

## October 2023

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## UUMAN as a Community of Care

Part of UUMAN's mission is to "Nurture Our Spirit." Note that the wording is nurture our spirit; not nurture my spirit. UU theologian Thandeka has always said that salvation is

not a solo act. Nurturing our spirit is not a solo act either.

We all experience loss in our lifetimes. It's part of what it means to be alive. And loss is something we also experience collectively as a gathered religious community. It's part of what it means to be alive as a gathered religious community.

Each week we share our joys and sorrows into that gathered community. We say, "we share our Joys with each other to magnify them, and our Sorrows to divide the weight of their pain."

Recently, we've experienced some deep losses both as individuals and as a community. It hurts. It's painful. When we, or one, are in pain, we must individually and communally nurture one another's spirits. This is easier said than done. Confronting another's pain is difficult, likely because it resonates with some of our own.

Author Brene Brown writes:

My mom taught us to never look away from people's pain. The lesson was simple: Don't look away. Don't pretend not to see hurt. Look people in the eye. Even when their pain is overwhelming. And when you're in pain, find the people who can look you in the eye. We need to know we're not alone - especially when we're hurting. This lesson is one of the greatest gifts of my life.

It's important to understand that being present with someone who is hurting, dividing the weight of their pain, isn't about eliminating the pain. Although not looking away is difficult, one need not feel an added burden of trying to fix anything, trying to eliminate the pain. The Catholic priest Henri Nouwen writes:

When we honestly ask ourselves which persons in our lives mean the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand....The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not-knowing, not-curing, not-healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness - that is the friend who cares.

A seminary friend of mine said, "Every person you meet has at least one secret that will break your heart." We don't know what it is, we just know it to be true. May we honor those secrets. May we honor the crosses we all carry in this community. And moving from me to we, may we nurture our spirits together through our community of care.

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

Dave



## Common Grounds Coffee House

The Next Common Grounds Coffee House will be on Saturday October 21st. You don't want to miss this one! Doors open at 7, show starts at 7:30. \$5 suggested donation at the door, cash only and bring some cash for treats from the kitchen and to tip these amazing performers.

### Tony Bolin



Tony delivers a melodic and laid-back blend of original songs, Americana and Blues favorites. A veteran of the Atlanta acoustic music scene, he has performed throughout the Southeast with groups such as Blue Yonder, The Outside Agi-Taters, and Lester

Road and the Tail Draggers. Recently he has focused on solo performances featuring his original songs and has appeared at Ragamuffin Music Hall, The Red Light Café, 45 South, Red Clay Theater, Steve's Live Music, Lena's Place, (Atlanta's longest running coffee-house venue), and other Atlanta purveyors of live acoustic music. Expect a great entertaining evening of original songs and old favorites.

### Bill Sheffield with Sandra Senn and Spencer Kirkpatrick

Everything about **Bill Sheffield** is authentic. It's there in the intense, transcendent way he finger picks his guitar with hints of John Hurt and Blind Blake flashing through. It's there



in his songs that wrestle with earthly pleasure and the need for redemption. He was playing in coffeehouses and bars around Atlanta by the time he was 18. Not much of folk-blues town at that time, Sheffield was one of the only authentic blues players in the city. That led to opening slots for such greats as Big Mamma Thornton and Muddy Waters. He began writing his own original compositions almost by chance. He was practicing, trying to imitate the slide genius of Blind Willie Johnson, and couldn't quite get the riff.

But he liked what he was playing and it soon became a song. More quickly followed. He began performing his own tunes at a time when roots music was coming back into favor. Texas-blues stars like Stevie Ray Vaughan, who was guitar slinging his way to national fame, helped make the blues cool. Vaughn, in fact, once opened for Sheffield, who's also performed in concert with a who's who of music greats including Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, B.B. King, Delbert McClinton and Bonnie Raitt.

Categories don't do justice to Sheffield because he effortlessly transcends genres to create what can only be called great American music. "There are nights when you get absorbed by the music," he says. "Everything else disappears and you are lost in the song. Those nights are like nirvana."

**Sandra Senn** has been playing with Bill Sheffield since February of 2019. She started sitting in with Bill at the Northside Tavern and there was an immediate musical connection. In 2019 as a duet, they performed at the WRFG Labor Day Blues Barbecue and also open for George Thorogood and the Destroyers. In addition to playing in Bill's 4 piece electric band, Sandra also plays traditional trap set drums with the band Blue Velvet Atlanta, and the original music project Delta 8 Groove. Bill and Sandra also run a jam night every Thursday evening at Cajun Blues Seafood Restaurant in Chamblee.

**Spencer Kirkpatrick**, another well-known and versatile guitarist in the Atlanta area, and longtime friend, partnered up with Bill Sheffield in 2021 as the fourth member of his four piece electric band, and he also performs with Bill on acoustic guitar as part of his acoustic show. Spencer was the guitar player for the band Hydra, in the 70s and had a lot of regional success. His high school band The Atlanta Vibrations, also opened for the Beatles in 1965. Spencer plays everything from slide guitar, finger picking acoustic styles, hard rock and roll, to jazz and blues. He always knows what's right to play when he accompanies Bill's original tunes.



- Janet Lacey

## An October Book Event

Coming in October, the Acworth Book & Storytelling Festival, free for all ages. Our own Joe Lamb will be there signing his books.

### Acworth Book & Storytelling Festival

10AM- 4PM Oct. 14  
The Rosenwald School

4410 Cherokee Street  
Acworth, GA



- 2 keynote speakers
- 1 panel discussion
- 40+ authors
- Live storytellers

Words & Stories of Many Voices

Free for all ages



Acworthculturalarts.org

## Which Way Forward?

“Cop City” is a story of 2 visions. One well established in the present. The other waiting to be born. The political aristocracy, both Democrats and Republicans, privileged and comfortable, are fully intent on maintaining the status quo. From their vantage point, all is in order. Their message seems to be “you elected us, now step aside.” But the public is not well, and there is dis-ease. And engaged citizens recognize that democracy requires constant vigilance. Many are keepers of the other vision, a vision based on justice, equality, and quality of life for all living beings. They know that the status quo is protective of those well-established, but has limited regard for those that are not. Engaged citizens understand that this behavior puts all life on this planet at risk.

When “Cop City” initially caught my attention damage had already been done and lines were drawn. Proactive efforts had run into a wall with no windows of opportunity. The conflict is receiving national attention because the same issues are in play across the country. The Unitarian-Universalist church debated the crisis at their General Assembly and decided to join the citizens in protest. My wife, co-chair of our social justice committee, is a woman of compassion and great instincts, and my minister a man of courage and character. When they both homed in on the ‘Cop City’ issue I decided to join them at a direct-action workshop for a closer look at a conflict that impacted many communities and featured so many areas of concern. Even though I felt the outcome had already been tragically decided, there was more to do.

The workshop featured a motley crew from various backgrounds, a mix of color, age and gender. Working with everyone that day through a variety of exercises it was clear that all were serious and intent on a positive nonviolent outcome that would serve the larger community. Though labeled anarchists by the attorney general these folks, these protesters, were not risk takers in the spirit of Elon Musk pursuing power and money, but rather defenders of their communities and their dreams. It was an open gathering of artists, musicians, ministers, single moms, grandmothers, and fathers united in joy and sorrow, committed to building a better world.

Some were students, young and inexperienced, no match for the forces aligned against them. I had seen this played out in my younger days. But they were aware of their importance, aware, “that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.”

The name “Cop City” would imply that the conflict is with the police. I think though perhaps the police are in the middle following orders of those in power, encouraged perhaps to see protesters as un-American, and therefore the enemy. Quite often, as in this case, those in the streets are there only after exhausting all opportunities to be heard.

The Atlanta City Council is moving forward with this project. Funding was approved by an 11 to 4 vote. But to understand the story it’s necessary to unpack the vote. This pro-

ject requires 85 acres and \$90 million Dollars. The land was the South River Forest. Though the project is still in contention, the land has been clear cut and construction is under way. The City of Atlanta owns the land, but the land is in DeKalb County. DeKalb citizens, however, have no say in the matter regardless of the impact it will have on their lives. Democracy again was shunned in the buildup to the project. “Cop City” is promoted and financed by major corporations including Home Depot, Delta, Chick-fil-a, under the guise of a nonprofit organization called Atlanta Police Foundation. They are at work militarizing our police across the nation. Their lobbyists are on the job.

Atlanta leases the property to APF for 10 dollars a year and pays an additional 1.2 million to the fund annually. The public initially was told that their cost would be 30 million dollars for the one project. That figure is now 67 million with the Atlanta Police Foundation covering the balance. Prior to the council vote there was a call for a public comment. The result was the largest public response the Atlanta City Council had ever experienced. There were 16 hours of comments from 300 speakers, with several hundred outside that could not get in the building. 70% of the comments were in opposition to the project. The message from concerned citizens was heard but disregarded. Activists then decided to use their Georgia constitutional prerogative for overriding the council vote with a referendum placing the issue before the public at the November election.

A referendum requires signatures from 15% of the Atlanta voters. 116,000 signatures, well beyond the 60 to 70,000 required, were gathered, and submitted. The council is refusing to certify the signatures. The matter is now before the court, but likely the stall will kill the opportunity as the election is fast-approaching.

The land of concern was something of a phoenix arising from years of tragedy. The Muscogee Indians who lived here were forced off the land in the 1820’s. It then became a plantation worked by slaves, later a prison farm operating well into the 20th century. But with time, trees returned, filtering the creek that flows into South River. In 2017 the Atlanta Planning Department recognized this area as a major natural resource containing one of four major lungs for the city. Their plan was to create a preserve, a large historic natural park for the public that connected with the beltline. A park that would offer health and recreational opportunities for ever. But the lobbyist for the Atlanta Police Foundation sold a different vision.

Their dream, drawing on fear and the need for training, was to create the largest police facility in the United States. But the surrounding community, 70% black, has had enumerable tragic experiences with a militarized police force. They have now lost the forest and if the project is completed, property values will diminish, they will be impacted with constant traffic and the noise of a major firing range. And to be clear, the color of one’s skin offers no immunity from an elected tyrant willing to use a militarized police force to maintain power.

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Protests began with the first public announcement of the project in 2021 and have remained unabated. In the early days, environmental groups from across the nation camped in the forest. They staged various activities and events to bring attention to the foreboding environmental impact.

Most of that period was peaceful but when the decision was made to clear the forest, the police were brought in. There was resistance. A few engaged in the destruction of machines being used to clear-cut the forest. Ultimately 69 people were arrested and charged with felonies and declared members of a criminal conspiracy under the RICO act. The greater tragedy resulted when one young man was shot by law enforcement. It was reported he had a weapon and injured an officer. There are conflicting reports of the incident. What is clear is the coroner's report showing that the man was shot 57 times. Most of those shots had to happen while the victim was lying on the ground. Clearly police training is needed but no amount of training can change the culture of an organization that can do that to a human being.

Our system of justice has decided that when a handful of people burn a machine, 69 people can be charged with criminal conspiracy requiring each, if convicted, to spend 5 to 35 years in prison, while officers of the state can shoot a man 57 times on suspicion of firing a gun and injuring a trooper and not be charged at all. The fact that this occurrence is not a single incident is why "Cop City" is a national story.

But to get at the source, we must examine motivations of those calling the shots. We have seen political opportunities advance throughout this country when district attorneys and governors stoke fear and demonize 'the Other'. The word on the street is that both elected officials are seeking higher offices. It appears too that this is an attempt to destroy a citizens' movement willing to stand at the risk of their lives to exercise constitutional rights to speak against a perceived injustice perpetrated by the state, a movement with a different vision, a vision of a landscape that supports life and offers justice, and opportunities for all.

For transparency, I did not continue the direct-action trainings, nor did I put my life on the line, but I did witness Reverend Dave doing so. I did experience with all that gathered the power of that day. Jennifer and Reverend Dave worked in concert with concerned citizens and religious leaders for long hours to move all toward 'the beloved community' that can save our lives, and perhaps our souls.

These are strange times with divisions where none need be. We share this earth but not equally. We all have contributed to the problem, but some more than others. We must create the way forward together or acknowledge that our time on this planet is slipping away.

- Gus Hadorn



## Mark your calendars for UUMAN's 2023 Under the Harvest Moon Auction!

**Date:** Saturday, November 11, 7:00 - 10:00 pm

**Location:** Join us in person at UUMAN, or virtually!

### **Details:**

Each year UUMAN holds its annual Under the Harvest Moon Goods and Services Auction. This is a "fun"-raiser with a collection of special items, meals, trips, baskets, and services for attendees. In addition, hand-knitted scarves by someone you know, handmade jewelry, beautiful paintings from familiar artists, gift cards to local restaurants, and the ever-coveted UUMAN Parking Spot will all hopefully make their way into the catalog of items this year!

Come, socialize, spend some money, and have lots of fun!!!

Stay tuned for more information!

- Miriam Patanian



## Notes from the Board

### Talk Governance to Me!

It has been many years since I have served on the UUMAN board. So many years in fact, that the entire structure of the board has changed. Many years ago we were functioning within a “Portfolio Board” governance system and I served as the RE trustee. The Portfolio structure operates by electing the chairs of each committee (RE, Social Justice, Operations, Worship, etc.) who also serve as the trustees on the board, maintaining both authority and responsibility for almost all decisions within the congregation. With the time and attention required to both serve on the board and lead a major area of congregational operations and programming, very little energy is available for board work. It also has the dynamic that Portfolio board members tend to look at issues through the interests of their own area, rather than from the perspective of the health and mission of the whole congregation. Of course UUMAN was younger then, and this model seemed to work for us at the time. (Although I can tell you it was exhausting!)

Now that I am once again on the board as secretary, I can see the huge changes that resulted from moving to our current governance structure, which is known as a “Strategic Board” governance. The board still maintains accountability for the effectiveness of the operations and program of the congregation, but delegates much authority and responsibility for the day to day operations and program of the congregation to our wonderful Program Council as well as our staff. Our Program Council is made up of chairs or representatives from each committee, and works in conjunction with the board. The board ensures that we operate with fiduciary responsibility, within our policies, and in service to the vision and mission of the congregation. Strategic Boards can focus their time on setting “big picture” goals of discerning the congregation’s identity, culture, mission and vision, developing sound policy guidance for the congregation, and ensuring that the assets of the congregation are protected and utilized to achieve the vision and mission.

This structure feels very different in a good way. The board has grown and changed to better serve the congregation in a healthy manner. I am awed by the past and current board members who volunteer their time to serve, sharing their gifts to help UUMAN continue to strive, grow and support our mission. I am honored and inspired to work alongside the amazing, dedicated folks who serve on the UUMAN board of Trustees.

Laurie Wheeler

UUMAN Board secretary

## Religious Exploration News

By Lexie Tangney, Director of Religious Education

### **A note from your DRE...**

I am excited to announce your patience has been rewarded and your DRE is back! It has been an eventful few months! Together the RE Team and UUMAN volunteers hosted Summer Programming. These Sunday morning offerings included educational offerings like "Hindu Gods", community service events such as NFCC back to school backpacks and a SUPER successful car wash that raised \$400 (a UUMAN record) for RE funds.

RE restarted earlier than it has in years past. Our goal was to restart RE at the same time as public school restarted so parents, youth and children would have a more seamless transition from summer break to school and church. Thanks to all the instructors who volunteered we were able to offer 4 groups (PreK-1st, 2nd-4th, JR, & senior youth).

Also this summer, we welcomed Koda Brown into our family! It brings me so much joy to have the privilege of being part of the children and youth programming my 1st born will grow up in. Thank you to all those who made it possible to focus on this big transition for my family. I am especially thankful to my care circle who fed us, the RE team who kept MCY going while I was away, and Elizabeth Rohan for being the glue that kept us all together.

### **What the rest of the year holds...**

Join us for a spectacular **Autumn Festival** that promises fun-filled moments for the entire family! Embrace the crisp fall air with a delightful hayride through the golden-hued landscape, tackle our thrilling obstacle course, and indulge in the mouthwatering delights of our donut hang. Show off your creativity in our costume contest and savor a delicious potluck feast with friends and neighbors. Capture memorable snapshots at our charming photo booth, and test your teamwork in a thrilling three-legged race. Plus, explore diverse cultures at our Culture Fair, celebrating the rich tapestry of our community. It's a day of laughter, connection, and autumn magic that you won't want to miss! Mark your calendars and join us for an unforgettable experience.

### **RE Schedule**

10/1- [RE Curriculum](#)

10/8- [Hembree Field trip](#)

10/15- [NO RE- Pride weekend in ATL](#) (join the parade!)

10/22- [RE Curriculum](#)

10/29- [Autumn Festival](#)

## FUN Volunteer Opportunity

Greetings from Keep Roswell Beautiful!

Keep Roswell Beautiful is a local non-profit that serves the residents and visitors of Roswell. Our mission is to cultivate environmental stewardship in the Roswell community. We do this through a variety of environmental education programs and events and encouraging recycling stream and litter cleanups, invasive plant species removal and planting of native species....but that takes money!

Our main fundraiser is a fall event called The Great Annual Duck Race! We "rent" the ducks and then race almost 1,000 of them down a section of Big Creek. (Winners get cash prizes!) As part of the Duck race festivities, we have a fun family festival with free food, drinks, snacks, face painting and tables of corporate sponsors and local community groups and non-profits.

We'd like to extend an invitation to you to participate in our family festival on October 21! Traditionally non-profit groups can be sponsors at a reduced \$50 rate but we are waving that fee for all of our non-profit friends and community partners who want to participate. We'd ask someone from your organization to attend/staff a table or activity. That could be as simple as pass out literature, or interact with the public, or you could do a fun family activity/game. You are welcome to sell items or do sign ups or other things related to your organization as long as they are family-friendly.

We will provide a table and chairs. There will be food drinks and port-a-potty on site.

The event is October 21st from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The ducks race at noon sharp and the race lasts about 15 minutes. We recommend that our partners be on site between 9:30 and 10:00 to set up. Parking is very limited so we encourage carpooling whenever possible.

I'd be happy to answer any questions that you might have. Feel free to give me a call at 404-610-5418 or you can respond to this email.

We very much look forward to hearing from you and we'd love to have you participate in The Great Annual Duck Race fun family festival!

Thank you so much!

Michelle Vincent, Secretary, KRB Board

UUMAN's Board of Trustees uses [Covid Act Now](#) to monitor current Covid risk levels. We are thrilled to see that the counties in which the majority of us live are in the Low Risk category. Masks are optional for indoor activities, and indoor congregational singing can occur at this time. We are happy to say that UUMAN's community is highly vaccinated and boosted—thank you for doing your part to keep our risk as low as possible!

## October 2023: A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
10/1	<b>Betsy DeVos' Yacht</b>  American public education funding has been the source of intense sociopolitical friction. We UUs vigorously call out those who are blatantly trying to advance religious extremism in the classroom. But is our opposition enough? How much do our personal decisions, including our financial choices, contribute to furthering our mission? What are our moral obligations to do more?	Dirk Bender
10/8	<b>The Breath of Life</b>  Descartes said, "I think therefore I am." Couldn't he have said, "I breathe therefore I am"? What is the breath? What is its relationship to life? What is its relationship to the natural world? What does it connect us to?	Rev Dave Dunn
10/15	<b>Faith After Doubt</b>  Leaving the faith system that you grew up in is difficult - and often traumatic and/or life-altering. How do you navigate deconstruction and finding a new normal in your spiritual life?	David Kroeber & Joe Lamb
10/22	<b>Start Making Sense</b>  Things "make sense" not when we engage the mind but when we engage the senses. How did we get to believe that "making sense" is an intellectual, rather than a sensual, thing?	Rev Dave Dunn
10/29	<b>Service of Remembrance</b>  Please join us as we remember those who have passed over the course of the year. Let us remember how they have shaped our lives in ways we could not have imagined.	Rev Dave Dunn



## 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@uuman.org](mailto:membership@uuman.org).

Date	Celebration
10/2	John and Miriam P. are celebrating their anniversary of 19 years.
10/3	Dillon L. is celebrating a birthday.  Alex P. and Susan are celebrating their anniversary of 11 years.
10/4	Callum A. is celebrating a birthday.  Eli L. is celebrating a birthday.  Jacob P. is celebrating a birthday.
10/5	Bruce and McPatti L. are celebrating their anniversary of 32 years.
10/6	Rollin M. is celebrating a birthday.
10/11	Michelle L. is celebrating a birthday.
10/14	Alex P. is celebrating a birthday
10/15	Hayden B. and Lexie T-B. are celebrating their anniversary of 7 years.
10/18	Olivia P. is celebrating a birthday.
10/19	Becky N. is celebrating a birthday.
10/22	Jerry J. and Laura K. are celebrating their anniversary of 17 years.  Annette and Jim P. are celebrating their anniversary of 28 years.
10/24	Ann and Joe C. are celebrating their anniversary of 31 years.
10/25	Stephen S. is celebrating a birthday.
10/26	Dave P. is celebrating a birthday.
10/29	John P. is celebrating a birthday.
10/30	Jan W. is celebrating a birthday.

**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](mailto:newsletter@uuman.org)