



UUMAN TIMES

Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North

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November 2015

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In the Interim: Nothing But Turtles

A professor ends a lecture on the structure of the universe. As she readies to leave, a student rushes up to the lectern, Excuse me, but you've got it wrong. The universe rests on the back of a giant turtle. Playing along, the professor says, Okay, what is the turtle standing on? The student doesn't hesitate, Why, another turtle, of course. This repetitious exchange goes on for a while. Finally the professor heaves a breath, preparing to repeat the question a final time. The student interrupts, Save your breath. It's nothing but turtles all the way down.

This joke has been taken by more than one Unitarian Universalist minister to highlight the limits of debating any subject as though objective truth lies out there somewhere, and eventually we'll all see the same light. There are many ways of stacking turtles, not to mention that turtles have minds of their own. Probably you already know this, but I need reminding myself when my passion for a conviction or a cause is running high.

For over half of you who responded to the Ministerial Search Committee's congregational survey, human community is everything you mean by the word religious. A search for kindred community is what brought you to UUMAN. It's why you stay. Of course occasionally it's why someone leaves due to the curse of unmet expectations.

Unitarian Universalism's reverence for individual freedom of belief and conscience is the source both of our calling and the tensions among us. To profess a creed is a straightforward gesture of faith. Even when you're not certain you believe all the words, you've still got a ready refuge. For a creedless (okay, creed-free) religious movement, to place its manifold visions of truth squarely in the hands and hopes of an earthly human community such as UUMAN is brave, bold, and very difficult in practice.

Fortunately advice on how to do this well is available from a number of religious and secular sources. This tip from Buddhism is my favorite: Do not mistake a finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself.

Truth is a bottomless stack of free-thinking turtles.

UUMAN

Ministerial Search Committee

News You Can Use – November 2015

Charter for UUMAN's Ministerial Search Committee (MSC), 2015

The purpose of the MSC is to carefully assess the needs and expectations of the congregation and search for the best ministerial fit for UUMAN.

MSC roles

Chair: Shelley Nagrani
Secretary: Laura Keck
Treasurer: Joe Creech
Survey Coordinator: Dirk Bender*
Packet Editor: Lyn May
Arranger: Phillip Seaver
Reference Checker: Miriam Patanian*

Note*: As these responsibilities occur at different times in the process, Dirk and Miriam will tag team on them both.

Relationship to Board

MSC promises to conduct a thorough, respectful, confidential process to find the minister that best meets the needs and aspirations of UUMAN. MSC promises to keep the Board informed of progress and roadblocks. The chair agrees to attend Board meetings as needed/ requested.

MSC expects the Board to work diligently to create the best compensation package possible, to support the process of the MSC, and to respect the need for confidentiality.

Relationship to Congregation

MSC promises to listen carefully to the wishes and concerns of the congregation. MSC promises to conduct a thorough, respectful, confidential process to find the minister that best meets the needs and aspirations of UUMAN, as expressed by the membership. MSC promises to keep the congregation informed of progress through a variety of channels, including the newsletter and a bulletin board.

MSC expects the congregation to fully participate in meetings, the online survey, and other opportunities to inform MSC about its wishes and concerns.

Relationship to Interim Minister

MSC promises to keep the Interim Minister informed of its progress. The chair promises to meet with the IM once a month to discuss the search process with her. The MSC agrees to protect the privacy of all ministers who express an interest in serving UUMAN.

MSC expects the minister to speak honestly with any candidate who contacts her about UUMAN. MSC expects the IM to serve as pastor to the committee and its members without influencing the decision making of the committee.

Relationship to other staff

MSC promises to listen carefully to the wishes and concerns of the staff. MSC promises to meet with each staff member individually to hear those wishes and concerns. MSC promises to conduct a thorough, respectful, confidential process to find the minister that best meets the needs and aspirations of UUMAN, as expressed by the membership, being mindful of the input received from the staff.

MSC expects the staff to fully express their wishes and concerns about who might be called as settled minister. MSC expects the staff to support its work, when called upon to do so and to respect the confidentiality of ministers who participate in the process in any way.

Committee Norms

Members of the MSC agree to prioritize the work of the committee by attending as many of its meetings as possible and completing all tasks in a timely manner.

During the process we all agree to:

- Test assumptions and inferences.
- Share all relevant information.
- Use specific examples to help explain what we mean.
- Come to shared understanding of what important words mean.
- Explain our reasoning and intent.
- Be conscious of the impact of our statements and actions, regardless of intent.
- Focus inwardly and outwardly on needs, hopes, and concerns, not positions that we have independently determined.
- Combine inquiry with advocacy.
- Be brave and to discuss difficult issues.
- Balance self-care with the tyranny of time.
- Continue, through the process, to define a decision making process that will create the highest level of participation of the committee members and will allow us to honor our commitments to the congregation, to the staff, and to each other.

To contact the MSC:, email us at search@uuman.org

In faith,

Dirk Bender, Joe Creech, Laura Keck, Lyn May, Shelley Nagrani, Miriam Patanian, and Phillip Seaver

Under the Harvest Moon: Goods and Service Auction



Saturday, November 14 at 6:30 pm

Halloween, homecoming dances and Under the Harvest Moon Goods and Services Auction on November 14 – who knew the fall could be so exciting!

You can be excited because some cool services and goods are being donated for Just-Sign-Up, Silent Auction and Live Auction bidding. The first reveal will be tomorrow.

Committee chairs are excited because there are still a few spots where help is needed.

You can be excited because you can dress in the “school” attire you feel is festive – a band uniform, a college jersey, your glee club outfit, the school crossing guard’s uniform, the tux like the one you wore to the homecoming dance, a color guard uniform – it’s yours to design and wear!

Publix, Kroger, Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s can be excited because of all the great food that will be prepared for all the dinners, movie nights, and other themed events you’ll be able to attend.

You can be excited because you can still donate a wonderful good or service for 10 more days, by November 3. Cool daytrips or overnights, acts of service and dinners or help around the house or other things no one as thought of yet are still needed.

Attendees will be excited because UUMAN will have another night to have fun together and help our UUMAN community.

The Under the Harvest Moon table will be excited when people stop by to buy their tickets for \$10 or sign up for free childcare available while the goods and services auction festivities occur.

The Under the Harvest Moon Goods and Services Planning Committee

News You Can Use: The Survey Says

Our Search Committee asked, and the congregation answered loud and clear. You wanted to be heard, and so 132 of you took about a half hour of your lives to answer our Congregational Survey. Thank you!

The survey is now closed. We are still in the process of analyzing the results, and we will present a report that will be publicly available in the next few weeks. But for now, we know a few important things about UUMAN that we didn’t necessarily know before.

We learned that a lot of you attended the Cottage meetings where we shared our hopes, our disappointments, our joys, and our notions of ministerial success. Ninety of you indicated that you either attended or hoped to attend these meetings, and again, thank you!

We learned that the single most important reason, among the twenty options given, that people attend UUMAN was Belonging to a community. 86% chose this, and of any dominant themes that will emerge from our analysis, we know that a sense of community will play an important role.

The survey posed an admittedly dizzying array of questions about our personal ideas of what we may call “faith”, or perhaps a “belief system.” We know that these are all cherished beliefs that our membership strive to respect. However, the closest thing to consensus, interestingly, was this statement, of which 76% were on board: “Goodness” and “meaning” are human constructs created as a result of the human encounter with each other and the world.

There were more than thirty questions; some are of critical importance to a candidate minister. The congregation believes that Presenting stimulating and challenging Sunday services is the most important priority for a minister, surpassing priority #2, Fostering a sense of fellowship and community (there’s that word again!) within the church by a 22% margin.

Since we tend to think that there are a lot of newcomers here not just to UUMAN, but to Unitarian Universalism, it came as a bit of a surprise that something approaching a majority—44%—claimed more than 15 years as a UU.

The number crunching will continue, and the Search Committee will work in the next month to disseminate information about what we’ve learned, and to reach out to our UU network through the next phases of the search process. We will continue to report from the pulpit and online, and in-person; remember, we wear special hot-pink nametags with commissioned artwork to set us apart while we’re at UUMAN, so find us. Talk to us. We have heard a lot from you via the survey and cottage meetings, but we are still listening.

- Dirk Bender

New Members Corner



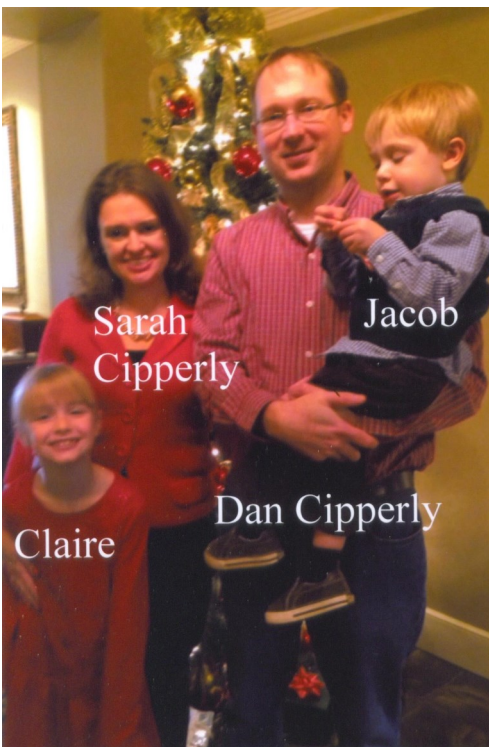
MJ & Bayard Stringer - MJ Stringer was raised in a military family that settled near Louisville, KY, where her mother still lives. She's a painter with a B.A. in Fine Arts from Western Kentucky University, but her day job is as a data entry specialist. Bayard Stringer was born in Pensacola, FL and grew up in Warner Robins, GA, where his parents still live. He has a B.S. in Physics from Mercer University and a Ph.D. in

Physics and Astronomy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He's a lecturer at Georgia Perimeter College. They were married in 2011, and they relocated to Georgia from Salt Lake City in 2013 to be closer to family. Their favorite things include hiking and delicious food.



Mary McGrath - My first 45 years were spent in Vermont where I raised two children and some sheep. My teaching career was followed by semiconductor engineering with IBM and later work as a consultant. From Vermont, I went to Belize to do some environmental engineering on the islands. From there to Austin and then Cleveland, Ohio where I met and eventually married Ted Jones, a Presbyterian minister, became a Reiki master, and practiced and taught energy healing. A pastorate for Ted in Virginia afforded us both the opportunity to do a training course in spiritual direction at Eastern Mennonite. After his retirement we spent several winters on the road in South Texas and landed here in Atlanta to be near family. I tried UUMAN because the name reminded me of a very beautiful fellow spiritual director from India named Ooman. Though I had no past UU association, it felt like another excellent choice.

And so it is.



Sarah & Dan Cipperly- Sarah & Dan Cipperly are very happy to be joining UUMAN. Sarah is a lawyer who recently opened her own law practice after ten years representing low-income families for Atlanta Legal Aid Society. She has an interest in social justice issues, particularly those impacting women and girls, and volunteers as a pro bono attorney for low-income survivors of family violence.

She's a fourth-generation UU and grew up in a family active in UU congregations. Dan's a financial analyst with a company in Midtown and, although an Emory and UGA grad, is a native of upstate New York. He misses the skiing part of living in the northeast but doesn't miss shoveling snow. He's an avid sports fan and plays soccer with a men's league. Daughter Claire is in second grade at Mount Bethel Elementary, plays every sport possible, and loves art and Minecraft. Son Jacob is 3 and already loves playing with his new buddies in his RE class. The Cipperlys live in East Cobb.

New Members Corner



Kaitlin and Billie Abbitt—As an Air Force brat, Billie lived all around the world growing up, from places with lots of snow to places with lots of desert to places with lots of English accents. He finally settled in Fort Walton Beach, Florida (a place with lots of water) when he was in middle school. He later attended the University of Florida where he took more political theory and philosophy classes than any reasonable person could while remaining a functioning member of society. Occasionally, he would show up to his other classes.

In his last semester, when it was apparent that he had gained no marketable skills and had little inclination to wake up before noon to show up to more classes, he and a friend founded Common Grounds Coffeehouse in Gainesville, Florida. Common Grounds would eventually grow to be one of the premier indy music venues in central Florida. He was also the founder and manager of Whitman Acid Media Group which developed promotions for national music acts such as They Might Be Giants, Edwin McCain, and Sister Hazel, as well as one of the earliest online political campaign websites. After selling his portion of the business, and realizing he was relieved of any real responsibility for the first time in his life, he set out for an epic road trip across the country. Alas, his car broke down while visiting his sister in Atlanta and he never left. Billie is a professional know-it-all (aka Business Analyst) for Philips in their healthcare division where he has been for 15 years.

Kaitlin isn't an Air Force brat, but moved around enough that some might wonder whether someone in her family was in the military or part of a traveling circus. After 4 years in upstate New York (a place without a particularly strong college football culture) and 2 years in North Carolina (a place with only a slightly better college football culture, mostly attributable to the short two years of Steve Spurrier coaching at Duke), Kaitlin's family settled in Gainesville, Florida (following Steve Spurrier, of course to a place with a very strong college football culture). In middle school, she attended boarding school in North Georgia, and around high school, her mom relocated to the Atlanta area, too.

Kaitlin majored in Political Science at MIT and attended UGA's law school (while driving a car with a Gator bumper sticker). She now considers herself a recovering lawyer since she no longer practices and instead works at a software company where she has found her happy place surrounded by technology.

Kaitlin and Billie have a beagle, Annie, who acts more like log than dog, and 2 sons, Corbin (age 5) and Fletcher (6 months). Corbin aspires to be an American Ninja Warrior, and Fletcher enjoys watching other people make funny faces and noises in the name of making him laugh.

UUMAN's HomeStretch Volunteer Day



On October 17th, a group from UUMAN put our principles to work at our annual HomeStretch volunteer day. HomeStretch is a local charitable housing community that gives homeless parents and their children a safe and comfortable place to live, while simultaneously helping them address the root causes of their situation and return to a life of self-reliance and stability.

Our UUMAN crew set to work early Saturday morning, preparing the community garden for fall, trimming hedges, pulling up weeds, and clearing brush. The volunteers were Rosie Popp, Donna Guile, Bob Popp, Dirk Bender, Steve Allerton, Tim Link, and Mike Chambers. Much was accomplished; it was a good day.

- Mike Chambers



COMMON GROUNDS COFFEE HOUSE

Common Grounds is our monthly coffee house, where UUMANs and the surrounding community meet to enjoy music and each other's company. The September show presented **Bob Bakert** (www.bobbakert.com) and the duo **Out of the Rain** (www.outoftherainmusic.net). Not only is Bob a wonderful singer-songwriter-guitarist-entertainer, he was *instrumental* in helping Janet Lacey establish UUMAN's Common Grounds. Janet says, "we are eternally grateful that Bob was willing to help us get the Common Grounds Coffee House up and running three years ago. We couldn't have done it without him." So, when she heard that Bob's birthday was coming up this September – and it was a big one – Janet made sure that Common Grounds and many local musicians who have worked with Bob marked the occasion.

October's performers were **Rick Diamond** (www.reverbnation.com/rickdiamond) and **Lashbrooks** (<http://www.lashbrooksmusic.net/>). Their rich vocals and acoustic work were outstanding. Our audience had great time.

You can join us at Common Grounds the fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 PM. No reservations required, just a requested donation of \$5 at the door. We also welcome contributions of canned food for North Fulton Community Charities. Bring your own beverage, or purchase coffee and snacks. It's always a worthwhile event.

- Carole Herman



Out of the Rain



Bob Bakert's 65th! Long-time friends & fellow musicians joined him onstage.



Celebrating UUMAN's Silver Anniversary ReUUnion – 25 Years Standing on the Side of Love



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

Believe it or not UUMAN will celebrate 25 years of "Standing on the Side of Love" in February 2016! From humble beginnings in January 1991 until present day, UUMAN has been a place of refuge, and a place to find community, and a place to grow in our faith. The beginning of our year-long recognition of our past and planting the seeds for the future will begin Saturday, February 6, 2016, with our Silver Anniversary ReUUnion evening celebration and will continue Sunday, February 7th with a special intergenerational service and family luncheon. Please save the dates and come be a part of the fun!

We'll have many more communications about the events so don't worry, just put it on your calendar to be in town and be available to participate that weekend. We are planning for both days to have special attractions that will be fun and meaningful for all members and friends of UUMAN including the youngest to the oldest. We really do hope that everyone will join us to celebrate the history, the present, and the future of UUMAN.

If you would like to get involved with the planning of the celebration please talk to any of the current members listed below. The next 25th Committee meeting will be Monday evening at 7:30, November 9, 2015.

And, by all means, put these events on your calendar right now!

Bev Jordan – Chair
Bob Popp
Jim Saunders
Kate Hudson
Kevin King
Merri Beth Stephens

Date	Celebration
11/2	Bailey S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
11/6	Shelly Nagrani is celebrating a birthday
11/9	Amy Scovill is celebrating a birthday
11/10	Linda Etheridge is celebrating a birthday
11/11	Colin L. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
	Lara vdB. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
11/13	Steve Allerton is celebrating a birthday
11/14	Ilona Walker and Randy Jue's children, Alexander and Arianna, are turning 19
11/17	Ember S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
11/18	Joss H. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
11/20	Carolyn Lee is celebrating a birthday
11/21	Joe Creech is celebrating a birthday
	Jen Saltzman is celebrating a birthday
11/22	Bailey S of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
11/29	Desmond Wilkins will be turning 21
11/30	Desiree Wilkins will be turning 17
	Becky Norris' son, Nicholas, is turning 20

FROM THE GARDEN

Hello Fellow and Potential Gardeners,

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, from mid-March to mid-November. That means that this month, we will be meeting only on November 9 as our final work day of the year. We usually work from around 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or noon. UUMAN Announcements are sent out the Friday before each work day. Hope you can join us!

Claire Sullivan
UUMAN Gardening Group

cbsullivan@bellsouth.net



A Monarch Butterfly on the Ageratum



A Fall Planting in the Meditation Garden



A Praying Mantis on the Lantana



A Field of Daisy Mums



A Yellow Butterfly on the Butterfly Weed



A Perfect Rose



The Yellow Mums Finally Bloom

A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Speaker
11/1	Beyond Categorical Thinking: The Van Gogh Café Living our Unitarian Universalist values isn't always as easy as we would like it to be. Often what we strive for is not what actually happens. How can we improve the odds that we will lead with our best values inside and outside our congregations? This sermon will explore these issues as they pertain to your next minister. Rev. Kron is Director of the Transitions Office for the Unitarian Universalist Association, helping congregations and ministers as they navigate the ministerial search process.	Pulpit Guest: Rev. Keith Kron
11/8	Just Mercy Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson is this year's Unitarian Universalist Association Common Read. Stevenson has devoted his legal career to defending those trapped by the criminal justice system at its unjust, capricious worst. The book, and today's sermon, will speak to themes of justice, mercy, and compassion. A discussion will follow the service.	Lay Speaker: Jim Saunders
11/15	Faith In Action: Immigration	Toniann Read
11/22	Bread and Gratitude This service will include a Thanksgiving communion in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. Bread bakers are needed in advance. Contact RevCP if you would like to help.	Rev. Cynthia Prescott
11/28	Searching for God on the Blue Ridge Parkway Why is it that when we look the hardest, spiritual revelations and the deeper meanings of life always seem to be just out of reach, but when we let our guard down... THEY find us when and where we least expect it...	Lay Speaker: Randy Blasch

November Events

Date	Event
2nd Sunday of each month, after the service, in the sanctuary.	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
Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 in Discovery Hall	Circle of Women We aim to develop a warm nurturing circle of trust where we can share ourselves and our lives. Contact Kate Hudson hudsonkd@bellsouth.net or Linda Etheridge lletheridge1@gmail.com
Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.	UUMAN's Painting Group 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.
Weekly on Wednesdays at 12:15	Daytimers 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
Fourth Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m.	The Common Grounds Coffee House <i>Connecting people who love to play music with those who love to listen!</i> 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.
Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary	Centering at UUMAN 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. For more information, contact Carolyn Bommarito at campoften@aol.com



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 proceeding the issue date. Please email your news articles and artwork to Becky at newsletter@uuman.org