

May 2025

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The Passing of Pope Francis

As you all likely know, Pope Francis passed away on Monday, April 21, 2025 at the age of 88 after serving as pontiff since 2013. Best pope in my lifetime thus far.

Perhaps his most famous utterance took place at a press conference in the first months of his papacy when asked about the possibility of homosexuals serving as clergy. He responded, “If someone is gay and is searching for the Lord and has good will, then who am I to judge him?”

Then, in 2015 he published his first encyclical entitled *Laudato si'* which called upon the faith to combat global warming, consumerism and punitive capitalism.

He eventually came around to allowing clergy to bless same-sex unions. Yet he was a person of his times – as we all are. Such a blessing was to be conferred in a pastoral, and never in a sacramental, way. This often led to confusion and criticism. Frank Bruni of the New York Times wrote that, “...for every advance, there was an asterisk, and for every proclamation of love, a delineation of limits, so that Francis personified the indelible tension in the church’s official teaching about homosexuality, which he never squarely renounced (Frank Bruni, NY Times, April 22, 2025).”

...but there were progressive advances nonetheless; and these advances came at a cost. For the most part, he didn’t substantially change church teachings and doctrines yet gave progressives Catholics around the world the freedom to modernize in way that

worked for them. For Catholic conservatives, such actions, at best, sowed confusion regarding the interpretation of church teachings and doctrine; at worst, it riled and emboldened those who saw such actions as blatant disrespect of those teachings and doctrines.

We Unitarian Universalists have our own views on doctrine (be it Catholic or any kind of doctrine), yet I’ve always been inspired by the ministry of Jesus as related in the Gospels and the only doctrine that I seem to carry forward from those texts say, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40);” and to illustrate the importance of caring for those less fortunate, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Matthew 25:40).”

Pope Francis may have had his faults. He may have been an imperfect pope. Yet he was always consistent about that doctrine articulated in the Gospel of Matthew. His ministry was more like Jesus’ than any pope in my lifetime thus far: a ministry to the poor, the outcast, the marginalized, the hungry, the stranger, the migrant.

Francis’ actions, what he actually did, taught us more than any official church teachings and doctrines ever could.

He will be missed.

Nurture our spirit. Strive for Justice.

Transform the world.

— Dave

An Important Announcement from Earth Ministry

We at Uuman set the standard, and we are running late. Please heed the call.

A world without Butterflies

You would have to be sadistic to kill a butterfly.

These fluttering beauties offer wonder and inspiration, and a much-needed expression of freedom. Yet kill them we do. Bugs and spiders are not our enemies. We have made war on the environment; now our weapons are turned on us.

A young man knocked on my door yesterday wanting to poison the pests for a fee, pests that I don't have. I happen to like spiders and bugs. Most of them do good service. Even the mosquito, but I'll come back to them.

My family enjoys the world beyond our doorstep. We live among big trees, beside a little creek with native plants, birds, pollinators, and other critters.

All of us in Pine Valley breath the same air, and we are all victims of the many poisons that come with the wind and water. Pest control is a 24-billion-dollar industry in this country, and like much of what is advertised, they peddle fear and hedge the truth. Green washing is now a part of their game. They know we care, but not that much.

The natural world is a finely tuned miracle that we are a part of, but more and more we have become a destructive part. The Monarch is now on the endangered list. In the last 50 years we have lost 30% of the bird population. 96% of our backyard birds require insects to feed their young. And it's clear to everyone paying attention that insects are disappearing at an alarming rate. Habitat loss and the incredible number of chemicals on the market,

many of which are unregulated, are the major sources of the problem. Even where regulations exist chemical lobbyist have written or highly influenced the regulations. Glyphosate, for God's sake, is exhibit number one.

Syngenta the maker of 217 different chemical products for crop protection just settle a lawsuit for 1.5 billion dollars related to Parkinson disease. Bayer who recently bought Monsanto is presently lobbying lawmakers across the country for protection against lawsuits. To date they have paid out 10 billion dollars for product damage, and still have 67,000 lawsuits pending. Their premier product Round-up is the most widely used herbicide in the world, and Georgia was their first legislative success. The bill is currently on the Governor's desk.

Regarding the mosquito—The most used chemical control is Pyrethrin or the synthetic version, a broad-spectrum insecticide highly toxic to bees, butterflies, dragonflies, etc. as well as aquatic critters. So, what to do? Chuck the toxic. Empty standing water. Encourage what nature provides—dragonflies, frogs, bats, and birds, wear long-sleeves, use mosquito dunks, fans, oil of lemon eucalyptus. You have choices. Butterflies don't. Toughen up, for the sake of life on the planet.

Gus Hadorn

UUMAN Trivia Night 2025!

On Saturday, April 26, UUMAN's Fellowship Hall once again became a Trivia Palace... Several teams of brave and brainy members and their guests competed for fun, bragging rights, and strange prizes. Movies! Music! Sports! Books! Geographic! Historical Facts! Science! Names in the News! All of these knowledge categories and more were puzzled over by our intrepid teams, while they enjoyed snacks, drinks, and desserts, plus plenty of good times and laughter.



Trivia host Martin Poteralski with winning team "Lady and the Tramps" and their prizes

In the end, "Lady and the Tramps" came out with the highest score, by racking up correct answers all night and a shrewd final question wager. They won several prizes, including the Cash Grand Prize - a double album of Johnny Cash songs. They also get the right to call themselves reigning trivia champs for 2025. Congratulations and thank you to all the teams who participated!

—Poteralski Family

Sound Improvements Underway in the Sanctuary



We have started installation of eleven panels on the back wall of the sanctuary. The sanctuary has a lot of echoes and ringing so that voices are sometimes hard to understand or hear properly. We believe that these panels will make a very noticeable improvement to the sound quality while not being visibly intrusive. An anonymous regular attendee has generously donated funds to cover the cost of the panels.

- By Lynn Hannan and Seth Pratt

Grounds Spruce Up at UUMAN

By Melinda Whetstone (Operations Team)

Thank you to all who came out and helped spruce up the grounds in April. In the span of 2 1/2 hours, all window exteriors and screens were washed, the back pathway was mulched, bamboo was cut and discarded, sheds were cleaned out and organized, debris was removed, and the first coat of paint was put on the back door into Fellowship Hall. John Pruitt then stayed on and pressure washed the portico, while Seth Pratt, Bruce Langston, Michael Grosse-Huelsewiesche, and Lynn Hannan stayed on to hang sound panels in the sanctuary.

There were 22 people who came out, which includes several non-members. We give a special thanks to these individuals. Tim and Miranda Philbin are Premo parents; Miranda has been on the UUMAN Playscape team for almost two years and Tim chose the plantings surrounding the Playscape nest and dome. Erin Crowley and Dan Baugh started attending UUMAN in February and plan to join the church in May.

All attendees: Richard Bomba, Amanda Bralley, Mike Chambers, Erin Crowley, Brian Cuthrell, Michael Grosse-Huelsewiesche, Donna Guile, Lynn Hannan, Bruce Langston, Donna Melcher, Rachel Osborne, Dan Paugh, Miranda Philbin, Tim Philbin, Seth Pratt, John Pruitt, Bob Popp, Rosie Popp, Mike Quattrochi, John Wheeler, Laurie Wheeler, and Melinda Whetstone

Thank you everyone for all your hard work and all you do.



UUMAN Board 101- Q & A

If you are newer to UUMAN (or if you are a long-timer who has not paid much attention to our church governance), here is some basic UUMAN board information for you, so you can attend our May 18 election “in the know”!

Q: How many board members are there, and what are their positions?

A: There are 6 members: Vice President, President, Past President, Treasurer, Special Projects, and Secretary. The Minister and DRE usually attend the board meetings but are not voting members of the Board.

Q: How long are their terms?

A: Two years for Treasurer, Special Projects and Secretary. Three years for the trustee who spends the first year as Vice President, second year as President, and third year as Past President.

Q: How are Board Trustees elected?

A: Members are nominated for each open position and once a year in May the congregation holds an election. Any member in good standing may vote, and a quorum of 20% of full members is required.

Q: What are the open positions we will be voting on During the May 18th meeting?

A: We will be electing a new Vice President, Special Projects trustee and Secretary. You will be receiving an email prior to the meeting to introduce the slate of candidates.

Q: What should I bring to the potluck prior to the Congregational Meeting?

A: Hmm, tough question. But whatever delicious dish you bring, please label it as Vegetarian, Vegan, Dairy, Meat, etc., and remember to take your dish home afterwards! See you there!

—Laurie Wheeler

UUMAN Garden

Hi friends, our UUMAN garden is ready to produce some yummy food for NFCC. Thanks to the Pops for tomato starts and basil and John Pruitt for new tomato cages, soil, straw and sweat. There will be plenty of opportunities to help these little seedings grow and to learn about gardening.

Most Sundays at Second Hour, join Garden Talk. Bring your coffee and we'll share, weed and eventually harvest.

- Donna Melcher

MCY May Times

Lexie T. Brown
Director of Religious Education

Coming of Age: Honoring a Journey of Growth

Our Coming of Age (COA) program is wrapping up for the year, and we could not be more proud of the three youth who have journeyed through it. Over the past many months, these young people have explored their values, questioned big ideas, built relationships with mentors, visited other UU congregations, and reflected deeply on their beliefs.

The culmination of this journey will take place on Sunday, May 4th, during our Rites of Passage service. Each participant will be formally recognized and honored by the congregation. This service is a milestone not only for the youth but for our community, as we witness and affirm the next generation of Unitarian Universalists.

This summer, our COA youth will also travel to Boston, the historic heart of Unitarian Universalism. While there, they'll meet with their mentor Raffaella, explore the birth place of UU and continue their faith journey with a deeper understanding of the movement they now belong to.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported their trip by attending the spaghetti dinner, pancake breakfast, flower sale, or car wash. Thanks to your generosity, the youth met their fundraising goal. We couldn't have done it without you!

We encourage everyone to attend this service in person if possible. A small portion of the service will not be available via livestream.

This Sunday: Rites of Passage Service at UUMAN



Join us this Sunday for our annual Rites of Passage service — a celebration of growth, learning, and community within our Ministry with Children and Youth.

We'll honor our Coming of Age youth as they share their Credo statements, recognize participants and facilitators in our Whole Lives (OWL) program, and celebrate our bridging seniors as they transition into young adulthood.

We'll also take time to thank the many volunteers — nursery caregivers, RE instructors, mentors, and more — who help nurture our young people all year long.

Come be part of this meaningful and joy-filled morning!

Summer Programming for Children & Youth Begins



Starting Sunday, June 1, we'll kick off our Summer Sunday programming for kids at UUMAN! This year, children and youth will go directly to their activity space at the start of service—there will be no time in the sanctuary. Most weeks, we'll meet in Fellowship Hall for fun, hands-on activities led by volunteers.

Please come a little early to check in—each family will need to fill out a short one-time registration form for summer. This helps us keep your children safe and supported while they're in our care.

Here's what's coming up:

June 1 – Surprise Activity

June 8 – Pride Parade Activity

June 15 – No Programming (Father's Day)

June 22 – Rock Painting

June 29 – DIY Coasters

July 6 – No Programming (Fourth of July weekend)

July 13 – Sewing Bags from T-Shirts

July 20 – Mindfulness Activity

July 27 – Needle Craft Group

There will be no second hour RE for children and youth during the summer. Full RE programming resumes on August 10, which will be the first Sunday of our 2025–2026 program year.

We hope your kids will join us for a summer of creativity, community, and connection!

MCY April Times

Lexie T. Brown
Director of Religious Education

I'm deeply grateful to the MCY team and the UUMAN Board for approving this generous and ethically grounded leave. Their support reflects our shared UU values and commitment to caring for staff and families alike.

Nursery Update: Closed for Summer



The UUMAN Nursery will be closed for both May 11 (Mother's Day) and throughout June and July. We will reopen for first-hour nursery care starting Sunday, August 3, just in time for the new RE year!

Looking ahead, we are still in need of volunteers to support our nursery program in the 2025–2026 year. If you enjoy snuggles, board books, and baby giggles, we'd love to have you!

A Note from Your DRE: Summer Plans and Upcoming Leave

As we move into June and July, I'll be shifting into planning mode to prepare for the 2025–2026 Religious Education year. This includes choosing curriculum, updating calendars, refining class schedules, and getting everything ready behind the scenes so we can start strong in August.

During this time, our incredible MCY Team—especially our Summer Programming Coordinator—will take the lead on Sunday programming. I will not be attending Sunday services in June and early July, and my availability for meetings will be limited. If you know you'd like to connect with me, I recommend reaching out to schedule a meeting in May.

Starting July 11, I'll be taking some vacation time, and shortly after that, I'll begin maternity leave for 12 weeks following the birth of baby #2—Connor! During both my vacation and leave, I will be completely unavailable, but you'll be in good hands. The dedicated MCY team will carry out all responsibilities, from Sunday RE to the Autumn Festival.

Abode of the Clouds

UUNEI Pilgrimage to Meghalya

A trip is being offered from Oct. 22nd-Oct. 30th to visit our partner church in the Meghalya, NE India. The trip is a good introduction to Unitarianism in the Khasi Hills. It is being planned by a former travel consultant with the UU Partner Church Council, John Dale and led by his wife, Csilla Kolcsar, who has been apart of this trip at least six times. John and Csilla bring a wealth of knowledge and insight.

My husband, Mike and I did this trip with John and Csilla in 2015. It was an incredibly meaningful journey-we shared experiences with others, and it fostered lasting friendships that have continued.

There is opportunity for sight seeing too. In the East Khasi Hills, is the town Cherrapunji, one of the wettest places on earth, where living root bridges are formed by rubber trees. Cherrapunji, is part of the Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot, making it a treasure trove of flora and fauna.(1) The region boasts over 600 species of birds, including migratory species from as far as Serbia and Mongolia. It is also home to 137 rare, endemic, or threatened plant species.(2) The lush forests, natural caves, and unique climatic conditions contribute to its incredible biodiversity. However, human activities and high rainfall have led to some degradation of the landscape.

<https://httpgemofhimalayas.blogspot.com/2023/01/biodiversity-of-cherrapunji.html>

If you have any questions, please contact me, Michelle Liebergesell (Partner Church Chair) at mliemberg@bellsouth.net or call (770) 778-7217

Also look for Second Hour activities to learn more about the trip.



Tentative Itinerary – Hotels may change due to availability at time of booking. Activities may switch days based on weather, road conditions or other factors.

Wednesday, October 22 – Day 01: GAUHATI – SHILLONG.

Arrive/gather at Gauhati airport. Essential India participants are scheduled to arrive at 12:30 PM. If you are making your own flight arrangements, please plan to arrive no later than this is you wish to share the transfer with the group. Transfer to motor coach for 3-hour drive from Gauhati airport to Shillong. Hotel check-in. Group dinner with local Khasi ministers, orientation & introductions. Overnight – Hotel Centre Point. (D).

Thursday, October 23 – Day 02: SHILLONG

Breakfast at hotel. Morning tour of Don Bosco Museum of indigenous cultures. Group lunch back at the hotel followed by afternoon shopping excursion & walkabout in central Shillong through the nearby Police Bazaar to vibrant city market. Free time for shopping. Afternoon conversation with UUNEI leaders on Khasi Unitarian history and theology, and UUNEI polity.– dinner on your own. Overnight Shillong – Hotel Centre Point. (BL),



Friday, October 24 - Day 03: SHILLONG - JOWAI - SHILLONG

Breakfast at the hotel before departing for Jowai (2 hours). Just outside of Jowai we detour to visit Monolith Park where hundreds of ancient stone monoliths provide striking evidence of the indigenous tribal religion. Group lunch before continuing on to Jowai where we visit the Jowai Unitarian Church & Margaret Barr Unitarian school before returning to Shillong. Dinner on your own. Overnight - Shillong Hotel Centre Point. (BL)

Abode of the Clouds

UUNEI Pilgrimage to Meghalya



Saturday, October 25 – Day 04: SHILLONG – KHARANG - VILLAGES

Exact itinerary and destinations for this day will be determined by the group composition. Depart Shillong after breakfast. Morning drive to Kharang (2 hours). Visits to the local Unitarian church & school. Tour and lunch at the Unitarian-run “Children’s Village” before continuing to the partner villages. Those pilgrims with partner churches in NE India where home stays are possible will be delivered to their villages. Travelers without partner churches or whose partners are unable to host visitors overnight will return to Shillong for home stays in the city. Meal(s) with partners or on your own. (BLD)

Sunday, October 26 – Day 05: VILLAGES - SHILLONG

Breakfast with partners/hosts. Free day with hosts to share their surroundings and get more familiar. Afternoon worship services with partners or in one of the Shillong congregations. Late lunch/reception with partners/hosts following. Transportation back to the city for out of town worshipers. Return to Hotel Centre Point. Free evening to freshen up, rest, and repack. Overnight Shillong – Hotel Centre Point (BL)

Monday, October 27 – Day 06: SHILLONG – CHEERAPUNJEE

Breakfast and check out at the hotel. Scenic drive to Cherrapunjee National Park. (2 hours). Bag lunch at picnic area on the bluffs overlooking Bangladesh. Entertainment by resort staff and Dinner & overnight Cheerapunjee Holiday Resort. (BLD)

Tuesday, October 28 - Day 07: CHERRAPUNJEE

Full day in Cherrapunjee (beautiful area of hills, gorges and waterfalls); points of interest such as Nohkalikai Falls (2nd highest in India) and Nohngithiang Falls (beautiful views of Bangladesh on clear days) are possible stops. There will also be a guided (very strenuous) hike to one or more of the famous Khasi “living bridges”. (There is a less difficult walk to a nearby living bridge that is under reconstruction). Sack lunch. Dinner & overnight Cheerapunjee Holiday Resort. (BLD)

Wednesday, October 29 - Day 08: CHERRAPUNJEE - SHILLONG

Breakfast at resort followed by free morning to stroll and/or visit to the local history museum. Light lunch before departing for Shillong. En route we visit the Cheerapunjee Unitarian Church. Afternoon visit to the tea plantation outside Shillong. Hotel check-in. Free time to repack. Farewell group dinner. (BLD)

Thursday, October 30 - Day 09: SHILLONG - DELHI or PARO, BHUTAN

Travel day. Breakfast at hotel before retracing our route to Gauhati airport for early afternoon flights to Delhi International Airport or Paro to begin Bhutan extension. Late PM arrival in Delhi to connect to onward International flights. For those who want an airport hotel there is an extra fee of \$170 per room.

08 nights / 09 days UUNEI Pilgrimage

COST

Land cost + One-way domestic airline (double occupancy)

US\$ 1419 Net per person + \$150 registration fee

Supplement for Single Room

US\$ 880 Net per single Room

ABOVE COSTS INCLUDE:

- 08 Nights Bed & Breakfast in hotels mentioned or similar based on availability at time of booking.
- Additional meals as listed in itinerary
- Ground transportation to & from all group activities.
- One – way domestic airline flight from Gauhati to Delhi. (Subject to an up-charge. The current airfare projected is \$150 and is built into the trip fee. This is subject to change over time. Later registrants may pay more).
- Local English-speaking guide(s)
- Trip leader(s)

NOT INCLUDED IN PACKAGE:

- International airfare to/from Delhi.
- Domestic airfare from Delhi to Gauhati.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Gratuities
- Any expenses of purely personal nature like, laundry, telephone/fax calls, Insurance, room service. Any other service or item not specified above or in the attached Itinerary.

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 office@uuman.org

| Date | Service Description | Service Leader |
|------|--|---|
| 5/4 | UUMAN Rites of Passage Join us for our annual Rites of Passage service. We will honor our Coming of Age youth as they bridge to Youth Group and our senior Youth as the bridge to Young Adults. | Rev. Dave Dunn, Liz Martin & Lexi Brown |
| 5/11 | Mothers of Spirit and Strength An exploration of the multifaceted nature of "motherhood," both in Unitarian Universalism and in our own lives. | Valorie Baylis |
| 5/18 | Love Has Always Been Our Song Join us to celebrate the songs the UUMAN Chalice Choir loves to sing. These selections are sure to bring joy, hope and peace to us all as we celebrate the final service of our choir season. | Alex Pietsch and the Chalice Choir |
| 5/25 | Hembree Park Service Join us at Roswell's Hembree Park pavilion for an end of the church year service. Although we won't be sharing, bring some food and drink for a picnic afterwards. | Rev. Dave Dunn |

| Date | Celebration |
|------|--|
| 5/5 | Ann C. is celebrating a birthday |
| | Kurt B. is celebrating a birthday |
| 5/8 | Wilder C. is celebrating a birthday |
| 5/13 | Brian C. & Rachel O. are celebrating an anniversary of 2 years |
| 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 |
| | Don & Merry Beth S. are celebrating an anniversary of 41 years |
| | Emmy P. is celebrating a birthday |
| 5/22 | Erin & Martin P. are celebrating an anniversary of 21 years |
| | Waverly C. is celebrating a birthday |
| 5/26 | Elizabeth R. & Stephen S. are celebrating an anniversary of 23 years |
| | Timothy Jr. W. is celebrating a birthday |
| 5/27 | Paula W. & Rick I. are celebrating an anniversary of 46 year |
| 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