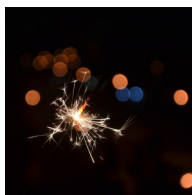


Tending the Spark: An Evening Gathering

Jan 11 & 25 at 5 pm

Our Sunday evening alternative service, Tending the Spark (or Spark for short), gathers in Atherton Hall on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of each month. This intentional gathering remembers the ancient ways of ancestors who circled and sang under the night sky. Each service aims to recall our inter-connection as beings embedded in the web of life.



On Jan 11, join us for *Moving Peace: Circle of Movement and Song* with Dr. Mary Shelden. Join us for a meditative journey through movement and sound where simple movements and sacred songs become a shared meditation. Together we'll weave sound and motion into a circle of joy, presence, and harmony.

Everyone is welcome. If you have friends or family members disinclined toward "church" who still long for community, please invite them. We have families who attend both Sunday morning and evening and are fed in different ways. Every evening closes with a shared meal of soup & bread with potluck sides provided by participants. It's an experiment in community – come explore.

Tending the Spark: Where the Body Remembers, the Spirit Sings

Winter-Spring Adult Faith Development Offerings

For details, see page 3 of this newsletter.

New:

- Crucial Conversations (begins Jan 11)
- Building the World We Dream About
- Shared Pulpit Worship Class
- UU Elevator Speech

Continuing (newcomers welcome)

- Biblical Literacy for UUs
- Telling Our Stories
- Living Well
- Tai Chi (new days & times)



Family Game Night

Friday, Jan 23, 6-9 pm

ALL are invited to join us in Atherton Hall for a night of board games. Bring a snack to share and your favorite board game. Help us plan by signing up here: <https://ccuu.breezechms.com/form/game-night-2026-jan>.

Save the Date

Time & Talent Auction: April 25

Please SAVE THE DATE for this year's Time and Talent Auction on Saturday, April 25 at 5:00 PM in Atherton Hall. This auction is our major fundraiser of the year that benefits our [three Service Partners](#), Chalice House, and CCUU.

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Monthly Fair Trade Sale

January 18

Please stop by our table in Atherton Hall after worship to purchase fairly-traded coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts, olive oil from Equal Exchange.

From Our Minister

New Year, New Beginnings

We've rounded the final week of 2025 and I think many of us were happy to see it in the rearview mirror. Sadly, with the incursion into Venezuela, 2026 is not off to a great start. It's concerning and more than a little frustrating to watch raw greed on the geopolitical stage, but it is not the whole of our lives. The world has always been a place of avarice and conflict, duplicity and oppression. But not the whole world. Not the places where we live and gather and hope and pray.

Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer continues to be relevant as we watch so much happening in the world that goes against our values as Unitarian Universalists.

*God (life, highest self, universe),
Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference.*

It's no easy task these days, to separate out what is ours to do. I pray every day for wisdom, for the ability to parse where I should be putting my energy. Because we only have so much. And the world with all its problems is vast.

Today, begin with making sure you have the resources you need. Watch the birds outside your window – or take a walk in the warm weather. Read about an inspiring person. Listen to music that fills your heart. Then see something close at hand that needs your attention and offer it; prayerfully, intentionally. Not with angst or fear, but simply with the particular grace that you bring.

We each show up who we are and as we can. And that will be enough. The world will never be exactly what we want it to be, but that doesn't mean we can't appreciate the beauty of this life anyway.

Have a blessed New Year,
Rev Pam



From the Board President

Dear Fellow Countryside Members and Friends –

Many of you know that Robin and I, along with our son Steven, were in an auto accident on Saturday, November 29. We were taking Steven to O'Hare airport for his flight back to Philadelphia after his visit for Thanksgiving. I was driving and we were on Northwest Highway in Arlington Heights when I unexpectedly suffered a seizure and lost consciousness. Thankfully, Robin quickly realized I was having a problem, and from the passenger seat, she grabbed the steering wheel and worked to steer the car away from oncoming traffic. It was snowing so we weren't going very fast, but the snow made it difficult to control the car. I was still unconscious with my foot on the gas pedal, which caused the car to weave from side to side with even slight movements of the steering wheel. Finally, Robin could only steer the car toward the opposite side of the road, and we crashed into a parked car. As a result of the crash Robin sustained a broken right wrist (she's right-handed of course) and Steven broke his nose. While our car was a total loss, I had no significant physical injuries other than bruises on my chest, thankfully. All three of us were taken to the hospital by ambulance and Robin and Steven were treated and released the same day. I finally regained consciousness later that day. I stayed in the hospital for two more days while doctors conducted a series of tests and scans. I was prescribed seizure medicine and was referred to a neurologist who I saw a week and a half later. He reviewed the test results and scans but could not determine the cause of my seizure. However, I can't drive by myself, nor should I go out without someone accompanying me for at least 6 months. While that is frustrating, considering that the outcome of the accident could have been much worse, I am grateful.

Robin and I are grateful for the response from the Countryside community. To Rev Pam and Rev Karen, and Ellen Vinzani and the Lay & Care Ministry, to others who made meals, sent cards, called us to find out how we are, or gave us rides or sent positive vibes, we can't thank you enough. You helped make a very difficult situation bearable.

As I mentioned, I won't be able to drive for about 6 months and Robin won't be able to drive until her wrist heals, so you may not see me at CCUU as often as in the past, but I'll try to attend as often as I can get a ride. In the meantime, I ask for your patience and understanding as we heal.

On a brighter note, our year-end fundraising campaign, Sustaining Our Spirit, was a success. We met our goal of \$15,000 and I thank you all very much for your generous support.

Finally, I was heartened to see robust attendance at the first service and potluck of the new year. We're starting the year off on a positive note. Let's keep it up!

Thank you for being a part of this amazing spiritual community,

Gary LaBedz, Board President



From Lay Ministry Team

Let the Lay Pastoral Ministry Team know your joys, concerns, and gratitudes: <https://ccuu.org/joys-concerns-gratitudes/>.



Remember that we have votives in the back of the sanctuary that you may wish to light on Sunday morning with a prayer regarding a hardship in your life or that of a loved one.

Stay Informed of UUA News

Subscribe to an email list: <https://www.uua.org/communications/web/lists/topically-sorted>

MidAmerica UUA Newsletter

Subscribe here: <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/news>

Register online at <https://ccuu.breezechms.com/form/AFD2026-winter>

Crucial Conversations: A 3-Session Skill-Building Series; Sundays in January, 11:30–1 pm. 1/11, 1/18,



1/25. Let's face it: things can sometimes get tense with family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, teammates, even between members of our congregation—occasionally leading to avoidance of key conversations, simmering resentments, or even dissolution of a relationship. In

this interactive three-session course, participants will explore key concepts from the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High (Third Edition)* by Grenny, Patterson, McMillan, Switzler, and Gregory. Come learn skills needed to talk openly and safely about tough issues so that everyone feels heard, relationships are honored and deepened, and effective decisions can be made. Lay leaders in the congregation are among those encouraged to sign up for this course. *Facilitators: duRee Bryant, Karolina Kozakiewicz, Matt Myren. Minimum class size: 10; Maximum class size: 24.*

Building the World We Dream About: A 90-Minute Journey Toward Racial Justice: Sunday 2/8/2026,



11:30-1pm. Early 2026 brings a brand-new anti-racism workshop especially for our UU community. Blending UU spirituality with hands-on exercises, the workshop peels back the layers of systemic racism, implicit bias, and privilege that shape our daily lives. Expect energizing activities, brave conversation, and take-

home tools that deepen our shared covenant and help to widen the circle of belonging. This workshop is open to everyone 14+ (youth should attend with a parent/guardian). As Unitarian Universalists, we strive for equity and justice in our world, and this is a way to build on that work. We encourage everyone to sign up! *Facilitator: Mari Van Meter*

The Shared Pulpit Worship Class: Sundays, 11:30–1 pm. 2/15, 2/22, 3/15, 3/22, 4/19, 4/26.



This class is designed to introduce or strengthen sermon writing skills and prepare for presentation on Sunday mornings. Anyone is welcome to attend – especially folks considering joining the worship team in the future. There will be four sessions exploring the work of creating

reflective, passionate and theologically grounded sermons and homilies. The class will finish with each participant presenting a sermon they have written over the final two dates. We will read from *The Shared Pulpit* by Erika Hewitt and *Thematic Preaching: An Introduction* by Jane Rzepka and Ken Sawyer (books will be available for purchase from the church office). Gather at 11:30 for nosh; class begins at 11:45. *Facilitator: Rev. Pam Rumancik.*

UU Elevator Speech: Saturdays, 10-11 am; 3/7, 3/14,



3/21. Need a way to quickly and succinctly describe where you go on Sunday morning for your spiritual participation or when someone says, “Never heard of Unitarian Universalists, what

is it?” Join this 1-hour class that meets 3 consecutive Sundays at 11:30 am. Excellent for newer UUs, and also good for longer-term members who would like to finetune their explanations. Interactive participation will encourage confidence in responding to curiosity and questions. *Facilitator: Denise Sepos*

Continuing in the Spring:

New participants are welcome to join us for the spring session. If you registered for the fall session, you do not need to re-register.

Biblical Literacy for UUs: Sundays, 11:30 am–1:00 pm; 3/8, 3/29, 4/12, 5/3, 5/24, 5/31.

The Bible has inspired movements for liberation and legitimized horrific injustices. Its language and stories resonate through the literature and art of the Western world. How do we, as liberal seekers, skeptics, and UUs, understand it? This course will explore the Bible in historical context and reflect on some of its stories from a UU perspective. Topics in March through May will include the parables of Jesus, creation stories, the prophets, Paul's letters, Revelation, and the Psalms. *New participants are welcome at any time. Facilitators: Pat Wydell and Jeannie Scown*

Ongoing:

New participants are welcome to join these ongoing classes/groups. If you are already registered, you do not need to re-register.

Telling Our Stories: 1st Wednesdays, 10 am–12 noon, Oct. 1 through May 6.

Come and join this group of mature adults as we utilize a variety of materials as food for discussion about our lives today, aging, encounters with loss, grief, and end of life issues in a supportive and caring environment. *We plan to focus next on legacy writing with online Zoom sessions in January/February. New participants are welcome to register at any time. Facilitators: Becky Serpe, Lisa Christensen*

Living Well: 3rd Wednesdays, 10 am–12 noon

[ongoing]. Living Well is a discussion group that draws inspiration from the Blue Zones program. We meet monthly and explore living in ways that support engagement with others, exercise, a spiritual life, healthy eating, finding a purpose, and taking time to relax. We are currently reading *When Things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times* by Pema Chödrön, a collection of essays on facing difficulties in life based on Buddhist teachings. *Facilitators: Karolina Kozakiewicz and Leslie Peet*

Tai Chi – **New Days & Times:** Thursday, 5:45-6:45 pm and Saturday, 10:30–11:30 am. **Weekly January–March.**

Tai Chi is an ancient practice that enhances health, concentration, and wellbeing. It can be practiced by people of all ages, sizes, shapes, and abilities. This class will focus on short movement sequences that increase flexibility, strength, and balance. The class is open to beginners and to those with prior experience. *Instructor: Melanie Terbovic, a certified Tai Chi teacher*

Worship descriptions are included below and are also on the church website: <https://ccuu.org/services/>

Join us Sunday mornings in the Sanctuary or online—<https://bit.ly/CCUUworshipSvc>

Join us Sunday evenings on the 2nd & 4th Sundays in Atherton Hall.

Religious Exploration classes for Children & Youth are held Sundays at 10 am.

Jan 4 at 10 am Another Trip Around the Sun Rev. Pam Rumancik

We begin another year, wondering what is coming, what we have to offer, how we might live more fully into the gift of being-ness. Bring your intentions for 2026 and be ready to leave behind that which needs to be set down. Let's begin again in love.

Congregational Potluck follows the Jan. 4 worship service; bring a dish to share & join us for good food & fellowship!

Jan 11 at 10 am Queen of Soul: Aretha Franklin Rev. Pam Rumancik

Some people are more 'soulful' than others - right? But what does that mean? The human experience spans a wide spectrum. Do some people have a different connection to the All than others? Let's explore.

Jan 11 at 5 pm Tending the Spark: Moving Peace

Join us for a Circle of Movement and Song with Dr. Mary Shelden, a meditative journey through movement and sound where simple movements and sacred songs become a shared meditation. Together we'll weave sound and motion into a circle of joy, presence, and harmony. This intentional gathering remembers the ancient ways of ancestors who circled and sang under the night sky. Come as you are, ready to rest, remember, and be renewed.

Jan 18 at 10 am Dissolution & New Beginnings Rev. Pam Rumancik

Letting go is an important part of every new beginning. Here in the depth of winter, the world sits dormant, waiting for the coming of spring and new life. What practices might help to allow the old to pass away and make room for the new?

Share the Plate: We will share half the offering with UU Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI).

Jan 25 at 10 am Color It In: Acts of Beauty in Ghastly Times Kate Steinberg

2025 delivered a deluge of dizzying, bewildering, and tragic events. Let's come together to consider how acts of beauty and public art transmute into refreshing acts of resistance.

Our pulpit guest this Sunday, Kate Steinberg (she/her), is currently pursuing her Master of Divinity at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She is a ministerial candidate with the Unitarian Universalist Association. Called to interfaith chaplaincy, Kate brings her ministry of presence to hospital, hospice, congregational, and community settings.

Jan 25 at 5 pm Tending the Spark



Join the Choir!

Thursdays, 7 pm

Thursday rehearsals are held 7-9 pm. No audition needed, just come! We'll save a seat for you.

Did you miss a Worship Service?

View them:

- on our website, <https://ccuu.org/past-services/> (just click on the service you'd like to view; if there's a video available, you'll see it on that service's page)
- on our YouTube channel, <https://bit.ly/CCUUyoutube>.

Congregational Potlucks

Thank you the Justice Matters team for hosing our Jan 4 potluck.

Upcoming potlucks—mark your calendars:

- Mar 1: hosted by Transitions & Feminine Divine
- Apr 5: hosted by Green Sanctuary & Grounds Working Group
- May 3: *no host yet*

If your group would like to host in May, please sign up here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11QAcoAw5YVvCCTPfc5IWG_EaZoEmHAJA-yWoyDy8_Kk/edit?usp=sharing

What's involved in hosting? See this document: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s6DG81QjYo-t6zM-xYf6Xm-ngCmRd6rx/view?usp=sharing>.



Be the First Smile They See!

One of the most powerful ministries at CCUU happens before the worship service even begins. A warm smile at the door. A friendly "we're so glad you're here." A helping hand for someone who's new, uncertain, or just had a tough week.. Sign up online using the QR code or go to [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-sunday2#/.](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a044ea4a72fa13-sunday2#/)

For more info, contact Nancy Frenk. Thank you.



Young Adults (18-35ish)

Vision Board Night: Jan 11, 6:30 pm

Join us in classroom 6 for a Vision Board Crafting Night. Bring your chosen craft supplies, and create a vision/dream/manifestation board for the year ahead. Minimal supplies will be supplied for those who don't have any to bring.

Business Meeting: Jan 18, 6:30 pm

Young adults (18-35) are invited to join us in classroom 6 for this monthly session. We discuss various matters or plan things to do.

Covenant Review, part 2: Jan 25, 6:30 pm

We will gather in Room 6 of the RE Wing to continue the discussion we started in November to revisit and refresh our group covenant.

Game Night: Feb 1, 6:30 pm

Join the Young Adults group in Atherton Hall for game night on the first Sunday evening of the month. Bring a game to share with others, or play one of ours.

Show & Tell Night: Feb 8, 6:30 pm

We will meet in room 6 for a Show & Tell Night. Bring an item that is very important to you and share why it means so much. If you are not comfortable speaking publicly, feel free to come and observe as a means to better get to know the other members of the group.



Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic Online Discussion

2nd Tuesdays—Jan 13 at 7 pm

This month, we will discuss *Human Exceptionalism*: How the self-inflated view of our species affects and degrades the natural world and is reflected by tribal exceptionalism within our species. The presentation was inspired by the book *The Arrogant Ape* by Christine Webb.

We will meet on Zoom in January & February; use meeting ID: 975 1200 6347 and passcode: 1025.



Open Forum Discussion

Sundays, 9 am—In person or Online

In the Open Forum, we agree to discuss the issues of the day honestly and respectfully, welcoming the diversity of views that may be expressed on any given topic. All are welcome to join us in classroom 2 or on zoom; meeting id 974 5981 3107 and passcode 1025.

Earth Rhythms Drum Circle

Fri, Jan 2 & Apr 17, 7-8:30 pm



This is an inclusive organic gathering where participants are empowered by the creation of rhythms, dancing, celebration and community. No musical background is needed, only the desire to have fun. All are welcome. For more

info, contact Nancy Frenk or Cindy Thornton.

Green Sanctuary Meeting

2nd Sundays—Jan 11, 11:30 am



GREEN
SANCTUARY

All are welcome to join us for our monthly meetings.

The Green Sanctuary Committee encourages awareness, appreciation and action in support of the environment on which we all depend. We promote worship that deepens our connection to the natural world, educational programs for all ages, and service projects that benefit our local area and beyond.

Earth Rhythms Sound Journey

Fri, March 13, 7-8 pm



Join Nancy Frenk & Cindy Thornton in the Sanctuary for a sound journey as we meditate with the gentle frequencies of crystal singing bowls, chimes and additional calming instruments. These sessions provide relaxation, restore mindfulness, and promote overall wellbeing in a tranquil environment. Participants are encouraged to bring a yoga mat or sit/recline on sanctuary chairs. No registration is required for participation. A suggested donation of \$20 is encouraged with a portion being donated to CCUU.

Buddhist Study Group

2nd Sundays—Jan 11, 11:30 am



We read selected Buddhist texts, discuss them, and try to apply the principles and techniques to our everyday lives. All are welcome! For more info, contact Melanie Terbovic.

Feminine Divine Women's Group

Last Saturdays—Jan 31, 10 am



New women are always welcome. Join us the last Saturday of the month in classroom 6. For more info, contact Barbara Griggs.

Transitions

Jan 22, 10 am



Please join us in Atherton Hall this month when Jim Simmons, an accomplished amateur historian, will present a program entitled "Five Major Human Productivity Challenges" - a topic of major interest in this Age of AI. As usual, we will enjoy a pre-program coffee time and the camaraderie of a post program potluck lunch.

Learn more about being part of the CCUU Community



Intro to CCUU: Feb 1, 11 am

Newcomers are invited to attend this brief orientation to Countryside Church and Unitarian Universalism which is offered the first Sunday of each month and hosted by a longtime CCUU member and lifelong UU.

Path to Belonging: March 22 & 29

This two-class series is an opportunity to learn more about Countryside Church UU and more about the meaning of membership; it is also an opportunity to get to know others who are new to CCUU. Our minister, staff, and lay leaders provide exercises and opportunities to explore what you are seeking and to discover the freedom and diversity of our faith. Register here: <https://ccuu.org/path-to-belonging/>

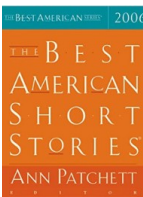


Daytime Book Group for Fiction Lovers

1st Wednesdays at 1 pm

All are welcome to join us in the Stokes Room for our upcoming discussions:

- Jan 7: *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult
- Feb 4: *The Lager Queen of Minnesota* by J. Ryan Stradal



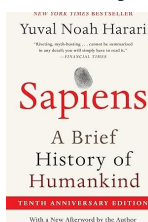
Reading Roundtable

2nd & 4th Weds—Jan 14 & 28 at 10 am

Join us to discuss selections from *2006 Best American Short Stories* edited by Ann Patchett. All are welcome! For more info, contact Barbara Griggs.

Book Circle

January 18 at 6:15 pm



Join us Sunday, January 18 to discuss *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari. "Bold, wide-ranging and provocative, *Sapiens* challenges everything we thought we knew about being human: our thoughts, our actions, our power...and our future."

We will gather in classroom 2 at 6:15 and begin discussion at 6:30. Newcomers are always welcome!



Last Mondays Book Discussion

Jan 26 at 7:00 pm

All are welcome to join us in the Stokes Room to discuss *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir.



Online Journaling Circle

Jan 8, 10 am

NOTE: This month, we're meeting the 2nd Thursday; we'll return to 1st

Thursdays in February.

Each gathering opens with a short meditation. We then free write and write from prompts related to our monthly themes. Have your notebook or journal ready & join us online for personal exploration and growth. For more info, contact Juli Cicarelli.

Haiku Garden Online Workshop

Jan 15, 10 am

NOTE: We're meeting the 3rd Thursday this month.

Want to write haiku for our garden? All are welcome to join us on the 2nd Thursday of the month to learn & work on modern Haiku for the church's seasonal Haiku garden.

We meet on zoom. Go to www.zoom.us and use meeting id 947 7524 4603 and passcode 262695..



Bayside UU Family Camp

Looking for a great summer experience? Join us at Bayside UU Family Camp held at Wesley Woods Conference Center on the shores of Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, WI. This year, camp will take place June 28 - July 4. This special week includes adult workshops, activities for children, free time for family fun and relaxation, and inter-generational activities. For more information visit our website at baysideuu.org or contact baysideuu@gmail.com.

UU Men's Retreat Committee

Upcoming Events

The Men's Retreat Committee offers events which promote meaningful discussions and thoughtful dialog among men. For more info & to register, email mensretreat@unitytemple.org.

- Sat. Jan. 10, via Zoom: Adaptive Resilience. Reacting to our current climate.
- Men's Retreat Weekend: March 6-8 at St. Marys/ Baraga Retreat Center



Wellness House Offerings at CCUU

Hypnosis Group & Reiki Sessions

Held at CCUU the 1st Saturday of the month, these offerings are open to anyone in our area who has or had cancer of any kind. *Free, registration is required*; email jchipman@wellnesshouse.org or call 630-654-5116



Justice Matters

The Justice Matters Committee wants everyone to know about opportunities for participation in training, conferences, and events to attend. Please also take a few minutes to help create a better world by following up on our recommended action for the week.

Please see the JUSTICE MATTERS calendar of events at <https://ccuu.org/service-ministry/>. If you use Google Calendar, there's a link at the bottom of the to subscribe to our JUSTICE MATTERS calendars for: Democracy Action, Immigration Action, LGBTQ Action, and/ or Climate Action.

Want more information or to get involved in one of our Action Teams? Email justicematters@ccuu.org

Rx Drug Bottle Reuse Program

CCUU is partnering with Southminster Presbyterian Church to collect empty Rx bottles. The bottles will be cleaned and reused to serve low-income families, helping with Rx costs. **Bottles must be empty, with labels removed as well as possible, and with lids still attached.** There is a box in Atherton Hall for your bottles to be deposited. Questions? Contact a member of the Green Sanctuary Committee. *Thank you!*



Volunteers Needed

Grounds Work Day on Jan 31

The Grounds group needs volunteers to cut down brush and drag it to the curb on Saturday, January 31. Palatine's annual brush pickup is the following Monday. This is a great timesaver for us as the brush can be just piled at the curb, no bundling. Please let Mike Calwas (gardens@ccuu.org) know if you can come in the morning or afternoon. Mike will be here to show you where we need to work.

Help Provide Meal for PADS Shelter

Weds, Jan 21

We will provide the evening meal at Journeys for overnight shelter guests on Wednesday, January 21. The Journeys Center provides overnight shelter seven days per week. In partnership with St. John UCC in Arlington Heights, CCUU has committed to provide the evening meal once per month, on the 3rd Wednesday, at the Journeys Center.

For January, we're going to leverage post-holiday turkey sales! Turkeys will be prepared in the CCUU kitchen. We are seeking volunteers to prepare the accompanying side dishes and dessert.

Thank you SO much to those who provided the meal in December, in the midst of the busy holiday season, and to volunteers Lillian Schnitzler and Rachel Dehoff and their "support staff" who served the meal. The Journeys Center can accept our meal contributions from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, thus making the drop off process very flexible for us. They are located near I-53 and NW Hwy.

Please sign up to contribute a portion of the meal: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A044EA4A72FA13-61340006-2026#. Additional details are provided on the sign-up sheet. Please contact Karen Epps with questions. Thank you so much for your support!



Board of Trustees Meetings

3rd Weds—Jan. 21 at 7 pm

Board of Trustees meetings are open to the congregation for people who want to observe. To be on the agenda, contact the Board President at least one week in advance. If you plan to attend, contact the Board President, prez@ccuu.org, for the meeting information.

Religious Exploration

Preparing children for this life, every week.

February 8th - A Religious Exploration fundraiser

SUUpper Bowl Sunday

During Coffee Hour - after the Senior High Youth **preach!**

Sit down with it bowls & take-away quarts will be offered.

\$8/bowl : \$15/2 bowls : \$25/family : \$15/quart

Come and get your belly-full!



Practicing Resistance

*...it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more.*

– Marge Piercy, from [The Low Road](#)

Out of all our themes this year, resistance is among the most complex. But it also may be the most simple.

Let's start with the complexity.

Sometimes resistance involves bravely picking up a picket sign; other times it asks us to courageously put down our masks and allow who we really are to see the light of day. Sometimes it involves defeating the enemy; other times it's a matter of noticing that treating "them" as the enemy defeats us all. Often the path of resistance asks us to stay in it for the long haul, but just as often it's about taking that first tiny step. Most of the time it requires us to fight to the bitter end, and yet there are many moments when we need to stop resisting and let go. Resistance certainly takes the form of speaking the truth to power, but often what the world needs even more is for us to speak the truth in love.

Bottom line: practicing resistance is tricky business and takes multiple, even contradictory, forms.

But beyond this complexity lies the simplicity of Marge Piercy's words. In *all* cases, she reminds us, practicing resistance starts when we say "We!" For instance, the power of our picket sign resides in the fact that it hangs alongside those of others. Being who we are usually begins with another person loving us for who we are. Both the long haul and our first courageous step are made possible by reaching out to receive a helping hand.

It's all one big reminder that none of us resist alone.

Or maybe what really needs to be said this month is that none of us **have to** resist alone.

Yes, we certainly need pushed and prodded this month. But maybe what we need most is to be reassured. Reassured that when the road gets too treacherous and the forces against us grow too big, others will be by our side. Maybe it's not more courage that is required, but more connection. Maybe what we really need to hear is not simply "Resist!" but "I will resist with you!"

Maybe it is as simple as that.

Questions for Practicing Resistance

*This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. How you answer them is often less important than the journey they take you on. So, read through the list of questions 2-3 times until **one question** sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions "shimmers." Or as we like to say, "Read over them until one of the questions **picks you**." Once you've identified it, go deeper by asking yourself:*

- *What might my inner wisdom be trying to say to me through this question?*
 - *How might this question be trying to wake me up or get me to realize something through this question?*
1. As a kid, did you resist the rules, or did you follow them? How might you see an echo of that earlier self in your life today?
 2. Of all the moments of your life where you found the courage to accept change instead of resist it, which one are you most proud of?
 3. Is there a time from your past where you wish you would have found a way to resist the fear of failure?
 4. Have you been following the path of least resistance for so long that you no longer notice?
 5. Is it time to heed the warning that "What you resist, persists"?
 6. Has joy ever been an "act of resistance" for you?
 7. Has your resistance to change grown or eased as you've gotten older?
 8. How might resistance be calling you to rest?
 9. What song, book or movie has inspired or supported your resistance efforts?
 10. Our self-focused culture is not designed to encourage activism and other-centered resistance. Who do you have to thank for you becoming someone who counter-culturally cares about and works for needs greater than your own?
 11. How is your corner of the world calling you to help save it?
 12. What small step could you take in the next month or two to make your resistance more radical?

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Monthly Theme Inspiration & Exploration

We explore the monthly themes during worship & RE, through our narthex table display, in CCUU's Journaling Circle and Soul Matters small groups.

Find musical inspiration on each theme:

- Spotify: <https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com/spotify-lists.html>
- YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL_fSD0_Ps01IGauCVL_mKQ/playlists

Upcoming Church Events

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>*REMINDER* - This calendar does not reflect outside groups' use of CCUU space. To avoid conflicts, please schedule all events with the church office – email ccuu@ccuu.org or call 847-359-8440 x 1</p>			<p>Jan 7 <i>Focus publication</i></p> <p>10am Telling Our Stories</p> <p>1pm 1st Weds Book Group</p>	<p>Jan 8 10am online Journaling Circle</p> <p>5:45pm Tai Chi</p> <p>7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>Jan 9</p>	<p>Jan 10 9 am Ministry Council Mtg</p> <p>10:30 Tai Chi</p>
<p>Jan 11 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship & RE 11:30am Green Sanctuary Mtg 11:30am Buddhist Study Group 11:30am Crucial Conversations class 5pm Tending the Spark 6:30pm Young Adult Vision Board Night</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 7pm AHA Discussion</p>	<p>14 10am Reading Roundtable</p>	<p>15 10am online Hai-ku Garden workshop</p> <p>5:45pm Tai Chi</p> <p>7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 10:30 Tai Chi</p>
<p>Jan 18 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship & RE 11am Fellowship 11:30am Crucial Conversations class 6:15pm Book Circle 6:30pm Young Adult Business Meeting</p>	<p>19 MLK Day</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 PADS Meal</p> <p>10am Living Well</p> <p>7pm Board of Trustees meeting</p>	<p>22 10am Transitions</p> <p>5:45pm Tai Chi</p> <p>7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>23 Family Game Night</p>	<p>24 10:30 Tai Chi</p>
<p>Jan 25 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service & RE 11am Fellowship 11:30am Crucial Conversations class 5pm Tending the Spark 6:30pm Young Adult Covenant Review, part 2</p>	<p>26 7pm Last Mondays Book Discussion</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 <i>Focus deadline</i></p> <p>10am Reading Roundtable</p>	<p>29 5:45pm Tai Chi 7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 Grounds Work Day</p> <p>10am Fem. Divine Women's Group 10:30 Tai Chi</p>
<p>Feb 1 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service & RE 11am Congregational Potluck 6:30pm Young Adult (YA) Game Night</p>	<p>Feb 2</p>	<p>Feb 3</p>	<p>Feb 4 <i>Focus publication</i></p> <p>10am Telling Our Stories</p> <p>1pm 1st Weds Book Group</p>	<p>Feb 5 10am online Journaling Circle</p> <p>5:45pm Tai Chi</p> <p>7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>Feb 6</p>	<p>Feb 7 Wellness House Offerings</p> <p>10:30 Tai Chi</p>
<p>Feb 8 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship & RE 11:30am Green Sanctuary Mtg 11:30am Buddhist Study Group 11:30am Building the World We Dream About 5pm Tending the Spark 6:30pm YA Show & Tell Night</p>	<p>Feb 9</p>	<p>Feb 10 7pm AHA Discussion</p>	<p>Feb 11 10am Reading Roundtable</p>	<p>Feb 12 10am Hai-ku Garden Workshop 5:45pm Tai Chi 7pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>Feb 13 7pm My Improv Buddies</p>	<p>Feb 14 10:30 Tai Chi</p>

focus

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Mary Johnson		

For assistance from Lay or Care Ministry, please contact Ellen Vinzani or Rev. Pam.

Our Covenant

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

Our Mission

In pursuit of Beloved Community, we welcome ALL to Create Belonging, Inspire Curiosity, Heal our World.

Our Vision

We envision a Beloved Community that is a dynamic community, ever widening the circle to be inclusive of everyone and where diversity can flourish. We envision and realize an interdependent relationship of love and mutual respect for each other and our environment, and a place where we can also learn from each other while we honor an all-encompassing free and responsible search for meaning and truth in this world.

Upcoming Focus Deadlines

Submit all articles to ccuu@ccuu.org

- January 28 (publ. Feb 4)
- February 25 (publ. March 4)

Between *Focus* issues, see announcements in the E-News on Wednesdays. Deadline for e-updates is Weds at 9 am.

Return Service Requested
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