While we’re not meeting in person on Sundays, we’re still connecting with each other:

- **Spiritual Sustenance** mini-service every Sunday mid-morning via email
  - Starting 5/10, the service will be mostly or entirely in video format (you’ll still get the link via email).
  - If you would like to submit music or reading videos for these weekly services, please contact Rev. Sarah (sarah@revsarahrichards.com) or Sunday Services Committee Chair Rhonda Kosmicki (rlpk63@hotmail.com).

- **Phone Outreach** Check-In Team reaching out weekly to CUF Elders. Board of Trustees, Congregational Connections and Rev. Sarah are contacting all other CUF Members and Friends.
  - Contact Rev. Sarah (sarah@revsarahrichards.com) if you’d like to join the Check-In Team or receive weekly calls from a Team member.

- **Everyone** making phone calls, sending texts, emails, or notes to CUF folks.
  - Consult Member and Friend Directories on Member Page at www.carbondaleuf.org, or contact Office Administrator DeSande R at carbondaleuu@gmail.com, 618-529-2439 if you need someone’s contact info.
Zoom Gatherings – Each event has its own log-in info, which remains the same even if it is rescheduled. The log-in info is emailed Tuesdays & Fridays to all members and friends; contact Rev Sarah if you haven’t received it.

- RE Children & Youth gatherings
  - Children’s Chapel, 1st & 3rd Sundays, 10am via Zoom
  - Children & Youth Gathering, 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays, 10am via Zoom
  - Children & Youth Check-in, Thursdays 10:30am
  - contact RE Coordinator Jodi Ruffner (jodi_ruffner@frontier.com) if you or your child would like to be involved.

- CUF Coffee Hour + Bingo every Sunday at 11am via Zoom

- Vespers: Music, Sharing and Blessing Wednesdays at 7pm via Zoom

- Social Hour every Saturday evening at 5pm via Zoom
  - contact Laura Basanta (lauraqueenofall@hotmail.com)

Zoom Calendar

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<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Sat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10am Children’s Chapel (1st &amp; 3rd), RE Gathering (2nd, 4th, 5th)</td>
<td>7pm Vespers</td>
<td>10:30 RE Check-in, 7pm BoT (confirm with Miriam L-M)</td>
<td>5pm Cocktail/Social Hour</td>
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<td>11am Coffee Hour + Bingo</td>
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<td>7pm AHDG</td>
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Your ideas are welcome! Share them with the contact people listed above.
The Minister’s Column
Rev Sarah Richards

Dear CUF folks,

We’ve been using Soul Matters themes to enrich our spiritual exploration every month since my ministry began nearly six years ago, and I’ve always thought that they helped to deepen our individual and communal spiritual journeys. But has there ever been a more fitting question for the times we are in than “what does it mean to be a people of thresholds?”

It made sense when it was mostly about graduations and end of church year-beginning of summer rites of passage, it is even more fitting as we collectively – not only UUs, not only Americans, and not only even humans are experiencing the threshold that is Covid-19 response. We are all in a liminal state, no longer how we were pre-pandemic, and not yet how we will be post-pandemic. The liminal state is uncomfortable for human beings in general, because we crave certainty and control over our environments, or at least the illusions of certainty and control. Anthropologists and theologians alike have long studied the meaning of liminality – usually limited to a certain group (i.e., graduating seniors, pregnant women, fasting pilgrims, etc.) – but this one has no traditional rituals (yet) to guide us all through the change process.

We can’t move quickly through this threshold, we have no choice but to stay in it for an undetermined length of time.

- So what does it mean for you, spiritually, to be in this liminal moment?
- How have you been dealing with no longer being the person unaware of Covid-19, and not yet a person unafraid of it?
- Have you continued, altered, or created new spiritual practices to sustain yourself?
- Who and what are the resources you are learning from and leaning on?
- And who is learning from and leaning on you these days?

These are vital questions we must sit with this month, and beyond, as we live into being a people of thresholds. And the same questions apply to us as a congregation – CUF is certainly not the same as we were on March 8, the last time we were able to gather in person for Sunday Service. And CUF will not be the same on date TBA, the next time we are able to all be together.

- How are the ways we’ve altered our communal spiritual practices fulfilling or falling short of people’s needs?

The UUA, both on the national and regional levels, has offered many resources for worship, stewardship, Religious Education, social justice, and other congregational functions.

- How can we use and adapt them to our benefit?

This liminal, threshold time has meant separation from our daily social, ecological, and economic connections, and perhaps because of this, the awareness of the interdependent web has never been more acutely felt.

- What are we doing, and what can we do, as a congregation, to continue, alter or create new engagements with those people and organizations that need our attention and support?

Now that we’ve been in this stay at home threshold for more than a month, we can come out of our shock and see what we can do, especially for those most...
affected by the pandemic and the response to it.

I realize that this column is mostly a list of questions – that’s par for the course in this liminal time. Thinking about possible answers, on your own, on the phone or zoom conversations, we can share ideas and develop options. At CUF, the Board and I, Sunday Services, RE Coordinator, Building & Grounds Chair, and Vote Love team (and probably others I don’t know about) have already begun exploring what it means to be a people of threshold with our particular commitments to CUF and its functions. Let’s keep asking questions – that’s one of our Unitarian Universalist strengths that will help us at this in-between time. May our ritual be reaching out with love and care; may our spiritual practice be tending the interdependent web.

Peace,

[Signature]

If you go back to the etymology of the word ‘threshold,’ it comes from ‘threshing,’ which is to separate the grain from the husk. So the threshold, in a way, is a place where you move into more critical and challenging and worthy fullness.

John O’Donohue
President’s Report
Miriam Link-Mullison

Our theme this month is “what does it mean to be a people of thresholds?” When the theme was chosen for May thoughts were likely centered around graduations and other spring milestones. But here in 2020 the most pressing threshold many of us face is the thresholds of our own doors leading away from stay at home orders to returning to a “normal life”. Illinois’s Stay at Home Order was recently extended to May 30. And assuming that Illinois will be following the federal phased guidelines for reopening, even when this stay at home order is lifted, we will not be able to hold services in the first phase of reopening. We have been reviewing this phased reopening and will be developing a plan for CUF. Without the opportunity to gather in person we need to continue to stay connected virtually. **What more can we do to provide spiritual space and support to each other in this extraordinary time? We are open to new ideas on how to make this work for you.**

When we do return what lessons are we bringing back with us to reshape our futures? One of the lessons I have heard many express is how much CUF means to them. How CUF plays a centering role in their life, how powerful it is to come together in common purpose and how meaningful it is to support each other. I am sure we each have other lessons. As we come back together let us bring the best of those lessons back with us. As we start back. Do we want to continue any of the programming that we started during the pandemic? **What lessons do you want to see incorporated into the future at CUF? Please share your thoughts.**

Another threshold we will be crossing soon is the coming to the close of the church and fiscal year. We have moved our spring Congregational Meeting to May 30th. This meeting will be held by Zoom. We will need at least 46 members to join us so that we can take action on two minor by-laws changes. These provide clarification on what constitutes a quorum for the Board of Trustees and provide more latitude on the timing of replacing Board members. They are as follows:

Section VI. 5. Add “Votes of the Board require a quorum of more than half of the voting board members, excluding unfilled board seats. Scheduled Board meetings that do not have a quorum are considered adjourned with no action.”

Section VII. 6. Delete “Vacancies shall be filled within 45 days from the date that the Board declares the position open.”

**We will also be electing Board members.** My first term is ending and I have agreed to run for a second term. The vice-president’s term is also ending, but this position is being eliminated by the change in by-laws and downsizing of the Board which passed last spring. We will have two Board vacancies to fill as well as three positions on the nominating committee. After the success of this year’s Social Action Initiative of immigrant justice we will be voting on another project for next year. **The Social Action Committee is proposing that we focus next year on UU The Vote.** They will be sharing a proposal for engaging the Fellowship in this important work.

**Also on the agenda is the budget for fiscal year 2021.** At this time the budget has not been developed but it is sure to be impacted by the times we find ourselves in. We are likely to be faced with some tough decisions. **Are there ways to raise money that we have not**
thought of? Are there changes we can make to save money? We are a vibrant Fellowship with no end of the ways we would like to spend our pooled resources but the first focus needs to be on salaries and building maintenance. The path forward will likely be one of change, but as John Lilly said, “Our only security is our ability to change.” The need for change also provides the opportunity to make us stronger.

I am looking forward to the day when we can cross the threshold at the CUF building and be together again. I have missed seeing you all in person. In the meantime, reach out to your friends at CUF, attend Zoom gatherings so we can see your face and work with your committees and teams to carry on the mission of CUF. Prepare yourself to come back to CUF sharing your lessons learned and your renewed energy for a vibrant future.

Bill Sasso

Our Fellowship’s 2019 Strategic Plan calls for “identifying [a] congregation-wide focus/priorities for Social Justice and [for] a process for changing that focus.” At our May, 2019, Congregational Meeting, we voted to work for “Immigrant Justice in Southern Illinois” as our 2019/2020 focus. We’ve accomplished a lot in that campaign, and as it comes to an end, you may be wondering what’s coming next. The CUF VoteLove Team has voted to propose “VoteLove: engaging the democratic process” as our Social Justice focus for the coming year (June, 2020 to May, 2021).

This campaign includes a number of objectives that will reach across all areas of our Fellowship. This proposal will be reviewed by the Social Action Committee, presented to the Board of Trustees, discussed with interested CUF members, and upon approval by the Board, will be presented at the congregational meeting in May 2020. This process is similar to that used last year with the immigration justice campaign. The proposed campaign for the coming year engages the Fellowship in VoteLove and the democratic process in accordance with our principles, vision, covenant and strategic plan. In pursuing this focus, we will collaborate with the Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois (UUANI), VoteLove (the statewide effort here in Illinois), UU the Vote (the national UU electoral initiative), the Ralph Anderson Interfaith Dialogues, and other relevant local organizations.

In January, nineteen CUF members participated in the national UUtheVote kickoff, and we are already working on various aspects of the VoteLove statewide campaign.

This nonpartisan campaign will include many different opportunities for participation, such that every Fellowship member or friend will be able to support this campaign. The following are examples of what participation may include:

- Using our Sunday services and educational programs to explore topics such as voting issues, the meaning and process of democracy, and advocacy as a religious practice.
Encouraging existing CUF groups, from the Round Table Readers to the Art Colony to the Video Circle to the Awakening Hearts Dharma Group (and all points in between), to consider how engaging the 2020 election can be part of their group’s activities during this year.

Enrolling CUF as a Bona Fide State Civic Organization to facilitate training as voter registrars.

Encouraging registration of voters at various places, e.g. SIU, farmer’s markets, high schools.

Engaging the public with speakers, as well as candidate or issue forums that relate to our basic UU values and their application in democracy.

Hosting Zoom meetings that will reach out to possible new voters and youth about registering to vote, social and other issues, and various aspects of our democratic process.

Exploring how CUF youth and young adults can participate in this effort.

Encouraging community participation in the 2020 Census, and making information about the citizenship application process widely available.

Supporting actively the democratic process after the 2020 election, in ways such as making our values and principles known to those elected, advocating on behalf of issues and specific legislation, encouraging participation in public events, and continuing voter registration and education activities.

Other ongoing CUF social action efforts, such as the Spirit of Christmas, food drives, and Social Action Sunday offerings will continue. We hope that this campaign will help us learn, as a congregation, how we can collaborate as a congregation to live our principles more fully as we did with the yearlong immigrant rights focus last year. Please note the timeliness of this campaign in relation to our upcoming 2020 elections. There may never be a more important time to work for UU values in the democratic process. Please watch for the announcement of open discussions of this proposal, but if you have any questions about it in the meantime, please contact Bill Sasso, Laura Basanta, or Gene Basanta.

Interfaith Council
Laraine Wright

Concerns about the effects of the pandemic continue to be the main focus of the Carbondale Interfaith Council as well as with its individual faith community members. During its April 28 meeting, the council:

— agreed to encourage providing food for the 8 p.m. dinner hour at the Carbondale Warming Center. Meal preparation is part of the staff’s many responsibilities. The clients and staff would appreciate desserts, fresh fruit, homemade bread, and other uncomplicated food for up to 35 people. To offer help, please call Center Director Carmalita Cahill at 618-319-2240. The center is now functioning 24/7 and its funding should last through May 31, if not further. “Every need has been met by the community,” Carmalita said.

— asked CIC members' congregations to use political pressure to change the draconian policies of the Pulaski County Detention Center near Ullin. (For background, please access the April 25 article, “Officials tight-lipped on Pulaski County Detention Center outbreak as detainees fear for their lives,” at thesouthern.com.) The staff continues to deny guaranteed rights for spiritual care and for meetings with ICE detainees. The point was made that since the center is the main source of employment in the county, spotlighting its problems might jeopardize that income. While understanding that issue, we also must fight for the lives and mental and spiritual care of people
— suggested that those who don’t need the stimulus check to donate all or part to local groups that are caring for those who have lost an income, need food and shelter, and need help with their coursework. These groups include:

Saluki Cares Student Emergency Fund, salukifunder.siu.edu
Boys and Girls Club, bgcsi.org
Help Cristaudo’s Share and Care, GoFundMe.org
Good Samaritan House, PO Box 506, Carbondale, IL 62902

— approved the sending of a letter of solidarity and compassion to the Islamic Center of Cape Girardeau whose building was destroyed by arson on April 24, the beginning of Ramadan. A 42-year-old man with previous charges for damage at the mosque was arrested and charged with a hate crime. Money is being raised for a new building through GoFundMe (Fundraiser for Islamic Center). For more information visit the city newspaper’s website semissourian.com.

Well, things just keep on changing! The Coronavirus outbreak has caused our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to alter its plans for the 2020 General Assembly, which was to be held in Providence, Rhode Island, from June 24th to 28th. In an April 15th announcement, the GA Planning Office described the new approach in these terms.

“The UUA Board of Trustees has passed a resolution to make the 2020 General Assembly a 100% virtual event. This decision alleviates the anxiety and concern shared by many about how GA might proceed given the impact of COVID-19. It also gives the Association time to plan a more robust and rewarding virtual experience.

“A virtual GA has many benefits, including a significant reduction in our carbon footprint and the possibility of higher attendance, since it is more accessible for delegates and anyone else burdened by travel costs or time. “For many years we have offered virtual attendance as an option and, this year, we will scale and enhance our technology so that we can accommodate a wider, ideally more global, audience. Across the country, UU congregations have embraced virtual meetings and Sunday services and we know that the number of screens that log in has grown each week. We are excited for what lies ahead!”

General Assembly is many things: a gathering of Unitarian Universalists from all over the country (and from other countries, as well), a fountain of opportunity for worship and for learning, a visible, large-scale act of social justice, a recognition of new congregations and religious professionals as well as those retiring, a meeting to conduct the business of the Association, and much, much more. Here’s a description offered by LaTonya Richardson, UUA General

It’s a dangerous business, Frodo, going out your door. You step onto the road, and if you don’t keep your feet, there’s no knowing where you might be swept off to.

—Bilbo Baggins, The Fellowship of the Ring
Assembly and Conference Services Director (see going all virtual for the entire article).

“Virtual GA will include popular programs such as the Ware Lecture, featuring Naomi Klein this year, and worship services, including the Service of the Living Tradition, with a sermon by the Rev. Danielle Di Bona. GA will acknowledge the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ arrival in what is now Massachusetts with programs highlighting the ongoing violence of colonization and the powerful legacy of 400 years of Indigenous resistance. Native scholars, leaders, and activists will be major presenters. And the Commission on Institutional Change will present its final report on systemic racism in Unitarian Universalism, including recommendations for countering white supremacy. ‘It’s all a big experiment,’ said Richardson. ‘We are a living tradition, we are a revolutionary faith, we like to live out our mission in innovative ways, we like to honor the earth, and to the extent that is true we have opportunity here.’”

This virtual GA will be totally unprecedented, and you can be part of it from the comfort of your own home, as long as you have internet access. The GA registration fee has been reduced from $400 to $150 per person, and there won’t be the usual travel, lodging, or meal expenses. In case you are wondering, registration is open now, and financial assistance is available if the registration fee is an obstacle. If you have never attended a GA, and feel curious about it, this is your golden opportunity. If you have questions about GA as an event or as an experience, please contact me; I’m always glad to share more information about our Association and its activities!

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 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.