February 2 – "Lessons from Groundhog Day" Rev. Sarah begins the month's exploration of resilience by reflecting on Groundhog Day, both the holiday and the 1993 movie. What are your favorite stories of resilience in film, book, tv, or other media? Who are the characters who have helped you bend and not break? Send your answers to Rev. Sarah via email or Facebook by 5pm, Thursday 1/30.

February 9 – "Compassion Resilience 2020" Five years ago, Rev. Sarah preached about compassion fatigue and how we can avoid it. Given all of the people – not to mention our planet – in dire need of our attention and compassion these days, we could use a refresher on that topic. It’s also a fitting preparation to opening our hearts as hosts of the 3rd Love & Solidarity potluck after the service.*

February 16 – "T.H.I.N.K." How can learning and practicing Compassionate Communication techniques help us to become a people of resilience? Rev. Sarah explores how incorporating simple (but far from easy) techniques in challenging situations can keep us from shutting down or giving up on our faith’s principles.

February 23 – “Climate Change & Immigrant Justice” Members of CUF Social Action will lead this service about the intersections of immigration and global climate change.

*See event details in the weekly CUF Bulletin http://carbondaleuf.org/weekly-bulletin/ or at https://www.nonviolentcarbondale.org/11-days-for-peace-schedule.html
Dear CUF folks,

I’m glad that we get to explore the question of what it means to be a people of resilience in the month of February. February is the shortest month, but weather-wise it seems to drag out winter. The cold, overcast days seem to go on and on, which for me at least has a dampening effect on morale. So it’s good to turn that around and look for examples of resilience in the natural world – like the trees that withstand wind, water and ice. We may not see any buds yet, but we know they’re coming. We can look for examples in the cultural world too – people weathering storms (meteorological or metaphorical) and marvel at their way of fighting, or laughing through them. But just as individual trees benefit from being part of a sheltering forest in high winds, so do we.

 Sometimes we miss the forest for the trees, and we often don’t notice all the people (and animals, sometimes) around the individual person struggling through a tough patch.

If we widen our lens and look for groups and communities demonstrating resilience, we can see the support network supporting the “lone hero,” like looking under the waterline to see the rest of the iceberg.

This month, we can see – and experience – a larger picture of resilience all around us. The 8th 11 Days for Peace initiative, coordinated by Nonviolent Carbondale is itself an example, as it brings together many different groups from across the city to plan, publicize and present its diverse programs. Did you know that the 11 Days for Peace movement began in Carbondale on September 11, 2011, to mark the 10th anniversary of the 9-11 attacks? Every year that we participate in the 11 Days for Peace, we are embodying community resilience. And CUF’s own 11 Days for Peace event, the Love & Solidarity Potluck (Feb. 9, 1pm at the Carbondale Muslim Center), is an appreciation and support for the resilience of marginalized Muslim and Jewish faith communities here in Carbondale. The fact that we’re hosting it at the “Wall St. Mosque” shows our interdependent relationship with the Carbondale Muslim Center.

So, resilience is dependent on both individual internal fortitude and supportive relationships.

We’ve experienced this reality at CUF time and again as connections developed in committee work, choir, RE classes, and coffee hour blossom into hugs, calls, casseroles, shoulders to cry on, hospital visits, and high fives. I invite us all this month to think about those who we/the Fellowship lean on, and those who lean on us/the Fellowship. Let us be mindful of our relationships of mutual respect and support, and express our gratitude and compassion. Friends, I look forward to learning and experiencing what it means to be a people of resilience with you this month!

Peace,
President’s Report
Miriam Link-Mullison

In this month of exploring resilience I want to highlight one sign of CUF resilience by sharing our progress on our current strategic plan. Just one year ago the Fellowship adopted a five year strategic plan, “The Road Ahead.” Since then there has been a growing momentum of activity within CUF to live into our mission. Here are some of the highlights:

1. Increase opportunities for connection as well as personal and spiritual growth.
   - Fundraising with more emphasis on FUN—service auction, silent auction, Bawdy Wench Concert.
   - Blue welcome cards to facilitate outreach to visitors; Friends list being developed.
   - Cards are being sent to members and friends we haven’t seen.
   - More focus on spiritual components within groups at CUF.
   - Children’s Gift Shop/Parents Night Out held.

2. Demonstrate our environmental stewardship.
   - Reformed Green Team. Assistance provided from Faith in Place. Assessed current activities and developed plans for the future. Conducted audit on electricity use. Seeking bids for solar panels.

3. Develop a Fellowship-wide approach to social justice.
   - Immigrant justice chosen as first Fellowship-wide campaign. 76 members have participated in some activities such as Sunday Services, on-line petitions, sharing own immigration stories. Work supported by UUANI.
   - Participating in Legislative Action Days.
   - Continued social justice activities including Social Action Sundays, Spirit of Christmas, Alternative Gift Fair, and collections for food pantry, Women’s Center, and Warming Center.
   - Kick-off for UU the Vote/ Vote Love IL campaign held.

4. Build a system to encourage “shared ownership.”
   - Inclusion of youth in yard sale, caring and sharing and other CUF activities.
   - Held We Are CUF session to train on how to step up and take on tasks for the Fellowship. Held window cleaning competition.
   - Held annual special collection campaign for CUF goals.

5. Restructure work to ensure sustainability.
   - Incorporating new ideas of volunteer sustainability including recognition and focusing on volunteer’s need for fulfillment.
   - Changed the bylaws to reduce the size of the Board of Trustees and increase the requirements for being a Trustee. Discussion groups were held on these changes.
   - Restructured Membership committee into Congregation Connections Team.
   - Streamlined two holiday activities into a Carol Sing Sunday Service.

6. Conduct targeted outreach efforts.
   - Elevator speech training offered and results shared.
   - Renewed efforts to keep the website current.
   - Developed an outreach schedule for Facebook posts and community activities.
   - Hosted films on Transgender and immigration issues. Hosted townhall meeting on LGBTQ issues.

As you can see, there has been a great deal of activity! Focusing on our strategic plan assists us in living into our mission of fostering Unitarian Universalism which nurtures deep respect and caring for each other and champions social justice and environmental stewardship in our world. The key to all this success has been the engagement of the Board, Minister and staff, committees, teams and members in ensuring that the strategic goals are embraced. I want to thank each of you for what you have done to build this momentum and demonstrate CUF’s resilience. Let me or any Board of Trustee member know if you have ideas for how we can enhance and expand our progress.
Community News from the Carbondale Interfaith Council

Laraine Wright
Highlights of the monthly meeting of the Carbondale Interfaith Council, held on Jan. 28 at Congregation Beth Jacob:

Warming Center Open House
Here is a chance to tour the new site of the center that CIC, Sparrow Coalition, and other organizations established and help fund for the homeless in winter. Come to 608 E. College Ave., Carbondale, at 5:30-7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 11, for an open house, tour, and silent auction. The center offers shelter and bedrooms in a secure building overseen by paid and volunteer staff each night from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. More than 110 visits were recorded the first two months this season. Donations of winter clothing are still welcome.
carbondalewarmingcenter.weebly.com

Free Laundry Day
A great idea initiated by First Presbyterian Church, the Free Laundry Day is held the second Tuesday of the month at Laundry World, University Ave. and W. College, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Last month, 45 people used this service. The church appreciates donations of quarters and laundry supplies, so please take those this month on Tuesday, Feb. 11. carbondalelaundryproject@gmail.com

Jazz Vespers
This free music and devotional program is offered at 5 p.m. on the second Sunday of the month at Epiphany Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Chautauqua, Carbondale. On Feb. 9, the theme will be “peace”—a good way to sit stress-free with others in the community and listen to the New Arts Jazztet.

Faith in Place
This environmental action initiative, led regionally by cheerful Christina Krost, is sponsoring 2 upcoming events. First Annual SI Green Team Summit Feb. 29, 9am-1pm at First Christian Church, Carbondale. Goal-setting visioning, Faithful Citizen Workshop and more! Statewide lobbying day in Springfield on Wednesday, March 4. Free transportation leaves at 7 a.m., First Christian Church, Carbondale. While enroute, trainers will give advice on do’s and don’ts for lobbying legislators. christina@faithinplace.org

Annual Report from Good Samaritan Ministries
These numbers give a good snapshot of needs that continue to grow in our area. For 2019, Good Sam prepared 30,000 meals for residents and visitors at its shelter; served 337 people with one-time financial help for rent, utilities, medications, and transportation; helped 15,000 individuals with food donations through its pantry; and offered almost 10,000 nights of shelter, both emergency and transitional. CIC treasurer Jack Wides of Congregation Beth Jacob suggested it was time for the CIC to lead the effort to purchase or construct a better building for Good Sam, long overdue.
Denominational Connections: VoteLove Illinois 2020!
Bill Sasso

Inspired by our Sunday morning service, nineteen CUF members participated in UUtheVote’s national online kickoff on Sunday, January 12th! With hundreds of other UUs from coast to coast, we learned about this important national campaign and about how we might be part of it.

UUtheVote encourages UU congregations across the USA to engage this year’s electoral process with our voices and our values. VoteLove Illinois is our state-wide effort as part of UUtheVote, and tailors UUtheVote to take into account factors specific to Illinois, such as our Fair Tax referendum and our proximity to Wisconsin, Kentucky, Missouri, and other potential “swing states.” Just as UUtheVote will be coordinated by our national Unitarian Universalist Association, VoteLove Illinois will be coordinated by our Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI) as part of UUtheVote. That way, we can take advantage of relevant resources available from the UUA as well as those specific to Illinois, and can share resources that we may develop ourselves.

Both UUtheVote and VoteLove Illinois share five main themes, which interact with each other. Maybe the most obvious theme is voter registration and mobilization – we want to get folks registered, and get registered voters voting! This can include sharing information about how and where to register, to vote early, to vote by absentee ballot, and to vote on primary and election days. In addition to basic voter registration, this theme also includes making sure that all who are eligible to vote know they are eligible, and helping folks get to the polling place on election day.

A second theme is “values-based issue conversations.” This theme invites us to learn how we can both share conversations with people about the values that underlie our choices when we vote. This may involve taking risks with friends, neighbors, and family members, in the hope of learning how they see things and helping them understand, for example, why we are committed to voting with love foremost in our hearts, rather than fear or hatred. UUANI is organizing a day-long workshop that will help us have these conversations. It will take place in Rockford, Illinois, on Friday, April 17th in conjunction with MidAmerica Regional Assembly on Saturday, April 18th.

“Election Protection and Countering Voter Suppression” is the third theme. This theme is one where state and local context makes a huge difference in terms of the work that may be needed. It might, for example, involve serving as an election judge or monitor, or calling 1-866-our-vote to report voting issues that you observe. Alternatively, it could mean attending meetings of your local Board of Elections to advocate for adequate siting, staffing, and locations of polling.

If you have been thinking that this is a lot for UUs to accomplish on our own, you’re ready for the fourth theme – Building Partnerships. What non-partisan organizations can we work with to move forward on these goals? How can we best work in partnership with them? What resources can we share, and what do we need to find outside our own congregation’s community?

And fifth, how do we sustain our spirits through this process? How can we work in ways that renew and nourish us, rather than draining us? The UUA has formed a group to collect and share resources that help us take care of ourselves spiritually and personally and grow deeper as we engage this work. Watch for more information about how we may address this theme within our own Fellowship over the coming months.

Here at CUF, members of our Social Action Committee have been working to activate CUF in VoteLove Illinois. If you would like to help, or for more information, contact me at bsasso62901@gmail.com – thanks!
Rest and Renew: Supporting Rev. Sarah and CUF During Sabbatical

Rev. Sarah’s sabbatical and vacation/study leave is right around the corner (April-July 2020) and the Sabbatical Planning committee and other CUF groups continue to make progress on Fellowship readiness. Here are some highlights of our progress:

Call sheet developed: The call sheet was distributed at the Feb. 2 congregational meeting and will be posted on CUF’s website this spring, and mailed out to members. The call sheet is a quick glance guide for members and friends of who to contact re: specific congregation needs.

Technical matters addressed: Rev. Sarah has been working with staff, board members and committee members on ensuring folks have access to commonly used materials.

Pastoral Support: Rev. Sarah has made a plan with a local chaplain, Rev. Jason Eisele, for support to Pastoral Friends during the sabbatical period. Pastor Eisele will meet the congregation at the March 15 Sunday Service. Our Emeritus Minister, Rev. Bill Sasso has also worked with Rev. Sarah on the ways in which he is willing to support the congregation during sabbatical.

Sunday Services planning: The Sunday Service committee has been amazing! They’ve pretty much got the Sunday Services plan together for all of Rev. Sarah’s sabbatical period. Thanks to all who contributed ideas at their recent brainstorming session.

Financial Support: Endowment committee has moved forward a request for modest funds for office support and guest minister services. The congregation voted to approve the proposal at the Feb. 2 congregational meeting.

Continuing to be active and engaged in the wider community: we’ve been planning for how CUF members can continue to be present and informed about relevant community coalitions and events during sabbatical.

This is just a brief summary of what we’ve been working on recently in partnership with Rev. Sarah. This planning continues to be a reflective and practical process, in order to help Rev. Sarah feel ready for her earned sabbatical leave and also make the sabbatical period a time of stability and comfort at CUF. If you would like further information on sabbatical plans, please reach out to a member of the team: Jess Jobe, Miriam Link-Mullison, Roy Sumner, Martha Shum, Gene Basanta, Rhonda Kosmicki, Jodi Ruffner, DeSande R, Cheryl Schmit, John Hochheimer.

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.