



focus

Volume 30, No 3

March 8, 2017

MUSIC with a MISSION

This Saturday, March 11, 7 to 10 pm
Come have some fun and raise funds for our Outreach Service Partners! Hope to see you there!
<http://ccuu.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Music-with-a-Mission-Flyer-2017.pdf>



Winter Farmers Market

This Sunday, March 12, 10 am to 2 pm

Winter markets provide our community with sustainably-grown foods and support our local farmers during the off-season. This market will be held here at Countryside in Atherton Hall and is sponsored by the Green Sanctuary Committee and Faith in Place. It will be a great opportunity for you to purchase goods such as meats, salsas, soups, jams, cheese, baked goods, produce that is available this time of year and more! *Come and please invite your friends, neighbors, and family!*

[Group Discussion] The Case for Reparations

This Sunday, March 12, 12:30 pm

Since running as the June 2014 cover story in *The Atlantic*, Ta-Hehisi Coates's thought-provoking article has sparked lively conversation, soul searching, and countless questions. Join the CCUU Black Lives Matter Initiative for this important and timely discussion. Special guest Cliff Nellis, executive director and co-founder of the Lawndale Christian Legal Center, will join us for the discussion. Read the article online in advance of discussion. You can find it here: <http://tinyurl.com/CCUUCaseForReparations>.

Please bring something to share for the potluck lunch at 12:15. We will begin the discussion at 12:30.

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2017-18 Pledge Drive

CCUU: A Blessing for Today, A Beacon for Tomorrow

Thank you to those who have already returned their pledge forms for the 2017-18 church year! If you have not yet submitted your pledge form, please do so as soon as possible but not later than March 15. Pledge forms are available in Atherton Hall, in the classroom wing, and on the stewardship page of the website, <http://ccuu.org/stewardship/>

In addition to our operating pledge drive, we are also requesting commitments for the *Going Solar for 2017* project initiated by the Green Sanctuary Committee. Once you have submitted your 17-18 Operating Pledge Form, you will have a chance to make a solar panel commitment, if you are interested. Solar panel commitment forms are due by March 31; payments for the solar panels are due not later than May 1.

If there is a reason that you are unable to make a pledge for the coming church year, please contact Rev. Hilary or Gary LaBedz (our stewardship chair). We want to be sure that you are fully supported.

Minister's Muse

On Wednesday, February 15, we held a "Love Your Neighbor Vigil" here at CCUU. It was a moving and powerful evening. A slate of speakers spoke from the Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Baptist, Methodist, and Unitarian Universalist faith communities and from the Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants and Partners for Our Community (two of our service partners who serve immigrant communities). What struck me most about the evening was the great courage that everyone found being together – seeing that we are stronger together, that we really do celebrate our common humanity and respect our enriching differences. As the more than 250 people circulated in our fellowship hall, sharing stories and hopes, the overwhelming sentiment that was expressed was "let's not let this be a single event – let's keep connecting, getting to know one another, standing by one another."

Afterward, I reached out to local colleagues to begin to build a strong interfaith alliance out here. It may take a little time, but there will be many eager to engage in this project – only in some part to socialize – but, more, to be able to offer strength, comfort, witness, and advocacy for one another in challenging times. It reminded me of something that the Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed, who's spoken here a few times, said (find it in our hymnal!), "The central task of the religious community is to unveil the bonds that bind each to all. There is a connectedness, a relationship discovered amid the particulars of our own lives and the lives of others. Once felt, it inspires us to act for justice."

That connectedness was palpable in our gathering. We often speak of connection as an almost abstract idea, but the day after Valentine's Day, it was something you could feel easily. There is a great power in presence. At the same time, I felt and could feel around me a spirit of compassion and mercy and a passion for the justice that Rev. Morrison-Reed spoke of. Relationship is key.

Relationship is the core of religious community. "Religare" from Latin means to tie, to bind – in essence, to come together in covenant. To be religious, in these days, is to be urgently called to connect and then to serve that spirit of love and justice.

I think of Abraham Heschel, a Rabbi whose sense of awe and wonder inspired him to work tirelessly for justice during his lifetime (he died in 1972). He once said, "Awe is an intuition for the dignity of all things..." Prophetically, he said, "Horizons are wider, dangers are greater... **No religion is an island.** We are all involved with one another. Spiritual betrayal on the part of one affects the faith of all of us. Views adopted in one community have an impact on other communities. Today religious isolationism is a myth."

We can see now, more than ever, how linked our fates are – how oppression of one group slides into oppression for others, how important the voice of the faith community is, and how much we need to speak together. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King spoke to this, "The church... is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide

and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority."

People are sometimes confused about the role of the faith community in social issues. Recently, the Rev. William Barber said, "If you read the scriptures, Isaiah 10 says, 'Woe unto those who legislate oppressive degrees.' Or you get Jeremiah 22, 'Go down to the king's palace and tell him not to pass policies that hurt children and hurt women.'...it's not Democrat-versus-Republican politics... it's calling us to move our politics to higher ground. Every major progressive thing that's happened in America ... always had a deep moral underpinning where people moved away from their particular parties and said, 'There are some things higher, based on our deepest principles and deepest values.'"

So it was a great joy to find our sanctuary and fellowship hall filled with people who were filled with a true religious spirit, serving their deepest principles and values, and above all, one another.

In that spirit, I thank Christine Organ, whose suggestion made that event possible, whose organizing powers made for a smooth evening, and whose leadership inspired plentiful people to help prepare, setup, serve, and clean up – all in a spirit of love.

9:00 am Worship Service

Every Sunday morning, we offer two worship services, almost identical in content. Yet year after year, our 9 am service has remained small in attendance, though there has been a modest increase in recent months. In conversations among the staff and at the Worship Council, we have come to see that this is a great opportunity. There are folks who prefer a more intimate worship setting and such a setting makes possible elements and connections that simply would not work or feel the same in a larger context. Over the next months, Rev. Hilary and the worship team (the vergers) will be introducing new elements at 9 am – that work with the same content as the 11 am service but in more varied forms. We will build on and enjoy the warmth and depth possible from more meditation, more dialogue, more community building. We have begun quite modestly by changing the seating in the sanctuary from a large, open space filled with straight rows to a few curved rows and have moved from the large pulpit to a smaller podium. So we invite you to check out 9am, sit in the first three rows, and experience some new worship at Countryside.

From Your Board of Trustees (BOT)

Be the Change

Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

I've been thinking a lot about this statement and its meaning in the past few months. Be the change. Truth be told, there is so much I want to change in the world right now that I'm not sure where to start and it all can feel a bit overwhelming. The list of organizations and causes I want to support is endless, yet there is only so much time, energy, and money to go around.

A few months ago, my husband Matt and I had a long conversation about where we wanted to focus our time and attention so that, as a family, we could be the change we wanted to see. After listing all the causes and organizations that we cared about, ultimately, we decided that Countryside Church is the funnel through which we will channel our resources.

The rationale was rather simple: We only have so much time and money, and with two young kids both of those are tight. We can't participate in every protest or volunteer activity we would like; we can't donate to every organization we care about. But through our support of Countryside Church – which supports many of the causes we believe in, and whose members are active in many of the organizations we support – we can support those causes and organizations by supporting Countryside and its members.

For my family -- and perhaps many of you – Countryside Church is a direct and meaningful way to support and advance change in many of the social justice areas we care about. Through its partnerships with Faith In Place, Interfaith Committee for Detained Immigrants, Partners for Our Communities and many of the other causes that CCUU and its members support, we are in essence able to support those causes as well.

A few weeks ago, when I was feeling bogged down by challenges of daily life, startling news headlines, and fears about the future, I found myself desperately looking forward to the church board meeting that night. I literally couldn't wait to spend time with people who shared my values and, while we disagree about the details, on the whole, we agree about how we want to live in the world.

For many of us, Countryside Church is the closest we have to an organization that aligns with many of our deeply held beliefs and principles, and the need for progressive, socially-engaged liberal religion is stronger than ever. Rather than get overwhelmed by the countless social causes we could support (and want to support), Countryside Church is a way of tapping into and supporting those causes on an ultra-local level in a way that also aligns with our spiritual and ethical beliefs.

In other words, by supporting Countryside Church and its members and staff, we can be the change we want to see in the world.

...Christine Organ

Stewardship Conversations

From Discretionary Giving to Intentional Giving

Some of us give to the church what we feel we can afford. In fact, often what we give to the church is what's left over after we've paid all of our other obligations. By pledging to give the church a dollar amount that's affordable, we turn the experience of supporting the church into an exercise that's nearly the same as paying our bills. There's an amount we've pledged to pay, and we must pay it when it is due. No matter what we try to tell ourselves about why we're giving to the church, it will still feel like we're paying a bill. Some months we give less or we don't give at all. In other words, what we give is discretionary.

At Countryside Church, one of our Aspirations of Membership is to strive to contribute 3% - 5% of our income to the church. Many of us contribute a certain dollar amount and have never figured what percentage of our income we are contributing. Here's how. If you've recently filed your taxes, find your 'adjusted gross income' on Form 1040, Line 37. Next, divide the amount of your pledge to the church by your adjusted gross income. If it's 3% or greater, that's a wonderful, intentional contribution – and we thank you. If it's less than 3%, then you have something to strive for (and we thank you none the less).

If your contribution to the church is the last payment you make each month, it's discretionary. If your contribution to the church is the first payment you make each month, it's intentional. We ask that every pledging household strive to make their contribution to the church intentional – pay the church first – and contribute 3%-5% of your income.

One easy way to transform your giving from discretionary to intentional is to sign up for Countryside Express and have your contributions automatically deducted from your bank account or credit card on a regular schedule. Once you set it up, you may wonder how you ever lived without it – and you'll feel great knowing you are supporting this wonderful community.

(If you haven't returned your pledge form yet, please do so by March 15.)

Gary LaBedz
Chair, Stewardship Team

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: To make regular payments via credit card or 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.

Giving online is easy & 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. Visit the church website; click Donate Now button; click Create Profile; then follow the onscreen instructions.

Give by Text Message: Pick up a yellow card from greet-er table or back of sanctuary, or contact the church office.

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/>

****Daylight Saving Time begins March 12 ~ clocks spring forward at 2 am.****

Mar 12 Power and Privilege Eileen Wiviott, Ministerial Intern

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 Lawndale Christian Legal Center.

Mar 19 Something So Strong Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

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

Mar 26 to be announced Melanie Schikore

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

Apr 2 Deep Roots, Tender Leaves: Growing Values Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

Joining Sunday: We will formally welcome our newest members during today's worship services.

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

Apr 9 to be announced Eileen Wiviott, Ministerial Intern

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

Apr 16 Easter: If Jesus Were Here Today Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

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 the Minister's Discretionary Fund, used to help those in need in our congregation.

Apr 23 Multigenerational Earth Day Service Jules Jaramillo & Rev. Krivchenia

Young people in kindergarten and above attend the entire worship service with their families. Nursery & Chalice Children (ages 2-3) will be available during both services.

Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to Citizens for Conservation.

All-Church Earth Day Birthday Party

Sunday, April 23



In addition to our multigenerational Earth Day Service, on April 23, the Kinship Ministry is bringing back a beloved past tradition—an all-congregation birthday celebration! Mark your calendar and plan to

come celebrate your birthday with us!

Come at 8:30 am for Birthday Breakfast & 9:00 Multigenerational Earth Day Worship in Atherton Hall—and/or come for the 11:00 Multigenerational Earth Day service and stay for Birthday Lunch. EVERYONE is included, from age 0 to 100. More details to come.

Social Action

Monthly Fair Trade: March 12

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 [UUSC's Small Farmer Fund](#).

Next Social Action Meeting: Mar 26

All are welcome to join us for the social action meeting in classroom 1. Please bring something to share for a simple potluck lunch (no nuts, please).



Children's Choir

Children's Choir (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th graders) is meeting on Sundays after 2nd worship service in the choir room. For more info, contact Alison Vernon, Music.Director@ccuu.org or 847-359-8440, X 5.



Active Faith, Resilient Spirit *Journeys Adult Faith Development Retreat: April 7-8*

Join us on the beautiful grounds of University of St Mary of the Lake in Mundelein. Rev. Hilary, Jules, and Eileen will facilitate the retreat, which is intended to help you renew your spirit and become more fluent in your faith so you can continue to live your values and to be resilient in times that drain you. There will be time for reflection, discussion, and fun!

The registration form is available on the Study Ministry table in Atherton Hall and on the church website—<http://ccuu.org/afd-retreats-special-events-2/>. The registration deadline is March 15.

We hope you can join us!



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 ~ 4th Thursdays

We meet the 4th Thursday of the month at 10 am. On March 23, Rev. Hilary Krivchenia will present *End of Life Planning*. 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. All are welcome!

Memoir Makers: 2nd Fridays, 10 am

All are welcome to join us in classroom #1. In addition to sharing any new writings by members, we will continue viewing *The Art of Storytelling*.

Great Books Reading Group

We meet the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month, 10 am-Noon. We began a new book of short stories in January. For info, contact Gloria Kinney.

MidAmerica Regional Assembly *April 28-30 in Oak Brook; Early Bird & Children's Programming deadline: April 5*

Our Keynote Speaker, on the topic *To Multi-faith: A Verb*, will be Rev. Dr. Lee Barker, President and Professor of Ministry at Meadville-Lombard Theological School. We'll also have a forum with the UUA Presidential candidates.

Children's Programming is planned for ages 3-12. *Early bird registration and deadline for children's registration is April 5. Final registration deadline: April 21.* More details: <https://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly/2604-regional-assembly-2017>

Welcome, New Members

Please welcome our newest members who signed the book on February 19. Their photos are on the kiosk in the narthex (lobby between sanctuary & fellowship hall). They will be formally welcomed during the worship services on April 2.

Ellen Blumberg
Peggy Galle
Dan Krsmanovic & Jennifer Yeaman
Sandy Leitner
Stacey Tobin

[contact info omitted for posting on website; contact the church office if you need it.]

There will be another New Member Class on April 23 and 30; email Membership@ccuu.org if you are interested in participating.

Intro to CCUU

1st Sundays, 10 am & Noon

Newcomers are invited to attend a brief orientation to Countryside Church and Unitarian Universalism. It is offered the 1st Sunday of each month following the worship services.

Path to Belonging Spring Session **Sundays, April 23 and 30**

This two-session class is designed for those who are seeking more information about Unitarian Universalism and Countryside Church and would like to join others in discussions about it. In the class, we share our spiritual journeys, examine the UU Seven Principles, and learn about stewardship at Countryside Church. Also, we will have an opportunity to hear from minister, staff, and involved members. For those who are ready, the class is a path to membership.

The two sessions will be held from 12:15 to 3 pm and will include a light lunch. If requested in advance, child-care will be available. So that we can plan food, room location, and supporting materials, please sign up at the Greeters' window in the narthex or contact Kinship Ministry co-chair Tom MacTavish, membership@ccuu.org.

Love Your Neighbor Vigil a Success!

Reprinted from Feb 22 E-Update

There were nearly 300 people at the interfaith vigil on Feb 15 - it was a packed house! The speakers were dynamic and engaging, and they were all grateful to be included in the event. There were people from a wide range of faiths, ethnicities, and cultures there, and people stayed until well past 9 pm talking with each other.

Thank you to Christine Organ and Rev. Hilary for organizing the event! Thank you to all the Countrysiders who came through in such a big way - there were mountains of food and tons of people who came early and stayed late to set up and clean up.

The resounding sentiment from all in attendance was that we should do more events like this - stay tuned... or if you have a passion and interest to help put something together, let us know!

Full Week Faith

Family Ministry: Risk

Rituals help us slow down, create a practice of mindfulness, and reinforce what is most important. We invite CCUU families to sit down together for a family ritual of sharing, practice, and living Unitarian Universalism. You honor and lift up parents, grandparents, and guardians as their children's primary religious educator, and we wish only to support you in that role.

Choose one or more nights each week to gather before eating dinner or at bedtime. We recommend the time you pick be consistent. The power of ritual is that it be predictable and regular. Feel free to adapt the reflection questions to meet your family's needs.

Chalice Lightings

Light a chalice to begin your day, before a meal or before your spiritual practice...

Our Family

We light this chalice for our family and honor the light that each of us bring into the world, rejoicing in the community we create together.

The Best Place It Can Be

We come together to remind ourselves
To treat all people kindly
Because they are our brothers and sisters;
To take good care of the earth
Because it is our home;
To live lives full of goodness and love
Because that is how we will make our world
The best place it can be

Meal Blessing

Say a blessing before you eat a meal...

*We give thanks.
For the food before us,
For the friends and family beside us.
For the love between us.
We give thanks.*

Taking it Home

Consider taking a risk in regards to your faith...

We learn by trying new things, sometimes we fail which can be very disappointing. Many times, after we fail or something doesn't work out, we grow in what we have learned. Unitarian Universalists believe that it is important to continue to search and learn what is true and right. We also believe that our actions should be guided by our beliefs.

Read about these Unitarian Universalists who took risks and chances:

- Dorothea Dix, <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/windows/session16/143973.shtml>
- Two men named James, <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/grace/session6/two-men>
- Lydia Maria Child, <http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop2/186395.shtml>

As a family, discuss some of these questions: How did

(Continued...)

they take risks? How did they meet obstacles and continue to work for what they believed in? How did they create a better world for those around them?

Make a list of ways your family works to make a difference in the world. Why does it make a difference? Have there been obstacles for your family? How have you overcome them?

Reflect on your list and choose a way to go one step deeper with your family this month. Examples: Every month your family donates cat food for a local cat shelter - this month you can make toys for the cats to play with as well. You are friends with a neighbor that has recently had surgery. You bring them food every Wednesday-while there this week ask if it is OK for your family to rake the leaves and sweep their driveway.

Share with other families at church how you have lived your Unitarian Universalist values deeper and stronger this month.

Blessing

Blessing of the Failures and Risk Takers

by Robin Tanner

Today we share in a blessing for losers, risk-takers, all failures far and wide....

Blessed are they who fall in the mud, who jump with gusto and rip the pants, who skin the elbows, and bruise the ego, for they shall know the sweetness of risk.

Blessed are they who make giant mistakes, whose intentions are good but impact has injured, who know the hot sense of regret and ask for mercy, for their hearts will know the gift of forgiveness.

Blessed are they who have seen a D or an F or C or any letter less than perfect, who are painfully familiar with the red pen and the labels as "less than," for they know the wisdom in the imperfect.

Blessed are they who try again, who dust off, who wash up, who extend the wish for peace, who return to sites of failure, who are dogged in their pursuit, for they will discover the secret to dreams.

Blessed are they who refuse to listen to the naysayers, for their hearts will be houses for hope.

Blessed are they who see beyond the surface of another, for they will be able to delight in the gift of compassion.

Blessed are they who stop running the race to help a fellow traveler, who pick up the fallen, who stop for injured life, for they shall know the kindness of strangers.

Blessed are they who wildly, boldly abandon winning, for they shall know the path of justice.

Family Ministry Team

The mission of Countryside's Family Ministry Team is to create opportunities where families can support one another to discover and rediscover a seeking, active faith in the context of our family lives. To stay connected, join our closed Facebook group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1821210571463096/>

Full Week Faith

Adult Faith Development: Risk

We encourage congregants to explore full week faith practices on a regular basis to be fully engaged in their faith for the entire week. This month, we begin the theme of risk, which will be reflected in sermons, small group ministry programs, and our religious education community. Countryside Church invites you to continue exploring at home the theme of risk and how it relates to your Unitarian Universalist faith. You might consider one or more of these questions:

- What are you willing to jump deeper into?
- Are you willing to give yourself to something bigger?
- What will you stay truer to?

Chalice Lightings

Light a chalice to begin your day, before a meal, or before your spiritual practice...

Cherish Your Dreams by Maureen Kiloran
The poet Langston Hughes has written, "Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly." May this chalice flame challenge each of us to cherish our dreams, for all things worth doing begin in the courage and inspiration of a dream.

Pride Flame by Linda Lee Franson
We light this flame
to ignite our hearts and minds—
the spark of knowledge that enlightens,
the shimmering hope that burns,
the blazing love that engulfs our actions,
the bonfire of our commitment.

We light this flame for those
who celebrate themselves
who fear
who hope
who persevere
who stand on the side of love for all.
For this, we light this flame.

Meal Blessing

Say a blessing before you eat a meal...

Loving Spirit by Gary Kowalski
Loving Spirit,
Be our guest,
Dine with us,
Share our bread,
That our table
Might be blessed
And our souls be fed.

Taking it Home

Consider taking a risk in regards to your faith...

Risk Letting Your Unitarian Universalist Self Loose
(adapted from Soul Matters Sharing Circle)

Each of us has Unitarian Universalist commitments and values that we don't always lean into as fully as we wish. It might feel risky being labeled "a liberal" or even "a radical". And so, we may downplay our involvement in

social or environmental justice, pacifism or do not make a big deal out of our veganism. Some of our closest friends might not really understand Unitarian Universalism because it is too hard to explain, you don't want to seem pushy or simply wish to avoid conflict.

Taking a risk and letting your UU self loose is not simple nor easy. But not letting our UU self loose comes at a cost. This month take the risk of letting it all hang out, or hang out to the degree that feels right to you. Maybe it's wearing your Pride Parade t-shirt to the gym. Maybe it's inviting your friends over for a vegan dinner, or an omnivore dinner with a UU prayer to begin. Or how about asking a friend to come to church--not to recruit them, but just so they get a better sense of this piece of your life that is so important to who you are.

This month, I invite you to take the risk and find ways to let your UU self loose. How did it go? What did it feel like? What do you plan on doing next? And lastly, find a friend at coffee hour to share your story with. I can't wait to hear all about it.

Quotes

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, is nothing. He or she may avoid suffering and sorrow, but he or she simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love – live. Only a person who risks is free. ~Janet Rand

To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable. ~C.S. Lewis

Create Monthly Themed Art

Congregants *of all ages* are invited to create an original piece of art that represents what the monthly theme means to you. Any kind of art: fiber art, ceramics or pottery, metalwork, woodworking, paintings, photography, poetry, sculpture, etc. Bring your original artwork to church the last Sunday of the preceding month. Upcoming themes: April-Transformation, May-Embodiment, June-Zest. Contact Alison Vernon or Lois Phillips with questions.

Mark Your Calendar: Annual Seder

Fri, April 14, 6 pm

Join us for a family dinner in remembrance of the Jewish search for freedom and the need for us all to continue that effort. Register and pay during coffee hours March 19 thru' April 9. Suggested donation: \$10/adult, \$5/child under 12, \$30/family. Seder essentials, wine, soup, and roasted chicken will be provided. Please bring a vegetable, salad, side dish, or dessert to share. All dishes should comply with Passover traditions (no dairy, flour products, yeasts, bread, etc.)



Green Sanctuary News Garden Plots Available

The Green Sanctuary Committee has organic vegetable plots available. No experience is necessary, just a commitment to maintaining your plot through the season. Produce may be donated to the Palatine Food Pantry. Contact Mike Calwas.

Garden Work Day

The CCUU vegetable garden will be having a work day on Saturday, March 18 at 10:00 am in the garden plots immediately north of the church building. We will be laying down stone pavers to build paths between the garden plots. All are welcome to help out. Rain date will be Sunday, April 2 after second service.

Active Hope Workshop Offers Tools and Inspiration for These Trying Times

Everything seems important and vulnerable these days. Attention and energy are pulled in many directions and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. An upcoming workshop, *Active Hope: How To Face The Mess We're In Without Going Crazy*, offers tools for dealing with today's challenges and gaining inspiration and strength to make a difference.

Hosted by CCUU's Green Sanctuary Committee, the day-long workshop is based on activist, ecologist and author Joanna Macy's *The Work That Reconnects*. It features exercises, readings, simple ceremonies and teachings led by local WTR facilitator Kathleen Rude.

Macy's work aims to "bring us back into relationship with each other and with the self-healing powers in the web of life, motivating and empowering us to reclaim our lives, our communities, and our planet..."

Event details: Active Hope Workshop, May 13, 9 am – 5 pm, Countryside Church. Cost \$40. Space is limited. Register at: <https://www.active-hope.eventbrite.com>

Interfaith Green Partners News: Earth Hour

Cities worldwide will go dark for Earth Hour to raise awareness about climate change. Everyone is welcome to attend a Kick-off Event on March 25, 6:15 pm, at St James Catholic Church in Arlington Heights. Earth Hour officially takes place 8:30-9:30 local time, so you can go home afterward and turn out your lights. If there are musicians who would like to contribute their talent to the kick-off event, please email Bonnie.Cimo@gmail.com. This will be a candlelit event with no amplification for music.



Ignite Your Passion and Get Into [Social] Action

Feeling a renewed energy to make a positive impact, fix the broken, and affect change? Your vision and your passion to help have a place here.

UUs have a long tradition in social action and Countryside Church's work in this area is well-established. The **Social Action Committee** (SAC) tackles head-on the overwhelming social justice issues of today and drives a variety of service-oriented projects that reflect the passions of its members and engage the broader congregation. It is where faith is put into action for social good.

SAC's goals are two-fold: Make social action and community engagement part of the individual spiritual journey and become a transformational source of spiritual and intellectual growth for members of all ages.

Along with its ongoing schedule of workshops, programs and speakers, SAC helps advance UUA initiatives, such as Black Lives Matter, and builds partnerships through allied organizations with shared values. Its involvement with UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI) on behalf of statewide efforts for social justice and with the UU Prison Ministry of Illinois opens doors for new, interesting volunteer activities and helps these organizations accomplish more than would be possible on the strength of their resources alone.

A long list of activities with social impact – nationally and locally – are embraced by committee members who keep their eyes and ears open to needs and opportunities and thoughtfully consider ways to engage.

SAC often jumps in where there is an immediate need or in response to crisis/disaster. When Countryside Church was alerted that many Palatine High School students were essentially homeless, SAC collected gift cards to help ease the financial burden faced by these students. Through a recent share-the-plate collection, SAC plans to direct funds to the Victoria Islamic Center Mosque in Texas for its rebuilding efforts following a recent arson attack.

Not surprisingly, social needs outweigh resources and SAC welcomes new members for their energy, ideas and dedication. The committee meets monthly, typically on the last Sunday from 12:30 -2 pm (check the monthly CCUU calendar). Send questions about SAC to SocialActionChair@ccuu.org



Organizing for Justice Workshop: Talking Our Walk April 28, 1-5 pm

Join UU Advocacy Network of Illinois at Unitarian Church of Hinsdale for this workshop led by Rev. Kathleen McTigue, Director of the UU College of Social Justice.

Learn how to frame action in terms of our UU values. A session on action strategies for the year ahead will be held with other state action networks. Contact uadvocacyillinois@gmail.com for details.

Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic (AHA)

Discussion Group ~ 2nd Tuesdays, 7 pm

On March 14, working from a book he published recently, Bill Marsh will lead a discussion on the idea of memory—how it works and what it means for the way we live our lives. In particular, we will focus on memory, time, and mortality. All are welcome to join us!

Mary Oliver Poetry Series

March 31, 7 pm

NOTE: This month, we are meeting the 5th Friday due to the Youth Con. Each evening begins with a Mary Oliver poem, then a featured poet reads his or her own poetry followed by an opportunity for audience members to read during an open mike session. This month, the featured poet will be Linda Johnson, who offers a toast to pivotal moments. The readings are open to the public, and all who love poetry are welcome. We hope you'll join us!

Book Discussions

Book Circle: April 2

All are welcome to join us in classroom 6 on Sun, April 2 to discuss Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right by Jane Mayer. We gather at 6:15 and discussion begins at 6:30. We are always happy to welcome new people!

Last Mondays Book Group: March 27

All are invited to join us at 7 pm in the Stokes Room to discuss A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith.

Open Forum Discussion

Forum meets each Sunday, 8:45-10 am, in classroom 5 to discuss "the issues of the day" while respectfully welcoming different perspectives. To be added to the Forum email list to receive supporting materials for the discussions, contact Vid Axel.

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

- Mar 12: Water, part 1: U.S.—Management in distressed communities & the health issues from waterborne disease, not climate, rivers and the politics of water like lead in Michigan, which is another issue.
- Mar 19: Water, part 2: Abroad
- Mar 26: Pipelines and Oil, part 1: U.S.
- Apr 2: Pipelines and Oil, part 2: Abroad
- Apr 9: Trump, how is he doing? Part 1: quick evaluation of economic, social, and foreign policy

QiGong Resumes This Month

1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 10:30—11:30 am

2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7:00—8:00 pm

Qi (energy) Gong (transformation) is a class that combines slow, gentle body movements and guided meditation. Discover your natural ability to heal yourself and others through movement and guided meditation to open your heart to unconditional love, kindness, and forgiveness. We're trying a slightly different schedule in hopes that more people can participate. All are welcome to join us in classroom 9/10 on 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 am, and on 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7-8 pm.

20-30 Somethings

1st & 3rd Sundays

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.

40-50 Somethings

This new group is for those too old for the 20-30s group but not yet ready to retire and attend Transitions.

40-50 Somethings events will be scheduled for the 1st Saturday of each month, and to foster relationship building and to discuss future outings, we will meet the 2nd Sunday of each month between worship services in Atherton Hall—mark your calendars & plan to join us! For more info, email Mary Beth Van Wijk or watch the Sunday Times and e-updates.

Buddhist Study Group

Sundays: March 5, Apr 2, May 5, 12:30-2 pm

For these three months, we will meet the 1st Sunday instead of the 2nd. We read & discuss selected Buddhist texts, practice mindful breathing & walking meditation, and strive to cultivate the capacity to be kind & compassionate and to bring joy into life. All are welcome!

Sacred Heartbeat Drum Circle

Sat, March 18, 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. More info at PalatineDrumCircle.com.

Wellness House Hypnosis Group

Held here at CCUU the 1st Saturday of the month at 10 am, this program is open to anyone in our geographical area. The program is led by our community minister, Rev. Dr. Giles, who uses hypnotism to promote healing, emotional resilience, and comprehensive stress management. The program is free, and registration is required. To register, contact Kelli Mitchell, kmitchell@wellnesshouse.org or 630-654-5197. *Wellness House Yoga & Support Groups are now meeting at the Wheeling Township Office.*

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To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. ~James Baldwin

Risk is usually associated with the dare devils and thrill seekers. The real danger, we're told, is a life of boredom. The battle is between the bland and the bold.

Yet, as James Baldwin reminds us, it's not quite that simple. He places commitment, not thrills, at the center of the game. For him, the ones to be admired are not so much the dare devils as the dedicated ones. And that Holy Grail? Well, he suggests, maybe it's not "the exciting life" as we've been told. Maybe it's the faithful life.

And that turns everything wonderfully on its head.

From this perspective, the important question about risk (and about life) is not "Are you willing to jump off?" but "Are you willing to jump in?" Not "Are you willing to put yourself in danger?" but "Are you willing to give yourself to something bigger?" Not "Will you be daring?" but "Will you stay true?"

And the message changes too. Suddenly, it's not "Run to what's thrilling!" but "Don't run away!"

It's all about remembering not to let the thrilling trump the faithful. As exciting as roller coasters and jumping out of planes might be, let's remember to remind each other that the most deeply rewarding risks are the ones that involve jumping into causes and putting our hearts in the hands of others. As the poet David Whyte puts it: "We are here essentially to risk ourselves in the world. We are meant to hazard ourselves for the right thing, for the right woman or the right man, for a son or a daughter, for the right work or for a gift given against all the odds." Bob Marley's take is equally compelling. He writes, "The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for."

And here's the twist: It's not just Baldwin's dangers, Whyte's hazards, and Marley's suffering that come at us when we take the risk of living faithfully. Grace and gifts slip in there too! As the Scottish writer W.H. Murray explains,

Concerning all acts of creation, there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no one could have dreamt would have come their way.

How thrilling is that?!

Questions about Risk to Consider

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. Are your commitments deep and big enough to put you in danger? (To act is to be committed, and to be committed is to be in danger. ~James Baldwin)
2. Who in your life needs their vulnerability affirmed? Who near you is taking a risk and needs reminding that others are watching with admiration and awe? Who needs help seeing that they aren't simply exposed, but radiant? ("What makes you vulnerable, makes you beautiful." – Brené Brown)
3. How breakable is that heart of yours? Is it more "carefully wrapped" than you noticed? What one small risk this month might help it get some "air"? ("Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to keep it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable." - C.S. Lewis)
4. How might it hurt less if you reminded yourself you picked well? If you took the time to remember that you've "found one worth suffering for"? ("The truth is, everyone is going to hurt you. You just got to find the ones worth suffering for." – Bob Marley)
5. Have you fallen into more "vanilla pudding" than you thought you would? How's "the middle" feeling to you these days? ("Brothers and sisters,...Lose the edge and all you've got is middle - middle aged, middle class, middle of the road, middle management. Lose the edge and you're dribbling along in the uncooked vanilla pudding of life." - Lisa Martinovic)
6. Have the adventures gotten a bit out of hand? Is there a bit too much "living boldly" going on for you right now? Might it be time to take the risk of turning some adventures down?
7. How might that struggle of yours change if you took the risk of sitting down and listening rather than the risk of standing up and speaking? ("Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." - Winston Churchill)
8. What about the risks of letting go? What about the boldness of taking a pass? Sometimes deciding to walk away from the cliff is as courageous and bold as jumping off.
9. Are you or someone you love being reckless and calling it "freedom"? ("We mistook violence for passion, indolence for leisure, and thought recklessness was freedom." – Toni Morrison)
10. Are you scared? And if so, why aren't you telling someone?
11. When was the last time you referred to life using the phrase: "The thrill of it all?" Where is there room this month to make life a bit more thrilling?
12. Are you putting up with recklessness? ("Don't be reckless with other people's hearts, and don't put up with people who are reckless with yours." - Kurt Vonnegut)

Upcoming Church Meetings & Events: March-April

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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/calendar . 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.						
Mar 12 **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS** 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education 10am & Noon Fair Trade monthly sale & Fellowship 10am 40-50s Mtg 10a-2p Indoor Farmers Mar- ket 12pm Children's Choir 12:15pm Case for Repara- tions Discussion & Potluck Lunch 12:15pm Green Sanctuary 12:30pm Family Ministry Mtg	13	14 7pm Atheist-Humanist- Agnostic Discussion 7pm Interfaith Green Partners Mtg 7pm QiGong	15 7pm Black Lives Mat- ter Team Mtg	16 7pm Soul Inten- tions Thurs Cov Grp 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	17 7pm Soul Intentions Fri Cov Grp	18 10am Veg Gar- den Work Day 7pm Drum Circle
Mar 19 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education & Fellowship 12pm Children's Choir 12:20pm 20-30 Somethings	20	21 10:30am QiGong 7pm Soul Intentions Tues Cov Grp	22 10a-4p PADS Meal Delivery to Presby Church of Palatine 10am Great Books Discussion Group	23 10am Transitions 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	24	25 Sr High Youth CON @CCUU
Mar 26 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education & Fellowship 12pm Children's Choir 12:30pm Social Action Mtg	27 10am Focus dead- line 7pm Last Mondays Book Discussion	28 7pm Board of Trustees Mtg 7pm Experiencing God Cov Grp 7pm QiGong	29	30 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	Mar 31 7pm Mary Oliver Poetry Series	April 1 10am Wellness House Hypnosis Group
Apr 2 8:45 am Open Forum 9 & 11am Worship & Relig. Education & Fellowship 10am & Noon Intro to CCUU Children's Choir 12:20pm 20-30 Somethings 12:30pm Buddhist Study Group 6:15pm Book Circle	3	4 10:30am QiGong 7pm Ministry Council Mtg	5 <i>Focus publication</i> 7pm Outreach Steer- ing Council	6 7:15pm Church Choir Rehearsal	7 7pm Journey In- ward labyrinth walk & drumming	8 Journeys AFD Retreat

Focus

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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

- ◆ Mar 27 (to be publ Apr 5)
- ◆ Apr 24 (to be publ May 3)
- ◆ May 22 (to be publ June 1)

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.

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