

October 2023 President's Report

Well, we are back from our month-long trip to France. We had a great time. After flying directly from Saint Louis on September 6 to Frankfurt, Germany on Lufthansa, we took the train to Marseilles, France where we picked up a rental car. We then spent the month traveling around France from the French Riviera to the Pyrenees Mountains (Catalan country) then on up to Brittany, Normandy, and Alsace Lorraine. We returned to Frankfurt and flew home on October 4. Before we left, we were able to spend an evening and share dinner with Jay Houkes. As many will remember Jay was a regular attendee at CUF while in graduate school at SIU. After returning to Germany, Jay still joins us on occasion on Zoom for Sunday Service. In any case it was great to see them.



As we traveled in France, we were able to visit several of the major Gothic cathedrals including Rouen, Amiens, and Strasbourg. They are of course amazingly beautiful and inspiring structures. They reflect the intense fervor that religion can generate in humans. Sometimes that fervor inspires great things. But sometimes as well—all too often it seems—it can generate terrible acts of inhumanity as we have seen recently in the Middle East. Must it always be this way? No is my answer to that question. We remember always our message of love, freedom, reason, respect, and justice as the basis for religious community.

As we move through October, we find the natural world around us in its wonderful cyclical transition. These words by Viola Abbitt capture my feelings at this time:

The Growing Darkness



As we move deeper into the season,
There are some things we know.

*Fall brings a growing darkness
That we cannot escape.*

The nights become cooler
And take on winter's chill.

*The leaves on the trees and blades of grass
Try on new suits of yellow, orange, red and brown.*

Life around us slowly retreats
And goes to sleep.

*In the rest before renewal, the earth will remain
Waiting . . . waiting . . . waiting.*

For the time that they are returned to us . . .
The warmth and the light.

Recognition:

- While we were away, CUF celebrated Ingathering Weekend on September 8-10 as the Fellowship began a new congregational year. The weekend began on Friday evening September 8 with a fun family picnic/cookout at CUF. This annual event brings us all together to share lots of food, catch-up from summer travels, enjoy outdoor games, and listen to wonderful music from CUF musicians. We missed the fun, but I heard people had a great time. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this event.

Then, at the Sunday Service on September 10, CUF held its annual celebration of the new congregational year featuring the Water Communion ceremony. In this special ceremony, everyone is invited to contribute a small amount of water to a common bowl, explaining its source and the spirit with which it is added to the bowl. Music was provided by Maki Ito Pardieck and CUF choir.

- Work on CUF's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, "Creating the Future We Want" is well underway. Thanks to Miriam Link-Mullison and the rest of the Team including Roy Sumner, Bethann Siebold, Nan Sorrels, Bill Kline and Rev. Sarah. During September several Listening Circles were held both in person and on Zoom to revisit and refine, if necessary, our current vision and mission. As noted below our upcoming CUF Retreat on Saturday, October 21 will continue this process.
- In September, CUF welcomed our new choir director, Michael Thompson who was referred to us by his friend Carrie Vine when she stepped down last summer. The congregation has already enjoyed several services with our choir under Michael's leadership. We are very pleased to have Michael join us.
- On a regular basis CUF is the site for Red Cross Blood Drives. On September 22, CUF hosted another drive with cosponsors the Rotary Club of Carbondale and the NAACP. Thanks again to Jerry Molumby for leading this effort that is so important to our community.
- On September 30, CUF hosted a Celebration of Life for our friend and longtime CUF member Pam Jacobini. Recently Rev. Sarah and I met with Pam's brother Bob who let us know how much he and the family appreciated the service. Thanks to everyone who helped with the celebration of Pam's life.

In addition to being a longtime and active CUF member, as noted below, Pam left CUF a legacy that will benefit our congregation for years to come.

- With the leadership of Bill Sasso, the CUF Vote Love voter empowerment effort has moved forward in preparing activities for the primary and November 2024 general election. Additionally, CUF's Vote Love effort has recently focused on "get out the vote" postcard writing in relation to Kentucky's upcoming statewide elections including the governor's race.
- CUF again partnered with Faith in Place, the regional affiliate of Interfaith Power and Light, for their annual Green Team Summit kickoff event by hosting a local watch party on October 8 at CUF to watch the keynote address by Leah Thomas, founder of Intersectional Environmentalist. Thanks to the Green Team and its leader Benita Powell and to Wade Halva from Faith in Place for setting this up.

And thanks to Faith in Place for recognizing CUF with its 2023 Faith in Place Green Team Award for Southern Illinois "In recognition of their inspiring work building healthier and more just communities."

Endowment Gift from Pam Jacobini

Pam Jacobini, a long time CUF member passed away on April 28, 2023. Over the years Pam was an active CUF member serving on the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee as well as the Endowment Committee among others. She was also a regular participant in our Friday evening Social Hour on Zoom.

Adding to her many contributions to CUF over the years, Pam designated CUF's Endowment Fund Principal as the recipient of a portion of her investment funds totaling \$95,250. Thanks to Pam's generosity, CUF's Endowment Fund Principal is now approximately \$125,450. Pam's gift will benefit our congregation for many years in the future. We are so grateful that Pam was part of our family for so many years as well as for her sustaining generosity.

September Services and Attendance:

The service theme for September was "The Gift of Welcome." In addition to the Ingathering service on September 10 noted above, September services included a Matin service on September 3 with music by Pat York and a service presentation by long time CUF member Roy Sumner on September 24 sharing his insights about what successful welcoming looks like as well as his reflections on his recent experience serving as a member of the CUF Board.

Attendance for September'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>
Sept. 3	46	6	13
Sept. 10	40	9	6
Sept. 17	46	11	3
Sept. 24	48	3	7

Building Security at CUF

In light of recent events at CUF, with the break-ins in both September and October, the CUF Board has begun to examine how to enhance our building's security. On October 17 Randy Mathis from the Carbondale Police Department will undertake a security inspection of the building and grounds and will provide the CUF Board with a written report. Several CUF members will join Randy during his inspection. Additionally, Jerry Molumby has contacted ABF, the company that furnishes our fire alarm system, about installing a security system. We are scheduling a security review with them. Finally, Jerry is also looking into another local security firm to get an estimate/bid from them. There will be more to come, but be assured that the Board has security as a top priority.

Things to Look Forward To:

- Coming up this weekend on Saturday October 21 is CUF's **Congregational Retreat** at SIU's Touch of Nature Outdoor Education Center. 1206 Touch of Nature Road in Makanda. We'll be in Schafermeyer Hall and the Goldman Pavilion.

The Retreat will begin at 9:30. After an all-ages Welcome and Chalice Lighting, kids will head out for adult guided activities, and we'll spend the morning briefly looking at our Covenants and then moving forward with our Strategic Planning process. After the morning's work, an afternoon of fun begins with a lunch time cook out, hiking and other outdoor activities, a campfire and sing-a-long. Plan to join us for this great activity.

- CUF will participate in the **UUANI 10th Anniversary Celebration: Building Community, Bending the Arc!** from 10am to 3pm, Saturday, November 4. UUs from across Illinois will celebrate all we've done together over the last ten years, all the new things happening and all that's coming up. **Nicole Presley** from *Side With Love/UUtheVote* will be the keynote speaker. This event will be both in-person at Abraham Lincoln UU Congregation in Springfield and online via Zoom at CUF. If you can't make it to Springfield, join the watch party at CUF. You can register [HERE](#).
- The 2024 & 20 More Campaign is in the midst of year 3 fundraising efforts for our building including a new roof. [Click here](#) for more information and a list of 2024 & 20 More Team Members who also can be contacted.

As part of this fundraising effort, there will be an **Art and Craft Sale** at CUF on both November 5 & 19 in the Commons right after the Sunday service. Twelve artists are contributing a wide array of items for the sale.