

February 2022

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Thirty Days of Love

For Muslims, the holy month of Ramadan is a time of spiritual reflection, prayer, worship, charity and discipline. Fasting during its observance is one of the Five Pillars of Islam; the others being Profession of Faith, Almsgiving (charity), Pilgrimage and Prayer (five times per day).

Thirty Days of Love is the annual Unitarian Universalist Side With Love celebration that runs from the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. to Valentine's Day. With the vast majority of Unitarian Universalists coming from various denominations and having different beliefs (we are a covenantal faith rather than a creedal one, (i.e. we are more concerned with how we are together rather than what we believe together)), UU traditions, holidays and rituals are sometimes difficult to embody and carry forward...though we did Chalica again this year!!!

For the past two years, in an effort to make our UU Thirty Days of Love more meaningful for me personally, I borrowed elements of Islam's observance of Ramadan and incorporated that into my observance of Thirty Days of Love.

Throughout the month, I fast during the daylight hours and engage in my meditation practice five times a day.

Although Almsgiving is practiced throughout the year, I am also more intentional about almsgiving during this particular month.

Fasting during Ramadan is done as an exercise of discipline to focus one's attention on the stirrings of the spirit. Observers of Ramadan do not eat or drink anything during the daylight hours; yet fasting is not meant to be a punishment or a penalty. For Thirty Days of Love, I've had to make some modifications. I allow myself water and coffee.

Also, as part of my observance, I'll be posting a daily reflection on the UUMAN Members Facebook Group.

Who knows, maybe, with this, you'll be inspired do celebrate Thirty Days of Love in your own way. Doing so would be a favor to yourself...and one that can't help but send your positive energy out into the cosmos. And the cosmos needs you!

Thirty Days of Love...may it be a blessing!

Nurture our spirit. Strive for Justice. Transform the world.

Dave

Nothing New in '22

The struggle to be a good environmentalist is real. As Unitarians, we are often very hard on ourselves and tend to feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility to do the right thing and often take on more than our share. In 2022 there are more than enough stressors that are beyond our control, so I have decided to take some of the pressure off my environmental efforts by simply not buying anything new this year. Pledging, Nothing New in '22. By nothing new I am referring to items other than everyday essentials, for those the Earth Ministries team has some suggestions. A few things that have motivated me to Stop shopping include the following:



An article by The Atlantic titled, **Stop Shopping** <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2021/10/stop-shopping-global-supply-chain-shipping-delays/620465/>

This article points out how an increase in consumption has contributed to the supply chain problem. We may not be able to help the container ships get to shore, but we can decrease our demand.

Another experience that has caused me to reevaluate what I buy is simply looking around my house. What's your experience when you look around? Does everything that you see bring you joy? Is it all necessary? What purpose does each item serve? I know that I have too much stuff, but I also know that I have far less stuff than many people that I know. I don't rent a storage facility or fill a garage so full that it no longer holds a car, I don't have closets bursting at the seams, but I still have a lot of stuff that I don't need.

Finally, the first rule of "R's" is to REFUSE. So, I will simply REFUSE to buy anything except essentials for all of 2022. Instead, I am reading books that have sat on my shelf (some for the first time, some for the second or third), I am finding new ways to wear old clothes, I am using up all the products that have been stored in my cabinets and drawers, and generally trying to use what I already have.

For the household items that we do need to purchase throughout the year, the best thing that we can do is attempt to shop smartly. As a start, you can be inspired by our own Bob Popp and simply pay attention to the packaging of the product. Aim for minimal packaging and choose items not wrapped in plastic when the choice exists.

For a comprehensive database of products, check out the Environmental Working Group's website... <https://www.ewg.org/consumer-guides>. Here you can find a plethora of information about various industries, their products and their environmental impact.

<https://byhumankind.com/> offers personal care products that "don't have to come at the Earth's expense" and <https://www.grove.co/> offers "sustainable choices to transform your home".

Looking for the best canned fish options? The two top brands for flavor and sustainability, based on research conducted by Gus Hadorn, are Cento (reasonably priced) and Fishwife (listed as best for sustainability and flavor but expensive).

And finally, here's an article listing The 10 Most Environmentally Friendly & Sustainable Companies (2021). <https://growensemble.com/environmentally-friendly-companies/?ignorenitro=a26fd5a00f9bd2d6e8b5cd41bdf70ed1>

To summarize, being a good environmentalist doesn't have to be hard work. Instead of trying to do it perfectly, simplify your efforts by reducing your consumption. When you do consume, aim for less packaging and avoid plastic when possible. Finally, support businesses that make the Earth a priority.

~Jennifer Phillippi

Times are a Changing

January marked the beginning of a new calendar year and the midpoint of our church year. Both have given me time to pause and reflect on the last six to twelve months. During that time a new Board developed goals for our church, we continued to offer Sunday services and we hired and lost Ayanna Kafi, our DRE (Director of Religious Exploration) and Membership Coordinator. We hired Ayanna because we were counting on being able to increase membership and grow the RE program for our young ones. It didn't pan out. That means we need to look at ourselves and figure out what we missed. Where did we go wrong? We need to change and learn from this lesson.

After a glorious month of seeing each other at church every Sunday, we're back to being separated by the Omicron variant, and for how long? What are we missing? What's going to change?

The next few months will be crucial. We'll kick off another stewardship campaign, we'll be looking for a new vice-president and a new treasurer. Some Board members will step down, and we'll lose their dedication and expertise. How will that impact you? Impact our church? Will new leaders step up? How will we manage the change?

Do you see a recurring theme?

Change is everywhere. Let's get used to it. People react differently to change. Some process quickly and get on with life. Others take their time and move more slowly. A few years ago, I wrote a sermon after Toniann Read left her position as DRE. From that sermon, I remember this about change, applicable to our current situation:

All people are more likely to need a cognitive closure when they believe that the benefit of a premature closure outweighs the costs of remaining open-minded.

What that means for us is that we can stay open to current conflict (no DRE, no Membership coordinator, no one paid to do these tasks for us, but us) for a while, and then we 'll feel the need to act, sometimes to our detriment. The longer we take to decide about what to do next, the more likely we'll choose a mediocre solution instead of an ideal solution. I'm not saying to hurry up and decide what to do next.

On the contrary, I'm saying let's be aware of how to do things differently, support each other during this process, accept change, fear not what lies ahead. Together. Times are a changing, but they'll be better times if we stay connected.

Together we can continue to serve the north Fulton community with a liberal faith, together we stay connected to our neighbors through Family Promise and together we encourage our members--adults and young ones alike-- to be kind and generous. Will you join me?

Jennifer Ratcliffe

La Prez



UUMAN Sharing the Plate—50/50

Each month a non-profit organization is chosen to receive half of our designated 50-50 offering. In December, Foster Care Support Foundation received \$862.00 and UUMAN got the same amount to be used for the work that we do.

Last year our recipients were:

- ♦ Project South
- ♦ Fulton County Remembrance Coalition
- ♦ Family Promise of North Fulton/Dekalb(3 times)
- ♦ Kids to the Country
- ♦ Nourish Ecovillage
- ♦ Groveway Community Group
- ♦ NE India Partner Church-Mawsynjri
- ♦ Lost-n-Found Youth
- ♦ North Fulton Community Charities
- ♦ Foster Care Support Foundation

The total amount UUMAN donated to non-profit organizations through the 50-50 program for 2021 was **\$5,794.50**.

Freedom University will be our recipient of **February's 50-50** offering.

Through serving UUMAN as 50-50 Coordinator for the last 4+ years, I have learned a lot about myself through this program and by giving in other ways at UUMAN over the quarter of a century that Mike and I have been members. Giving to charity was something that my father, a very resourceful Middle Georgia dairy farmer did not do. He saved it all! I learned resourcefulness and frugality from him and his parents and I am grateful for that.

But a piece that was missing to help fulfill my needs as a person has been gained through volunteering and the giving of treasure. I am still learning about the giving of treasure to non-profits that UUMAN has introduced me and shadow its choice of charities by giving to some of them personally. I have found that feelings of happiness can be found through giving to organizations that make the world better. I credit UUMAN with teaching me to give charitably through the 50-50 program and with other giving opportunities.

Some of what I liked best about being 50-50 coordinator were meeting other people-volunteers and staff of the charities and learning about the organizations' missions. I came to UUMAN in search of community, but have been transformed through the years by learning to give.

Thank you UUMAN for your generosity to the 50-50 program and for teaching me about giving!

I am grateful!

Michelle Liebergesell



Life Celebrations

We want to commemorate the happy occasions in the lives of our UUMAN members and other friends of UUMAN. We are looking for Naming Ceremonies, Graduations, Marriages, Anniversaries, Retirements, and Birthdays. Please submit the information about your special day, in the month prior to the event, to membership-tech@uuman.org

Date	Celebration
2/1	Kyra P. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
2/2	Elizabeth S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
2/4	Phillip Seaver is celebrating a birthday
2/5	Carolina Patlis-Friedman is celebrating a birthday
2/12	Jacob C. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
2/14	Mike and Michelle L. are celebrating their anniversary
2/15	Dan Cipperly is celebrating a birthday
	Maud vdB. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
2/22	Riahna Lee is celebrating a birthday
2/28	Raffaella S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday

UUMAN Clean-Up Crew

We serve many communities at UUMAN, both inside and outside our walls. We have a commitment to our Crabapple Road neighbors to help keep the shoulders litter free.

Thanks to our clean-up crew who bundled up on a cold January Saturday to pick up litter along the road.

~ Bruce Langston



Sunday Worship Service and many other activities will continue to be made available online for the health and safety of all our members and guests. Please check [our calendar](#) for more detailed information about availability.

February 2022: A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
2/6	UUMAN Matters Does UUMAN matter? Does UUMAN create ripples in the pond of your life? Ripples in the pond of our community? In the world? Is this anything one can measure?	Rev. Dave Dunn Randy Blasch
2/13	Love and Cheese Service Description: Is love complicated? Is it simple? Is it "all you need?" Is there a potion? A recipe? Can it be learned in a book? And just "what does love got to do with it?"	Rev. Dave Dunn
2/20	The Mystery of the Family What are families all about? What constitutes a family? What is a "nuclear" family? Does "family" mean different things to different people, different cultures? How does our perspective on what a family is inform our judgments?	Rev. Dave Dunn
2/27	TBA	Lay Led

ABOUT THE UUMANTimes: The UUMANTimes is the newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN). We go live with each issue by the first Sunday of the month; deadline for submissions is typically on the 22nd of the month preceding the issue date. Please email your news articles and artwork to Becky at newsletter@uuman.org