

June 2023 President's Report

It's June and summer has arrived in southern Illinois. After some uncharacteristically dry weather in the last part of May and early June, as I write this report, I am enjoying a lovely cool and rainy Sunday. For much of May, the CUF prairie was filled with beautiful blooming foxglove penstemon, a favorite of bees and other pollinators. It is now happy to get a good soaking as it transitions to bee balm, dock and other native flowers beginning to bloom. Thanks to Miriam Link-Mullison, you can keep up with what's "happening" in the CUF prairie by checking out the poster she maintains in the CUF entryway with photos and plant names.

Recognition:

- As we prepared for CUF's annual May Congregational Meeting, discussed in more detail later in this report, in late April members and friends were asked to consider additional contributions and pledges to help CUF meet its 2024 projected budget. We had a great response to this "second ask"! With pledges from new members and additional contributions from other members and sources, our "Sustaining Our Vision" Generosity Campaign finished up in May with over \$153,000, exceeding the campaign goal of \$152,000. Thanks to all who have committed to support our CUF community as we go forward.
- During our Sunday Service on May 21, we welcomed 13 new members! We are so excited to have Joni Bailey, Debbie Blomer, Paul Cline, D'Tréveouz Graham, Beth Jackson, Bill Kline, Susan Lutton, Mike Nance, Colleen Patrylo, Lori Smith, Terri Sullivan, Alex Waller, and Mary Ellen Young as part of the CUF community.
- Our May 21 service also included the celebration of young members of our CUF family who graduated from high school this year including Katie Herzog and Cal Vine. Both provided their personal thoughts and reflections as they reached this milestone point in their lives. Additionally, we recognized Alecks Rhude who also graduated from high school this year. We wish them all the best as they move on in their young lives.
- On Thursday, May 25 CUF hosted the opening concert of the 19th annual Southern Illinois Music Festival with some very special guests! Emily Hughes, one of CUF's own, traveled from the East coast to sing. Emily was joined by her father, cellist Randy Hughes. This wonderful evening of music also included SIU cello professor Bill Cernota, and pianist Jace Kim. The concert benefited the Carbondale Warming Center. Attendance at this opening concert was great with about 120 attendees.

Congregational Meeting Recap

After the service on Sunday, May 21, CUF held its annual Congregational Meeting. The agenda and various items discussed at the meeting, including CUF's 2024 Proposed Budget and the Proposed Social Justice Focus for the coming year can be found at the member page of CUF's website at the "Current Fellowship Year" tab. Minutes for the meeting will also be posted at this website location.

Among the highlights from this meeting were the approval of the "Reproductive Justice" social action focus and the 2024 Budget as presented by Fiscal Specialist Bill Sasso. We also heard from Miriam Link-Mullison about the final Generosity Campaign results with over \$153,000 raised. Additionally, Miriam provided an update regarding the "2024 & 20 More" building maintenance fund campaign. This included information about the need to replace CUF's roof estimated to cost \$120,000 and the status of this project.

May Services and Attendance:

In May, our service theme was "creativity." With this theme in mind, we had some very thoughtful services. For example, at our May 28 service Bill Lauritzen provided an interesting and timely presentation "Artificial Intelligence: A Tool for Creativity." Earlier in the month, during the May 7 Matin Sunday Service we enjoyed some wonderful music created by Elana Floyd- Kennett. We also listened to several meditations including "If I owned a fortune cookie company, here's what I'd put in the cookies" by Rev. Meg Barnhouse. If you would like to revisit this happy and creative story, go to: <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/fortune-cookies-soul> For the May 14 service, Beverly Shofstall from Free Again Wildlife Rehabilitation, our Social Action recipient in May, brought two owls and some other critters to CUF. She presented the Time for All Ages during the service, and then went with the kids to the RE wing to talk more about FAWR and the animal visitors.

Attendance at our Sunday services continued to be strong in May, both in person and online.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Adults in Person</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
May 7	43	15	15
May 14	41	12	10
May 21	65	12	14

May 28

42

6

12

Things to Look Forward To:

- Once again, CUF is hosting cyclists from Bike & Build on Thursday, June 22. They started in Virginia in late May and will end up in Oregon on their cross-country trip raising awareness (and funds) for affordable housing in the US. The riders and their support team will spend the night at CUF. We will be providing dinner on June 22 and breakfast before they leave in the morning on June 23. They will do a presentation on affordable housing at CUF at 7:30 on June 22. To learn more or help out, contact Laura Basanta at lbasanta75@gmail.com.