

July 2024

Gwinnett News for Unitarian Universalists

The Gifts of Compassion and Democracy

This month we explore The Gifts of Compassion & Democracy, because democracy functions best when it is values driven. And when those values include compassion, the common good is centered in our collective discernment of candidates, programs, and policies. Our discourse improves, and an attitude of collaboration and a diversity of ideas broaden the possibilities for solutions to the problems we face as a nation and a society.

Is centering compassion the path to prioritizing universal progress over party? To careful consideration of the means by which leaders pursue and achieve power over the blind quest to attain it? Join us through the summer as we find ways to center compassion in our pursuit of democracy.



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Worship in July

Sundays at 11:00am

Theme: The Gifts of Compassion and Democracy

Join us in-person or via Zoom

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



After Hour

July 7

Presence-With and Power-With: How Our Internal Transformation Reveals Itself in the World

We consider the spiritual gift of compassion, and how it transforms our self-love into empathy with and sympathy for others. We consider how the spiritual gift of democracy recognizes our own inherent worth and dignity, as well as that of others, by giving everyone a voice inside of a "power-with" style of government.

Bill Benshoof (he/him), Service Leader

July 14

Circles and Triangles: What Are the Faces of Unitarian and Universalist Divinity? And Why Does it Matter?

It has been said that all theology is anthropology. Let's explore, and consider why it even matters.

Bob Patrick (he/him), Service Leader

July 21

Bringing the Gifts of Compassion to Our Commitment to Democracy

In this difficult election year, we'll continue to witness—and sometimes be drawn into—fraught and polarized conversations, whether they're taking place on the news and social media or within our own family dynamics. What if a little more self-compassion—and a little brain science—could help us navigate these conversations in ways that truly embody our values of equity and pluralism?

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

July 28

Exploring Lughnasadh through Compassion and Democracy

Can we embody compassionate democracy through rituals that honor the land, the ancestors, and the spirits of place? Today, as we explore Lughnasaad, I invite you to reflect deeply on a theme that resonates profoundly with our spiritual journey: the many gifts of Compassion and Democracy.

Candice Carver (she/her), Service Leader

**Sundays at
12:30pm**

1st Sunday, July 7

no program

no Potluck this month

2nd Sunday, July 14

Spiral Scouts

(pre-registration required)

Belief Explorers

3rd Sunday, July 21

Sunday Tarot

4th Sunday, July 28

Good Trouble





Message from Reverend Nancy

Tell Me Again: What Are Those Promises We Just Made?



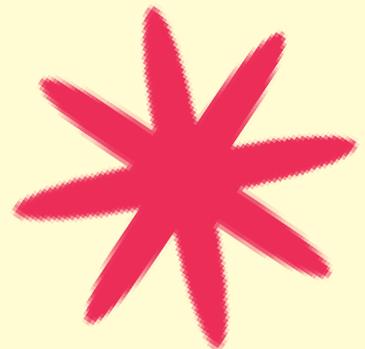
Hot off the presses on Sunday, June 23, 2024, the UU World sends out an article that begins, “After a democratic process involving thousands of Unitarian Universalists discussing the faith’s values and core theology over the past three-plus years, delegates at General Assembly 2024 voted decisively to approve a new statement of values and beliefs for Unitarian Universalism.”

That sentence is going to carry me for a long time, beloveds. It captures the depth and breadth of the work that has gone into articulating in fresh ways who we are as a living faith tradition; it honors the people who have led and participated in all the conversations and the surveys, the services and the votes that culminated in this day. And it records that as diverse and clunky and sometimes cranky our association of Unitarian Universalist congregations can be, we actually came together and Did A Thing. We made a change by putting Love at the center.

Now what?

Well, the fresh phrasing about each of our Values includes a covenant—a promise about how we congregations can live out these values. The Inspirations section issues a call, and the Inclusion section names a pledge, a striving, and a commitment. How will we live into these promises, UUCG?

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Here's a list of just the promise part of each of these statements. (I've abbreviated a tiny bit.) Please do read them like a spiritual practice, pausing between each paragraph to let the words sink in. What images spring to your mind and heart?

Interdependence: We covenant to protect Earth and all beings from exploitation, to create and nurture sustainable relationships of care and respect, mutuality and justice, and to work to repair harm and damaged relationships.

Pluralism: We covenant to learn from one another in our free and responsible search for truth and meaning, and to embrace our differences and commonalities with Love, curiosity, and respect.

Justice: We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of systemic oppression, and to support the use of inclusive democratic processes to make decisions within our congregations, our Association, and society at large.

Transformation: We covenant to collectively transform and grow spiritually and ethically, and to remain open to change.

Generosity: We covenant to freely and compassionately share our faith, presence, and resources, so that our generosity connects us in relationships of interdependence and mutuality.

Equity: Because every person has the right to flourish with inherent dignity and worthiness, we covenant to use our time, wisdom, attention, and money to build and sustain fully accessible and inclusive communities.

Inspirations: Grateful for the experiences that move us, aware of the religious ancestries we inherit, and enlivened by the diversity which enriches our faith, we are called to ever deepen and expand our wisdom.

Inclusion: We pledge to replace the barriers set up by systems of power, privilege, and oppression with ever-widening circles of solidarity and mutual respect. We strive to be an Association of congregations that truly welcome all persons who share our values. We commit to being an Association of congregations that empowers and enhances everyone's participation, especially those with historically marginalized identities.

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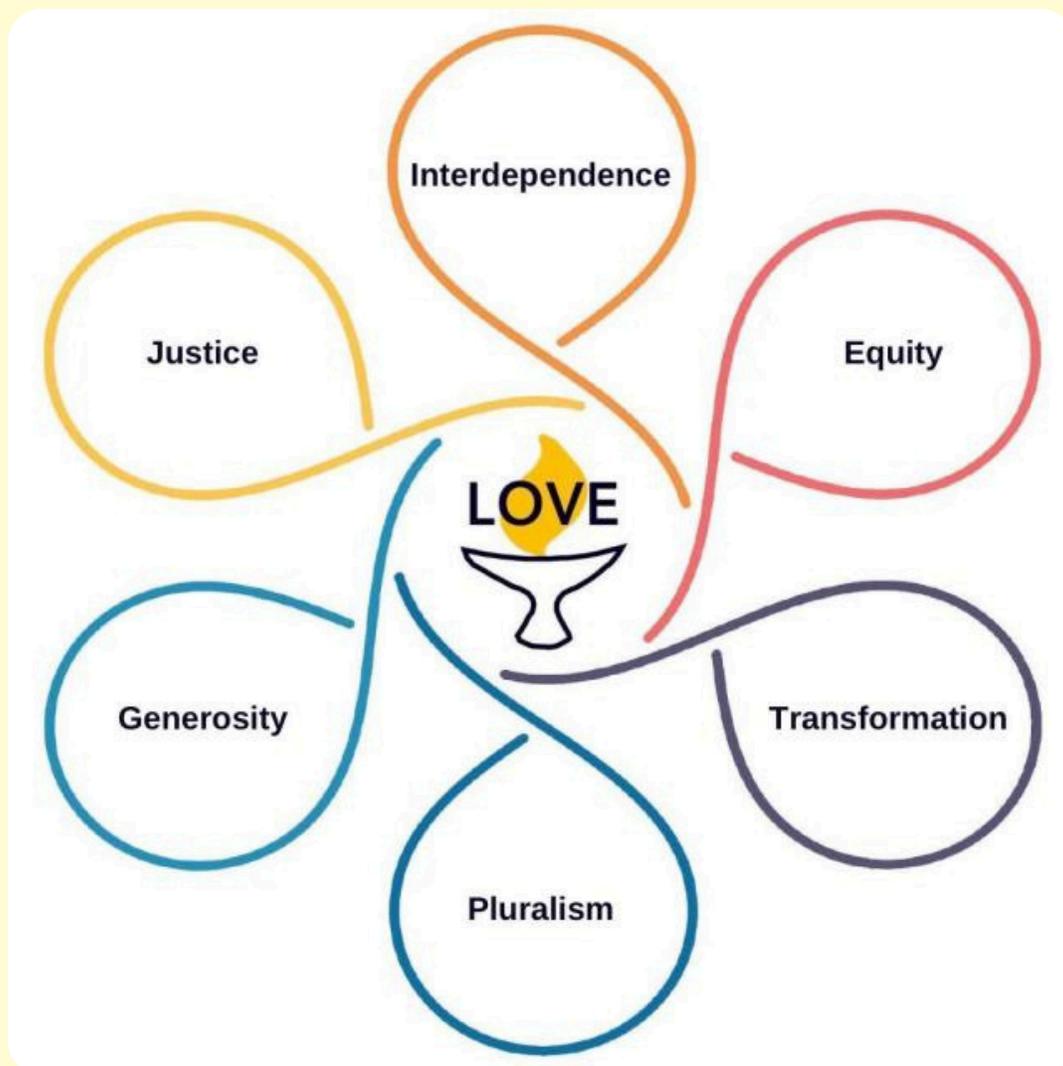
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What action verbs we've now got as guidance for our growing faith! Protect, create, nurture, work to repair. Learn, embrace, dismantle, support. Transform, grow, and remain open. Share, connect, use our gifts, sustain our communities. Deepen and expand. Replace barriers with ever-widening circles. Be an association that truly welcomes, empowers, and enhances.

Here at UUCG, we could create whole meditations and mantras, concertos and works of art, based on those verbs. I know we will surely deepen our embodiment of them with our words and deeds in the months and years to come.

I am so glad to be part of this faith and to be engaged with you in this work!

With Love at the center,
Rev. Nancy



graphic created by Tanya Webster



Message from General Assembly

By Candice Carver (she/her)

I can't express how grateful I was to be a UUA General Assembly delegate this year, but I can say I wish I had gotten involved in GA sooner. I was not prepared for the sheer amount of community, classes and discussions to choose from. It was a bit overwhelming, but it was exciting to see all that was offered for the different interests that make us UU's.

I was so happy to see environmental groups, LGBTQIA groups, spiritual groups and so many more. One group that I found inspired me to do so much for myself and my community was the FatUU and Fat Liberation group. Seeing this, seeing that I'm not the only one that has been condemned for my body was uplifting. Seeing that there is a movement to bring attention to the injustice towards fat, plus size, round, fluffy and heavy set people, was inspiring.

Although there were many more things going on during the General Assembly I was so inspired by the meetup with this group and I attended the Fat Liberation at the Intersection: Anastasia Kidd and Tigress Osborn in Conversation in which "Rev. Dr. Anastasia Kidd, author of Fat Church, and Tigress Osborn, Chair of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, [...] discuss the complexities of fat liberation and the social biases and weight stigma that pervade even progressive political spaces."

This conversation encouraged me to bring awareness to fat liberation and activism for equal rights at EVERY SIZE. I only hope that they make it available for all to watch when GA is concluded.

I have so many experiences of being stigmatized, teased, left out of social experiences, assumed I'm unhealthy, and degraded as a fat person. To the point that I have harmed my body with unhealthy diets, eating habits and mental thoughts. I am not a disease, I am not unhealthy, I am not ugly, I AM FAT, I AM BEAUTIFUL!

The General Assembly isn't just about this one presentation, it was so much more. I learned more about stewardship and tools to be a productive and engaging pledge chair. I learned about lay leadership and what support systems the UUA has for their lay leaders that we don't take advantage of. I learned about the democratic process that the UUA takes so seriously and presented a well thought out platform for discussions and disagreements.

I am so thrilled that Article II passed and that I was a part of this democratic process. I can't express how overwhelmed and anxiety ridden I was at the start of the General Assembly. But as the days went on, it got easier and I relaxed into the meetings, the group sessions, and the meet ups. I would encourage everyone to experience this at least once in their life as a UU. This was one of the most encompassing and over all educating assemblies I've ever been to.

General Assembly 2025 will be June 18-22 and will be multiplatform. I'm excited to throw my hat in the ring for another year as a delegate and would love to attend in person should I be financially able to. I would love to see our congregation gather together for a grand trip of the delegates and members to Baltimore to show that UUCG is centered around LOVE. **Maybe we can carpool....**

Candice Carver





Reflections on General Assembly 2024

By Bob Patrick (he/him)

The standout event for me as one of UUCG's delegates to General Assembly this year was witnessing how we as a very large gathered community chose to watch ourselves and call ourselves in when something was going wrong. What does that mean?

We were told that the UUA had set up official “watchers” of the ongoing proceedings and whenever they became aware of something said or done that was out of covenant, called for a pause, consulted with the moderators, and then we were all given some new direction based on those observations. You may have noticed in the Sunday service introductions which were pre-recorded, individuals told us their names, a physical description of themselves including things like skin color, hair color, eye color, hair length, type or styling, clothing descriptions, and their location and the names of the indigenous peoples who once lived on and stewarded that land. These kinds of descriptions were used all through GA as an attempt to give greater accessibility to those with visual impairments.

Individuals in their self-descriptions were referring to themselves as “cis-gendered” which means a person whose gender corresponds to the gender assigned at birth. The watchers noted that this label was unnecessary as that was not something that one could visually see and that requiring that self-description might force someone to out themselves when they were not ready to. They asked us to stop using that term. Another time, the watchers reported that some people who were white were describing themselves as “light-skinned.” They noted that this is a term with specific meaning within Communities of Color, and asked that white people not use this term. And, there were a couple of occasions during debates where individuals began to use opinion and judgments against others to make their point. The watchers paused us, called us into silence, back into covenant, into generosity and love. They gave us the grace of second chances..

This is messy and at times frustrating and painful. And it's the kind of mess that gave me pause (notice that this required a lot of pausing) to consider just how hard we were working to be generous with one another--generous to those of us who are visually impaired people; generous to our many gender identities; generous to People of Color; generous to people who for passion or other reasons became combative. At some point, in the mess, despite the mess, because of the mess, what I took away was that we are generous people, or at least a people aiming to live up to one of our freshly stated and long lived values: generosity. And that reminded me of our hymn:

We are a gentle, angry people . . .

We are a justice seeking people . . .

We are young and old together . . .

We are a land of many colors . . . and we are singing for our lives.



Give Away the Plate Recipient



Our third quarter plate recipient is the New Georgia Project.

The New Georgia Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is an effort to register, civically engage, and build power with the New Georgia Majority—the large and growing population of Black, brown, young, and other historically marginalized communities through nonpartisan voter registration, organizing, and advocacy on the issues important to our communities.

The selection of the New Georgia Project as our shared plate recipient is timely and relevant in this election season. Our ministry themes for July and August invite us to explore democracy as an expression of our core values. In addition, UUCG worked in partnership with The New Georgia Project for phone banking in 2020; and as part of our congregation's work toward achieving a Good Trouble Congregation Designation from the UUA, we are hoping to partner with them this year in projects over the summer months and into the fall.

[Learn more here](#)

LAY MINISTERS

New Slate of Lay Ministers at UUCG

- Radical Welcome- Carol Underwood (she/her)
- Green Space - Gary Kiel (he/him)
- Spiritual Growth - Lydia Patrick (she/her)
- Connecting Within - Lisa Kiel (she/her)
- Connecting Beyond - Candice Carver (she/her)

Communications Team Member Search

UUCG MEMBERS!

WE NEED YOU

OPEN VOLUNTEER POSITIONS:
COMMUNICATIONS
TEAM MEMBER

CONTACT CANDICE CARVER FOR DETAILS

Ministry of Radical Welcome

(Y)Our Radical Engine

By Bill Benshoof (he/him)

Dear Friends,

As we transition the Radical Welcome Lay Minister role from myself to Carol Underwood, I have a story and some insights for you.

"In the olden days," there was a Green Energy movement to convert gas guzzlers into recyclers of waste cooking oil. My Brother, Rob, who had a long commute, made the conversion on a vintage Mercedes and freed himself from the need to look for gas stations. However, he did need sources for used cooking oil, so he made friends along his commuting, including some Chinese restaurants, who were glad to save their used oil for him. I liked to think his source of energy ran on friendship.

Just as the vintage Mercedes engine needed fuel, so does our (more appropriately, "your") Radical Engine- need a different kind of grease - "elbow grease." As you've seen, I'm always about some task on Sunday mornings, to the extent that I often miss most of Service. It's a labor of love, however, I want to talk about that technique as "the elbow grease equation."

The premise of the "elbow grease equation" is that, by showing folks the tasks that run our Radical Engine, I and the other volunteers will inspire folks to help out. AND, THANK YOU! This equation worked, and there are several folks who are new to The Engine and whose help is very welcome.

Going forward, as I step back from the leadership role into a helper role, I'll still be one of those folks who run the Engine. HOWEVER, without people-power, the Engine doesn't run, and we miss opportunities to be Radical in our Welcome. As the Congregation pointed out back in September when Sheree Bailey offered an opportunity to share what you would like to see and create at UUCG, there is a common element to much of our Engine - FOOD!
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Hummus Recipe

1 can chickpeas OR
1 ½ cups cooked chickpeas
Juice of 1 large lemon
1/4 cup (60ml) well-stirred tahini
1 small garlic clove, minced
2 tablespoons EVOO
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
Salt to taste
2 to 3 tablespoons cold water or
aquafaba
Dash ground paprika, sumac, or Za'atar

In the bowl of a food processor, combine the tahini and lemon juice and process for 1 minute. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then process for 30 seconds more.

Add the olive oil, minced garlic, cumin, and a 1/2 teaspoon of salt to the whipped tahini and lemon juice. Process for 30 seconds, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, and then process for another 30 seconds or until well blended.

Add half of the chickpeas to the food processor and process for 1 minute. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl, then add the remaining chickpeas and process them until thick and relatively smooth, 1 to 2 minutes.

The hummus will likely be too thick and still have tiny bits of chickpea. To fix this, slowly add 2 to 3 tablespoons of cold water or aquafaba with the food processor turned on until you reach the perfect consistency.

Ministry of Radical Welcome

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For example, mostly verbatim from comments by members of the Congregation, "we" wanted:

- (More) Frequent Saturday or Sunday evening gatherings with food;
- Potlucks every Sunday; and
- More events like monthly pizza night with activities.

These ideas, along with other possibilities, identify food as one part of our "Radical Engine" fuel, an (y)our "elbow grease" as another.

In the last year, it was my intent NOT to hold counterproductive committee meetings or antisocial parking-lot conversations where folks wailed about the lack of "elbow grease" support. I think I succeeded.

I did follow the Safety And Security Committee's example by setting up a way (GroupMe, and there are other possibilities) for "on-the-fly" collaboration about fuel for your Engine, and showed the example that the "pitch in" approach can be way more efficient - and possibly more effective- than lamentation sessions.

Mentors and friends also pitched in to create a "Potluck Volunteer Board," which has been a resounding success because we have an "open book" on whether or not potluck happens - depending on whether volunteers happen!

So, I invite everyone to continue to pitch in with gratitude and gusto to provide the "elbow grease" that keeps our Radical Engine running! And, I invite folks who see that sort of action to PLEASE pitch in, because redoubling our efforts can help satisfy our Congregation's appetite for the Fellowship and Fun that go along with Food!

You are Beautiful, you are Powerful, and you are Loved, and I have every confidence that, as everyone brings their Magic, our Engine can help us open magical spaces!

Don't forget, "we needs our feels!"

Peace,
Bill

Ministry of Green Space

UUCG HAS BEEN INVADED!

By Karen Smith (she/her)

Did you know that UUCG has been invaded? Aliens are starting to take over our property and possibly yours!

Now that I have your attention, let me explain. These aliens are of the common garden variety and can be found in almost every backyard in the county. They are English ivy, Chinese privet, princess trees, mimosa and autumn olive. The scientific names can all be found on the Georgia Invasive Species Council web site, along with lots more, unfortunately. Nandina and Japanese honeysuckle, too. Not only do they not provide food for our native pollinators, but these plants also block the sunlight and take nutrients from our native wildflowers. They are adapted to, but part of, our local ecosystems. And part of what we do on our monthly Beautification Days is to remove these invasive plants from our property.

Come join us on our next hunt for invasive plants on **Saturday, July 6, 10:00-12:00pm**. Bring a water bottle and protection from the sun, because, well, it's July in Georgia!

Climate a Hot Topic at 2024 General Assembly

By Terry Welsher (he/him)

With this being my 11th General Assembly, I have seen the topic of climate change vary in its presence in the program and in the minds of the organizers and attendees. At my first GA in 2014, there was a Business Resolution asking the UUA Board of Trustees to begin a process of divesting the UU Common Fund investments from fossil fuel companies. A somewhat weakened form of the resolution did pass. Another divestment resolution was proposed last year but did not pass. Climate discussions and proposals have arisen in the years in between.

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Invasive species is defined as any species, including its seeds, spore or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem; and whose introduction does or is likely to cause environmental harm.



Ministry of Green Space

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Fast forward to this year. There were many changes in the UU climate organizations this year that I won't go into here. The main point is that these changes generated a lot of action that was evident at this year's GA. There were four main areas of action:

1. Among the three Actions for Immediate Witness (AIW) was – World on Fire: Humanitarian Work and Climate Change. It passed with 95.6% approval. Here is a quote from the Action proposal. “The impact of climate change brings congregations into a new era for religious activities, education, and humanitarian work. The General Assembly calls for immediate and direct action during the next 120 days. Congregations are asked to help each other and to act with marginalized groups to provide humanitarian services while working for justice.” This leaves us with the question as to how UUCG can be engaged in this type of humanitarian work.
2. UU Climate Justice Coalition – This group met four times during the GA to socialize an emerging new UU vision which is described as an evolution from Environmental Justice to Climate Justice to Energy Justice. Eleven different UU organizations have joined to form this coalition. The discussions and actions focus on the fact that climate change impacts marginalized communities first and worst and these communities are least resourced to adapt and respond to climate disruption. Also, during the on-going transition to clean energy we must consider Energy Justice. That is, we need to ensure access to the economic benefits of the new energy system. The question was posed: What do climate and energy injustice look like in your community?
3. UU Climate Justice Revival – Congregations can sign up to be a part of this collective event which will occur in individual congregations on or after September 28-29, 2024. There will be a series of information sessions in August. There is wide flexibility in how congregations can participate. From the Revival Welcome Packet – “...congregations will host UU Climate Justice Revivals to collectively reimagine a spirit-filled ... future. Through conversations, worship, and advocacy, congregations will work together to realize climate justice ... in our communities.” Congregations are asked to register by July 1.
4. UU/Citizens' Climate Connection – This was not a formal part of the program but has happened at GA for as long as I can remember. It stems from the fact that there are many UUs who are also members of Citizens' Climate Lobby/Education. The two organizations share similar values and ways of working. The group met several times during GA and shared experiences and described the similarities between the two organizations to people new to either organization.



UU Climate Justice Revival | September 28-29, 2024

Ministry of Spiritual Growth



Monday

Monday was named after the moon! In Anglo-Saxon, the moon is called *mona*, *Monandæg* translates to "Moon's day." In Old Norse, the moon is personified as the God *Máni*.



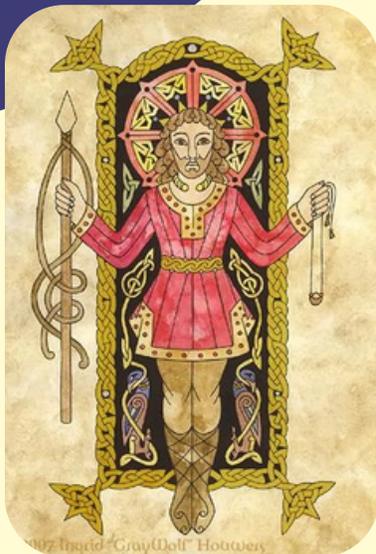
Oak Grove CUUPS

The Oak Grove Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) of UUCG is open to anyone in the UUCG community. Our purpose is to explore, celebrate, and participate in Earth-centered spiritual practices within the framework of Unitarian Universalism. We have regular attendees from a variety of Earth-centered traditions, as well as people who do not practice a particular pagan path but are interested in learning more.



What is Sylvan Sanctuary?

Sylvan Sanctuary is a branch of the Oak Grove UUCG CUUPS that focuses on a Druidic path. The Sylvan Sanctuary Druids host the Rituals for the Eight Solar Holidays with a Potluck after.. To join the Sylvan Sanctuary and become an Aspirant contact Bob Patrick.



Lughnasadh

A Sense of Community

Lughnasadh is a traditional Celtic festival that marks the beginning of the harvest season. Lughnasadh fosters a sense of community much like the God Lugh did with his character and tales of his life that highlighted the importance of unity, skill and cultural identity.

Lughnasadh centers around celebrating the first fruits of the harvest and giving thanks for the abundance of the land. This communal celebration reinforces the idea of sharing blessings and recognizing collective prosperity, fostering a sense of unity and gratitude among participants. Lugh's identity as a Warrior God inspired a collective defense within communities encouraging them to support and protect each other in times of conflict and adversity.

Lugh was known as *Samildánach*, meaning "Skilled in Many Arts," and he was proficient in various disciplines such as crafts, arts, and warfare. This portrayal of Lugh as a polymath inspired communities to value and cultivate diverse skills and talents, fostering a culture of learning and mutual respect for different abilities. This emphasis on skill and mastery encouraged people to work together, sharing their expertise for the common good.

Lughnasadh included feasting, games, trading, and fairs, which strengthened social bonds and communal identity. By honoring Lugh during this festival, communities reinforced their connections to each other and shared cultural heritage.

In modern times Lugh is celebrated as a cultural hero, his tales and legends serve as a source of inspiration and moral guidance for many pagan communities. His actions and virtues were recounted in stories that were passed down through generations, instilling values of courage, ingenuity, and community spirit. Lughnasadh celebrates more than just the abundance and harvest but the connection we have as a community and society. Join us **August 3rd at 6PM** as we celebrate the Earth's abundance and our community.

Ministry of Spiritual Growth



Oak Grove CUUPS & Sylvan Sanctuary Summer Schedule

CUUPS Gatherings will be on hiatus until September 7th

August 3rd

Lughnasadh Ritual

At Lughnasadh we see the fields of corn being cut, and for some this is the true time of the festival. In the fields John Barleycorn, who laid with the Lady in the woods at Beltane, has grown old, and now stands bent and bearded with a crooked cane. He looks to the Sun as he has changed from green to gold, and he knows that his time has come. His life will feed the people, and it is this sacrifice that we honor at Lughnasadh.

Ritual Lead by Sylvan Sanctuary Druids

2017



2019



2022



2023



What to Bring To A Ritual

- offering to Mother Earth
- Canned goods for the Food Drive to Lawrenceville Coop
- Drums and/or other instruments to use during ritual
- A dish to share for potluck
- Your Staff or Wand
- Druid egg to place on the altar





Magical Arts & Crafts!

Preparing for Lughnasad

Lughnasad or Lammas marks the beginning of the harvest season. This is the time to start decorating with seasonal flowers, gourds and cornstalks... but the craft we present to you for this ritual is

Herb & Wildflower Besoms

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Twine, jute or other rope
- A branch or stick, depending on how long you want the handle
- Tall grasses, wildflowers, herbs, acorns or pinecones
- Hot glue gun & glue sticks

Once Materials are collected cut the grasses, wildflowers, and herbs to the desired length. Arrange the grass at the end of the stick and tie it securely around the stick with one or two loops around. Arrange the wild flowers and herbs to your liking, once complete secure with a bit of hot glue and start wrapping the rope around the bouquet and secure it with each round with hot glue. Hot glue acorns and/or pinecones to the arrangement as you like. You can also decorate with ribbons, charms and runes.

Take a small loop of twine and hot glue to the top of the stick so that you can hang it on the wall.

As you are making this arrangement think of the abundance that nature has provided for this first harvest and of all the more she will provide to us moving into the fall.

We would love to see what you made! Post it to the UUCG CUUPS Facebook page and tag it with **#WildflowerBesoms!**

Fun Fact!

One of the oldest forms of preserving food, fermentation, was not invented, but discovered! Fermentation happens naturally in the wild and 10,000 years ago early humans discovered it by observation and started making wine and beer! HOW COOL IS THAT?!?!?





New Moon Election Magic

A New Moon is a time for new beginnings, setting intentions, and planting the seeds for the future. Here's a short and simple New Moon ritual focused on bringing blessings and positive energy to the presidential election.

Gather your Supplies

- A black or dark blue candle
- A piece of paper and pen
- A small bowl of water (preferably moon water)
- A bay leaf

Prepare your self and space - Find a quiet, comfortable space where you will not be disturbed. Cleanse the area as you wish to do. Arrange your materials in front of you. Sit comfortably and take a few deep breaths to center and ground yourself. If you practice circle casting, do so now.

Invoke the Moon - Light the black or dark blue candle. Hold your hands over the bowl of water and say: "Element of Water, flow with peace and clarity. Blessed New Moon, I call upon your power to aid in this ritual of new beginnings."

Set your Intentions - On the piece of paper, write down your intentions for the presidential election. Focus on positive outcomes, such as peace, unity, justice, and the highest good for all. Fold the paper and hold it to your heart, visualizing your intentions being imbued with the energy of the New Moon.

Bless with the Bay Leaf - Take the Bay leaf and say; "Bay leaf of wisdom and protection, bless these intentions with your strength. Guide us towards a future filled with justice and unity." Place the bay leaf on top of the folded paper.

Meditate - Spend a few minutes in quiet meditation, visualizing a positive and peaceful outcome for the election. See the nation united, and the leaders acting with wisdom and integrity.

Close the Ritual - Thank the Moon and the elements for their presence and assistance. Extinguish the candle, saying "Thank you, Moon, for your guidance and blessings. This ritual is complete." If you cast a circle, open it now.

Place the bay leaf and folded paper in a safe place where they will not be disturbed until the election is over. Reflect on your intentions periodically and reinforce them with positive thoughts and actions.

Additional Actions - Perform the ritual on the night of the New Moon or within 48 hours for the most potent energy. Keep your focus on positive outcomes and the highest good for all involved. Follow up your ritual with informed and responsible actions, such as voting and encouraging others to participate in the electoral process. **Join us for UU The Vote and Good Trouble** this year to make your voice known.

By aligning your intentions with the powerful energy of the moon, you can bring blessings and positive energy to this years elections. Be sure to keep individual people's consent in mind when setting intentions. Ensure your intention doesn't infringe on another person's autonomy, no matter how much you disagree or dislike them.

Moon Magic



NEW MOON

New beginnings, and renewal.
Time to do clear Manifestation magic, set those intentions.



FIRST QUARTER

Keep Moving forward putting your ideas and plans into action.



FULL MOON

This is the time to push the intentions made at the new moon and prepare for the harvest of intentions.



LAST QUARTER

Allow the transformation of your accomplishments to fully emerge. Let go and release what does not serve you.

Ministry of Connecting Within

Gifts

by Lisa Kiel (she/her)

We're exploring the Gifts of Compassion and Democracy this month, and I realized that UUCG is exactly that, a gift!. We gather together committed to both compassion and the democratic process and what we experience here is a gift of both of those ideals. We have multiple ways to connect to one another, get to know each other and to offer compassion. The democratic process that governs our congregation allows all to vote on what happens here within our community. We rotate our leadership to allow more folk the opportunity to serve. Even the range of our groups reflects our varied pluralistic interests, and we are free to find our own niche here.

If you are taking advantage of the many opportunities for involvement here at UUCG, I am so glad. If you are hesitant to join a group, I encourage you to take a risk and jump in. One of the gifts of democracy is that you make the choice. If a group isn't for you, you don't have to stay. There are so many new groups looking for participants, The Men's Group, Alphabet SoUUp for our LGBTQIA+ folk and QUUest on 4th Fridays are three of our newest groups. Fall and its flurry of activities and programs will be on us before we know it. So here, in the lazy days of summer, give something new a try!

With Joy!

Lisa

Ongoing Connecting Within Opportunities: For more info, check out the CW bulletin board located beside the Library entrance!

Alphabet SoUUp - 1st Monday at 6:30pm

Chalice Circle - monthly meeting set by members

Book Group - Online 4th Wednesday from 7-9 pm

Yarns from the Heart - Online 1st and 3rd Wednesday

QUUest - Adults: In Person: 4th Friday at 6pm, contact Jason Pfeffer to inquire about openings

QUUest Jr. - Youth: fully enrolled

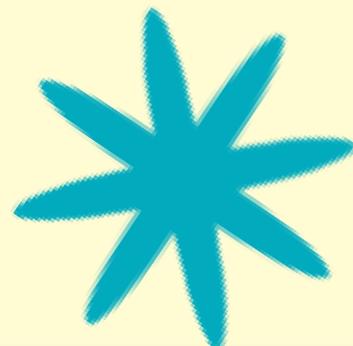
Spiral Scouts - In-Person 2nd Sunday following Sunday service

Music Night - In Person every Thursday night starting at 6:30

Men's Group (inclusive) - In Person 2nd Saturdays in person at 9 am

"When you get to a place where you understand that love and belonging, your worthiness, is a birthright and not something you have to earn, anything is possible."

-Brene Brown



Ministry of Connecting Within



Book Group July 24 at 7pm

July Selection:
*Are You There God?
It's Me, Margaret.*
by Judy Blume

Published in 1970 this book for young girls drew controversy for two reasons: its frank talk about sexuality and its skepticism of organized religion which led to its banning in some school districts.

[Learn More...](#)

Potluck Update

Since we had a special potluck late in June, **we will not have a July potluck.** To sign up to help with the next one on **August 4th**, check out the dry wipe board on the bulletin board in the entryway. If you don't know what to bring, see the Radical Welcome space in this newsletter for a hummus recipe.

You do not have to sign up to bring food or break bread with your community.

UUCG POTLUCK STARTER PACK

-  Oops, no drinks
-  VEGGIES
-  Get more forks
-  Slow Cookers
-  The best company!

Ministry of Connecting Beyond

Good Trouble

by *Barbara Stahnke (she/her)*

UUCG wants to be designated as a Good Trouble Congregation (See my June GNUUs article). A Good Trouble Congregation is connected to UU the Vote, Side with Love, and other partner organizations (like the New Georgia Project) aligned with UU values.

Even though I will not be the Lay Minister of Connecting Beyond as of this month, I do have a connection to the next Lay Minister of Connecting Beyond: know her, love her, respect her, can work with her, and anticipate her support, Yay Candice Carver – I look forward to working with you in efforts to connect beyond our walls with UU the Vote (UUTV) efforts. She rocks skills that will support our efforts to engage with our Gwinnett community and within our UUCG community.

Needs – Leaders, Someone with Slack Skills and some time to coordinate on Slack (Slack is a networking channel for UUTV), Participants for training and activities.

- Choose a training on the UUTV training and resources and let me know what you think.
- Find the “Good Trouble Congregation” in the UUCG Community Chats on Facebook. This will be a primary location for planning and notifications about upcoming activities.
- If you are not on Facebook, please contact me directly at bstahnke@comcast.net. I will be creating an email notification group. Place UUCG Good Trouble Congregation in the subject line.



Second Produce Giveaway Rocked

by *Barbara Stahnke (she/her)*

UUCG participated with Volunteer Gwinnett with our second produce distribution. This time we gave away 80 boxes of produce in about 2.5 hours. Thank you to all who helped make this event another success for UUCG. The contacts we are making with our community are HUGE. Here’s a photo of some of the folks who did the work.



You can read more about becoming a [Good Trouble Congregation](https://uuthevote.org/goodtroublecongregation/) here:

<https://uuthevote.org/goodtroublecongregation/>

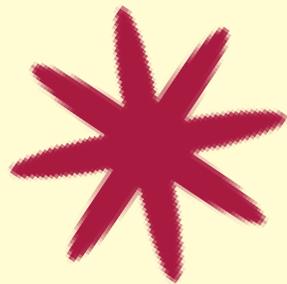
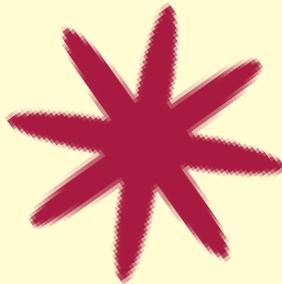
Ministry of Connecting Beyond

Lilburn Pride a Huge Success

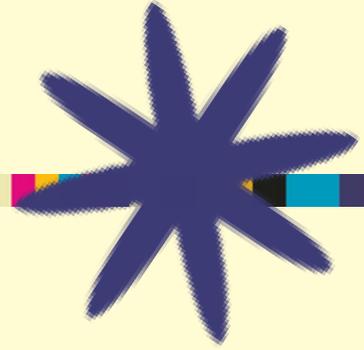
By Barbara Stahnke (she/her)

We again had a booth at Lilburn Pride in June. The booth was beautiful, the float was FABULOUS, and the choir sang “You are a Yes” to grand applause. One of the main organizers told me how much she appreciated and loved what we did. (I wish I wrote what she said down; I just remember how good it felt to hear it.) I am already talking to the choir to prep them for next year. Also, we identified two other Gwinnett Pride events to consider participating in next year.

Now to prepare for Atlanta Pride in October. I need a point person for this as I will be out of the Country during Atlanta Pride this year.



Staff Hours



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

Summer considerations:

- June 28-July 8: Vacation
- August 5-11: Study Break

Christiana McQuain, Coordinator of Family Ministries,

cmcquain@uucg.org

Tuesdays, 9:00am-4:00pm; Fridays (on-site), 9:00am-2:00pm;

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

away for Professional Development July 7-12

Aline Harris, Office Administrator, aharris@uucg.org

Tuesdays 9:30 am-1:00 pm; Fridays (on-site) 10:00 am-1:00 pm;

most Sundays (on-site) 10:30 am-12:30 pm

Michael Parker, Choir Director, choirdirector@uucg.org

Office hours (on-site) Tuesdays, 1:00pm-6:00pm, by appointment

off during the month of July

Becca Parker, Choir Director, choirdirector@uucg.org

On-site Sunday mornings (except 4th Sundays)

off during the month of July

LaTreisha McKay, Bookkeeper, lmckay@uucg.org

Available for communication on Monday evenings, 5:00-8:00pm



ALL UUCG STAFF ARE PART-TIME, PLEASE RESPECT THEIR HOURS