



January 2018

CUFLINKS

monthly newsletter of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship
— a welcoming congregation —



Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship

Reverend Sarah Richards, Minister

Connie Payne, Religious Education Coordinator

Sunday services and religious education at 10:30 AM

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On the web at

<http://carbondauef.org/>

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SUNDAY TOPICS | JANUARY THEME

What Does it Mean to be a People of Intention?

January 7 - "Feeling Our Way"

Welcome the New Year in an "experiment in spaciousness" service led by Rev. Sarah. There will be singing, sharing of sorrows and joys and other familiar elements of Sunday Service but also more silence and spontaneity, e.g., no printed order of service.

January 14 - "Welcoming All Genders"

Every Sunday, we say that CUF welcomes "those of all ages, all colors, all genders, all abilities, all kinds of wealth, all kinds of love." What does it mean to welcome all genders with intention? The LGBTQ+ Welcoming Committee, and guest Chip Loghry of the Rainbow Café will explore the possibilities for our congregation.

January 21 - "Inward"

One year after the Women's March in Carbondale, how are our spirits? Using Richard Rohr's "The Activist's Guide to Contemplation" as text, Rev. Sarah looks at the relationships between our work in the community and in our consciousness.

January 28 - "TBA"

THE MINISTER'S COLUMN



Dear CUF Folks,

Happy New Year!

A few days ago, I felt a subtle thrill as I took down the old calendar and put up the 2018 edition. Whether

the feeling came from the release of the past year, or the possibilities of the new, or a combination, I can't say. But the sense of freedom and potential was there, and has not entirely left. Now I know that the "new year" is an arbitrary date, and that January 1 has no astronomical or other scientific significance. In fact, at CUF we also have recognized the Pagan new year at Samhain, the Jewish new year, Rosh Hashanah, and next month we move from the year of the Rooster to the Dog in the Chinese calendar. Given all the cultures and calendars in the world, it's not really that hard to imagine that every day a new year is celebrated by some people somewhere.

The reality is, we could treat each day as a new opportunity to release ourselves from regret and move into the moment of possibility. And what might that feel like? I've personally never been one for making resolutions, but I'm definitely a task list-maker – how else would I keep on top of them all? So this set of questions in the January Soul Matters packet hit me hard:

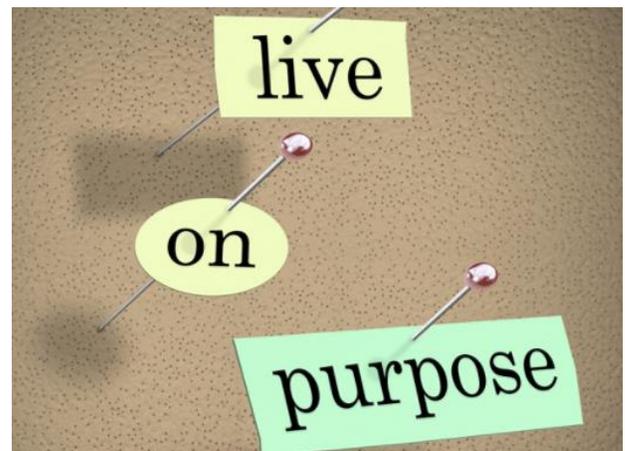
What dictates your days? Your To-Do list or your intentionality? Do you begin by asking, "What do I have to get done?" or "What do I want this day to be about?"

Well, the answers for me are To-Do list and "What do I have to get done?" but I want to begin each day asking myself what I want this

day to be about, because I recognize that shift as directly connected to that little thrill that comes with changing the calendar. I want to establish the intention toward gratitude, or kindness, or justice, or even productivity, to move into the moment with my whole being, not only the doing. What about you? What dictates your days?

Time and space are needed to make that shift to intentionality, so I'm glad for the Soul Matters Covenant Group, and for this month in which we will be exploring together what it means to be a people of intention. During the first Sunday Service of the month, we'll all have the opportunity to write down some of our thoughts about that theme and share them on the bulletin board. Additions can be made at any time thereafter, creating a physical space for contemplation and discussion of being a people of intention. I look forward to seeing you at CUF on Sunday morning, and every day of the week, when we can begin a new year as people of intention.

Peace,



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

January 2018

by Janet E. Harris

The New Year has arrived and I look forward to it with hope and gratitude. As many of you know I managed to break my ankle on Nov. 30th. Unfortunately, it was not a simple fracture and I was out of commission for all of December. With the help of others driving I plan to resume my duties as BoT President this month.

I want to thank so many of you for stepping up to take over my many responsibilities! Cheryl Schmit led the Hospitality team of Al Babbitt, Linda Linsin and others in helping to commemorate the life of our long-time member Ban Banerjee at his Memorial which was attended by so many from the Fellowship and the community at large. My understanding is that the music was superb and transcendent.

Jess Jobe, Pam Jacobini, Sage Banks, and Benieta Powell sat at our Fellowship Equal Exchange table at the Alternative Gift Fair. The sales amounted to over \$450.00 dollars. Most of which will be transferred to the Social Action Committee's General Fund. I haven't heard how the Ranchod Scholarships table did but hope that many children will receive scholarships thanks to community members and to the ongoing CUF scholarship fundraiser that was held after services in December.

Richard Norman has taken over the leadership of our dedicated counters and Treasurer Tabitha Ayres and DeSande R will be sending out the annual 1099's.

And although my friend Bob DeFilippis implies that I need to get back to keep the

kitchen cleaned reports from others say that many, many of you have been handling coffee hour, making the coffee and cleaning up afterwards!

And thank you to Miriam Link-Mullison, our V-P for taking on my usual duties during the month, it is much appreciated! And to all the officers, trustees and minister for carrying on without me (I guess this once again proves that no one is irreplaceable ☺).



So, one more time, THANK YOU ALL!

Although I have been unable to attend any of the services I have seen photos and had reports on the Carol Sing get together (over 70 in attendance!) and on the Christmas Eve service...wow, looked like an interesting pageant.

We must thank the Artist Colony for their amazing contribution of a bit over \$1000.00 to the CUF general fund and for offering us the opportunity to buy Art by members of the Artist Colony and others who contributed their items to the sale. Thank you!!

We also had a nice surprise in the mail with a financial gift from a member of the Awakening Heart Dharma Group. Thank you.

Upcoming in January is our Winter All-Congregation Business meeting. I believe some of the topics which will be presented and

discussed have been written up and included in this issue of CUFlinks. Please be sure to attend after the service on Jan. 28th. We will have refreshments in the Sanctuary and babysitting will be available so that all can attend!

Sunday Service Survey Report *by Rev. Sarah Richards & Kate Niman*

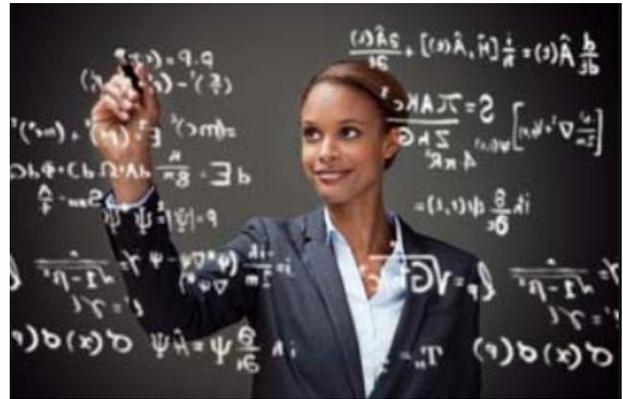
The Sunday Service Committee is grateful to Kate Niman for taking on the time-consuming task of sifting through a large amount of qualitative data and writing a clear and concise report [see following]. If any member would like access to the raw data, please contact Kate. We are pleased to see that the majority of respondents feel that their needs are being met by Sunday Services. We see the survey results as both an affirmation and invitation to look for ways to improve the various aspects of Sunday Services. Even before the survey was done, we have made some changes to the typical service:

- Added candle table to allow for people to light silent candles of sorrow or joy throughout the service.
- Programmed two hymns when the choir sings an anthem (rather than the usual three), and cut back on the frequency of rounds.

After the survey, Rev. Sarah has asked RE Coordinator Connie Payne to gather ideas from our children and youth for and about Time for All Ages. In the coming year, we'll be considering other ways to provide an environment for spiritual growth of all who participate in Sunday Services. Thanks again to all who participated in the Survey!

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Sunday Services Committee: Rhonda Kosmicki, chair, Kim Asner-Self, Jodi Ruffner, Toby Saken, Darl Young, Rev. Sarah Richards, ex-officio.



Fall 2017 Sunday Services Survey Results

CUF Member Kate Niman,
Ph.D., Qualitative Sociologist

The CUF Sunday Services survey results are in with fifty-three respondents! Both CUF newcomers and established members answered the survey (25% attended 3 years or fewer; 33% attended 16+ years.) Frequent attendees and those who only stop by occasionally also responded (54% attended 30+ services last year; 16% attended less than ten times). Below, I look at the overall trends.

The most important reason that respondents report attending Sunday Services is because of feelings of belonging and community (47%). Folks also come primarily for spiritual growth (15%) or because of CUF's liberal religious perspective (17%). For the remaining 21% of respondents, they come because of combined reasons, reporting that they find service to be uplifting and inspiring, valuing especially both the community and spiritual growth that CUF provides.

When asked about their typical Sunday Service goals, respondents are most concerned with having an inclusive and cohesive service. Less

important to respondents are having a variety of communication styles, using innovating elements during service, and having an efficient services. During service, respondents are seeking community connection (92%) a peaceful, calming time (83%), intellectual stimulation (79%), spiritual nurturing (79%), personal growth (75%), a call to engage in social justice (68%), and liberal religious teachings/theologies (68%). Individual responses also reveal that respondents are seeking, a “connection to the cosmos,” “inspirational message[s] that will nurture,” and ‘a safe, nurturing space for my children to connect with others.’”

**Some days I need
the music and some
days I need the
lyrics.**

As far as the musical elements of Sunday Service, respondents most value guest musicians and choir anthems. Respondents mention especially enjoying performances by Kindred Moon (Christine Bauer, Candy Davis & Marty Merrill) and Joe Palermo. Hymns sung as rounds are respondents’ least favorite musical element of service, with one respondent calling rounds “a real pain in the neck.” Suggestions include: singing fewer hymns on choir days to allow more time for choir performance, changing the key to songs to make them easier to sing, skipping or shortening hymns when service runs long, picking music that relates to the theme, and again, getting rid of the rounds.

Regarding the typical elements of Sunday Services, respondents most value the service’s

message, the sharing of sorrows and joys, and meditation. Respondents report that the message is often moving and very good, but others indicate that they would like the service’s message to be clearer, less contingent on the monthly theme, and more thought provoking. People find sharing sorrows and joys a good way to build a caring community and get to know one another better, but there was some concern about people standing to share “silly” or “superficial” information. Eighty-seven percent of respondents say that the amount of silence during service is “just right,” and the remaining 13% would like more silence during Sunday Service.

One point of contention that some folks (6 people; 11%) mention is Time for All Ages being too long/often. Overall, 66% of respondents value TFAA, 23% do not find it particularly valuable, and 12% have no opinion. For those with suggestions, they include having TFAA only once or twice a month and for it to be limited to five minutes or 3-4 processing questions. Although there is wide agreement that it’s important to include children in our services, one person expressed concern over its informality/lack of structure, and another person worries that it takes away from time children spend in RE. One suggestion is that on any weeks that there is no TFAA, an RE student “could read the chalice lighting words and be introduced to the congregation with [their] family,” as a way to



keep us all connected. One person suggests consulting with the RE students to find out what they think about TFAA.



Most people are fine with how announcements during Sunday Service happen, but for those with ideas for how announcements could be handled differently, opinions vary. Some respondents do not like it when people come up separately, whereas others think that people with announcements not already in the bulletin should announce them themselves, to foster connections, community, and be more impactful than having them read aloud by the Sunday Service Coordinator. People agree that it's preferable that announcements are already printed in the bulletin insert, so do get your announcements in early when possible. Regardless, whenever you speak during service, please remember to use the microphone so that everybody can hear and understand you.

There are other areas where respondents disagree. Some people want service to only be an hour whereas others think an hour and fifteen minutes is perfect. Whereas one person wishes that announcements were only related to CUF and never political in nature, another respondent wants to see more services about social justice issues that encouraged members to take action. Some people especially love the guest musicians whereas another respondent doesn't like when music is done for the sake of

performance. As one person states, "it is difficult (ok, impossible) to meet the needs of everyone, every service. But I think Rev. Sarah and the Sunday Service Committee do a fabulous job!"

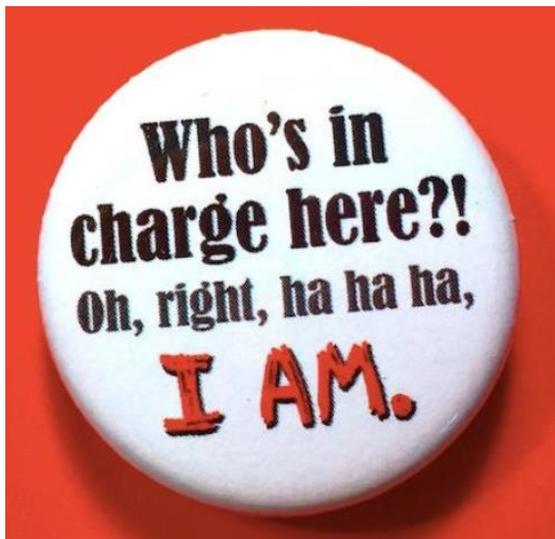
To end, a quote from a CUF member: "Sunday Services are very important to me. They allow me space to focus on things outside my daily life. They give me inspiration and being part of the community helps me throughout my week. I have learned so much over the years and gained new ways of looking at the world. The services have literally given me strength at times to deal with difficult things in my life. I think I am a better person because of CUF and Sunday Services."

WHO'S RUNNING THE SHOW? *by Toby Saken*

Have you been a member of a committee, taught in RE, helped plan a special event? Maybe you volunteered in the office, participated in a covenant group, served as a Sunday Service Facilitator or as a Sunday Counter. Whatever you have done, if you have found something special in our community, think about taking the next step in sharing your talents with your CUF community.

During the next few months, the CUF Nominating Committee will be seeking members to fill several positions on the Board of Trustees. The committee is asking you to think about whether being a member of the Board of Trustees is right for you. Being a member of the Board of Trustees does not require any special degrees or credentials but it does require a willingness to share your ideas and to listen to the concerns and ideas of others. Demonstrated commitment to CUF through active participation in the committees

and functions that help our community meet its goals and financial support through your pledge or other means are the only other requirements.



Being a member of the Board of Trustees can give you the satisfaction of knowing you have made a difference. It is an opportunity to share your unique insight and talents and to develop a deeper relationship with other CUF members. Want to know more? Talk to our President, Janet Harris, the Board Liaison to the Nominating Committee, Miriam-Link Mullison, to Rev. Sara or to me, Toby Saken, Chair of Nominating Committee. Who's Running the Show? It could be YOU.

EXPLORING OUR VALUES IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM A STUDENT OF ANOTHER FAITH *by Rev. Sarah Richards, Jess Jobe, Kathy O'Laughlin, and Darl Young*

In mid-December, I received an intriguing request from a Catholic high school student. She was doing a research project on Unitarian Universalism (chosen because it “strongly

advocates for social justice issues”), and wanted to hear from a Unitarian Universalist first-hand. I invited three CUF members to respond to her three questions, and thought that we’d done our good deed helping a student to learn about UUism. But in reading the responses, I realized that the student had done us a favor, too. There is much to be learned from looking at our own faith from an outsider’s point of view. Thanks to Jess, Kathy, and Darl for first agreeing to share their views with the student and now with all of us, as presented below.

Rev. Sarah

I love that you're researching other faiths and am happy to share my experiences with you. I have been a member of the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship for about 12 years. I was raised Protestant, but no particular denomination (we were what I call "church hoppers") and I attended Catholic elementary school. ... Should you need more information, feel free to ask. Good luck with your independent study!

1. *The Unitarian Universalist Association supports many social justice issues, which specific social justice issue do you advocate for and why?*

While many issues of social justice are important to me, I have been most involved with those involving racial justice and economic justice. These issues have always been close to my heart, even before I was a UU. At this time, I am very concerned that progress we as a society have made on racial justice and economic fairness has been eroding, so that is where I choose to put my energies.

2. *Because the Unitarian Universalist faith believes that individual truth and spiritual growth are important, have you found your spiritual identify with another religion? If so, which religious community do you identify with?*

Great Question. My cultural and spiritual roots are with Christianity and I find still that the life of Jesus is the path and example that speaks to me most. I do not consider myself a Christian in the traditional sense, but I do find inspiration and direction in the life of Jesus. I believe that life is for service and more than any particular creed, I try to live that belief in service. I appreciate that there is no creed in UUism and that I can join with others who may have different theological beliefs but who covenant together to find their own spiritual paths and ways to live out the seven principles.

3. *Which of the seven principles do you believe you practice the most? How do you do so? (spirit, democracy, kindness, ecology, truth, peace and justice, dignity)*

Another great question. I try hard to live up to all the principles, but of course, it's always a process and some days I do better than others. The principles that resonate most with me and that I try hardest with are of kindness, peace and justice and the inherent worth and dignity of all persons. I also do just naturally support the interconnected web of existence and try to leave as soft a footprint as I can in the natural world. I try to live out these principles through my service in the world.

If you would ever like to visit the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship, we would welcome you. Take care.

Jess Jobe



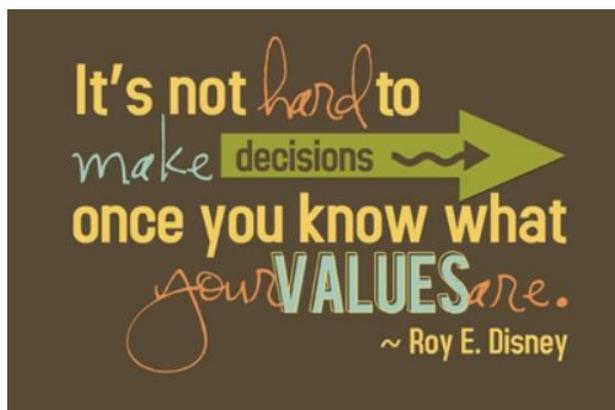
The social action area that I identify with and have worked on most consistently over my 20 years as a UU is LGBTQ issues. I was raised Catholic, but found myself drawn to UUism after visiting a congregation in Chicago with my future husband, and then participating in the gay pride parade there. It felt important to me to be part of a faith community that affirmed LGBT rights, since I have two brothers who are gay. I later was one of the initial volunteers for Rainbow Café here in Carbondale, a safe and welcoming space for LGBT youth in Southern Illinois. My husband and I went to Springfield several years to advocate for marriage equality. Each of these activities has touched my heart deeply! I am involved in other social justice activities, but this is the one that I feel most deeply about.

The religious tradition I identify with most strongly is Unitarian Universalism, followed by Buddhism. Although UUs do not have a prescribed creed, we do have a long religious tradition which calls us to spiritual inquiry and growth. My spirituality is informed by my Christian heritage, but as a UU, I have the freedom to embrace a variety of religious sources. I have found Buddhist spiritual practice to be very helpful to my spiritual development. I meditate daily and attend a Buddhist sangha at CUF weekly.

It's not possible for me to say which of the Seven Principles I practice the most. To me, it would be like saying which of the Ten Commandments you follow the most! Each of the Seven Principles is integral to my way of being in the world. I endeavor (albeit, imperfectly) to honor them all!

Hope this snapshot is helpful!

Best, Kathy O'Laughlin



As a UU I find myself most advocating for being on the side of love no matter the specific issue. Today there is so much division and people tend to be so entrenched in their opinions and their particular world view. (People who are both conservative and liberal tend to do this! I am not pointing any fingers!) This tends to leave out love for others. Even though we may disagree with their opinions, world view, or choices we can still choose to view others with love. If we start from a place of love differences, no matter how great, tend to shrink at least a little bit and we can begin to find common ground.

I most identify my spiritual identity as a "melting pot" informed by many different religions, religious practices, and philosophies. I do not identify with a particular religious community outside of the Unitarian fellowship. I find it hard to accept

that any one religion or philosophy has all the answers to all of the problems life has to offer. Therefore, I find myself searching for those elements of various religions that ring true for me and somehow help me to face the blessings and challenges that each day brings. This life is very short, and I don't feel like I can know with any certainty what, if anything, comes after this life. Therefore, I challenge myself in my own spiritual growth to be sure that I am getting the fullness of the experience that life has to offer.

I would like to think I most practice kindness and dignity. I know that I fall short, but I do believe that it is of the utmost importance to value the inherent dignity and value of each human whether or not I happen to agree with him/her. If you keep the idea of human dignity and love for others at the forefront of your mind it is very difficult to be nasty or argumentative. Rather, I have found that my mind opens up and I am able to absorb what other people have to offer my life and my spiritual journey.

If you have further questions or need anything further feel free to contact me!

Darl Young

REVISITING OUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

by Astrid Norman

Our congregation is quite dynamic and our evolution continues as many new members have recently joined. Each person who enters a religious community is not only touched by it, but also touches and transforms the congregation. This month, we'll begin a process of re-visiting our CUF Vision and Mission statements. Our first conversation

about this will be at our January congregational meeting.



Please look at the current statements reprinted below and bring your ideas and insights to the January congregational meeting.

As currently stated and posted on the CUF website (see <http://carbondaleuf.org/our-mission/>):

Our mission as a fellowship is to...

Create a spiritual home for our congregation to be:

- A light to welcome the community
- A space to amplify the value of all activity within
- A center to celebrate life in all its diversity, richness and sorrows

Empower our congregation to:

- Educate one another, both young and old
- Enlighten and challenge one another to grow spiritually, intellectually and socially
- Discover and create a caring, supportive and healing environment endowed with a sense of religious roots and wings

Encourage our congregation to:

- Share our beliefs with others
- Become an active presence in our community for the common good

Our Vision Statement

In a nurturing and democratic atmosphere of openness, mutual respect and friendship, the Carbondale Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is a welcoming, diverse congregation of individuals who share values and seek to celebrate life, support each other in our inward and outward search for spiritual meaning, provide a liberal religious presence, and strive for compassion and justice in our community and our world.

CUF MUSIC MUSINGS: MUSIC IN CELEBRATIONS

by Candy Davis

Music has been a part of what makes us human for tens of millennia. Archaeological evidence suggests that simple flutes were among the first melodic instruments early humans used. Among the earliest were found at a site in Germany: flutes and whistles made from bird bone and mammoth ivory at least 40,000 years ago, around the time some groups of early *Homo sapiens* were migrating out of Africa. We can surmise that our early ancestors gathered around fires, shared a meal, and sometimes celebrated with chanting, drumming, and playing these early instruments. Music in celebrations is very old, indeed.



Music brings people together and moves them emotionally. It has a magic quality to it that is pleasing to the ear and can evoke many different feelings. Hunter-gatherers living close to the earth probably made music to summon spirits that would, for example, guide them in the hunt, lead them to fresh water, fulfill their hope for fertility, and bring back the sun as it waned toward the end of the year. Later in time, as groups of people grew larger, started domesticating plants, and became more sedentary, music most likely accompanied cyclical feasting and celebrations of rites of passage. It encouraged people to gather, participate, and feel connected, as music still does today.



Our monthly theme in December was *Hope*. As music organizer for the annual Southern Illinois Alternative Gift Fair, I recognize that seasonal music can set the mood for a gathering of this kind in modern times as people look for gifts for their kith and kin that may bring **hope** to others. At the Alternative Gift Fair, many different organizations: social and environmental, such as Ranchhod Hospice (our Zambia partnership), Boys and Girls Club, Friends of the Shawnee, the Carbondale Dog Park committee, Friends of Giant City, and the Peace Coalition, were able to raise money by offering alternatives to shopping at the Mall or big-box stores for the holidays. As the

shoppers browsed the booths and bid on the silent auction items in the Civic Center hallway, many stopped to listen to the sweet sounds of music: the harmonic, soothing sounds of the woodwinds of the CUF Recorder Group; the dynamic duo of Andrea Stader & Ruth Ann Levinson singing folk rock and carols accompanied by dulcimer, mandolin, and guitar; and UFO (Unitarian Folk Orchestra), playing Christmas carols, Hanukkah songs, and Solstice songs on multiple instruments: guitars, ukuleles, banjos, autoharp, and mountain dulcimer. On the stage in the exhibit hall, Curt Wilson regaled the shoppers with light classic rock anthems on his guitar and sounds from India on his sitar. Once again, I would like to thank these musicians and ensembles listed above for helping set a mood of hope and peace for this very special winter event that helps so many. May the magic of music continue to move us to care about others and make our own little corner of the world a better place in small, but meaningful ways.

WINTER SOLSTICE SONG

by *Candy Davis* © 2012 All Rights Reserved

**Let's circle 'round, let's dance, let's sing
On this, the longest night we bring
Our tales of hope and love to share
As warm the embers glow.**

The trees asleep, their branch-es bare
White quilt of snow and clean, cold air
Green holly leaves and scent of pine
With winter solstice near.

The redbirds, finches, chickadees
Peck at our feeders, eating seeds
The migrators wing south to feed
As warmer temperatures they need
With winter solstice near.

Yet deep within the winter's cold
New hope springs forth in tales told,
Of lives washed clean of greed and fear
Of holidays with loved ones near
And birth upon a midnight clear . . .
With winter solstice here!

**Let's circle 'round, let's dance, let's sing
On this, the longest night we bring
Our tales of hope and love to share**

As warm the embers glow.

DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS *by Bill Sasso*

Please note: the following text is reprinted with permission from *Faithful: Annual Report of the UUA 2017*. You can read and download the entire 78-page report at <https://www.uua.org/giving/news/annual-report>



UUA President Susan Frederick-Gray recently sat down to reflect on her first months in office with Rev. Terry Davis, the called minister at Northwest Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Atlanta, and a member of the UUA President's Council.

This has been a tough year, both inside and

outside the UUA. What do our priorities need to be moving forward? **Susan:** This is a time of enormous challenge for our world and our congregations. It is also an opportunity, and a priority, for our faith to make a real and measurable difference in this time. It's critically important to focus on reestablishing strong relationships and trust between our congregations and the Association, as well as between the UUA president and the board of trustees. We're not going to do that if we aren't building trust in one another, and if we're not committed to a broader vision and mission for our faith. We all have a role to play in making this happen.

What strengths will help us reach these goals?

Susan: Our commitment to understanding ourselves as an interdependent community is a strength. In this time of national and climate disasters, in this time of growing nationalism around the globe, our theology grounded in love, justice, and interdependence is a strength. Our theology is already progressive, already pursuing justice, and already grounded in a sense of covenant rather than creed— emphasizing our responsibilities to one another.

What are some of our greatest challenges?

Susan: We're in a change mode, and that's never easy. We need the spiritual resources to embrace and navigate change. We also need to articulate clearly how our faith is being called because we don't want to embrace change for change's sake. We need our mission to drive the change so we can have a greater impact. For instance, we're living in a period where a lot of shocking things are happening in our daily lives. It puts tremendous stress on people and on our institutions. How do we nurture spiritual communities that prepare us for resiliency, compassion and collective strength? This is a question we need to

answer.2 | Additionally, our congregations' economic realities are changing. This means we have to be better at understanding where our ministry and resources are having the greatest impact for our children, our families, our members and the wider community. This focus on impact can help us understand that we may need to double our resources in some key areas and let go of some things we've always done.

What will you recognize as signs that our UUA is growing healthier and stronger?

Susan: Seeing increasing numbers of children and young people and families engaged in our religious education and family ministry programs will be a huge indicator of the vitality and future of our faith. Having the UUA and our faith as a whole on a stronger financial foundation is also important. However, it would be wrong to think we'll ever have all the resources that we need. If we think we do, then we're not dreaming big enough.

What will be personally challenging for you in your new role?

Susan: I want to make sure that I regularly find the time and space to articulate our theological call. In a time when we're seeing civil rights, human rights and climate justice efforts rolled back every day, it's hard not to feel devastated. I want to make sure that I'm sending a pastoral and prophetic message of resiliency, courage and hope.

At the end of your first year, what do you hope you can say about the difference you made?

Susan: I hope that I can say that people feel more connected to the larger Association and our shared mission. I think that people really do feel optimistic about our faith. I hope we are able to live into this moment and keep feeling it calling us forward.

INVITATION TO SHARE

by Nolan Wright, CUFlinks Editor



Have you ever attended a Sunday service or other CUF program or event and been moved by or learned something from the experience, or from your own efforts trying to live your UU principles or observations of others doing so? If so, it would truly be wonderful if you would share that by putting that experience in words to print as a reflective piece here in the newsletter. You will help bring the experience alive for those that were not there by doing so, and will add to the experience of those who were there by sharing your perspective.

Some of you already post about your experiences on Facebook; feel free to copy a post you shared there to republish here, to share with those among us who are not Facebook inclined.

Take the plunge! It doesn't have to be a long piece, and don't worry whether you are a "good enough" writer; folks are more interested in what you have to say than how you say it.

Send your reflections, other contributions, or questions to Nolan L. Wright, CUFlinks Editor, at nolalwright@gmail.com or call Nolan at 512-567-7972.

CUF COVENANT

We are the Carbondale Unitarian Fellowship.

With compassion we honor our whole selves, each other and our beloved community.

With intention, we choose to walk together in fellowship.

We seek truth and growth together, nurturing each other's spirit and sense of reverence.

We respect all individuals and strive to create a world where all are treated with love and dignity.

We believe all people have strengths and wisdom, and are able to contribute to our faith community.

We give action to our faith through service and the pursuit of justice in the wider world. Every act of service, lovingly performed, matters.

We value diversity in its many forms and welcome with open minds and hearts, all those who come among us.

