actively answering the call for love, compassion, reason, and justice

2017-18
Year in Review

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

Presented prior to the Annual Meeting
to be held on May 20, 2018
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.

To serve our mission and make real our vision, we engage with one another and with this congregation in the light of these

Aspirations of Membership:
To the extent that my life circumstances permit, as a member of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist I will:
• Attend Sunday services and congregational meetings
• Seek out and share opportunities for spiritual, ethical, and meaningful growth
• Engage in congregational projects, programs, or events that reach beyond the church
• Engage in congregational projects, programs, or events that support the life of the church
• Strive to give 3 - 5% of my income to support the mission of the church
• Share with others outside the church the value of my membership at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist

Covenant of Right Relationship
In my relationship with the CCUU community and in keeping with our UU values, I will strive to:
• Take responsibility for my words and actions by being honest and respectful in my speech, while listening to others with an open mind and heart;
• Be sensitive to possible conflicts, and be willing to work toward solutions using available resources, accepting that some differences may not be resolvable;
• Respect and support the diversity within our congregation, and work to create and maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all.
A Song for the Unsung
by Steve Crump

You make the coffee, set up the tables, and organize the cleaning, when the rest of us have gone home.
You know where the brooms and the supplies are kept.
You run to the store in the nick of time.
You find the great stuff to sell at the fundraiser.
You remember to use “I” language.
You speak passionately with a clear voice and listen with open-mindedness.
You consider your tone when you speak.
You say you want to be part of the solution, part of the healing, by hanging in there.
You come up with new ideas.
You gracefully accept the group choosing someone else’s idea.
You step up to make the extra contribution.
You make welcoming room for others.
You acknowledge children and are happy to be around them.
You hold a child, hold a confidence, hold a hand.
You go the extra mile, contribute the extra dollar, and give the benefit of the doubt.
You know that congregational life is all about relationships.
And because you know this, your spiritual discipline of forgiveness is always at hand.
You, with your presence alone, offer a holy companionship.
You accompany others in their dark night of the soul.
You do what you do because you can.
You often wish you could do more.

You labor not for praise or for a song but for the good in the doing of work.

But we sing this song of praise for you – the unsung in our congregation.
And our hearts are glad in the singing because we know the many things you do.
We appreciate you very much.
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**Our Staff Team:** The Reverend Hilary Landau Krivchenia, Minister; The Reverend Dr. C. Scot Giles, Community Minister; Jules Jaramillo, Director of Lifespan Religious Education; Laurie Lantz, Congregational Administrator; Alison Vernon, Music Director; Dr. Janice L. Razaq, Staff Pianist; Aida Acurio & Natalie Gerson, Childcare Providers

**2017-18 Board of Trustees:** Christine Organ, President; Peggy Simonsen, Vice President; Kathi Hillyer, Secretary; Marcus White, Treasurer; Mike Berry, Karen Epps, Kristin Huston, Jeanie Michalec, Joy Simon

*Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist*  
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As our church year draws to a close, there is much to celebrate and recognize. Not only are our ministries full of robust activities, but our programming needs are expanding and evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of the congregation, our community, and the world around us. Though we are immensely sad to say goodbye to our beloved Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Jules Jaramillo, we are ever-grateful for our exceptional staff and Senior Minister who consistently rise to meet the needs of the congregation. We are also fortunate to have a vast pool of volunteers – all of you – who come together to do the work of this congregation and this faith, and we are most appreciative.

Among our exciting activities, most recently, we celebrated “going solar” this year with a one-of-a-kind event in April. The Sustainable Energy Expo brought together experts in the field of climate change – including WGN’s Tom Skilling and Argonne Laboratory’s Seth Darling – as well as a variety of eco-friendly organizations and businesses. In doing so, we not only celebrated taking this step in our church’s efforts to continue to be a Green Sanctuary, but also brought the message of sustainable energy to the wider community.

As part of our efforts to live out our values, we are currently engaged in the 40 Days of Action, which is part of the Poor People’s Campaign – designed to “challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation’s distorted morality.” We hosted a number of UU youth events, and continue to support service partners whose values align with our own and are making a difference in the community. Our staff continues to initiate and develop programs that serve all ages and enable us to strengthen the connections between all ages as well.

Also, this year, the Board of Trustees investigated and considered various possibilities for long-term financial sustainability, including the possible sale of the North Property and a capital campaign. We conducted several town hall meetings and informal surveys. Since it was determined to not proceed with either option, we are considering other ways ensure our financial wellbeing and will continue to do so. It is important to note that we all play a role and we all need to take responsibility for our growth – whether it is growth in pledges, in membership, or in connection.

While this year has not been without its challenges, together, as a congregation and with the help of a staff willing to rise to shoulder additional responsibilities, we have not only survived, but thrived. We have come through the challenges (for there will always be challenges) with a greater understanding of each other and what the congregation needs to continue moving forward in this unique time in the world.

Last year and throughout this year, the Board has continued to work with you and with our staff to create a sustainable future for our congregation. We have made it a priority to provide transparent and frequent communications about our progress and decision-making at the board level; to support ministry work that will enhance our presence in the community so that we can meet the needs of the time; and to grow as a environmentally sustainable congregation. We continue to develop an integrated approach the development and implementation of programs and activities so that we can harness our collective energies and use our staff/volunteer capacity more efficiently.

We continue to deal with the challenge of funding a budget in which we are poised for growth, while maintaining our ongoing building needs and supporting the larger Unitarian Universalist (UU) community. The board is committed to supporting our staff -- including providing fair and competitive salary and benefits packages – so that as a congregation we can implement robust programs and comprehensive ministry work.

Despite the loss of some large donors this year, the stewardship drive was quite successful, nearly matching last year's total (before close-the-gap pledges) with an estimated final pledge amount of $405,000. What's more, the pledges received in 17-18 were in excess of the amounts pledged, and we continue to have faith in the congregation to rise to meet our ongoing needs. We hope to continue this positive momentum into the upcoming year.

As you read through this report, you will see the wide range of activities that show our we are living our UU values making our vision and our mission a reality. If you are looking for a way to connect with others, make a meaningful contribution, or to find a source of support, you can find it in these pages. If you are already active in one area, you may consider getting involved in something new.

Countryside is a place to find sustenance for the soul and of the mind, and a refuge in this wild and chaotic world. But it isn’t just a place; it is a community – a community of people who shares our values, if not our opinions. It is a community that will support, empower and inspire us to be the change we want to see in the world. Personally, I believe I am a better person because of Countryside and my UU faith, and I know many of us would – quite simply – be lost without Countryside and this community.

I, and the rest of the Board of Trustees, look forward to gathering with you at the Annual Meeting so that we can all be a part of planning our future. We are all in this together, and we look forward to building a sustainable future for Countryside so that we can live out our values in the world in a meaningful way.

In Faith,
Christine Organ
President, Board of Trustees
North Property Update

Last year, at our annual meeting, we introduced the idea of possibly selling the North Property. As a bit of background, the property was purchased in 1996 with cash raised through donations by a small group of members to prevent CCUU from being “land-locked” and allowing CCUU an option to expand.

CCUU continues to be immensely grateful for the foresight and financial contributions of these members, including longtime members Martha Atherton and Rem Stokes.

At the time the property was purchased, the parking lot to the south did not exist and occupancy was limited by the number of parking spaces provided. Accordingly, purchase of the North Property provided CCUU with room for expansion within the sanctuary building, as well as property for possible additional expansion or alternative use.

In 2012, a committee was formed to consider possible uses for the North Property, including a PADS site or an after-school youth center. Following their research, the committee determined that there were not needs or volunteer resources available to make use of the North Property aside from its use as a residential rental property. These findings and recommendations were again confirmed as recently as 2016.

Last summer and fall, the Board explored the possibility of selling the front half of the North Property in order to substantially pay down our existing mortgage on this building. We held several Town Hall meetings to hear your opinions and concerns, and to answer your questions. Based on the feedback we received, we determined that the information needed – and questions raised -- to make a proper assessment could not be answered in time to obtain funds to pay down our mortgage (which will be refinanced later this year).

As such, in October/November 2017, the Board of Trustees determined that continued discussions and assessment of a sale of the property in the short-term (i.e., prior to January 2019) was not realistic or in the best interests of the congregation. There are, however, several long-term steps that we suggest to facilitate the sustained health and well-being of CCUU, including:

• Assessing church membership trends, both within CCUU and on a larger scale
• Taking proactive steps in the budget process to become less dependent on the rent proceeds of the front half of the North Property
• Carefully archiving the comprehensive information obtained regarding the North Property so that the information is readily available as future Boards continue to assess the nature of the North Property; and
• Setting forth clear processes for communications and decision-making regarding church assets.

These are long-term activities and cannot be completed within a few months or even within a year; rather, they are activities and responsibilities that require ongoing attention of the board and the congregation as a whole.

Proper and best use of the North Property continues to be an issue of ongoing consideration – and will be as long as we own the property. Currently, the building is occupied by long-term tenants. The house is in need of minor repairs. The tasks associated with being a landlord are ongoing and consistent as well.

I will reiterate: we are not currently considering the sale of the North Property, however, the issue will continue to arise, particularly every five years when our mortgage is up for renewal/ refinancing. It is important that we stay on top of these issues so that we are prepared to act if need be.

So where do we go from here? The Board is recommending that a small task force be assembled to act as liaison with the tenants and to work toward resolving some of the ongoing questions associated with our use of the North Property, such as:

• Do we, at some point, want to significantly pay down, or possibly retire, our mortgage?
• Do we want to invest in the ongoing financial upkeep of the front half of the North Property?
• What impact would a sale of the property have on potential future needs of the congregation?
• Does use as a residential rental house whose income is legally taxable as residential property rental align with the CCUU mission/vision?
• Is there substantial interest and financial resources for exploration of possible community partnership uses of the property?

These are not questions that we need – or even should – answer today. But they are questions that we will continue to assess and evaluate.

If you’re interested in being a part of this task force, please email me at prez@ccuu.org. ...Christine Organ

Personnel Committee

Committee Members: Cathy Maraist (chair), Joy Simon (Board representative), Linda Berry (1/18) and Linda Kuna (4/18) as well as Reverend Hilary Krivchenia, who as Chief of Staff, serves as an ex-officio member.

The Personnel Committee is a committee of the Board, reporting to the Board of Trustees, and is a primary contact between the church staff and the Board of Trustees. The Committee has a number of responsibilities, including managing the process of hiring and evaluating employees; developing a budget for staff salaries and benefits; and developing/updating personnel policies, position descriptions, and forms. The Committee advises the Board of Trustees and provides support to the Ministers with regard to personnel concerns as well as internal and confidential matters of the church.

This past year, the Personnel Committee completed the following goals:

• Finalized the staff review process (October 2017)
• Facilitated hiring process for RE assistant (January 2018)
• Evaluated fair compensation and ensured that CCUU is meeting the guidelines for fair compensation. (February 2018)
• Created personnel budget for 2018-2019. (February 2018)
• Created “hiring streams” document outlining clear personnel hiring instructions to facilitate increased efficiency in hiring and retention. (April 2018)

Our goals next year include continuing the process of ensuring procedures and policies are current and in line with UUAA documents as well as a communication strategy to congregation regarding current and future staffing.

We wish to thank Cathy Maraist for her outstanding leadership over the past two and a half years. Her expertise in Human Resources and seemingly limitless dedication have ensured consistency in personnel practices and provided support to staff members and the Board.
It began as a slightly bumpy year for me and, still, I watched a tremendous year for our congregation as a whole. And then, it became a little bumpy at the end, as we received the news that our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Jules Jaramillo, is leaving us. I will directly address this a little later in my report. But first, the good news.

It was wonderful that the dedication of our solar panels expanded so that it was both a public event on Saturday, April 21, and a congregational event on Sunday, April 22. The Saturday event allowed us to declare our Unitarian Universalist dedication to our earth in a way that was both inspiring and very concrete. There was much press coverage, thanks to the presence of this weather newscaster, Tom Skilling. And, because this was a joint venture between five organizations, the attendance was around 400 people. So our faith, our values, and our vision for a planet loved and healed was able to reach many people. In addition, our Sunday service, to which I had invited County Commission President Toni Preckwinkle, also provided a joyful time during which we could dedicate our solar panels, remind ourselves and teach our children that you cannot live your principles in word only but must act, and re-dedicate ourselves to continuing work for the future on behalf of our beleaguered planet. I was lucky to be able to observe some of the planning of the public event because of my spouse's participation. He and what I observed was a large and always growing team of volunteers in our congregation and in the partner organizations worked energetically to make the event a success. I was inspired by our Green Sanctuary team (co-chaired by Mark K. and Don Bussey) and all the people who participated as that team grew and grew.

The solar panel dedication was yet another reminder that faith is not something that you possess, it is something that you must live in your choices and deeds – whether as an individual, a family, or congregation.

All year, I have been excited and inspired by the work of our Social Action Committee and our Outreach Steering Committee. Not only have we raised generous funds to contribute to our service partners, we have increased our commitment and our action on behalf of and in solidarity with others. I was fortunate this year to be invited to speak publicly at a couple of events – one event in Palatine when I spoke of the spiritual dimension of a fairer tax law and another event in Barrington when I spoke in support of immigrants who were brought here as children, raised here, and who are, for all intents and purposes, American.

I am also looking forward, right now, to the 40 Days of Action promoted by the New Poor People's Campaign. Maryanne O'Dowd and I worked on a worship service to introduce the 40 Days to the congregation, and it is my hope that not only will there be plentiful active participation during the 40 Days, but that it will build up a habit so that, as a congregation, we will continue that activism with the New Poor People's Campaign far into the future. The 40 Days is the critical inaugural time which will be part of making a clear declaration that as Marley said to Scrooge, "Humankind is our business!"

In addition, as part of the 40 Days of Action, and perhaps long after, a number of folks here at Countryside, including myself, will become certified voter registrars. This will enable us to go out in the community, in a structured, planned way and help register people to participate in our democracy. That's exciting!

I was also glad that there was another round of the Beloved Conversations on Race this year. I believe this is an important program, and I wish that every person at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist would participate in the program. It is only eight or so sessions long, and it provides group connection, genuine awareness raising, and it is directed at an issue which curses our society – the issue of racism. Melanie Schikore and Kamala Urs led the group, for which I am also deeply grateful. It is a series best led by laypeople for laypeople. When I went through it, I could see its applicability on a wide scale in a congregation.

Despite Jules Jaramillo's departure, the enthusiasm I found for our Lifespan Religious Education Program has not dampened. For a long time, I have felt keenly that we needed more specific Unitarian Universalist adult faith development. So, it was with great joy that our Lifespan Director of Religious Education and I began the Turning Points series. This will go on into the future, offering regular sessions for study and discussion of Unitarian Universalist figures in history, Unitarian Universalist responses to the larger events of history, individual turning points for spiritual growth, and exploration of current trends, challenges, and opportunities in the larger world of Unitarian Universalism. For the most part, these sessions will be stand-alone units. This will enable people to be able to dip in and out, as schedules allow. While it is always good for people to form cohorts for study or for the sheer pleasure of one another's company, people's schedules nowadays are so challenging that standalone sessions made the most sense. As the sessions began, I felt great excitement and enjoyed the opportunity both to teach and to facilitate some rigorous discussion among those who attended. I am looking forward to the sessions in the future. When I attended our Transitions Meeting in March, to hear Jules talk about Lifespan RE, I heard a great passion for learning more about Unitarian Universalism from the people there, which reinforced the messages I have heard from others.

I loved the Journeys Retreat, which I co-led with Jules. Unitarian Universalism is a shared path, but it is also an individual discipline, an individual search that asks of each of us time and deep attention and a certain rigorous notice in exploring our own ethics, metaphysics, system of belief, and meaningful symbols. That is the price, I believe, of our principle of the individual search for truth and meaning.

In the spring of 2017, I attended, along with Alison Vernon and Lois Phillips, an exciting workshop on worship arts led by Marcia McFee. We returned much energized, and I looked forward to the worship calendar for the 2017–18 church year. Although I was unable to bring many of those plans to fruition, I look forward in the next year to being able to bring further dimension to our worship experience. In the meantime, our Music Director Alison Vernon and the many talents of musicians in our congregation have enriched our whole year. I have gone further, this
year, with the themes in my preaching and have found that to be inspiring to me, and I love the way that it ripples through the congregation – as the themes are shared in our small groups, our lifespan religious education, our monthly newsletter, and on the walls of our building so that conversation and reflection happens among us all throughout the year. I look forward to next year’s themes and the adventures on which those themes will take us. Our music program, as you will see in the Music Director’s report, has been really strong this year. There is no need for me to go into great detail because of her report, however there are a few things I would like to highlight. One is my appreciation for the steady, faithful work of our choir on so many Sundays throughout the year, sometimes at both services, to bring the focus of the service alive through music, to bring depth and texture to worship, and to model song as a spiritual practice to the congregation at large. Another is my appreciation for the growing – gradually – attendance at our first service. In part, I think that is due to the different energy at each service, offering people an opportunity to worship in slightly different atmospheres. I think that the solo singing of Alison Vernon as well as the periodic volunteering of other vocalists and musicians at that earlier service has also been an enriching dimension. Yet another is my appreciation for the Sundays on which the Peace River Band plays. They manage to have a sound that truly accompanies the mood of the service, and they bring in energy and a sound which is refreshing. The blend of different kinds of music at different services on different Sundays helps us to more fully embody our sources in our services.

This April, I had the pleasure of attending the Choral Festival in which our choir participated. While you can read more about it in the Music Director’s report, I want to add that as an observer of the event, as one in the audience for that festival, it was a highlight of my year. The blending of seven choirs and the outstanding excellence of our own made for a powerful musical experience and a musical experience composed of pieces entirely in keeping with Unitarian Universalist principles, values, and tradition. If we are able to participate again next year or the year after, I urge everyone to attend for the sheer pleasure and joy of music.

As most of you know, I had surgery at the end of September, followed by many complications, and yet I missed none of the major holidays and special days of the 2017-18 church year. Ingathering, High Holy Days, Thanksgiving, most of December – with Christmas Eve a high point, the New Year service with our annual greens and beans potluck largely prepared by my spouse Mark, the sermon on the amount Sunday, Easter, Earth Day, and all that will come after this report is submitted. I was able before my surgery to line up visiting speakers and then as complications arose in my recovery, to find more speakers. I was so fortunate to have colleagues willing to come in who were so good that the congregation was truly nourished from the pulpit throughout the year. I loved working with the themes and benefit from the dimension that they add both to worship and my own creative process.

I returned to the congregation and the pulpit repeatedly during my recovery, and then, disappointed by complications and infection, I would end up returning to the hospital and then home. I very much missed being in the flow of the year, but our president Christine Organ kept me in the loop, and most months, I was able to attend board meetings by phone or electronically.

The staff, however, found themselves in an awkward position, where there were demands on their time that would normally have been handled by me. As a result, one of the positive things that came out of my absence, is that the board and I have created a guide document that will help the congregation in the unlikely event that such a challenge would arise again. I consulted with colleagues and created a guide that will offer clear paths for the congregation, the staff, and the board to know where to turn. One of the things to remember, that I always keep in mind but recognize that members of the congregation may not, is that our regional staff hired by the Unitarian Universalist Association are always available to offer guidance to congregations when needed. On the whole, what I saw while recovering was the congregation moving ahead with both vision and energy.

Jules Jaramillo’s departure was triggered, in large part by an offer, out of the blue, from a congregation that provides generous health coverage for their staff – something of critical importance for many people – as well as stronger compensation. It has long been my hope that we would focus on providing strong health coverage to our own staff and strive to compensate more competitively. The UUA health plan, while expensive, is an excellent plan. As we look ahead to fund raising, to priorities, to future hiring, and to staff retention, I urge us to make staff compensation and health care a benefit we offer as a matter of justice, fair compensation (a UUA designation we have fallen short of for some years), and good practice as an employer in a competitive setting.

I had plans, arranged with the board, to take sabbatical time in the spring of this year, to work on some research and writing however, with the lost work time already behind me, it seemed impractical and kind of heartbreaking, to be away from the congregation even more this year. Therefore, I am putting off my sabbatical time, details to be worked out with the board.

At the same time, I have found many sources of inspiration this year. Our themes have sometimes been a challenge, but repeatedly challenged me to think more creatively. The staff team has been a place of inspiration and co-creative thinking. A world of good thinking continues even when the world seems a little mad. Always, there is so much to read. Above all, there is this creative, compassionate, congregation that challenges me to broaden my sights, deepen my thinking, and serve with a whole heart.

It is an honor for me to serve this faith here with you.

Hilary Landau Krivchenia
DIRECTOR OF LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is with sadness and love that I submit my final annual report serving Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist as your Director of Lifespan Religious Education. This report is an overview and reflection of the work we have done this year and includes my hopes for your future. I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the entire church for your support, creativity, and dedication to our Lifespan program. It has been an honor to serve as your religious educator, and I will miss you all deeply.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the staff team at Countryside Church. It has been an honor to serve this community alongside some of the most talented, dedicated, and gifted individuals I have ever worked with. Laurie Lantz, CCUU’s Congregational Administrator, holds every piece of this church together and I could not have served this congregation the way I have without her support. Laurie is a gift to CCUU that should be celebrated on a daily basis. Alison Vernon, the Director of Music, has brought her incredible gifts to our worship experiences and has shared her light, love, and laughter with everyone around her. Reverend Hilary has been an honor to work with. She is an example to all ministers of what true shared ministry is. She is a brilliant minister, brings delight to those around her, and has been a generous partner in creating a more loving and accepting multigenerational community. She is genuinely dedicated to her staff team and works tirelessly to serve Countryside Church. I will truly miss being part of this staff team.

Family Ministry

This was the first full year Family Ministry has been learning and growing together. Our Mission, Vision, and Values statement was developed, and we are learning ways to embrace what this means for families at CCUU. This year was challenging to coordinate and make connections as much as we had hoped. Hilary’s leave and additional responsibilities on staff took some of the focus away from connecting families to the mission, vision, and values. My hope for the future of Family Ministry is that we listen to families, to their needs, and how to connect those needs to the vision of CCUU through our RE program, connections to social justice, and the larger faith community. I encourage families to unite, support one another, and to be a voice in the future of CCUU.

Family Ministry Mission

Countryside Church’s Family Ministry recognizes each family as the primary source of religious education for their children. Together, we unite to support and nurture families through education, spiritual development, social engagement, community outreach and connection with the larger church community.
**Family Ministry...**

**Supports** families raising children in our Unitarian Universalist values in a rapidly changing world.

**Nurtures** families through education, spiritual development, social engagement, community outreach and connection with the larger church community.

**Fosters** parent to parent interaction, support, and sharing of ideas as they face the challenges and celebrate the joys that go along with raising a family.

**Develops** our children’s sense of community and a shared sense of identity with our church and the values it represents.

**Seeks** to transform lives, promote justice, and foster universal values of love, respect, and responsibility for children, youth, and families.

**Celebrates** our children’s unique sense of self, their place in our wider Unitarian Universalist movement today, and for generations to come.

**Family Ministry Events**
- September: Ingathering
- October: Game night
- November: Bingo for Books
- December: Caroling Party
- January: Pizza and Movie Night
- February: Cupcake Wars
- March: Board Games and Pizza Night
- April: Seder
- May: Bonfire

**Religious Education Support Staff**
Aida Acurio and Natalie Gerson to serve as our paid childcare employees and have been great support not only to our RE program but also providing needed childcare for adult RE, membership, choir and 20/30 Something childcare needs. Kathy Underwood was hired as the RE Assistant in October. She has brought a wealth of knowledge and support with her 21 years of RE experience and expertise. She has supported the RE program, Family Ministry and Adult Faith in a professional manner beyond her title or job description. We are fortunate to have her as part of the staff team.

**RE Volunteers**
Our RE program is a cooperative effort and would not exist without many hours of generous support. Many thanks to everyone who served as RE Floaters, and to the 50+ volunteers, who made this year’s RE experiences possible. Our RE Coordinators were Cara Duffy, Jen Rotchford, Chris Smith, Lisa Bezella, Linda Berry, and Kim Tifford. I extend my sincere appreciation to all these leaders, who give generously of their time, energy and spirit. I have contacted the RE Coordinators and teachers to encouraged them to continue supporting the RE program. We truly need all our wonderful volunteers to stay next year and welcome new faces to our RE volunteer teams.

**Children and Youth Religious Education**
We have 89 children and youth registered with approximately 40 visitors or non-registered attendees. Religious education class attendance ranged from 40-65 young people on Sundays with an average of 45 for the program year. Fluctuation in attendance depends on band, sports, and extracurricular school activities.

**Summer RE**
Last year’s summer RE program for Grades K-6 was supported solely by volunteers. The programming focused on community building, meaningful values-based stories and fun. We cared for our garden, shared our gifts of creativity, and played community building games. This summer, our focus will be on world religions and how their faith lessons share common values and lessons that connect to our Unitarian Universalist faith.

**2017-2018 Curricula**
- **Nursery (0-2) & Chalice Children (+2 years – Pre-K)**
  Aida, our nursery care provider, continues to provide a safe, nurturing environment for our youngest UUs to play, nap, and engage while parents attend service. Natalie, our paid childcare provider, works in Chalice Children on Sunday morning with volunteers. Chalice Children curriculum and activities encourages self-awareness and teaches UU values with stories and celebrations from around the world.

- **Spirit Play (Kindergarten & 1st Grade)**
  2018’s focus is our 2nd Source; in Spirit Play’s language, *people from long ago and today, whose lives remind us to be kind and fair.* Centers include Head, Heart, and Hand with themed-base activities to support individual learning styles.

(continued...)
Hogwarts UU (Grades 2-4 and 5-6)
This has been an exciting year with a new Hogwarts curriculum. The themes in Hogwarts UU support the Seven Unitarian Universalist Principles. Young people learn about the values of diversity, honoring the worth of all beings, the power of love, the importance of community, how to work toward the goal of a peaceful world with justice for all, the right of conscience and how to show a deep respect for the interdependent web of life.

Our Living Sources (Jr Youth)
Connecting our Sources to our UU Faith and how they shape our lives through understanding and compassion.

Soul Matters (Senior High Youth)
Our senior high youth share time in community and fellowship. They have been involved in many youth activities including the Youth Ministry Revival and Youth Cons.

Faith in Action
Every other month, Faith in Action provides opportunities for young people to experience their power to make a positive difference in the world, experience learning and service as an integral part of our UU beliefs and practices, and cultivate young people’s natural sense of justice, empathy, and compassion. This year, our focus has been to connect Faith in Action with our service partners or with those organizations we “share the plate” with.

Senior High Youth Group
Lead Advisor: Kim Tilford Frank; Youth Ministry Team: Steve Black, Jeanie Michalec, Leslie Vaughn, Joel Dennison
It has been a challenging year of attendance in the Sr High Youth Group; we continued with a combination of curriculum-based workshops mixed with open discussion topics. We are receiving feedback that the youth would like more structured learning opportunities so Kim is working with Jules to schedule further out and publicize a more consistent curriculum to meet that need and encourage more regular attendance. Youth had expressed an interest in Social Justice outings early in the year, but with limited attendance and little response to ideas the advisors were hesitant to plan this. We are going to try for 2 within the next few months that will include the Jr. High group and have plans to launch new ways to connect with youth group parents in hopes to revitalize the group.

The youth group attended both Fall and Spring regional youth conferences this year. Fall Con was at 2nd UU in Chicago and Spring Con was at the DuPage UU Church in Naperville.
The youth assisted the younger grades in December’s Hanukah activities and have also participated in Faith in Action Sunday’s including the Easter Sunday food drive.
The annual Youth Group service was on February 25th, the group chose the theme of Lean on Me. Seven youth participated in skits, songs and stories, followed by serving soup in Atherton Hall afterward to promote community and play off the story of Stone Soup that was told as the story for all ages.
We did not have a youth that was able to join the Board as a youth liaison, but we are hoping to have a youth join the Board this coming year. The monthly themes have been a helpful connection with the larger church and the youth group has connected discussions, music meditations and readings to open our group time with a connection to the current theme.

Respectfully submitted by Kim Tilford Frank, Lead Advisor

Adult Faith Development
• 20/30 Somethings strives for mindful listening while remaining open to where the currents of conversation take us. We work towards interpersonal growth through compassionate connection while contributing to the community through service.
• Buddhist Study Group
• AHA: Atheism, Agnostics, and Humanism
• Open Forum- discussion on Issues of the Day
• Mary Oliver Poetry Series
• Book Groups- Book Circle (nonfiction), Last Mondays (primarily fiction), Great Books (offshoot of Transitions)
• Divinity School Address, Pt.1 & 2
• Journeys Retreat
• The Elevator Speech
All Church Worship
CCUU continues to create worship opportunities where children, youth, and adults experience the benefits of multigenerational community. These have included:

- **August**: Backpack Blessing/Love Demonstration
- **September**: Ingathering
- **October**: Stories of our UU Faith
- **November**: Thanksgiving
- **December**: Chalica
  - Christmas Pageant
  - C'mas Eve Morning
  - Christmas Eve
- **January**: Martin Luther King
- **February**: Sr High Youth Service
- **March**: The Six Sources
- **April**: Earth Day

CCUU Community Outreach

- **August**: Vigil for Charlottesville to show our support for Charlottesville and stand up against racism and hate in all forms. Open and attended by the public and local UU church members.
- **September**: Community@Heart hosted and organized a national UU youth ministry revival. CCUU youth and advisors attended, and I worked directly with regional staff to coordinate the event. We brought in youth leaders, ministers, musician and religious educators that inspired youth and adult leaders (teams) across the MidAmerica Region and beyond to engage with and explore spiritual practice in an inclusive and culturally sensitive UU context and to bring this experience to their community and the greater world.
- **October**: Christine Organ and I attended and spoke at an interfaith vigil at the Sikh Religious Society in remembrance of the victims of the Las Vegas shooting.
- **December**: I was the Keynote Speaker at Faith in Place annual event and fundraiser, reflecting on Unitarian Universalism and our connection to the 7th principle and our relationship with our Outreach Partner FIA.

Connection to our Larger UU Faith

- **UUA Family Ministry Webinar panelist**: I was asked to be a speaker on a UU panel hosted by Kimberly Sweeney to discuss the work that CCUU is engaged in with family ministry. There were representatives from 22 UU congregations to discuss family ministry, multi-generation programming, and Full Week Faith. There is a new understanding across all denominations which recognizes the importance to serve families in inclusive, all age programming, and church life for churches to be relevant and sustainable in the future. Countryside Church’s progress with Family Ministry is being looked at as a model for this work.
- **LREDA Continental Board- Professional Support Portfolio**: Serving the Liberal Religious Educators Association in active support and advocacy for religious educators for the United States and Canada. This portfolio includes overseeing Good Offices and Good Officers and support for LREDA Chapter Leadership.

Professional Development

- **Dismantling Racism with Religious, Educational and Non-Profit Systems**: 30-hour intensive at Chicago Lutheran School of Theology paid for by LREDA Diversity and Inclusion Team and CCUU Social Action Committee.

Although I am leaving at the end of June, I wish this beloved congregation the best in the future. I hope that at some point you focus your efforts towards providing full health coverage, through the excellent UUA health plan, and actual fair compensation to attract and keep the finest level of professional staffing. I encourage you to embrace fully and budgetarily support Lifespan Religious Education allowing your Religious Education leadership to strengthen a program that will grow and deepen the lives of every person who walks through your doors. I believe if CCUU approaches faith formation as a mission and a value of this congregation, the result will not only flourish your membership, it will also increase life-long connections to Unitarian Universalism and Countryside Church.

As I wrote in my letter to the congregation, my hope for Countryside Church is that you continue your journey of faith development while looking deeply at how Unitarian Universalism creates meaning in how you live and in what you do. I ask that you continue to embrace the work that we have begun together in sharing your hearts with one another, welcoming families, and living church life in this multigenerational community. What I hope for you the most is that you continue to love boldly and courageously.

Submitted in faith and love—Jules Jaramillo

Love Demonstration, August 2017
Our fiscal year begins with summer services in July and are mostly led by lay leaders. Tom Dempsey and band provided a folk/patriotic musical service which has quickly become a Countryside tradition. Although the choir is on hiatus, they chose to come together on Pride Sunday (normally held in June but held in July last year) to sing for the service. Lois Phillips and I, having recently returned from a conference about planning worship experiences, went all out, along with many others, to decorate to the fullest in rainbow motif.

Lay people also provided music for most of the summer services. The choir also came together, out of summer hiatus to do a service in August, followed by a potluck and choir retreat/kickoff.

Countryside Church has subscribed to Soul Matters themed ministry for a couple years now and this year, the themes were taken to a whole new level. Again, calling on some of the techniques learned at the Worship Experiences workshop, Lois Phillips and I began a monthly theme table that visually announces the monthly theme. It greets people as they enter the building. Appreciation has been high concerning the table. Lois and Alison also continued calling for artwork from church members that would reflect the monthly theme and while we did not have submissions every single month, we did receive amazing art about half the time. We plan to continue seeking themed art from our congregation.

I have successfully completed two years of a three-year UU musician credentialing program. Only one more year to go. It is a very intensive program and incorporates UU theology and history and personal reflection along with music. The program requires hours of study and written papers and projects.

I also attended the UUMusicians Network conference in Arlington Virginia. The week long conference is a gathering of UU musicians from all over the United States and Canada. We study, participate in workshops, sing, network, and worship. This time, at the end of the week, about 200 of us held a song gathering on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and sang Justice songs for 2 hours. It was a glorious sound on a spectacular day and well received by the hundreds of tourists visiting the site that day.

September brought the beginning of the “choir year” and the beginning of our Children’s Choir too. Countryside’s newly established Children’s Choir serves approximately 15 1st thru 4 graders who love to sing and are really talented. This gives the children a very real and meaningful opportunity to actually participate in our worship services. Music is chosen to reflect the church’s monthly theme which is also part of what they are studying in RE. Our kids sang in all generation services 5 times this year and did an outstanding job. We also had a volunteer children’s choir intern this year, Mr Jamey McDunn. Jamey is working on his music certification to teach elementary music and needed some experience. He chose to come to Countryside and work with Music Director Alison Vernon. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to have him “on board”.

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Rev. Hilary Krivchenia was on medical leave in October and the services were led by multiple guest speakers. The choir continued to be the glue that held the services together, and although Rev. Hilary was very much missed, the Sunday services were vibrant and inspiring. Rev. Hilary's medical leave was longer than expected but again, the staff pulled together and continued the work of Countryside.

In December, the RE led by Jules Jaramillo and the choir collaborated on our second annual All Ages Caroling Party. It was a huge success with about 65 participants of all ages, caroling, crafting, eating, and socializing. We also collaborated on the annual church Christmas pageant.

On Dec 18, 15 choir members joined me at a Community Carol Sing held in Wilmette. This event brings together people from many different churches to sing music of the holiday season with a 50 voice choir, 20 brass instruments, and a pipe organ. This is a fundraiser for the Greater Chicago Food Depository and this year over $6000 was raised and then doubled by an anonymous donor.

On March 30, the choir collaborated on a lovely contemplative evening Tennebrae service followed by a joyous Easter service on April 1.

The Countryside choir participated in the Western Crescent Choral Festival this year. Seven UU churches from the area met on April 15 at the church in Elgin and presented a concert of choral music and ending with a combined choir of over 100 voices. Over $1300 was raised for the local Crisis Center.

The Countryside band, known as the Peace River Band continued playing about 4 times this year and was led by Jeff Phillips. They are always appreciated and enjoyed. There were also a couple of Sunday services where the music was provided by piano, violin and cello, which was also very much appreciated. There is an abundance of talent within our congregation.

There was a lot of music making going on at Countryside this year, and through it all, our collaborative pianist, Dr. Janice Razaq provided musical leadership on our keyboards. We all appreciate her so much.

As the “annual report year” draws to a close, I find it exciting to reflect on all the ways in which music ministry is such an important and inspiring part of Countryside Church and also the larger UU community. The Countryside music ministry also contributes substantially and financially to the larger community through its involvement with the Community Carol Sing, Music With a Mission, and the Western Crescent Choir Festival.

I anticipate continuing all of these programs in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted, Alison Vernon
CONGREGATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

The 2017-18 church year started with my emergency appendectomy the end of July. Board member Karen Epps and ever-reliable office volunteer Debbie Lee provided office support during my time away, for which I am tremendously grateful.

During my recovery at home, I spent many hours converting our church membership database from ChurchDB to Breeze Church Management System. Breeze is much easier to customize than ChurchDB was. They have lots of documentation and videos for how to use, but those are not necessarily written for distribution to congregants, so I’ve needed to create that documentation myself.

As most of you know, in addition to supporting the Board, Ministries, Staff & Minister in the coordination and administration of programs, my areas of responsibility include:

• Communications, including the weekly e-news, the monthly Focus, orders of worship, pamphlets/brochures, the website, and this Annual Report;
• Finance, including all bookkeeping and payroll;
• managing the church calendar & coordinating scheduling of church programs & building rentals;
• maintaining church records, files, & databases;
• overseeing church facilities including the North Property.

As you well may guess, in a church this size, all of that is time-consuming and could not be done without the assistance of volunteers. Debbie Lee for several years has been my primary office volunteer. Tom Curtis and Don Bussey provide regular office support on Sunday mornings, allowing me to put on my ‘member hat’ for a few hours each week. Many thanks to the other volunteers who have helped in the office this year: Dan Yokas & Tim Walsh, Pat Rochelle & Art Mayfield, Karen Epps, Lois Phillips.

In addition to regular staff meetings, I attend monthly meetings of the Executive Team (Minister, Board President, President-elect, Board Vice President), Ministry Council, and Finance Committee.

Communications. In addition to compiling the Annual Report, which you are currently reading, I compile & edit the monthly newsletter, the weekly e-updates, the order of worship & inserts. The church website is a WordPress format based on a template from the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), which Cherita Axel adapted for CCUU. Currently, Rev. Hilary and I are the primary updaters of website content. Mike Gilley helped to create the Solar Panel page which shows the metric of energy generated & used. I’ve spent quite a bit of time this year trying to get our website menu structure to more closely resemble the UUA template, which was developed through best practice research and user testing to find the most intuitive way for users (both UU and non-UU) to find what they need on a congregational website. There is still more to be done. It would be great to have a few more people able to update website content; if this is of interest to you, please let me know.

Christine Organ, Jackie Dennison, and Michelle Hitchcock continue to administer CCUU’s social media presence on Facebook and Instagram; if you have church-related content you want posted there, please send it through a staff member or ministry coordinator.

Professional Development. I maintain membership in the Association of UU Administrators (AUUA). I attended AU-UA Professional Days in New Orleans in June 2017. This year, I will attend both AUUA Professional Days and UU General Assembly in Kansas City, MO. I have been asked to serve on the AUUA Board beginning the end of June and will attend the AUUA Board meeting in advance of Professional Days. AUUA Professional Days is a valuable conference for learning pertinent administrative updates from the UUA and for sharing resources and information with colleagues, as well as being professionally reinvigorating. My ability to regularly attend this important conference is because of the professional expense funds provided by CCUU.

Though there isn’t currently an active local or regional UU administrators’ group, a few of us try to meet when possible. Most administrators have trouble getting away from work, especially those who are part-time; those of us who have been most successful in meeting regularly are from CCUU, Tree of Life in McHenry, Geneva UU, North Shore in Deerfield, and Prairie Circle in Grayslake.

Sign-up Genius: We continue to use this online tool for congregants to sign-up for the essential Sunday volunteer positions of greeter, usher, A/V assistant, and coffee host – it can be accessed from the front page of the church webs (www.ccuu.org). Using Sign-up Genius requires less managerial time on the part of office staff and volunteers. The Hospitality Teams help to make sure these roles are filled each week. Angelina Huntsha uses sign-up genius for the PADS Meal sign-up. Jules has a separate sign-up genius account for RE volunteers.

Areas Where You Might Help (this is basically the same list from year-to-year)

If you see something with which you can help, leave a note in my mailbox or send me an email, office@ccuu.org.

• Facilities on-call list, to be called as needs arise. Many thanks to Steve Black, Don Bussey, Richard Urban, Jeff Phillips, Ron Vargason, Mike Gilley, Roger Lofstrand, and John Evans – my current list of facilities helpers.
• Website content updating
• Graphic design interest/experience: helping to refresh the Annual Report format and/or other printed church materials
• Photographers: please take photos at any opportunity - church meetings, events, gatherings, worship - and to share them with me, so we have selections to use for purposes on the Annual Report, website, and other publications. Barrie Burr has been a great help in this capacity this year, and Dayle Roberts and Ken Sepos have agreed to help as well – thank you!
• Lobby staff – monitoring the doors to give groups access to the building yet keeping the doors locked for safety/security, perhaps while doing some clerical or handyperson work (a few hours one evening/week or month)

In appreciation and faith, Laurie Lantz
THE MINISTRIES

The activities and programs of Countryside Church UU (CCUU) are organized into Ministries. Each Ministry encompasses events, teams, committees, groups, councils, and is led and sustained by staff and lay leadership. The Ministries help people find pathways to become involved in activities of interest and to create connections among our people and programs. Ministries support the work of CCUU and ensure that our work is aligned with the mission, covenant, and seven principles of Unitarian Universalism.

Our Ministries are named to represent our congregational covenant, “we unite to strengthen the bonds of Kinship” and to promote our vision through Worship, Study, and Service; and they exist to make that covenant live.

The Ministry Council coordinates the many programs and efforts of these Ministries. It meets monthly and is made up of the Board Vice President and Senior Minister, who act as co-chairs; the Staff Leads and Ministry Coordinators of each of the ministries; and the Congregational Administrator.

This year, we encouraged all the groups and committees in each ministry to tell the “story” of their purpose and activities visually for the annual report and for others to learn about our various programs. The process, led by Maryanne O’Dowd and Jackie Dennison and assisted by photographer Barrie Barr – more photos and fewer words – is a work in process. Of course, some of our activities are more photogenic than others, but every group has a story to tell.

The Ministry Council this year included Service Ministry coordinators Maryanne O’Dowd and Tom Curtis, Kinship Ministry coordinators Juli Cicarelli and Lisa Christensen, Study Ministry leader Jules Jaramillo, Worship Ministry coordinators Lois Phillips and Reverend Hilary, and Congregational Administrator Laurie Lantz representing Operations-Foundations. We have determined that instead of monthly meetings which were primarily used for reporting and communicating, we will change our process for 2018-19. We plan to hold three workshop sessions for the year to include the ministry coordinators and all the committee chairs and group leaders. We plan the initial session for Jun 2, 2018 as a joint session with the Board of Trustees to ensure that all the groups’ goals and plans will be aligned with the board’s direction and goals for the fiscal year. The second session will be scheduled for late August or early September as a workshop to formulate and communicate the activities to carry out the goals planned in June. The final session will be held in early January to prepare committee and ministry budgets, contributing to the church’s annual financial planning.

This past year, the Board of Trustees finalized two new policies with input from the Ministry Council. We now have a policy for using external signs on the church property promoting CCUU events that complies with the regulations of the Village of Palatine. With many enthusiastic members and friends of Countryside who have creative ideas for projects, issues, and events they want to pursue, we have created a policy to guide the formation of new groups and for planning church-wide activities. These are intended as guidelines to ensure alignment with Countryside’s mission and vision, to manage events on the calendar, and to ensure successful endeavors.

During the 2018 Stewardship campaign, each ministry was represented by an individual’s affirmation about the value they receive from membership here and why they pledge.

As you know, we have had a year packed with successful events led by tremendously talented leaders and committees. To keep up this great involvement in the Countryside community, I encourage others to step forward to contribute your time and talents too. We are currently seeking a coordinator for Circle Suppers, our social opportunity to get to know other parishioners better, and we continue to need people to step up for hospitality roles each Sunday. I thank all of our very active committee, group and ministry leaders and participants for the huge contribution you all make.

….submitted by Peggy Simonsen
Ministry Council Chair &
Vice President of the Board of Trustees
WORSHIP MINISTRY
Reverend Hilary Krivchenia, Minister
Alison Vernon, Music Director
Lois Phillips, Worship Council Chair

Due to necessary, planned medical leave, the minister was able to line up visiting speakers before her surgery and was then able to find more speakers, as complications arose, during her recovery. We enjoyed a diversity of services and were glad that there was additional support from neighboring clergy. Our Music Director, Alison Vernon, as well as the entire Worship Council, worked to create uplifting worship throughout the year.

It was an exciting and positive worship year. Our work with the themes deepened this year and the Peace River Band returned, under the leadership of Jeff Phillips, to bring a fresh dimension to worship services.

The Worship Council is a small and dynamic group of people who really make interesting worship possible. They support visiting speakers and Guest Ministers, and their work was made more challenging this year with the unexpected prolonged absence of the minister.

In addition, the members of the Worship Council corral readers, they support and sometimes offer worship, they work with the minister to arrange summer worship, set up the chancel for special services (think Child Dedication tables, Flower Communion, candles, chalice oil, flowers, etc.) The Music Director often meets with the Council, thus ensuring further coordination for our worship services.

The Worship Council members work within the worship services, taking turns, every single Sunday of the year. Some of the Worship Council serve as Vergers, a term that was taken from the old Anglican Church indirectly, through a British situation comedy called *The Vicar of Dibley*.

Some people serve on the Council simply by being readers, helping to set up the sanctuary, and bringing their own wisdom to Sunday services. One of the most cherished of our worship services are the Spiritual Journeys services, during which two members of the congregation share their own spiritual journeys – the path that threaded through their lives and that lead them to Unitarian Universalism.

Predictability, flexibility, reliability, and quick-thinking make worship smooth and the Worship Council makes that happen weekly. It is with deep gratitude to every member of the Worship Council that the Minister chairs the Worship Council. Members: Martha Blus, Tracy Boland, Jackie Dennison, Kristin Huston, Pratik Mamtora, Christine Organ, Leslie Peet, Lois Phillips (who serves as co-chair), and Elizabeth Vesto.

STUDY MINISTRY
Jules Jaramillo, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

Please refer to Jules’s Staff Report
Efforts to make a change for the better are often difficult to do alone. The Countryside Service Ministry offers help to overcome this problem. By working together and sometimes with like-minded organizations, we can make a difference.

The Service Ministry has a long history with Countryside Church and the efforts of its committees have made a significant contribution to the community at-large and the well-being of the church congregation. It embraces particularly the first two and last two of our Unitarian Universalist principles:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equality and compassion in human relations
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

In addition to our Lay & Care Ministry program, through which we provide Service to one another, the Service Ministry committees - Social Action, Outreach Steering, Green Sanctuary – are all actively making a difference. For more information, see each committee’s annual report. If you want to make a difference and put UU values into action, join one of these groups. Any member of the Countryside Church community can participate. If we are to continue as a viable, socially active organization, it’s also important that you do so.

Participation in one or more of the Service Ministry committees is rewarding and invigorating. This time well spent offers opportunities to get to know others who share your interests, to socialize in constructive efforts, and to make a difference. Look for opportunities on the Service Ministry bulletin boards outside of the office, as well as in our area in Atherton Hall or contact us at Service@ccuu.org.

LAY & CARE MINISTRY PROGRAMS
We are completing the 31st year of providing lay/care ministries to the Countryside Church congregation. This year, the Lay Ministry was fortunate to have the following people continue to serve in the program: Ken Bobbe, Karen Greenland, Barbara Griggs, Melanie Schikore, Joy Simon, and Chris Smith.

This Lay Ministry Team supports and expands the pastoral care of the called minister, but the Team also serves to strengthen the ties among the members of the congregation through the active embodiment of the spirit of mutual care. This is a special Team in the congregation and requires particular attributes in order to ensure that we are taking the best care within the congregation that is possible.

Over the winter, all lay ministers were involved in calling every member of Countryside to touch base and to take questions regarding lay ministry. We find this to be very helpful for us and for the congregation in general. Lay Ministry meets monthly at the church to check-in with each other, review current Lay Minister activity, determine availability and write and send cards to members needing support.

Our Care Ministry coordinator, Sheilah Sokeland, continues to arrange for practical assistance, such as rides for medical treatment, check-in calls and visits, and meals for Countryside members when appropriate. These arrangements are made through Rev. Hilary Krivchenia or myself.

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

A long list of activities with social impact – nationally and locally – are embraced by committee members who keep their eyes and ears open to needs and opportunities and thoughtfully consider ways to engage the congregation. During church fiscal (FY) 2018, the Social Action Committee continued many of its long-standing activities—Share-The-Plate, Fair Trade Monthly Sales/Fair Trade Bazaar, PADs and KIVA.org, while strengthening partnerships with organization that help effectively and efficiently affect change toward a more just, compassionate and fair society. Partnerships and collaborations include:
One hundred area advocates, organizers and supporters working to abolish unjust systems gathered at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist for Tearing Down Walls | Building Up Connections, Community, Solidarity in March. Area UUs gained practical insight to complex issues affecting racial and restorative justice.
Living our UU values of justice, compassion and equity often means collaborating with like-minded groups and standing in solidarity with those affected by injustice. These times demand a strategic and concerted effort beyond the strength or resources of any single person, congregation or organization. In the past year, CCUU participated in the Day of Faith at the Capitol, MLK Faith In Action Rally and, recently, committed to making the new Poor People’s Campaign a strategic focus of Countryside’s social justice work.
The Green Sanctuary Program is a UUA accreditation process inspired by our UUA Seventh Principle of "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" and has as its purpose encouraging the spread of "green" values to all aspects of church life. We on the Green Sanctuary Committee in cooperation with other committees and programs are working to facilitate that program. It has been an exciting year for GSC.

We started the year with Don Bussey taking on the role of co-chair from Judy Ball. Don brought to the committee his considerable passion and energy (as will be noted below). Mark Krivchenia continued on as our other co-chair.

The focus of this year was to implement the solar panels for which we raised funds last year. In June, a final contract was signed with Hawk Energy Solutions. Engineering work and contractors were lined up over the summer. Construction was completed by early November, and the lights were turned on (metaphorically) in late November.

Success!
GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE, cont’d

We planned the congregational celebration of our solar panels for Earth Day, April 22, 2018. In addition, we wanted to have a public celebration of this accomplishment to share our success and to educate others in sustainable energy. What started out as a small public event, under Don Bussey’s strong leadership, turned into our second major accomplishment of the year: Sustainable Energy Expo on April 21, 2018.

In partnership with the NW Sierra Club, Faith in Place, and the Citizens Utility Board, the GSC led and hosted a half day Sustainable Energy Expo at CCUU on April 21, 2018. Our headline speakers were Tom Skilling, chief meteorologist at WGN TV, and Seth Darling, an eminent climate scientist from Argonne National Laboratory. In addition, almost 20 exhibitors shared and educated the public about sustainable energy and other “green” topics. Finally, we conducted seven workshops throughout the afternoon. Approximately 400 people attended the event.

We capped this successful Saturday event with a Sunday worship service organized and led by Rev. Hilary. At this service, we celebrated the solar panels and the wonderful efforts of the GSC over the past ten years. We paid special tribute to our founding mothers: Gail Wisniewski, Leslie Peet, and Judy Ball. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle came to the 11:00 service to recognize CCUU’s solar panels!

Along with these major activities, the GSC sustained its ongoing work in the church and our community:

- Leslie Peet organized two winter’s farmers markets, one in November and one in March.
- Leslie again organized our annual winter solstice service.
- Mike Calwas led the community garden through another successful harvest and planning for the upcoming growing season. Excess produce is taken to the local food pantry. (We estimate a couple of hundred pounds of fresh produce throughout the season.)
- Gail Wisniewski continues to lead and be our link to Interfaith Green Partners. They sponsor regular outdoor walks in spring, summer and fall.
- We supported and advocated for many environmental actions throughout the year: local, state and national.
- We continue our ongoing support of Faith in Place as well.

Yours in love, commitment, and community,
Mark Krivchenia & Don Bussey
OUTREACH STEERING COMMITTEE (OSC)
The Board of Trustees established the Outreach Steering Committee to assist and guide CCUU and its congregants in reaching out and making a difference in our community.

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 become an inspiring example to others.
Outreach Steering Committee (OSC) Annual Report
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Contributions to our Service Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funds raised for Countryside Church – Facilities and Capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Contributions this year from Outreach Activities</td>
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Countryside Outreach Activities 2017/2018:

**Time & Talent November 18th ‘17**
(Co-Chairs: Laura Mandell & Linda Berry)
Raised: $31,022

**Music with a Mission March 17th ‘18**
(Co-Chairs: Jeff Phillips & Edie Reese)
Raised: $2,044

Other Activities this year:

**Service Partner Exposition**
October 22nd, ‘17

**Six Focus Groups**
January 14th and 28th, ‘18
Kinship Ministry

KINSHIP MINISTRY
Coordinators: Juli Cicarelli, Kinship@ccuu.org
Staff Lead: Rev. Hilary Krivchenia

The mission of the Kinship Ministry is to ensure Countryside Church grows and has increasing impact on the religious and social life in the Northwest suburbs by developing an atmosphere that is inclusive, welcoming, connecting, compassionate, and respectful.

We include each and every member of Countryside as partners in this mission. We need your welcoming smiles and willing hands and hearts as we welcome newcomers, host church events like the Seder, and help out with church committees. One of the best ways to get to know others and to become an integral part of our beloved community is just to step up and say, 'How can I help?'

Key Committees and Programs (Coordinators)
- Soul Connections Small Group Ministry (Don Bussey)
- Circle Suppers (Marty Farrington)
- Compassionate Communication for Resolving Conflict-CCRC (Vid Axel)
- Feminine Divine Women's Group (Wendy Ingrassia)
- Membership Committee (Tom MacTavish)
- Transitions (Kathy & George Motto)
- Sunday Hospitality Teams

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Our Membership Team consists of Key Gredell, Siri Laurin, Krista MacTavish, and Tom MacTavish. If you are interested in joining the team, contact Tom MacTavish. We continue to emphasize flexibility, availability, and consistency in serving potential members in their quest to find and connect with our community. The Path to Belonging class is comprised of two sessions: one session focused on providing information about the UU faith and sharing the participants' spiritual journey's and a second session focused on meeting our Countryside community through dialogue with representatives from our board, staff, and ministries. We use prepared presentation materials to ensure that our message is well structured and we augment this with a 'take home' folder containing materials describing the UUA, our church, our ministries, and a request for participating in the life of the church through active personal engagement and financial support. This year, we are holding three sessions. 17 people participated in our October and February sessions; of those, 10 joined. We will hold our third session on June 3 & 10.

A special ‘thank you’ to Siri Laurin for being a steadfast champion of the monthly "Intro to CCUU" informational session. Our congregation has done well this year as ambassadors for our faith community and I am often pleased to learn that our visitors’ first contact was with one of you who reached out to them with a friendly smile and expression of interest.

Submitted by Tom MacTavish, Membership Committee Chair, Membership@ccuu.org

PATHFINDERS

In the spring of 2017, through the efforts of Reverend Hilary Krivchenia and Eileen Wiviott, a Listening Campaign was initiated. This campaign provided a tool for CCUU to more fully live our shared values. Its goal was to initiate 30-45 minute, face-to-face conversations with new members at CCUU or other locations in the community. From those conversations, it was hoped to gather information about passions and interests so that connections could be made between the member and a person, program, committee, activity, etc. within the church.
Fifteen to twenty members were invited to the initial information and training meetings. Initially, seven members participated in the Listening Campaign. Currently, there are four members who participate in what we now call Pathfinders. They have reached out to approximately 39 new members (2016,2017,2018) and have identified interests and passions in order to make connections.

Pathfinders has become part of the Kinship Ministry’s Membership program. New members are introduced to the initiative during the Path to Belonging class.

Submitted by Susan Auld & Joy Simon, Pathfinders Co-Facilitators
SOUL CONNECTIONS SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
Don Bussey coordinated our small groups this year, renaming them Soul Connections because at its heart, that is exactly what small group ministry is. We continued to use the materials provided by the Soul Matters collaborative this year. We had a total of 5 groups this year: one group carried over from last year, three new groups began in September, and a fifth group started in April. The group that carried over from last year rotated group facilitation; the other groups were facilitated by Jackie Dennison, Pam Frech, Sue Montgomery, and Chris Smith.

In addition to the Soul Connections groups, Don revitalized Movies with Meaning, offering it as a companion to Soul Connections and a further way for the congregation to continue exploring our monthly ministry themes.

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION for the RESOLUTION of CONFLICT (CCRC)
The CCRC (Compassionate Communication for Resolution of Conflict panel) consists of Vid Axel (chairperson and panelist), duRee Bryant and Lisa Bohné (panelists). The CCRC stands ready to assist those within the CCUU family who might encounter conflicts with others within our congregational circle, but who encounter difficulty engaging constructively with these conflicts, on their own. All panelists have received training regarding the kinds of support that we can offer, how to offer it, and with respect to the limits of CCRC activity. When the panel's support is sought, the more experienced members of the panel make judgments about what kinds of support our less experienced panelists might need to offer the most effective help in specific, conflict situations.

For those who would like assistance, the CCRC can offer different forms of confidential support. Support can range from the rudimentary to the more actively involved. CCRC panelists may offer advice which a person can then apply when striving on one's own to deal more constructively with a conflict. When more support is wished, the CCRC can also offer intermediate forms of help. In its most advanced form, when a given situation warrants, and both parties are willing, one or more CCRC panelist(s) can even assist with facilitated dialogue or mediation.

The CCRC does not take sides or dictate solutions. The CCRC does not seek to act as some kind of "conflict police."

Rather, the aim of the CCRC is to offer confidential and safe support that will assist CCUU community participants who find themselves in conflict, and who request assistance, to 1) communicate more effectively within the framework of our Covenant of Right Relationship; 2) to more deeply understand one another; and 3) together, to craft their own, constructive solutions.

The CCRC may also, at times, make educational presentations in which we draw attention to the existence and purpose of the CCRC, as well as teach skills in more effective communication and conflict resolution.

When the CCRC has been sought for support, we have provided it. Because of the confidentiality involved in such support, further details cannot be provided in this annual report of our activity. Those who have sought our assistance have reported that we have helped and have lived up to our aspirations. Even so, we continue to learn from experience and to improve our work.

We look forward to future opportunities to offer support.

Respectfully Submitted by Vid Axel, Chairperson, CCRC
Kinship Ministry

Feminine Divine Women’s Group

This year, we read and studied Warrior Goddess Training by Heatherash Amara and provided service to the church by helping with Sunday hospitality and Music with a Mission.

Study

Service
TRANSITIONS
For more information about Transitions or to put your name on our email list, please contact our facilitators, Kathy and George Motto, 847-394-0846, george1m@aol.com.

At our January meeting of Transitions: Memoir Makers, Ginny Lopez shared her story to Barbara Griggs, Krista MacTavish, and Tom MacTavish about the wild ride to the August 21, 2017 Total Eclipse and the collected artifacts that made it so memorable.

On February 22, 2018, the CCUU Transitions group hosted John Leeker, Historian/Archivist at Meadville Lombard UU Seminary, for a discussion of his reflections on UU history and Countryside Church in particular. We were joined by Reverend Hilary Krivchenia and our Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Jules Jaramillo. Afterward, we enjoyed a potluck luncheon.

Gloria Kinney’s 90th Birthday was recognized at our March 18th coffee hour.
This year's Seder was held Fri, April 6. About 80 people attended. As usual, we had too much food - which is good. The soup was outstanding. The music added so much to the event - lots of fun. Those who have been working on this event for years were joined by a few new folks. Thank you to all the people who helped make this a wonderful event: Carol & Ken Bobbe, Peggy & Mike Graves, Diane & Alan Johnson, Susan Auld, Linda Kuna, Karen Epps, Lois & Jeff Phillips, Edie Reese & Phil Goldberger, Linda & Mike Berry, Margaret & Ki Kaden, Kathy & George Motto, Mark & Hilary Krivchenia, Jessica Gardner & the 20-30s group, Cathy Marais & Jeff Oremland, Mary Ellen Heelan. It truly takes a village, and with all the help we get, it's not too much work for any one person.
OPERATIONS/FOUNDATIONS MINISTRY

The care and running of our congregational home resides increasingly with staff but depends on the involvement, skills, and time of our congregants.

The Operations/Foundations Ministry includes all things pertaining to maintaining and operating our building and grounds, the equipment, the use of our building, as well as our means of communication— with each other and the broader community. Much of that is overseen by Laurie Lantz, our Congregational Administrator, with the support of a few of our members and friends. Budgetary items fall primarily in the Buildings/Grounds section of the budget, with “operations committees” being Aesthetics, AV, Historian, IT/Tech, Leadership Development, Marketing & Communications, and Safe Congregation (background checks for those working with children & youth).

Most of us take for granted that our building is always here ready to receive us on Sundays and during the week. We take for granted that the heat will turn on, the AV equipment will be available, equipment and materials will be available, our gathering spaces will be attractive and ready for our use. We don’t think about what is involved in producing and sharing information or how the larger community can find out about what is happening within our walls. In a business with a building our size and with the number of people using it, there would be a team of paid staff to cover all of this. At Countryside, we have one staff person plus a small group of volunteers who give of their time and talent quietly and behind the scenes.

BUILDING & FACILITIES. incl. NORTH PROPERTY & CAPITAL REPAIRS

Because of Laurie’s appendectomy last summer, we did not get a church work day scheduled – perhaps this August (stay tuned…) Steve Black continues to be the primary volunteer expert that advises on what needs to be done to keep things in working order and contacting contractors when needed. Steve has also updated the capital repairs forecast for the Board. Don Bussey has been very generous with his time, volunteering one evening each week to help the place look orderly and spic & span – since our custodial service only comes twice/week, that additional time helps a lot! Steve and I are working on getting roofers to attend to the leaks in the sanctuary & RE wing, primarily due to flashing issues. The Sanctuary & Atherton Hall roofs are still under warranty (with two separate companies). In addition to Steve and Don, the on-call list of church members who are handy and willing to do help with minor repairs in the building include Ron Vargason, Jeff Phillips, Ray Holpuch, John Evans, Mike Gilley, Roger Lofstrand, Richard Urban.

Ongoing facilities work for which we have contracts with outside contractors includes quarterly preventive maintenance of the HVAC system and annual inspections of the fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, emergency lights & exit signs, and sprinkler system. We also have a bi-monthly contract with Smithereen Pest Management.

This year at the North Property: we had another dead tree taken down, replaced the oven/range which quit working, and replaced the garage door springs, which broke. There are a couple kitchen cabinet doors which still need to be repaired/re-hung and a window which needs to be replaced; for these items, we will get a quote from a contractor who has done work for us in the past. We are also aware that the carpet is quite worn and might need replacing soon.

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The CCUU website uses WordPress, based on a template provided by the UUA and adapted by Cherita Axel. Christine Organ, Jackie Dennison, and Michelle Hitchcock administer CCUU’s social media presence on Facebook and Instagram; if you have church-related content you want posted there, please send it to a staff member or ministry coordinator. With our switch to Breeze Church Management System, we now use MailChimp for weekly e-updates; it is FREE and capable of coordinating with Breeze if we decide to segment the congregation for more targeted emails.

AUDIO-VISUAL

I am happy to report that this year was relatively smooth regarding Audio and Video at CCUU. At replacement cost, we have over $80k of AV equipment, about $20k of which is beyond its life expectancy. This year, we purchased a heavy-duty rolling stand for our new 55” LED screen. The screen was donated in December by the Kenneth Young Center, who asks simply that we put their visual content in rotation with ours. Their content is aimed at Youth, encouraging them to say NO to alcohol consumption. In addition to displaying “slide shows” from a memory stick, this display may be rolled to where it’s needed and was very helpful in our April Sustainable Energy Expo.

During the Expo, our AV capabilities were exceeded. We brought in three borrowed projectors for break-out sessions, and I used borrowed video networking gear, in order to link a camera feed to the projector in Atherton Hall. Don Bussey borrowed a video camera from the Palatine Library, providing engaging video to those without a seat in the sanctuary. It would be helpful to make these enhancements permanent.

Thanks to donations from the participants in Rem Stokes’s Monday night class, classroom 1 is equipped with LED video
Operations/Foundations Ministry

display. Last August, Jules purchased a second screen for classroom 2 because we needed screens for two RE classes. Perhaps in the future, all rooms will be similarly equipped. If you are upgrading your home video, please consider donating your 50" or greater LED display. Such displays would need to be thin and wall-mountable.

Other AV improvements include dual hi-definition monitors at the AV table, an Apple iMac, and a remote control for the choir to control their audio monitor loudspeaker. We are retiring our oldest video projector, and I have donated an upgraded model, which includes HDMI input, to accommodate digital source equipment.

Before the end of this fiscal year, we hope to have a high-definition remotely-controlled video camera installed in our sanctuary. This will be part of next year's initiative to provide video archiving and streaming. The cost and complexity of video streaming has come down dramatically, and it is our desire to "spread our lovely light far and wide," using the tools of the current century. This will also allow shut-ins to be able to participate in our services, and we estimate, build our membership.

Of course, AV infrastructure is nothing without the people who operate it. We would like to thank Tony Pretto for his unassuming assistance for the 9:00 service, and Mike Gilley, Karen Greenland, Mike Jeschke, Art Paton for 11:00 service. Our need for AV assistants is going to increase next year, as we add video streaming. We will make it as easy as possible to carry out this meaningful work. Thank you all for your help this past year and thank you in advance for your help this coming year. Your vital service is commendable!

…Jeff Phillips, AV Systems Lead

AESTHETICS

Team Members: Lois Phillips (Facilitator), Dan Yokas, Tracy Boland, Pratik Mamtora, Naomi Unverzagt, Gloria Kinney and Laurie Lantz (Tie Breaker)

Our mission will always focus on the beautification and improvement of the aesthetics in our amazing church home. This mission informs our yearly goals.

This year, we saw the addition of a handrail in the Sanctuary to assist those of our members who need extra stability when they utilize the ramp in front of the Pulpit Wall. Thank you, Jeff, for making Lois’s design a reality!

Laurie Lantz and Lois Phillips spent three days at Oakton Community College rummaging through many rooms on multiple floors and two buildings inspecting, selecting and transporting 16 new upholstered armchairs for the choir rehearsal room and flexible wooden furniture suitable for the RE wing of the church. This summer, those pieces will be refurbished and put into classrooms in time for next year’s latest crop of children. Lois even unearthed a piece of UU history at Oakton in the form of a shadow-box-framed plate featuring prominent UU Joseph Priestly!

Dan Yokas suggested buying the hi-top tables and “spanx” (black stretch table cloths) that now grace Atherton Hall every Sunday. He had rented them in the past for various church events. In a link with our aesthetics past, former member Larraine Leblond purchased the fourth table and “spanx” when she learned that our Aesthetics budget would only stretch (pun intended!) to cover three tables. Members may move away, but they never really leave Countryside!

John Evans and Lois Phillips painted the choir room last summer prior to choir kick-off. Lois and Kathi Hillyer rearranged church storage to accommodate our growing Worship Arts supplies. One last thing that may have happened by the time you read this, we are changing the ceiling decorations (aka “sparkle balls”) in Atherton Hall! LED lighting is the name of the game these days and we are keeping up with the times.

Thank you to all who have commented and offered suggestions throughout the past year. Our team will always do our best to accommodate your needs and wishes.

Thoughtfully submitted, Lois Phillips
GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The pictures that accompany this report are an accurate portrait of what we view as the winter to spring scene at Countryside Church. There are always scenes that give examples of winter’s textures, whether in the roughness on the bark of trees or the soft sprinkling and graceful swaying of the ornamental grasses. During the growing season, the grounds are alive with plants that alternate their bloom times.

All of this activity requires care, great effort, and knowledge of what plant needs to remain and what plant needs to be removed. This upkeep is costly in time and money. Our hired workers are Luis Flores, who maintains the plants, and Humberto Montesino, who cuts the grass each week. Beth Gerson and I also volunteer countless hours of work to supplement the work done by our paid workers. We work as a team and use the integrated pest management program to promote the health and vigor of all our landscaping. Because our property is fully used throughout the year, we also work at picking up all unwanted and carelessly left paper and other rubbish and debris on our grounds.

All of these efforts require time and expense, but it is so rewarding to hear first time visitors, as well as our own members remark about the beautiful experience they receive just walking through the "Island Gardens" in the center of the parking lot or on the stone pathway that encircles the church building. These statements more than qualify that which is budgeted to maintain our beautiful church grounds.

…submitted by Judy Miller, Grounds Chairperson