

May 2024

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Reflections from Your Outgoing Past President

It's been nearly three years since I began my tenure on your Board. I wasn't exactly sure what I was getting into, but decided the time was right, and I enjoyed giving my time to UUMAN. I can honestly say that I feel I've been given a gift in serving—I've grown closer with those on the Board who have served with me, and I feel that we've made some meaningful progress.

So what have we done?

We began to offer benefits to our incredible staff. The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) offers a number of tools and resources that helped us prepare for this, and we worked closely with the Treasurer to ensure we would be able to continue offering benefits each year. I feel strongly that offering benefits to our staff is a social justice issue. I offer my gratitude to everyone who helped make this a reality for UUMAN.

We hired a homegrown director of religious exploration—Lexie T Brown has nearly completed her second year with us as staff, and she, her RE team, and our children and youth are killing it! She is building a strong program, having hard conversations, and working collaboratively to identify solutions. I am so delighted to see just how much Lexie loves our children.

We worked very hard to increase transparency into our finances—Jennifer Phillippi has logged many hours helping to get us moving in that direction, and I cannot thank her enough. She worked closely with Suzy Lamoree, our bookkeeper, Margriet van de Stieg, our Special Projects Trustee, and Seth Hannan from the Finance Team to help carry out this huge undertaking. Great job, all!

We helped our congregation continue to navigate through COVID with a focus on keeping us as safe as possible. It meant that we didn't come back to in-person service as soon as we would have liked, but we also placed a value on pro-

tecting our community. And we couldn't have done this without an incredible livestream team who continue to show up week after week for those who choose to worship remotely.

We waded through the cleanup and restoration of our Sanctuary after it flooded. We were pretty cramped in Fellowship Hall for several months, but in the end, we had a lovely new floor in the sanctuary, new tile in the narthex, and fire sprinklers that won't freeze and burst in the future!

We continue to navigate our church business while Dave is away on sabbatical. We had saved up funds each month while he was working, so we have sufficient funds to pay our guest ministers. I want to give huge credit to our Sabbatical Team for having a fantastic lineup of guest ministers.

We began to look in earnest at our staff job descriptions and policies and update them as appropriate, including our COVID-19, safety, rentals, and social media.

We've also improved our communication with Premo School, our largest renter. Two UUMAN liaisons meet weekly with the two Premo directors to discuss any issues that may have come up that week. Thanks to Elizabeth Rohan for being my Premo Partner as we navigate all the things!

While there is still much work to do, I feel like UUMAN is in a better place now than we were three years ago. Our community is caring and dedicated and I look forward to being part of great work happening outside of the Board. Thank you to all the Board members I've had the pleasure of serving with over the past three years.

With Love-

Miriam



Join Us for a Fun-filled Summer with UUMAN Youth

There are still slots available!!

Hi UUMANites,

Summer is just around the corner, which means our religious education teachers get to take a break and enjoy some rest. But our UUMAN youth still want to have fun, and that's where you come in! We're looking for volunteers to lead an hour-long Sunday activity from 10-11 a.m. with our youth. The summer program runs from June 2nd to August 4th, and we need ****two volunteers who do not live in the same household**** for each Sunday.

Feel free to be creative with your activities! If you're not sure what to do, here are some ideas to get you started:

- ♦ Make toys for cats and dogs to donate to an animal shelter
- ♦ Host a music jam
- ♦ Organize a field day with soccer balls, hula hoops, and sidewalk chalk art
- ♦ Plan a UUMAN scavenger hunt
- ♦ Play Bingo or host a board game day
- ♦ Set up a lemonade stand with homemade signs and fresh lemonade
- ♦ Create crafty projects like homemade Play-Doh, bird-seed treats, or fairy houses outside the clubhouse

Sign up with a friend or colleague, but remember that the two volunteers cannot be from the same household. Click [Signup](#), select "2" slots, and add the second person's name in the comments. If you have any questions, please contact me or a member of the Religious Education Committee. We can also help with supplies if needed.

Thanks for making this summer memorable for our youth!

Best,
Elizabeth Rohan
Chair, Religious Exploration Committee

Welcoming Our Visitors: Making Room for New Faces and Hearts



At UUMAN, we strive to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all. This spirit of hospitality extends not just to our programs and beliefs, but also to the very first impression we make – how we welcome visitors to our church home.

Here are a few simple ways we can all contribute to a warm and inviting atmosphere:

Parking with Purpose: When you arrive on Sundays, consider parking at the back of the lot. This allows visitors unfamiliar with our layout to easily find a spot closer to the entrance.

Making Space in the Sanctuary: Our sanctuary is a place of refuge and celebration, and how we fill it matters. Sitting in the middle of the rows or on the far side of the sanctuary leaves prime seating available for newcomers who might feel hesitant to navigate a crowded space.

The Power of a Friendly Greeting: A simple smile and a warm "hello" can go a long way. After the service, take a moment to introduce yourself to visitors, ask them about their day, and share a bit about yourself and the church.

By working together, these small acts create a ripple effect of inclusivity, letting visitors know they are valued members of our community, right from the start. Let's continue to make our church a welcoming haven for everyone seeking spiritual connection and a sense of belonging.

Claudia Rossi

My Journey with UU the Vote

Or How I (partially) Manage my Doomsday Anxiety by Using my Talents to Defend Democracy

by Canedy Knowles

During second hour on Sunday, April 28th, the Social Justice Committee met to officially launch our involvement with UU the Vote, and share our intention to become a 2024 “Good Trouble Congregation.” During that meeting, I also shared my personal journey with UU the Vote and how it has become vital to my social justice work. I’d like to share that journey with you here:

It was the early fall of 2020 and the presidential election was underway. I was trapped in my house watching the news and wanting to defend our democracy in a meaningful way. I knew this election was vitally important, but felt so isolated from the rest of the country that I couldn’t figure out how to connect and make a difference. Then an email popped into my inbox from UUA. It was for a new initiative called “UU the Vote.” Volunteers were needed to help with online events they were planning. I immediately signed up. I had no idea what any of it was, but if it was going to give me an opportunity to be involved in the election process, I was all in.

That first event was an online event in Wisconsin organized by Nora Rasman. I honestly do not remember what it was about, but I remember that I was asked to do Zoom support. I didn’t end up doing much, but was featured as a dancer during their online dance party and met some incredible, dedicated individuals who were finding ways to stay active and engaged when the world was so separated. I wanted to be more involved.

I did more support work for local text banking campaigns and threw myself into showing up wherever the newly formed group needed help. I met other likeminded UU volunteers from all over the country and I finally felt like I was putting my energy towards something that was making a difference. When I felt anxious about the upcoming election, I volunteered more.

Then Rev. Cathy Rion Starr sent an email to the core group of UU the Vote volunteers asking if anyone wanted to help think of ways to celebrate the efforts of UUs that had shown up for events. I immediately responded saying I’d love to help. I couldn’t have known it at the time, but that email launched me into a new trajectory and deeper involvement with UU the Vote and eventually the Side with Love Action Center.

I offered to lead some warm-up exercises for an upcoming small group planning session focusing on the Georgia runoff. After that, Rev. Cathy saw how adding this type of offering to the online programming could be incredibly beneficial for the group. They connected me to another UU minister in the Northeast, Elaine, and together we created opening exercises for all the UU the Vote online events. We were figuring it out as we went, drawing from my improvisation background to create online warm-up exercises and pulling from Elaine’s ministerial work to tie in a spiritual reading. It was a lot of fun and the response from the volunteers was beyond positive.

What began as two people discovering ways to address zoom fatigue and bring some lightness to our heavy work has become “The Fun and Spiritual Nourishment Squad” (lovingly called ‘Funnish’). It is a core volunteer squad within the Side with Love Action Center. Under the guidance of Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, I co-lead a dedicated group of ministers and laypeople whose mission is to “ignite joyful play and soulful presence of our ever evolving Side with Love community by co-creating embodied energetic fun, and liberating spaces of belonging.” We provide programming across all the Side with Love initiatives, train ministers and leaders to do the work with

their groups, and have presented at UU General Assembly, contributed to 30 Days of Love, and lead Skill-Ups. In a beautiful full-circle moment, I am again collaborating with Nora Rasman who is now the Democracy Strategist leading UU the Vote, to create programming for the events around democracy and the upcoming election. With the “Funnish” squad, I have found a way to apply my skills and live my UU values in meaningful and impactful ways. I have deep gratitude for the path that lead me to this place.

Almost four years later, we find ourselves back in another fraught election. It is imperative that we step up to defend our democracy leading up to the election and beyond through our core UU values. UU the Vote is one way to put our values into action. There are many ways to do that. Phone banking and text banking gives us the opportunity to connect directly with potential voters and have conversations about values. Getting a voter to think beyond party can open the door to more thoughtful choices at the polls. UU the Vote also partners with local advocacy groups that are on the ground advocating for issues that align with our causes. There are trainings to become election defenders and opportunities to support the work of UUs and their partners in other states. There are countless opportunities to get involved both online and in-person and not all of them require you throw yourself into it the way I did, unless you really want to (and if so, I’d love to help your figure out how). Being a part of this movement gives me a place to turn my doomsday anxiety into meaningful action and connects me with like-minded UUs who are doing the same. I welcome you to join us!

In 2022, UUMAN worked towards becoming a “Good Trouble Congregation” and members got involved making good trouble. The social justice committee has made becoming a “Good Trouble Congregation” a primary focus of our work in 2024. We hope you are inspired to join us as we ignite our UU values to build a genuine multiracial democracy and support the Side with Love initiatives. We are seeking for a core group of UUMANites interested in helping UUMAN become a “Good Trouble Congregation” in 2024. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to the Social Justice Committee and we will plug you in! You can also find us at the SC table on Sundays after service where we can answer questions.

UU the Vote has helped me turn my doomsday fears into meaningful action and connected me to an engaged and caring national UU community, I hope it can do the same for you.

About UU the Vote:

UU the Vote is a bold initiative created by the Unitarian Universalist Association’s Side With Love team, providing UUs a thoughtfully crafted “plug-and-play” opportunity to bring our democratic values to life in the crucial struggle to build a genuine multiracial democracy. UU the Vote engages people in voter registration, issue education, get-out-the-vote drives, voter protection, state leadership development, and more.

Now, in 2024, we have progressed to shift from just election-year organizing to year-round movement-building work toward building a truly inclusive democracy.

<https://uuthevote.org/>

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



Our 50/50 Shared Plate

Each month a non-profit organization that is chosen by our Social Justice Committee receives half of our designated 50-50 offering . This means that half the money goes to the non-profit and half goes to UUMAN.

The Social Justice Committee chose The Mountain Retreat & Learning Center to share in our offering for May. The Mountain is an ecologically-conscious retreat and learning center serving congregations, schools, and other Unitarian Universalist and community groups. Go to themountainrlc.org to learn more.

Monthly Non Profit Share of 50/50		
	Non Profit	Amount
Sep 2023	Groveland Community Center	\$390.00
Oct 2023	Atlanta Pride Committee	\$877.50
Nov 2023	North Fulton Community Charities	\$352.50
Dec 2023	Family Promise of N. Fulton	\$685.00
Jan 2024	No Harm	\$660.00
Feb 2024	Planned Parenthood SE	\$1,527.50
Mar 2024	Cats in the Cradle	\$557.43

- Michelle Liebergesell



May Common Grounds Coffee House

Gibson Wilbanks returns to Common Grounds Coffee House!



An alumnus of Atlanta Institute of Music's acclaimed guitar program, Carly Gibson is a triple threat for her prowess as a guitarist, songwriter and vocalist. She has shared stages with artists such as Will Turpin (Collective Soul), Randall Bramblett, Michael Tolcher, Caroline Aiken, Mothers Finest, and more.

Georgia born BJ Wilbanks is a prolific and extremely talented songwriter/producer. He creates music that fuses the roots of Americana, Motown, Funk, Blues, & Country into an intoxicating blend that is all his own. Critics and fans have referred to his style as "Back Porch Soul." His 2017 self-titled album received high acclaim by American Songwriter, All Music, and many other major music outlets. His genuine sound and success as an artist lead to him performing shows with music legends Gladys Knight, Drivin N Cryin, and Mothers Finest.

BJ and Carly combined their considerable songwriting and musical skills to create a unique Americana sound that is all its own and fully embodied on their self-titled album which has been extremely well received. As a live act, Gibson Wilbanks is delightfully engaging, bringing exceptional skill, camaraderie and humor to the stage. They are a delightful combination that is not to be missed!

SassFolk returns to Common Grounds to open the show at 7:30, with a 30 minute set of new material! Jana Wolf and Ana Pike are harmony-weaving, multi-instrumentalist, soul sisters based out of Atlanta, Ga. Their modern-folk tunes, sprinkled with life ramblings and laugh fests, will leave you feeling like you have found some new best friends.

Doors Open at 7:00

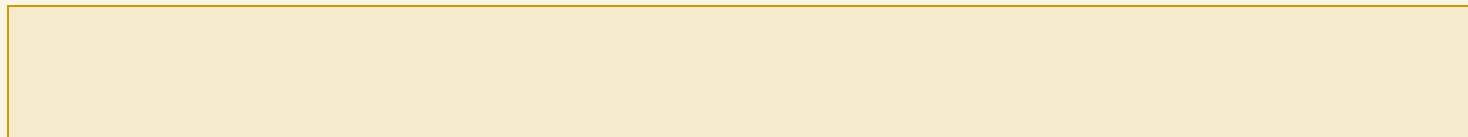
Show starts at 7:30

Suggested at the door - \$5.00 (Cash)

Plus Cash Donations to the Performers, and to Purchase Food from the Kitchen. BYOB. Some tables will be provided.

We accept donations of canned and dry goods for the Fulton County Community Food Bank at the venue. Please donate, if you are able.

- Laura Keck



May: A Month of Sundays



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.

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
5/5	Rites of Passage On this day we will honor our Coming of Age youth as they bridge to Youth Group and our Senior Youth as they bridge to Young Adults.	Lexie Brown
5/12	The Mountain: Reflections on our Core Values Join us as we discuss and reflect on core values with the executive director of The Mountain, Steph Anderson.	
5/19	TBA	Rev. Duncan Teague
5/26	Hembree Park Service Join us at Roswell's Hembree Park pavilion for an end-of-church-year service. Although we won't be sharing, bring some food and drink for a picnic afterwards.	

Date	Celebration
5/5	Kurt B. is celebrating a birthday.
	Ann C. is celebrating a birthday.
5/15	Paula W. is celebrating a birthday.
5/19	Laura K. is celebrating a birthday.
5/20	Addison G. is celebrating a birthday.
	Amy M. is celebrating a birthday.
	Emmy P. is celebrating a birthday.
	Erin and Martin P. are celebrating their anniversary of 20 years.
5/26	Don and Merry Beth S. are celebrating their anniversary of 40 years.
	Timothy W., Jr. is celebrating a birthday.
5/27	Elizabeth R. and Stephen S. are celebrating their anniversary of 22 years.
	Rick I. and Paula W. are celebrating their anniversary of 45 years.
5/31	John P. 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 newsletter@uuman.org