



## Countryside Church

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

• Create Belonging • Inspire Curiosity • Heal our World

<https://ccuu.org/rooted-in-love>

CCUU is its own ecosystem, offering life and love to a wanting world through the work of your hearts and hands and voices. Thank you so much for thoughtfully considering how much you are able to offer to nourish and grow this beloved community.

**Please join us to grow the future of CCUU!**

### From Our Minister

I love the theme of this year's campaign because it connects so deeply with how we actually live in the world. We grow up from soil created by our ancestors, knowing that what we do today will bless future generations. Your investment in this congregation nourishes the people here now and those yet to come, just like the Atherton and Stokes families did in the past – along with so many others.

We are living in an unfamiliar moment, but it is one where we have a choice; we could isolate, keep our heads down, trying to ride out the uncertainty in the world around us, or we can choose community, choose to support one another, to build back a better world. The folk I've come to know these past two years at CCUU are already making this church a haven of kindness, compassion, justice and inspiration. You are already a beautiful and healthy ecosystem holding out hope in a hopeless world.

The world needs this church, and the world needs you.

CCUU can be likened to a forest grove unto itself. We support the UUA, not the other way around. Everything this church does is because of the love and sweat and generosity of its members. It's one of the healthiest and best managed churches Karen and I have ever served. You can be proud of that.

Now it's your turn to take on the mantle of nourishing the church to keep it vibrant and able to share its blessings with so many. Your turn to provide compost and topsoil so great things can continue to sprout and grow. CCUU is its own ecosystem, offering life and love to a wanting world through the work of your hearts and hands and voices. Thank you so much for thoughtfully considering how much you are able to offer to nourish and grow this beloved community.

~ Rev. Pam

### WHY Should I Pledge?

Your pledge will allow CCUU to:

- offer creative and thought-provoking worship services with inspiring music.
- provide vibrant, engaging, and spiritually-rich religious exploration for children and youth.
- provide opportunities for faith development, spiritual growth, and involvement in social justice work.
- make efforts to grow our church and strengthen our community outreach.
- fully fund our dues to the UUA, MidAmerica Region, and Chicago Area UU Council (CAUUA).



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### WHEN Should I Pledge? NO LATER THAN MARCH 15!

Our budgeting process takes many hands and minds (including yours!) to calculate and approve, so it is important for us to have all our pledges in by March 15 so that we can get to work!

Here is how you can support CCUU by returning your pledge:

#### 3 simple ways to pledge!

1. Fill out the enclosed pledge form and mail it to the church office.
2. Fill out the enclosed form, scan it, and email the scan to [ccuu@ccuu.org](mailto:ccuu@ccuu.org)
3. Fill out the pledge form online: click the PLEDGE NOW button on the website, <https://ccuu.org/rooted-in-love>, or click the link in the Stewardship email, or click the link in the ENews.



<https://ccuu.org/rooted-in-love>

### How Much Should I Pledge?

Please refer to the Suggested Fair Share Contribution Guide, which is enclosed with your pledge packet and available on the website and from the church office. The treasurer and staff are developing a preliminary budget for 2026-2027. After the stewardship drive, the budget will be finalized and a final budget will be voted on by the congregation at the annual meeting on May 17.

If every household gave an equal share for 2026-27, it would be approx. **\$3,000/year** or about **\$250/month**.

We understand that this suggested pledge may not be possible for some. We acknowledge all pledges equally and with great appreciation—from \$100 to pledges of many thousands of dollars—from those who have been able to pledge in the past and all who would like to start pledging to the church.

**Additional information will be provided during Cottage Meetings offered in February and March ~ stay tuned to E-news and the Sunday announcement inserts.**

**We ask that you consider very seriously how much you support your church financially as we all worship, teach, learn, care, serve, love, and support CCUU!**

### Today, in 2026, our church offers...

- A community of inquiring and open-minded people
- A centering worship service on Sunday morning and an alternative Sunday evening service twice/month
- A liberal Religious Exploration program for children & youth
- A warm and welcoming space to learn and teach
- Inspiring music
- Opportunities for service and to make a difference to others

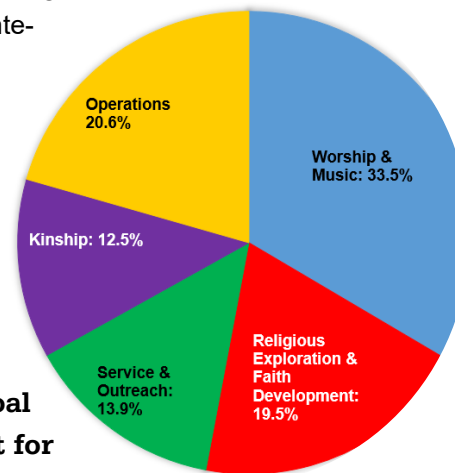
### How We Use Your Gifts

Pledge income makes up about 84% of the income in the annual budget. This church is literally what our members share with one another. All pledged gifts are used to fund the work of our ministries (including salaries).

Notice that 80% of our income goes to WORSHIP & MUSIC, RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION & FAITH DEVELOPMENT, KINSHIP (small groups, coffee hour, social events), and SERVICE & OUTREACH (green sanctuary, social justice, share-the-plate donations). Approx. 20% goes toward OPERATIONS (building & grounds maintenance, office expenses).

Of course, everything that happens here at the church impacts you and touches our community.

**All of us are active participants working toward a goal of a balanced budget for 2026-27.**



### From Our Board President

Dear CCUU Members & Friends,

As I think about our theme—Rooted in Love, Growing Our Future— I find it particularly relevant to my own experience here at Countryside. Robin and I joined this community nearly 30 years ago. We immediately felt welcome here, and we continue to feel strong bonds of kinship and love. As members of this wonderful community, we have planted our religious and spiritual roots here. Over these many years, we have witnessed numerous changes and have experienced this community growing in various ways. It's hard to imagine what our lives would be like without this supportive, loving community.

I know you, like me, are grateful for this community and we show our gratitude by volunteering our time and contributing our money. I trust that all of us will continue to do so. No one can know for certain what the future will hold, but I know that we are a vibrant, resilient and accomplished congregation. I am confident we can attract qualified ministerial candidates and hire a minister who can grow with us in the future.

We all need a community like Countryside Church to ground us and sustain us. To give us the strength to stand up for what is right and what is good. Despite the uncertainty, I urge you to renew your commitment of financial support to Countryside Church. Please be as generous as possible – so that this community can continue to be rooted in love and grow into a brighter future.

~ Gary LaBedz

