



UUMAN TIMES

Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North

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May 2015

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IN THE INTERIM: My First Convert



I joined the church on Sunday. On Monday I was asked to chair a committee. Tuesday I was tapped to be the next congregation president. Wednesday through Thursday I got involved in denominational affairs. Friday I went to my first Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly. Saturday I left for divinity school. Of course it didn't happen that fast, although the Sunday-Monday timing was pretty close. No one signs the membership book because Spirit is calling her to serve on a committee. I had no clue what Spirit wanted from me. What I wanted personally was to show my commitment right away. This made me every congregation's Godsend, a volunteer who can't say No.

On April 18 delegates to the Mid-South District Assembly, hosted by the UU Fellowship of Montgomery, Alabama (UUFM), voted to disband and with three adjoining districts form the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Regionalization, its weary clinical name, was years in preparation. I had been skeptical at first. Can regional really be better than comparatively local? Prove it, Mid-South District! They had. I would vote in favor of the change. Mine would be a vote of affirmation, not permission. The change was already underway.

When I followed my nose to the coffee pot on the morning of the vote, so absorbed was I in nursing remnants of my skepticism that I nearly collided with a woman who'd been a member of the first congregation I served, the one in South Carolina. Hugs and squeals ensued. We'd not seen each other in a decade. I call her My First Convert to Unitarian Universalism, although certainly the entire congregation she joined helped. She arrived on our scene in the midst of a volunteer drought. You guessed it. Within weeks of signing the membership book, everyone wanted her to do a bit of everything. She plunged in, and in, and in some more. I've often wondered about people like My First Convert who move away and lose touch. Did they stay Unitarian Universalists or did we burn

the Spirit right out of them with endless requests to volunteer for stuff that mostly has little to do with being a Unitarian Universalist?

I knew my friend had spent some years working in a town with no Unitarian Universalist congregation. To stay involved, she'd had to travel. And travel some more to where she lives now. The road in between was difficult for her at times. Yet here we both were on a fine spring Saturday in Montgomery, Alabama, when we could have been doing something...dare I say it? Something more fun.

Not every Unitarian Universalist is able or willing to donate a weekend to the cause of regional governance; or to devote precious vacation time and money to attending a UUA General Assembly; or to sit through a congregational meeting when other compelling needs are calling. Even a minister has choices in expressing commitment to the faith depending on the circumstances of her life. More important than the event at hand is the prerequisite instruction to all spiritual practice, and that is to Show Up—whenever, however, and as often as possible, because the religious home you have found in Unitarian Universalism is worthy of your love, your commitment, even occasionally your boredom. Just that.

Among the assigned tasks of interim ministry is Renewing the congregation's connections with available resources within and beyond the UUA. Tension between congregational independence and interdependence with Unitarian Universalism itself is woven into the DNA of our free-thinking faith. Mix in suspicion of most institutions and forms of authority and you have a huge obstacle to embodying our vision of a world made fair and all her people one. To be the Southern Region, rather than four districts (Florida and Georgia both straddled two) effectively erases boundaries to acting as one faith on issues affecting the entire UU South.

Ain't that Good News!

—Cynthia Prescott

From Your ICOM

The Interim Committee on Ministry (ICOM) has completed our initial interim appraisal report, and (spoiler alert!) things are moving along quite well. In order to complete the required appraisal, members of the UUMAN board, ICOM members, UUMAN staff and Reverend Cynthia filled out a questionnaire about UUMAN's progress toward completing the tasks of interim ministry. The results were tabulated and compiled through a process of consensus and submitted to the UUA.

Here are some highlights taken from the report:

Requested-Assistance: The board requested advice on Search Committee selection. Cynthia has been helpful with suggestions about the process, but has also made it clear that the Search Com will function independently once selected. Cynthia has worked with the Worship Com. to help them try new and different approaches (ongoing).

Cynthia has also worked with leadership regarding some Healthy Congregation related conflicts, which have been resolved.

Multicultural-Progress: There is much excitement and renewed energy at UUMAN revolving around Social Justice. We are holding "Faith in Action" Sundays quarterly and plan to expand them. We have held two roadside vigils for Black Lives Matter, and members are participating in Moral Monday demonstrations at the Capitol. We had a large multi-generational turnout at the MLK march and Pride parade in Atlanta. We have also had several thought and action provoking sermons to help light the fire under us!

Interim Program: Members who have experience the Interim Program in the past commented that the UUA and especially the SE district have been much more responsive and helpful this time. They note that the program has improved over the years by becoming much more intentional and does a good job helping with the transition. It is also clear that an Interim Minister who understands that role can serve a congregation better than a minister who would rather be settled. We are pleased with the program and the support we are receiving.

Your Leading Role: There is much optimism about the future, and we are grateful for Cynthia's guidance and our part in this transition period. There is some concern that the board, who function so well as a team, may become overburdened or that as members are selected to serve on the Search Com. there will be other holes in leadership to fill, but with the renewed sense of energy emerging, we believe members will step forward and work together to ensure that we continue to move forward through the transition process.

Additional Thoughts: Reverend Cynthia's quote:

"I could not be more pleased with UUMAN's interim to date. Sure there's still a lot of work to be done, but a strong start counts for a lot."

We agree!

If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding our Interim Ministry, please let us know!

Your ICOM,

Julie Fogel, Ben Sample, Sheila Smith, Laurie Wheeler

Life Events Gifting



LIFE EVENTS GIFTING: There are envelopes waiting for you to pick up in the narthex at UUMAN. They are attached to the bottom of the poster explaining Life Events Gifting. The envelopes make it easy for your donation to be recognized as earmarked for Life Events Gifting. If it is more convenient,

use your own envelope and just write Life Events Gifting on the outside, the occasion and honoree. These envelopes may be dropped in the collection plate, mailed to UUMAN or hand delivered to Jan Wilson or Carolyn Lee. We will send the person or family being honored or remembered a handwritten note telling them of your thoughtfulness, and you will receive an acknowledgement which can be used for tax purposes.

There are a multitude of reasons for using Life Events Gifting: weddings, birthdays, graduations, showing appreciation, honoring an achievement, memorials for the deceased, and many others. Please consider this alternative when you want to let someone know you are sharing their joys or sorrows.

Please contact me if you need more information:

Jan Wilson

janbillwilson@msn.com

India Partner Update

Within the last several months, Mike and Michelle Liebergesell from our church visited our Indian partner church, the Mawsynjri Unitarian congregation. The Mawsynjri church is located in the northeast hills of India. This is the second time UUMANs visited our partner congregation. Mike and Michelle reported on two significant events.

First, the fourteen letters sent from the kids at UUMAN were received and read. When necessary translation to the Khasi language was provided by the local teachers. The Khasi kids sent letters to their new UUMAN pen pals via the Liebergesells. The India partnership committee is exploring ways to improve the communications link.

The second item relates to the use of our 50-50 funds in Mawsynjri. With the approximately \$1,000, (1) ten students are supported in the school. (2) a classroom was built (3) a ¼ acre lot was purchased for future use of the school.

On Sunday, May 3rd at 12:00 in Discovery Hall a slide show presentation will be given by the NE India Partner Committee of the Khasi Hills in Northeast India.

—Jim Rogers

FROM THE GARDEN

Hello Fellow Gardeners,

Our workdays will be changed during May, in order to allow everyone to enjoy the Memorial Day holiday. We will only be working on Monday, May 11 this month.

Claire Sullivan
UUMAN Gardening Group
cbsullivan@bellsouth.net



Deep Purple Irises



Azaleas



Mature Dogwood



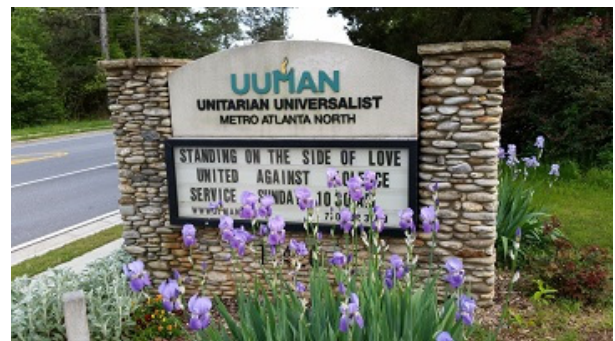
April Showers Brought Purple Flowers



Young Dogwoods



Redbud



Lavender Irises

Spruce Up Day



I want to extend my most sincere gratitude to the following people who helped with purchasing, chipping, hauling, raking, and feeding on Spruce-Up Day at UUMAN:

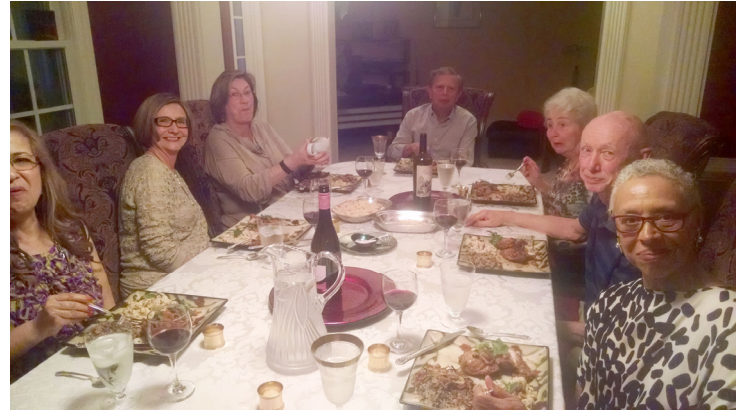
- Steve Allerton
- Kelly Callan
- Mike Chambers
- Rich Foley
- Don Groce
- Rick Irwin
- Pat Lampert
- Bruce Langston
- Marc Lee
- Mike Liebergesell – Special Thanks!
- Shelley Nagrani
- Bob Popp
- Rosie Popp
- Susan Wilson

If I have forgotten you, I'm sorry! It was a looonng day!

Claire Sullivan
UUMAN Gardening Group

Dinner from the Jerusalem Cookbook

"Jerusalem Cookbook" dinner winners from the Heart's Desire auction enjoying dinner and good company at the Nagrani's home.





Game Day

This month's Game Day has been moved to Sunday, May 17th, starting at 2:30pm and probably ending around 6. It's at Ashok & Shelley's house -- email if you need directions or have other questions. There is also a [Facebook event](#) for April

4th, where you can RSVP and ask questions.

Game Day is where we get together, eat, chat, and play modern board, card, and/or dice games. People usually bring food or beverages, but you don't have to. You can bring games, too, but don't worry if you don't have any or don't want to -- there's usually plenty. Don't worry if you don't know how to play them -- we'll be happy to teach you. Often, we're learning new games, too!

The newer games are usually much less luck-based than older board games (Candyland, e.g.). They also tend to be designed such that it's harder for one person to run away with the game so that the end is just everyone else waiting to lose. :-)

There are cooperative games, where the players are working together against the game ([Pandemic](#) or [Flash Point: Fire Rescue](#), for example). Some games take 30 minutes, some can take 2 or 3. Games can be all about what you do on the board or how well you can bluff your opponents, like in [The Resistance](#). There are many different game types and themes.

One of my favorite introductory games is [Ticket to Ride](#), and you can see an episode of TableTop [here](#) where they play the game. I've watched most of the episodes of [TableTop](#) with my kids. They're usually pretty entertaining, though they can be off-color. Between several members of the group, we have most of the games in that show, though we don't always bring them.

Speaking of which, some of us have our collections published on BoardGameGeek. Here are the links for the collections of [Ryan & Meghan](#), [Langston](#), [Carlton](#), and [mine](#). If you're interested in something, let me know and we'll try to bring it.

Hope to see you there!

—Phillip Seaver

Path to Membership

The next UU101 (also known as Path to Membership) class will be offered on Saturday, May 16th, 10am-2:30pm in the UUMAN sanctuary.

If you'd like to learn more about Unitarian Universalism, our UUMAN community, and what membership is all about, this is the class for you! It's also a great way to meet other newcomers to UUMAN and find out ways to get involved with the activities and groups we support.

Lunch is provided and childcare is available upon request.

There's a sign-up sheet at the greeter station, or you can contact me at suzanne@rezelman.org

-- Suzanne Rezelman (UU101 coordinator)



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 Claire Sullivan at cbsullivan@bellsouth.net

Date	Celebration
5/1	Camille T. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
5/2	Jake H. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
5/4	John and Dolly Peltier are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary!
5/5	Ann Creech is celebrating a birthday
5/7	Levi S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday Anna and Kit Hamblen are celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary
5/8	Gloria Parsons , former member of the Choir, is celebrating a birthday Jen Saltzman is receiving her Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Georgia Regents University!
5/14	Divya P. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
5/15	Thomas S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
5/20	Addy G. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday Amy Moss is celebrating a birthday
5/25	Marjorie Pomper is celebrating a birthday
5/26	Elizabeth Rohan and Stephen Shanahan are celebrating their 13th wedding anniversary!
5/27	Rick Irwin and Paula Watson are celebrating their 36th wedding anniversary Melane Sibley is celebrating a birthday

A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Speaker
5/3/15	<p>The Meaning of Home</p> <p>We emerged from the sea; we came down from the trees and we wandered the earth for millennia. Then, about two million years ago, we began to settle on the land. Rather than following our food and traveling with the seasons, we began to stay put, grow our own food and make the animals our captives. We became landholders, defenders and owners.</p> <p>Now, because of changing economics, increasingly violent weather and devastating wars we humans – around the world - are faced with threats to what some of us thought was a birthright – safe, secure homes. Places we could count on to be able to get and keep. How will we respond to these changes - and how will they affect us?</p>	<p>Lay Speaker</p> <p>Lyn May</p>
5/10/15	<p>Parenting—Holding On and Letting Go</p> <p>We start life connected, physically and psychically, to our parents. Then we begin the dance of letting go and holding on, stepping on each other's toes, bumping into each other. Let's explore why we stay in the dance and what we learn about ourselves by parenting and being parented.</p>	<p>Lay Speaker</p> <p>Merri Beth Stephens</p>
5/17/15	<p>MCY Celebration Service</p> <p>Join us as we celebrate another wonderful year of worshipping, playing, serving, learning and growing together. We will honor several milestone achievements including our youngest 'OWL' graduates, Coming of Age Youth, and Bridging High School graduates. Let's give thanks for this community that holds a powerful space for our shared Ministry With Children & Youth.</p>	<p>Toniann Read</p>
5/24/15	<p>Transcendent Alvania</p> <p>Multi-generational celebration of the Flower Ceremony and its originator, Rev. Norbert Capek. Picnic on the grounds to follow, hosted by MCY.</p>	<p>Rev. Cynthia Prescott</p>
5/31/15	<p>The Annual Poetry Service</p> <p>The theme of this year's annual poetry service is "Transformation." Members will share their original poems on the subject. This service has been treasured by our congregation in the past, so come and be a part of the transformation this year.</p>	<p>Lay Speaker</p> <p>Jim Saunders</p>

May Events

Date	Event
<p>Humanism</p> <p>2nd Sunday of each month, after the service, in the sanctuary.</p>	<p>21st Century Humanism focuses on the philosophy of mankind as the center of all things, informs members of Humanism's nature and history, and emphasizes free and frank discussion of the effect on humanity of past and present events, safe from the influence of contravening public opinion. For more information, contact John Peltier at peltier.john@gmail.com</p>
<p>Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 in Discovery Hall</p>	<p>Circle of Women</p> <p>We aim to develop a warm nurturing circle of trust where we can share ourselves and our lives.</p> <p>Contact Kate Hudson hudsonkd@bellsouth.net or Linda Etheridge lletheridge1@gmail.com</p>
<p>Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.</p>	<p>UUMAN's Painting Group</p> <p>Come paint with us in a relaxed atmosphere with a glass of wine. All are welcome. There is a fee but half is donated to UUMAN.</p>
<p>Weekly on Wednesdays at 12:15</p>	<p>Daytimers</p> <p>The Daytimers group discusses contemporary, thought-provoking topics such as current political issues or social trends that may affect everyone at some level. All are invited to attend. For information, contact Dan Ben-David at dan@uuman.org</p>
<p>Fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>The Common Grounds Coffee House</p> <p><i>Connecting people who love to play music with those who love to listen!</i></p> <p>Doors open at 7 pm (except April this year it is the 3rd Saturday). Live music and delicious refreshments, \$5 suggested donation, held in the Sanctuary.</p>
<p>Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary</p>	<p>Centering at UUMAN</p> <p>Silent meditation Saturday mornings at UUMAN. Please come at 9:10 for some basic instruction if it is your first time. The meditation itself begins promptly 9:30. Please be in your seats on time. Those who wish to may stay after for 30 to 45 minutes of discussion about our experiences.</p> <p>For more information, contact Carolyn Bommarito at campoften@aol.com</p>

For more information about events, see the UUMAN Events Calendar at www.uuman.org.

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