

## May/June 2024 President's Report

It is a warm but pleasant July morning as I sit at my computer writing this report. So far July has seen more rain than usual and right now everything is green and growing.

Laura and I just got back from a 3 ½ week trip to Ireland. It was amazing! In addition to Dublin, we explored Donegal, Clare, the Beara Peninsula, and Kilkenny. Laura has Irish roots (McCarthy) as do I. While my father's family came to the US from northern Spain via Trinidad in the West Indies, my mother's name was O'Reilly and I still have distant cousins there. We got to visit with one, a young woman named Faye at dinner one night in Dublin.

While we traveled around, we read out loud to each other from Frank Delany's wonderful book *Ireland*. It tells a mysterious story about an itinerant storyteller or *seanchaí* and a young boy who becomes enthralled with the stories he tells about the history of Ireland, its myths, and its people.

The story of Ireland is both splendid and tragic. It has deep roots in pre-Christian and Celtic culture. We were able to experience some of that powerful history when we visited different ancient stone circles and dolmens or tombs. As these pictures suggest, these sites are deeply spiritual and inspiring.



### Events and Recognition:

Lots happened at the Fellowship in May and June. Here are a few items to note for the record.

- Thanks to Rhonda Kosmicki for organizing **Family, Food, and Fun Night** on Friday, May 3.

This family fun night had an art theme with various creative activities for CUF kids and youth including making an eclipse t-shirt with Matt Sronkoski. The evening included dinner with pizza, salad, veggies, and a treat. Parents were invited to join in the activities or just relax. Everyone had a great time!

- On May 9 a group, including CUF members William Sasso, Kathy O’Laughlin, Susan Lutton, Laura Basanta, Gene Basanta, Beau Henson, Benieta Powell, and Linda Linsin joined with Faith in Place and UUANI in Springfield at the capitol building for **Climate Action Advocacy Day**. Led by Wade Halva the Southern Illinois Outreach Senior Coordinator for Faith in Place, the group met with Illinois State Senators Terri Bryant and Dale Fowler, as well as with State Representative Paul Jacobs. The group then participated in a rally on the capitol steps. It was a fun and productive day as CUF people put our UU values into action. Thanks to all who participated. Additional thanks to Bill Sasso and Kathy O’Laughlin who also participated in **LGBTQ+ Advocacy Day** on May 8 in Springfield.

- Once again CUF was the site for a **Red Cross blood drive** on May 24. Jerry Molumby has been actively coordinating this activity for several years. Thanks to Jerry for all of his efforts and to all those who donated.

- The **planters on CUF’s patio** are filled with beautiful flowers this summer thanks to members of the Green Team including Joni Bailey, her son, Susan Lutton, Astrid Norman, Laura Basanta, Gene Basanta, and Benieta Powell. Be sure to check them out next time you are there.

- Beginning with the first Carbondale Brown Bag concert on May 1, members of **CUF’s VoteLove/Voter Empowerment campaign** have been staffing a voter registration table each Wednesday at the noontime concerts. This ongoing effort is an important part of our social action agenda. Thanks to all who are involved.

- On Saturday June 8, CUF members gathered at the Fellowship for a **Cleanup Day**. There was lots to be done! The work included spot cleaning the carpet in the entry hall and Commons, power washing the patio, replacing burned out light bulbs, and other maintenance tasks. Thanks to all who helped out. The Green Team is planning a fall Work Day for Saturday September 8—so mark your calendars now and help keep CUF beautiful.

- In honor of the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan – considered the tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States – each June Americans come together to celebrate **LGBTQIA+ Pride Month**. **Southern Illinois Pride** hosted by Southern Illinois Pride Collective and The Rainbow Cafe, was held on Saturday June 15 at Washington Square and the Town Square Pavilion. CUF and other

affirming churches and health care providers, had tables at the Pavilion. Also CUF members and friends participated in the Pride march with our CUF banner. As noted below, this year CUF was also the host church for the congregation for the annual Interfaith Pride Service. Thanks to Alix Waller and the Welcoming Congregation Team.

### **CUF's New Roof**

After several years of effort, CUF's new roof was installed by Clover Roofing in late May and early June. The job was done quickly and professionally. It looks great! Fortunately, the project came in at a final cost of \$73,700 well within our funding parameters. With the roof replaced, the Fellowship's "2024 and 20 Years More Campaign" closes one chapter and has helped position the Fellowship to meet its future long term maintenance needs. Thanks to all who contributed to the campaign and to the CUF team that led it including Miriam Link-Mullison, Roy Sumner, Tom and Cheryl Robinson, Jan Eisenhard and Jerry Molumby.

### **Congregational Business Meeting**

The Fellowship's annual business meeting was held on May 19 after the Sunday service in person and on Zoom. The meeting included the President's Report, the Treasurer's Financial Report, the Social Action Team Report including this year's social action focus proposal, the proposed Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee candidates, a report from the Endowment Committee, and approval of CUF's FY25 Budget. Also at the meeting Nan Sorrels was recognized as she completed four years of dedicated and outstanding service on the CUF Board.

The proposal for this year's social action focus "VoteLove – Embodying Our Commitment to Democratic Process" was unanimously adopted by the congregation. As recommended by the Nominating Committee, Alix Waller was elected to the CUF Board for his first two-year term replacing Nan Sorrels. Also, Gene Basanta was elected to a second term two year term as President and Rob Gallegly was elected to his second term as a Board member. Joining Charles Rufner on the Nominating Committee are Nan Sorrels, Jess Jobe, Debbie Blomer, and Therese Thien.

Treasurer Martha Shum reviewed the proposed 2025 budget in detail including the budgeted income and expenses. As proposed the FY 2025 budget is for the first time in several years balanced. This was accomplished, she explained, in part by several expense reductions including eliminating CUF's

Office Administrator position. As noted below, this will require CUF to rely on volunteers to staff the office. The FY 2025 budget as presented was unanimously approved.

**CUF Office Volunteers**

As noted above, the congregation approved the FY25 budget at the May 19 Congregational Meeting. Along with other measures taken to achieve a balanced budget, the Office Administrator position was eliminated. As a result, CUF is now using volunteers to come into the office to do a variety of tasks, from answering the phone and making copies, to checking email and compiling the Bulletin. Currently, we have volunteers to staff our office Monday - Friday, 10 am to 12 Noon. We can use more help however. So if you'd be willing to be an office volunteer, please contact Amy Weber.

**May and June Services and Attendance:**

The service theme for May was “The Gift of Pluralism” while the June theme was “The Gift of Renewal.” Attendance for both months’ Sunday services was very strong with many attending either in person or online.

May

<u>Date</u>	<u>Adults in Person</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
May 5	38	12	14
May 12	41	8	6
May 19	57	5	8
May 26	39	8	10

June

<u>Date</u>	<u>Adults in Person</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Zoom</u>
June 2	53	7	5
June 9	40	4	11
June 16*	148	16	22
June 23	41	13	10
June 30	13	4	9

\*Interfaith Pride Service

The Sunday services in May and June included an array of topics, with thoughtful readings, fine music, and interesting messages. Among the services several stand out.

- The service on May 5, entitled **Using Our Values to Create Our Future** was built around our in-progress 2025-29 Strategic Plan. Using the new UUA statement of values as a frame, members of the Strategic Planning Team explained how the plan was developed and how, with our input, it will be finalized. Warren Bush provided the service music.

- High school graduation is an important life transition for the individual student, their family, and our congregation. CUF's annual **Graduation Sunday Service** was held on Sunday, May 19. In this celebratory service we recognized our graduating senior, **Madi Herzog**, and heard her reflections as a CUF youth and her future plans. We also recognize our new members including **Warren Bush, Eyde Arndell, Beau Henson, Heather Hoffman, Clare Killman, Ashley Herd, and Brandy Carr**. We are pleased to welcome them to the CUF community.

- Our annual multigenerational **Flower Communion** service was held on June 2. In it we celebrated those CUF people and experiences that have sustained us over the past year. With the flowers brought by attendees to the service, we created a bouquet of blessings for all of those folks and moments. Music was provided by Elana Floyd-Kennett, playing our organ, and by the CUF Choir.

- On Sunday, June 16, CUF was honored to host the annual **Interfaith Pride Service** celebrating LGBTQ+ inclusion. Also participating in the service were members of the Church of the Good Shepherd (UCC), First Christian Church (DOC), First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, and St. Peter's Church (UCC). Gypsy Obermiller and the Interfaith Pride Choir, directed by Michael Thompson, provided the music for this joyous service.

### **Upcoming Events**

As summer passes and fall approaches, there are events at CUF that need to be put on your calendars. Here are a few to note down. And of course, check the weekly CUF Bulletin for information about everything happening at the Fellowship.

- The **CUF Yard Sale** will be held on **August 9 & 10!** Donations are now being accepted. Bring in your CLEAN items and put them in Room 6 in the RE wing. Thanks for donating your items! Please no

underwear, tech items (computers, wires, etc) or magazines! The sale supports the work of CUF's Social Action Team. For more information contact Laura Basanta.

- The Congregation's new year will kick-off with our annual **In Gathering Weekend, Friday, September 6 to Sunday, 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 8, we will have our Ingathering Service with Water Communion. Also, the Green Team is planning to host a Fellowship Clean Up Day on Saturday September 7 followed at noon with a potluck lunch and a movie.
- CUF will again be a Watch Party host site for the Faith in Place Green Team Summit, now called the **Environment and Spirituality Summit**, on **Sunday, September 22** with keynote speaker Lama Rod Owens.
- CUF's **Annual Congregational Retreat** will be at **Touch of Nature Camp I** on **Saturday, October 5**. Program details to be announced and will include guided hikes, shared meal, sing-along and more.