

December 2020

Inside this issue:

UUMAN's Retrospective of 2020 1

Notes from the Board 2

Winter Solstice Celebration 2

UUMAN Sharing the Plate—50/50 2

UUMAN Organization 101 – Standing Committees 3

Youth Gathering for Family Promise 3

Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other—even better: Bralley family 4

Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other—even better: Greyenbuhl family 5

NFCC Santa Shop 5

Life Celebrations 6

Jr. Youth Social Justice Project 6

December 2020: A Month of Sundays 7

Oh, There's No Place Like UUMAN for the Holidays 7



## UUMAN's Retrospective of 2020

It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming in a new year full of hope. At the time, there had been some preliminary reports of a virus outbreak in Wuhan, China; yet those reports seemed like from another world – not ours. Then there were reports that the virus had spread to some other distant countries: Thailand, South Korea, Iran. Eventually the virus showed up in Washington state and New York City. Then there was a case in Georgia...and we were off to the races.

In early March the U.S. still had no testing infrastructure in place and understanding that COVID symptoms may not show up for two full weeks (or at all) after infection, we knew that we were playing with fire...and we didn't know who had the matches.

I was at a minister's retreat at The Mountain, March 9-12. I remember telling some of my colleagues on March 10 that UUMAN would likely be cancelling Sunday services beginning March 15. I can remember a few colleagues telling me, "Sounds like a full-blown knee-jerk reaction." UUMAN's Board then went ahead and cancelled in-person services. By the end of that week at The Mountain, all of my colleagues had cancelled their in-person services too.

Again, back in March, I can remember hearing reports that the virus could seriously disrupt American life through August. August!!!? I couldn't imagine that. Then, back in May, people said that they'd voluntarily quarantine themselves through the remainder of 2020. I can remember thinking, "Seriously???? Sounds like a knee-jerk reaction."

Well, we've all been taught lessons this year. Some of the lessons have been mere inconveniences; others have been troubling, heart-wrenching traumas.

Yet despite the inconveniences and traumas, UUMAN has stayed together and moved forward.

We've learned to adapt and change. I am so proud of what UUMAN has done in the past year:

- ✓ Prerecorded and live Zoom Worship
- ✓ Adapting to a virtual MCY program
- ✓ UUtheVote, Family Promise, NFCC, Earth Ministry initiatives
- ✓ Care Circle communications & check-ins
- ✓ Coffee & Conversation & Happy Hour check-ins
- ✓ Outreach Team engaging UUMAN in social media and Google Ads
- ✓ Search Team completing the hiring of a Membership Coordinator
- ✓ Operations keeps our building going (the virus doesn't affect Mother Nature!)
- ✓ ...and many more

The virus has forced us to think about UUMAN's identity. I've been encouraged by the optimism that our members have exhibited when thinking about these things: Are we still a church if we can't meet in person? What does our building mean in such an atmosphere? Is it more than a place to gather? Can we still live our mission during a pandemic? Whom do we serve? Who are our congregants: residents of North Fulton, Metro Atlanta, nearby states, the U.S., the world? Is our relationship, or the necessity of a relationship, with the UUA any different in the pandemic era?

We don't know what 2021 will look like and we will need to hold one another in the midst of this uncertainty. Again, I've been encouraged by UUMAN's willingness to dwell in this uncertainty and to enthusiastically address the questions of what it means to be a church in this age. I look forward to walking this path of questioning uncertainty with you.

Nurture our spirit. Strive for Justice. Transform the world.

- Dave



## Notes from the Board

Welcome to December's "From the Board" column! I hope everyone is staying safe and enjoying the Holiday season despite the challenges we face. This is the time of year to give "thanks," and so I wanted to list a few things I am very thankful of at UUMAN.

First, as UUMAN Board Immediate Past-President, I want to start by thanking the new Board members. Everyone is leading with great care and concern, and Bob Popp has done a great job of comfortably and seamlessly moving into the President role during a very tough period.

Next, I wanted to make a point of thanking the entire congregation for the overwhelming support and contributions to Harvest Moon this year. We really were not sure how it would go this year, given this would be our first auction done virtually, and since it is our biggest fundraising event of the year, we simply didn't know what level of participation we would see. But all of you pulled through, and we brought in much more than we could have imagined. Harvest Moon (at last count) raised almost \$22,000 even during a tough pandemic year! And a huge shout out to Laurie Wheeler who tirelessly organized a hugely successful event despite the virtual setting, and of course some great co-hosting from Randy Blasch and Canedy Knowles.

And speaking of great co-hosting, it is always great when UUMAN can extend its reach to the broader church community, and that is exactly what happened with the 16th Annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving that is held at Temple Kol Emeth in Marietta each year. It is a very diverse event and regularly draws over 1000 people. This year of course it needed to be held virtually but they lost both of their MCs for the event. Dave recruited Canedy Knowles and me to co-host, along with Noor Abbady of the Roswell Community Masjid. The event's theme this year was "Silence is Not an Option," and it was well attended and received great response. I think Rabbi Larry Sernovitz of Temple Kol Emeth captured it best, saying "What a celebration of solidarity in the midst of the worst pandemic in 100 years! This truly shows the power of community to stand up when it is most needed."

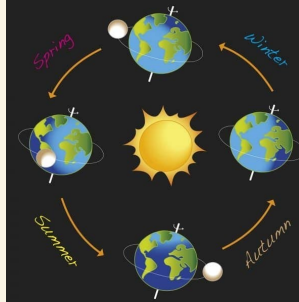
I (and my family) am so thankful for UUMAN and the strong bonds it has brought. I hope you have similar feelings of thanks and gratitude, and here is wishing you and your loved ones a very safe and happy holiday season!

Love and Peace,

Todd Callen

UUMAN Board Immediate Past-President

## Winter Solstice Celebration



The longest night of the year is upon us. Winter Solstice (the sun stands still) is a reminder to slow down and remember that the spring is not far away. A UUMAN celebration of light is an annual event and remembers one of our UU sources of Earth based traditions. Join us for a simple and wonder-

ful ceremony on Sunday, December 20, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Take a twilight drive to the 'backyard behind the sanctuary' and light a luminary of hope. You can do this without even leaving your car (wear masks please). Speak your wishes for the coming year or be silent. Together, we will shine brightly.

Donna Melcher



## UUMAN Sharing the Plate—50/50

This month we will be sharing our offering with Family Promise. Their mission is to help families experiencing homelessness and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. We have been supporting this organization since Dave came to us. Besides supporting them monetarily, UUMAN provides food and lodging and other needed items to Family Promise families.

Thanks to all who have made donations to non-profits through our 50-50 Share the Plate program.

Now that the services are virtual during the Pandemic and 50-50 money is trickling in all month long, we have begun a new policy. Money for 50-50 will be counted by our bookkeeper through the end of the month. After that time, money received will go to the next month's recipient.

You can donate through the [Givelify app](#), write a check and mail it to UUMAN, or you can call the office and give Suzy, our office administrator your credit card information. If you write a check, it is important to write "50-50" on the memo line.

Please contact me, Michelle Liebergesell, if you have any questions. [mliemberg@bellsouth.net](mailto:mliemberg@bellsouth.net)

# UUMAN Organization 101 – Standing Committees

## Youth Gathering for Family Promise

In the November newsletter I covered the high-level overview of how UUMAN is organized. In this newsletter I would like to dive a little deeper and describe UUMAN's Standing Committees.

UUMAN's Bylaws give the UUMAN Board authority to delegate appropriate authority to Standing Committees. Standing Committees gather information, draft policies, propose and make recommendations to the Board. These Standing Committees currently exist and report to the Board:

**Leadership Development** – the purpose of this committee is to foster leadership and growth in the Congregation; provide training opportunities as needed; and serve in a nominating role for Board of Trustee positions to be voted on by the Congregation.

**Finance** – is responsible for the administration, monitoring and oversight of all financial dealings of UUMAN.

**Long Range Planning** – gather input from all committees, and others to establish a Long-Range Plan to implement the Mission Statement of the Congregation.

**Committee on Shared Ministry** – review and renewal of the congregation's purpose and mission, systematic evaluation of the effectiveness of the congregation's ministerial activities, and development of recommendations for the Board regarding changes in strategic direction to help ministries support the congregational mission.

**Endowment** – oversees the UUMAN Endowment Fund including increasing visibility, encouraging donations, and recognizing donors.

**Personnel** – overseeing and conducting hiring searches for paid positions, establishing all employment contracts with such contracts to be executed by the Vice President, establishing, implementing and monitoring a review process for all employees, researching, evaluating and recommending compensation and benefits for all employees, and any other duties as prescribed by the Board.

**Healthy Congregations** – develop and implement a program of conflict management that will help the Congregation manage conflict in a healthy manner.

If you would like to learn more about these committees please reach out to the UUMAN Board of Trustees at [board@uuman.org](mailto:board@uuman.org).

- Bob Popp

Senior youth gathered and enjoyed some safe, social time together on October 18th at UUMAN. They enjoyed pizza while putting together dozens of toiletry kits for the homeless families in the Family Promise program.



Melinda Mischik  
Interim Director of Religious Education

## Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other even better

Let's get to know the Bralley family.



**Q: Please introduce the members of your family to us.**

Myself, Amanda, and my husband, Krishan with Lucia (17) & Ever (5) & Reece (2) & Lita our doggie will be 6 in December

**Q: Where part of the world do you and your spouse come from?**

Krish was born at home with midwives in College Park just east of Atlanta & raised in North Fulton county. I was born in Ft Lauderdale, Florida and lived in Florida until high school, when I moved to Alpharetta. Since then I've spent a year at college in Milledgeville, Georgia, another year in Lafayette, Indiana, and another year in the Colorado Rockies. Actually Krish bumbled around after a stint in college as well, including at a wellness retreat called Omega in upstate New York, as well as in the Rockies of Colorado. All of our children were born here in Atlanta.

Krish & I did meet in high school...but we did not begin our romance then. We actually didn't start dating until we were both 30. I always encourage single folks to go to their high school reunions to find true love.

**Q: How long have you been involved at UUMAN and why did you pick us?**

I've been a member since summer of 2017 although I did attend some services before that. One of my oldest friends had become a member & thought that I would enjoy what we do here at UUMAN. After the death of a close friend & other family problems, I was grieving deeply on a lot of levels. Coming to service on Sunday helped me to process that grief, heal the wounds, gave me spiritual sustenance & understanding, as well as a place to ponder life's bigger questions. Another thing I love is that we learn about philosophies & different perspectives. The best part of UUMAN is that it is full of people willing to pitch in an extra hand or two or go the extra mile to give to others.

**Q: It seems you have done several volunteer activities and I would like to know which ones have been the most meaningful to you?**

I absolutely LOVE singing in our small choir. It is a spiritual practice in and of itself. Our music director, Alex, is a beautiful soul with a servant's heart but the best thing about him is he is an amazing musician. It has given me a lot of joy to join the Worship Committee this year. There is even talk of me becoming its chair next year - yikes! It is funny because my husband has been teasing me lately about how much I volunteer for things, but I'm grateful that I can. I've also enjoyed leading my daughter's Senior Youth Religious Education class.

**Q: What do you and your spouse do for day jobs?**

My husband is a talented electrical contractor & we run our own business. He has almost 17 years experience & was a journeyman with the Local IBEW chapter 613. He got his residential & commercial license in 2013 & we started the business in 2014. He has donated a lot of his time to UUMAN over the years.

**Q: What are your hopes and dreams for the future at UUMAN or in general?**

My hope is that we all get vaccinated & can be together again. Even though it is a lot of work, I miss getting my little kids ready early on Sundays to arrive at church at 9:00 a.m. to practice with the choir before service. I love greeting new families when they come in to check us out hoping to find a community with us.

- Melinda Mischik  
Interim Director of Religious Education

## Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other even better

The Greyenbuhl family is one of our newest families. They just moved to Alpharetta in August of this year in the middle of a pandemic. They have jumped right in with the kids attending three different classes on Sunday mornings, contributing to the Under the Harvest Moon auction and making new friends immediately.



**Q: Would you please introduce us to your family and give the ages of the kids?**

There are 5 humans and a dog:) Lisa and Chris are the parents, kids are Jacqueline almost 15 years old, Sasha 13 years old, Etienne 4.5 years old and Leo, golden retriever 7 years old.

**Q: You recently moved to Alpharetta. Can you tell us where you were living before and why the move?**

We lived in metro New York area, in Westfield, NJ for 9 years. My husband Chris works for ADP and he was transferred to their office in Alpharetta.

**Q: What has been the hardest part of totally changing your life during a pandemic? (Has there been any upside?)**

The hardest part was saying goodbye to friends and family up north and not even being able to travel there now for a visit. Definitely there are quite a few upsides - warmer weather, new part of the country to explore, nice people in the South and new opportunities on the horizon.

**Q: Have you always been a UU?**

We have been UU's for about 3 years. Loved it from the very beginning, it just felt right. That's why one of the first things we did is found UU congregation in our new area.

**Q : What do the Greyenbuhl's do with their time when not engaged with school or work?**

We like exploring new places, like cities and towns, museums and cultural events, we love hiking, skiing, and any outdoor adventures.

**Q: What are you yearning to do the most when the pandemic subsides?**

Get on a plane and go on vacation, visit family in Europe, get back the freedom of moving around.

- Melinda Mischik  
Interim Director of Religious Education



## NFCC Santa Shop

North Fulton Community Charities (NFCC) Santa Shop holiday gift drive begins December 8th. Please consider donating an unwrapped gift to our neighbors in need this holiday season.

[Click here for Santa Shop info and a list of needed/suggested items](#)

[Click here for easy online shopping. Purchased items will be shipped directly to NFCC.](#)

Donate gift cards in \$25 increments for teens from stores such as: Target, Amazon, BestBuy, Wal-Mart, Kohl's, GameStop, Sephora, Macy's, TJ MAXX, Claire's, Dick's, The Gap, H&M.

\*Please note: the LAST DAY to drop off donations is 12/17.

Please contact me with any questions or if you need any help.

Thank you, UUMAN!

Sue Greenspon 617-778-4354



## 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-tech@uuman.org](mailto:membership-tech@uuman.org)

Date	Celebration
12/8	Jim N. is celebrating a birthday
12/9	Presley C. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/15	Carole H. is celebrating a birthday
	Duco V. is celebrating a birthday
12/17	Bruce L. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
	Joaquin F. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/18	Karen S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/19	Nick G. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
12/23	McPatti L. is celebrating a birthday
12/24	Paul G. is celebrating a birthday
12/29	Sue G. is celebrating a birthday
12/31	Marty H. is celebrating a birthday



## Jr. Youth Social Justice Project

On November 1st, the UUMAN Junior Youth RE class met on the UUMAN portico to drink hot chocolate, catch up with each other, and play a game. No one in this group had met in person since March. While it was great to see everyone again, there was a deeper mission. The kids were delivering on a social justice project they had chosen—to create tie blankets, a type of no-sew quilt, for homeless families in the Family Promise program.

The eight kids created a total of 17 quilts, which were delivered to Family Promise by our MCY Director Melinda on the following weekend. It's heartwarming to know that these families will be a little more comfortable this winter, thanks to the efforts of our Junior Youth. These kids are not just learning about UU values and principles—they are living them.

Family Promise provides highly individualized, person-centered, trauma-informed care. Their vision statement reads: "A nation in which every family has a home, a livelihood, and the chance to build a better future." UUMAN has a long relationship with Family Promise, including housing families within our facilities.

-- Mike Chambers

All in-person Sunday services and any meetings or groups at UUMAN are canceled until further notice. See [this page](#) for more details.

We plan to continue live-streaming Sunday services on [YouTube](#).

## December 2020: A Month of Sundays

## ♪ Oh, There's No Place Like UUMAN for the Holidays ♪

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
12/6	<b>God Reimagined</b> Are we stuck in thinking about God as the Judeo/Christian God? As a being in whose image we were created? As an omnipotent, omniscient being? Can we expand our imagination?	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/13	<b>Just One Thing (Children and Youth Edition)</b> Now the Children and Youth will have their say: If there was one thing you wanted people to know, what would it be?	Children and Youth
12/20	<b>Jesus, May I Ask You Something?</b> Jesus of Nazareth was undoubtedly one of the most influential figures in human history? How might he respond to the needs of our world today?  50/50 Family Promise	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/24	<b>Multigenerational Christmas Pageant (4PM)</b>	Randy Blasch & Canedy Knowles
12/24	<b>Candlelight Christmas Eve Service (7PM)</b> Let us share the warmth of this holiday season in joyful celebration. May the glow of our candles symbolize the hope that will sustain us through the dark times of winter and throughout the coming year.	Rev. Dave Dunn
12/27	<b>The Longest Night</b> Winter Solstice marks the longest night of the year. We usually associate light with this celebration. But can we go deeper?  We could stare longer and discover that darkness has its own gifts.	Jennifer Ratcliffe

As we head into our traditional holiday season, it's important to be able to celebrate and honor our traditions together, as members and friends of our church home.

Here's a summary of what we have planned so far, for UUMAN.

**Seven Days of Chalice:** This new, "First Annual" celebration begins at 8pm on December 7, and continues every evening through the seventh day on December 13. For more information, click [here](#).

Chalica (rhymes with "Metallica") is a fairly new UU holiday, first established in 2005; for more information on the holiday, click [here](#).

**Winter Solstice Celebration:** This beloved UUMAN tradition continues as an outdoor, in-person ceremony at 6.30pm on December 20. Our hosts will ensure that all in attendance can experience this event however they feel comfortable, including those who wish to remain in their cars. in the parking lot.

For more information, click [here](#).

**Christmas Pageant:** This modernized version of the original story of Jesus's birth written by the UUMAN youth, is presented online at 4pm on Christmas Eve.

For more information about the pageant, click [here](#).

**Candlelight Christmas Eve Service:** 7pm on December 24.

For more information about the Christmas Eve Service, click [here](#).

We'll share the warmth of this holiday season in joyful celebration.

Dirk Bender  
 Communications Committee Deputy  
 Outreach Committee Member

**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](mailto:newsletter@uuman.org)