From Your Board of Trustees

Greetings and Happy New Year!

I hope you had a joyous and restorative holiday season. As is true for many of us, the turning of the calendar offers a time for reflection, introspection, and vision — and the Board of Trustees is no different.

As a Board, we continue to work toward the active fulfillment of CCUU’s mission, vision, and purpose as a UU faith community and within the larger world as well. In a few weeks, we will be launching our annual pledge drive — with a theme of #SupportTheMission — and we ask each of you to consider ways in which you are also supporting the mission.

As always, we are also actively working to amplify the voice of CCUU as an advocate for justice, compassion, and equality, while also working to ensure a sustainable future for CCUU. Doing so sometimes requires stepping outside of our comfort zone, but together as a faith community, we are up to the task and can rise to these challenges.

As always, please feel free to contact me at prez@ccuu.org with any questions or concerns.

In faith,
Christine Organ, President, Board of Trustees

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Family Ministry Pizza and Movie Night
Fri, Jan 12, 6:30-8:30 pm

All in the congregation are welcome to this event hosted by Family Ministry. Sign up online (link below) to let us know how many are attending and what your pizza topping choices are.

http://www.signgenius.com/go/30e0b45acaa2aaaf6-family1

And Mark your calendar for our next event on Sat, Feb 10—an afternoon of baking. Details to come.

Ministry Council Invite to Committee & Group Leaders or Coordinators: Feb 6

The Ministry Council asks leaders of CCUU’s various groups & committees to attend its next meeting on Tuesday, February 6, at 7 pm. A special presentation, Storytelling: Bringing CCUU’s Narrative to Life, will cover plans to use more visual content to showcase the work of CCUU’s various committees & groups. A mini workshop will follow to help committees map out a plan for securing visual content in the coming months. Please RSVP to Maryanne O’Dowd at mod763@gmail.com with names of attendees from your group.

Our Winter Weather Closing Policy

If the decision is made to close the church, we will publicize the decision:

- on the church website,
- on the church Facebook page,
- on the Congregational Administrator’s voicemail message (847-359-8440 ext 1), and
- with the Emergency Closing Center (which publicizes on the local TV and radio stations).

Guidelines considered when making the decision: If the wind chill in the greater Chicago area is colder than 40 degrees below zero or if a weather emergency has been issued because of snow or wind, we will cancel all church events, including any committee meetings, office hours, Sunday morning religious education, and Sunday worship.

CCUU puts a high priority on the safety of staff, members, and guests. Although the church may remain open, individuals may find that their local conditions make it unsafe for them to travel. When in doubt, please stay home!
**Minister’s Muse**

If 2017 had been a floor, it would’ve been a floor partially covered with marbles. It was, I admit, for me. Here, at the start of 2018, things look smoother – at least from some perspectives. Typically, at the start of the year, I take at least a portion of January, out of the pulpit and away, to shape, organize, and begin some real work on the Congregational year through the summer. This year, I am taking much of January in order to do that and to continue the healing process. I am so glad to be back and in the swing of things. December was wonderful. Reconnecting with the congregation is wonderful. The staff have been incredible this year – working so hard and making so many things possible and I see a level of programming, vibrancy, social connectedness, and vision that is percolating throughout the congregation now.

In terms of my health, it seems that I am almost out of the woods. There are no more hospital visits in my foreseeable future, my healthcare is going smoothly, and I should be able to start physical therapy soon—something I’ve wanted since the surgery. I am amazed at the obstacles and complexities that face any person with a serious physical illness, disease, injury, or challenge. And I am still awed by the strength that I see in so many members of the congregation as they face challenges that are so significant with persistence, courage, and grace.

I am excited by what is ahead of us in the congregation this year. And I’m very excited to be a part of it.

One of my favorite Sundays of the year has become the last Sunday of the year. It’s become a tradition that my husband, this year assisted by my daughter Chava, spends much of the Saturday washing, chopping, and cooking greens, onions, garlic, making cornbread, cooking rice, and filling the crockpots to take a New Year’s modest brunch to the congregation. Then on Sunday, he sets up, serves and cleans—sometimes, like this year, with helpful volunteers. The meal, which is meant to signify wishes for health and wealth in the coming year, is a tradition that I learned when I lived in Atlanta, Georgia. Other people bring dishes as well—usually more breads or other side dishes and plenty of desserts. It is a tradition that I feel very fortunate that I’m able to share with the congregation. But each year I am also moved by the length of the feasting that follows. As people brunch, nibble, and talk and talk and talk, the most important part of the feasting happens: it is the making of connections, the deepening of relationships, and even the shared exploration of hopes and resolutions for the new year. It was a wonderful feast this year, and this has become a Sunday when people intentionally make time to come to church in spite of the fact that it is in the heart of the holiday season. I love it.

May your new year be filled with health and strength, with the comfortable means to support your life and to share with others, with the warmth of friends and family, with the encouragement and challenge of congregational life, with learning and new adventures, and with joy. I look forward to all that we can create and shape together in this new year.

...Hilary

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**In Memoriam**

Most have probably heard by now of the death, on December 6, 2017, of Miles Wrigley, a beloved member of our congregation since May, 2000. Miles was a passionate, keen thinking man. He had a heart for social justice and for the lively and respectful dialogue among persons. He struggled long and hard with illnesses that attacked his mind and body. With the support of his wife, Jeanmarie Dwyer, he attended worship services at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist until, nearly, his very last days. He will be remembered. A memorial service will be held in February or March.

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**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, 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 having a conversation with you...

...Your Countryside Lay Ministry Team: Ken Bobbe, Karen Greenland, Barbara Griggs, Melanie Schikore, Joy Simon, Chris Smith

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**Outreach Steering Committee**

**Focus Group Meetings: January 14 and 28**

The purpose of these focus groups is to obtain input from the congregation about their interests and priorities that support CCUU values in order to optimize the selection of future service partners for the coming year.

OSC Vision Statement: The OSC is a catalyst for channeling the talents and passion of the CCUU community to the human needs of the larger community. We will do this through understanding the needs of organizations that address issues important to the CCUU membership and providing resources of both time and money to make a transformational difference to these organizations and CCUU members. We will collectively learn as we develop innovative solutions and processes that enable broad member participation in these activities and manage relationships such that success is sustained. The pride and joy of this effort will be felt by every CCUU member and their children and becomes an inspiring example to others.

One of the primary tasks of the OSC is listening to you, the members of the community. To help us accomplish this task the members of the OSC will be facilitating focus groups on January 14 and 28 from 10:15 am-11:15 am and from 12:15 pm -1:15 pm. We invite you to join us and share what you are passionate about, what causes you to want to support and how you would like to be engaged in the outreach process.

Please mark your calendars to join us on January 14 or January 28 to share your thoughts on how we can best direct the outreach efforts at CCUU to benefit the community, engage our congregation and ignite YOUR passion to make a positive change in the world.

For more information please contact Mike Graves at mgraves@ameritech.net.
Upcoming Worship Services

Our Worship Services are held on Sunday mornings at 9:00 and 11:00. Unless indicated otherwise below:

• At 9:00, all young people attend the service with their families; childcare will be available.
• At 11:00, young people in kindergarten through grade 6 attend the beginning of the service with their families; all other young people begin in their classrooms. Religious Education classes are offered for infants through senior high.

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/](http://ccuu.org/services/)

Jan 14 at 9 & 11 am  All-Church MLK Service  
Jules Jaramillo  
This is an All-Church Service; young people in kindergarten and above attend the worship service with their families; nursery and chalice children will be available for those younger. Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to Lawndale Christian Legal Center.

Jan 21 at 9 & 11 am  Spiritual Journeys Service  
Christine Organ  
Spiritual Journeys services are offered a few times each year and are an opportunity to hear stories of congregation members’ individual spiritual journeys.

Jan 28 at 9 & 11 am  Hitting People with Sticks  
The Rev. Dr. C. Scot Giles  
Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to the UU Society for Community Ministries.

Feb 4 at 9 & 11 am  On Balance  
The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia  
At 9:00, all young people attend the service with their families; childcare will be available. At 11:00, young people begin in their classrooms for Faith in Action service learning. Religious education classes are offered for infants through senior high.

Feb 11 at 9 & 11 am  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

Come Sing with Choir  
**Thursdays, 7:15–9:15 pm**  
Join us for rehearsal on Thursday evenings in the music rehearsal room - just north of Atherton Hall. Childcare is available if requested. For more information, contact Alison Vernon, 847-359-8440, ext.5 or Music.Director@ccuu.org.

Children’s Choir  
**Sundays, 12:15 pm**  
1st through 4th graders are invited to join us in the music rehearsal room (the room immediately north of Atherton Hall) on Sundays at 12:15 pm (after Sunday School). For more info, contact Alison Vernon, 847-359-8440, X5 or Music.Director@ccuu.org.

Calling all RE Floaters!  
The RE Floater is a vital role for safety & welcoming, and we need to have coverage each Sunday. To foster a welcoming atmosphere & help ensure safety, we ask that each family with a child or youth in the RE Program serve as a RE Floater a couple of Sundays each year. **Please take a minute & sign-up as per your availability.** Thank you for your time and assistance in making our RE Program safe & welcoming. [http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b45aaca2aaaf6-refloaters](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b45aaca2aaaf6-refloaters)

Annual ChocolateFest: Feb 11  
**Combining Kinship and Food Drive (and Chocolate!)**

ChocolateFest is coming again! The Membership Committee’s very popular annual event will be held on Sunday, February 11, and will include a food drive for the Palatine Food Pantry. For those not familiar with it, ChocolateFest is a chocolate potluck during coffee/fellowship time on the Sunday nearest Valentine’s Day. Congregants are invited to bring chocolate finger food treats to share—use white chocolate, milk chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, dark chocolate.... (Please try to refrain from bringing treats with nuts—see reminder of our nut-free practices) on p.10

In addition, we request that you bring a food donation for the Palatine Township Food Pantry. Go to [http://www.palatinetownship.com/food_drive/](http://www.palatinetownship.com/food_drive/) for a list of needed items. There will be a sign at the food donations table.ChocolateFest will take place following both worship services. We request that you place your chocolate treat on the large serving table(s) in Atherton Hall before going into the service.

We would love some help with setting up and delivering the Food Pantry donations Monday morning. Please contact Kay Gredell at kaygredell@att.net or 847-632-0660. 

**UU History: Torda450**

January 14, 2018 will be the 450th anniversary of the world's first proclamation of religious tolerance. The Edict of Torda was issued in 1563 in the city of Torda in present-day Romania. It was the first statement in history to affirm the right for individuals to believe and worship freely. This Edict also officially recognized Unitarianism as a faith and began our spiritual tradition that recognizes many paths toward truth and that values diversity and tolerance.
Last month, I was invited to be a guest keynote speaker at our Outreach Partner Faith in Place’s Annual Event and Fundraiser. It was an honor to represent Countryside Church UU, as well as to lift up the good works and partnership we have with Faith in Place and Dan Huntsha, Faith in Place’s North & West Suburbs Outreach Director.

Thank you for coming out this evening to lift-up and support the wonderful work of Faith in Place. My name is Jules Jaramillo and I am the Director of Lifespan Religious Education at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist. Lifespan Religious Education simply means that my job is to teach, care for and nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of my congregants from the moment they take their first breath on this earth until the very last day of their beautiful lives. It is a pretty amazing job.

Our congregation and our Green Sanctuary Committee have been partnering with Faith in Place since 2014 because they are an organization that speaks directly to our values and our Unitarian Universalist principles. These principles are a covenant we affirm and promote that guide our faith. Our seventh principle is that we promise to respect/honor the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Our children’s version breaks it down into simpler terms: “We believe in caring for our planet Earth, the home we share with all living things.”

Countryside Church and Faith in Place began our relationship with a connection. Their work was something we believed in. At first we recognized this work by sharing the offering plate with them throughout the year. Then as our relationship developed Faith in Place became one of our Outreach Partners. We have been witness to the impact their work has had- not only on important environmental concerns, but we experienced the benefits of partnership- as we were both fully engaged in the connection to environmental stewardship. Faith in Place has supported this work by assisting Countryside Church with a free audit- evaluating our building’s energy efficiency, they guided us on how to be the most impactful with our Climate Conferences- participating with speakers and leading workshops, and inspired us that YES, solar power was possible! Faith in Place supported us through the process by referring us to creative financing options and our contractor Hawk Energy Solutions was one of the companies Faith in Place recommended. Thank you, Faith in Place—specifically Dan Huntsha—your commitment to the work of Faith in Place and our partnership has been life changing. Especially in a time when leadership on a national level seems to have questionable intentions and commitments about caring for the environment and, quite honestly, does not seem to be guiding us in a healthy direction—relationships with local/grassroots organization like Faith in Place are essential. We must work as hard as possible on the local level. And as we care for our local “biomes,” let us remember that each and every one of our local efforts are connected to the next. And our positive results have a healthy benefit locally, nationally, and if the momentum and work of Faith in Place continues, can have an impact globally. Lowering greenhouse gases locally helps us here in Palatine & the Northwest suburbs and vibrates out into our interconnect-

ed web of life.

In my position as Director of Lifespan Religious Education, I feel that it is also really important to mention not only the concrete outcomes that Faith in Place and Countryside Church’s partnership have had, but also to lift up the work Dan has done with our children and youth. I grew up in Barrington—a northwest suburb in the 70s-80s—where I attended Grove Avenue Elementary, Barrington Middle School, and Barrington High School. During my entire time as a child and youth, nowhere did I receive education or nurturing to develop a connection to environmental advocacy. I was active in a large church and never once were there Sunday School lessons or sermons that spoke of conversations around climate change, environmental justice, advocacy or stewardship. I did not make a connection to the importance of conservation until I was well into college. Years later, I have found that one of my greatest joys of being a religious educator is that faith now guides us to would be a voice and play a powerful role in advocacy for the earth and supports us in raising our children with the same desire and intention.

Faith in Place has been paramount in making this happen with Dan’s involvement with our children and youth justice program called Faith in Action. Countryside Church teaches our children and youth how to put their values and beliefs in action-action to create change. Dan graciously lead us in Faith in Action when he organized a session and shared Migration and Me story telling circles. These stories helped connect us to our roots, where we come from- an ownership to our own stories. Stories of our food and the importance of how they connect us to the earth and to each other. He guided us in preparing the soil in our children’s garden and sat with each child as they planted their very own connection to the earth- a small plant- that turned into a beautiful butterfly garden. We watched it grow and flower- took turns watering and caring for the plants and even got to see a few butterflies and bees. This may not seem like a big deal when face with the magnitude of environmental conversation needed but it is. His time with our children and youth gave them something I never had. His work through the NW suburbs Faith in Place offices, gave Countryside Church’s children the opportunity to grow up as environment stewards- connecting their minds, bodies and spirits to care for the earth and each other in the process. As an educator, I am all about experiential learning. That we grow and develop by the experiences we have. What we touch, what we do, what we feel with our bodies, what we connect our mind and spirits to is- the most important way to learn and make lifelong connection with caring for our earth and each other. I believe that environmental conservation is a spiritual practice for ALL AGES- connecting us to something greater than ourselves- creating meaning and purpose in our lives and other’s and leaving a legacy for the future to learn and benefit from. Faith in Place’s partnership with Countryside Church has supported the creation of lifelong environmental stewards and I see that as the biggest blessing of all.
Soul Connections

A Testimonial

Soul Connections enriches me. Our gatherings help me to understand myself, challenge me to thoughtfully consider viewpoints I haven’t thought much about, and invite me to look at familiar concepts in new ways.

We do thoughtful, insightful readings in preparation. The short readings and monthly, themed discussions help me more clearly understand what really matters to me; in invigorating, life-changing ways. Plus, as part of our “optional” homework, we get to watch TED talks and YouTube selections! How can you go wrong with that!

At our gatherings, as we freely share, without fear of judgement, the discoveries we’ve made and the life struggles we’ve faced around our monthly themes, compassion for and understanding of our “soul-mates” grows. Our practice of purposeful deep listening has transformed our group from acquaintances to a cozy community of good friends. We’re connected. We respect, value, and care deeply for each other.

Soul Connections is a wonderful bridge that helps me -- new in town and new to Countryside Church UU – to truly embrace my own life’s theme; the one I’ve always tried to live by:

“There are no strangers, only friends I haven’t met yet!”

By Sue Montgomery, Group Facilitator for the Soul Connections Third Tuesday Morning Group

Join a Soul Connections Group

New group forming in February

Soul Connections is forming a midyear group! This group will meet the third Friday of each month beginning February 16 and continuing for 10 months through January 2019, except for July and August.

Soul Connections is the small group program at Countryside Church which more closely explores the month’s ministry theme. A group of eight to ten people regularly meet for two hours once a month for 10 months. Working with material provided by the group facilitator, participants share their perspectives, tell their stories, and listen deeply. This is an opportunity to more closely explore the monthly ministry theme while getting to know other people in your group and building deep, meaningful, soulful connections.

All are welcome to join. For further information including a request to reserve a seat, contact Don Bussey at soulconnections@ccuu.org

Movies with Meaning: Jan 26, 7 pm ~ Smoke

Please join us in Atherton Hall to watch this story about moving from wandering through life to living it intentionally. The official trailer can be viewed online—https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uem9TbvQpFk

This movie is offered as companion to our January ministry theme journey, as we consider what it means to be a people of intention. Popcorn, cold and hot beverages included for your enjoyment at this gratis event. Sponsored by Soul Connections. Email Don Bussey MoviesWithMeaning@ccuu.org, for further info.

Green Sanctuary News

Monthly Meetings

Green Sanctuary Committee meets the 2nd Sunday of the month in classroom 6. Join us for our next monthly meeting on January 14 at 12:30pm in Classroom 6. All are welcome! Help us plan the solar dedication and ceremony this spring or participate in one of our many exciting new projects.

Interested in Ecological Restoration?

Come to the events at nearby Deer Grove Forest Preserve. To learn more about volunteering, go to the Facebook page. Sign up for the volunteers’ email list which publicizes current days and locations for restoration. Contact Anne Stake at astake@gmail.com. Enjoy your time in the woods - year round!

Solar Panels Update

Be sure to check out the “eGauge” on the home page of the Countryside Church website at ccuu.org. The eGauge shows real time data for the electrify produced by the recently installed solar panels on the roof over Atherton Hall. This graphic details production from the solar panels in green in relation to the total electricity being consumed in red by the building. Click on the graphic and explore various data functions. For questions, please email Mark Krivchenia or Don Bussey, co-chairs, at greensanctuary@ccuu.org.

Social Action News

Weekly Action Update

To receive our bi-weekly action update, which includes information about local justice issues and actions, email SocialActionChair@ccuu.org

Next Social Action Meeting: Jan 28

All are welcome to join us for social action meetings on the 4th Sunday of the month, 12:30-2 pm, in classroom 1. Please bring something to share for a simple potluck lunch (no nuts, please).

Monthly Fair Trade Sale: Feb 4 & March 4

Once/month we offer fair trade chocolate, coffee, tea, cocoa, olive oil, and snacks from Equal Exchange for sale during our coffee-fellowship time. For each pound of Equal Exchange foods purchased, 20 cents goes to the UUSC’s Small Farmer Fund.

Drum Circle ~ 4th Saturdays

Adults & teens are invited to join us on Jan 27 at 7 pm 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. Go to www.PalatineDrumCircle.com for more info.
What does it mean to be a People of Intention?

Here’s what I discovered. Intention is different from setting goals or resolutions in that it “pulls us into” who we truly are. Goals and resolutions “push us out” into future possibilities. To set intentions, we listen to our inner voice which tells us who we truly are.

~ Katie Covey, on what she learned from Soul Matters Sharing Circle colleagues during their brainstorming session on being a people of intention

So here we are again, in the month of January with its talk of daring resolutions and its demanding call to “become better.” It’s hard not to buy into it. After all, it seems so well-intended. I mean, who could argue with the goal of self-improvement? And so most of us gladly go along and declare “This is the year I’m going to finally be a better me!”

But are we sure this is what we really want? When you read that quote above about being “pulled in” rather than “pushed out,” what happens in your heart? Do you find yourself still excited about the New Year’s work of striving to become a brand new self? Or do you suddenly notice an internal whisper that says “I long to be pulled in more deeply to the self I already am”? In other words, maybe our real New Year’s work is not about leaping into self-improvement, but about pausing, stepping back and asking “What hunger really has my heart?”

There is, after all, a big difference between becoming better and becoming ourselves. Self-improvement is not the same as self-alignment. Wanting to get from point A to point B is something quite different from longing to find your inner anchor. Goals and intentions may indeed be more distinct than we have thought.

So this month, maybe our most important work is to make room. All around us, there’s going to be plenty of busy talk about being “a people of goals and resolutions.” We are going to get more than enough advice about how to stay focused on a new future for ourselves. But in the midst of it all, may we, as a people of intention, also carve out a quieter place that keeps our attention closer to the present and who we already are at our center. May we make space for listening before we leap into the striving. And as we do that, maybe we will discover that this isn’t the year of “finally becoming a better me.” Maybe we’ll decide it’s enough to simply “finally be me.”

Questions for Considering Intention

Pick the single question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of intention means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains “your work”?

1. Are you so dead set on telling your life what you intend to do with it that you no longer notice what it intends to do with you? Could your life’s purpose be something that comes from life itself rather than something that is forced on it?
2. What dictates your days? Your To-Do list or your intentionality? Do you begin by asking, “What do I have to get done?” or “What do I want this day to be about?”
3. Are you too intentional? Is it time to put down all the “doing” and pay a bit more attention to “being”? Has your long list of intentions left you feeling exhausted and even lost?
4. Are you serving a purpose or living a lifestyle?
5. We all “go along with the crowd” in some way. Which is fine as long as we are doing it intentionally and self-consciously? Are you doing it intentionally and self-consciously?
6. Are you sure “bettering yourself” is what you really want? Or is that hunger inside you about “finding and aligning with your deepest self”? Do you want to “finally be better” or “finally be me”?
7. The philosopher, Nietzsche, said, “No one can build you the bridge on which you, and only you, must cross the river of life.” We are all intentionally crossing a bridge of some sort. Are you crossing someone else’s bridge? Or your own?
8. Did he/she/they really intentionally hurt you and let you down? What if they’re doing the best they can? Could your anger at them really be your way of avoiding feeling grief over the fact that they are just never going to be who you need them to be?
9. Is it finally time to give up that unrealistic intention? The one you’ve failed at following through on again and again? The one you’ve been beating yourself up over, again and again? Is it time to intentionally be gentle with yourself and let it go?
10. Do you intentionally allow yourself to make mistakes? New things do not arise without trial and error, missteps and slip-ups. If we’re not making mistakes, we’re likely choosing safety. Are you intentionally choosing safety over new life?
11. Are you as good at assuming the good intentions of others as you are at defending your own?
12. You surely sent an unintentional message to your child this week. All parents do. The question is: Are you willing to take the time to notice it and fix it?
13. How are you doing at the work of intentional authenticity? Are you succeeding at being the same person on the outside as you are on the inside?

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 in any medium. Bring your original artwork to church the last Sunday of the preceding month. Artwork will be displayed in the Sanctuary or elsewhere in the building as appropriate. Upcoming themes are:

- February—Perseverance
- March—Balance
- April—Emergence
- May—Creativity

For more info or if you have questions, contact Alison Vernon, music.director@ccuu.org, or Lois Phillips.

Our Soul Connections small ministry groups discuss the monthly themes and questions each month. For further info regarding the Soul Connections program, email Don Bussey, SoulConnections@ccuu.org

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Adult Faith Development
This month, we begin the theme of intention which will be reflected in worship, small group ministry, and our religious education community. Countryside Church invites you to continue exploring the theme of transformation and how it relates to your Unitarian Universalist faith. Perhaps you can start each day by answering the intention question, “Today I want to be/feel _______ _______ _______.”

Chalice Lightings
Light a chalice to begin your day, before a meal, or before your spiritual practice.
Beginning of a New Year
We light this chalice at the beginning of a new year
Letting go of what has been
Open and hopeful for what may come
Renewed, restored, ready
To live Life fully anew
May we move forward with intention.

The Promise and the Practice
We light our flaming chalice as a beloved people united in love and thirsting for restorative justice. May it melt away the tethers that uphold whiteness in our midst.
May it spark in us a spirit of humility.
May it ignite in us radical love that transforms our energy into purposeful action.
This a chalice of audacious hope.
This chalice shines a light on our shared past, signaling our intention to listen deeply, reflect wisely, and move boldly toward our highest ideals.

Meal Blessing
Say a blessing before you eat a meal...
We receive this food in gratitude to all beings
Who have helped to bring it to our table,
And vow to respond in turn to those in need
With wisdom and compassion.
~ Buddhist Meal Gatha

Taking it Home...
Consider being intentional in regards to your faith...

Family Ministry
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 wish only to support you in that role.

Chalice Lightings
Light a chalice as a family to begin your day, before a meal, or before your spiritual practice

Warmth Light and Energy
We light this chalice for the warmth of love, the light of truth, and the energy of action.

Meal Blessing
Say a blessing before you eat a meal...
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.
~ Secular mealtime prayer

Taking it Home...
Consider being intentional in regards to your faith...

Family Metta Meditation (Loving Kindness)
Practice the Metta The Loving Kindness meditation together as a family.

• Sit in a comfortable and relaxed manner. Take two or three deep breaths with slow, long and complete exhalations. Let go of any concerns or preoccupations. For a few minutes, feel or imagine the breath moving through the center of your chest - in the area of your heart.

• Metta is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following or similar phrases: May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease. . .

• Invite the bell.

• In this meditation, we begin with ourselves, because without loving yourself, it is almost impossible to truly love others. Then, extend it to a friend or a person in your family. May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease. . .

• Invite the bell.

• Then we extend it to all. May we be happy. May we be well. May we be safe. May we be peaceful and at ease. . .

• Invite the bell.

• Repeat it in your mind for several seconds.

• Invite the bell, to return to the present.

Sharing Joys and Sorrows
Intentionally sharing our lives with our family, we find connection and we find meaning. Intentionally sharing our lives with our family, our joys are amplified and our sorrows are lessened. Every day, intentionally take a moment as a family to reflect on your joys and sorrows and to acknowledge the mutual support of your family.

Closing
Listen to each other, it is a loving act. In sharing our joys and sorrows, grace and peace flow back.
Feminine Divine Women’s Group
Last Saturdays, 9:30 am
This year, we are discussing *Warrior Goddess Training* by Heatherash Amara. On January 27, we will discuss chapter 5. Newcomers are welcome to join us in classroom 6. For more info, email wendyinggrassia@yahoo.com.

Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic (AHA) Discussion ~ 2nd Tuesdays, 7 pm
All are welcome to join us in classroom 4 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Book Discussions
Last Mondays Book Group: January 29
Join us at 7 pm in the Stokes Room to discuss *Call the Midwife* by Jennifer Worth. Copies of the book are available to borrow in the church office. On February 26, we will discuss *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell.

Book Circle: February 25
All are welcome to join us in classroom 6 to discuss *Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist and Other Essays* by Paul Kingsnorth. We gather at 6:15 pm, discussion begins at 6:30 pm.

Buddhist Study Group ~ 2nd Sundays
All are welcome to join us on January 14, 12:30-2 pm, in the Sanctuary. We are discussing the ancient values and the book *Living Kindness* by Donald Altman. Reading the book is not necessary for participation in the group.

Warm-Up Yoga
1st & 3rd Thursdays, 6:20-7:05 pm
A gentle yoga class will be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, January – May, in the Spirit Play room (rm 9/10) from 6:20 - 7:00 pm. NO CLASS FEBRUARY 1. The emphasis is on stretches and strengthening poses that reduce tension and calm the mind. Class will end at 7 for those attending Soul Connections. Email Laura.Mandell@comcast.net with questions.

Open Forum Discussion
We meet on Sunday mornings at 8:45 in classroom 5 to discuss “the issues of the day” while respectfully welcoming different perspectives. 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. Email vidaxel@axeldesigns.com to be added to our email list to receive notices and suggested readings.
- Jan 14: Jokes & Laughter
- Jan 21: Why do so many very rich folks buy sports franchises as investments?
- Jan 28: Music—What & Why
- Feb 4: Democracy & Trends in Rural Representation
- Feb 11: Sale of Prescription opioids for Illegal Resale—what & why?

Intro to CCUU ~ 1st Sundays
Newcomers are invited to attend a brief orientation to Countryside Church and Unitarian Universalism. It is offered the 1st Sunday of each month following either worship service.

Path to Belonging
Feb 18 & 25, 12:15-3:30 pm
These classes are an opportunity to learn more about CCUU and more about the meaning of membership and to get to know others. Our minister, staff, and lay leaders provide exercises and opportunities to explore what you are seeking at CCUU and to discover the freedom and diversity of our faith.
It’s helpful to take both classes in the same session, but you can take one in one session and one in another. Sign up at the greater window or email Tom MacTavish, Membership@ccuu.org.

20-30 Somethings ~ 1st & 3rd Sundays
If you are in your 20s or 30s, please join us following the 11:00 worship service in classroom 4. Childcare is available during the meetings. We also meet at other times during the month for socializing and service. For more info or to be added to our email list, email 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. To subscribe to our group email list, go to http://ccuu.org/mailman/listinfo/4050slist_ccuu.org. Upcoming: Potluck & Games Night on Feb 13, 7 pm, in Atherton Hall. Mark your calendar and watch for details to come.

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 Thurs, 10 am
Join us on January 25 for a program presented by Susan Auld on *Haiku as Spiritual Experience*. Bring something to share for the potluck or your own individual lunch. All are welcome—invite a friend!

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.

Mary Oliver Poetry Series
4th Fridays, 7 pm
Each evening a featured poet will read his/her own poetry followed by an opportunity for others to read during an open mike session. The readings are open to the public, and all who love poetry are welcome to join us in classroom 6. Our January 26 session will be open mike—please bring a favorite poem to share.
Wellness House Offerings at CCUU

Hypnosis Group & Reiki Sessions
Held here at CCUU the 1st Saturday of the month, these offerings are open to anyone in our geographical area who has or had cancer of any kind. The hypnosis program is led by our community minister, the Rev. Dr. Giles, and the reiki sessions are offered by his wife, the Rev. Lindsay Bates. These are free, and registration is required. To register, email kmitchell@wellnesshouse.org or call 630-654-5197.

CCUU No Photo List
We are maintaining a No Photo List of people who want to opt out of having their image used by and for the benefit of CCUU in internal and external publications including print, digital, and social media. Any person may instruct CCUU to place their name and/or the names of any of their children on our No Photo List by advising the Congregational Administrator in writing, cceu@ccuu.org. Be sure to include the date of your request.

Used Bookshelf
This small fundraiser for the church operating budget is in Atherton Hall. If you have books which you no longer want, you may place them on the shelf. If you see a book on the shelf you’d like, we ask that you leave $1 per book in the box on the shelf. Periodically, it is refreshed by donating all the books to Palatine Library book sale.

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 bank account, 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 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 the greeter table or back of sanctuary, or contact the church office.

Support CCUU through GoodShop
Raise a tiny bit of green for CCUU. Through GoodShop, many of the retailers you use are likely to give a small amount per purchase to a non-profit of your choice – CCUU! Go to https://www.goodsearch.com, search for Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, select us as your non-profit. Whenever you shop online, go to goodsearch.com before you shop, go from there to the retailer. Tell your friends and family to shop through GoodShop too, and you can multiply your impact. If you shop online, Goodshop for CCUU!

UU Military Ministry: Help Wanted
Administrator & Volunteer Lay Leaders
The Military Ministry conducts UU services for recruits at the Navy’s Great Lakes boot camp. There is an immediate opening for an administrator to coordinate the work of the lay leaders and serve as liaison with the Chaplain’s office. This person would also serve as one of the five lay leaders. The position pays $500/month; workload averages about four hours a week. It’s open to UU men and women (about a quarter of the recruits are women), regardless of age, race or sexual orientation. Military experience is not required. There are also openings for volunteer lay leaders. If interested, email Roger Baron at rbbaron@comcast.net or call 847-291-1082 (cell: 312-560-8382). uummgl.org/

UU Notable News from Harvard Square Library

The Greatest Showman: The Complicated Legacy of P.T. Barnum
Hugh Jackman’s biopic of P.T. Barnum, “The Greatest Showman,” was released late in 2017 to record breaking box office success. And while no one expects complete factual accuracy from a biopic, many critics have been rightly alarmed by how the show “whitewashes” Barnum’s troubling relationship with the human side show “curiosities” that made him famous. Learn about the complicated legacy of the man who was both the most effective Universalist evangelist ever, and the exploitive ringmaster of the “World’s Greatest Show” at the Harvard Square Library’s website (http://www.harvardsquerlibrary.org/cambridge-harvard/the-greatest-showman-the-complicated-legacy-of-p-t-barnum/) …Rev. Susan Ritchie, Director

WhaleCoast Alaska 2018
Four UU Fellowships in Alaska invite you to our awe-inspiring 25th annual Alaska tour program. See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs, with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. Tours led by a longtime member of the Fairbanks UU Congregation who is an Alaska travel expert.

- Tour #1: National Park Tour, June 9 to 19 -- $3,135
- Tour #2: All-Alaska Tour, July 6 to 18 -- $3,843

Find out more about this Alaskan trip of a lifetime. For complete info, go to WhaleCoastAK.org, email dfrey@whalecoastak.org, or call 907-322-4966. Discount for groups of 8 or more. We would love to share our Alaska with you!
Reminder: Nut-free Practices
This information is also posted on the kitchen door and on the bulletin board near the microwave.

Countryside Church has put into place restrictions around peanuts and tree nuts in our building. This practice reflects our desire to be a welcoming and safe congregation for members, friends, and visitors that have potentially life threatening allergies to peanuts or tree nuts.

- Please do not bring any food item that contains nuts or has allergen warnings that it may contain nuts. If you are unsure, do not bring it to church.
- Check and recheck labels on all food.
- Bring snack foods that ARE peanut & tree nut safe.

We ask that everyone work together to remind each other not to bring or serve anything with peanuts or tree nuts. If a snack or food item has nuts, we will ask that it be removed and returned to your car. If we do not know who brought the nut item, we will place the item in a labeled Ziploc bag and if no one retrieves the item, it will be discarded.

Empathy and compassion are the key elements to understanding the reason behind these practices. Thank you for assisting to make Countryside Church a more welcoming and even safer place for everyone who walks through our doors. Further details are posted in the kitchen and at http://ccuu.org/peanut-treenut-practices/.

Welcoming is very important work. Hospitality, and especially ‘Radical Hospitality,’ refers to the conscious and intentional generosity of spirit that exists in people’s behaviors and attitudes, conveying that all are truly welcome. The presence of our Hospitality Teams, which are made up of church members & friends who take responsibility for one Sunday each month, ensures that all are welcomed warmly on Sunday mornings. Think about when you first came to Countryside Church. Who welcomed you (or didn’t)? Can you make others who arrive on Sunday morning feel as welcome as you felt – or more so? Being part of a Hospitality Team is a way to get to know other church members while making newcomers feel welcome. The more members we have participating on a team, the less frequently any one person has to show up.

If you are already part of a Hospitality Team, please remember to sign up online to help - http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-sunday

If you are not yet part of a Team, please contact the church office and we will connect you with one, or feel free to sign up to help at the link above.

Thank you, all!

Outside Groups Held at & Open to CCUU
Several outside groups use space at Countryside Church UU and are in alignment with our UU Principles and open to participation by all. There may be a participation fee or other requirements set by the group and which apply to all participants, regardless of CCUU affiliation.

- Agape—A Community of New Hope. We welcome Agape, who will be holding worship in our Sanctuary on Saturday evenings, and this interfaith opportunity to help an emerging community that, although a different denomination, is welcoming of all and aligns with UUism on social justice issues.
- Transcend is a program of Youth Outlook which meets here every Wednesday evening. It is a support group focusing on gender identity and is geared towards Trans youth. It is suggested for 14-20 yr olds. For more info, go to www.youth-outlook.org or talk to CCUU member Kimberly Frank.
- Journey Transgender Support Group is for anyone transgender, gender queer, androgynous, or gender questioning; meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 2:30 pm in classroom 5. Meetings are limited to people 18 or over, unless accompanied by a parent. transgender_journey-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- Great Plains Zen Center (GPZC) sits meditation on Sundays at 7 pm and offers monthly Intro to Zen workshops. For more info about GPZC’s programs, refer to “Other Religious Voices” bulletin board across from the church office or go to www.greatplainszen.org.
- AA: Men’s Meeting: Saturdays, 9-10 am; Women’s Meeting: Fridays, 7:30 pm
- Job Search Circle (JSC) meets in Atherton Hall on Wednesdays, 9-11am. $5/meeting. Dress code is business casual. For more info, contact JSC founder Rosemary Monahan, Rmonahan@improve-ization.com.
- Career Communicators is a Toastmasters International Club dedicated to professional speaking. Meets in Atherton Hall the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7-9 pm. For more info, visit www.careercommunicators.com.
- St Hubert Job Ministry Events are nondenominational, free, open to all occupations, and held at various member churches. Upcoming event listings are posted on the Community bulletin board across form the church office or go to http://www.sainthubert.org/ministries/job.html.

UU Bed & Breakfast in SW Florida
Enjoy a stay with a UU host family! For over 25 years, The UU Church of Fort Myers has been conducting a Bed & Breakfast program for UU members and friends throughout the country as a fundraiser for our church operating budget. The program runs January through April; off-season is based on availability. See the brochure on the bulletin board across from the church offices. For more info, go to www.uucfm.org/about-uucfm/hospitality/bed-a-breakfast.
### Upcoming Church Meetings & Events: January-February

**Jan 10**  
Focus publication  
10am Great Books Group  
7pm Finance Ctte  
7pm Beloved Conversations

**Jan 14**  
8:45 am Open Forum  
9 & 11am All-Church Worship Service & Childcare  
10am & Noon Fellowship  
10:15am & 12:15pm Outreach Focus Groups  
12:15pm Children's Choir  
12:15pm Green Sanctuary Mtg  
12:30pm Buddhist Study Group

**Jan 21**  
8:45 am Open Forum  
9am Worship, Nursery, Chalice Children  
11am Worship & RE  
10am & Noon Fellowship  
12:15pm Children's Choir  
12:20pm 20-30s Group

**Jan 28**  
8:45 am Open Forum  
9am Worship, Nursery, Chalice Children  
11am Worship & RE  
10am & Noon Fellowship  
10:15am & 12:15pm Outreach Focus Groups  
12:15pm Children's Choir  
12:30pm Social Action Mtg

**Feb 4**  
8:45 am Open Forum  
9am Worship, Nursery, Chalice Children  
11am Worship & RE  
10am & Noon Intro to CCUU & Fellowship  
12:15pm Children's Choir  
12:20pm 20-30s Group

**Feb 11**  
8:45 am Open Forum  
9am Worship, Nursery, Chalice Children  
11am Worship & RE  
10am & Noon Chocolate-Fest & Fellowship  
12:15pm Children's Choir  
12:15pm Green Sanctuary Mtg  
12:30pm Buddhist Study Group

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This calendar shows upcoming Church meetings & events. All meetings and events held in the building are listed on the church website, under Programs & Events - [http://ccuu.org/calendar/](http://ccuu.org/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.

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<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
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<th>Wed</th>
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<td><strong>Jan 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan 17</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan 24</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jan 31</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feb 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feb 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 am Open Forum</td>
<td>Focus publication</td>
<td>10am Soul Connections daytime group</td>
<td>10a-4p PADS meal delivery</td>
<td>10am Transitions</td>
<td>7:15pm Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>10am Memorial Makers</td>
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<td>9 &amp; 11am All-Church Worship Service &amp; Childcare</td>
<td>Great Books Group</td>
<td>Board of Trustees Mtg</td>
<td>10am Great Books Group</td>
<td>7pm Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>6:20pm Warm-up Yoga</td>
<td>1pm Family Ministry Bake-Off</td>
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<td>10am &amp; Noon Fellowship</td>
<td>7pm Soul Connections Thurs groups</td>
<td>7pm Beloved Conversations</td>
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<td>7pm Drum Circle</td>
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<td>10:15am &amp; 12:15pm Outreach Focus Groups</td>
<td>7pm Soul Connections Tues eve group</td>
<td>7pm Board of Trustees Mtg</td>
<td>7pm Beloved Conversations</td>
<td>6:20pm Warm-up Yoga</td>
<td>7pm Soul Connections Thurs groups</td>
<td>7pm Drum Circle</td>
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<td>12:15pm Children's Choir</td>
<td>12:15pm Green Sanctuary Mtg</td>
<td>10am Transitions</td>
<td>7pm Soul Connections Thurs groups</td>
<td>7pm Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td>7pm Drum Circle</td>
<td>10am Wellness House Hypnosis Group &amp; Reiki Sessions</td>
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<td>12:30pm Buddhist Study Group</td>
<td>12:30pm Buddhist Study Group</td>
<td>7pm Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td><em>Intro to Zen workshop, great-plainszen.org</em></td>
<td>7pm Drum Circle</td>
<td>7pm Drum Circle</td>
<td>7pm 40-50s potluck &amp; games night</td>
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*Note: Dates and times are subject to change.*
Focus
Published by Countryside Church UU
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Assistant RE.Assistant@ccuu.org

Lay Ministers
Ken Bobbe, Coordinator Melanie Schikore
Karen Greenland Joy Simon
Barbara Griggs Chris Smith
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 Mission
We are a spiritual community actively answering the call for love, compassion, reason, and justice.

Our Vision
Countryside is committed to being a voice of and active presence for liberal religion in the northwest suburbs. Empowered by our Mission Statement, we endeavor to:
• Create a welcoming place of connectedness, compassion, and respect for people of all ages.
• Advance inclusivity and diversity within our congregation and community.
• Care for each other in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.
• Provide for spiritual and intellectual growth and inspire lifelong learning.
• Promote a sustainable future for our community and world by acting with a social, environmental, and global conscience.
• Communicate and spread the message of Unitarian Universalism within and beyond our community.
• Promote peace and justice in our congregation, communities, and the world.
• Engage in thoughtful stewardship of our resources to achieve our mission and carry out our vision.

Upcoming Focus Deadlines
Submit all articles by 10 am to ccuu@ccuu.org
Jan 29 (publ. Feb 7) Feb 26 (publ. March 7) Mar 26 (publ. Apr 4)
Between Focus issues, written communication is via E-UpDATES & the Sunday Times insert to the Order of Worship. Deadline for e-updates & Sunday Times is Weds at 9 am.

Follow us on Facebook
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Countryside-Church-Universalist

Time-dated material—Promt Delivery Requested
Return Service Requested

Countryside Church
1025 N Smith Rd • Palatine IL 60067