

# 138 Years of Atlanta UU History in 20 Minutes

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta  
Jan 28, 2017

# Objective

A quick review of Unitarian & Universalist Atlanta history

- Appreciate the history that made UUCA possible
- Appreciate our responsibility to continue making history

# An Exercise

Please stand in body or in spirit and repeat...

- Before Coca Cola....
- Before Georgia Tech....
- We Unitarians and Universalists were in Atlanta!

# Resources

## Interactive timeline

- <http://www.uuca.org/about-us/our-mission-history/>

## Video of UUCA 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

- <https://youtu.be/8YbD6hj0iu8>

## UU Digital Archive

- [nwuuc.org/archive](http://nwuuc.org/archive) (Temporary Nesting)

## Emory Pitts Theology Library

- <https://findingaids.library.emory.edu> (Search Unitarian)

# UU Collections Emory Library



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## SEARCH RESULTS

Search results for **unitarian**

19 finding aids found, displaying 1 - 10

Pages: 1 [2](#)

Relevance

### UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF ATLANTA (ATLANTA, GA).

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta records, circa 1831-2008.

36.4 cubic feet (107 boxes)

Contains the records and publications of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta.

Repository: Pitts Theology Library

### CHANEY, GEORGE LEONARD, 1836-1922.

George Leonard Chaney papers, 1856-1908, 1896-1904

1 linear ft. (3 boxes) and 1 oversized paper (OP)

Papers of Unitarian minister and author George Leonard Chaney, including photographs, writings, and printed material.

Repository: Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library



# UUCA Collection Emory Library

Box	Folder	Document
105	7	Church history: Unitarian Universalists in Atlanta: 100 Years, 1882-1982, 1982 <a href="#">[Resource available online]</a> 
10	6	Cliff Valley School, 1972
10	7	Congregational meeting, 1978 April
10	8	Congregational Statement of Purpose Surveys, 1984
10	9	Conscientious objector statement, circa 1965

Third year of transcription of old Unitarian and Universalist documents held at Pitts Theology Library at Emory

Long term goal is to make a rich repository of Southern UU history available online for students, researchers, authors, ministers and others

# UUCA Collection Emory

Online  
Access

The screenshot shows the Pitts Theology Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, RESOURCES, and SEARCH. Below this is the Emory University logo and the Candler School of Theology logo, followed by the text "Pitts Theology Library". A search bar is present with the text "discoverE" and a search button. Below the navigation bar is a menu with links for HOME, ABOUT PITTS, BORROW, RESEARCH, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, EXHIBITS, and SUPPORT THE LIBRARY. The main content area is titled "Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (RG 026)". It includes a breadcrumb trail: Home » Special Collections » Digital Collections » Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (RG 026). The page describes the UUCA's history and mission, and provides a list of digital collections including Exhibits Online, Selected Lectures, and Rare Books. A "Pitts Quick Links" section is located in the bottom left corner, listing various database and archive links. The main content area also includes a "Box Folder Contents" section with a list of items and their descriptions, and a note about the availability of materials transcribed by a third party.

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Rare Books

Archives and Manuscripts

United Methodist Church North Georgia Conference Archives

Reading Room

Pitts Quick Links

- discoverE
- ATLA Religion Database
- Databases @ Emory
- Emory eJournals
- WorldCat
- Research Guides
- Digital Image Archive

Home » Special Collections » Digital Collections » Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (RG 026)

## Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (RG 026)

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta (UUCA) has long and rich history in the city of Atlanta dating back to the late nineteenth century. The UUCA's mission includes fostering a community of faith that encourages and supports individual spiritual quests and action for social justice. For more information about this collection, consult the finding aid.

*Box Folder Contents*

104 2 King, Martin Luther, Jr., Letter to thank Rev. Pickett for co-sponsoring an honor dinner for MLK, 1965 Mar 15 [PDF]

Please note that the following links are materials that have been transcribed by a third party and are available at the Unitarian Universalist Digital Archive as HTML documents. **Pitts Theology Library does not maintain responsibility for the following links.**

*Box Folder Contents*

60 1 First Universalist Church - Board minutes, 1900-1907 [HTML]

105 7 Church history: Unitarian Universalists in Atlanta: 100 Years, 1882-1982, 1982 [HTML]

25 1-6 Unitarian Church of Atlanta - Minutes, Book I, 1884-1909 [HTML]

26 2 Unitarian Church of Atlanta - Minutes, Book II, 1884-1909 [HTML]

26 1 Unitarian Church of Atlanta - Index to Record Books I & II, 1884-1909 [HTML]

The aggregating page for indexes on the website is found on the Archive Contents page: [nwuuc.org/archive/digital-archives-content/](http://nwuuc.org/archive/digital-archives-content/)



# Online Documents

## Handwritten

Tuesday, March 27, 1883.

A meeting was called and was in the Kimball House, at 4 o'clock p.m.

Present - W.H. Snowden, J.R. Hodge, J.A. Burns, Frank Lederle, G.L. Norrman, Mrs. W.C. Morrill, Miss Coolidge, Mrs. J. Sever, Mrs. J.R. Hodge, Mrs. W.H. Snowden, Mrs. G.L. Chaney.

The meeting was organized by the choice of Mr. J.A. Burns, Chairman, and Mr. Frank Lederle, Secretary.

Mr. Chaney asked the Divine blessing. He then explained that the object of the meeting. He said that the time had come for giving organized form to the interest we felt in the establishment of a new church in Atlanta. At an informal conference of gentlemen previously held, a committee had been appointed to prepare a form of covenant for the consideration of those who should meet to form a church. He then read a Covenant and Constitution and each article was separately considered and passed upon. It was finally adopted.

## Transcribed

Tuesday, March 27, 1883

A meeting was called in room No. 7 Kimball House, at 4 o'clock pm.

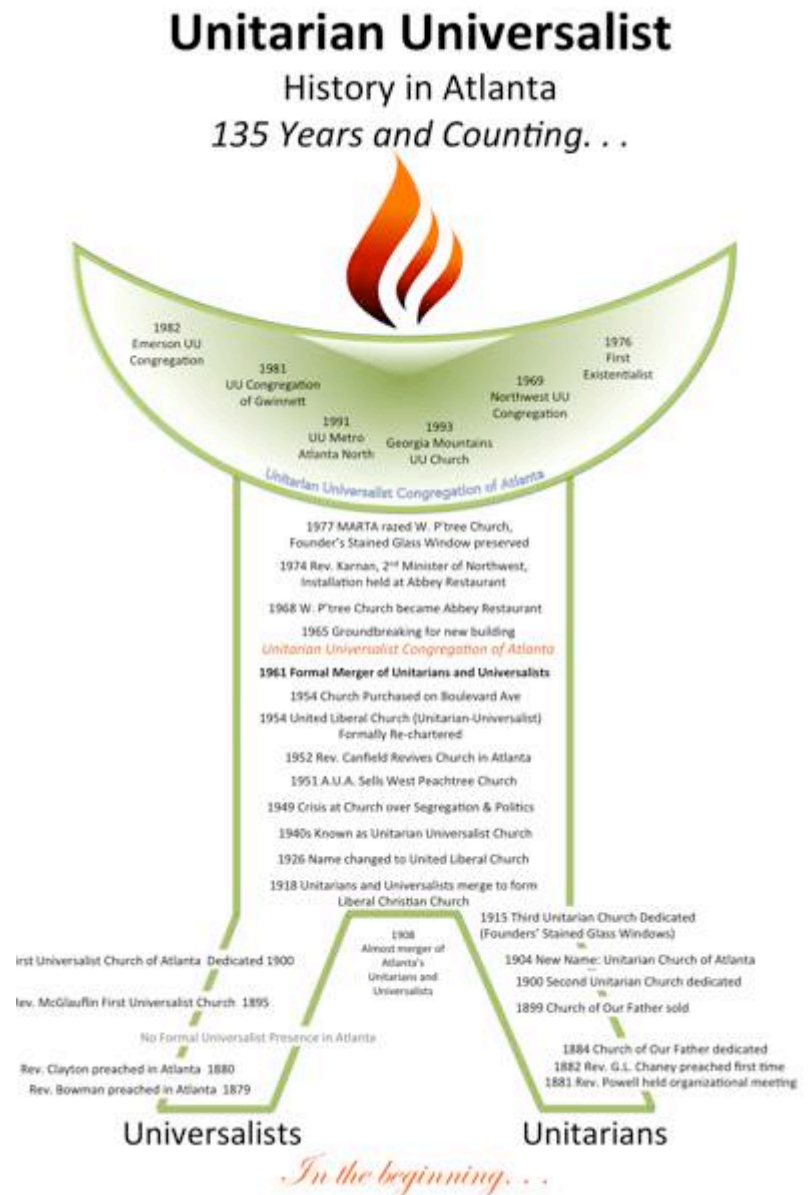
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- 1879: Universalists begin preaching in Atlanta
- 1881: Unitarians begin preaching in Atlanta
- 1884: **Church of our Father**, 1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Church dedicated in Atlanta
- 1900: 2<sup>nd</sup> Unitarian church dedicated
- 1900: **First Universalist church**, 1<sup>st</sup> and only Universalist church dedicated in Atlanta
- 1915: 3<sup>rd</sup> Unitarian church built (Founders' stained glass windows)
- 1918: Atlanta Unitarians & Universalists merge forming **Liberal Christian Church**
- 1926: Name change to **United Liberal Church**
- 1949: Crisis over segregation and politics; a year later the **congregation fails**
- 1952: Rev. Canfields **revives** the congregation
- 1965: Ground breaking for **UUCA**



# Universalists

- 1836: Universalists hold their Georgia State Convention
- 1879: Rev. Bowman preaches a Universalist message in Atlanta
  - No physical church established
  - Fails within two years

# Rev. W.C. Bowman



Circa 1896

# Universalists

- 1895: First Universalist Church in Atlanta is re-established
- 1900: Universalists church building is dedicated
- 1918: Merge with the Unitarians

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IS  
TO BE DEDICATED TODAY



# Unitarians

- 1883: First Unitarian church in Atlanta is established
- 1884: Church of Our Father dedicated
- Church supported social actions such as the Home for the Friendless and the Women's Exchange
- Chaney was on the Board of Trustees of Atlanta University and Tuskegee Normal School whose headmaster, Booker T. Washington, Chaney knew quite well



Rev. George Leonard Chaney



# Church of Our Father 1884 - 1889



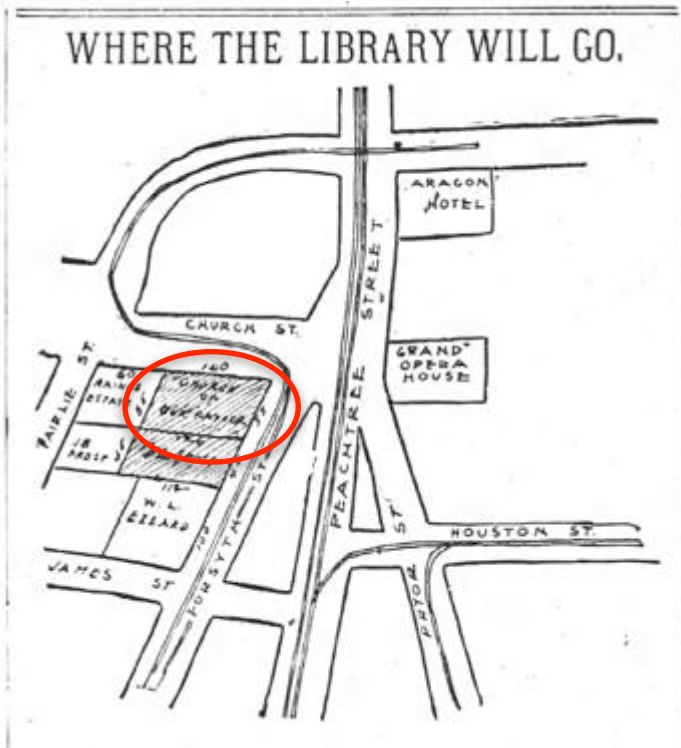
1<sup>st</sup> Unitarian Church Building

# Inside Church of Our Father





# Church Sold to Carnegie Trustees



# Unitarian Church 1900 - 1914



2<sup>nd</sup> Unitarian Church Building

# Unitarian Church 1900 - 1914

- Jan 1900: Name Change Vote - Failed

Article I- Name  
The Name of this church shall be the *Church of Our Father* ~~First Unitarian Church~~ in Atlanta, Georgia.

- Apr 1904: Another attempt at a name change
  - The Unitarian Church of Atlanta
  - Church of Our Father, Atlanta

# Unitarian Church of Atlanta

- 1903: Atlanta Equal Suffrage Association holds annual meeting at Universalist church
  - Suffrage for women as an act of justice
  - Compulsory education for children
  - Equal pay for equal work
- 1903: Conservative Baptist minister refuses to partake in common services with Unitarians and Universalists



# Unitarian Church 1915 - 1950



3<sup>rd</sup> Unitarian Church Building

# Inside W. Peachtree Church



# Unitarian & Universalist Merger

- 1918: Unitarians and Universalists of Atlanta merge “for the duration of the war”
- 1918: Combined church called “The Liberal Christian Church”
- 1926: Renamed “United Liberal Church”



# Crisis

- 1947: Rev. Isaiah Jonathan Domas
  - Support for Progressive Party Candidate – Henry Wallace
  - Invitation extended to Dr. Jones, a colleague of Rev. Domas at Atlanta University, to attend Sunday service
- 1948: Rev. Domas resigns
- 1949: Dr. LeBaron who was neither a Unitarian nor a Universalist becomes minister

# Communist Infiltrate Church



**RALPH McGILL**

## The Unitarians Have Reason to Fret

Don West, who has served here and there in the South as preacher, teacher and Communist organizer, as well as contributor to the Communist Daily Worker, turns up on a farm outside Douglasville, Ga., which he has rented or leased to a Unitarian Church Youth project. As best as I can deduce he is serving as a sort of second man, teaching the young persons there how to know life and recognize it and taking them to the Ku Klux demonstrations, and to rural churches to see how rural people worship and maybe offering up a prayer or so as a visiting brother should.

This fact will cause most of the local Unitarian Church members to fret even more than they are. They are convinced that the Communist Party has caused the Unitarian Church, because of its liberal policy, to be selected for infiltration purposes and for use in various Communist front purposes.

# Phoenix Rising

# United Liberal Church Unitarian-Universalist

- 1952: Rev. Canfield arrived in Atlanta and reconstitutes the congregation
  - Services held in Briarcliff Hotel
- 1952: UUs purchase building from Latter Day Saints on North and Boulevard
- 1954: Formal charter of the congregation: United Liberal Church Unitarian-Universalist

# United Liberal Church



4<sup>th</sup> Unitarian Universalist Church Building

# United Liberal Church UUCA

- 1965: Ground broken for UUCA
  - Cost: \$449,000
  - Award received for the building “circle in the square” design
- 1966: First service held in this building Jan 2, 1966

# What Happened to the W. Peachtree Street Church



# W. Peachtree Street Church



- AUA sold the building in 1951
- Building was occupied by the Bible Research Foundation until 1968
- The Abbey Restaurant then occupied the building
- The building was razed in the 1970's for the North Avenue MARTA station.
- The Rev. Bob Karnan (2<sup>nd</sup> Northwest minister) worked with MARTA to save the stained glass windows
- Stained glass windows now at UUCA and Northwest

# The Next Page of Our History

It's up to us...