

February 2023 President's Report

Our Southern Illinois weather rollercoaster has given us quite a ride in recent days. January closed out with an ice storm that made walking and driving treacherous. A week later our temperatures were in the 60s. And most recently rain and wind have been our companions. Spring is, as they say "in the air." The goldfinch at our feeder are starting to turn yellow. And with the rain and the warm nights, if you hike into the woods, you might find spotted salamanders emerging from their woodland burrows and heading to a pond for mating.

Recognition:

As always there are plenty of things going on at CUF that deserve our recognition and thanks. Here are some that I want to mention:

- You may recall that one of our voting initiatives at CUF back in the fall coordinated by Mary Campbell and Sara Starbuck was a "get out the vote" postcard campaign with Citizen Action Illinois relating to the election of Illinois Supreme Court Justices. Recently we heard from Citizen Action Illinois noting the success of this postcard and mail campaign and thanking groups like CUF for their participation. Our efforts make a difference! Thanks again to Mary, Sara and all those who wrote postcards as part of this effort.

And note as well that CUF's VoteLove 2023 effort, led by Bill Sasso, is underway as the April 4 local election approaches. If you're interested in learning more about this effort to encourage voter engagement contact Bill at bsasso62901@gmail.com and come to a "brainstorming" meeting at CUF at noon on Sunday, February 19 .

- One of the groups at CUF offering help to our congregation is Pastoral Friends. Pastoral Friends is a lay ministry which complements and supports the pastoral care offered by our minister especially when she is unavailable for immediate personal contact. In January, thanks to Pastoral Friends Bob Camp and Kitty Juul, a helpful resource handout was provided for CUF members and friends dealing with issues caused by post-holiday letdown.
- Thanks to Sage Banks and Laura Basanta CUF's new "Game Night" got off to a great start on January 28. Folks came together for games as well as shared food and drinks. There was lots of laughter as we played games and told stories. CUF's next game night will be Saturday, February 25 after the "Coldest

Night of the Year” fundraising walk for the Carbondale Warming Center noted below in “Things to Look Forward To.”

- Thanks to the efforts of the recently formed Reproductive Justice Discernment Group (RJDG) CUF is hosting a Donation Drive to collect items (granola bars, herbal tea, comfy socks etc.) to fill care packages for clients and staff of Choices Center for Reproductive Health. This will be an ongoing effort by RJDG that other groups will hopefully join. Those who wish to participate in assembling the bags will gather after the February 12 service.

Congregational Meeting Summary

On January 22 CUF held a well-attended Congregational Meeting. With a quorum of members present, both in-person at CUF and on Zoom, the Congregation heard updates and information about an array of topics. This included a detailed year to date Financial Report by Bill Sasso, CUF’s Fiscal Specialist. Other items on the agenda included a President’s Report discussing among other things recent changes regarding CUF bank accounts, as well as a presentation by Rev. Sarah concerning the development of a process for members of the Congregation to decide what should be done with the Rose/Hayward Gift Money. Presentation topics also included a Generosity Campaign update (Miriam Link-Mullison), information from the Welcoming Congregation/LGBTQ+ Team (Tasha Youngblood and Bill Kline), the Reproductive Justice Discernment Group (Carrie Vine), and Building Security (Charles Rufner). The meeting closed with a presentation by Rev. Sarah regarding current efforts at the UUA to revise and update Article II of the UUA Bylaws, Principles and Purposes, which form the foundation for all of the work of the UUA and its member congregations

Engaging and Belonging at CUF

In my reports this year I have tried to emphasize the many ways that members and friends can engage at CUF. From committees and teams, to various groups focusing on shared interests, there are many places where you can belong at CUF. For instance, the reinvigorated “Social Stitchers” previously called the Society of Stitchers has started to meet at 10:30 am at CUF and every Friday. If you like to crochet, knit, embroidery, etc. come join in. For more information, contact **Benieta Powell**.

January Services and Attendance:

Our January service theme was “Finding Our Center.” The first service of the new year on January 1 was our annual Fire Ceremony. In this lay-led service, the Fellowship bids farewell to the old year and welcomes the new year as we symbolically burn our outdated habits and thoughts and enter into a new year full of promise. Our January 8 service led by Rev. Sarah helped us look for opportunities in our daily lives to make space for centering ourselves and reflection. During the January 29 service, “Finding Our Center in Nature,” CUF members Candy Davis, Glenn McLernon, and Benieta Powell shared how being in nature helps them find their center.

For the record, here are the attendance figures for our January Sunday services.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Adults in Person</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
Jan. 1	28	5	--
Jan. 8	38	10	22
Jan. 15	46	10	17
Jan. 22	45	--	--
Jan. 29	45	--	21

Things to Look Forward To:

- **Coldest Night of the Year Fundraising Walk.** As mentioned previously, CUF has formed a team to participate in the “Coldest Night of the Year” (CNOY) fundraising event for the Carbondale Warming Center on February 25. See <https://cnoy.com/location/carbondale>. The CNOY is a family-friendly walk to raise funds for local charities such as the Warming Center serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness. The Coldest Night of the Year is a international program of Blue Sea Philanthropy USA. For more information about the CNOY event and being part of the CUF team, contact Rev. Sarah.
- **Spring Frolic.** Mark your calendar now for CUF’s Spring Frolic on March 25. There will be lots of interactive fun things to enjoy with friends and family. Look in future issues of CUF’s weekly Bulletin for more information.

