



**CEDAR VALLEY  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

3912 CEDAR HEIGHTS DR. CEDAR FALLS, IA 50613

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

319-266-5640

www.cedarvalleyuu.org



\*\*\*\*\* 2023 \*\*\*\*\*

- DECEMBER 3 10:00 A.M. FESTIVAL SUNDAY**  
**HOLIDAY HARMONIES: A WINTER MUSIC SERVICE** – Jess Lieb, Callie Amiday \*  
**11:30 A.M. Adult Forum**
- DECEMBER 10 10:00 A.M. WOMEN OF YULE** – Bittersweet Christmas Band, Karen Impola \*  
**11:30 A.M. Adult Forum**
- DECEMBER 17 10:00 A.M. THE DANCE OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS: A WINTER SOLSTICE PAGEANT**  
**11:30 A.M. Adult Forum** – DRE Kate Flynn, Pastor Emma Peterson; Kathi Bower \*
- DECEMBER 24 10:00 A.M. TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** – Pastor Emma Peterson, Mandy Boody \*  
**5:30 P.M. CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** – Pastor Emma Peterson, Mandy Boody \*
- DECEMBER 31 10:00 A.M. TOUCHSTONES, WAYPOINTS, AND DESTINATIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR**  
– Mandy Boody, Dick Warhol \*

\* ~ denotes *Worship Associate*



For complete CVUU COVID-19 information, go to Guidelines on the website at <<http://cedarvalleyuu.org/covid-19>>.

The *mission* of this organization is to be an accepting and supportive community that nurtures spiritual, emotional, and intellectual explorations, articulates ethical values, and encourages actions based on personal beliefs. This community is a voice for religious diversity, human tolerance, improvement of the human condition, and preservation of our environment.

## NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

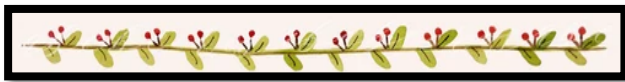
We're entering one of my favorite times of the year. 'Tis the season when the nights are long, arriving early, holding back the sun. Daylight lasts only a precious, few hours and we begin the long wait as the seasons turn. Winter is a time for rest (hibernation!). It is a time to conserve one's energy, consume warm and hearty foods, and take it easy until the new life of spring returns. Nearly every religion and culture recognizes the time of year when the darkness presides and the light is dim. Stories, fables, and rituals recognizing the duality of bright daylight and dark nighttime span across the world. Everywhere, we wait for the sun to return to us.

There are many ways we are celebrating the season at the CVUU. On December 3<sup>rd</sup>, our Music Director *Jess Lieb* invites you to attend a holiday music service, filled with classic favorites as well as music that feels fresh as new fallen snow. On December 10<sup>th</sup> returning guests, *The Bittersweet Christmas Band* will offer a service of story and song. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, Director of Religious Education, *Kate Flynn* and I welcome you to our first ever "Solstice Pageant!" This all-ages show is sure to be equal parts sweet and silly; and as of this writing, we're still looking to fill the cast! Contact either one of us if you'd like to participate.

You may have realized by now that Christmas Eve this year falls on a Sunday! That means you have two chances to attend our Christmas Eve service. At 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. join us for a traditional Christmas Eve service, full of carols and the old familiar story. Both services will be the same, with regular fellowship following the morning service and a cookie party following the evening service. Come to one—or come to both—but please do join us!

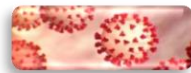
I hope this season is filled with joy for you. There is, indeed, so much darkness in the world. It can sometimes be difficult to feel joy in the midst of so much difficulty. But that's exactly what joy is for. Joy is the growing light in the darkness, the lining of hope in a seemingly hopeless circumstance. There is a reason we celebrate festivals of light at this time of year. They remind us that to everything there is a season, and that the light always returns in the spring. Happy, blessed winter holidays to All.

*Pastor Emma*



### COVID-19 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

If we learn that there has been a possible COVID exposure at a CVUU event, we will send out an all-church email. To ensure that you receive these emails, verify that you are signed up on our newsletter and Weekly Update email lists.



Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 in the days after attending an event at the CVUU should contact the CVUU office at <office@cedarvalleyuu.org>; the Vice President, *Karen Impola* at <vp@cedarvalleyuu.org>; and *Pastor Emma Peterson* at <pastor@cedarvalleyuu.org>.



UU-related historical facts in our newsletters are contributed by *Mica Lorenz* and taken from *This Day in Unitarian Universalist History* by Frank Schulman – Skinner House Books.

## MEMO FROM THE PREZ

Many of us grew up during an era when children were expected to 'be seen, not heard'—especially on Sunday mornings. The rules at church were clear: no running, no loud voices, and no questioning of authority; in other words, nothing that happy, excited children like to do! (And we wonder why fewer young adults and 'younger generations' attend church on Sunday mornings.)

As younger families join our congregation and we begin to see more children in our building, it's important to spend time thinking about how we interact with the children in our midst.

Let's start with the personal. How many names do you know of the children who come to the front of our sanctuary on Sunday mornings? How often do you interact with children during Coffee Hour? I confess my answer to those questions is "a few" and "rarely." I need to do much better in both those areas.

For our youth program to grow, children will need to feel welcomed and loved by the adults they encounter at the CVUU, not judged and reprimanded. In this day and age, if a child doesn't want to attend church, it makes it doubly difficult for the family to attend on Sunday mornings. After a long work week with limited time to spend with their children, no parent wants to argue with their child over whether to head to the CVUU or not.

Babies cry. Happy children make loud noises. Their little legs tend to move fast, sometimes without forethought about who or what's around them! They are a precious part of the *cycle of life*—a cycle which we at the CVUU profess to treasure and value.

I'm aware running children can create a tripping hazard for our elders, especially if our hands are filled with snacks during Coffee Hour. But it's our responsibility as adults, who are conscious and aware, to move slowly and extra carefully!

Here's the deal: if at some point you find yourself irritated by a baby crying during the Sunday service, or by noise from upstairs classrooms or the nursery, or by a youngster running through the middle of Coffee Hour, or you find yourself thinking maybe a child is taking too much food from the snack table, well, . . . please check yourself. And then smile, because the sound you hear and the sight you're seeing, is *LIFE*, in one of its most beautiful forms. You're experiencing the future of Unitarian Universalism, in all its spontaneous, chaotic glory.

"Jesus called, saying 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them'..." -- *Luke 18:16*

Let the children come to *us*. And let's welcome them with patience and love, *especially* during times of increased noise and occasional inconvenience!

*Dennis Harbaugh*

P.S.: Speaking of children, please consider donating to our Mitten Tree. Mittens, gloves, and socks are the focus this year, preferably in sizes elementary and up.



*John Murray*, the founder of modern Universalism, was born on December 10, 1741, in Alton, England. Many historians say that Universalism in America began when Murray's boat from England ran aground at Cranberry Inlet, New Jersey, in 1770. He was known as an eloquent preacher. During the Revolutionary War, General George Washington appointed Murray chaplain to the Rhode Island Brigade.

*Francis Greenwood Peabody*, a Unitarian minister and Harvard Divinity School professor, died on December 28, 1836, at age eighty-nine.



## DECEMBER SERVICES

Sundays at 10:00 a.m. online and in person unless stated otherwise.

### December 3<sup>rd</sup> Festival Sunday

#### Holiday Harmonies: A Winter Music Service

~~ Jess Lieb, Callie Amiday (WA)

There will be no Children's RE this day; children will enjoy the service.

### December 10<sup>th</sup>

#### Women of Yule

~~ Bittersweet Christmas Band; Karen Impola (WA)

This is the day to drag out and wear your best, ugliest, or most creative holiday sweater!

### December 17<sup>th</sup>

#### The Dance of Light and Darkness: A Winter Solstice Pageant

~~ DRE Kate Flynn, Pastor Emma Peterson; Kathi Bower (WA)

This is Pageant Sunday with adults and children taking part, and it's all about solstice. Join us!

### December 24<sup>th</sup> ~ 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

#### Traditional Christmas Eve Service (a.m.)

~~ Pastor Emma Peterson, Mandy Boody (WA)

Our usual 'after the service' hospitality will be available in the Fellowship Hall for socializing. Come and be a part of it on Christmas Eve morning.

#### Candlelight Christmas Eve Service (p.m.)

~~ Pastor Emma Peterson, Mandy Boody (WA)

After the evening service enjoy warm cider and holiday cookies while socializing in the Fellowship Hall.

&& &&

Join us for one or both of these services on Christmas Eve. It will be the same service, but there will be candles and other lights to add to the evening's ambiance.

\*\*No Sunday morning RE this day, but children are welcome at either service. Note: *Nursery care* will be available only during the *morning* service on Christmas Eve.

### December 31<sup>st</sup>

#### Touchstones, Waypoints, and Destinations for the New Year

~~ Mandy Boody, Dick Warhol (WA)



## MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Sunday morning meditation will continue at 9:00 a.m. Use this link to join us: <<https://meet.google.com/edc-tsvx-fbj>>. Look for group posts and updates on the Buddhist Path Facebook page.

## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Forums take place following the Sunday services at 11:30 a.m. unless publicized otherwise. Most, if not all, are available on Zoom and in person at the church.

### December 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### **How Do Unitarian Universalists Celebrate Christmas and Winter Holidays?**

Some new CVUU members have been curious about how UUs enjoy the holidays. Many UUs would not describe themselves as Christian, but they find meaning and joy at this time. A panel of young and not-so-young UUs will discuss old and new ways to celebrate. Those on the panel will be: *Bob Robinson, Gigi Bower, Kathi Bower, Rita Waggoner, Lynn Brant, and Jill Miller; Pam Hays* will lead the discussion.

### December 10<sup>th</sup>

TBA

### December 17<sup>th</sup>

#### **Winter Solstice Ritual**

*Al Hays* will lead a Winter Solstice ritual to continue the day's service theme.

### December 24<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup>

Due to the holidays, there will be no forums on these Sundays.

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our second hour Forums in 2023. We're looking forward to seeing you in 2024!

*Al and Pam Hays* for Adult RE



## CHILDREN'S RE!!

At our *Haunted House* on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> we had a wonderful time doing crafts, getting our faces painted, and having our fortunes told by *Pastor Emma*. It was a splendid and honestly calm time for everyone!

The December Soul Matters theme is *Mystery* as we continue to enjoy the materials in the curriculum. There may also be some RE class time used to make things for the pageant. The *Winter Solstice Pageant*—we need kids and folks of all ages! If this sounds like fun to you, send me an email right away at: <[dcre@cedarvalleyuu.org](mailto:dcre@cedarvalleyuu.org)>.

*RE Classes this month* will be on Sundays the 10<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Children are welcome to join in the services on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> (a.m. and p.m.).

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>** is a Festival Sunday so children will be in the service; no RE classes that day.

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** is "wear your best, ugliest, or most creative holiday sweater" to class!

**December 17<sup>th</sup>** is 'pictures with Santa' following the Winter Solstice Pageant.

**December 24<sup>th</sup>** (Christmas Eve) services at 10:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.—no RE classes that morning.

**December 31<sup>st</sup>** there *will be* classes on New Years Eve at 10:00 a.m.

\*\*Please note: *Nursery care* will be available at all the December services *with the exception of* the 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Children are welcome at that service.

Classes will resume on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>! As we come to the end of 2023, I want to thank all of our wonderful RE and nursery volunteers—we couldn't do what we do without them!

DCRE-ly yours, *Kate*

## BOARD BRIEFS

On November 9<sup>th</sup> your CVUU Board held its regular monthly meeting. We again had excellent attendance and reports were received from all seven Councils. In addition to other items, the Board...

- ✦ Heard from *Pastor Emma* about the OWL (Our Whole Lives) training she received in Minneapolis, and we began discussion of next steps to bring that training to our CVUU youth.
- ✦ Received a report from *Dennis* about a national UU webinar he attended, along with 600 other UUs from across the U.S., on the Middle East. Follow-up materials on this topic will be made available to our congregation.
- ✦ Found out that our recent October attendance on Sunday mornings averaged fifteen persons more per Sunday than in October 2022.
- ✦ Celebrated the addition of four new members to the Caring Committee.
- ✦ Heard about each Council's progress toward presenting *Congregational Handbook* updates to the Board by December 1<sup>st</sup>; and,
- ✦ Set the deadline for Councils to submit FY 2025 budget recommendations to the Finance Council.

With fewer major policy issues on the agenda, the Board appreciated the opportunity to dig into some details related to each Council's work and progress on a variety of matters.

*Dennis Harbaugh*



## CARING CONNECTIONS

The members of our Caring Connections Committee are devoted to serving this congregation month after month in various ways as the needs arise. Many thanks to each of them! The contact person for **December** is *Carollyn Hartsfield*.



With so many December activities and events at the CVUU, we hope you'll join us for several, if not all of them! At the time of this writing, the weather has still been fall-ish but as the temperatures drop, do remember those neighbors/friends who live alone and might need a call or something warm from the oven.

To those in our congregation who have been dealing with health issues or are recovering from illness or surgery, we wish you a very speedy recovery; to those who have experienced the loss of a relative or dear friend, we send our deepest sympathy.

Contact the *Caring Committee* with pastoral concerns, or if you are in need of assistance.



## SOCIAL ACTION COLLECTIONS

The Social Action Collections are an important activity for the CVUU, and we have continued to do well in supporting worthy charities.

The October charity was for the *Iowa Abortion Access Fund* and \$882.70 was collected! The collection for November was for the *Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Fund* and we'll report that total next month. The designated December charity is the *Cedar Valley Angels*, the collection for which will be on Sunday, the 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve. Thank you to all who participate in this meaningful and worthwhile activity on behalf of Social Action in the name of the CVUU.



*The Social Action Committee*



## DECEMBER DEADLINES

### FOR THE CALENDAR AND NUUSLETTER

The next newsletter will be the *January 2024* issue. The calendar deadline for this issue will be **Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** (send info to the office); the newsletter deadline will be **Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup>** (send articles to me). This information can also be found in **bold type on the calendar page of this newsletter**.

Mark your calendars now for **December 13<sup>th</sup>** and **15<sup>th</sup>**—the calendar and newsletter deadlines for the *January issue*. There are paper copies left at the church each month—some in the acrylic wall holder in the front entry and some at the foot of the stairs in the Fellowship Hall.

**Please note:** the office will be closed from December 20<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup>. The normal deadlines for the January calendar and newsletter would occur during that time, therefore those deadlines have been moved up a week to the dates mentioned above (for the January issue). Please mark your calendar(s) accordingly.

*Gerry Chamberlin*, Editor  
newsletter@cedarvalleyuu.org



## ESTHER KIEFFER'S BIRTHDAY

Please join in and help *Esther* celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>! Her address is available in the on-line directory if you'd like to mail a card. If you would prefer to bring a card to the church on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, it will be delivered to her the following week, in advance of her birthday. Happy Birthday, Esther!!



If you have questions, or need her address, please contact *Moria Brown*.

[Editor's Note: there are other 'known' December birthdays in our congregation—Trish Cook (16<sup>th</sup>), Mary Kay Madsen (25<sup>th</sup>), Betsy Brant (27<sup>th</sup>), Bob Robinson (30<sup>th</sup>), and Mica Lorenz (30<sup>th</sup>).]



*John Disney*, a leading Unitarian scholar, died at age seventy on December 26, 1816.



## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

'Tis the season for coming together with your loved ones, whether they be biological, chosen, your circle of friends and/or your Beloved Community. We are fortunate at the CVUU to be able to share times of celebration with such a good group of people. (We're also fortunate to have this community **all year long** to support us through the ups and downs of our lives.)

This month offers many special opportunities to come together and enjoy your CVUU circle. December will kick off with our *Treats & Talents Auction* on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. (You won't want to miss this wild bunch o' fun!) On December 9<sup>th</sup> more fun will be had with a concert by the *Bittersweet Christmas Band*. (This group always brings frivolity and honest reflections on the holidays.) There will also be a Solstice Celebration and of course, the Christmas Eve services. This year, the 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve service will be followed by refreshments so we can mingle and celebrate together with some holiday treats.

There will be numerous opportunities to celebrate the holidays with your CVUU family of friends this month, so we hope you will take in as many of these opportunities as possible.

Most of all, enjoy ALL your circles of friends and family and look for ways to invite people into the circle who need a community like ours. 'Share the wealth' in all the ways you can, as you savor the rich gifts of life you enjoy all year long.

Wishing you peace and connection this holiday season.

*Juanita Williams*  
for the Congregational Life Team

See [Meet Our New Members](#) – [next column](#) →



## CVUU READER'S GROUP

The Reader's Small Group is being revived by *Mandy Boody* and *Dick Warhol* but, they will not be meeting in December.

The next meeting will be January 23<sup>rd</sup> so mark your calendar(s). The plan is to meet in person at the CVUU in the balcony area **every fourth Tuesday** at 6:30 p.m. For now, the group won't be using a Zoom component.

As in the past, there won't be an assigned book; instead, attendees will share with each other what they've been reading.

If you'd like to be on the email list for the Reader's Small Group notifications, contact Mandy.



## KNOTS OF LOVE

Knots of Love will be meeting temporarily on the first Monday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. The group will meet on Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8:30 p.m. They will further explore the best time to meet in 2024.

All are welcome. If you have questions or need more information, contact *Jill Miller*.



### Meet Our New Members~

*Erik Norquest, Joanna Waggoner-Norquest and Max Waggoner-Norquest*

Having joined the CVUU this past spring, *Erik Norquest, Joanna Waggoner-Norquest* and *Max Waggoner-Norquest*, have enjoyed meeting people over the last several months. Max loves coming to church and especially enjoys it when we all greet each other on Sundays. Erik and Jo are both singing in the choir and Erik is playing in the band.



Erik was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. Joanna was born in Michigan and grew up in Waterloo. Erik and Joanna met in south Texas in 2006 and then moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2012 where they lived for ten years until moving back to Waterloo in June of 2022. Minneapolis is where Max entered the scene in 2018.

As a family, they love to make music, go on hikes, play Nintendo, and spend time with friends and family (including Joanna's folks, *Mike and Rita Waggoner*), make silly songs, jokes and read. Max loves books, art, fashion design, Captain Underpants, Barbie, and My Little Pony.

They are glad to have found the CVUU community and are looking forward to getting to know more people and to continue making music together!

[Editor's Note: Mike and Rita are also members of the CVUU.]



Support for our *Little Food Pantry* and *Little Lending Library* is ongoing through the upcoming winter months. Our neighbors, and the children getting off the bus coming home from school, can use nourishment for minds and bodies during this chilly time of year. Thanks for helping us to help others.



Recently we heard some clumping around on the roof and discovered it was *Roger* who had found a 'critter' hole. Thanks to him and others on Building & Grounds—they have a big, ongoing job keeping our building in good repair. (We want to be the only 'critters' in this building!) **The Church Mouse**

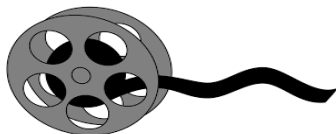


**Ralph Waldo Emerson** resigned his ministry at Second Church Boston on December 22, 1832, ostensibly over a dispute about Communion, but he felt he needed to either find another church or seek a new profession.



### SOME OBSERVANCES FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER INCLUDE:

- National **Write a Business Plan** month
- National **Pear** month    National **Tie** month
- National **Impaired Driving Prevention** month
- National **Human Rights** month    National **Fruitcake** month



### MOVIE DISCUSSION SMALL GROUP

The Movie Discussion Small Group will meet at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom on Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. The movie being discussed this month is *Inherit the Wind* (1960) which is available at both the Cedar Falls and Waterloo Public Libraries as well as Prime Video (subscription, not for rent).

A reminder will be sent out the week prior and include the Zoom link. For questions, contact *Nancie Groszkruger*.



### “Good Vibrations” 2023 Treats & Talents Auction

If you are reading this newsletter prior to Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> then you still have time to plan to join us for a groovy night of good vibrations as we gather at the CVUU for our annual Treats & Talents Auction. This year’s theme is the 60’s. While not quite the summer of love, this December date will give you the opportunity to pick up early Christmas gifts for those you love. The Social Hour begins at 6:00 p.m. The Auction starts at 7:00 p.m. so we can finish by 9:00 p.m. Refreshments and beverages are provided to deal with the munchies. Childcare will also be available.



Treats & Talents is our main fundraising event of the year and offers a variety of items donated by our members so plan to attend and do some bidding. Dinners, bake goods, road trips, parties, handmade items—you name it, and we’ve usually got it on the auction block. Even if you don’t find anything to bid on, join us for a night of fun, frivolity, and fellowship.



### NEW HORIZONS BAND

Each December the Cedar Valley can experience a live band concert, thanks to the New Horizons Band! They will hold their winter concert on Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center.

No tickets are needed. Many of our friends and neighbors play in the band, so you won’t want to miss this terrific evening that is always enjoyed by a good-sized crowd. . .and afterwards, there are treats in the lobby, too!



### MUSIC COMMITTEE NEWS

In November, the Music Committee began meeting again! This is a great opportunity to be a part of our music ministry here at the CVUU, no musical talent required! December 7<sup>th</sup> will be the next meeting, and plans are to continue to meet the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

They will discuss ideas for potential music, performers, and musical events at the CVUU. If you would like to be a part of this creative and collaborative group, please email *Jess* at <music@cedarvalleyuu.org>!



Are you in need of some gifts to finish up your holiday shopping? If so, there are numerous items from which to choose at the UU Book and Gift Shop called *inSpirit*. If books are on your list for family, friends (or maybe even a gift for yourself), check out this shop! Leisurely browse for clothing, jewelry, cards, many books—and much more, at: <<https://www.uuabookstore.org/>>.



### ADMIN UPDATE

I am taking an extended holiday vacation this year, which will include a trip to Disneyland with my family. I’m looking forward to seeing this “land of magic” through the eyes of my nieces, who at the ages of 6 and 9 should find the experience particularly enchanting. As a result, I will be away from December 20<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, and the CVUU office will not be open regularly during that time.

You can still send submissions to <office@cedarvalleyuu.org> for the December 20<sup>th</sup> and December 27<sup>th</sup> Weekly Update emails. Keep an eye on the December Weekly Updates for information on who to contact if you need something else while I’m away.

Happy holidays!

*Kat Beane Hanson*  
Office Administrator



## UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER SUNDAY!!

Wear your best, ugliest, or most creative holiday sweater on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> for the *Bittersweet Christmas Band* service. We will take a group picture to post on our social media and show the Cedar Valley our holiday spirit.

*Growing in Purpose: Rooted in Values!*



### BITTERSWEET CHRISTMAS BAND PRESENTS BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE CVUU

The Bittersweet Christmas Band is a group of four talented multi-instrumentalists and singers who draw from folk traditions of America, the British Isles, and beyond, playing “seasonal music from the reverent to the ridiculous”.

In advance of performing for our regular Sunday service on December 10<sup>th</sup>, they will present a concert at the CVUU on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Reserved seating is available for \$25 in advance. There are two ways to reserve these seats:



Pay by check. Put a check in the collection box in the sanctuary, or mail it to CVUU at 3912 Cedar Heights Drive, Cedar Falls IA 50613. Note in the memo line that it’s for the Bittersweet Christmas Band Concert.

Pay online. Go to <<https://cedarvalleyuu.org>> and click on the word “GIVE” at the top of the page. Scroll down and you will find a link to our Tithe.ly app. Under “to”, select “Bittersweet Christmas Band Concert”.

All remaining seats on the day of the concert will be available as general seating, and a freewill donation will be accepted for these seats at the door. We want this concert to be available to everyone, regardless of your ability to contribute.

Proceeds from this concert will be used to fund our Accessibility Project, which will bring greater ADA accessibility to our building.

The Bittersweet Christmas Band has been a highlight of the holiday season at the CVUU, and we look forward to welcoming them back for this fun event! We hope you will join us.



*Valentine Smalcus*, a Socinian minister in Poland, theologian, and activist for religious tolerance died at age fifty on December 8, 1622.

*Gilbert Stuart* was born on December 3, 1755 in North Kingston, Rhode Island. He was a Unitarian who studied portraiture in London and Edinburgh and became one of the most famous American artists, painting portraits of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and John Adams.



The Church Mouse is getting ready for the holidays too. Since the little mice heard that folks will be bringing cookies for a party following the evening Christmas Eve service, they are looking forward to possible cookie crumbs left behind!

Merry Christmas to all from the Church Mouse and family.



### PHOTOS WITH SANTA

Santa is coming to the CVUU on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> after our Pageant service. Children are welcome to come and tell Santa what holiday wishes they have this year, and parents are welcome to take pictures. Santa will have a small gift for each child and will be wishing everyone happy holidays this December. (The location will be announced that day.)



### SOCIAL ACTION

### MITTENS, GLOVES, AND SOCKS TREE

Beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving, and running through Christmas Eve, we will be collecting cold weather items that will be donated to organizations/schools sometime in January. We have learned that hands and feet suffer the most, so would like to focus on *mittens*, *gloves*, and *socks*, but will take whatever you have to offer!!



They need elementary sizes for all items, not infants and toddlers. This includes a need for some adult sizes, as many children’s hands and feet run large. New and gently used items are welcome (if possible, avoid Christmas motifs). If the items are used, please wash them before donating to our tree.

Contact *Moria Brown* with any questions related to this annual effort and thank you!



*“Moments of silence are part of the music.”*  
*Anonymous*

## NEW YEAR'S DAY 2024 LABYRINTH WALK AND MINI-RETREAT

Welcome in the New Year at the CVUU on Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup> from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. by walking a canvas labyrinth in the Sanctuary and/or reading Tarot cards in the Fellowship Hall, while enjoying a hot cup of tea and discussing goals and plans for the new year with other UUs.



All are welcome to drop in for a few minutes or stay for the entire two-hour mini retreat. Please contact *Floralyn Groff* if you'd like to help set up the labyrinth and/or move chairs before or after the event.



### ***GUEST AT YOUR TABLE***

***Welcome Guest at Your Table (GAYT) season at the CVUU!!***

This year's campaign began October 31, 2023 and will run until January 31, 2024. This year's theme is: *Pursuing Liberation*. To find out more, please visit the UUSC website at: <https://www.uusc.org/resources/congregations/gayt/>.

#### **What is Guest at Your Table?**

Guest at Your Table (GAYT) is UUSC's annual intergenerational program to raise support for and awareness about key human rights issues. Since the UUSC works in more than twenty countries with over fifty grassroots partners, there are thousands of individuals involved in and who benefit from the work that our members make possible. The program is an opportunity to celebrate grassroots partnership and support human rights.

#### **Why Give?**

This is the time of year for spending time with loved ones, for coming together collectively to spread the warmth of the holidays, and to consider giving generously to causes about which we feel passionate. This year, the CVUU Social Action Committee strongly encourages you to include the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's *Guest at Your Table* (GAYT) fundraiser in your charitable giving. A GAYT donation goes directly in support of many human rights issues across the globe. Support GAYT today!

#### **Making a Gift to Guest at Your Table**

Donations to Guest at Your Table help advance community-led human rights initiatives around the world. Donations of \$150 or more are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

Ways to Give at the CVUU:

- Tithle.ly: be sure to type "Guest at Your Table" in the notes/memo section.
- Send a check to the CVUU at 3912 Cedar Heights Drive, Cedar Falls, IA 50613 with *Guest at Your Table* in the memo line.
- Drop cash or check in the CVUU Collection box in the sanctuary with a note/memo signifying the donation as a *Guest at Your Table* gift.

With any questions or inquiries, please reach out to the Social Action Committee or *Kathi Bower*.

On December 21, 1563 the anti-Trinitarian *Bernardino Ochino* was expelled from Zurich, Switzerland, at age seventy-six in the middle of winter, for publication of *Dialogues*, the authorities claiming that he had written in favor of polygamy.



### LABYRINTH NEWS

Those of you who have been around the CVUU for a while know of my passion for Labyrinths. If you are a new member you may not know, and you may not even know what a labyrinth is or why I would have such a passion. I have been interested in and searching for labyrinths wherever I travel for over twenty years. I have built them on several of my own properties, on beaches, with chalk on driveways, and even in the snow.

A labyrinth provides a tool for walking meditation where one can easily follow a circuitous path from an outer threshold to its center and back out again while meditating. It can be used as a tool to solve problems, quiet one's mind, let go of and manifest things, grieve, and sort out feelings. It can be walked as a solo journey or in community.

In late October, I was fortunate to be able to attend The Labyrinth Society Gathering in Hendersonville, North Carolina with my daughter, *Heather*. I was also fortunate to become the owner of a 24-foot portable canvas labyrinth. I was so excited about the possibility of using it with our beloved CVUU community that I called *Al Hays* who was planning the Samhain ritual for the Sunday forum following my return home. He welcomed my idea of using the labyrinth to walk with our ancestors and our dearly beloved who had passed away.

Setting up the labyrinth required a team of helpers to move chairs and unfold (and fold back up) the labyrinth.

Thanks goes out to all who helped, but especially to *Skylar Blum, Jill Miller, Debbie Kyler, Margie Miller, and Heather Flory* for their enthusiastic willingness to volunteer to help.

This was especially exciting because it was a Festival Sunday and we even enjoyed participation from families, including several adorned in costume to celebrate Halloween. A video of this event can be seen on the CVUU group discussion Facebook page.

It was easy from this experience to see how a labyrinth walk can serve as a metaphor for life's journey. While we walked as a community, each person was on their own solo journey. Some walked very seriously, some greeted their sojourners with hugs along the way, one was carried by their father, each person was respectful of the other as they stepped aside briefly to make room for another to pass. Some chose to sit around the edges and observe the others, or just be with their own thoughts. Some stayed in the center feeling grounded and contemplating their journey longer than others.

There is no right or wrong way to travel a labyrinth. Each person is on their own journey. Each journey will be unique from the last one. I for one, look forward to many more opportunities to use this labyrinth for various occasions as they arise. If you have ideas for its use and want to get more involved with the labyrinth, please contact me. I hope to provide more opportunities to share what I learned from the Gathering. I would also love to receive feedback from anyone who experienced this labyrinth ritual.








Namaste,  
*Floralyn Groff*





# GREEN LIVING CORNER

## Books for Conservationists and Gardeners

Looking for books for holiday giving? The past year produced exceptionally compelling books from Ice Cube Press and the University of Iowa on the Iowa environment, starting with two books on water quality.

-  ***The River Knows: How Water and Land Will Shape Our Future***, by Neil D. Hamilton. Hamilton, a professor emeritus of agricultural law, was raised on a family farm in Adams County. Former Senator Tom Harkin gave this review: “A powerful sequel to Hamilton’s *The Land Remains*. With clarity and a unique style, Hamilton takes on the forces, philosophy, and economic “religion” that is destroying our soil and polluting our rivers and streams, with a corresponding degradation of our social values of individual and collective responsibility.” 
-  ***The Swine Republic: Struggles with the Truth about Agriculture and Water Quality***, by analytical chemist Chris Jones. Neil Hamilton refers to Chris Jones as “the most valuable source of real scientific data on Iowa’s water quality.” But *Swine Republic* is not a boring or difficult read: Jones has the ability to make scientific facts and numbers, e.g. about animal waste, absolutely jump off the page with a map, graph, or verbal description; and these short essays hum with outrage, wit, and his love of the Iowa landscape.
-  ***Iowa’s Changing Wildlife: Three Decades of Gains and Loss***, by James J. Dinsmore and Stephen J. Dinsmore. Identified as appropriate for ages 18 and older, I think teenage wildlife enthusiasts would love this book, which summarizes changes in Iowa wildlife between 1990 to 2020. U of I Press says, “Readers will learn more about familiar species, become acquainted with the status of less familiar species, and find out how many of the species around them have fared during this era of transformation.”
-  ***Tending Iowa’s Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future***, ed. by Cornelia Mutel. Organized into sections titled Soil, Water, Air and Life, this book addresses the potentially controversial topics of land usage and agricultural practices with personal essays written by Iowa farmers or environmentalists. Unfortunately, this valuable book is currently available only in e-book format.

Home gardeners interested in native plants may find inspiration in these two books published in 2023.

-  ***Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design***, by Benjamin Vogt. Vogt, a Lincoln, Nebraska resident, is a major voice renewing interest in urban wildlife gardens. With over 150 photographs and step-by-step plans, this book is a practical guide, a toolkit, to reviving diversity.
-  ***Tiny and Wild: Build a Small-Scale Meadow Anywhere***, by Graham Laird Gardner. *Tiny and Wild* provides step-by-step advice on putting native plants into small bits of space in urban and suburban yards and includes lists of best plants and tips for weed management. Don’t be put off by the examples from New England; this advice is useful in other parts of the country.

Sally Browne for Green Living



*Le Christopher’s* Southern Cuisine will be offered *every second Sunday of the month* at 12:00 p.m. This means the December meal will be Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup>, weather permitting.

Prior to the pandemic, several of us enjoyed the socializing and hospitality over the noon meal served once a month at the Jubilee United Methodist Church, 1621 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Waterloo. Gather up your CVUU friends and let’s plan to do it again!!

Adult plates are \$20 cash donation (\$15 cash donation for children twelve and under). Check out their website at: <<http://jubileeumc.com/>>.



## CUUPS DRUM CIRCLE

For those who like to plan ahead, there will be a Drum Circle at the CVUU on Friday, February 2, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.!

Drum circles have been a part of the human experience in virtually all cultures since time immemorial. Drumming together provides participants with an opportunity to connect with the community in interesting ways and provides an opportunity for meditation and for spiritual growth. It can literally lower blood pressure and create a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere. No musical skills are required.



If you have questions, direct them to *Nate Callahan*.



Many CVUU members see things that ‘need doing’ . . . and just do them, not expecting any thanks. Recently we saw *Steve Chamberlin* cleaning out the drinking water dispenser on the kitchen counter. Thanks to all of you who go above and beyond taking care of your (our!!) church home! **The Church Mouse**



## WhaleCoast Alaska



### WhaleCoast Alaska - A More Authentic Travel Experience

Two unique, exciting fundraising tours organized by four Alaska UU congregations are being offered again next summer by WhaleCoast Alaska. Experience majestic scenery, wildlife, Denali National Park, Alaska Native culture, glaciers, and UU homestays. For thirty years, WhaleCoast Alaska tours have been the *best* way to visit Alaska.



The *Alaska National Parks Tour* is June 15-25<sup>th</sup>, and *The All-Alaska Tour* is July 19-31<sup>st</sup>. Register now for this amazing experience! Check out the details at: <<https://whalecoastak.org/>>. For questions, email Maya at: <[whalecoastak@gmail.com](mailto:whalecoastak@gmail.com)>.





## Soul Matters for December—Mystery

We live in a culture that loves to conquer mysteries. For us modern folks, the unexplainable is simply a lock to be picked, a code to be cracked, a puzzle to be figured out. But what if mystery isn't just something to solve? What if it's something to be listened to? This month, the Soul Matters curriculum invites us to let mystery work its magic, to open ourselves up and listen for the whispers of the sacred.

Adapted from the Soul Matters curriculum.



*Thomas Aikenhead*, an eighteen-year-old student in Edinburgh, Scotland, was sentenced on December 23, 1696 to be hanged for reviling the Trinity, denying the Incarnation, and “scoffing” at the scriptures. The execution took place on January 8, 1697.



## WOMEN OF FAITH OF THE CEDAR VALLEY

Women of Faith of the Cedar Valley has a Zoom gathering on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Robin Kime, Campus Ministry Associate at ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries at UNI will be our presenter. Students describe ThreeHouse as “a community of individuals from multiple religions and secular beliefs alike”. They “celebrate and support those from all walks of life regardless of race, gender identity, sexuality or culture.” ThreeHouse promotes questions that help students understand their own beliefs, identities, and vocations in a space of “radical hospitality”.

For more information about the program and a link to the Zoom meeting, contact *Ruth Ratliff* at <ratliff@cfu.net>.

## CVUU AND PASTOR EMMA COLLABORATE ON CONTINUING FELLOWSHIPING PROCESS

In this article, the Shared Ministry Council would like to recap *Pastor Emma's* fellowshiping process, provide a status update on that process, and highlight some of the successes the CVUU has achieved in the last year, thanks to Pastor Emma's support and involvement.

First, a brief CVUU history lesson. . . Pastor Emma has been the minister at the CVUU since August of 2018, and she's been our full-time, settled minister since the summer of 2020. Pastor Emma came to us through a non-traditional path, having completed training and work as a hospital chaplain. For several years, Pastor Emma has been working to complete her UU fellowship process with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee so that she could become a fully ordained UU minister. In fall of 2022, Pastor Emma completed the initial requirements for her fellowshiping process, and she was granted Preliminary Fellowship status by the UUA. This allowed the CVUU the honor of ordaining Pastor Emma as a UU minister, which we did with great ceremony and celebration on April 2, 2023.

Next, a status update. . . several steps still remain in Pastor Emma's fellowshiping process. Since Pastor Emma is in *preliminary* fellowship, she needs to renew her preliminary fellowship for the next three years and complete paperwork each time. After three years of receiving approval, she'll be in *full* fellowship. As part of this process, the CVUU Board and the Shared Ministry Council each completed separate evaluations in October, in addition to Pastor Emma's own self-evaluation. These evaluations included successes of both Pastor Emma and the CVUU in the past year.



Finally (saving the best for last!). . . here are some highlights of the successes the CVUU has achieved in the last year, with Pastor Emma's support and involvement.

- Steadily growing membership! We had a new member mixer on October 27, 2023 with forty participants (including Pastor Emma and her partner), about half of whom were new members within the last year.
- Financial and community-building results of a historic Stewardship campaign! This resulted in the CVUU giving our minister and all of our staff raises sufficient to bring them into the new UUA-recommended equitable pay range.
- Improved collaboration with the Religious Services Council, resulting in revitalized and innovative Sunday services and planning.
- The community-building results of making CVUU history together with Pastor Emma's ordination ceremony and party.
- A shift in culture, using the word “love” with each other, being more patient with each other. Early on in Pastor Emma's time with us, she started using the phrase “beloved community” to describe our CVUU family. Over the last year or two, we have started to see more and more people within the congregation and leadership also use this phrase. Pastor Emma has helped us truly become a beloved community.

One final note, regarding mission and vision. . . for the last five years, the CVUU has determined a theme for each church year, with collaboration between Pastor Emma and the Board. Last year's theme (2022 – 2023) was “New Growth from Deep Roots”. This year's theme (2023 – 2024) is “Growing in Purpose: Rooted in Values”. The CVUU works hand in hand with Pastor Emma each year to strive towards living our theme and accomplishing goals related to our theme. We look forward to what we can accomplish together at the CVUU in the coming year!

*This article is brought to you by the Shared Ministry Council, whose role at the CVUU includes working together to support and promote the growth and well-being of the CVUU congregation in all aspects of its community life. The Shared Ministry Council consists of Heather Flory (chair), Floralyn Groff (Board liaison), Debra Kyler, Nancie Groszkruger, Steve Thom, and Pastor Emma Peterson.*

