Annual ChocolateFest: Feb 11

**Combining Kinship and Food Drive (and Chocolate!)**

The Membership Committee’s very popular annual event is this Sunday, February 11, and will include a food drive for the Palatine Food Pantry. ChocolateFest is a chocolate potluck after the worship services 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 refrain from bringing treats with nuts—see reminder of our nut-free practices)* on p.10. Please place your chocolate treat on the large serving table(s) in Atherton Hall before going into the service.

We are also collecting food donations 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 table in Atherton Hall for your food donations.

If you can help with set up on Sunday or with delivering to the Food Pantry on Monday, please contact Kay Gredell, kaygredell@att.net or 847-632-0660. …The Membership Committee

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#SupportTheMission

Greetings! Our annual pledge drive has begun. As we do every year, we ask members and friends of CCUU to reaffirm their commitment to this congregation. After all, you and your contributions – financial and otherwise – are what make this place the welcoming, loving, and transformative faith community that it is.

This year, however, we are doing things a little differently. To build momentum, support planning, and make the process less time- and attention-consuming for everyone, we have set a goal to have pledge forms returned by **FEBRUARY 18TH – THE 18TH FOR ’18**.

We need everyone’s full involvement and support to make this goal happen. You should have received your pledge forms by now, and we ask that you return them as soon as possible. But definitely by **The 18th For 18**.

We will have tables on Sunday morning to collect pledge forms and once pledged, we have awesome stickers for you to wear to celebrate your commitment to Countryside. You can also submit your forms to the church office or online: [www.tinyurl.com/CCUU1819Pledge](http://www.tinyurl.com/CCUU1819Pledge).

It probably goes without saying, but – for many of us – Countryside is a refuge in this wild and chaotic world. As a self-sustained congregation, we rely on your **continued and generous financial support** so that Countryside Church can continue to amplify our collective voice and ensure that our core Unitarian Universalist principles are represented in the world and live on for future generations. As Rev. Scot Giles said during his service on January 28, we encourage everyone “to give until you are proud.”

Countryside’s Unitarian Universalist voice of love, compassion and justice is essential in today’s increasingly divisive world. We need your continued financial support – now more than ever. Help support the mission. And remember: **the 18th For 18**.

Sincerely,
Your Stewardship Team: Christine Organ, Dan Yokas, Greg Blus

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No matter how weak or how frightened we may feel, we each have gifts that can make a difference in the world. In this coming week, may you do at least one thing to support the broken; to welcome the stranger; to celebrate what is worthy; to do the work of justice and love. Be strong. Be connected. Each day, act — so you may be a little more whole.

~ Maureen Killoran
Minister’s Muse

In a meeting recently, I heard a member talk about one of our bulletin boards.

Now in this day of tweets and snapchats and group lists the idea of a bulletin board might seem quaint – archaic – even vestigial. But – quaint though they may seem, they point to something important about the way a congregation sees itself.

Basically, you see, the bulletin board is a way, albeit basic, that a congregation communicates.

It’s a way that folks in a congregation tell one another what’s happening – a reminder that may catch the eye while spending time in the building.

It’s a way that folks in a congregation tell everyone who walks into their building who they are, where they put their time, and, therefore, what their values are.

It’s a way that adults in a congregation teach the next generation of the members of their faith community who they are, where they put their time, and, therefore, what their values are – what values they are trying to pass on.

It’s a way that a congregation shows their joy in being an active faith community together. The care, the detail, the timeliness, the relevance, playfulness, the love all shine out (or don’t) from bulletin boards. It’s a way that folks in a congregation show pride, leadership, engagement, stewardship of their shared community.

If you go into a school or a municipal building a bulletin board shows the work that the paid staff are doing to communicate ideas and events to those who attend or pass through. When my youngest was in elementary school elaborate bulletin boards and doorways welcomed kids to each class room – not unlike our RE classrooms where we’re doing the Hogwarts UU curriculum for our children this year.

In a congregation, activities are not only created and sustained by staff – they represent hosts of volunteer-led activities that reflect the values and touch the lives of all who participate in the community. So bulletin boards end up belonging to everyone and no one.

Now, it happens that the person I mentioned at the meeting was taking responsibility for a bulletin board on behalf of a committee. But, often, much of what goes on in a congregation ends up belonging to everyone and no one.

It’s not uncommon for a member to mention that there’s stained ceiling tile, a light burned out, a toilet clogged, a poster needed, the list is minute and endless – you know. It’s seldom that folks realize that, even in a mid-sized congregation, there’s no staff person who “takes care” of that – the administrator keeps track of what’s what – just as the staff help support and guide the ministries at CCUU. Yet, we all share some responsibility for the care of our home and the activities that happen in it.

Now I’m not writing this to recruit folks for the bulletin boards or the light bulbs – though volunteers are joyfully welcomed! There’s a quality of belonging, ownership, mutuality, that we share with one another when we are engaged in an activity as small as a coffee cup brought to the kitchen, a toilet unclogged, or big as a room painted or solar panels installed. Ask the families whose kids are in religious education classes – they volunteer significant time and find a sense of belonging because of it. But stepping back and taking in our whole beautiful project from the roof to the rock path outside the building, this place, its character, and message come from the combined involvement or lack of involvement of every person here.

And, like the bulletin boards, all of these things are ways that we communicate – with one another, our children, our visitors, and our seekers – something important about the heart of this place. So let’s communicate more often.

Thank You!

It’s already into February and I have not yet written to say how grateful I am for the gifts – the contributions to the Minister’s Discretionary Fund. You cannot know how much these resources can mean in the lives of the members of this congregation. There are times when money is short for rent, for groceries, for medical treatment, for simply living. People hesitate to ask – and it is always best not to put people in a position where they have to ask. So, it is a privilege when I learn of someone’s struggle and I can call and say “is it possible that we can help?” Sometimes a hole is so deep that we can only help superficially, but often these gifts are a real blessing – as a bridge for survival and as a demonstration of the care of this community. It is only possible to give a sum from the MDF once.

Hard as it is to ask – when you have been unemployed or under-employed for a while, when you face a mountain of medical bills, when ”%&*” happens, I encourage the members of this congregation to come and talk with me. It is confidential. It may be that you’re having a rough time and don’t need a penny – give me a call anyway – let’s get together and talk.

So I write with love and care and with gratitude for all that you do and all that you have given to one another.

As Luck Would Have It

Back in November, my husband Mark returned from Countryside Church’s annual Time and Talent auction that Saturday evening. Unable to attend myself, I was eager to hear all about it – and the next day I was even more excited to learn that it was one of our highest netting auctions – benefiting our service partners with thousands of dollars. It takes a tremendous amount of work on the part of many enthusiastic volunteers to make this event a success and it certainly was one this year. Anyway, Mark came in and said "I've got some good news and some bad news." Simultaneously excited and uneasy, I rushed to say "well, tell me the bad news first." "Well," Mark said, "they're sort of attached to each other." "Yes?" "Well," he said, "we won the raffle!" Now my husband has known for many years that I've wanted to win the raffle in order to give the money back to the congregation and here was my chance! So, I wasn't entirely sure what the bad news was. "So you gave it back right?" I asked. "Well, they wouldn't let me!" I will admit I gave him a long, skeptical look. He said, "Really, I tried quite persistently to give it back. They told me this was a new policy -- that when people win the raffle -- they are not allowed to contribute the money back because it puts people in an awkward position." On the one hand, they want to be generous otherwise they wouldn't have come to the auction the first place. On the other hand, they have bought raffle tickets (continued on p.3...)
Minister’s Muse (cont’d)
and it would be fun to win and keep the prize. I completely understand that bind. However, as the Minister, I’ve never felt like it was a bind for me -- there was just one thing I wanted to do if I won the raffle. This was particularly true when all of the winnings of the auction were circulated back into our budget -- even though that was only a short period of our Congregational history.

I needed to think long and hard about this. I spoke with Christine Organ, our fine Board President. I spoke with our executive team. Ultimately, as the Minister, I realized how much I just wanted and felt that I needed to find some way of using the money for CCUU. So I’ve contributed it back to the Minister’s Discretionary Fund -- the fund that enables us to provide support to members of our congregation in times of crisis or financial hardship.

What made me feel awkward as the raffle-winning minister in this congregation does not extend to every person. I believe that when members of the congregation win the raffle they should keep the money or at least feel no pressure about what to do with it. The auction is a fun way that we share our resources with the larger community but we also share our resources of joy and warmth with one another. Nobody goes to the auction hoping for a windfall from the raffle, but if it happens, it should be their windfall without fear or favor. What are the odds that anybody could win the auction more than once? I had a friend in Atlanta who called in to two different radio stations during contest seasons, and two years apart, won $10,000 each time. What are the odds? I think maybe I’ll just leave my name off the raffle tickets in the future.

From Our DLRE (cont’d)
planet -- we affirm our unyielding commitment to protect the interdependent web of all existence.

We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate, or despoil.

As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us.

We welcome and invite all to join in this commitment for justice.

The time is now.

Some of that language was challenging for our young people to fully grasp, so recently our 2nd-4th and 5th-6th grade classes rewrote the declaration into their own words, and sent it the UUA and UUSC. Here is the Declaration of Conscience in their words:

As people understanding right and wrong, we keep our promise to live our faith in action.

We want everybody to come and step up for lives and justice.

We must absolutely do it now.

At this amazing time in our nation’s history, we will show commitment to the values of our American society.

We want things to be fair for all people, and respect for all beings.

In Faith, The 2nd-4th Grade Class at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist

We believe everyone deserves respect and kindness, even those who may be discriminated against in our society, such as immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and LGBTQ people.

We oppose any actions that attack these groups of people.

Instead, we support actions that support justice and compassion.

We also want to protect the environment.

We stand on the side of love.

In Faith, The 5th-6th Class at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist

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/30e0b45acaa2aaaf6-refloaters

From Our Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE)
At the beginning of last year, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) created a Declaration of Conscience and called for UUs across the nation to commit to putting Unitarian Universalist values into action to resist hate, fear and bigotry. They collected electronic signatures and we, as a congregation, signed a handwritten declaration and submitted it to the UUA and UUSC.

It states:

At this extraordinary time in our nation’s history, we are called to affirm our profound commitment to the fundamental principles of justice, equity and compassion, to truth and core values of American society.

In the face of looming threats to immigrants, Muslims, people of color, and the LGBTQ community and the rise of hate speech, harassment and hate crimes, we affirm our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

In opposition to any steps to undermine the right of every citizen to vote or to turn back advances in access to health care and reproductive rights, we affirm our commitment to justice and compassion in human relations.

And against actions to weaken or eliminate initiatives to address the threat of climate change – actions that would threaten not only our country but the entire

(continued...)
From Your Board of Trustees

There are several exciting things happening at CCUU, many of which are reported in the *Sunday Times*, weekly email updates, and this *Focus* newsletter. Most significantly, we are thrilled that Rev. Hilary Krivchenia is back in the pulpit. The Board of Trustees would like to remind everyone that we are available to answer questions and address any concerns during those times when our Senior Minister is away.

Second, we are in the midst of our annual pledge drive. As mentioned in the Stewardship Message, this is the time of the year when we ask members and friends to reaffirm their commitment to Countryside Church with a financial contribution. As a self-sustaining congregation, quite simply, we rely on the contributions of you all to fulfill our mission to answer the call for love, compassion, reason and justice within the community and the larger world.

In the past six months, the Board of Trustees conducted comprehensive research, contemplation, and discussion with the congregation regarding ways to bolster our financial viability. As reported in the November Focus, we have determined that a sale of the North Property is not in the best interests of the congregation at this time, and after much investigation and consideration, we have also determined that we will not be conducting a capital campaign in the near future.

Consequently, your annual pledge contributions are more important than ever so that we can meet our ongoing needs, plan for upcoming and necessary capital repairs and improvements, fulfill our programing potential, and better meet the needs of the changing world around us. Each household’s pledge is an essential piece of the fabric that makes up the vibrant faith community that is Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist.

As a reminder, we ask that all pledge forms be returned by February 18 – the 18th for ’18. Help support the mission. Don’t delay – pledge today.

Thank you all for your continued support, financial and service. As always, please feel free to contact me at prez@ccuu.org with any questions or concerns.

In faith,
Christine Organ, President of the Board of Trustees

Social Action News

**CCUU Focuses On Values-Rooted Social Justice: New Poor People’s Campaign**

**Opportunities for action, support and networking**

The new year brings a new focus to Countryside Church’s social justice efforts as the new Poor People’s Campaign (PPC) becomes a beacon for putting UU values into action through a variety of activities and networking opportunities.

Led by Rev. William Barber and embraced by UUs nationwide, PPC provides a national values-rooted framework for action. It is also the theme of an upcoming Sunday service (February 18).

CCUU plans to work in close partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI) to help congregants tap into a statewide framework of activities and partners, concentrating on three campaign pillars/initiatives:

- **Economic Justice:** With wealth overwhelmingly concentrated at the top, we seek economic justice, equity and compassion through a Fair Tax, providing for the common welfare of all based on ability to pay.
- **Racial Justice:** With jails filled with people of color targeted for their skin color and detained for lack of funds, we seek to Abolish Cash Bail. This is also part of the Love Resists campaign to promote worth and dignity rather than the criminalization of people of color, immigrants, Muslims, and people who are LGBTQ.
- **Environmental Justice:** With ongoing objectification, exploitation, and violence against people and the planet, we are ready for 100% renewable energy based on respect for the interdependent web of existence.

Details about CCUU’s involvement in the campaign and opportunities for congregants of all ages to get involved are forthcoming. *Want to get involved now?*

- Register for the upcoming UU justice event, *Tearing Down Walls | Building Up Connections, Community and Solidarity*, at CCCU, Fri eve & Sat, March 23 & 24. Register for this free event at UUPMI.org
- Go to the Illinois State Capitol, February 14, for *People’s Budget Action for a Fair Tax*.
- Get on the UUANI email list. [Click here to join.](mailto:)
- Join CCUU’s Social Action Committee. Meetings held last Sunday of the month, 12:30 pm, Room 1.

If interested in helping plan/coordinate the church’s PPC efforts, or for more information, contact Maryanne O’Dowd, socialactionchair@ccuu.org.

**Monthly Fair Trade Sale: 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.

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**Chalice Sparx Family Camp & Retreat**

**July 12-15, 2018 in Sturgis, Michigan**

Hiking the trails, singing by the campfire, playing games ... all childhood camp fun. This camp and retreat is not just for kids — it’s for people of all ages. Make connections, build friendships, and experience nature together as a family — with other families, youth, and adults — in an environment where diverse religious, spiritual, and theological perspectives are welcomed and celebrated. With programs for children drawing upon the natural environment, workshops for adults and youth on spiritual practices, multigenerational worship, and fun group activities such as canoeing, archery, s’mores around a campfire and popcorn popped in a kettle over an open fire -- all with a variety of accommodations from dormitory-style lodging to hotel-like rooms in the Retreat Center. Tent and RV camping is also available at nearby Amigo Park.

Registration is now open at [www.chalicesparx.org](http://www.chalicesparx.org)
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/)

Feb 11  Infinite Love  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia
Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to [Journeys: The Road Home](http://ccuu.org/services/).

*Bring a chocolate treat to share during fellowship after the service (see ChocolateFest article on p.1)*

Feb 18  The Tired Arms of Justice  Rev. Krivchenia & Rev. Scott Aaseng
Rev. Krivchenia will be joined by Rev. Scott Aaseng, the director of UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI).

Feb 25  All-Church Service  Sr High Youth Group
Join us as our high school youth lead us in worship.

This is an All-Church Service; all young people attend the service with their families; childcare will be available at both services.

*Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to [Shelter, Inc.](http://ccuu.org/services/).*

Mar 4  Tilt a World  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

**Daylight Saving Time Ends March 10-11 ~ Clocks Spring Forward**

Mar 11  Dreaming on the Mountain  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

*Share the Plate: Half of the cash collected in the offering will be donated to [Clearbrook](http://ccuu.org/services/).*

Mar 18  A Dance in Balance  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

Mar 25  All-Church Service: Our Six Sources  Rev. Krivchenia & Jules Jaramillo, DLRE

This is an All-Church Service; all young people attend the service with their families; childcare will be available at both services.

**Fri, Mar 30 at 7:30 pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service**  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

The Tenebrae (Latin for shadows) Service will begin in light and end in darkness. It is a time to acknowledge the struggles we face individually and globally in order to understand the pathway to hope symbolized on Easter.

Apr 1  Easter Service  The Rev. Hilary Landau Krivchenia

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**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, Music.Director@ccuu.org or 847-359-8440, X5.

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**UU Notable News from Harvard Square Library**

*The Pentagon Papers and the Unitarian Universalist Association: How the UUA Was Almost Destroyed by the Decision to Publish*

The December of 2017 release of the blockbuster Stephen Spielberg movie “The Post” has everyone talking about the Washington Post’s brave defiance of the Nixon administration with its decision to publish excerpts from the Pentagon Papers, the 7,000-page compilation of secret government documents pertaining to the war in Vietnam. But how many people know of the tremendous bravery demonstrated and risk assumed by the Unitarian Universalist Association, whose Beacon Press was the only publisher to print the complete Pentagon Papers?


…Rev. Susan Ritchie, PhD, Director
People cry not because they are weak. It’s because they’ve been strong too long. ~Shane Koyczan

This morning I have been pondering a nearly forgotten lesson I learned in high school music. Sometimes in band or choir, music requires players or singers to hold a note longer than they actually can hold a note. In those cases, we were taught to mindfully stagger when we took a breath so the sound appeared uninterrupted. Everyone got to breathe, and the music stayed strong and vibrant... So let’s remember the advice of music: Take a breath. The rest of the chorus will sing. The rest of the band will play. Rejoin so others can breathe. Together, we can sustain a very long, beautiful song for a very, very long time. You don’t have to do it all, but you must add your voice to the song. ~Michael Moore

So, have you been strong too long?

It’s not the usual question when tackling the topic of perseverance. Most often, we’re asked, “Are you ready to be strong?” The standard recipe is well known: Buck up! Grin and bear it! Keep pushing! Keep moving forward! Dig deep; you are stronger than you know! But maybe Koyczan is right. Maybe this typical roadmap isn’t the path to perseverance; maybe it’s just the path to breakdown.

And when we combine Koyczan’s quote with Moore’s invitation to breathe, we suddenly see that balance plays a bigger role in perseverance than we often assume. As a people of perseverance, we are being called not just to grit and strong wills, but to gentleness and self-care. Constantly pushing ourselves without also giving ourselves the gift of pause gets us nowhere. Digging deeper without making time to deepen and fill our wells is a recipe for self-inflicted pain.

All of which is to say that maybe vulnerability is the real secret to perseverance. Maybe admitting you’re tired and asking for help is the real strength that gets us through. That dominant myth of Sisyphus pushing his rock up that endless hill hasn’t done us any favors. We assume that Sisyphus is suffering because his work is endless, but maybe it’s his isolation and lack of a place to rest that is his true torment.

So, friends, this month, let’s not torment ourselves. We don’t have to give up those pep talks about digging deep and being stronger than we know. But right alongside that, let’s make sure we’re also doing the more tender work of propping each other up and reminding each other to breathe.

Rabbi David Wolf tells a story that we all should carry with us this month:

A boy and his father were walking along a road when they came across a large stone. “Do you think if I use all of my strength, I can move this rock?” the child asked. His father answered, “If you use all of your strength, I am sure you can do it.” The boy began to push the rock. Exerting himself as much as he could, he pushed and pushed. The rock did not move. Discouraged, he said to his father, “You were wrong. I can’t do it.” His father put his arm around the boy’s shoulder and said, “No son. You didn’t use all your strength – you didn’t ask me to help.”

What a gift to remember that perseverance isn’t a solo act. May that be the gift this month gives us all.

Questions for Considering Perseverance

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. The saying is widely known: “Trees that bend in the storm don’t break.” Are you trying to stand tall and remain immovable, when life is asking you to bend?
2. We all fall down. Very few of us pick ourselves up on our own. Perseverance is rarely a solo act. Who in your life needs a bit of help getting back up off the mat?
3. What if the way through your pain is to feel it?
4. It’s hard right now. The light at the end of the tunnel is still a ways off. You’ve remembered to just keep moving forward. But have you remembered to breathe? Have you remembered to be tender with and to take care of yourself, not just push yourself?
5. Are you sure your strategy of “grin and bear it” is still working? What’s the worst that could happen if you just walked away?
6. It is said that people who persevere don’t just struggle through their pain; they share and tell stories of their pain. Others then respond with their own stories of pain and struggle, leading to the discovery that we are not as alone as we thought. So is it time for you to be a storyteller, not just a survivor?
7. Have you made friends with defeat? Do you still resent it? Or have you figured out the hidden gift, lesson or blessing of your defeat?
8. So you think you’ve lost the struggle? Or could it be that you’ve just lost your illusions?
9. Yes, it is important to gratefully acknowledge the shoulders of those you stand on. But how are you doing with the equally important work of offering your shoulders to others? Could it be that perseverance is something we pass on?
10. It is said that mastery requires persevering through 10,000 hours of practice. If you are feeling like you are failing or not good enough, might it be time to consider that you are only 5,000 hours in?
11. What’s your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don’t include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

For information regarding the Soul Connections program, email Don Bussey, SoulConnections@ccuw.org

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:

March—Balance
April—Emergence
May—Creativity
June—Blessing

For more info or if you have questions, contact Alison Vernon, music.director@ccuw.org, or Lois Phillips.
Lifespan Full Week Faith: Perseverance

**Full Week Faith** reminds us to carry our faith into our daily lives through rituals which help us slow down, mindfulness, and practices which teach us to connect our minds, bodies and spirits to Unitarian Universalism. I invite you to take time daily, individually or as a family, to create rituals and practices in living your Unitarian Universalism faith guided by our monthly themes.

As we lean into perseverance this month, let us remember our faith embraces and guides us in times of challenge - not simple to survive, but to thrive. When we are faced with challenges that draw on perseverance we can renew ourselves by our spiritual practices and the teachings of our faith. We can find comfort in the loving arms and strength of our faith community. Abiding in our faith gives us the strength to persevere and in our perseverance, we also learn to flourish.

**Chalice Lightings**

Create a daily ritual of lighting a chalice to start or end your day, before spiritual practices or during meal times.

**Still There is Light (adapted)**

by Nadine McSpadden

During our darkest moments, still, there is light.

*Look for the light*

When facing our biggest challenges, still, there is light.

*Look for the light*

When all we can do is put one foot in front of the other, still, there is light.

*Look for the light*

When we struggle to see the way out, still, there is light.

*Look for the light*

When all we can do is hold someone’s hand as they cry, still, there is light.

*Look for the light*

We are the light—for ourselves and for one another. Always, there is light.

**Chalice Spirit**

*Just as the sun shines its light, its warmth, and its love,*

*So may the spirit of this chalice bless us with truth, life, and love.*

~ Derek McCullough, Australian and New Zealand Unitarian Association

**Perseverance Practice**

Putting the monthly theme into a practice reinforces learning and connection.

**Letters**

- To Yourself: Take time this month to reflect on areas in your life do you need an extra dose of perseverance. What challenges you the most? What are your obstacles? Send yourself a card, letters or emails of encouragement, affirmation and love to help you persevere. Remember to send them— that is important to this practice!
- To Friends or Family: Reflect on 3 friends or family members that could use kind thoughts around perseverance. Send each of them a card, letter or email of encouragement, affirmation and love. They will appreciate hearing from you!

**Prayers & Meditations**

Take a few minutes out of your day offering prayers to whomever you hold as sacred and/or moments in meditation. Return to these throughout your day to bring your mind, body and spirit back to a place of connection, affirmation, hope or peace.

**May I Be by Meg Barnhouse**

May I be kind, Strong and brave, Joyful, useful, loving, Honest and healthy.

*Add the Alleluias by Paul R Beedle*

Spirits of Life and Love, Justice and Peace:
Day in and day out wait weary tasks, burdens we lift again, worn paths we wear some more, Want, and means worn thin, and fatigue— Pain and grief, coldness of heart, bitter and weary. Where we know desolation, how do we call forth hope? When our hearts buried, sunken down, how do we dig out? rise up? What healing touch do we long for? What balm might we take and share? Come what may, O Spirit of Life:

May we keep a ray of light, for our inward path; a living water, in the depths of us; a cleansing breath, at our core. May we keep them for ourselves, and to share. May we call forth from each other vitality and tenacity. May love rest in us. May justice live through us. May we have the touch to call others back to life and love, justice and peace. May we sing back their songs, and add the alleluias. In the Spirit, by the Spirit, with the Spirit giving power, so may it be. Amen.

**Meditation Practice: Breathing into the Awareness of Your Body**

*By Thich Nhat Hanh*

Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my body.

**Concentration**: I know my body is there. This brings the mind wholly back to the body. Mind and body become one. When your mind is with your body, you are here and now. You are fully alive. You can be in touch with the wonders of life that are available in yourself and around you.

Breathing in, I am aware of my whole body. Breathing out, I am aware of my body.

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Soul Connections

A Testimonial

I am currently in my 4th Soul Connections group which leads me to believe I am a SC addict with little desire for rehab.

In the past, I have been a group co-leader and now I am part of a group that bonded in our last session and unanimously agreed that we would remain together for another year.

Soul Connections allows me to step out of my hurried and sometimes fractured existence and step into a peaceful and thoughtful environment of like minded people who gather to explore and share ideas on a new topic every month.

I have come to realize that I don’t have another space in my life where for two hours I am free to think, speak and be heard on a deeper level than the superficial level that I communicate on during much of my work day.

To me, Soul Connections allows me to take a mind vacation free from meaningless chatter and instead to visit new ideas, listen and connect with others allowing me to learn more about myself and the people in my group.

So, in short, if I have drunk the addictive cool aid present at SC meetings, I think I’ll have another glass.

By Barrie Burr, Group Participant, Soul Connections Third Thursday Evening Group

Join a Soul Connections Group

We’re forming a midyear group!

Soul Connections is a distinctive small group program at Countryside Church whose central goal is to foster circles of trust and deep listening. A group of eight to 10 people regularly meet for two hours once a month for 10 months. Working with material provided by a moderator, participants explore worship themes in more depth, experience the worship theme, not just talk about it and receive questions to walk with, not talk through.

Our monthly themes are more than interesting topics. They focus us on a spiritual value that our UU faith has honored and calls us to embody in our daily lives. At each meeting, we are reminded that our faith promotes a preferred way for us to be in the world. This is why each monthly theme asks, “What does it mean to be a people of…?”

In a Soul Connections group, you develop an increasing depth of relationship that comes from meeting over time, willingness and ability to listen without comment or advice, to learn from others and to share from the soul. We focus on meaning and significance rather than details, information or outcome. Soul Connections offers opportunities to develop skills and grow in confidence and in generosity, cooperation and sense of well being. We grow because we feel supported.

The new Soul Connections 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. 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

Fri, Feb 23, 7 pm ~ Lion

Please join us in Atherton Hall to watch this true story of a life lost and found.

The official trailer can be viewed online—https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Coly9Xq8tYs.

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

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.

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 February 22 to hear John Leeker, Head Archivist/Librarian at Meadville Lombard UU Seminary in Chicago. John will discuss the history of UU with special emphasis on our, CCUU’s, history. Everyone—CCUU staff, members, and friends—are encouraged to join us for a stimulating session with John and his staff followed by Q & A and then a convivial potluck! This year is the 450th anniversary of the Edict of Torda in Europe at which Unitarianism was officially recognized for the first time in the history of the world! 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 start our new venture in viewing a workshop conducted by Donald Davis and sponsored by the Timpanogos Storytelling Institute.
Feminine Divine Women’s Group

**Last Saturdays, 9:30 am**
This year, we are discussing *Warrior Goddess Training* by Heatherash Amara. On Feb 24, we will discuss chapter 6. Newcomers are welcome to join us in classroom 6. For more info, email wendyingrassia@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. Feb 13 will be a follow-up last month’s discussion of Sean Carroll’s book, *The Big Picture*; we will talk further about his notion of ‘poetic naturalism’ and its

**Book Discussions**

**Book Circle: Feb 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.

**Last Mondays Book Group: Feb 26**
Join us at 7pm in the Stokes Room to discuss *The Sparrow* by Mary Doria Russell. In March, we’ll discuss *The Alice Network by*

**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, through May, in the Spirit Play room (rm 9/10) from 6:20 - 7:00 pm. 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.

- Feb 11: Sale of Prescription opioids for Illegal Resale—what & why?
- Feb 18: Responsibility for Property Damage and/or personal injuries caused by delivery drones and driverless vehicles
- Feb 25: “right to work” laws and states having it. what it all means, advantages vs disadvantages
- Mar 4: Machine Learning, AI, Bias, and Ethics
- Mar 11: civil discourse now and in the future
- Mar 18: how do we define patriotism?

**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: Sat, Feb 10, 7:30pm**
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/4050list_ccuu.org. Join us on Sat, Feb 10 at 7:30 pm in Atherton Hall for a Games Night—bring your favorite game and a snack to share.

**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 February 23 session will be open mike—please bring a favorite poem to share.

**Buddhist Study Group ~ 2nd Sundays**
All are welcome to join us on Feb 11, 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.*

**MidAmerica Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship (UUBF)**

**Daylong Retreat, May 5, 2018**
You’re invited to attend the first ever one-day MidAmerica Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship retreat at Lake County Unitarian Universalist Church in Heartland, Wisconsin (half hour west of Milwaukee).

Rev. Zenshin Florence Caplow will be the keynote speaker. Florence is the minister at the UU Church of Urbana-Champaign, and a Soto Zen priest and teacher in the Shunyitsu Suzuki Roshi lineage. She has been practicing vipassana and Zen for thirty years, is on the Board of the UU Buddhist Fellowship, and is the co-author of the *Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women.*

Join us for a day of comradery, meditation, dharma talks and discussion with other UUs interested in meditation, mindfulness and/or Buddhism. Home stays available. For further info and to be added to the email list, email Terry Kinsey, mindful@unitytemple.org. Go to https://goo.gl/forms/7HOY1dXs90EYbAVE2 to register.

**Drum Circle ~ 4th Saturdays**
Adults & teens are invited to join us on Feb 24 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.
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, ccuu@ccuu.org. Be sure to include the date of your request.

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 greater table or back of sanctuary, or contact the church office.

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!*

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 welcomed. 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/70a044e4a72fa13-sunday](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044e4a72fa13-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!

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/](http://ccuu.org/peanut-treenut-practices/).*
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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<td>9am Worship, Nursery, Chalice Children</td>
<td>7pm Finance Ctte</td>
<td>10am Soul Connections Tues daytime group</td>
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<td>7pm Mary Oliver Poetry Series</td>
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Midwest UU Youth Camp Reunion @CCUU
**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
- Feb 26 (publ. March 7)
- Mar 26 (publ. Apr 4)
- Apr 23 (publ. May 2)
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.

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### Lay Ministers
- Ken Bobbe, Coordinator
- Karen Greenland
- Barbara Griggs
For assistance from Lay or Care Ministry, please call Ken or Rev. Hilary.