



**CEDAR VALLEY
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

3912 CEDAR HEIGHTS DR. CEDAR FALLS, IA 50613

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

319-266-5640

www.cedarvalleyuu.org



***** 2025 *****

- DECEMBER 7 10:00 A.M. **BLUE CHRISTMAS: A SERVICE FOR ANYONE WITH A TENDER HEART**
11:30 A.M. **Adult Forum** – Pastor Emma Peterson, Kathi Bower *
- DECEMBER 14 10:00 A.M. **THROUGH THE FIREPLACE: A CELEBRATION OF WARMTH DURING
THE WINTER HOLIDAY SEASON** – Bittersweet Christmas Band, Karen Impola *
11:30 A.M. **More music from the Band following hospitality** (see articles for details)
- DECEMBER 21 10:00 A.M. **REFLECTIONS ON THE LONGEST NIGHT** – Karen Impola, Mandy Joy *
11:30 A.M. **Adult Forum**
- DECEMBER 24 **5:30 P.M. TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: STORIES AND CAROLS**
– Pastor Emma Peterson, TBA *
- DECEMBER 28 10:00 A.M. **REFLECTIONS AND INTENTIONS FOR THE NEW YEAR**
Due to the holidays, no Adult Forum this day. – Callie Amiday, TBA *

* ~ denotes *Worship Associate*



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 have some wonderful news to share at the CVUU! Recently, the Personnel Committee extended an offer to *Alan Beving* to become our Interim Music Director. Alan is pursuing his master's in Choral Music Conducting at UNI. He joined us as a guest musician in November, and (I personally thought) he was spectacular! Alan accepted our offer and has already begun learning UU music and preparing to revitalize our choir! Because Alan will complete his master's in the spring, we're pretty confident he won't be with us forever. I'm admittedly already a little nervous about finding his replacement, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. In the meantime, let's appreciate the remarkable talent Alan will share with us.

I'd like to extend my deepest thanks and unending gratitude to *Carolyn Hildebrandt* for the sixteen months she dedicated to being our Volunteer Interim Music Director. Carolyn devoted untold hours of her time and nearly every single Sunday over the last year and a half to making sure our worship services contained the crucial element of music. As someone who isn't a musician, I can't fully comprehend exactly how much work it is to coordinate and prepare music for Sundays. But I am aware that it is a tremendous amount! Carolyn stepped up when we were in dire need. I don't know what we would have done without her. The next time you see her, please extend your thanks to Carolyn. Not just for her work as our Volunteer Interim Music Director, but also as our Board President! And let's all collectively put some good energy out into the Universe to manifest the perfect fit for the position when Alan inevitably departs for whatever big city where his dreams are waiting for him. Until then, consider joining the choir and enjoying the music!

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, *Al Hays* 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.

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy holidays! As I write this article, I'm on my way to New York City to celebrate Thanksgiving week with family and friends.

One of the highlights of my trip will be hearing *Pastor Emma* preach on November 30th at one of my favorite UU churches, the First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society in Brooklyn, which is affectionately called the FUUB. I expect Pastor Emma will be impressed with the building, the congregation, and the music program, which boasts an impressive list of donors. Their candlelight service on Christmas Eve is like being at the Met!

Don't get me wrong, though. I'm also fond of our music program at the CVUU, which is set to grow in exciting new ways under the leadership of our new Interim Music Director, *Alan Beving* who is currently pursuing a master's degree in Choral Music Conducting at UNI. Alan is an "Interim" Director because he will be graduating in May to pursue a teaching job or a DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) degree, both of which could take him away from the Cedar Valley. Unlike the FUUB's music program, ours is built primarily on the work of volunteers. So if you are a singer or a musician, please step up and participate! We will also be continuing our Guest Musicians Program, so let Alan know if there is someone you would like him to invite to perform!

In wishing you happy holidays, I know that not everyone in our congregation is in the best of health and spirits. In the most recent Weekly Update, there is a long list of people who could use some love, sympathy, compassion, food, housework, rides, cards, emails, texts, phone calls, or visits.

Soon I'll be on that list as well, as I was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Despite this unsettling news, I still have a lot to be grateful for: an excellent care team, wonderful friends, good health insurance, and a single tumor that is grade 1, stage 1A, quite small, and growing very slowly. I will need surgery, hormone blockers, and perhaps some other therapies depending on what the MRI will show.

One thing I've learned from this experience is that negative health news can be very tiring and disorienting. I've been telling people that I'm a walking psychology experiment: a perfect example of "inattention blindness". Although it might seem like I'm understanding everything I read and hear, in reality, I can't handle a lot of information all at once...unless it's about my current diagnosis or treatment! Luckily, things will settle down in January after I know more about what to expect.

So, in this season of giving, let us be thankful for all of our blessings. For me, one of the most important blessings is membership in our beloved community, the CVUU.

Carolyn Hildebrandt
CVUU President



You come from dust.
You will return to dust.
That's why I don't dust,
it could be someone I know.



Sallie Ellis, who distributed Unitarian sermons, tracts, and books throughout the United States, died on December 27, 1885 at the age of fifty.



DECEMBER SERVICES

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

December 7th

Blue Christmas: A Service for Anyone with a Tender Heart

~~ Pastor Emma Peterson, Kathi Bower (WA)

December 14th

Through the Fireplace: A Celebration of Warmth During the Winter Holiday Season

~~ Bittersweet Christmas Band, Karen Impola (WA)

December 21st

Reflections on the Longest Night

~~ Karen Impola, Mandy Joy (WA)

December 24th ~ ~ Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

Traditional Christmas Eve Service: Stories and Carols

~~ Pastor Emma Peterson, TBA (WA)

December 28th

Reflections and Intentions for the New Year

~~ Callie Amiday, TBA (WA)



MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Sunday morning meditation will continue at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. Find the *NEW* 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.



HOSPITALITY ON CHRISTMAS EVE !

Following the Christmas Eve service, join us for hospitality in the Fellowship Hall where hot apple cider will be provided. If you have extra cookies, candies, cheese/crackers, or other snack items, please consider bringing a plate to contribute to the table. As in the past, we ask that you keep the contributions to ***finger foods and bring your items already plated***. This cuts down on clean-up for the kitchen folks. Please remember to take your plate home with you!

Merry Christmas!



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 7th

Soul Matters: Choosing Hope

Small Group coordinator *Kat Beane Hanson* will lead us in an exploration of our December Soul Matters theme, *Choosing Hope*. We hope to begin offering a Soul Matters forum each month!

December 14th

Mini Concert by the Bittersweet Christmas Band

While the band is in town, we thought we'd get them to provide a bit more holiday cheer and opportunities to sing along. Join us in the sanctuary (or on Zoom) for more seasonal music in the Bittersweet style, which ranges from the sublime to the ridiculous, and provides a UU perspective on winter holidays. We'll pass the hat to help the band with their expenses.

December 21st

The Best and Worst of Holiday Celebrations

Most of us have tales of holiday celebrations that have been memorable in one way or another. To promote socializing within our CVUU community and striving to get to know each other better, this will be a sharing time for your stories. Please be brief so everyone who wants to share has a chance to do so.

December 28th

Due to the holidays there will be no Forum this day.

Al and Pam Hays for Adult RE

A CELEBRATION OF WARMTH DURING THE WINTER HOLIDAY SEASON

Please join us on ***Sunday, December 14th*** for a festive service put on by the ***Bittersweet Christmas Band!***

The Bittersweet Christmas Band consists of musicians Phil Cooper, Kate Early, Patty Peace, and Susan Urban. Their concerts feature traditional and contemporary holiday music with stunning vocal harmonies, plus guitar, banjo, mountain dulcimer, hand drum, and other percussion instruments. They've been with us in the past, most recently in 2023.

The band has developed a number of holiday-themed Unitarian Universalist services which they present to various UU congregations throughout the Midwest. Their services are especially appealing to UUs whose theology goes beyond the usual Christian observances.



This year's service, "*Through the Fireplace: A Celebration of Warmth During the Winter Holiday Season*", takes its title from a song by the band's newest member, singer-songwriter Patty Peace. Those of us who dwell in cold climates are grateful for warmth and light at the coldest and darkest time of the year. This includes not only the physical warmth of fires, central heating, good food and warm clothing, but also the warmth of human caring and compassion that helps us all to make it through until spring.

Following our usual hospitality time, the Bittersweets will return to the sanctuary from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. for a mini concert. We hope you can stay for this as well! The band will also have CDs for sale in case you still need to do some holiday shopping, and donations for the band are also welcome.

CHILDREN'S RE!!

It took some time for the Earth to decide what she wanted the weather to be, but we seem to have finally settled into the winter season. The weather is expected to be tumultuous this year, so don't forget to bundle up!

I am overjoyed to say that our *Trunk-or-Treat* at the end of October was a complete success! With at least a dozen adult volunteers and double the number of children, my hope is that everyone had as much fun participating as we had putting it together. Everyone's trunks looked amazing, and the kids went home with more candy than I think they knew what to do with. Thank you to everyone who made the event possible, we couldn't have done it without you!

Our Soul Matters theme for the month of December is *Choosing Hope*. In times where despair seems the only option, it is important to be offered and capable of calling upon the hope within us. Sometimes we cannot do it on our own, and so December will be dedicated to how we can learn to choose hope, and how we can share that feeling with others. Many of our lessons have been guided by the ideas of people who represent the values we share, and I am excited to learn more about the poets, artists, and everyone who inspires hope within us.

We have some fun activities planned for and including the children throughout the month! Friday, December 5th at 5:30 p.m. is *First Friday Fun Night*. There will be games and a movie for the children in the sanctuary. As well as First Friday, on Wednesday, December 31st from 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. we will be throwing a *Noon Years Eve party!* Please join us in the Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary to celebrate the new year with snacks, crafts, and



a ceremony. We will be creating two time capsules to be decorated and filled with photos, salt dough hand impressions, and anything else we wish to put inside them. Everyone is welcome to join us and bring items for the capsules! At the end of the party, we will be engaging in a ritual to seal our time capsules until the date they're set to be opened.

In the cold months on the shortest days, it can sometimes be difficult to find energy, motivation, even joy. Winter can represent dark, stagnant times both within ourselves and the world around us, but don't forget that it can also be a time of renewal, hope, and rest. Seize the opportunity for relaxation whenever possible and remember to be kind to yourself in the meantime.

Ronan Parker

Coordinator of Children's Religious Education



DECEMBER'S FIRST FRIDAY FUN NIGHT

Join us on December 5th for *First Friday* (the last First Friday in 2025!). We'll celebrate our UU community and upcoming winter holidays! There will be pizza! No need to bring anything but yourself – and a friend if you'd like!

If you're not in the mood for pizza—or if you'd like to add to our pizza buffet—bringing something else works, too. The paper plates will be out to make clean-up easy. This is an event for all ages, so everyone is welcome! We'll get started at 5:30 p.m. to eat and socialize. If you have a game you'd like to play, bring it along! Questions? Contact *Michaela Rich*.

The eloquent Unitarian preacher *William Henry Channing* died on December 23, 1884 at the age of seventy-four.



SOUL MATTERS FOR DECEMBER – CHOOSING HOPE

During dark days, we all get tired. The fruits of our efforts are hard to see. The cold seems to have set in deep. We feel small, and alone. So the promise that things will change offers us relief. Hope is a candle in the darkness. However, hope doesn't just promise us that change will come in the future; it also changes who we are in the present. When we believe that a new day is possible, we don't just sit down and wait to see what happens. We get up and go out to meet the light.

Please go out with us and meet the light. *Choose Hope* with us. Join us in the Fellowship Hall to talk about this theme on Wednesday, December 10th at 6:00 p.m.



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Welcome one and all!

Did you know that historically CVUU has our highest number of visitors in November and January? Some of our highest-attended services and activities also happen at this time of year. As you look around at CVUU services, during Fellowship, or at our events, please reach out with a warm welcome to our visitors and friends. Share a bit about yourself and what activities or events are coming up that are of interest to you. The best way for CVUU to continue to grow is to create a warm welcome where visitors and friends want to keep coming back again and again. Is there a member you haven't seen in a while? Reach out and check in with them. Let them know they are missed. Invite them to join you for a CVUU activity. Whether you have been here twenty years or two, remember what drew you in and share what keeps you coming back.



Jill Miller

for the Congregational Life Council



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. Have you thought about joining them in their efforts to provide various means of assistance? Contact *Carollyn Hartsfield* for more information.

Many thanks to each of them for their ongoing dedication to and support of our congregation. The contact person for the month of *December* is *Jan Anderson*.

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.

October's charity was for *Planned Parenthood of the North Central States* and \$692 was collected in support of their mission of reproductive justice. The November charity was for *Iowa Safe Schools* and we'll have that total for you next month.



These collections are on the last Sunday of the month (*except December* when the collection is on Christmas Eve!). The December Social Action Collection will be for the *Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Fund*.

You can donate early if you wish but be sure to note the *specific charity* for our Collector. Thank you to all who participate in supporting these worthwhile organizations each month in the name of the CVUU.

The Social Action Committee



DECEMBER DEADLINES

FOR THE CALENDAR AND NEWSLETTER

The next newsletter will be the *January 2026* issue!! The calendar deadline for this issue will be **Wednesday, December 17th** (send info to the office); the newsletter deadline will be **Friday, December 19th** (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 17th and 19th**—the calendar and newsletter deadlines for the *January 2026 issue*. There are always paper copies left at the church each month—some in the acrylic wall holder on the north wall in the front entry, and some at the foot of the stairs in the Fellowship Hall.

Something to Ponder!

Like most of us, you could use one less deadline on your calendar! Consider sending newsletter contributions to me when you send Leann any/all calendar items, since the calendar and newsletter deadlines are only two days apart. This gets *Leann* what she needs *on time* and gives me a bit more lead time for preparing articles. We are fine if you send everything in one email to the two of us; just be clear of your intentions. The Friday newsletter deadline will still be an option, but if you are looking to streamline your CVUU work, give the calendar deadline a try for sending your information to both of us.

Gerry Chamberlin, Editor
newsletter@cedarvalleyuu.org



I once bought my kids a set of batteries for Christmas and put a note on it stating, "toys not included".

~~Bernard Manning

GREEN LIVING CORNER

Plastics – Some History, Concerns, and Questions

Most of us have lived with plastic our entire lives, so in brief, where did it get its beginning? John Wesley Hyatt created the first plastic in 1869, celluloid, by mixing modified cellulose fibers with camphor. It was a durable and moldable material that served as a substitute for ivory. Then in 1907, a Belgian chemist by the name of Leo Baekeland invented the first fully synthetic plastic, which was heat-resistant, durable, and could be mass-produced. He beat his Scottish rival, James Swinburne, to the patent office by one day. His invention, which he would christen Bakelite, combined two chemicals, formaldehyde and phenol, under heat and pressure. This breakthrough opened the door for the development of many other synthetic plastics.

Bakelite began showing up in too-numerous-to-mention items such as telephones, radios, electrical plugs, pot handles, toasters/other kitchenware, jewelry, buttons, chess sets, poker chips, light sockets, billiard balls, airplane instrument knobs, early automobile parts, and the list goes on. One of the early benefits of plastics (and it's still true today) is that they are so much lighter than glass, keeping shipping costs down for grocery and other kinds of retail stores; less breakage in shipping too.

Rubbermaid originated in 1920 producing toy balloons and around 1934 it began producing household products. Though the company was founded in 1938, Tupperware was invented by Earl Tupper in 1946 when he developed the first products including the signature airtight, "burping" seal container. Those are just two easily recognized names but there have been plenty of spin-offs since.

Fast forward to today and every newsfeed has articles about how we are being overrun by plastics that are now in every part of our lives and well-being – the air, the soil, our food, our bodies, etc. For several years, recycling has become the norm at our house but there are also articles stating recycling is an 'overrated bill of goods' due to so much of it not being recycled and ending up in landfills. How do we cut back? It's not easy when so many products come in some sort of plastic packaging. Even when we consciously try to avoid plastic it's challenging. Recommendations are to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables but so many come in plastic clamshells. (Shopping Farmers' Markets helps with this but they are seasonal.) Many of us have resorted to using totes for shopping, thus eliminating even more plastic in the form of bags to carry groceries home. Even then I have to insist that the baggers fill the totes full to the top, or I end up with several of the store's plastic bags anyway!

For some months, *Sally Browne* and I have had an ongoing conversation about how plastics have invaded our lives. Getting through a day by not using any additional plastic is not easy and takes some planning and thought. In the coming months we hope to continue this conversation with more observations and comments. Obviously, what we really need is answers, but a conversation is a great starting point.

Gerry Chamberlin



JUST WHAT THE HECK IS THIS GENEROSITY FUND?

We all hear about the Generosity Fund, but what it is, isn't all that clear. I would like to tell you about it.

This fund is used for those in the congregation or sometimes in the wider community of the Cedar Valley. These are people who have exhausted all other means of a little financial help with the necessities of sustaining life. They are always steered first, in the direction of other community outreach resources.

We have this fund because it is in accordance with our covenant and our stated values. Love is at the center of generosity, justice, equity, pluralism, transformation, and interdependence. It is a way to show that we live those values.

The money in the fund is given with the values of the church in our heart. The financial assistance is given at the discretion of and by the minister of the church, to those with financial emergencies such as a need with heating, food, medical care, etc. At that time, whenever possible, it is given directly to the creditor requiring money for their product or services necessary for life, and as stated, after all other resources are exhausted.

Just how it works is that the minister may give up to \$200 at a time, to the recipient generally once a month. If further assistance is needed beyond this, the minister should consult with the Shared Ministry Council before more is given. It is to be used sparingly so that all in need are taken care of equitably.

The minister keeps a confidential log of who and why it is given. Then, only the amount of the funds is given to the Finance Council for the purpose of accountability and as a request for reimbursement. The reimbursements are given in cash or another method so that it can be proven that the reimbursements are not counted as income for the minister.

You, the beloved community, are able to keep this fund going by giving through the offering box or Tithe.ly, noting in each case that it is for the Generosity Fund. To make it really easy, you may hand a check made out to the CVUU directly to one of the Shared Ministry Council members. All checks should have "Generosity Fund" written in the memo. The Shared Ministry Council members at present are *Heather Flory, Deb Kyler, Michaela Rich, David Nation*, and me.

As little as \$5.00 is of help and will be greatly appreciated by the person in need who receives it.

Thank you for your kind consideration,
Nancie Groszkruger
and the Shared Ministry Council



MOVIE DISCUSSION SMALL GROUP

The Movie Discussion Small Group will be meeting in the sanctuary on Monday, December 8th at 1:00 p.m.

The movie being discussed is *Christmas with the Kranks*, which is available on Netflix, for rent from Amazon, Fandango, and YouTube. It is also at the Cedar Falls Public Library.

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*.



A group of shepherds are getting ready to bed down for the night. They notice that one of their group has wandered away and he is picking a large bouquet of small flowers. He brings the flowers back to the campsite, lays down, takes off his watch, places the watch under the bouquet and goes to sleep. The group thinks this is quite curious until it hits them. He is the shepherd who keeps Phlox over his watch by night.



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 15th 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!



SOME OBSERVANCES FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER INCLUDE:

- National **Pear** month
- National **Tie** month
- National **Write a Business Plan** month
- National **Impaired Driving Prevention** month
- National **Safe Toys and Gifts** month



WhaleCoast Alaska – Our 32nd Year!

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 over thirty years, WhaleCoast Alaska tours have been the BEST way to visit Alaska. Each tour sells out once thirty guests are registered so don't delay!



Alaska National Parks Tour

June 20 – June 30, 2026; 11 days/10 nights
Visit Anchorage, Seward, Kenai Fjords National Park, Denali National Park, Fairbanks

The All-Alaska Tour

July 17 – July 29, 2026; 13 days/12 nights
Explore Fairbanks, Denali National Park, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka

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

DECEMBER DROP-IN SMALL GROUPS

No need to register or RSVP! New CVUU Small Groups are a drop-in opportunity to connect with the CVUU community. Come as you are, and enjoy some time being mentally present with other UU folks. This month's events, dates, and times are:

Silent Book Club

Tuesday, December 2nd from 6-7:30 p.m.

Thirty minutes of casual conversation about books, sixty minutes of free reading as a group – bring a book!

Taste of Soul

Wednesday, December 10th from 6-7:00 p.m.

Brief, informal discussion of our December Soul Matters theme, *Choosing Hope*.

Crafternoon

Sunday, December 14th from 1-3:00 p.m.

Bring your most portable current project to work on! We have had everything from crochet to needle felting to embroidery to video game programming. All creative endeavors welcome!

Game Night

Thursday, December 18th from 6-8:00 p.m.

Options for games will include Bananagrams, Phase 10, and other quick-learn games.

Watch your newsletter and Weekly Updates for future offerings! Have ideas? Contact *Kat Beane Hanson*.



As this is being typed, it's less than a week before Thanksgiving and the yards are covered with leaves! Neighborhoods are beginning to put up holiday decorations while the temps are still in the 40s and 50s. Soon we'll be enjoying holiday lights twinkling through the fallen snow creating a fantasy world for young and old.

Our deepest sympathy to longtime members *Mica Lorenz* and *Mike Knapp* (and family) on the death of Mica's mother on November 5th in Madison, WI.

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 sympathy.

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



William Farwell died on December 11, 1823 at the age of seventy-four. He converted to Universalism as early as the late 1780's in Charlestown, New Hampshire. He was the first Universalist preacher in Vermont and a pacifist who was jailed for his principles during the Revolutionary War. Farwell preached all over New England, but his greatest influence was in north and central Vermont.

Saturday, November 15th was a busy day and evening for *Mike Knapp* and his 'team' setting up and breaking down for the annual T&T auction as well as running it. Word must be getting around that this is an event not to miss as there were some famous people who showed up. *Rosie the Riveter*, *Frank Lloyd Wright*, *Vincent Van Gogh*, and, to keep things civil, *RBG* just to name a few! Watching all the activity was exhausting! The energy in the air with all the bidding was impressive—as was the total sales at the end of the evening. Thanks, Mike for making another successful auction happen! *The Church Mouse*



CEDAR FALLS WEEKLY COMMUNITY MEAL

Every Tuesday night at the First United Methodist Church from 5:00-6:30 p.m., a free meal is served to anyone who shows up. CVUU is part of a team of churches serving on the *fifth Tuesday* (along with Community of Christ, Cedar Falls United Church of Christ, St. Luke's Episcopal, and First Christian Church).

Some years we don't serve the week after Christmas, but this year First United Methodist is not serving on December 23rd, so it was decided instead of depriving people of a meal two weeks in a row, we *WILL* be serving a meal on December 30th. Watch for a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall for our next commitment. To help on site or to provide dessert, reach out to *Shirley Whiteside*.



FABULOUS RESPONSE AT OUR SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

WOW! Attendance at our Special Congregational Meeting on November 9th was amazing. Between the sanctuary and Zoom, over 70 members were present, and with the absentee ballots, 89 members voted! We are clearly a caring and engaged beloved community.

The vote on the resolution to make an offer to purchase the Cedar Falls United Church of Christ property was 87 "Yes" and 2 "No". It is indeed rare for any major decision to have such overwhelming support. Our lawyer and the UCC lawyer are drafting a purchase offer which we expect to be presented to the UCC around the first week of December.

The ATF and the CVUU Leadership expresses our sincere thanks to all our membership for their interest and engagement! Stay tuned for more news as it develops!



Steve Chamberlin
for the Accessibility Task Force

Lewis Howard Latimer, a Unitarian and African-American inventor and engineer, died on December 11, 1928 at age eighty.



TOILETRY TREE FOR THOSE IN NEED IS BACK!

November 16th through December 31st

The Social Action Committee is bringing back the “TP Tree” again this year to help support populations in need in the Cedar Valley!! We are partnering with the Hospitality House and the Ruselle Debonis ACE-SAP Free Clinic to provide them with MUCH needed items for the vulnerable populations they serve.

What does this mean? We need you!! With many benefits being eliminated by our state and federal governments (including the very essential SNAP program), people are in greater need than ever! Let us help to reduce the heavy burden our most vulnerable people are carrying!

Items for Donation:

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| *Toothpaste, | *Deodorant, |
| *Dental floss, | *Razors, |
| *Soap (liquid and bar), | *Toilet paper, |
| *Shampoo, | *Tissues and, |

*Personal items including sanitary pads, incontinence pads (female and male), and incontinence briefs (sizes Small to XL).

**Please *avoid* hand sanitizer (risk of abuse).

Bring your donated items to church with you between November 16th and December 31st and our helpful “Toiletory Elves” will assist you in transporting your items, placing them on the “TP Tree”, and will grab a quick photo with you to celebrate your participation.



We appreciate your generosity and care towards our greater Cedar Valley community!

P.S. If you have left over “over-the-counter” benefits with Medicare, consider using them towards this drive. It’s a Win-Win for everyone!

Christmas Potluck

CHRISTMAS DAY POTLUCK

Last year’s successful Christmas Day potluck means there will be a reprise this month, with eating around noon! Some meat will be provided but side dishes, meat dishes, and desserts are all welcome. Check for signup sheets in the Fellowship Hall in early December. Sign up with your name and what you plan to bring to share—maybe a favorite dish or a family tradition? By having folks sign up, it ensures a good balance of food options. There will also be a need for help with setup and cleanup; many “worker bees” are needed in this effort!

Coffee, tea, and water will be provided. If other beverages are desired, please use the signup sheet and note what you will bring. Watch for more details as they become available.



Our family has overheard there will be various treats after the Christmas Eve Service, so in the spirit of sharing, we hope that means some holiday cookie crumbs. (We also heard *Moria* will again be in the kitchen making her delicious apple cider, so that may put a damper on any potential for crumbs for us!) Merry Christmas to everyone!

The Church Mouse



UUSC - GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Every year around the holidays, CVUU participates in an initiative to raise money for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, known to many as UUSC. This initiative is known as Guest At Your Table. The idea is to put a little extra money aside during your holiday dinners to signify setting a plate at your table for someone in need.



Where does that money go, you may ask. The money raised by UUSC is used for humanitarian efforts and volunteerism through grassroots social justice initiatives all over the world. The UUSC dates back to 1940 when a group of Unitarians provided support to those suffering during World War II. Since then, the UUSC has helped advocate, educate, and organize to bring awareness for marginalized groups and suffering countries. The UUSC has an excellent website with educational videos and brochures; visit <www.UUSC.org>. As in years past, when you donate \$150 or more, your donation will be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, NY.

Many of you may have received UUSC literature in the mail requesting donations. The CVUU Social Action committee kindly asks that you *donate through the CVUU* instead of by means of these mailings. Donating through the CVUU will allow our congregation to record the total value of the donations from our congregation and be recognized by the UUSC. *Guest At Your Table* will be the CVUU’s January Social Action collection, but you can begin sending money anytime. Donations may be made through the usual methods—mail a check, drop cash in the box in the back of the sanctuary, or on Tithe.ly. Whatever way you choose to give, please make a note that it should be allocated to UUSC-*Guest At Your Table* (GAYT). This is helpful to our Collector. Questions? Contact *Austin* or *Lizzy*.



The *Le Christopher's* meal in Waterloo at the Jubilee United Methodist Church is a special offering of hospitality, friendship, and delicious southern food to the Cedar Valley community. Several UUs have enjoyed the experience this past year. The meal will be on a break until March, so if you enjoy good food and plenty of conversation, plan ahead and mark your calendar for Sunday, March 8th when *Le Christopher's Southern Cuisine* will again be served at noon at their church!

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



NORTHEAST IOWA FOOD BANK

We will not be volunteering this month at the Food Bank due to our usual Saturday falling during holiday time. We are expecting to get back to our usual schedule in January—the fourth Saturday from Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Working together in community service and having *much* fun and socializing at the same time is uplifting. If this sounds like something you would enjoy, contact me (phone, text, email, or CVUU FB page). This has been a fun and productive event for us and we hope to keep it going. We’d like to have 8 to 15 people if possible—all ages—and there are some tasks that can be done sitting down.

Margie Miller



IOWA CANTERBURY FORUM

The Forum Coordinators met in mid-October and, going forward once Bob Dise steps down as chair at the end of this year, will be led by two co-chairs. They are *Ruth Ratliff*, a deacon at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, and retired religious broadcaster *Doug Smith*, known to everyone for his compelling Forum programs last year on the politicization of evangelical Christianity, and for his insightful letters to the Waterloo-Cedar Falls *Courier* on religious matters.

It was decided that the Forum will host two programs in the spring of 2026—the first at the end of February and the second in late April. After the first of the new year, there will be more detailed information from Ruth and Doug on those programs so watch this space for more information.



We watch each week as so much goes on behind the scenes in preparing for your Sunday services. The volunteers on Religious Services who work out the numerous and varying service details, and those who cover the technology aspects (sanctuary techs and Zoom hosts) are amazing! We’ve had the little mice observe rehearsals and Sunday services so they get a better understanding of what volunteerism means and what it can do for the benefit of the whole organization. Know you are appreciated!

The Church Mouse



TREATS & TALENTS AUCTION “HEROIC” RESULTS!

This year’s Treats & Talents Auction certainly lived up to its “Heroes” theme as nearly *fifty* CVUU members and friends came together for our annual fundraising event and set a new record by raising \$14,250 for the CVUU!!!

Many thanks go out to *Jeanette Talbert, Bill and Moria Brown, Steve and Gerry Chamberlin, Roger and Cindy Hahn, Jill Miller, Juanita Williams, Kathi Bower, Shirley Whiteside, Leigh Zeitz, Carolyn Hildebrandt, Rosa Torres and Mollie Wallsteadt, Dennis “Sticks” Harbaugh* for his breakout performance on drums, and of course, to the *Burning Heretics* band for all their logistical support and their work in making this year’s Treats & Talents Auction happen.

A great big round of applause to all of you for contributing items for this year’s auction, as well as all those who were present and opened their wallets/checkbooks and purchased live and silent auction items. Also, a shoutout to *Jill Miller* who organized the idea this year for the “\$5 Table”, which contributed \$185 in event sales.

We’re already looking for a theme for next year’s auction. Send your suggestions to me.

Mike Knapp



The abolitionist *Mary Ashton Rice Livermore* was born in Boston on December 19, 1820. As a young woman, she worked as a governess on a plantation in Virginia, where she witnessed the brutality of slavery. In 1845, she married Daniel Livermore, a Universalist minister, and became devoted to the principles of Universalism. Mary Livermore worked to raise money for medicine, food, and supplies for the wounded during the Civil War and helped found the Home for Aged Women and the Hospital for Women and Children in Chicago when the war was over. She founded and served as president of the Illinois Women’s Suffrage Association and formed the American Woman Suffrage Association with Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone. Livermore was also active in the temperance movement. In 1897 she wrote an engaging autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. Livermore died on May 23, 1905.



As this newsletter goes to print in late November, the holidays are fast approaching and online shopping is easy at the UU Book and Gift Shop called *inSpirit*. Browse for items such as adult and children’s books, ball caps, sweatshirts, mugs, decals, totes, rally signs, bumper stickers, jewelry, and so much more at: <https://www.uuabookstore.org/>.

