

Off Court Street



Fall 2017

the newsletter of **united campus
ministry**
at ohio university

*The mission of UCM is to engage the Ohio University and Athens communities in spiritual growth,
work for social justice, and community service guided by socially progressive and interfaith values.*

WINTER IS COMING... AND SO IS...

UCM'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISER!

This year we're calling it the



SNOWFLAKE SOIRÉE



Saturday, December 2, 6:00 p.m. at the Athens Community
Center

FOOD ❄️ RAFFLE ❄️ DANCING

Come join us at the Athens Community Center on December 2 at 6:00 p.m. for great food, great music, and a great opportunity to party with progressive friends and help UCM be the change we wish to see! Enjoy heavy appetizers by Mauvette with vegetarian and vegan options. Assorted wines, beer, and soft drinks will be provided (you're also welcome to bring your own). Compete for raffle prizes donated by local businesses and boogie down with live music by local keyboardist Dr. Feelgood. For reservations email jennifer@ucmathens.org or call 740-593-7301. Tickets are \$40 with a \$20 student/low income rate. Free childcare available upon request. All proceeds will benefit UCM.



DR. FEELGOOD AKA J.W. SMITH WILL BE ROCKIN' OUT AT UCM'S

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 11
Interfaith Peace Walk
*7:00 at Good Shepherd
Episcopal*

DECEMBER 2
Snowflake Soirée
*6:00 at Athens Community
Center*

DO YOU ♫ UCM?
Make a contribution at
www.ucmathens.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR ~ MELISSA WALES

Dear UCM friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I share this news with you. As you may know, I have worked at UCM since 1999, and from Program Coordinator to Executive Director, it has been a true labor of love for me. My experience here has been filled with incredible people and the most challenging and meaningful work I could have ever imagined. I have such a deep love and appreciation for the staff, and all the students, Board Members, and friends and supporters of UCM I've had the pleasure of knowing and working with over the years, and will be forever grateful for the privilege of serving the mission of UCM.

Recently a professional opportunity came up that I felt compelled to explore. I was offered and have accepted the position of Chief Operating Officer at Stuart's Opera House. This position will allow this former music major an exciting opportunity to work with an amazing local arts organization that is having such a positive impact on our region. I believe it also creates an exciting opportunity for UCM to benefit from some new ideas and energy at a time when that is certainly helpful.

All that said, I'll undoubtedly shed many tears before I step down on September 30, 2017. And I'll definitely still be around as a committed UCM supporter and activist! Please know that the staff and Board will work together to ensure UCM moves successfully through this time of transition. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all the ways you've supported me and my beloved UCM. Please continue to support us and contribute to this exciting new chapter in our nearly 7-decade history!

Here's some of what we've been up to since our last newsletter....

In February, we organized Black Lives Matter in Appalachia on campus promoting the history and current reality for people of color in Southeast Ohio. Our Showing Up For Racial Justice Southeast Ohio chapter has a strong core group meeting weekly, has organized three general meetings attracting hundreds of participants, sells the "No matter where you're from, we're glad you're our neighbor" yard signs, and has been supporting and raising money for local people of color-led organizations. We tabled at the first Athens Pride Festival to engage attendees in challenging conversations around race and racism. September's SURJ meeting is Monday, 9/18, 7pm - 9pm at UCM.

When 70 Ohio University students were arrested protesting the White House travel ban against seven Muslim-majority countries and calling on OU to become a sanctuary campus, we met with affected students, showed up for court dates, and approached administration with concerns about future protocols for responding to and supporting student activism. We hope to provide some education and training for student activists this fall.

Our interfaith identity remains a strong beacon of hope. We held an interfaith potluck in April with Hillel and the Muslim Student Association featuring Halal and Kosher food and look forward to making this an annual event. I took two undergrad students to the Atlanta Interfaith Leadership Institute in January and Evan took four students to Chicago this August to learn skills and strategies to organize Better Together at OU 2017-18. We'll kick things off as we always do with our Annual 9/11 Interfaith Peace Walk on Monday, September 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd.

We partnered with the Campus Involvement Center and First Presbyterian Church of Nelsonville to implement our annual Appalachia Rising Service Immersion Trip the week between spring and summer semesters. Students engaged in service projects and learned about SE Ohio in partnership with other local organizations. It was a great week, but we concluded this is not good timing for us or for the students, so we're moving it back to Spring Break in 2018 and hoping for no blizzards!

The UCM building remains an important meeting space for student and community groups including Defend the Wayne, Indivisible, the Multicultural Activist Coalition, the Athens Nature Center Board, and more. If you're interested in renting meeting space, please call 740-593-7301. Thank you!

GROWING TOGETHER ~ REV. EVAN YOUNG

“Love is the doctrine of this church” is how the congregational affirmation began in the second Unitarian Universalist congregation I belonged to. “The quest for truth is its sacrament,” it continued, “and service is its prayer.”

These words, repeated in unison each week, brought comfort and a sense of common purpose and unity to the folks in that congregation. It wasn’t so much the words that we focused on; it was more the act of saying them together, of jointly holding them out as a not-terribly-closely-examined aspiration. Still, the words settled into my heart. And they live there still.

Now, though, I’m experiencing them more as a challenge. Maybe it’s because what they affirm seems to be in short supply. “Love” embraced and expressed in community seems very far away from our national view of immigrants, or Muslims, or black or brown people, or the poor. “Truth” seems more and more elusive in the era of “fake news” and ideology-driven news reporting and public discourse—everyone has a spin to put on events that casts their adversaries in a bad light. And “service” seems more and more to be given only to those who are deemed worthy by those whose wealth or position gives them the power to decide.

UCM has always swum against this particular current. Our doctrine of “love” is closest to divine love, and we aspire to pour it out for all. Our “quest for truth” is a principled and purposeful engagement with faith and doubt around things that matter, and we give it power to transform our lives. And our prayer of “service” is a way of giving thanks and praise for all that comes to us, a recognition of the divine grace that asks not whether we are worthy but gives out of its abundant and ever-flowing grace.

Interesting, isn’t it, how these conventionally Christian ideas and means of expressing them, held up against what’s happening in our culture and our country, seem countercultural and revolutionary? Interesting, but not surprising—at its core, faith IS countercultural, IS demanding, IS revolutionary, particularly in its call to us to live according to something other than what the cash economy values.

As we enter a new school year, as we lean into relationships with a new cohort of students, I call on you—and all of us—to be revolutionary in our faith and in our lives. Especially now, the world needs us to believe, and act, differently. Let’s do it together.



Appalachia Rising Alternative Service Immersion Trip participants helping with Thursday Supper

THANK YOU!

As always, we could not do what we do without the generous and ongoing support of our Sustainer Circle, donors, and others who give to UCM...

Special thanks to

Little Fish Brewing Company for their fundraiser in July, **Bodhi Tree Guesthouse & Studio** for their Karma Yoga donation, **Wenda Sheard's** Pink Pussy Hat fundraiser, **Susan Roth and Jacky Brown** for their Taste of the Mediterranean fundraising dinner in April, **Kleinpenny Educational Fund** for their annual support, **Casa Cantina** for donating tips in August, **Devil's Kettle** Pints for a Purpose on September 20.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO SUPPORT OUR FREE MEAL PROGRAMS:

Athens Civitan Club for home-cooked dishes and volunteers on Fifth Thursdays; **Avalanche Pizza** for pizza on First Thursdays; Donations of food: **Athens Food Rescue, CFI Donation Station**; Volunteer organizations including: **First Presbyterian Church, The Plains LDS Church**, and the **Athens County Board of Developmental Disabilities**.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

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A Nice Room on the Second Floor

\$300 per month - utilities included

Approximately 13ft x 14ft. Ideal for non-profit organization, professional office, or research/writing.

Call 740-593-7301 or email
jennifer@ucmathens.org

Also available: on-site parking for
\$75 per month

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Rev. Evan Young, Campus Minister
Jennifer Kelly, Office Manager

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Athens Friends Meeting
Christ Lutheran Church
Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd
First Presbyterian Church of Athens
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens

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investing in UCM's future through multiple-year pledging

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UNITED CAMPUS MINISTRY

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FAITH SYMBOLS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Pagan Goddess,
Unitarian Universalism,
Wicca, Sikhism, Confucianism,
Humanist Emblem of Spirit,
Taoism, Atheist Symbol, Islam

