



May 1st: Make some noise on the I-290!

This May Day, we aren't just celebrating—we're taking action. Join the **CCUU Democracy Action Team** for a high-visibility overpass demonstration to show the thousands of commuters on I-290 that we are standing strong for our values. After we wrap up the rally, we'll head back to the park to break bread together at our Tailgate Potluck.

The Game Plan:

- **9:00 AM:** Meet at **Woodland Meadows Park**. We'll gather our gear and walk together (approx. 0.3 miles) to the Busse Woods bike trail bridge overlooking I-290.
- **9:00 – 11:00 AM:** Overpass Demonstration. Bring your flags, banners, and energy! We will have a super large **"No War for Oil"** sign to display.
- **11:00 AM:** Potluck Tailgate Lunch back at the Woodland Meadows Park parking lot.

Logistics & Comfort:

- **Parking:** Ample parking is available at Woodland Meadows Park (off Martingale/Rohlwing Rd).
- **Facilities:** Port-a-potties are located at the park.
- **What to Bring:** Pro-democracy or American flags, comfortable walking shoes, and a favorite dish or side to share for the tailgate.

Let's start the month of May with a powerful message of unity. **May Day Strong!** ~ The Democracy Action Team

Inside This Edition...

2	From Our President News from the Board: DRE Selected
3	From Our Minister: Dwell in Possibility—And So It Begins Lay-Care Ministry Ordination of Dr. Emma Farrell Board of Trustees Meetings
4	Time & Talent Auction Results and Thank Yous
5	Upcoming Worship Services Congregational Potlucks Be the first smile they see Join the Choir! Did you miss a service?
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Justice Matters ◦ Young Adults upcoming events ◦ Green Sanctuary Meeting ◦ Rx Drug Bottle Reuse Program ◦ Transitions ◦ Open Forum Discussion
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ AHA Discussion ◦ Fiction Lovers Daytime Book Group ◦ Book Circle ◦ Reading Roundtable ◦ Last Mondays Book Discussion ◦ Online Journaling Circle ◦ Haiku Workshop ◦ Earth Rhythms Sound Journey ◦ Earth Rhythms Drum Circle ◦ Feminine Divine Women's Group
8	Monthly Ministry Theme: <i>Awakening Curiosity</i>
9	Church Calendar for May Wellness House Offerings at CCUU

Last page: Focus Deadlines & CCUU Covenant, Mission, & Vision



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.

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. The selected slate was announced in the April Focus and can be found on the website: <https://ccuu.org/congregational-meetings/>.

The agenda and proposed budget will be emailed by May 7.

Attention, Program & Committee Chairs

If you have not already done so, please submit your Annual Report to the church office by May 3. If you need more time than that, please contact Laurie, ccuu@ccuu.org.

Monthly Fair Trade Sale

May 24

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

From the Board President

Dear Fellow Countryside Members and Friends –

For the second month in a row, I've got some exciting news to share!

The Board is pleased to announce that it has approved the hiring of Dr. Mary Lamb Shelden to serve as our new Director of Religious Exploration, effective June 1. This will allow Mary to work with Rev. Karen for several weeks to facilitate a smooth transition. Rev. Karen has brought new life and vigor to the Religious Exploration program over the past two years, and the transition period with Mary should ensure that the RE program remains vibrant, relevant and continues to grow, after Rev. Karen retires. (There is more specific information in an accompanying article.)

This past Saturday evening, we held our Time & Talent auction and raised more than \$40,000 for our service partners and CCUU. A big thank you to Nancy Dempsey and Mari Van Meter (and many others) who helped make this auction a fun, community event and a major success!

This past Sunday, we welcomed 9 new members to the CCUU community. That is wonderful news! I'm grateful that CCUU continues to attract people who value an open-minded, welcoming community, with which to share their spiritual journeys.

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. Work on the roofing upgrades is nearly complete. However, we are still awaiting the results of a review by Commonwealth Edison to determine whether our existing electrical equipment will support the new solar panels. We are hopeful that we will hear from ComEd soon, so that we can begin the solar panel installation and have it completed by the end of June. I understand that once the new solar panels are installed, we will have doubled our solar generating capacity.

Also, keep in mind that our Congregational Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday May 17, immediately after the service. At the meeting, the congregation will vote on, among other items, the new slate of Board members and the Annual Budget for the 2026-2027 church year. It is very important that as many members attend as possible. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

All in all, things are looking up for the CCUU community. We will end the current church year with a new Director of Religious Exploration, many new members, and new solar panels, and we will begin the next church year with a new Senior Minister. That's very desirable position to be in. I can't wait to see how the church grows and evolves during the upcoming year.

Thank you,

Gary LaBedz, Board President



News from the Board

Children's Religious Exploration Director Selected

Republished from April 29 e-news

Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist is pleased to announce that Dr. Mary Lamb Shelden will begin serving as our Director of Religious Exploration on June 1.

Mary returns to CCUU with both professional depth and a familiar presence, having previously served within our community. Her approach to spiritual formation is rooted in attentive listening, relationship-building, and a deep respect for the unique journeys of children, youth, and adults alike. In this position, Mary's work will be focused on Religious Exploration for children and youth. This clarity of role also means that her responsibilities will be intentionally bounded, supporting a sustainable and healthy program.

At CCUU, Religious Exploration is a place where curiosity meets community—where our youngest members and lifelong learners explore Unitarian Universalist values, ask big questions, and practice living into love and justice. We are excited for the ways Dr. Mary will help shape and support this work in the years ahead. We look forward to welcoming her and her commitment to building a program where curiosity, belonging, and growth can flourish.

If you have questions about the search process or about Dr. Mary's engagement in this role, please reach out to any member of the search team or the Religious Exploration Council.

Note: This hiring comes as Rev. Karen retires from her Religious Exploration leadership. We will be celebrating both Rev Pam's and Rev Karen's ministry with us in June.

Submitted by

Gary LaBedz, Board President

Children's RE Director Search Team: Linda Berry, duRee Bryant, Natalie Krastev



A Word from Mary:

I am delighted to be returning to service as your Director of Religious Exploration for young people. For those who don't know me, I previously served as Countryside's Director of Lifespan RE, 2019-2023. Since we were last together, I have been in formation as a spiritual director through the formation program at Meadville Lombard and, having been credentialed and commissioned in May of last year, launched my private practice back in September. I have been a guest in the pulpit at many UU congregations in Chicagoland and beyond. I have also been teaching first-year writing at Aurora University with some very earnest and dedicated students. I want you to know that I have never stopped loving this congregation, and that I have always been rooting for you. I am excited to connect again with those of you I know, and to get to know those of you I don't. I look forward to working with Revs. Pam and Karen as they prepare to depart, with Rev. Emma as they come on board, with other dear staff colleagues, and with all of you!

From Our Minister

Dwell in Possibility: And So It Begins...

You have a new minister! I can't tell you how happy I am for CCUU and for the soon to be Rev Dr Emma Farrell as you step into your next chapter together. Beginnings are full of hope and possibility. You all have the power to make this ministry rich, rewarding, and sustaining for all concerned.

CCUU is a wonderful congregation, and I trust that Emma will love you as well and deeply as Rev Karen and I have these past two years. You're lovable and possibilities abound.

But Dr Emma's beginning will be very different than when Karen and I arrived in August of 2024. At that time there was, sadly, a bit of discombobulation and even distress. That Ministerial Search hadn't gone well, your Religious Education person was AWOL, and folks were not exactly trusting the universe. We entered a system that had circled the wagons in many ways. Completely understandable!

Rev Karen and I understood that our ministry goal was to help you find your way back to yourself. To remember your strengths and to get back on your intended path. I'm happy to say that together, we all made great progress and this church is strong, solid and ready for a new beginning.

But I do want to offer a bit of advice. The hope is that this new relationship will transform into a long-term Called ministry and I would encourage you to treat Dr Emma as if they already are your Called Minister. This is the time to go all in.

When I arrived, I took the time to meet nearly 90 church members one-on-one. It gave me a deep look into the challenges of the previous years, and I needed that in order to figure out how to meet you; to discern what was required.

I found a church that had convinced itself that it really didn't need ministers all that much. With Rev Hillary's illness keeping her away for much of her last five years, the aftermath of the pandemic, and an Interim Minister strong on disruption but less skilled at building relationships, this church had created a strong ethos of taking care of yourselves and getting things done without much ministerial relationship (or interference!)

I admit to some surprise that I didn't get invited to many of the plethora of groups meeting in the church. It seemed odd that the Finance Committee never reached out to let me know when they were meeting, didn't consider adjusting their meeting dates, and weren't particularly interested in what the new minister might think.

You WERE very welcoming and kind, but I also got the sense that you didn't really need me for much beyond Sunday mornings. Odd, but again, entirely understandable with the history I'd uncovered. All of it made sense with the experiences you'd had prior to my arrival.

But it's different now. You are beginning a new chapter from a very different place – and I'm encouraging you to flip the script with your next minister. Invite them to get

continued...



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.

Board of Trustees Meetings

3rd Weds—May 20 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.

The Ordination of Dr. Emma Farrell

You are cordially invited to the ordination of our incoming minister, Dr. Emma Farrell, at Unity Temple on June 13, 2:30pm. We would love to see you there! Please RSVP here:

<https://partiful.com/e/DOknxls60cg9vzlxIEWo>



From the Minister, cont'd

to know you with open arms. Your book clubs, your Justice meetings, your morning forums and evening AHA groups. Invite them to Feminine Divine, Buddhist group, Tai Chi and Transitions. Don't expect they'll be able to attend all of them in the first few months or even regularly but keep your invitations open. Let Dr Emma get to know you as deeply and well as Rev Karen and I have eventually gotten to. Because Rev Karen and I were seasoned ministers, we essentially elbowed our way in, and created great relationships throughout the church.

We have functioned as unintentional Interim Ministers for you and I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish. We've witnessed as you remembered your strengths, deepened your connections, and stepped into a new vision of ministry during a very challenging time in the wider world. Rev Karen and I are convinced that this church is on the verge of an exciting new chapter of expansion and growth – and we'll watch from afar and cheer you on with pride.

We have one more monthly article and will include our many thanks in that one. But for now, the best gift you could give us is to continue being the amazing, generous, open-hearted, and loving community we've come to love. You are indeed an island of sanity in a chaotic and changing world. You have so much to offer and so many possibilities for growth when you remember to do it together. Give Dr Emma the gift of walking alongside you all and intentionally finding your way together.

Blessed be. ~ Rev. Pam

**2026
Time & Talent
Auction**

April 4 - 25



Auction Results

The grand totals are in, and our 2026 Time and Talent Auction “LOOK UP! Bloom Where You are Planted” netted over \$35,000 in support of Chalice House, our three [Service Partners](#), and CCUU!

This was made possible with the support of countless members of our church community and beyond:

- Over 100 donations/donors of time and talent
- 110 live auction participants
- 100 online auction participants
- Over 40 volunteers who helped with numerous roles and responsibilities (please see the [April 29 post](#) for a list of our intrepid volunteers)

We came very close to meeting all of our goals and surpassed several of our stretch goals for the “Raise the Paddles” for our Service Partners and CCUU. All auction contributions helped pay for:

- \$1440 for the Faith in Place “Annual Environment & Spirituality Summit”
- \$1300 for the Faith in Place “Faithful Democracy & Poll Protection” initiative
- \$2700 to send children and their families to attend POC’s “ICompete Summer Camp”, plus sponsorships for field trips
- \$2200 to provide fresh produce, dairy, and other food items for POC’s Faith Feeds Food Pantry
- \$2550 for case management for 6 ICDI clients
- \$425 toward Chalice House groceries
- \$4400 to CCUU to help cover Chalice House roofing expenses
- \$4100 to support CCUU outdoor grounds improvements
- \$2400 toward UUA Dues
- PLUS nearly \$14,000 to be shared with our three service partners to fund ongoing needs.

This spring, we chose to LOOK UP! We contributed our time, talent, and financial resources as we were able, and “bloomed where we were planted.” Well done, Countryside!

The Service Partner Fundraising Committee
Nancy Dempsey and Mari Van Meter (Co-Chairs)
Debbie Lee and Margaret Myren

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.

May 3 at 10 am Youth Bridging Service Rev. Pam Rumancik & Rev. Karen Mooney

As our seniors graduate and begin new chapters, we wish them well and honor the hard work that has brought them here. Join us in celebrating our kids.

May 10 at 10 am Parenthood: A Novel of Hope & Despair Rev. Pam Rumancik

Parenting is harder than ever before. Older folks feel like they tried to do everything right but get no credit. Younger parents have so many places of information – but will it be the right ones? We honor the ancestors who came before and offer a bit of kindness to those in the trenches today.

May 10 at 5 pm Tending the Spark: Vibrational Healing Nancy Frenk & Cindy Thornton

Join us for a sound journey as we meditate with the gentle frequencies of crystal singing bowls, chimes and additional calming instruments. 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!

May 17 at 10 am Unitarian Universalism in the 21st Century Rev. Pam Rumancik

Join us after the service for our Congregational Annual Meeting. This is the final day of RE Classes till fall.

May 24 at 10 am Blessed Are You Rev. Dr. C. Scot Giles

May 31 at 10 am The Eight Worldly Winds Buddhist Study Group

June 7 at 10 am Buffalo Grove Pride Parade, Day of Service, NO Worship Service or RE

June 14 at 10 am Revs. Pam & Karen's last service

June 14 at 5 pm Tending the Spark

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!

June 21 at 10 am Four Seasons: Summer

Congregational Potlucks

Thank you to Green Sanctuary and the Grounds Working Group for hosting the April 19 potluck!

Final Potluck of this church year: June 14—mark your calendars

June 14 is Revs. Pam and Karen's last worship service with us, and we will follow it with a potluck. If you or your group would like to help, please sign up here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/11QAcoAw5YVyCCTPfc5IWG_EaZoEmHAJA-yWoyDy8_Kk/edit?usp=sharing

What's involved in helping? 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#/#/](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.



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 HELP STOP THE SAVE ACT TO PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS](#) (Email, 10 Min)
- [CALL TO ACTION #3: PASS A FUNDING CARVE-OUT FOR TSA AND FEMA](#) (Phone Calls or Emails, 5 Minutes per Call or Email)
- [CALL TO ACTION #4: MAY 1st: MAKE A NOISE ON THE I-290!](#) (Overpass demonstration and potluck lunch, 3 hours)
- [CALL TO ACTION #5: SINGING RESISTANCE on May 2](#) (Singing and Sacred Circle dance, 2 hours)

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

Young Adults (18-35ish)

Game Night: 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.

Business Meeting: May 17, 6:30 pm

Young adults (18-35) are invited to join us in classroom 6 for this planning session, held the 3rd Sunday of odd-numbered months. We discuss various matters and plan things to do.

Game Night & Potluck on June 7, 6:30 pm

The Young Adults (18-35ish) are combining June's Board Game Night with a Potluck including special guests Rev Pam and Rev Karen! Bring your favorite games and some food to share as we bid farewell to the Reverends with some fun and good eats!



GREEN
SANCTUARY

Green Sanctuary Meeting

2nd Sundays—May 10, 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 all ages, and service projects that benefit our local area and beyond.

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!*



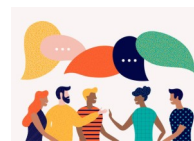
Transitions

May 28, 10 am

Join us in Atherton Hall this month, when Ron Vargason and Barb Sugden will amaze us with: *IRELAND--Its Unique Story* - as we travel by barge,

ferry, car, and foot to see this little green island of lush landscapes, rolling hills, barren rocky fields, dramatic coastlines, vibrant cities, and age-old historic sites that became home to Celts, Vikings, and Normans long before it formed the two countries it hosts today: the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It's filled with myths and magic as well as golden ages of scholarship and literature. But it's also had a long and tortured history with determined, everyday heroes willing to sacrifice all for a chance at life and liberty. Hear stories throughout the ages that make Ireland one-of-a-kind today.

As usual also come to enjoy our Pre-program Coffee time and Post-Program Potluck Lunch.



Open Forum Discussion

Sundays, 9 am—In person or Online

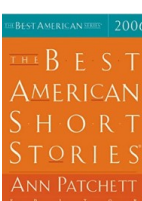
In the Open Forum, we agree to discuss the issues of the day honestly and respectfully, welcoming the diversity of views that may be expressed on any given topic. All are



Daytime Book Group for Fiction Lovers *1st Wednesdays at 1 pm*

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

- May 6: *Tom Lake* by Ann Patchett
- June 3: *Hard Rain Falling* by Don Carpenter
- July: we will not formally meet
- August 5: *Far from the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy



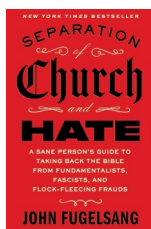
Reading Roundtable *2nd & 4th Weds—May 13 & 27, 10 am*

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

June 7 at 6:15 pm

All are welcome to join our discussion of *Separation of Church and Hate, A Sane Person's Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleecing Frauds* by John Fugelsang. We gather in classroom 2 at 6:15 and begin discussion at 6:30. Newcomers are always welcome!



Last Mondays Book Discussion

June 1 & 29 at 7:00 pm

NOTE: We are not meeting the last Monday in May, as that is Memorial Day. We will instead meet the 1st and last Mondays in June. All are welcome to join us in the Stokes Room for our discussions:

- June 1: *The Road to Tender Hearts* by Annie Hartnett.
- June 29: *How Beautiful We Were* by Imbolo Mbue

Earth Rhythms Sound Journey



Fri, June 12, 7 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.



Online Journaling Circle

1st Thurs—May 7, 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 Workshop

May 14, 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.



a scilla carpet pushes through leaf mold spring struggle
- Mary Freemire

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



Atheist, Humanist, Agnostic Online Discussion

2nd Tuesdays—May 12 at 7 pm

This month's topic: *Our founding fathers. How Christian were they and does it matter?* presented by Sandy Petroschius and Henrietta Sterl. We will meet in person at church in classroom 6.



Feminine Divine Women's Group

Last Saturdays—May 30, 10 am

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

Earth Rhythms Drum Circle



Fri, July 10, 7 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.

UU minister, Victoria Safford, speaks of curiosity using the metaphor of perception and sight. She writes:

“To see, simply to look and to see, is an ethical act and intentional choice; to see, with open eyes, is a spiritual practice and thus a risk, for it can open you to ways of knowing the world and loving it that will lead to inevitable consequences. The awakened [and curious] eye is a conscious eye, a willful eye, and brave, because to see things as they are, each in its own truth, will make you very vulnerable.”

Consequences. We rarely think of curiosity in terms of consequences. But Rev. Safford seems to have it right. There is a type of curiosity that is about enjoyment and adventure. This way of understanding curiosity invites us to experience life as a playground. But when we look closely at our lives we realize there's another type of curiosity at play. This kind leads us, not to playgrounds, but into dark alleys and pathless woods. It demands, not just our attention, but our courage. It's not interested in entertaining us with the wonders of the world. Instead, it wants to enlist us in the work of the world.

Just think of how we UUs talk about our dances with curiosity. We don't just tell stories about peppering our poor Sunday School teachers with “Why?!” and “Who says?!”; we tell stories about how asking why got us kicked out of Sunday School. We don't just talk about being open-minded; we talk about how our open-mindedness led us to leave home and family and walk a lonelier path than we wanted. And recently, many of us have leaned into the hard work of being curious about our role in upholding institutional racism and structures of white supremacy, which is clearly about more than learning new and interesting things about ourselves.

And here's the important insight revealed by these stories: As hard as these paths of curiosity are, we are grateful for them! Which in turn suggests that there is a part of us that doesn't want curiosity to just be fun or interesting. It wants curiosity to change us, to make us anew. This part of us wants to be altered, not just enriched.

So, maybe we need to tweak this month's theme a bit. Maybe, what we need to hear is not simply “Awaken your curiosity!” but “Awaken the kind of curiosity that comes with consequences!”

Friends, it is, of course, fine to be inquisitive for the fun of it. At the same time, we must remember that curiosity is not a game. Well, actually, maybe it's the greatest game. The one that drives us to constantly become more, for our sakes and for the sake of others.

Questions for Awakening Curiosity

*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. During your childhood, what were you not allowed to be curious about? How did that shape who you are today?
 2. During childhood, what one or two things were you most curious about? How do you see an echo of that in your life today?
 3. Has being curious ever come at a cost for you?
 4. Is it time to be more curious about what your body is trying to tell you?
 5. What is the greatest adventure that your curiosity took you on? What did that adventure teach you about yourself?
 6. Have you ever been punished for being curious? Have you ever punished someone else for being curious?
 7. Do you think you are worth someone being curious about? Have you always felt that way?
 8. When it comes to you worrying about the future or being curious about it, which one wins?
 9. Which were you taught was more important: the “expert mind” or the “beginner's mind”?
 10. What familiar thing (a person, object, or routine) in your life is asking you to approach it with a beginner's mind?
 11. Have you ever opened a Pandora's box of your own? What's one thing about that moment you'd do differently?
 12. If a crystal ball could reveal something about yourself, your future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
 13. How has approaching mistakes with curiosity rather than shame healed you and helped you heal others?

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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_Ps01IGauCvL_mKQ/playlists

Upcoming Church Events

May 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					May 1 <i>Focus publication</i> 9am May Day Demo 7pm My Improv Buddies	May 2 Wellness House Offerings 10:30am Tai Chi 1pm Singing Resistance
May 3 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship & RE 11 am Fellowship 11:30am Biblical Literacy for UUs 6:30pm Young Adult Game Night	4	5	6 10am Telling Our Stories 1pm 1 st Weds Book Group	7 9:30am online Journaling Circle 7pm Choir Rehearsal	8	9 10:30am Tai Chi
May 10 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship & RE 11am Fellowship 11:30am Green Sanctuary Mtg 5pm Tending the Spark	11	12 7pm AHA Discussion	13 10am Reading Roundtable	14 10am Haiku Garden workshop 7pm Choir Rehearsal	15	16 10:30 Tai Chi
May 17 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service & RE 11am Congregational Annual Meeting 6:30pm YA Planning Meeting	18 7pm Democracy Action Team	19	20 10am Living Well 7pm Board of Trustees meeting	21 7pm Choir Rehearsal	22	23 10:30 Tai Chi
May 24 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10am Worship Service 11am Fellowship & Fair Trade 11:30am Biblical Literacy for UUs 11:30am Buddhist Study Group	25 Memorial Day	26	27 <i>Focus deadline</i> 10am Reading Roundtable	28 10am Transitions 7pm Choir Rehearsal	29	May 30 10am Fem. Divine Women's Group 10:30am Tai Chi
May 31 9 am Open Forum Discussion 10 am Worship Service 11 am Fellowship 11:30am Biblical Literacy for UUs	June 1 7pm Last Mondays Book Discussion	June 2	June 3 <i>Focus publication</i> 1pm 1 st Weds Book Group	June 4 10am online Journaling Circle	June 5	June 6 Wellness House Offerings 9am RE Council Retreat 10:30am Tai Chi
June 7 NO Worship Service Day of Service Buffalo Grove Pride Parade 6:15pm Book Circle 6:30pm Young Adult Game Night & Potluck w. Revs. Pam & Karen	8	9 7pm AHA Discussion	10 10am Reading Roundtable	11 10am Haiku Garden workshop	12 7pm Earth Rhythms Sound Journey	13 10:30am Tai Chi

Mark Your Calendar

- June 7: Buffalo Grove Pride Parade, Day of Service, NO Worship Service
- June 14: Revs. Pam & Karen's last worship service, followed by Congregational Potluck

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

focus

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Director Relig. Exploration	Rev. Karen Mooney RevKaren@ccuu.org
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Congregational Administrator	Laurie Lantz ccuu@ccuu.org
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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

- Weds. May 27 (publ. June 3)
- Weds, June 24 (publ. July 1)

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

Return Service Requested
Time-dated Material—Prompt Delivery Requested

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