



focus

Full Week Faith: Spiritual Practices for Advent

The Season of Advent is a time of hope and anticipation. For Christians, it is the time recognized as awaiting Jesus's birth. Jesus's birth, life and many lessons of love, compassion, advocacy... are gifts to our common humanity. In honor of these teachings, we celebrate the Season of Advent, where we too can share the gifts of *hope, peace, love, and joy* in our spiritual practices at home. Let us all make time to experience a deeper connection to our lives and the people with whom we share our lives. May the *presence* of the holiday spirit hold you in love.

Week 1: 11/27- 12/3 ~ HOPE

Meal Blessing: For food in a world, may no one walk in hunger. For hope in a world, may no one walk in fear. For friends in a world, may no one walk alone. We give you thanks.

Meal Reflection or Discussions:

What do you hope for in your life? What brings you hope? Where do you turn to when you need hope? What are ways you can offer hope to others around you?

Chalice Lighting: We light this chalice to guide us in today's journey. May our heart be filled with the light of hope and the warmth of love. Today we will remember to look for the light others bring into the world to share their hope and love.

Week 2: 12/4-12/10 ~ PEACE

Meal Blessing: Dear and beloved stranger, Please share this food with us that we may all be nourished. Please share this walk with us that we may all know nature's peace. Please rest in this warm house that we may come to know each other. Please sleep under these soft blankets that we may all know safety. Please pray this prayer that all our names of God may guide us on. -Christina Baldwin

Meal Reflection or Discussions: If you could draw peace, what does peace look like to you? How would the community, country and world be different if peace existed? How do you create peace in your life? How do you share peace with others?

Chalice Lighting: We light this chalice to find inner peace, love for each other, and faith in ourselves.

Also, to be welcoming to whomever we meet and kind to all living creatures. So gather around this light of hope as we share this time together.

Week 3: 12/11-12/18 ~ LOVE

Meal Blessing: Dear earth who gives to us this food, Dear sun who makes it ripe and good, Sun above and earth below, Our loving thanks to you we show. Blessings on our meal.

Meal Reflection or Discussions: What do you like and what do you love? What is the difference between like and love? What makes you feel loved? How do you show others they are loved?

Chalice Lighting: We light this chalice to find inner peace, love for each other, and faith in ourselves. Also, to be welcoming to whomever we meet and kind to all living creatures. So gather around this light of hope as we share this time together. (Oberlin UU Fellowship)

Week 4: 12/19-12/24 ~ JOY

Meal Blessing: For our friends, for our families, for our meal, we are thankful. For life, for healing, for joy, we are thankful.

Meal Reflection or Discussions: What is the difference between joy and happiness? What gives you joy on a daily basis? How do you share joy with others? What would bring more joy into your life?

Chalice Lighting: We light this chalice to remember the great joys in our lives. The air we breathe, the beauty we see, the people we love and the joy we can share.

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From Your Board of Trustees (BOT)

We would like to welcome Kaydn Frawley as the Youth Rep to the Board of Trustees; she attended her first meeting in November. This pilot program began with a suggestion by Rev. Hilary, enthusiastically approved by all the trustees, to give our youth a voice and meaningful engagement in the governance of our congregation. Our high school youth voted for Kaydn to be their voice at the table. Kadyn has attended Midwest UU Youth Leadership School, UU Summer Seminary, and was named an Illuminating Leader by the UU Youth & Young Adult Ministries. We are looking forward to the insights that she can share with us and to her help in fostering deeper connections and engagement of our youth in the future of our congregation and of our UU faith.

The Time and Talent Event was a resounding success, with the largest net amount ever being collected for our outreach partners. Just as important as the monies raised was the opportunity for our congregation to gather socially. It was a lovely evening. Thank you to all who made it so!

A big 'Thank You' also goes to the Outreach Steering Committee for recognizing and including Countryside itself as an important part of our outreach in the community. Approximately \$5,000 of the monies raised will go to capital projects for Countryside! Our physical presence in this area, as well as our ability to use our building as a resource to act on our principles through workshops, classes and conferences, as well as having space to offer for partners such as Wellness House, are an important part of the Outreach that this congregation does.

We voted several years ago, as a congregation, to be a Green Sanctuary. Part of what that means is that we will work towards a more sustainable use of resources, in our personal lives, but also as a congregation. The Green Sanctuary Committee(GSC) can be our guide, but it is the responsibility of all of us as a congregation to take this designation seriously. You will find information in this Focus and at coffee hour on Sunday about specific, detailed opportunities to bring solar energy to Countryside. Thank You to members of the GSC who put in the time to carefully research and compare proposals. Now it is time for each of us to carefully study the information they have brought together and determine if we are ready to act on what many have said they want to see happen. You have the next two weeks to study the information, ask questions, and then respond through a questionnaire on what our next steps should be.

I would like to wish each of you 'Happy Holidays.' I use this term, not to be 'politically correct' but as an acknowledgement that from November through mid-January, there are over 20 Holidays observed by the world's major religions, all of which have members in this nation that belongs to all of us. How we use our language matters. In saying Happy Holidays, my hope is that during this time of short dark days and long cold

nights, you will be able to connect with those you care about in ways that are meaningful to you. If that is not possible, then my hope is that you will make an opportunity to share the gift of your presence with another.

As always, please feel free to contact me at prez@ccuu.org.

...Karen Noorani

Statement from the Board of Trustees to Endorse a Congregational Response to Societal Divisiveness

In light of recent events and the challenges of the current social climate, the Board of Trustees voted to approve the following Statement affirming our commitment to confront oppression and promote peace, justice and unity within our community, country and larger world. We strive to do so by uniting together as a congregation, empowering our ministries, and strengthening the reach of our social justice programs. We invite you to share with Reverend Hilary Krivchenia, the Board of Trustees, or Jules Jaramillo any community building or social action programs in which you are involved with so we might spotlight those activities. In addition, if you have any suggestions on possible social justice or outreach initiatives that you are willing to coordinate, please bring those to the attention of Christine Organ.

In the spirit of our principles and in light of the challenges of the current social climate, the Board of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist urges the congregation to confront oppression in its many forms by participating in a program that brings together people of all ages to:

Unite together, guided by our Unitarian Universalist faith, for a nonviolent alternative to the rhetoric of hate -- an alternative which includes radical hospitality, witness, advocacy, support, learning, and acting as a welcoming haven for those who are at risk, and the creation of the beloved community within and beyond our walls.

Empower our various ministries to connect with the larger community so that we bear witness to, support, advocate on behalf of, and work for a beloved community of all persons;

Strengthen the fabric of our faith community while engaging in the work of social justice.

We urge prioritizing these actions and goals so that they are done so in a timely and responsive manner.

Board of Trustees Meeting Date Change

The December Board meeting will be held on Sunday, Dec 18 at 12:30 pm. We will return to our regular 3rd Weds meeting date/time in January. Board meetings are open to the congregation, for people who want to observe. If you want to be on the agenda, please contact the Board President (prez@ccuu.org) at least one week prior to the Board meeting.

Minister's Muse

Someone suggested that I ought to take a look at a TV program called "This is Us." I did finally check it out. It's substantial, serious, funny at times. It centers on one family and their challenges, joys and tragedies, successes and failures, connections and breaks. It's also about their learning curve about race, since one of the children is black and the other two are white. In a sweep through time, the show is able to turn the pages of a few of the different chapters in the story of race in America.

I've also taken to watching "Mars." I am not sure how long I will keep with it. Mars is based upon a dream of Elon Musk, the very rich man who wants to open Mars for settlement. I don't know Musk well, but it seems like profitable idea. I might have a list of people I'd like to resettle there. But, of course, I'm joking, more or less.

What I know is that whether we're in a family with the same name or a planet full of people with DNA that ties us all together, back to the first mothers; whether we live on earth or in space – This is us. No matter where we go, as the saying goes, there we are.

That reminds me of the old, old Barry McGuire song:

Think of all the hate there is in Red China/Then take a look around to Selma, Alabama/ You may leave here for four days in space/ But when you return it's the same old place/ The pounding of the drums, the pride and disgrace/ You can bury your dead but don't leave a trace/ Hate your next door neighbor but don't forget to say grace.

That "this is us" is a hard reality to get one's mind around – much less one's heart. But how much different the world would be if we were taught from the earliest ages that we are all of the same family, that our different ethnic identities do not place us in different categories but enrich the species in countless ways.

So what do you do when there is a rift in a family? Well, it varies, doesn't it?

Sometimes you might extend an olive branch – "I shouldn't have borrowed that sweater, I'm sorry;" "I shouldn't have done/said that because... I won't do it again." "I've learned a lot since that time I hurt you – here is what I have learned. I regret what I did."

Sometimes a rift can be bridged together. "Let's sit down and talk and really hear each other." "I'd like to know how you feel and why you feel that way. Would you share it with me, please?"

Sometimes, the rift is filled with toxic debris and there's no crossing over it safely. These are rare, but at the very least, you need both sides to span a rift successfully. And you don't get a partnership and you can't span the rift if one side is just waiting for your mind to change. "We can make this work if you just do what I want."

In the difficult family of democracy, we have to come back to talking and working on our "issues" together. At the same time, we **cannot** treat all differences equally. Everything has to be tested against whether it lifts life as a whole to flourish (not your or my life in particular); whether it eases genuine suffering or contributes to suffering; if it depends upon resources that will vanish or endure; and whether it reflects the history of humanity in

its best or worst moments; if it reflects kindness, love, and respect or not.

And sometimes a rift can only be looked into – if it's too dangerous, potentially fatal. Then, we need much larger resources for healing and bridging.

There are things that we cannot, morally, claim to be "differences." They can be dangerous and even fatal. It is a slippery slope – judging those differences – but, in truth, we know that there are things that people have said or done through the ages that are simply immoral. It is in those moments that we are most roughly tested. And that would be a great sermon topic for a couple of months from now.

I find myself remembering these words of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from an address he gave in 1958 and a portion of which you can find in our grey hymnal. "...I never intend to adjust myself to the viciousness of lynch mobs; I never intend to become adjusted to the evils of ... discrimination..."

It may be that the salvation of the world lies in the hands of the maladjusted. ...there are some things in our social system that I'm proud to be maladjusted to, and I call upon you to be maladjusted too.... It is through such a maladjustment that we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man to the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom, equality and justice." So, in the name of love, let us be maladjusted together.



Lay Ministry Calls

Each year, the Lay Ministry attempts to contact all members of Countryside in an effort to "stay in touch" with as many people as possible. We want to check in with you and hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to speak with a lay minister. Of course, as you probably already know, we are available at any time if you need to get in touch with us. Over the next couple of months, we look forward to a conversation with you.

The Countryside Lay Ministry Team: Ken Bobbe, Coordinator; Karen Greenland, Barbara Griggs, Kathi Hillyer, Melanie Schikore, Joy Simon, Chris Smith & Kim Tilford. Ministerial Intern Eileen Wiviott will also be making calls.

Congratulations

To Sarah and Ryan Schaeftges on the birth of their son Xander on November 4.

In Sympathy

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Clarissa and Leon Olszewski and family on the death of Clarissa's father on November 23.

From Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE)

Family Ministry

Countryside Church has a community of beautifully diverse families. The families we serve include single parents, blended, multi-racial, multicultural, adoptive, two moms and two dads, LGBT, mom-dad-two-kids-and-a-dog, grandparents and elder families. We believe families are a vital part of our church community and recognize that families are in fact, the primary source of their child's faith development. With the vision of building a partnership between families, the congregation, and our homes, the Religious Education Council will be reforming as the Family Ministry Team in early 2017.

To create a flourishing family ministry, we must recognize:

- Religious education can help us grow in faith at any age, and faith development happens outside of our faith communities, especially at home.
- Parents, grandparents, and caregivers are children's primary source of religious education because it is where they:
 - * Receive consistent nurturing, acceptance and love
 - * Are given explanations of the world, values and advice
 - * Experience models of attitudes toward faith, meaning, and purpose that children will notice and copy
 - * Have the opportunity to develop, practice, and flourish in their faith

Our goal in developing a Family Ministry Team is to create opportunities where not only children can learn together on Sunday morning but families can support one another to discover and rediscover a seeking, active faith in the context of our family lives. Family ministry recognizes the entire family unit as being engaged on their own faith journey. Ministry within families is about interactions between family members that reflect the care and tending of one another's souls. The Family Ministry's role is to support our families in this endeavor.

I am very excited to begin the family ministry journey for I believe a strong family ministry helps build a partnership between our congregation and our homes, creates connections with other families walking similar journeys, and supports families to nurture their Unitarian Universalist faith at home. It allows families to find support in one another to create and maintain an active faith in the context of family lives.

Please contact me if you have any questions or would like to join the Family Ministry Team. Our introductory meeting will be on Sunday, January 22 from 12:30-2:00. Childcare provided upon request.

...Jules

A church program can't spiritually form a child, but a family living as a multigenerational community of faith can. (Allen, Ross, 2012)



The Green Sanctuary Committee wants to see our community live and demonstrate our values to the world. One concrete way we can do this is by going solar. We lower our carbon footprint, we reduce our CO2 emissions, and

we demonstrate to our children and our community that we believe in alternative clean energy. This is becoming a stronger Green Sanctuary. This is living our UU values.

Here is what we have investigated and are proposing to the congregation.

We propose to install 25kW of solar panels on our roof—that is about 90 solar panels, all of which would fit onto the roof of Atherton Hall. This covers about 40% of the church's electricity needs. Why 25kW? The key driver for this size installation is financial: there are significant tax credits we can get for this size of installation—it literally cuts the cost of installation in half. Our hope is that we would add additional solar panels in the next five years.

We have three bids from contractors. They ranged in cost from \$70K-\$85K for the system. The key question is how we finance the project. One option is to crowd source the funds as loans from the congregation. We propose repaying the loans over 5 years at a 2% rate of interest and the advantage here is that it will cost out of pocket \$20,000 (in total) to fully repay the loans with interest. So the catch is: we will need to raise about \$4K per year over 5 years (20,000) to fully pay back the loans to our congregants. The second option is to raise \$15K up front from the congregation. This would be sufficient to finance the system. After seven years, we can buy the solar panels for an additional \$8K. This is a simpler, more straightforward business transaction. The final option is to make solar panels part of our next capital campaign.

For both options 1 and 2, the full cost payback happens in about 12-14 years. Over the life of the solar panels, the church will save conservatively \$15-22,000. Long term this nets out as a positive investment, regardless of the moral benefits!

The GSC believes that the installation of solar panels will not only save CCUU thousands of long term dollars, but will provide a strong, immediate, and visible way that we can do something now for our planet in light of our Seventh Principle of the interdependent web. It is a way that we can, at relatively modest cost, meet the urgent need to act climate change now.

We are spending the next several weeks collecting information from congregants to see if there is strong support for solar energy at CCUU and which financing option they prefer. Stop by our table after church and talk to us!

What does it mean to be a People of Presence?

Sometimes, people can go missing right before our very eyes. Sometimes, we lose sight of ourselves when we're not paying enough attention.

~Cecelia Ahern

As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list to be covered in its entirety. Simply pick the question that "hooks" you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal of the questions is not to help you analyze in the abstract, but to figure out what a deeper awareness of story means for your daily living. So, which question is calling to you and contains "your work"?

1. Has the experience of "presence" increased or decreased for you as you've gotten older?
2. How might tomorrow be an opportunity to "discover presence"?
3. What absence walks with you more days than not?
4. Who has gone missing right before your very eyes?
5. Have you lost sight of yourself?
6. Would you be more present to your life if you weren't trying to perfect it or win at it? *Allow your life to be a work in progress. Do not hurry to mold the masterpiece; Always there is more to be done. Life is always unfinished business.* ~Richard S. Gilbert
7. When was the last time you created a world in itself? *The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.* ~Henry Miller
8. Where is your chance tomorrow to love someone with your presence? *At the end of the day: do others feel loved in your presence? This is the spiritual bottom line.* ~Masin Kipp *Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.* ~Simone Veil
9. Whose absence feels most present to you? What can you do tomorrow to feel and honor them more deeply?
One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone. ~Anon.
10. Are you living like you deserve to take up space in the world? *You deserve to take up space in the world.* ~Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
11. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. If the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there? The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers. ~Thich Nhat Hanh

Ministry Highlights

Kinship Ministry: A Reflection on Space, Place, and Presence

This month's theme is Presence. What is that? Is it acknowledging our state of being? Honoring our journey toward awareness? Recognizing our shared experience in another person? Do we leave an impression or a marker of our presence? I have reflected on this often and with the gift of time and community, I may be making some progress on the topic.

As a designer, I delight in the concept that a space defines an area where objects can repose and events can occur. And, that place is a space that accrues meaning from our relationship to it, our memories of it, and our engagement there with others. We have many well designed spaces at Countryside that have become powerful places in our church community: Atherton Hall vibrating with the energy of the Time and Talent Auction, our dew covered gardens on a sunny, Sunday morning graced by reflective people pausing for a quick sip of peace, the RE Wing ringing with the chaos of children's voices and bright spirits, or our sanctuary that welcomes everyone in joyful celebration and sad support. These are all places that build their meaning through the acts of people being themselves or through us being with others.

How can we get more presence? By joining in kinship with one another. We have many spaces to share and many opportunities to create welcoming places together.

The Kinship Ministry is a wonderful vehicle to help us get more engaged and become more active in place-making which, to me, is the essence of presence. So, as we close each Sunday service, enjoy our own local "Namaste" ritual as we say "I see the light within you and I share my light with you" to our neighbors new and old, let's remember that our presence matters. This is a small ritual that reminds me that every day, we must strive to make our space a more meaningful place. Joyfully, join in kinship and feel the presence.

...Tom MacTavish, Kinship Ministry Co-Coordinator

Create Monthly Themed Art

Is your Inner Artist looking for a project? Each month, we invite congregants *of all ages* to create an original piece of art that represents what the monthly theme means to you. We will display your offerings throughout the church building, protecting anything fragile in our locked display case. Any kind of art: fiber art, ceramics or pottery, metalwork, woodworking, paintings, photography, poetry, sculpture, etc.

The last Sunday of each month, we ask you to collect your artwork from that month and to bring your **original** art which shows what the upcoming theme means to you. The next few months' schedule is listed below. Contact Alison Vernon or Lois Phillips with questions.

- Dec 25 (or close to): bring *Prophecy* art for January
- Jan 29: bring *Identity* artwork for February
- Feb 26: bring *Risk* artwork for March

Stewardship Conversations

As I write this, it is the day after Giving Tuesday – the day each year when every non-profit organization in the country sends you an email or a letter asking for money. It got me thinking about the fact that some nonprofit organizations seem to be able ask for money all the time, yet we at Countryside Church hardly talk about it – generally, once a year during the annual stewardship campaign.

Since our stewardship campaign will begin in a few months, I wanted to start the conversation about money a little early so that we are all ready for it. Specifically, I wanted to talk about how to determine a fair and responsible annual pledge amount.

CCUU requests that its members pledge between 3% and 5% of income. In addition, the UUA has a Fair Share Giving Guide. It lists four levels of commitment along with recommended percentages of income to give. They are:

1. **Supporter:** The congregation is a significant part of my spiritual and intellectual life that I want to support. My fair share financial commitment starts at 2% of my income and rises to 6% as my income and capacity rise.
2. **Sustainer:** The congregation is my central community; I am committed to sustaining the programs and ministries of my congregation. My fair share financial commitment starts at 3% of my income and rises to 7% as my income and capacity rise.
3. **Visionary:** My commitment is a clear demonstration of the unique importance of this congregation and of my spiritual principles. My fair share financial commitment starts at 5% of my income and rises to 9% as my income and capacity rise.
4. **Transformer:** I am deeply committed to the congregation; my contribution provides fuel for transformation and is part of my spiritual practices in living out my UU Principles. My fair share financial commitment represents 10% of my income.

I realize that some of us can't give 2% of our income, let alone 5% or 10%. But if your pledge started out as an arbitrary \$50 or \$100 a month and hasn't increased in years, while your financial condition has improved, then maybe it's time to rethink your commitment to the CCUU. Unitarian Universalism and CCUU are needed now more than ever. Just imagine the difference we could make in the world if every member who could, gave their fair share. ...Gary LaBedz, Chair of the Stewardship Team

Intro to CCUU Endowment Fund

As the Time of Giving has started, first with Thanksgiving and then with our own Time & Talent Auction and soon with Christmas, please remember how important a gift to our Countryside Church Endowment Fund would be.

Giftng to our Endowment Fund – and this can be done in ANY amount at ANY time of year – confirms your commitment to religious freedom, to the free and independent search for truth, to the continuation of your core belief that no one has the whole truth or the right to “own” it.

Giftng to Countryside, again, in ANY amount at ANY time of year, speaks to your confidence that our faith will continue beyond our lifetimes to give voice to our principles and mission. Giftng to Countryside is a simple and straight-forward **act of faith**.

If you have ANY reason (Christmas gift, wedding anniversary, birthday, a Great Feeling – whatever!), to think about giftng ANY amount to the Countryside Church Endowment Fund, please see one of our team members, Mike Berry, Bridget Toth, Kay Gredell, Tony Pretto or Lois Phillips. If you are more comfortable simply leaving a message for Laurie Lantz at the Church Office, that will work too!

OUR Endowment Fund is **YOUR** gift to the future. When you think of giving at this time of year, think of giving to our children's future with a check to the Countryside Church UU Endowment Fund. Thank you.

...Lois Phillips, Chair

Outreach: Time & Talent Auction Thank You for a New Record Raised!

We raised a record \$31,000+ for our Service Partners: Partners for our Community (POC), Faith-In-Place (FIP) and Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants (ICDI); and for Countryside Church's Capital & Memory Garden programs. Many thanks to all who attended, contributed auction items, and/or bid on silent & live auction items in support of our service partners and the church! This new record is a result of your generosity.

The success of this event was due to outstanding efforts of Event Chairpersons Laura Mandell & Linda Berry and help from Judy Ball, Mike Berry, Carol Bobbe, Matt Briddell, John Conneely, Karen Epps, John Evans, Marty Farrington, Mike Gilley, Mike Graves, Peggie Graves, Karen Greenland, Mark Huston, Laurie Lantz, Janet McDonnell, Kathy and George Motto. A special thanks to our jolly bartending team and to Ryan Schaeffges, Mike Jeschke, and the 20-30 Somethings. Deb Quentel kept the evening light, fun, and extremely successful as our auctioneer for the second year.

We were pleased to have staff and board members from all three service partners attend and participate in the event. Melanie Schikore, our liaison with ICDI, invited a special guest. Feisal, now 18 years old, came to the US when he was 16 and would have gone to jail on his 18th birthday were it not for the existence of ICDI's House of Hospitality, one program supported by our Auction.

Our worship and religious education program are on Sundays at 9:00 am & 11:00 am.

Unless otherwise noted, young people in Kindergarten through Grade 7 attend the beginning of worship with their families; all other young people begin in their classrooms. At 9:00, we have classes for infants through Grade 6; at 11:00 for infants through Grade 12.

NOTE: Announcements begin 5 minutes prior to the start of the worship service.

Worship descriptions are also on the church website: <http://ccuu.org/services/>

Dec 11 at 9 & 11am Avoiding Holiday Madness Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia & Eileen Wiviott

Young people in Kindergarten through Grade 7 attend the beginning of the service with their families; all other young people begin in their classrooms.

****Holiday Worship Schedule: On Sundays, Dec 18, Dec 25, Jan 1, there will be ONE morning service at 11:00 am****

Dec 18 at 11 am All-Ages Christmas Pageant Jules Jaramillo, DLRE

This is an all-church service; young people in kindergarten and above attend the full service with their families. Child-care & Chalice Children classes will be offered at both services.

Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to [2 Li'l Fishes](#), a much needed lunch program which provides a nutritious, free lunch six days a week at the People's Church of Chicago, a dual UU and UCC affiliated congregation located in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood.

Dec 18 at 4 pm Winter Solstice Service Leslie Peet

Join us for our annual Yule celebration which includes candlelight and a spiral of greens. Stay after the service for hot beverages and fellowship

Dec 24 at 5 pm All-Ages Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us for Christmas reflections, lovely choral music, beloved hymns, and the magic of candlelight.

This is an all-church service; all young people, including infants and toddlers, attend the service with their families. Our Christmas Eve Offering will be donated to the Minister's Discretionary Fund, which is used to help those in need within our congregation.

Dec 25 at 11am All-Ages Christmas Day Service Rev. Hilary L. Krivchenia

This is an all-ages service of stories & caroling; all young people, including infants and toddlers, attend the service with their families.

Please bring cookies to share during coffee/fellowship following the service.

Jan 1 at 11am Old Year's Farewell, New Year's Hope—and Beans' n' Greens Rev. Krivchenia & Eileen Wiviott

This is an All-Church Service; all young people, including infants and toddlers, attend the service with their families.

Following the service, the Krivchenias will provide a New Year's lunch of greens and beans and rice to wish health and wealth in the coming year; feel free to bring nonalcoholic beverages, bread, or crackers to add to the meal.

Jan 8 at 9am & 11am Return to 2 Services Rev. Dr. C Scot Giles

Young people in Kindergarten through Grade 7 attend the beginning of the service with their families; all other young people begin in their classrooms.

Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to UU Society of Community Ministry.

All-Church Christmas Pageant: December 18 at 11:00 am

On December 18, *during our ONE worship service at 11:00 am*, we will hold our annual Christmas Pageant, which is a sing-along Living Nativity Story, and the **entire** congregation has a part! We have several parts from which you can choose:

- Donkey- Wear gray clothes
- Cow- Wear brown or black clothes
- Sheep- White clothes (wool or fluffy accents)
- Angel- Wear white clothes
- Towns Person- Wear simple clothes to match time theme of nativity story
- Shepherd- Wear loose flowing simple clothes with sash for waist and/or head dressing

Feel free to be as creative or extravagant as you wish with your costumes. Special guests are welcome (examples may be: dinosaurs, princesses, super heroes, etc.)

That Sunday morning, we will have costumes from which children and youth can choose, and there will be simple animal masks, tails, halos, and misc. items available to add to your costume if you need them. Feel free to bring any extra costume items to share if you have them.

New Members

Welcome to those who have signed the book since June 5 and who were officially welcomed during worship on December 4. Photos of our new members are on the revolving kiosk in the Narthex.

Susan Auld (joined Nov 13)
 Angela Lis (joined Sept 25)
 Grace Patel (joined Aug 21)
 Fran Patterson (joined Nov 13)
 Anna Skrzypek (joined Nov 13)

[contact info intentionally omitted from website]

Thank You

A huge thank you to the creative team that produced the amazing decor, punch, music and photos to commemorate CCUU's 60th Anniversary with an Upscale Coffee Hour in Atherton Hall!

Angelina Huntsha, Kay Gredell, John Evans, Judy Ball, Krista MacTavish, Dan Yokas, and Lois Phillips brought their imaginations together and then used air compressors and scaffolding (and some diamonds!) to bring their ideas to life! We hope you enjoyed it.

The ten years from our 50th to our 60th went by so quickly, I look forward to seeing what someone does for our 70th!



Guest at Your Table

The [UUSC](#)'s Guest at Your Table (GAYT) Program is an annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about work to advance human rights. As you enjoy meals with family and friends, you can put a box on

your table to remind you of the gifts and treasures you have and to think about how much you have to share. The box is a tangible reminder of all those who are searching for a place to call home, for a table at which to be welcomed, and for the dignity that each of us deserves. You and the guests in your home can put money in the box, and *we will collect them on Jan 8*. There are extra envelopes & info brochures at the back of the Sanctuary.

Hospitality Teams

Hospitality Teams are the friendly, welcoming face of our community! As we work on spreading the Good News of Unitarian Universalism and Countryside Church, we need to be ready to warmly receive those who come – we count on the Hospitality Teams to help with that.

Each team is scheduled for first, second, third, fourth, or fifth Sundays. *If you are not on a hospitality team, you are still welcome you to sign up to help with hospitality.* Email the church office, ccuu@ccuu.org, if you would like to be assigned to a team.

There are easy directions at the top of the sign-up page—www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-sunday

Please join us to foster kinship and to share the ministry of Sunday hospitality!

...Tom MacTavish and Peggy Simonsen, Kinship Ministry Coordinators, Kinship@ccuu.org

Workshop Coming to CCUU!

3rd Annual Mid-Winter Western Crescent Workshop: Religious Education & Social Justice in our (dis)connected World

For: Ministers, Religious Educators, Religious Education teams, Social Justice teams, Board members

Theme speakers:

- **RE track: Karen Bellavance-Grace.** Regional Staff for the New England Region, Karen is also the previous Director of Faith Formation and the author of Full Week Faith, which proposes a new approach to our ministries of faith formation in response to the social, demographic, technological, and spiritual realities of 21st century America.
- **Social Justice Track: Scott Aaseng,** Executive Director of Unitarian Universalist Action Network of Illinois and **Nancy Combs-Morgan,** MidAmerica Regional Staff. Scott and Nancy have been leading congregations in Social Justice Empowerment workshops, to help congregations reimagine their work in sustainable, connected, and effective ways.

Fees: \$20/person. Register by: Jan 23 at

<https://www.midamericauua.org/events/calendar2/eventdetail/640/-/reaching-beyond-workshop-in-palatine-il>

Transitions



The mission of the Transitions group is to provide a forum for mature adults to explore life transitions with a supportive community during daytime hours.

Monthly Program & Lunch

In Dec, we are meeting on the 3rd Thursday, due to the holidays. The program begins about 10:15 and is followed by a potluck lunch. Bring a dish to share or if you prefer, your individual lunch. Also, if you wish, bring a friend. Our program topic on Dec 15 will be *Music and the Brain* presented by Mary Ellen Ecklund.

All are welcome!

Memoir Makers: 2nd Fridays, 10 am

Our next meeting is Fri., Dec 9 in classroom #1. In addition to sharing any new writings by members, we will continue viewing *The Art of Storytelling*. For more information, contact Tom MacTavish.

Great Books Reading Group

We meet the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10 am-Noon. We will begin a new book in January. For information, contact Gloria Kinney.

Book Discussions

Book Circle: Jan 15 & Feb 19

All are welcome to join us in classroom 6 for our upcoming discussions:

- Sun., Jan 15: Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation by Michael Pollan
- Sun, Feb 19: The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism by Naomi Klein

We gather at 6:15 and discussion begins at 6:30. We are always happy to welcome new people!

Last Mondays Book Group: Jan 30

We will not meet in December. All are invited to join us on Jan 30 at 7 pm in the Stokes Room to discuss The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend by Katarina Bivald.

Open Forum Discussion

Forum meets each Sunday to discuss "the issues of the day" while respectfully welcoming different perspectives. We meet in classroom 5 at 8:45 am and socialize for 15 minutes before discussing the day's topic from 9:00 to 10:00 am.

To be added to the Forum email list to receive supporting materials for the discussions, contact Vid Axel.

Future topics are tentative. The ones that are scheduled for the upcoming two Sundays are the least likely to change, but current events developments or other factors sometimes inspire us to switch.

- Dec 11: The U.S. IRS today
- Dec 18 (special time: 9:30-10:45, one worship svc @11): Gerrymandering
- Dec 25 & Jan 1: NO Forum; worship svc @11
- Jan 8: Rape & Society, part 1—Justice for Victims
- Jan 15: Rape & Society, part 2—Justice for Offenders

Poetry Series ~ 2nd Weds, 7 pm

All who love poetry are welcome to join us on Dec 14 in Atherton Hall to hear local poet Tamara Tabel, who uses poetry to heal and to allow peace & space to reflect, rant, forgive. All readers are welcome after the featured poet's presentation; just sign in upon arrival.

20-30 Somethings

If you are in your 20s or 30s, please join us on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month at 12:20 in classroom 4. Child-care is available during the meetings. For more info or to be added to our email list, send an email to 2030s@ccuu.org. Note: We will not meet January 1st.

40-50 Somethings

This new group will have an initial meeting on Sun, Jan 15, 12:30 pm in classroom 6. Please bring your ideas and suggestions!

Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic (AHA) Discussion Group

2nd Tuesdays, 7 pm

All are welcome to join us on Dec 13, when CCUU member George Motto will discuss Unitarian Universalist Humanism with us.

Feminine Divine Women's Group

Last Saturdays, 9:30 am

This year, we are reading and discussing Daring Greatly by Brené Brown. On Dec 31, we will discuss chapter 3, and on Jan 28, chapter 4. The group is open to newcomers. For more info, contact Wendy Ingrassia.

QiGong

No QiGong in December

Join Emmett in January on Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 am, in the Sanctuary to experience slow, gentle body movements & guided meditation. Donations to CCUU will be accepted.

Sacred Heartbeat Drum Circle

Sat, Jan 28, 7 pm

Adults and teens are invited to join us in Atherton Hall for free-style drumming in a low key, peaceful, welcoming environment. No drumming experience necessary! Please bring your instrument(s); some limited hand percussion is available to share. Note: we are not meeting in December. For more info, visit www.PalatineDrumCircle.com.



Social Action

Next Meeting: Jan 15, 12:30 pm

All are welcome to join us in classroom 2. Please bring simple offerings for a potluck. Remember, no food with nuts!

Monthly Fair Trade Sale: Jan 22

Once/month we offer fair trade chocolate, coffee, tea, cocoa, olive oil, and snacks from Equal Exchange for sale. For each pound of Equal Exchange foods purchased, 20 cents goes to the [UJSC's Small Farmer Fund](#).



Wellness House

Cancer Support in Palatine

Wellness House and CCUU partner to offer cancer patients and their loved ones support services at CCUU. *The programs are free, but registration is re-*

quired. To register, contact Kelli Mitchell, 630-654-5197 or kmitcell@wellnesshouse.org.

Wellness in Season: Cooking Demonstration & Discussion. Thurs, Dec 8, 6-7:30 pm. Join us for a fun evening of cooking with a focus on seasonal foods and holiday favorites. Learn how to enjoy the holidays without giving up your focus on healthy eating. Register online for participation in Hinsdale or via webinar.

Support and Networking ~ Living with Cancer, Being a Caregiver. Come together with other cancer patients and caregivers on the journey. The groups meet the first Wednesday of the month, 7-8 pm. One-time phone registration is required.

Stress Management Through Deep Hypnosis, on the 1st Saturday of the month at 10 am. Hypnotism is used to promote healing, emotional resilience, & comprehensive stress management.

Healthy Living ~ Mindful Yoga. Cancer patients and their loved ones are invited to nurture your entire being with mind/body movement Tuesdays, 10 am, thru' Dec 13.

How has UUism Changed Your Life?

Skinner House Books is looking for short, personal stories about how Unitarian Universalism has changed the course of your life. These will be collected into an anthology and published as a book. Stories should be 750-3,500 words in length. Submit by Dec 19 to BMartin@uua.org.

Learn more—

<http://www.uua.org/publications/skinnerhouse/submissions/request-stories>

Alternate Methods of Giving to CCUU

If you prefer credit card or online giving to writing a check, there are a couple of options for giving to CCUU:

Countryside Express

If you would like to make regular monthly payments via credit card or via automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings, a form is available [on the church website](#) or in the church office. Submit the completed form to the congregational administrator for processing.

Manage your giving online

Giving online is easy and allows you to make one-time or recurring contributions and to view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps: Visit the church website at www.ccuu.org; Click on the Donate Now button; Click on the Create Profile button; then Follow the onscreen instructions.

Give by Text Message

You can also give via text message. Contact the church office, ccuu@ccuu.org.

UU Vacations

WhaleCoast Alaska 2017

You are invited to see Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Seward, and Sitka with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife, visit Denali National Park, experience Native Alaskan culture. Visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. Let us share our Alaska with you!

UU Bed & Breakfast, SW Florida

Hosted by the UU Church of Fort Myers. Unitarian Universalist members and friends are invited to stay with UU host families, who provide private room & bath, daily breakfast, UU fellowship & hospitality, maps & guidebook, access to golf, tennis pools, beaches, birding, boating. Cost is \$75/night. To make arrangements, email bedandbreakfast@uucfm.org or contact Mary Nies at 239-466-7933. More info:

<http://www.uucfm.org/hospitality/bed-a-breakfast>.

Summer Jobs at Camp UniStar

Camp UniStar is a family camp for Unitarian Universalists and like-minded individuals. It is nestled in the Chippewa National Forest on Star Island, near Bemidji, in northern Minnesota. There are several positions available. Training and camp season is June 5 to Sept. 2, with some personalization of schedules possible.

Starting salary for first year general camp staff is \$270 per week, room and board included. Application and position details at: www.CampUniStar.org Please contact 612-354-6566 or jobs@campunistar.org with any questions. Applications due January 31, 2017

Outside Groups

These are groups held at & open to CCUU in alignment with our UU principles. There may be a participation fee or other requirements set by the group and which apply to all participants, regardless of CCUU affiliation.

Transcend meets 2nd & 4th Wednesdays. It is a support group focusing on gender identity and is geared towards Trans youth, 14-20 yr olds. www.youth-outlook.org.

Journey Transgender Support Group is for anyone 18 or over (unless accompanied by a parent) who is transgender, gender queer, androgynous, or gender questioning; meets the 2nd & 4th Sundays. transgender_journey@yahoo.com

Great Plains Zen Center sits meditation on Sundays at 7 pm and offers monthly Intro to Zen workshops. For more info, go to www.greatplainszen.org.

AA. Men: Saturday, 9am; Women: Friday, 7:30pm
Job Search Circle (JSC) meets in Atherton Hall on Wednesdays, 9-11am. \$5/meeting. Dress code is business casual. Email: rmonahan@improve-ization.com

Career Communicators, a Toastmasters International Club dedicated to professional speaking. Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 7-9 pm. www.careercommunicators.com.

St Hubert Job Ministry, non-denominational, free, open to all occupations, and held at various member churches. <http://www.sainthubert.org/ministries/job.html>.

Upcoming Church Meetings & Events: December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>This calendar shows upcoming <u>Church meetings & events</u>. All meetings and events held in the building are listed on the church website, under <u>Events & Rentals</u> - http://www.ccuu.org/programs-and-events/. If your meeting or event is not listed, please submit a room reservation form (available in the office or on the website with the calendar) to the office.</i></p>						
Dec 11 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education 10am & Noon Coffee/Fellowship 12:15pm Green Sanctuary Mtg 12:30pm Buddhist Study Group	12	13 10am Wellness House Yoga 7pm LM 7pm AHA Discussion	14 10am Transitions Great Books Group 7pm Finance Ctte 7pm Poetry Series 7pm Beloved Conversations Grp	15 10am Transitions 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	16 7pm Soul Intentions Fri Cov Grp	17
Dec 18 9:30 am Open Forum 11am All-Ages Worship Svc & Christmas Pageant Noon Coffee/Fellowship 12:20pm 20-30 Somethings 12:30pm Board of Trustees Mtg 4pm Winter Solstice Service	19	20 7pm Soul Intentions Tues Cov Grp	21 7pm Soul Intentions Weds Cov Grp	22 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	23	24 5pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Dec 25 11am All-Church Christmas Day Service Noon Coffee/ Fellowship ~ bring cookies to share	26	27 7pm Experiencing God Cov Grp	28 10a-4p PADS Meal Delivery to Presby Church of Palatine	29	30	31 9:30am Feminine Divine Women's Group
Jan 1 11am All-Ages Worship Noon Fellowship, Greens 'n' Beans	2 10am Focus deadline	3 7pm Ministry Council Mtg	4	5 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	6	7
Jan 8 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education 10am & Noon Coffee/Fellowship Noon Coming of Age group mtg 12:15pm Green Sanctuary Mtg 12:30pm Buddhist Study Group	9	10 7pm LM 7pm AHA Discussion Group	11 Focus publication 10am Transitions Great Books Group 7pm Finance Ctte 7pm Beloved Conversations Grp	12 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	13 10am Memoir Makers 7pm Movies with Meaning	14 TBA Circle Suppers

Focus

Published by Countryside Church UU

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Barbara Griggs Chris Smith
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Melanie Schikore

For assistance from Lay or Care Ministry,
please call Ken or Rev. Hilary.

Our Covenant

We unite to strengthen the bonds of kinship among all persons, to promote human dignity, and to increase reverence for life's creating, sustaining, and transforming power through worship, study, and service.

Our Vision

We come together as a congregation to inspire our quests for the spiritual, ethical, and meaningful in life and to advance respect, compassion, and justice in the wider world.

Our Mission

Countryside is seen as the growing voice and source of liberal religion in the northwest Chicago suburbs by...

- creating a place of inclusiveness, welcome, connectedness, compassion and respect
- providing for the spiritual and intellectual growth of members of all ages
- cultivating a vital future for our congregation and community through thoughtful stewardship of our financial resources and our environment
- acting on a social conscience

Upcoming Focus Deadlines

Submit all articles by 10 am to ccuu@ccuu.org

- ◆ Jan 2 (to be publ Jan 11)
- ◆ Feb 27 (to be publ Mar 8)
- ◆ Mar 27 (to be publ Apr 5)

Between *Focus* issues, written communication is via E-Updates & the *Sunday Times* insert to the Order of Worship. Submission deadline for e-updates & *Sunday Times* is Weds at 9 am.

Return Service Requested
Time-dated Material—Prompt Delivery Requested

2016 Holiday Worship



Sunday, December 18, 11 am
All-Church Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 18, 4 pm
Winter Solstice Service
Saturday, December 24, 5:00 pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Sunday, December 25, 11 am
All-Ages Worship: Stories & Carols
Sunday, January 1, 11 am
All-Ages Worship
followed by Greens n' Beans
More details on page 7

Countryside Church
Unitarian Universalist
1025 N Smith Rd
Palatine, IL 60067

