


**2026
Time & Talent
Auction**

April 4 - 25



Now Open for Browsing Online

This year's Time and Talent Auction LOOK UP! *Bloom Where You Are Planted* is now OPEN FOR BROWSING ONLINE at 32auctions.com/ccuu2026 and is OPEN FOR BIDDING AT NOON THIS SATURDAY, APRIL 4. Be sure you don't miss out on the wonderful vacation homes in Michigan City and the Wisconsin Dells; parties, workshops; delicious foods, including authentic Chinese dumplings; CCUU merch; and so much more! All proceeds benefit our [three Service Partners](#) and our CCUU congregation. Get all the details on p. 5



Family Game Night
Friday, April 3, 6-9 pm

ALL ages and family configurations are invited to join us in Atherton Hall for a night of board games. Bring a snack to share and your favorite board game.

Religious Exploration

Preparing children for this life, every week.

EASTER - April 5

EGG HUNT

Join us after service to find some treats.

The older kids will hide eggs outside during the service (weather permitting). The younger kids will hunt for 5-10 min and then everyone will be invited to find treats in the lawn, under rocks, behind grasses and maybe even lurking in bushes. We hope you will join us!



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Save the Date: Congregational Annual Meeting May 17, following worship service

Be sure to mark your calendar for our Annual Meeting, when we vote on the budget and elected positions for the upcoming fiscal year.

Ministerial Search Announcement

Dear Fellow Countryside Members and Friends –

I've got some exciting news to share! The Board has hired a new contract minister – Dr Emma Farrell (they/them) - to be our new minister effective August 1, 2026. You may remember Emma as our pulpit guest on January 25, 2026 and March 16, 2025. You can view those services on our YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@countrysidechurchunitarian6274/videos>.

Emma is currently a ministerial intern at the Unitarian Church of Evanston (UCE). They will receive their MDiv degree from Meadville Lombard Theological School this spring. They will be ordained as a UU Minister in June 2026. Emma has a Ph.D. in Biochemistry (2010) and a B.A. in Biology (2004). Prior to entering ministry, they worked in academia as a biochemistry researcher, taught at several universities, and worked in the private sector as an analytical chemist. Emma has published professionally in several fields but consistently found the most meaningful parts of their jobs to be the relational ones. Emma has practiced building community in six major metropolitan areas where they've lived and now devotes their life to building beloved community. Emma's theological leanings are religious naturalist and Buddhist. Emma has two young children, enjoys blues dancing, tutoring science and math, and consumes all kinds of books.

In their ministerial profile, Emma says this about their call to ministry: "This call has been echoing through my life for years. Every step, from science to teaching to parenting to serving in ministerial capacities has affirmed this. Each vocation I've pursued has pointed toward ministry as the truest integration of who I am: relational, curious, and devoted to cultural change and meaning making in community. It feels less like a new direction and more like finally coming home. I feel called first and foremost to parish ministry that is deeply relational, justice centered, and relevant to the changing world, ... I hope to serve a congregation that wants to balance comfort in caring for each other with the discomfort of growing."

Please join me in warmly welcoming Emma to this wonderful Countryside Church community.

Thank you, Gary LaBedz, Board President

Dearest members and friends of CCUU,

It is such an honor to be preparing to serve alongside you in the coming church year. Everything I've seen and heard about CCUU reflects a community that is generous, vibrant, thoughtful, and kind, and I'm grateful to be finding my way toward you.

A little about me: I currently serve as the ministerial intern at the Unitarian Church of Evanston. Before ministry, I worked as a bio-analytical chemistry researcher and taught at several universities. Again and again, I found that what mattered most to me was the relational work of walking alongside people and building cultures of nurturance and intentionality. I'm a parent to two lively neurodivergent kids, have a non-nesting partner, and share my home with three cats. I love dancing (especially blues) and I consume audiobooks. If you're curious, you can also find me at ministeremma.com

I am excited to get to know each of you better and to see how we can collaborate to create more belonging, inspire curiosity, and live into the healing of our world!

With gratitude and warmth, Emma
Emma K. Farrell, Ph.D. (they/we/any)
UU Ministry
www.ministeremma.com



From Our President

Dear Fellow Countryside Members and Friends –

You can see the exciting announcement of the Board hiring Dr. Emma Farrell as our Contract Minister beginning August 1. Thank you to the search committee: Pat Wydell, Elizabeth Van Orden, Judy Ball, Michael Lunter, and Amy Zukoski.



As you may remember, our Treasurer, Rick Rayborn, has been leading an ad hoc capital projects team to install a second array of solar panels on the church roof. Prior to installing the solar panels, the roof needs some upgrades. Work on the roofing upgrades will begin this week, weather permitting. There will be some large equipment and materials stored on the parking lot for several days, so please be patient during this construction period. We are still awaiting the results of a review by Commonwealth Edison as to whether our existing electrical equipment will support the new solar panels. We are cautiously optimistic that the review will conclude that our existing equipment is sufficient or that the upgrades necessary will not be prohibitively expensive. If all goes well, the roofing enhancements will be completed in a week or so, and the solar panel installation will begin shortly thereafter. I understand that once the new solar panels are installed, we will have doubled our solar generating capacity. That's impressive.

Finally, we have completed our annual stewardship campaign (pledge drive). While we didn't attain our aspirational goal, pledges exceeded last year's pledges and that's encouraging. Thank you to everyone who pledged! Rick is now working on a budget that will be presented to the congregation during our annual meeting in May.

Thank you,
Gary LaBedz, Board President

Board of Trustees Meetings

3rd Weds—April 15 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.

From Our Minister

Time is a Gift

Life is changing every moment, but sometimes it's more obvious than others. Sometimes it hardly seems to move at all. Like the clock is ticking, but the big hand is not moving. Other times it's whizzing round the clock face and we can hardly keep up.



My dad told me that time seems to speed up as we age because of perspective. When we're little, one year might be one sixth of our life experience. Of course, that seems so very long. By the time we hit 80, each year is only 1/80 of our experience. A blink.

Plus, time has a mind of its own and creeps along when we're anticipating something good – but rushes by when we're preoccupied. You know how fast time flies when you're on your Insta feed or Facebooking. Or reading a really good book. I'll look up from the page at bedtime and wonder how it got so darned late!

We don't have a lot of control over time. It is both one of the defining characteristics of this human experience and something we haven't quite figured out. The only thing we can control over is how we use our time, where we put our attention; how much we lose worrying over the past we cannot change. How much time we waste on unhelpful emotions like regret or revenge – or even nostalgia.

We reclaim control when we guide our attention back, again and again, to a place of love and wonder. To a place where we pay attention to details, and to relationships with the people around us. Where we make it a spiritual practice to spend as much time as we can in the present moment.

When my kids were small, I had a picture on the wall that I'd cross-stitched while I was pregnant. From a poem by Ruth Hulbert Hamilton, it read:

*Cleaning and scrubbing can wait till tomorrow
For children grow up we've learned to our sorrow.
So quiet down cobwebs; Dust go to sleep!
I'm rocking my baby and babies don't keep.*

What might need your attention this day before it slips away? How can you hold onto the precious but limited moments we are each offered?

You might listen to a thunderstorm, watch a Robin catching worms, observe how the light crosses your kitchen window. In that moment, take a breath and remember to be fully present. This gift of life comes in tiny increments and we are most blessed when we can accept them all with a grateful heart.

~ Rev. Pam

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.

Tending the Spark:

Where the Body Remembers, the Spirit Sings

2nd Sundays: April 12 at 5 pm

Our Sunday evening alternative service, Tending the Spark (or Spark for short), gathers in Atherton Hall on the 2nd Sunday 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 April 12: *Moving Peace—Circle of Movement and Song*. Join us for a meditative journey through movement and sound where simple movements and sacred songs become a shared meditation.

Everyone is welcome. The evening closes with a finger food potluck.



Green Sanctuary News

Plastics: From Awareness to Action

Sat., April 11, 9 am to Noon

Join us in Atherton Hall for an interactive session on building awareness of the problems with plastics and finding solutions at individual and community levels. Light refreshments will be served. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/PlasticsApril11>



Creation Care Summit: May 2, 9am-Noon

All are invited to attend the 2026 Northern Illinois Creation Care Summit at First United Methodist Church in Arlington Heights. Cost: \$10, breakfast & snacks will be served. Connect with other creation care advocates, learn about solar projects happening, meet & talk with vendors, join breakout sessions on practical ways churches can become more eco-friendly. Find out more & register: <https://umcnic.org/calendar/2026-creation-care-summit>

2026-27 Leadership Slate Announced

It is with great pleasure that the Nominating Committee submits to the Congregation the following slate of candidates for various terms beginning church year 2026-27.

The church membership will vote at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 17 at 11:00 am. The nominees, if elected, will assume their positions on July 1. These candidates were thoughtfully selected and recruited by our Nominating Committee, and we are confident that they will serve our church well, with both skill and compassion.

From the By-Laws, Article X-3: Additional nominations for all elected positions may be made by petition of at least ten percent (10%) of CCUU membership. Petitions shall be filed with the Secretary of the Board at least ten (10) days prior to the business meeting convened for their election.

Board of Trustees

Nominees for the Board of Trustees:

- President-elect: Alan Greenland [1-year term followed by 2-year term as President]
- Vice President: Mike Berry [1st year of second 2-year term]
- Trustee: Ed Monson [1st year of 2-year term]
- Trustee: Bailey Pierce [1st year of 2-year term]
- Trustee: Joy Simon [1st year of 2-year term]

Continuing on the Board of Trustees:

- President: Gary LaBedz [2nd year of 2-year term]
- Secretary: Pat Wydell [2nd year of 2-year term]
- Treasurer: Rick Rayborn [2nd year of 2-year term]
- Trustee: Ryan Schaeffges [2nd year of second 2-year term]
- Trustee: Elizabeth Van Orden [2nd year of 2-year term]

Endowment Committee

from the By-Laws, Article XI, Sec.5: The Endowment Committee shall consist of five voting members, elected at an Annual Business Meeting of the Congregation for five-year (5) staggered terms such that one member is elected each year. Each member shall serve one term. The Senior Minister and President of the Board of Trustees shall be non-voting members of the Committee. In the event of a vacancy, vacancies will be filled by the Nominating Committee, per these by-laws.

Nominees for the Endowment Committee:

1. Rene Ayo [1st year of 5-year term]

Continuing on the Endowment Committee:

2. Bob Anders [3rd year of 3-year term]
3. Linda Segall [3rd yr of 4-year term]
4. Kevin Christensen [4th year of a 5-year term]
5. Margaret Myren [2nd year of 5-year term]

Nominating Committee

From the By-Laws, Article X-4: The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) to seven (7) members. Between four (4) and six (6) members shall be elected to serve for a term of two (2) years. Each shall be eligible for reelection to one (1) additional term. One member shall be appointed each year by the Board of Trustees to serve for a one-year term. No Nominating Committee member may serve more than four years of continuous service. Elections shall be held at the Annual Congregational Meeting each year. The Convener of the Nominating Committee shall be selected by the President from those directly elected by the Congregation to the Nominating Committee.

Nominees for the Nominating Committee:

1. Myles Olsen [1st year of a 2-year term]
2. Jeff Phillips [1st year of a 2-year term]
3. Jeanne Scown [1st year of a 2-year term]
4. Ellen Vinzani [1st year of a 1-year term]

Continuing on the Nominating Committee:

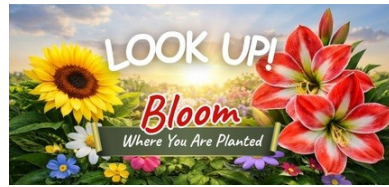
1. Hayden Pierce [2nd year of second 2-year term]
2. Joy Simon [2nd year of 2-year term]

The Nominating Committee would like to thank these members, who are completing terms, for their commitment to the work of Countryside Church:

- Peggy Simonsen, Board of Trustees
- Dan Yokas, Board of Trustees
- Ed Monson, Endowment Committee
- Linda Berry, Nominating Committee
- Margaret Myren, Nominating Committee

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and is OPEN FOR BIDDING AT NOON THIS SATURDAY, APRIL 4. Be sure you don't miss out on the wonderful vacation homes in Michigan City and the Wisconsin Dells; parties, workshops; delicious foods, including authentic Chinese dumplings; CCUU merch; and so much more! All proceeds benefit our [three Service Partners](#) and our CCUU congregation.

The online auction is designed to make participation easy and inclusive. You can browse, bid, and share the link with friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues. Then, on April 25, we will gather in person for the Live Auction and Party, bringing all that fun and generosity into one room.

While online bidding will continue until the Live Auction Party on Saturday, April 25, you may want to get your bid in early for parties and workshops, because when the seats are filled, they are filled!

Important information at a glance:

- We need event volunteers for the Live Auction party on April 25.** [Please sign up](#) for a time slot to help with Atherton Hall set up and food prep (on April 24), or general duties on the day of the event. You will be working with seasoned pros, so no prior experience is necessary. Ed Monson promises you will have fun!
- April 1: Online auction is open for browsing** at 32auctions.com/CCUU2026
- April 4 at 12PM: Online auction is live!** Let the bidding begin!
- April 15: RSVP deadline** for registering for the April 25 in-person event. There are three ways to RSVP:
 - Between April 4 - April 15 - "BUY NOW" Live Event Entry Ticket #0100 on the 32auctions.com/ccuu2026 website and pay at the conclusion of bidding, OR
 - Send a check in the amount of \$35.00 per reservation to Margaret Myren, 324 E Liberty St., Barrington, IL 60010, OR
 - Pay by check in Atherton Hall after Sunday services.
- April 25 (reservation required):** Doors open for in-person auction/dinner party at 5:00 PM in Atherton Hall; Online Auction closes at 6:30 PM; Live Auction begins at 7:15 PM.. Enjoy a great dinner; meet and greet our Service Partners, battle your fellow Countrysiders in a lively auction with our very own CCUU auctioneers, Matt and Margaret Myren, and enjoy storytelling by Red Hott Annie, and music by the CCUU Band.
- Today until April 25:** Watch enews for all the up-to-date info that you will need to know about this fabulous event!

Still have questions? Feel free to contact: partnerfundraising@ccuu.org

The Service Partners Fundraising Committee: Nancy Dempsey & Mari Van Meter, co-chairs; Debbie Lee and Margaret Myren

Passover Seder

Friday, April 10, 6 pm

Calling all ages!

Please join us for an evening of meaningful ritual and learning, as we celebrate the Jewish Passover Seder. Bring the whole family and friends.

Register and pay during coffee hour through April 5 or online: <https://ccuu.breezechms.com/form/Seder>.

Suggested Donations: Children under 12: \$5; Individuals: \$15; Families: max \$35.

- Seder essentials including wine, soup, and roasted chicken will be served.
- Please bring a vegetable, salad, side dish, or dessert to share. All dishes should comply with Passover traditions (i.e. no dairy, flour products, yeasts, bread, etc.).

What is a Passover Seder?

It's a ritual banquet which includes a retelling of the Exodus. *Seder* refers to the order of the ritual. *Passover* refers to the night that the angels of death passed over Jewish homes just before the Israelites won their freedom, fled after parting the Red Sea, and escaped from Egypt. The evening service includes wine (or grape juice) and special foods. There are readings in English and Hebrew and we even sing songs. Once the 'service' portion is over, a meal is shared by those attending and then another short service follows to end the Seder. While the Seder takes a while, it is a family-friendly event and is most often conducted in homes with children taking part in the reading or sharing of the story.

Why do Unitarian Universalists celebrate the Passover Seder?

As UUs, we recognize, respect, and turn for wisdom to the traditions of other religions – like Christmas and Ramadan. In this case, we are celebrating a sacred Jewish tradition. The main messages of the traditional Jewish Passover Seder are freedom and gratitude. We focus on these messages in our version of the Seder while retaining much of the traditions.

What will it be like?

You'll arrive by 6pm and bring a dish to share. That dish should meet general Seder guidelines – no pork, dairy, bread, or yeast. We'll then begin our service by following a book called the Haggadah which tells the story of the escape from Egypt. The word *Haggadah* means *the telling*. Since we will not eat for about an hour, you might give your kids a snack beforehand (though being hungry is part of the tradition for many folks). Coloring pages will be available to help occupy the children. Later we'll serve matzo ball soup and share a meal. Baked chicken will be served as a main dish. You are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to complete the meal. Once the meal is over, we'll have a brief service to complete the Seder. There will be the exciting search for the *Afikomen*.

Questions? Contact Linda Berry





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 actions for the week. These suggested action items are not the official position of Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist. We share these action items to keep our congregation informed of events occurring in our local community and around the country that each individual may or may not wish to take action on. Any actions or views taken as a result of the Justice Matters Committee are the actions and views of each individual alone

- [CALL TO ACTION #1: NO WAR WITH IRAN](#) (Phone Calls or Emails, 5 Minutes per Call or Email)
- [CALL TO ACTION #2 WRITE LETTERS TO VOTERS IN SWING DISTRICTS AT COFFEE HOUR](#) (Letter Writing, 30 Min)
- [CALL TO ACTION #3 HELP STOP THE SAVE ACT TO PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS](#) (Email, 10 Min)

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

Help Provide Meal for PADS Shelter

Weds, April 15

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 April, we are going to feature Chicken Pot Pie prepared in a 9x13 pan; the chicken, veg and sauce covered with a layer of pie crust or biscuits. You are welcome to use your favorite recipe for components of the meal or we will provide a recipe if you prefer. Please note that some guests request meatless options thus there are separate signup slots for some vegetable-based meal components.

Please deliver your contribution by 4 pm if possible. This will ensure we can fully heat the meal components for serving. The Journeys Center can accept our meal contributions beginning at 8:30 am, thus making the drop off process very flexible for us. They are located at roughly I-53 and NW Hwy. Just east of I-53 and on the north side of NW Hwy.

Please check out the [Sign-Up Genius sheet here](#) and sign up to contribute a portion of the meal on April 15. Additional details are provided on the sign-up sheet. Please contact Karen Epps with questions. Thank you so much for your support!



Don't ask
what will
happen;
Be what
happens.

Rebecca Solnit

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. A Creation Care Team Member from Southminster Presbyterian Church will pick up our donations, so it's an easy way for us to help out, both for our neighbors and for our environment.

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!*



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.

April 5 at 10 am **Easter Sunday: All on a Rising Day** **Rev. Pam Rumancik**

April 12 at 10 am **Until We Are All Free** **Rev. Allison Farnum & Keith Talley**

In challenging times that call us to live out our religious values, join Rev. Allison Farnum and Keith Talley of the Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of Illinois as we explore how we “get free” from the lens of Unitarian Universalist prisoner solidarity work.

Keith Talley (him/him) is a system-impacted Muslim leader working at the crossroads of reentry, faith, and narrative justice. He serves as Prison Solidarity Specialist with the Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of IL, Reentry Program Coordinator at Phalanx Family Services, and Founder & CEO of Revolutionary Reentry Hub. Introduced to UUPMI through the Pen Pal Program while caged, Keith found not a call to conversion, but a deep alignment of values. Today, he works to build bridges between spiritual traditions and to transform how we see, and stand with those returning from prison.

Rev. Allison Farnum (she/her/ella) is the Director and Minister of the Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry of IL, and a lifelong Unitarian Universalist. She is dedicated to the vision of collective liberation, one mindful act of care at a time.

April 12 at 5 pm **Tending the Spark: Moving Peace**

Join us for a meditative journey through movement and sound where simple movements and sacred songs become a shared meditation. 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. Remember to bring FINGER FOOD to share! *Where the Body Remembers, the Spirit Sings*

April 19 at 10 am **Earth Day Service** **Rev. Pam Rumancik**

Join us after the service for a Congregational Potluck.

April 26 at 10 am **Rev. Pam Rumancik**

We will welcome new members during this service.

Congregational Potlucks

Thank you to Transitions & Feminine Divine groups for hosting the March 1 potluck!

Upcoming potlucks—mark your calendars:

- Apr 19: hosted by Green Sanctuary & Grounds Working Group
- June 14: (after Pam & Karen's last worship service) If your group would like to help in June, please sign up here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11QAcoAw5YVyCCTPfc5IWG_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>.



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>.

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#.

For more info, contact Nancy Frenk. Thank you.



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.

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

Young Adults (18-35ish)

**Game Night: 1st Sundays—
April 5 & May 3 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.



Murder Mystery Night: April 12, 6:30 pm

Whodunnit?! We will have a Murder Mystery party starting in classroom 6. Come ready to play a role, uncover secrets, and see if you can crack the case! Even if you don't feel comfortable participating, feel free to come watch as the chaos unfolds!

Spiritual Discussion: April 19, 6:30 pm

Join us in classroom 6 to talk about a range of subjects that fall under the scope of being human - morality, ethics, life, death, spirituality, and whatever else speaks to us in the moment. Come with an open heart and mind and any discussion topics you may wish to pose to the group! We hold our Spiritual Discussions on the 3rd Sunday of even-numbered months.

Pictionary Night: April 26, 6:30 pm

Come ready to draw, guess, and laugh. All drawing skill levels are welcome and encouraged! We'll meet in classroom 6.

Earth Rhythms Drum Circle



Fri, 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.

Earth Rhythms Sound Journey



Fri, June 12, 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.

Feminine Divine Women's Group

Last Saturdays—April 25, 10 am
New women are always welcome. Join us the last Saturday of the month in classroom 6. For more info, contact Barbara Griggs.



Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic Online Discussion

2nd Tuesdays—April 14 at 7 pm

This month, Rick Rayborn will present on the "Virtues of Stoicism and their Waning."

We will meet in person at church in classroom 6.



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.



Green Sanctuary Meeting

**2nd Sundays—April 12, 11:30
am**

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

Buddhist Study Group

2nd Sundays—April 12, 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.



Transitions

April 23, 10 am

Please join us in Atherton Hall this month. Join us this month when Rob & Bev Leachman will astound us with a discussion of the 500-mile trek they completed in 2023 across northern Spain on the Camino de Santiago which is the basis of Rob's recently published memoir of that journey, *The Long Walk to Compostela: Life Lessons Learned on the Camino de Santiago*. As usual, join us for the pre-program coffee time and the camaraderie of our post-program potluck lunch.

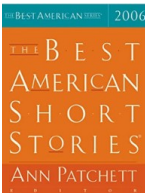


Daytime Book Group for Fiction Lovers

1st Wednesdays at 1 pm

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

- April 1: *Theo of Golden* by Allen Levi.
- May 6: *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett
- June 3: *Hard Rain Falling* by Don Carpenter



Reading Roundtable

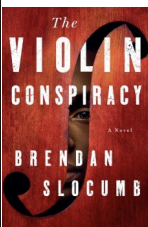
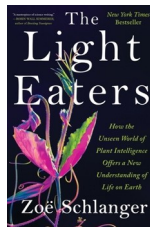
2nd & 4th Weds—April 8 & 22, 10 am

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

April 19 at 6:15 pm

All are welcome to join our discussion of *The Light Eaters – How the Unseen World of Plant Intelligence Offers a New Understanding of Life on Earth* by Zoë Schlanger. We gather in classroom 2 at 6:15 and begin discussion at 6:30. Newcomers are always welcome!



Last Mondays Book Discussion

April 28 at 7:00 pm

All are welcome to join us in the Stokes Room to discuss *The Violin Conspiracy* by Brendan Slocumb.

Monthly Fair Trade Sale

April 12

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

Stay Informed of UUA News

Subscribe to an email list: <https://www.uua.org/about/stay-in-touch>

MidAmerica UUA Newsletter

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



Online Journaling Circle

1st Thurs—April 2, 9:30 am

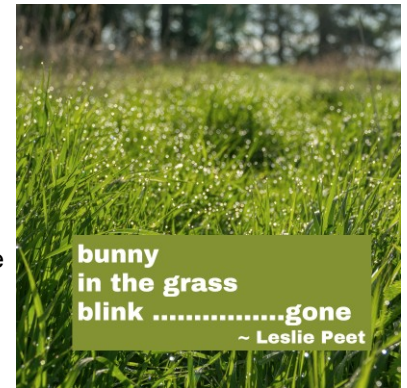
Each gathering opens with a short meditation. We then free write and write from prompts related to our monthly themes. Have your notebook or journal ready & join us online for personal exploration and growth. For more info, contact Juli Cicarelli. We meet on Zoom: meeting id 998 3055 0153 and passcode 1025.

Haiku Garden Online Work- shop

April 9, 10 am

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.



bunny
in the grass
blinkgone
~ Leslie Peet

My Improv Buddies at CCUU

Fri, May 1

doors open at 7, show at 7:30

Come laugh with us at this family-friendly improv show in Atherton Hall.



Tai Chi

Saturdays, 10:30-11:30 am

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



Save the Date

Rube Goldberg Challenge

May 16 (mid day)

Your Mission (should you choose to accept it): Build an outrageously creative machine that... sends a ball into a pan - OR - cracks an egg (for the brave and bold!)
What to Expect:

- * Chain reactions and surprising turns
- * A little chaos... and a lot of laughter
- * The joy of figuring it out together
- * Teams: Kids + Adults working together

Of all our themes this year, Embracing Possibility is arguably most central to our faith. It has distinguished Unitarian Universalists from our beginning. Historically, when others saw depravity and sin at the core of human identity, we saw potential. When many were preaching that this world is fallen, we fell in love with the possibility of heaven on earth. Theologically, you might say we were the people who believed that God hadn't given up on us and so we shouldn't give up on each other or this world. Psychologically, it's led to us being a people of "why not?" Why not give people another chance? Why not fight what seems like a losing battle? Why not risk a little failure? Or forgiveness? Why not trust in the possibility of a new dawn?

So that's our religion. But what about us personally? How open have you been recently to "Why not?" How's your faith in possibility doing? As we honor our religion's unwavering faith in what's possible, we need to allow space for the reality that trusting possibility isn't so easy for many of us. Here's how one Soul Matters group member put the challenge:

"When I think of possibility, I think of all the people and opportunities I've closed the door on. I've let myself believe that I would never see eye to eye with my sister. I stayed way too long at a ho-hum job because I was scared about starting my own business. And I spent two very lonely years in a new town because I convinced myself that I could never find close friends like I had where I used to live."

Who of us can't relate? We all tell ourselves so many small stories about who we and others are. We all - at one time or another - have lived in tiny tales of what the world could be. Part of it has to do with real life defeats. But often a bigger part of it is about imagined fear and protecting ourselves. There's comfort in convincing yourself that the effort is hopeless; that way you don't have to try and risk failure, hurt or disappointment, yet again.

All of which is to say that maybe embracing possibility has more to do with being able to embrace vulnerability and courage than we've thought. The work isn't just about believing in possibility. It's about being willing to endure a few wounds along the way. It can hurt to be hopeful.

And if that's true, then it seems that the core question this month isn't simply "Are you ready to embrace possibility?" but "Who binds up your wounds and tends to your hurt when you risk possibility?" And a whole host of clarifying questions spill out from there, such as: Who have you gathered around you to pick you up and patch you up when the path of possibility gets bumpy and knocks you down? Whose faith can you lean on when yours grows dim? Have you placed yourself in the orbit of someone who consistently tells bigger stories than you? And maybe most important: Have you found a friend or partner that sees more possibility in you than you do yourself?

The thread woven through all these questions is, of course, the fundamental truth that no one makes it down the road of possibility alone.

And perhaps that's the real secret: remembering that "Why not?" is something we all have to say and sing together. It's not a solo act. For "Why not?" to sink in - and better yet, take flight - it needs to be at least a duet. Of course a quartet is even better. And just imagine what we might pull off if we can gather a choir, all singing the tune

of "Why not?!" at the top of our lungs!

Questions for Embracing Possibility

*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. What book from your childhood convinced you that life was full of possibility? What would change in your life if that childhood sense of possibility returned to you today?
 2. If you could go back in time and expand your family of origin's sense of possibility in just one way, what would it be?
 3. How would your life be different if you had trusted in possibility earlier in life?
 4. If you believe that saving the world is no longer possible, might you still find hope in the work of creating islands of sanity - smaller circles of community dedicated to helping people stay sane and rooted in their values even as the world around them grows harsh and grim.
 5. We all tell ourselves, "One day I will..." What "One day I will" sentence has been with you the longest? And what would need to change for you to start turning that dream into a reality?
 6. Who helped you find your way back to possibility when all the doors in front of you felt closed? If you were to thank them, what would you say now that you didn't or couldn't back then?
 7. What have you learned about finding the possibilities that live on the other side of grief?
 8. We're told to live each day as if it were our last. But what if, instead, we lived each day as if it were our very first?
 9. What if we're built to have many lives in this lifetime of ours? What if we become fully human by pursuing and becoming many of our possible selves, rather than just one of them?
 10. Are you sure it's too late to do it, or become it?

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Monthly Theme 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_Ps01GauCvL_mKQ/playlists

Upcoming Church Events

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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			April 1 <i>Focus publication</i> 10am Telling Our Stories 1pm 1 st Weds Book Group	April 2 10am online Journaling Circle 7pm Choir Rehearsal	April 3 6pm Family Game Night	April 4 Wellness House Offerings 10:30am Tai Chi <i>Silent Auction Opens</i>
April 5 Easter Sunday 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship & RE 11 am Fellowship 6:30pm Young Adult (YA) Game Night	6	7	8 10am Reading Roundtable	9 10am Haiku Garden Workshop 7pm Choir Rehearsal	10 6pm Passover Seder	11 9am-Noon <i>Plastics – From Awareness to Action</i> 10:30am Tai Chi
Apr 12 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship & RE 11am Fellowship & Fair Trade Sale 11:30am Green Sanctuary Mtg 11:30am Buddhist Study Group 11:30am Biblical Literacy for UUs 5pm Tending the Spark 6:30pm YA Murder Mystery Night	13	14 7pm AHA Discussion	15 PADS Meal 10am Living Well 7pm Board of Trustees meeting	16 7pm Choir Rehearsal	17 7pm Earth Rhythms Drum Circle	18 9am Ministry Council Mtg 10:30 Tai Chi
Apr 19 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service & RE 11am Congregational Potluck 11:30am Shared Pulpit Worship Class 11:30am RE Council Mtg 6:15pm Book Circle 6:30pm YA Spiritual Discussion Night	20	21	22 10am Reading Roundtable	23 10am Transitions 7pm Choir Rehearsal	24	25 10am Fem. Divine Women's Group 10:30 Tai Chi 5pm Time & Talent Auction
Apr 26 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service & RE 11am Fellowship 11:30am Shared Pulpit Worship Class 5pm Tending the Spark 6:30pm YA Pictionary Night	27 <i>Focus deadline</i> 7pm Last Mondays Book Discussion	28	29	30 7pm Choir Rehearsal	May 1 <i>Focus publication</i> 7pm My Improv Buddies	May 2 Wellness House Offerings 10:30am Tai Chi
May 3 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship & RE 11 am Fellowship 11:30am Biblical Literacy for UUs 6:30pm Young Adult (YA) Game Night	May 4	May 5	May 6 10am Telling Our Stories 1pm 1 st Weds Book Group	May 7 10am online Journaling Circle 7pm Choir Rehearsal	May 8	May 9 10:30am Tai Chi

Mark Your Calendar

- May 16: Rube Goldberg Challenge
- May 17: Congregational Annual Meeting
- June 7: Buffalo Grove Pride Parade, Day of Service, NO Worship or RE
- June 14: Revs. Pam & Karen's last worship service, followed by Congregational Potluck

focus

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Community Minister	Rev. Dr. C. Scot Giles
Director Relig. Exploration	Rev. Karen Mooney RevKaren@ccuu.org
Volunteer Coord. Faith Dev. for Youth & Adults	Susan Auld & Pat Wydell AFD@ccuu.org
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Technology Coordinator	Luis Diaz Tech-Coord@ccuu.org
Volunteer Grounds Coord. Volunteer Kitchen Staff	Siri Laurin David Williams

Lay Ministers

Ellen Vinzani, Coordinator

Lisa Christensen Mary Johnson Joy Simon
Barbara Griggs Helen Moore

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

- Monday, April 27 (publ. May 1)
- Weds. May 27 (publ. June 3)

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

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