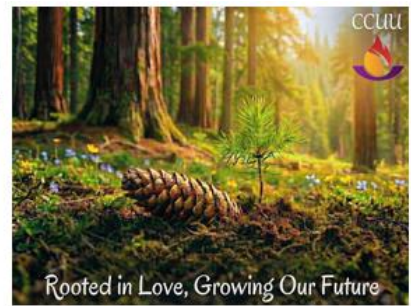


Countryside Church

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

• *Create Belonging* • *Inspire Curiosity* • *Heal our World*



Rooted in Love, Growing Our Future

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.

Growing up in a Roman Catholic church, I thought that the church was something much bigger than our parish and that it was doing my part to throw \$10 into the collection plate each week. It was only when I joined a Unitarian Universalist church that I realized that I *was* the church – and that the only way *my* church survived, grew and nourished the world around it was from my contributions.

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. We follow the best of the early Christian traditions, when church members shared according to their ability and need. In 2 Corinthians 8:13-15, Paul writes: *It is not our intention that others may be relieved while you are burdened, but that there may be equality... As it is written: "He who gathered much had no excess, and he who gathered little had no shortfall."*

Those early followers of that Jewish Rabbi followed the same process that the trees in the forests have done for eons. Water and nutrients are shared from stronger and more well-resourced areas and moved to those facing harsher conditions. This collaboration makes the entire ecosystem stronger than if each only looked out for itself.

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 Rumancik