

NOTES FROM THE PASTOR

In mid-December, right on schedule, *Skylar* and I listed our home for sale in Dysart. I say “Skylar and I,” but what I should say is “Skylar, our Beloved Community, and I” listed our home in Dysart. There were so many folks who made what felt impossible not only possible, but fun and almost easy! Members of the CVUU pitched in to clean out our garage (thank you *Michael J., Bill C., and Byron!*), packed and shuttled boxes on boxes of books and bits and bobs to storage (thank you, *Mollie and Rosa, Maegan B., Cindy and Roger Hahn, and Moria!*), and donated much needed packing supplies (thank you, *Steve and Gerry, Mollie and Rosa!*—keep those coming if you’ve got them to offload, by the way!). *Cindy and Roger Hahn* even took on the project of replacing many of the light and outlet covers in the house! Much of this help was orchestrated by *Moria Brown*, who also kept track of to-do lists and took many helpful notes, advised on staging, packed with the speed of light and the grace of a dove, and acted as cheerleader and ringleader of our pack of Strong Women Movers (and *Roger*). *Moria* is a magical person for so many reasons, and it’s been fun as we’ve taken on this project and discovered just how much we have in common. Many others have contributed their encouragement, support, and assistance in other ways. We’ve gotten through the “sprint,” and now begins the marathon of selling and buying. So please stick with us as we take our journey towards the Cedar Valley! I am especially grateful to the CVUU Board, helmed by President *Carolyn Hildebrandt*, with the backing of the Shared Ministry Council and approval of the Finance Council, for their creation of a fundraising effort to support the costs of this unplanned move.

Recently, UUA President Reverend Doctor Sophia Betancourt, in her seasonal address to the greater fellowship, wrote “Faith in each other is a source of great strength. Every controlling regime works to destabilize us and convince us of our powerlessness by separating us from one another. Instead, turn toward each other and nurture the bonds within your communities, providing care and upholding our commitment to equity and inclusion by centering those most directly impacted by violence and oppression.” As you know, my family is making this move because we recognize being close to our Beloved Community is one way we can sustain our energy for the years ahead. I am holding in awareness the tremendous privileges I have in this life—one of which is my connection with this Beloved Community. We must refuse to let this world separate us from each other, choosing instead to turn toward each other. I’ve felt tremendously nurtured by this community in this season of change and transition. I urge you to turn toward each other in the coming months, because life lived in good company is a good life indeed.

Thank you for all you do to make the CVUU the special place it is.

Pastor Emma



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.



GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

At the time of this writing, we are days away from Christmas and New Years—which are always filled with food, fun, and fellowship at the CVUU. Some seasonal highlights are the Christmas Pageant, Solstice, the Candlelight Service, and the New Years Service.

Each year the Christmas Pageant is a little different...and sometimes a bit of a disaster as well. Some reflections include. . .

One of my favorite memories is when *Hanna Gibson* (then in early elementary school) read the Christmas Story while referring to the mother of Jesus as “the Virginian Mary”. *Karen Impola* remembers that when she was a child, she thought the opening words to *The Friendly Beasts* were “Jesus, our brother, kind of good.” I also recall some of the younger members of our children’s choir singing, “Aye, said the cow, from the rafters high.”

For many years, we had a multi-aged cast—Mary and Joseph were teenagers, the Innkeeper was a middle-aged adult, and the Wise People were among the oldest in the congregation. The animals and angels were a mix of children and adults. One year *Mike Knapp* stole the show as the unruly donkey. When my younger daughter *Linnea* saw that, she claimed the role for the following year.

There were a number of years when the Pageant was a cross between the Christmas Story and the Jewish Seder. After each section of the story, a child would ask a panel of UU adults from various religious backgrounds—Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Humanist, and Atheist—what the story meant to them, sort of like the four questions of the Seder.

If you missed the Pageant service this year, the script is beautifully written. Each part is followed by a UU interpretation that can help guide us through the coming year. The Innkeeper reminds us to open our hearts and to make room for everyone, regardless of who they are. The Shepherds remind us that we are a loving community and that everyone needs to be included and cared for. The Angels herald the birth of a humble baby who, like any child, could grow up to show us how to live in peace and love one another. The Wise People say, “We followed the star because we knew it would lead to a place where all people would be treated kindly, no matter what land they come from, no matter what they believe, no matter what color their skin might be, no matter what religion they practice, no matter who they love, and no matter how they create a family. That kind of place, those kinds of people, are what we have come to find!”

One of the main goals of the CVUU this year is to welcome everyone and to make sure that our church is fully accessible, keeping in mind that not all disabilities are visible. Another task is to make sure that our minister and staff are equitably paid. To achieve these goals, we will need to launch a robust Capital and Pledge Campaign where everyone is willing to pitch in with their time, money, and talents. In the meantime, let us celebrate the New Year with food, fellowship, and song!

Carolyn Hildebrandt
CVUU President



Theodore Parker, a radical Unitarian theologian, was installed as the first minister of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston, Massachusetts on January 4, 1846. On that occasion he preached the sermon “The True Idea of a Christian Church”.

Joseph Priestley published the first edition of *The Theological Repository* on January 2, 1769, which may have been the first Unitarian magazine in England.



JANUARY SERVICES

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

January 5th

Aspects of Time ~ ~ Russ Campbell, Karen Impola (WA)

This talk will consider what we mean by time, how we value it (i.e., abhor wasting it), and its inevitable progress (or uni-directional flow).

January 12th

Burning the Old Year: On Letting Go and Letting In

~ ~ Pastor Emma Peterson, Lynn Brant (WA)

January 19th

Coming Out as Religious: Towards a Shared UU Theology

~ ~ Pastor Emma Peterson; Dick Warhol (WA)

January 26th

Next Steps Weekend Worship

~ ~ Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry, Pastor Emma Peterson (WA)



CHILDREN'S RE!!

As of this writing the Winter Pageant has not yet occurred, but what I *can* say with certainty is that it was an absolute joy to put together. The children had a hand in creating pieces to their own costumes, and the rehearsals were wonderful to host and participate in. Thank you to the parents who provided costumes, supplies, and participated in the pageant itself.

The Soul Matters theme for January is *Story*. Stories and storytelling have been a core part of the human experience for time immemorial. They are an important tool in forging our identities and connections to others. I am particularly excited for the activities that will allow children to share their stories, such as "The Storyteller's Circle" which will allow them to tell others things about themselves that they may not have known.

Children's RE will occur as usual each Sunday throughout January. We will continue to offer childcare during the Second Hour for any parents who wish to participate in the Forum. Additionally, there will be a meeting in mid-January with both parents and board members to discuss the upcoming spring season and what direction the Children's RE program will take into the new year. The date is still to be determined.

The new year presents with it new opportunities for growth and change. It is my sincere honor to continue providing a welcoming and nurturing environment to the children of our congregation. While the future cannot be guaranteed, I am excited to see what it holds.

Ronan Parker
Coordinator of Children's Religious Education

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.

January 5th

Poetry with Vince Gotera

Vince Gotera, a professor in the Department of Language and Literature at UNI, is an internationally recognized poet who will serve as Poet Laureate for Iowa through 2026. He has also served as Editor of the *North American Review* from 2000-2016 which is one of the oldest literary magazines in the U.S. and which is headquartered at UNI. A bass player for the group *Deja Blue*, Vince will speak on the role of poetry and music in his life. Having been described as "one of the leading Asian American poets. . .willing to take a stance against American imperialism" he will read and discuss some of his poetry and ideas with us.

January 12th

New Years Celebrations—Different Religious Expressions

Dr. Joyce Boss, Professor of English and Co-director of Global & Multicultural Studies at Wartburg College, will share with us the ways in which different cultures and religions commemorate starting a new year. (Joyce was the instigator of an almost nude run around the church at CVUU several years ago to celebrate the Shinto religion.)

January 19th

Job Foundation

Seth Stearns, the program director at the Job Foundation, will speak about their program that teaches Waterloo students living in low-income households how to become financially independent adults. *Lizzy O'Loughlin* has been a volunteer mentor with that program for seven years.

January 26th

Next Step Weekend

There will be activities related to the visit of Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Roseberry after the service. See the article "Congregational Stewardship Visit" elsewhere in this newsletter.

Al and Pam Hays for Adult RE



MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Sunday morning meditation will continue at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Find the link in the Weekly Update to join in with this group on Sunday mornings and look for group posts and updates on the Buddhist Path Facebook page.

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>.

On January 3, 1792 *Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin* published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. This early and outspoken three volume work on women's issues was the first call for women's suffrage. Godwin did not hold membership in a Unitarian Church, but she was friends with prominent Unitarians and greatly influenced by them. Her daughter was Mary Shelley, the author of the classic *Frankenstein* and the wife of romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley.



A brand-new year and a brand-new slate which always feels so good—a chance at starting over. Are you a New Year Resolution type or do you try to better yourself in other ways? Whatever the case, remember to be thoughtful of relatives and friends/neighbors who may need to be called on occasionally during more frigid times this winter.

We currently have members who are dealing with health issues including surgery; some are in various stages of the healing process. We wish each of them a speedy recovery to good health. To those who have experienced the loss of a relative or dear friend, we send our deepest sympathy.

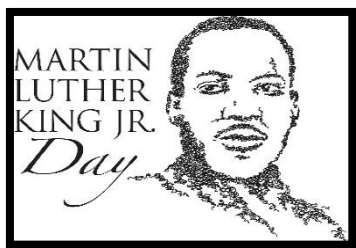
Contact the *Caring Connections Team* with pastoral concerns, or if you are in need of assistance.



CONTACT INFORMATION CHANGED?? DON'T FORGET THE CVUU!

Whenever your contact information changes, alert the office <office@cedarvalleyuu.org>, and ask that it be changed in the Directory—or you can change it in the online Directory yourself and the office will get a notification.

With Cedar Falls Utilities discontinuing their email service by next spring/summer, *please* remember the CVUU when you change to a different email address!



Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was an American Baptist minister, activist, and political philosopher who was one of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination on April 4, 1968. King advanced civil rights for people of color in the United States through the use of nonviolent resistance and nonviolent civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws and other forms of legalized discrimination. He and his wife, Coretta Scott King had four children—two sons and two daughters. Martin Luther King Day is celebrated on the third Monday of January each year.

UUSC - GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Monthly Social Action collections here at the CVUU are for local boots-on-the-ground organizations that benefit our Cedar Valley community. But how do CVUUs contribute to projects reflecting our values in the larger world? The answer is through the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, a UUA affiliate that advances human rights both in the U.S. and beyond. Our fundraiser for the UUSC is called *Guest at Your Table*; it's both a fundraising and educational program for congregations.

Each year, the UUSC brings us the stories of four leaders of UUSC partner organizations. These are the “guests” at our table; we learn about human rights struggles around the world through their stories.

This year's fundraiser highlights:

- a project offering support for the queer community in Ukraine;
- a coalition of young climate activists in the Marshall Islands;
- a group of Haitian academics researching the experiences of migrants of color in the United States; and
- the networks of safety and welcome for trans and gender expansive people forced to flee unsafe communities and states.



Our *Guest at Your Table* collection will be held on Sunday, January 26th. Donations of \$150 or more are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY. For a witty explanation of the work of the UUSC and GAYT, turn to the last page of this newsletter.

Sally Browne
Social Action Committee



We were watching the kitchen activity on December 15th when the hospitality treats were being plated for coffee time after the Pageant. Wow, those cookies that *Rosa* made and *Mollie* decorated were something to behold. Rosa's cooking skills matched with Mollie's painting skills are hard to beat! Only wish there had been a crumb or two for us to get a taste—maybe next year. ***The Church Mouse***



Millard Fillmore was born on January 7, 1800 in Locke, New York. He was a lawyer who served in the New York State Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives. Elected Vice President of the United States in 1848, Fillmore became president on July 9, 1850 when President Zachary Taylor died, and he held that office until 1853. Fillmore signed a series of bills known as the Compromise of 1850, which admitted California to the Union as a free state, restricted the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and provided for the return of fugitive slaves. He authorized the first American mission to establish trade relations with Japan. In 1856 he ran for president as the candidate of the Native American (Know-Nothing) party but was defeated. Fillmore was a member of the Unitarian Church in Buffalo, New York and died at age seventy-four on March 8, 1874.

IUUWAN NEWS

IUUWAN (Iowa Unitarian Universalist Witness Advocacy Network) is an organization that connects Iowa Unitarian Universalists to action on issues that concern the state. *Al Hays* was one of the founders, and presently *Byron Plumley* and *Shirley Whiteside* represent the CVUU on the board, in addition to UUs from Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Des Moines, Dubuque, and Ames. An environmental action group includes folks from Clinton and Davenport.



A new action team is forming related to *immigrant issues* in particular due to the incoming national administration focused on dehumanizing immigrants in our communities. This group of UUs will gather regularly on Zoom to build community with other UUs in the state and share ideas about what is happening in different towns to meet this challenge. Anyone interested should reach out to *Byron Plumley*.

For more information go to the website <iuuwan.com> where you can also find their new Facebook page.



THE MAGIC OF VOLUNTEERISM

The magic of volunteerism. The joy of giving and the grace of receiving. These three things are really important to the foundations of sharing the LOVE that creates our beloved community.

Sometimes we may not have much money to share, but volunteering is so important to keep this organization thriving. Those who give of their time, money, and heart also experience the power of *joy* that such acts of kindness and generosity produce. Sometimes we are afraid to ask for help, but by doing so we provide the opportunity for others to experience the *joy* of giving. Often, we don't volunteer because we feel inadequate. You may have hidden talents that just haven't been developed yet or of which you are unaware.

As we begin the New Year, take a self-inventory. What can you give of time, talent, or money? What needs do you have that you could use some help with?

The Shared Ministry Council strives to address the needs of the individual congregants and the minister. What keeps the wheels of this organization rolling are the volunteers, which are all the councils (Board, Finance, Congregational Life, Religious Services, Religious Education, Buildings and Grounds), and committees (Accessibility Task Force, Caring Connections, Music, Hospitality, Social Justice, Newsletter, Personnel, Nominating) and various Small Groups.

Although our minister is a paid staff person, she also does volunteer work behind the scenes, and above and beyond the call of duty. She currently has a situation in her life which has caused the Shared Ministry Council and the Board to create a new fund for moving. See the article in this newsletter for details. Ask yourself where you fit in. How can you give of yourself? It really does take a village!

Floralyn Groff
Shared Ministry Council

IOWA CANTERBURY FORUM PROGRAMS

Canterbury Forums are held on Sundays and will begin again in February, so watch this space for more information on the topic and speaker for next month.



Soul Matters in January

The Soul Matters theme for January this year is *Story*. Our children will also be using this theme in the RE classes. What does this theme mean to you in your daily life and in the lives of those around you? What stories come to mind?



When everything goes as planned, no one notices, but as soon as something goes awry, it's too obvious. That was the case in



December when the camera wasn't working for a service, meaning no visual for the Zoom folks.

Through much perseverance and many hours of troubleshooting, we watched as *Ken Taylor* kept at it until the problem was solved! The CVUU tech folks sure are dedicated to making services available to everyone. Thanks Ken!

The Church Mouse



If you are one who likes to plan ahead, mark your calendars for Sunday, March 9th when the Jubilee United Methodist Church in Waterloo will again serve the delicious *Le Christopher's* Southern Cuisine meal at their church. Think about gathering some friends and carpooling.



Support for the CVUU's *Little Food Pantry* and *Little Lending Library* is ongoing throughout the year. Our neighbors, and the children who are coming home from school, can use nourishment for minds and bodies especially as the weather turns cold! The CVUU LFP is one of the Social Action charities we support once a year, but it's always the season for sharing.



Have you seen it!? Wow, take a look!! The east Fellowship Hall entrance is done and what an improvement! Not only is the surface even now (and safer!), but the walkway is wider. Completion was delayed just a few extra days earlier in December but finished quite promptly—even with the cold temperatures. Come spring, it appears the little mice may have lost their source for mudpies and swimming. Thanks to *Bill* and Building & Grounds for taking such good care of our (your) home!

The Church Mouse



JANUARY DEADLINES

FOR THE CALENDAR AND NUUSLETTER

The next newsletter will be the **February** issue. The **calendar** deadline for this issue will be **Wednesday, January 15th** (send info to the office); the **newsletter** deadline will be **Friday, January 17th** (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 **January 15th and 17th**—the calendar and newsletter deadlines for the *February 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.

Gerry Chamberlin, Editor
newsletter@cedarvalleyuu.org



FIRST FRIDAY POTLUCKS

Join us for the first First Friday Potluck of 2025, on Friday, January 3rd, from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. This will be a time for us to enjoy a meal and get to know each other better as we start the new year!



This is a potluck, so please bring something to share if you can. There will be plenty of food, so no pressure! The paper plates will be out, but if you prefer your “regular” plates and silverware, bring them along. The hot water will be on for tea or bring your own beverage. There’s no theme or requirements, it’s up to you. This is an event for all ages. Everyone is welcome! Please invite a friend to join you! We’ll get started at 5:30 p.m., eat, and socialize.

If you have questions about First Fridays, would like more information, or would like to help out, please contact me.

Consider marking your calendars for the upcoming First Friday Potlucks this winter/spring: February 7th, March 7th, April 4th, May 2nd, and June 6th.

Michaela Rich

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 that are chosen annually by this congregation.

The charity for November was for our own *CVUU Little Food Pantry*, and \$489.00 was collected.

December’s charity was for *Iowa Safe Schools* and we’ll have that figure for you next month.

January’s charity is for the UUSC; for more information on this arm of the UUA, read *Sally Browne’s* and *Pam Hays’* articles in this newsletter.

Thank you to all who participate in supporting the charities each month in the name of the CVUU.

The Social Action Committee



MOVIE DISCUSSION SMALL GROUP

The Movie Discussion Small Group will be meeting this month in the sanctuary on Monday, January 13th at 1:00 p.m. The movie being discussed will be *Oscar* which can be rented for \$3.59 on Amazon or watched for free on Hoopla with ads. It is also in DVD form. If you don’t have access to it, check with *Leigh*.

This is an open group and all are welcome so if this Small Group sounds interesting to you and you’d like to be added to the email list, or you have questions, contact *Nancie Groszkruger*.



WhaleCoast Alaska - A More Authentic Travel Experience

Spots still remain for these two unique, exciting fundraising tours organized by four Alaska UU congregations that 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-one years, WhaleCoast Alaska tours have been the BEST way to visit Alaska. Register now for this amazing experience!



Details at <www.WhaleCoastAK.org>. For questions their email is <info@whalecoastak.org>.



The first issue of the “*Unitarian Miscellany and Christian Monitor*”, the first Unitarian periodical in America, was published on January 1, 1821. This monthly publication contained articles, hymns, sermons, and letters. “To teach plain doctrines in a plain way” was its stated purpose.

CONGREGATIONAL STEWARDSHIP VISIT

JANUARY 24-26th

Stewardship Consultant Rev. Lydia Ferrante-Rosenberry will be with us on the weekend of January 24th. She will meet with our board and staff on Friday, and members of assorted committees on Saturday morning and afternoon to hear about our culture, concerns, and our hopes and priorities for moving forward. Mid-day Saturday, we'll offer a lunch followed by a special workshop on Stewardship that is open to anyone in the congregation. A core focus of the visit will be on identifying recommended next steps and practical information to help us successfully discern what types of facilities are best for us, and our readiness for a capital campaign.

Lydia's visit will provide an examination of our congregation's strengths, challenges, risks and opportunities. The following benefits of this visit that are typical include:

- Shares lessons learned and best practices from other congregations.
- Clarifies how, where, and when a stewardship consultant can be helpful.
- Determines if you are ready for a major step, such as a capital campaign.
- Lays the foundation for potential follow-up work for successful programs, such as budget drives, strategic planning, endowments, and other areas determined during the visit.

Rev. Lydia will be preaching on Sunday morning, January 26th. After the service, Lydia will present her initial observations and recommendations to our entire congregation in the Second Hour. Following that, a final report will be delivered to the leadership about two weeks after the visit.

Snacks and childcare will be provided during Lydia's presentation after the Sunday Service.

Please make room in your schedule to participate so that we will get the most from this visit.

We will keep you posted on happenings for the week of January 24-26th either via emails, Weekly Updates, or both. If you have questions, please contact *Mary Kay Madsen*.



When you arrive at church on a wintry Sunday morning, do you ever think about who has shown up much earlier and checked the walkway/driveway for safety; who has opened the building; who has checked the heat, and more. . .so that when folks begin arriving, they feel welcomed? Each Sunday, no matter the time of the year, we are the first ones to see *Bill Brown* come through the door! We're glad to see him at this time of year, that means the inside temperature will be cozier. Thanks Bill, for taking such good care of everyone on Sunday mornings, making this place truly welcoming!
The Church Mouse



MINISTERIAL MOVING FUND

The Board and the Shared Ministry Council have set up a Ministerial Moving Fund to help *Pastor Emma* and her partner *Skylar* move to the Cedar Valley. Any donations would be very welcome. You can donate through Tithley or by writing a check to the CVUU—be sure that your donation is labeled for the “Ministerial Moving Fund”.



ALLERGY ALERT

The CVUU was recently made aware that we have a member with an allergy that is triggered by airborne particles when popcorn is being popped. The member is okay with the popcorn popper being used; they just need to know in advance when it will be in use. Until an allergy policy is developed and approved by the Board, the Congregational Life Council has requested the following occur:

- 1) Use of the popcorn popper needs to be planned in advance and the congregation informed through the church calendar and the Weekly Update.
- 2) The person planning to use the popcorn popper is responsible for notifying the Office Administrator who will then post it on the calendar and in the immediately preceding Weekly Update.



This information has been posted in the kitchen, and by the popcorn popper. Thanks in advance to everyone for helping to keep all of our members safe.

If you have questions, please contact *Jill Miller* or *Juanita Williams*, Co-chairs for the Congregational Life Council.

NOTE: If you are reading this in December, the current schedule is for the popcorn popper *to be used the last Sunday of each month during Hospitality, beginning with Sunday, December 29th*.



SOME OBSERVANCES FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY INCLUDE:

- National **O**pticians month
- National **G**laucoma Awareness month
- National **S**oup month National **S**kating month
- National **P**overty in America Awareness month
- National **P**olka Music month National **R**adon Action month



CARING CONNECTIONS TEAM

The members of our Caring Connections Team 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 assistance in *January* is *Stacey Bartz*.

EVERYTHING YOU'VE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT UUSC AND GAYT

1. What is UUSC?
Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
2. What does it do?
It is an "arm" of UUism that focuses on Human Rights Work.
3. When was it founded?
It was founded in 1940 as the Unitarian Service Committee by the Rev. Waitstill and Martha Sharp. They heroically rescued persecuted Jewish people. Their remarkable story is told by their grandson in a book, and also a Ken Burns PBS documentary, Defying the Nazi's: The Sharps' War.
4. How does it work? Does it send out UU "missionaries"?
No.
5. Then how?
It works with other groups; it "collaborates with grassroots organizations and movements that are advancing our shared human rights goals on the ground."
6. Ok, good – it doesn't "reinvent the wheel" or compete with good organizations around the world. Does it do anything else?
It offers a lot of different educational, skill building, and experiential opportunities. You can even volunteer to help at various sites; they also have "immersion journeys." Sounds like a life-changing opportunity.
7. Anything else?
Yep. Advocacy and mobilizing for human rights actions is another thing they do.
8. Ok, that's nice and general. How about some specifics?
All right, here's one.
Displacement – they "support the rights of people forced to leave their homes because of climate change, conflict, or economic hardship, always seeking to address the root causes of displacement." Such as, joining with the Lowlander Center to support Native tribes in Louisiana facing a decimated fishing economy, which has led to a severe loss of jobs and lower incomes for tribal members.
And here's another–
Migrant justice – they "disrupt the oppression of people based on their identities, and reduce harm for those who are impacted by discrimination." Such as supporting Al Otro Lado to provide legal services to migrants crossing the southern border.
And also –
Crisis Response – they "respond to humanitarian crises, partnering with people whose access to aid is most limited by helping them rebuild their lives and by enabling a more equitable and just recovery." Such as supporting a humanitarian hub that provides shelter, medicines, food for children, transportation, and psychological support to Ukrainian women in crisis situations due to the war.
9. OK, I get it, they do good stuff all around the world, working for human rights in a lot of different ways, in a lot of different places. How can I help?
Thanks for asking. Giving to UUSC through GAYT is one way to help.
10. Is GAYT some gender group? That's ok, just asking?
GAYT stands for Guest at Your Table.
11. So how does GAYT work?
You virtually welcome a person (who UUSC is or will be serving) to your table every time you eat, thinking about that person, and wishing them well.
12. I thought it had something to do with a little box.
I'm getting there. As a reminder, and as a way to teach children and others about giving, some people put together a cardboard box, distributed by UUSC or they make their own, put it on their dinner table, and every evening (or once a week, or whatever) put some money in the slot in the box. Some people put in the cost of the meal that they are eating.
13. Do you do it all year long? Some kids' attention spans aren't too long, you know.
No. At CVUU, we start the program around Christmas and run it through January. This is a time when we are enjoying the many blessings that we have, and a time of sharing.
14. Ok, I'm in. I can do this. What if I don't want to do this box thing? Can I just write a check?
Of course. Many people just write one check and send it to CVUU in January, made out to CVUU with "UUSC" in the memo. Or you can use the super easy Tithely site but be sure to note it's for GAYT.
15. Does it matter how much I give?
Only to the oppressed people UUSC serves. Ouch. Actually, any amount is most welcome and appreciated. Gifts of \$150 or more are matched, however, so you might want to consider that amount.



In solidarity,
Pam Hays
Social Action Committee

