



# UUMAN TIMES

Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North

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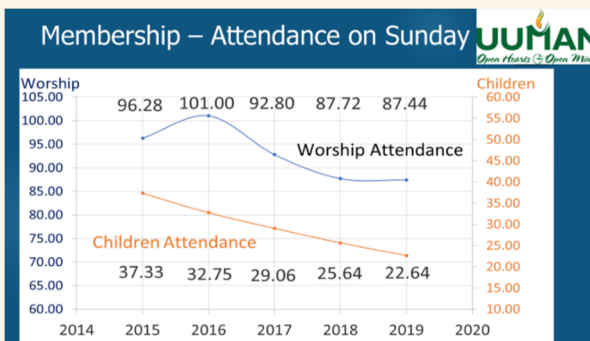
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## Membership at UUMAN

At the November congregational meeting, Board President Todd Callen and I presented some slides as an introduction to a membership and attendance discussion.

The following Sunday morning “Attendance” slide was presented:



I do not have attendance data across the UUA however there are some statistics that may be relatable.

- Worship attendance at UUMAN since 2015: **-9% (9% decrease)**
- Individual UUA membership across the denomination since 2015: **-1% (1% decrease)**
- Children’s attendance at UUMAN since 2015: **-39% (39% decrease)**
- Children’s UUA enrollment across the denomination since 2015: **-14% (14% decrease)**

(Note that UUA membership and children’s enrollment represent the sum total of all UUA congregations since one does not “join” the UUA as an individual.)

Generally speaking, these decreases in membership, attendance, and enrollment are being felt across most all denominations. There are generational and cultural reasons for this. The baby boomers had fewer children than their parents and the children of the baby boomers are putting off marriage and having fewer children themselves. Also, the children of the baby boomers weren’t accustomed to being taken to church as their parents were. What would make them want to come now?

A 14% decrease in children’s UUA enrollment across the denomination since 2015 is an alarming statistic. Yet, UUMAN has seen a 39% decrease in children’s attendance over that same period. We must also keep in mind that the largest decreases in UU membership are being felt in New England whereas the **UUA Southern Region is said to be growing**. Why then are we experiencing decreases?

On the bright side, UUMAN continues to get about four visitors per week. (Three of the four typically fill out a visitor card.) This represents 200 visitors per year. Converting just 25% of them into new members would add 50 members each year (without having to do any marketing or paid advertising).

One idea the Board is exploring is the addition of a part-time membership professional to UUMAN’s staff. This is not a new idea within UUism. In fact, there is an established organization called the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals. (UUAMP). <https://uuamp.org/>

From their website:

The Mission of UUAMP is to develop and support the ministry of membership through collaboration and professional development.

UUAMP is comprised of about 110 members...serving congregations with membership as one of the main components of their ministry. We also welcome UUA staff and the heads of the other UU Professional Groups to join us in supporting our mission and growing Unitarian Universalism as part of shared ministry.

Hopefully we can be more intentional about retaining our members and attracting new ones. This also means taking a look at our ministries. Are our ministries vibrant? Are they leading to fulfillment? Are we helping our members grow?

Let’s take a look at ourselves. May this be joyful work.

Take care,

Dave



## UUMAN Sharing the Plate—50/50

Once each month, half of our unpledged plate funds go to a nonprofit organization. This month's recipient is North Fulton Community Charities (NFCC).

NFCC assists residents living in North Fulton with short-term emergency needs. NFCC collaborates with many local providers to provide the resources necessary to help individuals and families remain stable in our community. For more information go to <https://nfcchelp.org/>

Please consider giving more generously than usual. Your contributions are tax deductible. You can write a check made payable to UUMAN; designate "50-50" in the memo line. Donations can also be made through Givelify.

UUMAN's "Share the Plate" Coordinator

Michelle Liebergesell

## Free Money!



**FREE MONEY! FREE MONEY!!** Well, kind of...we were just notified by the UUA, that we received \$5100 in matching money for our UUMAN Endowment Fund (to be paid in 4 payments). This will bring our total to over \$35K. UUMAN is deeply grateful for everyone that gave last year and also for those who have made estate arrangements for the benefit of UUMAN.

Everyone is welcome to join the UUMAN Legacy Society and the time has never been better to support liberal religious values in our nation. Whether it's a remembrance, a special event acknowledgement or a gesture expressing your values for all time, every gift is appreciated. The minimum \$1000 donation can be given directly or as an estate bequest. If you are considering a contribution, please contact Beverly Jordan, Donna Melcher or Ashok Nagrani (the UUMAN Endowment Committee).

- Donna Melcher

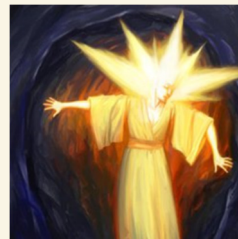


## Life Celebrations

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

[communications-chair@uuman.org](mailto:communications-chair@uuman.org)

Date	Celebration
12/8	Jim Nickens is celebrating a birthday
12/9	Presley C. of the MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/15	Carole Herman is celebrating a birthday
	Duco van der Beek is celebrating a birthday
12/17	Joaquin F. of the MCY program is celebrating a birthday
	Bruce Langston is celebrating a birthday
12/18	Karen Seaver is celebrating a birthday
12/19	Nick G. of the MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/23	McPatti Langston is celebrating a birthday
12/24	Paul Gellerstedt is celebrating a birthday
12/29	Sue Greenspon is celebrating a birthday
12/31	Marty Harvey is celebrating a birthday



## Winter Solstice Celebration

Winter (Solstice Celebration) is coming. Our nighttime service on the shortest day of the year is filled with magical moments and I've heard it's not just for the kids! A short ceremony outside (weather permitting) with a potluck and fellowship afterwards will help your family enjoy the ancient traditions of mid-winter and understand the origins of this holiday season.

Save the date for Saturday, December 21. We will gather when the sun goes down and start the ceremony when the stars twinkle. If you'd like to help, please let Donna Melcher know. Childcare will be available for those 6 and under. Dress warmly. And there will be a special surprise!

- Donna Melcher



# *Notes from the Board of Trustees*

## **November 2019 Congregational Meeting**

On November 17 UUMAN held its semi-annual Congregational Meeting. The meeting was well attended by approximately 50 people and included great information and lively discussion.

The meeting began with a Chalice Lighting by Rev. Dunn. We then watched a short “Keeping The Main Thing The Main Thing” (KTMTTMT) video <https://nowthisnews.com/videos/politics/trailer-uncovered-with-ady-barkan> . KTMTTMT is a regular monthly agenda item that the Board does at every meeting to keep us grounded in our Mission together.

Elizabeth Rohan gave a quick overview of the process the Visioning team and the congregation went through to arrive at the new Mission and Vision for UUMAN. She also shared the “Immediate Next Steps” which include beginning work on Strategic and Long Range Planning. If you are interested please contact [board@uuman.org](mailto:board@uuman.org)

The vote on the new Mission and Vision passed almost unanimously! The vote for the Bylaw changes involving primarily the overlap between the Bylaws and the Minister’s Agreement was tabled after much discussion. The Board agreed to get more information out to the congregation prior to calling for a vote on the Bylaw changes. A Coffee Talk after service in December will specifically focus on the Bylaw changes.

Todd Callen presented one of the Board’s top priorities which is “Balance of Authority” which involves clearly defining the responsibilities between the Board, Program Council and Minister. This will be an interactive effort with everyone having input into the process. Bob Popp gave an update on the other top priority of the Board, finding and hiring an Interim Director of Religious Education. The effort is moving along with two candidates so far and a goal of having someone in place by spring 2020. Jim Nickens provided an update on UUMAN policies. The Board goal for policies this year is to try to understand what policies we already have in place and where we may need more.

Rev. Dave and Todd then talked about the trend in worship and children attendance over the past 5 years which has been steadily going down each year. They discussed the Board effort to explore hiring a membership staff person to help with shoring up and growing the UUMAN congregation. This approach has been successful at other UU congregations. Colin Decker gave a financial update – we’re in good shape right now but we have several upcoming expenses including replacing two a/c units, hiring an interim DRE and possibly a membership staff person. Tanya Romine then showed us how to use Givelify an app that allows you to give to various causes at UUMAN.

Shelley Nagrani our Program Council chair facilitated a discussion about getting more members involved in being Greeters on Sunday by making an expected part of being a UUMAN member. Suffice it to say we had a lively discussion with members voicing support and some concerns

The meeting ended with prizes being awarded to everyone that currently gives to UUMAN through AmazonSmile and/or Kroger. If you have feedback you want to share with the Board about the meeting please email the Board at [board@uuman.org](mailto:board@uuman.org)

If you’re interested in seeing the full presentation click on the following link to the UUMAN website:

[November 2019 Slide Presentation.](#)

Thank you for all you do for UUMAN!

Bob Popp, Vice President

## Help Wanted

There are many ways that you can get involved in support of the UUMAN mission. Here are some of the current needs:

### Special Project

Are we a welcoming congregation? YES. Let's be more welcoming to parents of small children whose parents would like to meet other parents. We need a place for parents and children to gather after the service, as running around Fellowship Hall is not the best option. The Program Council is looking for an individual or small group of individuals to help facilitate this activity. It would involve finding the right space (maybe the fenced in area outside the downstairs), getting a play structure or other equipment out there, and helping to advertise this opportunity to parents. This is a time limited volunteer opportunity! If you are interested in helping email [program-council-chair@uuman.org](mailto:program-council-chair@uuman.org)

### Greeters

Greeters welcome visitors and everyone that enters UUMAN on Sunday morning prior to service; this is a great way to get to know people; if you are interested, contact [membership@uuman.org](mailto:membership@uuman.org)

### Choir

The UUMAN Choir is always looking for people interested in singing; For more information, contact Alex Pietsch at [music-director@uuman.org](mailto:music-director@uuman.org)

### RE Teachers

The fall religious education program for our children and youth is well under way. If you are interested in getting involved in teaching or helping, please email [re@uuman.org](mailto:re@uuman.org)

### Coffee House

Every month on the third Saturday we set up the Sanctuary to have live local music. We need help moving chairs around in the Sanctuary, setting up tables and putting up the backdrop for the show. It takes an hour or less if we have four or more volunteers helping. If you'd like to help, contact [coffee-house@uuman.org](mailto:coffee-house@uuman.org)

## Developing Lay Leadership

Many Unitarian Universalists experience a deepening commitment to their faith and congregation as a call to accept a position of leadership—as a lay worship leader, a leader of children or youth or a member of a task force, committee or governing board.

If you have an interest or would like to learn and explore being a Lay Leader at UUMAN please join Rev. Dave Dunn and myself starting in January 2020. We will be holding the workshop sessions on Sundays either before or after service. The health and well-being of UUMAN depends on our lay leaders so please consider getting involved and making a difference by attending the “Developing Lay Leadership Workshops”.

Thank you,

Bob Popp

# UUMAN Upcoming Events

Date	Event
12/1 12:00pm-1:00pm	The <b>UUMAN Cancer Support Group</b> meets on the first Sunday of every month, 12:00 – 1:00 pm in Discovery Hall. The group is for cancer survivors and their care-takers. Bring your own lunch. Questions? Contact the facilitator Kim Palmer at <a href="mailto:kpalmer01@gmail.com">kpalmer01@gmail.com</a>
12/2 7:00pm-8:30pm	<b>Earth Ministry</b> We deeply embrace the natural world and are stewards of our Earth for now and for the next seven generations. We are respected in our community for environmental action.  We invite YOU to join us! We meet the first Monday of every month at 7 pm in Fellowship Hall, the small brick house to the right of our UUMAN sanctuary. There is much we can do together! For more information, contact <a href="mailto:earthministry@umman.org">earthministry@umman.org</a>
12/8, 11:30am-1:00pm	Holiday Kick-off - You are invited to bring an ornament to hang on the UUMAN tree during the service. After the service, please join us in Fellowship Hall for festivities, including the Snowflake Sweet and Savory Swap. Bring a sweet or savory treat to share and a container to take treats home with you. We will have traditional holiday pizza so that the kids don't fill up on cookies. For more information, please contact Shelly Nagrani. <a href="mailto:shelley.nagrani@gmail.com">shelley.nagrani@gmail.com</a>
7:00-9:30pm	<b>Common Grounds Coffee House</b> Common Grounds Coffee House is held the 3rd Saturday every month in the UUMAN Sanctuary. Music starts at 7:30 PM. Doors open at 7:00 PM.  \$5.00 suggested donation at the door. We also collect food donations for North Fulton Community Charities.  Our Coffee House has live music, poetry, and refreshments for sale, including sweet treats, fruit with cheese and crackers, sodas, tea and of course fair trade coffee. You are also welcome to bring your own refreshments. Tell a friend! Bring a friend!
12/10 7:00pm-9:00pm	<b>Citizens' Climate Lobby – Roswell-Marietta Chapter</b> Citizens' Climate Lobby is a non-profit, nonpartisan, grassroots advocacy organization focused on national policies to address climate change. The Roswell-Marietta Chapter meets at UUMAN on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Contact Donna Melcher or Bob Popp for more information. <a href="mailto:melcherdonna@gmail.com">melcherdonna@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:bpoppp@att.net">bpoppp@att.net</a>

Date	Event
12/21 9:00am-11:00am	<b>Crabapple Road clean-up</b> Come have fun making the road in front of UUMAN more beautiful! Contact Bruce Langston for more information. <a href="mailto:brucelangston@gmail.com">brucelangston@gmail.com</a>
12/21 6:00 pm–10:00 pm	<b>Winter Solstice Celebration</b> Come have fun celebrating the return of the Light! We will share a potluck so plan to bring something to share. Contact Gus Hadorn for more information. <a href="mailto:gushadorn@gmail.com">gushadorn@gmail.com</a>
12/24 4:00 pm–5:00 pm	<b>Family Christmas Eve Service</b> Contact Rev. Dave Dunn for more information.
12/24 7:00 pm–8:00 pm	<b>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service</b> Contact Rev. Dave Dunn for more information.

## A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
12/1	<p><b>America's Native Stories</b></p> <p>The story of Thanksgiving goes back to the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth Rock. Yet before they were here there were already people here – loving their loved ones and living their lives. Let's hear some of their stories – stories of creation, stories of love and the ubiquitous trickster tales.</p>	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/8	<p><b>Holiday Traditions</b></p> <p>Many of us grew up with traditions in which our families participated during this time of year. For many, decorating a tree was one tradition. In this service, the congregation will be invited to contribute an ornament from their home to decorate the UUMAN Christmas tree. At the same time, we will remember that, around the world, there are other traditions at this time of year. UUMAN congregants from other countries will share stories about the traditions with which they grew up.</p>	Shelley Nagrani
12/15	<p><b>Reconnection Through Simplicity</b></p> <p>Are our lives so full that we leave no time for personal reflection and soul work? Do we consciously or unconsciously fill our lives with "stuff" to avoid connections with one another? Can we return to a spirit of simplicity in our daily lives? Let's explore the possibilities.</p>	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/22	<p><b>Holiday Stories and Songs</b></p> <p>Come join us for holiday stories and songs. The UUMAN Choir will be sharing the songs. The worship team will be sharing the stories - some you may know, others may be new to you; some may be happy, some may be sad, some may even be scary.</p>	<p>Rev. Dave Dunn</p> <p>Alex Pietsch</p> <p>Worship Team &amp; UUMAN Choir</p>
12/24 (4 PM)	<b>Multigenerational Christmas Pageant</b>	Randy Blasch
12/24 (7PM)	<p><b>Candlelight Christmas Eve Service</b></p> <p>Please join us for our annual Christmas Eve candlelight service.</p>	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/29	<p><b>Our Simulated Selves – Are We Living in a Computer Simulation?</b></p> <p>How do we know that we exist? How do we know what we experience is reality? Could our experience be part of a computer simulation? What are the implications for us?</p>	Rev. Dave Dunn

## December Connections

Date	Event
Wednesday nights from 7:00 PM to 9:30 PM in Fellowship Hall.	<p><b>UUMAN's Painting Group</b></p> <p>Learn to paint in a relaxed atmosphere (with a glass of red wine if desired). We have easels and tray tables; just bring your paints and a canvas. A portion of the fee goes to UUMAN. Contact: Annette Pate <a href="mailto:painting@uuman.org">painting@uuman.org</a></p>
Weekly on Wednesdays at 12:15. Location of meetings vary.	<p><b>Daytimers</b></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. <a href="mailto:dan@uuman.org">dan@uuman.org</a></p>
Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. In the Sanctuary	<p><b>Centering at UUMAN</b></p> <p>Silent meditation Saturday mornings at UUMAN. Please come at 9:00 for some basic instruction if it is your first time. The meditation itself begins promptly at 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 <a href="mailto:campoften@aol.com">campoften@aol.com</a></p>
2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 in Discovery Hall	<p><b>Circle of Women</b></p> <p>We aim to develop a warm nurturing circle of trust where we can share ourselves and our lives. Contact Linda Etheridge <a href="mailto:lletheridge1@gmail.com">lletheridge1@gmail.com</a></p>

*For more information about other offerings at UUMAN, go to [www.uuman.org](http://www.uuman.org).*

**ABOUT THE UUMANTimes:** The UUMANTimes is the newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN). We go live with each issue 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)



*Happy Holidays to everyone—may they be filled with love and hope.*