

July 2023 President's Report

We are well into the month of July and the height of summer in southern Illinois. It brings with it muggy hot days, regular afternoon thunderstorms, and nights filled with fireflies and critter sounds. Zinnias thrive in the garden and our CUF prairie, which as detailed below has received an award, has lots of interesting native plants in bloom including bee balm and rattlesnake master. The midpoint between the Summer Solstice and the Autumnal Equinox, called "Lammas Day" by the Celts will come on August 1 celebrating the first harvests of wheat and corn. And even now, the local news reminds us that school will be starting next month.

July marks the beginning of my second year as the CUF Board President. I learned a lot in my first year and appreciate all the support and hard work of the CUF Board, all our teams and committees, and Rev. Sarah together with the CUF staff members. I look forward to the year ahead as we continue to grow as a "a vibrant, diverse, loving community which fosters freedom of thought, spiritual growth, social justice and ethical living for all."

Recognition:

- On Sunday, June 11 CUF folks joined with other local open and affirming congregations for the 5th Interfaith Pride Service hosted this year by Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC. This service followed the Pride March and Festival on Saturday, June 10. CUF members and friends participated in the Pride March and then staffed a table at the Festival. Thanks to Alex Waller and all from CUF who joined in making this such a great event.
- On June 22, CUF hosted 28 young people with Bike & Build as they cycled across the U.S. to highlight the need for affordable housing. As was the case last year when the group visited CUF, in addition to a place to sleep for the night, we provided a potluck dinner and breakfast the next morning. We also got some good TV coverage as KFVS-12 interviewed some of the riders at CUF. See <https://www.kfvs12.com/2023/06/23/bike-builds-rides-across-country-build-housing-stops-carbondale/> Thanks to Laura Basanta and to everyone who helped us to host these dedicated young people on their journey.
- The Reproductive Justice Group has been awarded an \$18,000 grant from the UU Social Justice Funding Panel to help fund its work providing comfort bags and other support to clients and staff of Choices clinic in Carbondale. This will help the congregation further its work for Reproductive Justice as

our Social Action priority this year. Congratulations to the Group for securing this grant! For more information about the grant and the work of the Group contact Kathy O’Laughlin or Jeletta Brant.

- Throughout the year CUF conducts food drives to support food pantries and shelters in our area. In June we expanded our food drive outreach to include the Bethany Village Food Pantry which provides supplemental groceries to Union County individuals and families in need of assistance. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this food drive.
- As you’ll recall, our primary air conditioning unit failed back in late May. We then had to rely on a secondary unit that is designed to support the main unit at certain times. Through the efforts of Jerry Molumby, the primary unit has now been replaced and all new “smart” thermostats, which are much more accurate and efficient, have been installed. Thanks to Jerry for his continued efforts to ensure that our building is well maintained.

CUF Receives Bright Spot Award

CUF’s prairie/pollinator garden has received a “Bright Spot Award” from Keep Carbondale Beautiful (KCB). After our Sunday service on July 16, CUF folks gathered by the Cory Vine Memorial Bench next to the garden for a group photo as we accepted the award from KCB. Led by Charles Ruffner, CUF members and friends have worked hard to turn an acre of mowed grass into an environment filled with native plants supporting butterflies, bees, birds, and other wildlife. Thanks to Mike Baltz and KCB for recognizing our efforts with this award.

CUF Board Welcomes New Members

At the May 21 Congregational Meeting, we thanked outgoing Board members Charles Ruffner and Roy Sumner and welcomed several new Board members beginning July 1. Martha Shum now serves on the Board as Treasurer, a position that was vacant during the past year. She is joined by Jan Eisenhard as a new Trustee.

Phil Partridge was also selected as a new Trustee at the May meeting. However, soon after the meeting, the Nominating Committee learned from Phil that he would not be able to serve on the Board beginning July 1. As a result, as of July 1 there was a vacancy on the CUF Board. The Nominating Committee asked for members willing to fill this slot, and Kathy O’Laughlin agreed to do so. Based on the committee’s recommendation and in accordance with our Bylaws, at its July 16 meeting the Board elected Kathy to fill this vacancy.

Thanks to Martha, Jan and Kathy for stepping in to fulfill these important leadership roles.

RE Update

Ashley Moss, who has been our Transition RE Coordinator has been hired as RE Coordinator, starting July 1. We are really glad to have her continuing with CUF in this role. In other news RE Committee Leader Tasha Youngblood will be leaving as she and her family move to Houston. Thank you, Tasha, for being part of CUF. We will miss you and the kids. Jeletta Brant now leads the RE Committee with Joni Bailey joining as a new committee member.

Celebrations of Life at CUF

In June CUF hosted two celebrations of life. On Saturday, June 10 a service and reception for long-time member Joyce Webb was held. The service included family recollections and a video of a TV interview with Joyce about her years of work at the Women’s Center, now the Survivor Empowerment Center.

On Saturday, June 17 CUF was the site for a celebration of David Parrish, the brother-in-law of CUF member Astrid Norman. The celebration included a potluck and music with King Juba.

June Services and Attendance:

The service theme for June was “Delight.” June’s services began with our annual Flower Communion. In this celebratory ritual, created one hundred years ago by Czech Unitarian minister Rev. Norbert Capek, we gathered together a table full of flowers. Then the CUF children distributed the flowers to everyone as we sang “Des Colores” (Of Colors), the traditional Spanish language folk song expressing happiness and celebration that our world is full of so many colors. It was a wonderful service.

Other June services included “Box of Delight” an interactive service and “Well-Aged Delight” with Rev. Wade Halva from the Southern Illinois Outreach Coordinator for Faith in Place presenting the message.

Attendance for June’s Sunday services was again very good with many attending both in person and online.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Adults in Person</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
June 4	42	8	11

June 11 Pride Service at Church of the Good Shepherd

June 18 45 7 11

June 25 49 8 11

Things to Look Forward To:

- There will be lots happening at CUF in the fall so check out the CUF Bulletin each week for event and activity information. One important event that you should mark now on your calendar is our **“Ingathering Weekend”** starting on Friday, **September 8**. While planning is just underway, we will begin, like last year, with a family Picnic/Cookout outdoors at CUF on Friday evening. On Sunday morning, **September 11**, we will have our Ingathering Service with Water Communion.
- CUF will again be a host site for the Faith in Place **Green Team Summit**, on **October 8**. See <https://www.greenteamsummit.org/> There will as well be a variety of related events at CUF in October