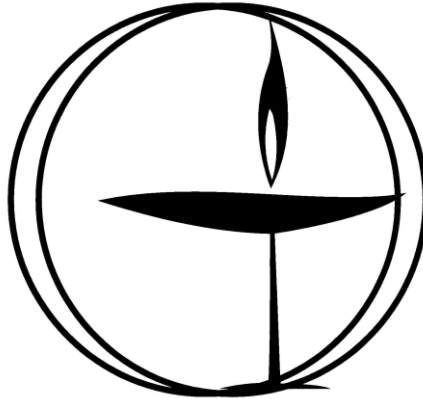


Family Handbook

**Religious Education for Children & Youth
2011-2012**



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Athens
780 Timothy Road • Athens, Ga. 30606 • 706-546-7914

Morgan Watson, DRE
dre@uuathensga.org

A Welcoming Program

Greetings, and welcome to UUFA Children and Youth Religious Education!

UUFA is a Welcoming Congregation. We consciously respect and nurture all individuals, regardless of cultural heritage, social class, gender, body type, abilities, philosophy, or any other individual characteristics. Our teachers and the RE Committee are dedicated to assuring a welcoming atmosphere to all individuals and families. This means that all of our programs, including the Religious Education (RE) program, welcome and support people of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning identity. We welcome families of all types and sizes.

We strive to:

- ✓ Treat all families with respect.
- ✓ Openly discuss issues of sexual orientation and other individual characteristics, in age appropriate language, in order to build understanding and trust among our community members.
- ✓ Include in our class covenants the request for respectful action and words at all times.
- ✓ Welcome your ideas and suggestions. Please speak with the DRE, Minister, and any of our other leaders for more information.

Registration

If you haven't already registered, please fill out our online registration, located at

www.uuathensga.org

Whether or not you decide to become a member, registration is important for sharing updated family contact information so that we may stay in touch with you about our wonderful programs and upcoming events. Providing accurate contact info, as well as informing teachers of special concerns such as dietary restrictions or allergies, helps ensure that our RE Program is safe for all to enjoy. Registering your family for RE also gives you the opportunity to sign up for our weekly email, join the Family Dinner Group, and offer your help. You may visit our office any time to register online.

RE Goals

Children & Youth...

...who engage in meaningful exploration of the UUFA community through simple interactions with their surroundings.

...who have a developed sense of our UU identity and a personal commitment to living our seven Unitarian Universalist Principles.

Families...

...who are connected to one another and what their children are learning.

Fellowship...

...created by children, youth, and adults interacting in meaningful ways.

2011-12 RE Class Teachers

Chalice Children

Leaders:

Wilma Harrington
Deborah Keys
Martha Phillips
Shannon Sharp

Assistants:

Diane Baggett
Ray Freeman-Lynde
Josh Sharp
Illona Stewart

Rainbows

Cathi Doherty
Sherry Lowrance
Kip & Sherri
Tanner

Seekers

Trina & Mike
Cyterski
Barbara Kiewel
David Sweat
Liz Weaver

Youth Leaders

Patty Freeman-Lynde
Michael Hammond
Dawn Meyers

OWL

Joe Avolio
Pinkie Bergmann
Kelly Case-Simonson

RE Committee

Barbara Kiewel	barbara.t.kiewel@gmail.com
Michelle Leebens-Mack, <i>Board Liaison</i>	leebensmack@hotmail.com
Mindy McCage	mmccage@barrow.k12.ga.us
Tom Senyitko	tomsenyitko@gmail.com
Shannon Sharp	srsharp127@gmail.com
Liz Weaver	ejsweaver@gmail.com

Youth Advisory Council

Illona Stewart	illonastewart@gmail.com
Michael Jenkins	michael.jenkins@ars.usda.gov
Gary Rinker	swtaccent34@yahoo.com

OWL Advisors

Linda Gilbert	lsg1991@hotmail.com
Michelle Leebens-Mack	leebensmack@hotmail.com

UFA Staff

Morgan Watson, DRE	706-546-7914	rev.eskildsen@uathensga.org
Rev. Alison Eskildsen, Minister	706-546-7914	dre@uathensga.org
Shaye Gambrell, Administrator	706-546-7914	uufa@uathensga.org.
Amber Fetner, Music Director	706-546-7914	musicdirector@uathensga.org
Erin Favre, Nursery Lead	706-546-7914	erin.favre@gmail.com
Kelly Jean Tucker, Nursery Asst.	706-546-7914	kjtucker@uga.edu

UFA website- www.uathensga.org

Sunday Morning Programs

Please dress children in play clothes. Save special clothes for All Ages Services or other special events. Children need to feel free to explore and play actively, and sometimes messily! Walking shoes, casual pants, and t-shirts are often most comfortable.

Nursery

Room #3

We're so excited about the addition of two terrific, experienced adult caregivers on our nursery staff- **Erin Favre** is our Nursery Leader, and **Kelly Jean Tucker** is our Assistant. They're committing to working in the nursery every Sunday with few exceptions, and they are also available for childcare on other occasions.

Please go by and introduce yourselves!

Our nursery is open every Sunday from 10:45-12:15.

Our youngest children, three and under, are cared for in a warm and loving environment. Parents are always welcome in our nursery. We ask that you please take the time to help your children feel comfortable in their environment, and bring any special items that may ease the transition. Promptly inform Erin or Kelly Jean of any special care, including medical needs or foods, which your children may require. You may also bring a bottle or sippy cup and snack. Please honor our Well-Child policy by caring for sick children at home to avoid spreading illness. More information is available in our nursery.

Please honor Erin and Kelly Jean's time in picking up your child by 12:15.

Quiet Room

We also offer a quiet room in the back hallway of the sanctuary for families who would like to enjoy the Sunday Service with infants or children in a more private setting. Here you'll be able to hear the service through our sound system and view the service through the window.

Children's Religious Education

Our preschool through 9th grade classes run from 11:15-12:15.

When you arrive at UUFA, please find the RE Sign-in table in the lobby, and sign your child in to class so our teachers know how many children to expect. Once registered, you will also find your child's nametag by the RE Table.

Please honor our volunteers' time by arriving between 12:10-12:15 to pick up your child. If you arrive a bit early, you are welcomed to join your child's class for closing activities, but taking children out early or chatting with other parents can be a disruption. Please sign your child out on the attendance sheet before taking him or her from the class.

Chalice Children (PreK-K)

Room #2, *The Forest Room*

Children can move into our Chalice Children group when they are potty-trained, and when their family feels they are ready to be in a 3 -5-year-old environment. Please speak with Morgan if you are considering graduating your child up from Nursery care during the program year.

This year, children will explore the curriculum "**Chalice Children**". As stated in the curriculum, the program is "designed to help young children learn about their church and congregation [and is] based on the belief that ...children gain a sense of belonging to their religious community and the Unitarian Universalist faith when they have concrete experiences with its people and places." The program is enhanced by Home Links to help parents reinforce ideas learned in the classroom and boasts a special set of games, cooperative activities, and songs for the children to enjoy together.

Chalice Children is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Church is a Special Place

Unit 2: Church is People

Unit 3: We Celebrate Holidays

Unit 4: We Wonder

Unit 5: We Make Friends

Ask Morgan or a Chalice teacher to view the curriculum at any time!

Parents are welcomed to stay with their Chalice Children during a child's first few visits. We have found that children engage with class activities, acclimate to the routine, and bond with peers and teachers more smoothly when parents allow them to attend RE by themselves. If you have visited and are concerned about whether your little one is ready to "fly solo", feel free to discuss a plan with the teachers and/or the DRE.

Rainbows (grades 1-3)

Room #1, *The Rainbow Room*

This year, our Rainbow class will be exploring the curriculum ***Faithful Journeys***, from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). As one of three curricula for this age level, children in this class will delve into *Moral Tales* and *Love Will Guide Us* during the following two years. Each age level curriculum is part of the larger *Tapestry of Faith Lifespan Curriculum*, which spans from Kindergarten through adult programs.

Here is an excerpt from the online description of Faithful Journeys at www.uua.org:

"Participants embark on a pilgrimage of faith, exploring how Unitarian Universalism translates into life choices and everyday actions. In each session, they hear historic or contemporary examples of Unitarian Universalist faith in action. Stories about real people model how participants can activate their own personal agency – their capacity to act faithfully as Unitarian Universalists – in their own lives, and children have regular opportunities to share and affirm their own stories of faithful action. Through sessions structured around the Unitarian Universalist Principles, Faithful Journeys demonstrates that our Principles are not a dogma, but a credo that individuals can affirm with many kinds of action. Over the course of the program, children discover a unity of faith in the many different ways Unitarian Universalists, including themselves, can act on our beliefs."

Among the great advantages to this UUA program, the entire curriculum is online, allowing parents to access their children's lessons at any time. Look for our link in the weekly email and on the UUFA website to find out what your child is exploring on any Sunday.

Visit ***Faithful Journeys*** any time at:

<http://uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/faithfuljourneys/index.shtml>

Seekers (grades 4-6)

Room #4, *The Ocean Room*

This year, our Seekers will be exploring the curriculum *Toolbox of Faith*, from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA). As one of three curricula for this age level, children in this class will delve into *Windows and Mirrors* and *Love Connects Us* during the following two years. Each age level curriculum is part of the larger *Tapestry of Faith Lifespan Curriculum*, which spans from Kindergarten through adult programs.

Here is an excerpt from the online description of Tapestry of Faith at www.uua.org:

"Toolbox of Faith invites...participants to reflect on the qualities of our Unitarian Universalist faith, such as integrity, courage, and love, as tools they can use in living their lives and building their own faith. Each of the 16 sessions uses a tool as a metaphor for an important quality of our faith such as reflection (symbolized by a mirror), flexibility (duct tape), and justice (a flashlight)."

Among the great advantages to this UUA program, the entire curriculum is online, allowing parents to access their children's lessons at any time. Look for our link in the weekly email and on the UUFA website to find out what your child is exploring on any Sunday.

Visit *Toolbox of Faith* any time at:

<http://uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/toolboxfaith/index.shtml>



Youth Religious Education

JrUU (grades 7-9)

Room #6, Youth Room

Our Junior UU group meets from 11:15-12:15. This year, they'll have an opportunity to take on leadership roles around the Fellowship. On the 1st Sunday of each month, JrUUs lead the Children's Worship Service in the Fellowship Hall, followed by helping with a "Faith in Action" project with 1st-6th grade. They'll also get to take on roles in the 11am service once a month. In addition, they'll get a chance to help out in the younger classrooms 3 times this year.

Once per month, JrUUs will get to have their "own" time on Sunday morning in the youth room. During this time, they'll explore the Compass Points curriculum and also discuss ideas and plan for weekend social events.

Here are the goals of Compass Points, as described at
http://shancarpublishings.com/Compass_Points.html:

To help participants sort out their feelings about themselves and their world as they do the difficult work of starting to create their adult selves

To help them discover what they believe about life's big questions -- the nature of humanity and the divine, beliefs about life, death and faith

To help youth think independently, assume responsibility, make decisions, explore values and adopt the practice of radical hospitality

To guide participants in acquiring enough background in Unitarian Universalist history, polity and theology that they can know and express what it means to be a Unitarian Universalists

To help them understand that religious liberty is a hard-won legacy that continues to need protection

YRUU (grades 10 -12)

Our Young Religious UUs will meet at a time determined by the group. This year, facilitators will use the Small Group Ministry with Youth curriculum to guide discussion groups twice a month. A balanced combination of deep discussions, games, educational field trips, and totally fun lock-ins will create the programming for our 10th-12th graders.

- ⇒ Field trips will usually meet at UUFA to carpool
- ⇒ Lock-Ins will be held in conjunction with our *Popcorn Theology* movie night series. During a lock-in, teens will watch a movie, then enjoy an activity related to concepts in the movie. Later in the night, they may work on a fundraiser or community service project, but they'll always have time for simple socializing.

This year, our Youth Advisory Council is planning many opportunities for Jr. and Sr. Youth and their families to get together to enjoy special social events, with the schedule balanced between Community Service Projects, Social Events, and FUNdraisers to support our larger field trips and events. If you have a special idea, bring it to the group!

Teens must be registered and have a permission form on file to attend any lock-in or field trip off UUFA grounds without a parent.

Sunday Routine

Children's Worship Service (CWS)- On the 1st Sunday of each month of the Program Year (except Jan. 1), children and youth begin in the Fellowship Hall at 11am for their own short service. Chalice Children are then dismissed to class, while grades 1-9 stay for a "Faith in Action" project. Parents pick up in the Fellowship Hall at noon.

All Ages Service- All are invited to join the 11am Sunday Service in the sanctuary to celebrate our special occasions together in multigenerational community.

All other Sundays- Sign in at RE Table; Begin in the sanctuary for the first part of the service. After the Together Time, children are dismissed to RE classes with a "traveling song". We call this "singing out" to class or "singing them on their way".

4th Sunday Lunch- Be sure to join us on the 4th Sunday of each month for our luncheon, which is a fundraiser for the church. It's always a terrific spread of food!

Annual Events

We encourage UUFA families to get to know each other and enjoy life.
Consider participating in any of the following events:

August 14	Water Communion, Ingathering Service
August 21	RE Kickoff Party
September 18	Parent and Youth Town Hall Meeting
October 21-23	Elementary CON at the Mountain (grades 3-5)
October 25	Field Trip to Food Bank, <i>1st grade & up</i>
October 30	Halloween Carnival
November 11-13	Jr. High CON at the Mountain (grades 6-8)
November 20	All Ages Thanksgiving Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
December 2-4	Sr. High CON at the Mountain (grades 9-12)
December	Holiday Hoopla- <i>Includes "Decking the Halls", "Nifty Gifty" handicrafts for children and adults, and caroling!</i>
December 18	All Ages Winter Solstice Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
December 25	<i>no RE classes</i>
January 1	All Ages New Year's Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
Jan. 8-Feb. 12	Mystery Friends <i>During this "Secret Pal" type program, adults and children are paired off with a common symbol. Neither knows the other's identity, but they sure have fun trying to crack each other's clues during the letter writing period leading up to the reveal party. Along the way, participants gain a new friend at UUFA that they may not have known before!</i>
February 12	"Discovery Reception" for Mystery Friends
January 29	Community Service Project, <i>1st grade & up</i>
March 18	All Ages Spring Equinox Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
April 8	Intergenerational Flower Communion (<i>no RE classes</i>), Easter Egg Hunt
April 29	Field Trip to Botanical Gardens, <i>1st grade & up</i>
May 20	RE Sunday Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
May 27	Memorial Day Service (<i>no RE classes</i>)
June 3	Summer Program Begins

You Make a Difference

Introduce yourself to class leaders and committee members, and feel free to ask questions about our program and community. When parents build strong relationships with their children's teachers, they learn about what their children are exploring during RE and how they can extend the experience at home.

We are a cooperative community. Once you've checked us out and decided you'd like to settle in, we'll help you find ways to get involved which suit you best. The success of our program depends on a diverse set of skills, talents, and shared ideas.

There are so many ways to contribute to our children and youth programs!

- ⇒ **Substitute Teacher**
- ⇒ **Guest classroom activity leader**
- ⇒ **First Sunday Assistant:** Help lead "Faith in Action" activity in Fellowship Hall after Children's Worship Service, held the 1st Sunday of each month.
- ⇒ **JrUU:** Be an advisor to our 7th-9th grade youth. Lead or co-lead 5 sessions of class during the 11am service; Chaperone social events and youth conferences
- ⇒ **YRUU:** Be an advisor to our 10th-12th graders in the Small Group Ministry youth curriculum; Chaperone social events and youth conferences.
- ⇒ **RE Committee:** Meets on the second Sunday of each month from 9-10:30am; focus is on children's programming.
- ⇒ **Youth Advisory Council:** Serve on the council for program planning for our 7-12th graders.
- ⇒ **OWL Advisory Council:** Meets once a month to set policy and provide support to the Our Whole Lives program.
- ⇒ **Nifty Gifty:** Help out with our annual arts and crafts making day.
- ⇒ **Halloween Carnival:** help set up, take down, and/or work a carnival booth.
- ⇒ **Community Service Leader:** Help lead Social Action/Community Service projects for children & youth.
- ⇒ **Field Trips:** Be a driver and chaperone for field trips during the year.
- ⇒ **Room Patrols:** Straighten/ organize rooms, closets, and cabinets; help with quarterly clean-up days.

Where to find INFO!

As part of the UUFA Community, it's important to regularly check up on the information being sent out from staff and lay leaders. There are lots of ways to stay involved and ensure you don't miss a beat...

- **UUFA website**- www.uuathensga.org
You'll find program information, the monthly newsletter, the Calendar, links to *Tapestry of Faith* curricula, and so much more.
- **Register** at the UUFA website- Once registered, you'll be put on Morgan's family email list.
- **Weekly UUFA E News**- Go to the UUFA website, scroll down to the bottom, and click the link to sign up for weekly email. RE information is updated weekly here.
- **Read the *Tapestry***- This monthly UUFA newsletter comes out at the first of each month. Each copy includes the ***Family Tree*** page for RE News. There are several options for getting the *Tapestry*:
 - ✓ Click the link to the *Tapestry* from the Weekly E-News.
 - ✓ Go to the UUFA website and click the **newsletter** link on the homepage.
 - ✓ Pick up a paper version on the visitor table in the lobby.
 - ✓ Ask Shaye for a paper copy to be mailed to you if you don't use the internet regularly.
- Check the **Church Calendar in the Athens Banner Herald** for basic Sunday information.
- Look for signs around the Fellowship:
 - ✓ **RE Main Bulletin Board**- This main bulletin board is in the Fellowship Hall, to the right of the RE Wing door. This contains all sorts of information for Sunday programming.
 - ✓ **RE Social Board**- This one is in the RE Hallway, near the kitchen door. It has flyers for upcoming events and sign-up sheets. You'll also find take-home copies of the Family Tree and other information in the magazine bins next to this board.
 - ✓ **Classroom Bulletin Boards**- These boards are located next to each class door and include teacher bios, curriculum info, Parent Take Home sheets, sign-up sheets, and other specific class information.
- Friend us on Facebook!

Bringing Guests

We love meeting your friends and family! Please feel welcome to tell your friends, colleagues, and neighbors about our liberal religious programming, and invite them to attend with you. We're the only Unitarian Universalist congregation in the Athens area, and we are happily growing to include many new families and individuals. When you bring guests, please use the guest sign-in sheet and let the teachers know they have a guest.



Field Trips

We have two field trips scheduled this year. Emails are sent to all registered families in advance of our field trips. For adequately anticipating transportation needs, please RSVP by the Thursday before and fill out a permission form for your children, found in the magazine bin by the RE Social Board. Field trips usually return by 12:30, but the estimated times will be posted for each trip. Parents are always needed to help drive- class Teachers get the day off during Field Trips! Children embarking on field trips should go directly to their rooms by 11:00 am, instead of going to the service first.

For everyone's safety, we will not transport any child who is not registered with RE off the UUFA grounds without an accompanying parent or guardian. If your child is unable to go on a field trip, she or he may visit another age group, or go with parents to the service.

Health & Safety Policy

At the UUFA, we are concerned with the health and safety of all our children, as well as their spiritual growth and religious education. The Religious Education Committee has developed guidelines to ensure a safe and healthful environment. Please become familiar with the following guidelines:

Nursery

- Our nursery is staffed from 10:45 am – 12:15 pm. Please pick up children promptly.
- Toys with small parts are dangerous to small children, and therefore are not allowed in the Nursery. Plenty of age-appropriate toys are provided for our infants and toddlers to play with.
- Children with evidence of contagious illness, such as thick mucus or fever, will not be permitted into the Nursery.

Snack

Though snacks are no longer part of the typical Sunday class, occasional wholesome snacks will be offered, usually by volunteer parents. If your child has special dietary needs, please alert the teachers on the visitor sign-in sheet or registration form.

Medical Alerts

If your child has a medical condition or is taking medication that we should be aware of, please alert the teachers on the visitor sign-in sheet or registration form.

First Aid

A first aid kit is kept on the wall next to the water fountain in the RE Hallway. If your child is injured while in class, the teacher will complete an “Ouch Report”. If an injury occurs while your child is in your presence, completing and submitting a report to the DRE will help bring any safety hazards to our attention. “Ouch Reports” are located in the magazine bin in the RE hallway.

Building and Parking Lot Safety

Parents/guardians are responsible for supervising their children before and after RE sessions, and at any time that childcare is not explicitly provided.

Playground

No child may be on the playground unsupervised. Our “Honoring the Children” safety policy requires at least two adults to be present with a group at all times, including the playground.

Field Trips

Permission forms must be signed by parents/guardians of all children who leave the UUFA grounds. All drivers must have a valid driver’s license and current registration & insurance. Younger children must ride in an appropriate child booster seat, and all other passengers must wear a safety belt. If a driver is under the ages of 18, children may ride with them only with written permission from their parent/guardian. **We are only able to transport children who are registered in RE, without a parent present.**

Illness

Please keep your children safely at home when they have a fever, communicable illness, or if they are in noticeable distress. We want to provide an environment of health and well-being for all our children.

See you Sundays!
Morgan and the RE Committee

