Never cruel or cowardly. Never give up, never give in”
~ The Doctor's motto,
Doctor Who

Ministry of Connecting Beyond Opportunities to Connect

el refugio WINTER CLOTHING & TOY DRIVE

Please bring new and gently used men's clothing, **stuffed animals**, or gas cards in \$25 and \$50 increments. Place in the labeled box in the entry way.

Produce Distribution
December 5th
Contact Barbara Stahnke for more information.



LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OP
COMMUNITY FOOD BANK MINISTRY

COLLECTING ON DECEMBER 1ST

Most Needed Food Items

- Snacks – Protein bars, granola bars, Cheese and crackers, Peanut butter and crackers
- Canned beans
- Rice
- Mac & cheese
- Pasta and pasta sauce
- Canned pasta
- Peanut butter & jelly
- Canned tuna and chicken
- Canned fruit
- Canned vegetables
- Canned soup
- Cereal

Most Needed Non-Food Items

- Size 3 and up diapers
- Feminine pads
- Adult diapers Size S-XL
- Laundry pods
- Toiletry items



SAD AWARENESS MONTH National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



**REACH OUT
IF YOU ARE
SUFFERING**

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

TEXT: TALK TO 741741

The Trevor Project

CALL 1-866-488-7386

TEXT: 678-678 OR CHAT



Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

CALL OR TEXT: 988

chat at: 988lifeline.org

More in December



Winter Solstice
a Sylvan Sanctuary Ritual

Saturday, December 21
at 6:00pm

at the Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Gwinnett

Room for a Little One,
Room for All!
The Heart of the Christmas Story

a Christmas Eve Service

with Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones

Tuesday, December 24
at 7:00pm



Save the Date!

SAVE THE DATE
MIXED MEDIA
WORKSHOP



OAK GROVE CUUPS
at UUGG

GATHERING
JANUARY 4TH
12PM-3PM

PAINT, CANVAS, BRUSHES
AND MORE PROVIDED.
BRING A LUNCH OR
LIGHT SNACK.

12 BETHESDA CHURCH ROAD
LAWRENCEVILLE, GA 30044

COME MARCH WITH UUGG!



UNITED EBONY SOCIETY

ANNUAL
MLK PARADE
2025

THEME: "DON'T GIVE UP ON THE DREAM!"

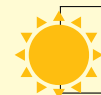
MONDAY JANUARY 20TH 2024

CEREMONY - 12:00PM  GWINNETT JUSTICE & ADMINISTRATION CENTER

PARADE - 1:00PM  GIAC TO CENTRAL GWINNETT



December 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7
8 	9 	10 	11 	12 	13 	14
15 	16	17 	18	19	20	21
22 	23	24 	25	26	27	28
29 	30	31	1 	2	3 	4

	Food Bank Collection	Donations for our members in need and the Lawrenceville Co-op	In-Person
	Potluck	Don't forget to sign up on the board, bring a dish to share as you are able	In-Person
	Board Of Trustees	Congregational Conversation, Board Meeting, or Business Meeting. All members are welcome to attend.	In-Person and Online via Zoom
	Alphabet SoUUp	Be you queer or questioning, you are welcome here	In-Person
	Choir	Rehearse for performance during Worship Services	In-Person
	Yarns from the Heart	Creates prayer shawls and baby blankets for members and friends	Online via Zoom
	Music Night	Musicians of all skill levels gather to play together	In-Person
	Property Beautification	All skills and abilities are welcome, indoor and outdoor work needed	In-Person
	Oak Grove UUCG CUUPs	Oak Grove UUCG Covenant of UU Pagans Gathering, all are welcome	In-Person
	Belief Explorers	Explorers of world faith traditions & religions, all are welcome	In-Person and Online via Zoom
	Spiral Scouts	Earth-centered, all-gender scouting group for ages 3-12	In-Person
	Covenant Groups	Small Group Ministry gatherings, Registration Required	In-Person and Online via Zoom
	Men's Group (inclusive)	Male-identified folk gather for discussion	In-Person
	Tarot	Exploration of the tarot including spreads, meditations, discussion. All are welcome regardless of experience.	In-Person last Sunday on Zoom
	Green Team Meeting	Environmental Justice group, all are welcome	Online via Zoom
	Sylvan Sanctuary	Oak Grove Sylvan Sanctuary Druid Ritual, all are welcome	In-Person
	Book Group	Title chosen monthly by the Group. All are welcome.	Online via Zoom
	Walkers	Walkers schedule outings and walk together in Bethesda Park	In Person
	Worship Services	Worship Services on Sunday Mornings at 11:00am	In-Person and Online via Zoom
	Family Game Night	All are welcome to the family game night hosted by Ian	In-Person
	QUUest & QUUest Jr.	D&D campaigns, registration required	In-Person

Staff Schedule

All UUCG Staff are off on Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Rev. Nancy Palmer Jones
Minister

revnpj@uucg.org | 678-558-4834

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays:

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

First and Third Saturdays: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Holiday considerations:

Christiana McQuain
Coordinator of Family Ministries

cmcquain@uucg.org

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

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

Sundays (on-site): 8:30 am-2:00 pm

Michael Parker
Choir Director

choirdirector@uucg.org

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

Becca Parker
Choir Director

choirdirector@uucg.org

Sunday mornings (On-site): 9:00 am-12:00 pm

LaTreisha McKay
Bookkeeper

lmckay@uucg.org

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