



**CEDAR VALLEY  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS**

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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\*\*\*\*\* 2026 \*\*\*\*\*

- JANUARY 4** 10:00 A.M. ELEVATOR SPEECHES – Various congregation members, Karen Impola \*  
11:30 A.M. Adult Forum
- JANUARY 11** 10:00 A.M. THE GOLDEN RULE: IS IT ENOUGH? – Carolyn Hildebrandt, Callie Amiday \*  
11:30 A.M. Adult Forum
- JANUARY 18** 10:00 A.M. WISDOM IN THE PAUSE – Judy Harrington, Jena Talbert, et al.; Kathi Bower \*  
11:30 A.M. Adult Forum
- JANUARY 25** 10:00 A.M. THE NECESSITY OF JANUARY: A TIME FOR REST  
11:30 A.M. Adult Forum – Pastor Emma Peterson, Al Hays \*

\* ~ 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

I'll be *out of the office* for a few weeks in January, returning Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. (Though for those of you attending the MLK Banquet on the 18<sup>th</sup>, I'll see you there!) I'm looking forward to a period of restoration. We're still in the unpacking stage at our new home. It's amazing how long that can take and how overwhelming it can feel! The seemingly endless gray days of January are perfect for nesting and resting. I look forward to doing just that! How are you keeping cozy and rested during the winter season?

January is a good time for preparation. On Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, the Chairs and Liaisons of our Councils (along with a few Committees) will meet to plan the remainder of the church year. We've done this historically, though not yet during my "tenure". We're always working to improve communication at the CVUU, and this is one way to get us all at the same table and on the same page. We'll be planning spring and summer programming, keeping in mind the big transitions we expect in the coming year. If you're a Chair or Liaison, be sure to get January 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. on your calendar! We'll have coffee and refreshments ready to fuel us along. See you there!

*Pastor Emma*



**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.



## 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 New Year! May this year bring you peace, joy, and hope as we face increasing uncertainty locally, nationally, and in the world at large.

As I write this letter, Christians across the world are celebrating the advent of the birth of Jesus, born in a lowly stable because there was no room in the inn. Although the Christmas period officially ends on January 6<sup>th</sup>, this message of radical hospitality echoes throughout the year.

Traditional nativity scenes show Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus surrounded by animals, angels, shepherds, and kings. Traveling throughout Italy, you can encounter many variations of this scene, referred to as "il presepe". For centuries, a popular way of bringing the story into the present day has been to include contemporary characters from all walks of life. For example, if you go into an Italian church and see statues of a wealthy merchant and his wife kneeling in front of the holy family with bags full of money, you can assume that they were heavy donors to the church. In Naples, there is an entire street dedicated to traditional and contemporary characters that can be added to nativity scenes. You can even find figurines of soccer legend Diego Maradona, whom many Neapolitans have elevated to the level of a latter-day saint.

Live nativity scenes are popular throughout the world. In Italy, fugitives from the law have been known to blend into nativity scenes to escape the police. Recently, a thirty-eight-year-old Ghanaian migrant went missing in Bologna after he was given a nine-month prison sentence for assault, only to be found standing like a statue in a life-size nativity scene next to a church in a small town in southern Italy. He was posing as a shepherd. When the mayor of the town discovered he wasn't a statue and asked if he needed help, the man said that he was tired and wanted to sleep in the church.

But of all the variations on the nativity scene I have seen to date, the most heartbreaking ones have been in the U.S. this year. In front of one church is an outdoor nativity scene in which the baby Jesus is wrapped in a silver emergency blanket with his hands secured in plastic zip ties. His mother is wearing a gas mask and surrounded by ICE agents. In another church nativity scene, the holy family is missing. In their place is a sign that reads, "ICE was here". <<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/mipq8IMAccM>>

Members of our own church have been active in demonstrations aimed at protecting immigrant rights and have joined organizations such as Escucha Mi Voz. As we face a year of increased pressure from the federal government to do exactly the opposite of what the scriptures and our consciences teach, may we all have the courage to step up and help in any way we can. It is only then that we can ALL feel safe and cared for within our beloved community.

*Carolyn Hildebrandt*  
CVUU President



I seem to have a lot of news for you this issue! Our family especially noticed the lovely decorations on the front ledge in December arranged by *Kate McElligatt*. The trees, lights, candles, stars, and more gave us a sense of holiday warmth throughout the month. We can't personally thank Kate for her efforts, but you can, so do let her know that her festive adornments are appreciated.



*The Church Mouse*

*William Greenleaf Eliot, Jr.*, founder of the first Unitarian church west of the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri, died at age seventy-five on January 23, 1887.



## JANUARY SERVICES

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

**January 4<sup>th</sup>**

### Elevator Speeches

~~ Various congregation members, Karen Impola (WA)  
Suppose you had to explain your UU faith in the length of an elevator ride. What would you say? This is a participatory service; congregation members are encouraged to think through their own “elevator speeches” and share them during the service.

**January 11<sup>th</sup>**

### The Golden Rule: Is it Enough?

~~ Carolyn Hildebrandt, Callie Amiday (WA)

**January 18<sup>th</sup>**

### Wisdom in the Pause

~~ Judy Harrington, Jena Talbert, et al.; Kathi Bower (WA)  
A sermon on mindful living, presence, and the spiritual importance of rest. Consider how to value connection over consumption and depth over speed.

**January 25<sup>th</sup>**

### The Necessity of January: A Time for Rest

~~ Pastor Emma Peterson, Al Hays (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.



*Karen Impola's* service on the Sunday before Christmas was a very informative history lesson on religions and the solstice. Hmm, we never really thought much about the darkness! Then, the Forum had us rolling on the floor (out of everyone's sight, of course) as most of the fifteen members who stayed shared a best/worst holiday celebration story. There were some fun ones and some that no one would want to relive. The little mice were all ears the whole time! *The Church Mouse*



## 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 4<sup>th</sup>**

### **More on Elevator Speeches**

Continuing on into the forum time, we'll have more elevator speeches by any folks who didn't get to share in the service.

**January 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **What is the Age of Responsibility?**

Currently, anyone over the age of 18 can be sentenced to Life Without Parole for a Class A felony, which means they will die in prison unless their sentence is commuted by the Governor (extremely rare). At what age should people be held fully responsible for actions that may have been impulsive or ill-considered? *Carolyn Hildebrandt* and *Al Hays* will lead a discussion on brain development that underscores the harshness of sentencing for young people.

**January 18<sup>th</sup>**

### **Beyond the Back of Our Heads and Behind Our Ordinary Faces**

Although many of us CVUUsers may look fairly average (okay, each of us is beautiful in our own way), there are fascinating people behind those faces. Many of our members don't toot their own horns but are greatly respected in their various fields of endeavor. They may have done/are doing important work in their careers, have interesting hobbies, or have travelled around the world. Some have acted heroically at times. Others are greatly appreciated for their gifts of supreme parenting and friending! At this forum, *Carla* and *Michael Fanelli*, *Stacey Bartz*, *Lawren Medhaug*, and a few others will share five minutes each of “truths” that you probably don't know about them.

**January 25<sup>th</sup>**

### **Soul Matters January Theme: *Practicing Resistance***

*Kat Beane Hanson* will lead a discussion of this month's theme.

*Al and Pam Hays* for Adult RE



## **SOUL MATTERS FOR JANUARY – PRACTICING RESISTANCE**

Practicing Resistance is tricky business and takes multiple, even contradictory, forms. Sometimes it looks like speaking truth to power or engaging in peaceful protest, but just as often, it can look like quietly living your own truth and marching to the beat of your own drummer. Join us in January to consider the ways we practice resistance in our own lives.

Follow along with Soul Matters in the Weekly Update! If you'd like to engage more deeply with Soul Matters, join us for *Taste of Soul* on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. or during Second Hour on Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.



“Let us love winter, for it is the spring of genius.”

~~*Pietro Aretino*

## CHILDREN'S RE!!

Winter came to us in a magnificent gust of wind and snow to blanket as far as our eyes could see. Its presence reminds us that this is a time to slow down and reflect in preparation for what is ahead. In December we explored what it means to choose hope, and now we carry that hope with us into the new year. *Dennis Harbaugh* did a wonderful job as a volunteer educator during one of our RE classes last month, where he led the children in a lesson on Hanukkah and trusting the hope that things will work out. He brought so many creative ideas to the classroom, and we are thankful to Dennis for leading such a meaningful and enjoyable lesson.

Our theme for January is *Practicing Resistance*. The practice of resistance takes many different forms and often begins from within. There are the mindsets that we can fall into that may pull us away from our spiritual self, and the choices we can make to reflect our personal and spiritual values. Each lesson, as well as the theme, is intended to teach us how we can uphold our UU Values and be the best version of ourselves that we can be. I am interested in our fourth lesson, which will focus on a Buddhist concept of a restless mind, or "monkey mind" that leaves us unable to resist feeling overwhelmed.

There are some fun activities lined up for the month of January! First, as always, there will be children's activities available during the *First Friday Fun Night* on January 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. As well as First Friday, I am excited to announce that our RE group is returning to Young Arena for the *Waterloo Black Hawks Faith Group Friday*. On Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:35 p.m. we will be attending a Waterloo Black Hawks game, which is sure to be an exciting evening!

A new year can mean a fresh start. We may choose to leave the past where it is as we move forward. With a clear mind and new goals, we look forward to the mystery of a new year and what the future will bring.

*Ronan Parker*  
Coordinator of Children's Religious Education



### **NEW YEAR LABYRINTH WALK AND FIRST FRIDAY FUN NIGHT**

The CVUU will be holding two events on Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>! From 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. the labyrinth will be available in the sanctuary for all to enjoy. There will be a short presentation on labyrinths and personal transformation, followed by time throughout the evening to enjoy walking the labyrinth and setting your intentions for the year. Questions? Contact *Jill Miller*.

Meanwhile at 5:30 p.m. there will be *First Friday Fun* in the Fellowship Hall. We'll celebrate our UU community and the New Year! There will be pizza! No need to bring anything but yourself, and maybe a friend or two. The more the merrier!

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

*Carolina Seymore Severance* was born in Canandaigua, New York on January 12, 1820. She worked all her adult life for social reform, and her home was a gathering place for liberal causes. At first, she held the conventional view that a woman's role was as a wife and mother, but she became increasingly involved with women's rights and stressed women's ability to shape public policy. When her family moved to Boston, Massachusetts, she took part in the city's reform movements. When her family moved again, to Los Angeles, California, they founded the city's first Unitarian congregation, Unity church. Severance championed Christian socialism, progressivism, and peace. In 1900 she became president of the Los Angeles County Woman Suffrage League. She died on November 10, 1914, at age ninety-four.

## CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

As we approach the new year, the Congregational Life Council encourages all members and friends to reflect on how CVUU can help you grow in the coming year.

If you are maxed out and want to decrease your stress, maybe you want to attend a *Silent Meditation* on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. or stay for an Adult Forum after the service. If you are wanting to build a sense of community, come to *First Friday* for free pizza, or attend a Board Game Night. If you want to challenge yourself to move out of your comfort zone but are not sure where to start, consider the *Silent Book Group*, or the *Movie Discussion Small Group*. If you want to be more creative, attend a Crafternoon, or make cards for the *Caring Connections Team*. If you want to increase your social activism consider volunteering with CVUU at the *Northeast Iowa Food Bank* or invite another member to attend a rally with you. If you want to increase your physical activity, consider walking with the *Nature Lovers Small Group*, or helping in the pollinator garden. If you want to feel energized, volunteer with our nursery or RE classes. Our community is here for all of us, to help us grow, and to become the best we can be. As each of us grows, we will strengthen our community, making it better and stronger each and every day.



The Congregational Life Council wishes each and every one of you an incredible new year full of growth, joy, and community.

*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. Have you thought about joining them in their efforts to provide various means of assistance? *Carolyn Hartsfield* led this team for several years and we thank her for her devotion and energy. As Carolyn takes a well-deserved break, taking her place (as of this month) is CVUU member *Stacey Bartz*. Thanks so very much, Stacey, for stepping up in this important role. If you have questions about this committee—what they do, when they meet, or if you would like to join them—get in touch with Stacey.

The contact person for the month of *January* is *Linda Lechty*.

## 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 November charity was for *Iowa Safe Schools* and \$230 was collected on their behalf. The December collection, on Christmas Eve, was for the *Black Hawk-Grundy Mental Health Fund* and we'll have that total for you next month. This month's charity is for our own UUA's *UUSC-Guest At Your Table* which advances human rights in the U.S. and internationally through grassroots collaborations; be generous.

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*



## JANUARY DEADLINES

### FOR THE CALENDAR AND NUUSLETTER

The next newsletter will be the ***February 2026*** issue! The **calendar** deadline for this issue will be **Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>** (send info to the office); the **newsletter** deadline will be **Friday, January 16<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 **January 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>**—the calendar and newsletter deadlines *for the February 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!

In an effort to streamline Leann's and my work with these monthly newsletters, we are asking that her calendar deadline be used for sending the two of us your dates, events, articles, etc. It means you have one less deadline to contend with by using her calendar deadline. 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

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**Horatio Alger** was born on January 13, 1832 in Revere, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard Divinity School and was ordained in 1863 as a Unitarian minister in Brewster, Massachusetts. Later he moved to New York City and devoted himself to literature, drawing on his experiences in social work at the Newsboys' Lodging House in New York. His books about young boys made him enormously popular and wealthy. Alger was a prolific writer and produced one hundred-nineteen novels as well as collections of poetry and biographies of Abraham Lincoln and James Garfield. He died on July 18, 1899.

## GREEN LIVING CORNER

This month's Green Living message is a poem by member *Bill Chene*, from his collection *Vision of a New Past: Poems About America.*



In the end  
When we humans are gone,  
And all of the sands  
Are pulled back  
Into the seas,  
The world will once again  
Be ruled by the snails,  
Slowly marking time.  
Clouds will once again  
Feed aimlessly  
Along the bottom of the sky,  
Unseen, unfettered  
By our thoughts  
Of what they might be.  
That is why they'll seem  
More stark, more real.

In the end  
The consequences  
Of our preferences  
Of race and tallness,  
Of vegetables and gods  
Will still linger on,  
Long after  
The last of us are gone.  
With all the messes we made,  
Some small traces of us  
Will stay behind, still remain,  
Slowly, they'll percolate up  
Through the soil,  
Bits of metal,  
A can used for oil,  
Here and there a tooth,  
The occasional bone or two  
Stirred by time,  
A plastic doll,  
Her lifeless toes  
Curled tightly  
In the rich brown loam,  
Mingled with other debris,  
Carried along slowly  
On her migration upward,  
Home, into the light.  
Her arrival pierces time  
Like the surface tension  
Of each day's new  
Sky blue bubble.

In the end  
There will be no one left  
To hear the wind blowing  
And know  
That that is what it is.



"The future will either be green or not at all."

~Bob Brown

## MEET THE SHARED MINISTRY COUNCIL'S NEW MEMBER

I had the honor of being asked to join the CVUU Shared Ministry Council (SMC) recently. I didn't know too much about the council but accepted the challenge and have attended several monthly meetings.

The mission of the SMC is to enhance the overall quality of the shared ministry of the CVUU by working with the minister and the congregation to collaborate and support each other in shared leadership. I hope to contribute my talents and experience as a member.

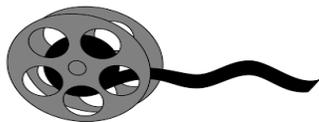
I have been involved in several other activities of the church since my wife *Becky* and I joined in 2020. Since the services at that time were conducted on Zoom, I volunteered to be a Zoom host and have continued as a host since then. I'm comfortable using computer systems since my career involved developing prototype software and demonstrating it to users.

When the choir resumed, I joined as a bass. The choir is one of the most rewarding activities as it involves getting to know other members of the congregation and working with talented directors.

One year I volunteered to enter sales data at the Treats & Talents Auction, as well as contributing a few items. Another activity I have recently volunteered for is the nursery. It's always rewarding to help care for children as needed.

*David Nation*

[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.]



### MOVIE DISCUSSION SMALL GROUP

The Movie Discussion Small Group will be meeting in the sanctuary on Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

The movie being discussed is *Caramello*. Because it is a Netflix original movie, it's only available on Netflix.

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*.



Several UUs were seen at the United Church of Christ's afternoon concert on Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>. The talented Kaplunas family on strings and the UCC's organist, Greg Meyer on organ and piano, treated the audience to a well-thought-out program of music selections. Greg gave some background on the pieces and the UCC members served refreshments afterwards during a social time. Our UCC relatives reported that a lovely time was had by all, but they have the same problem we do—no crumbs were left over.



*The Church Mouse*



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

- National **Cheesy Sock** month
- National **Radon Action** month
- National **Conscience** month
- National **Hot Tea** month
- National **Sunday Supper** month
- National **Skating** month
- National **Polka Music** month
- National **Mentoring** month



### *WhaleCoast Alaska – Our 32<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.WhaleCoastAK.org)>. For questions their email is <[info@whalecoastak.org](mailto:info@whalecoastak.org)>.

Editor's Note: What a joy to hear from past CVUU member, *Mimi Kuester*! She writes: "I did the WhaleCoast Alaska trip twice, each time with a grandchild (age 10, 11). It's well run and doesn't waste time at gift shops. When possible, participants stay with UU families and often have meals with the congregation. Anyone interested can feel free to contact me." *Mimi Kuester*, former CVUU member who has lived in D.C. for the last fifteen years.



## JANUARY 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:

### *Coffee Hour Small Group*

Saturday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:00 a.m.

Join us for coffee (or tea, if that's your thing!) and conversation. *Very casual Saturday morning get-together.*

### *Silent Book Club*

Tuesday, January 13<sup>th</sup> 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, January 16<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:00 p.m.

Brief, informal discussion of our January Soul Matters theme, *Practicing Resistance.*

### *Crafternoon*

Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 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, January 30<sup>th</sup> 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 newsletter is being prepared, the Cedar Valley has experienced some very cold weather. We hope everyone has been able to stay warm and well fed. To those who are mobile and can get around on snow and ice, do remember to check in on neighbors and friends who could use some TLC – and maybe some homemade soup!

It has come to our attention that *Dr. Marge Skold*, who was a member of this congregation several years ago, passed away in Omaha, Nebraska on July 25, 2025 after a lengthy battle with Parkinson's. Marge had a drive to succeed in so many areas of life including the world of academia where at one time she was full-time at HCC (when it was Hawkeye Institute of Technology). Our condolences to the family.

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.



## UPDATE ON OUR NEW HOME

Since our overwhelming approval at the congregational meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> to purchase the UCC property, our lawyers have been working on the legal agreements. We have also started the financing process with Veridian, with a required commercial appraisal of our current property to be scheduled soon. Our UCC friends are planning for a vote to accept the offer at their annual meeting in late January. Stay tuned for future progress reports!



Also keep an eye out for the **New Home Capital Fund Drive!** This will be run in parallel with our annual pledge campaign this year. While our normal annual pledges take priority, the capital drive will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide a huge boost to our beloved community's theme of *New Chapters: Honoring the Past, Creating the Future*. Generous pledges for this one-time effort will be critical to allow us to make valuable improvements to the property, and to allow us to carry both properties until we sell the current one. Please consider donating generously!

*Steve Chamberlin*  
for the Accessibility Task Force



## FROM THE MIDAMERICA UUA STAFF

*(in a December email)*

The MidAmerica UUA Staff wishes you peace and tenderness this December and in the coming year. Whatever your pace, whatever your celebrations, whatever is in your heart this season, may you move "to the poetry of stars" as the light slowly returns.

### *Moment of Spirit*

by Elizabeth Tarbox

I have this living image in my mind of the moonlight over the water—a broad highway of the most delicate iridescent light fluidly inviting my participation. It calls and I almost follow; nothing matters but the pull of the moon, and my spirit stretches out for it. Mana, let my spirit soar; for once let my soul go free so I may kiss the moon and become the clouds and roll over the ocean.

But the earth clings to my feet with an insistence that cannot be denied. All I can do is sigh and lean into the music of the moon and imagine my spirit ghostly and gossamer sliding into the silver night. Then I notice on the edge of the cliff in front of me a single tall blade of grass, leaning likewise and dancing to the same call. We are the earthbound ones, left to keep our adventurous spirits longing and leaning, looking for the light. Keep us poised thus, dear spirit, entrusted to the earth and moving to the poetry of the stars.



Henry David Thoreau, a Transcendentalist, delivered a speech on January 26, 1848 at the Concord Lyceum in Massachusetts that was later published as *Resistance to Civil Government*.



## LAST CALL FOR THE TOILETRY TREE!!

If you are reading this newsletter in December, **you have until December 31<sup>st</sup>** to add items to the Toiletry Tree in the Fellowship Hall. The Social Action Committee brought back the "TP Tree" again over the holidays this year to help support Cedar Valley populations in need! 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.

Our CVUU family is essential in making this worthwhile effort a success. 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! Here's a reminder of what items would be helpful:

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

If you have leftover "over-the-counter" benefits with Medicare, consider using them towards this drive. It's a win-win for everyone!

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

*The Social Action Committee*



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 8<sup>th</sup> when *Le Christopher's Southern Cuisine* will again be served at noon at their church!



"I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape. Something waits beneath it; the whole story doesn't show." ~~Andrew Wyeth

## UUSC - GUEST AT YOUR TABLE

Every year around the holidays and into January, the 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 meals 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](http://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* is the CVUU's January Social Action collection, so if you haven't done so already, get your donations in soon—**preferably before January 31<sup>st</sup>** which would be most helpful to our Collector! 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](http://Tithe.ly). Whatever way you choose to give, please make a note that it should be allocated to UUSC-*Guest At Your Table* (GAYT). Questions? Contact *Austin* or *Lizzy*.



## CROSS-COUNCIL COALITION

The CVUU Board is asking all Council Chairs to meet with the Board on Saturday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Coffee, tea, and delicious treats will be provided.

This meeting is a time for the Board and councils to discuss what is working well with each of our councils and committees, share tips for ways to promote volunteering, and work together to develop our calendar for the remainder of our liturgical year. Committee leads and members of the congregation are welcome to attend and participate. Contact *Jill Miller* with any questions.



On January 14, 1571 *The Diet of Maros Vasarhely* in Transylvania legally recognized the Unitarian religion as equal to three other recognized religions—Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism. This protection, subsequently reaffirmed by Prince John Sigisund, saved the religion from the extinction it suffered in Poland.



## NORTHEAST IOWA FOOD BANK

We will be volunteering this month at the Food Bank. Our usual schedule for this monthly event is from Noon to 2:00 p.m. on the fourth Saturday which is January 24<sup>th</sup>.

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.

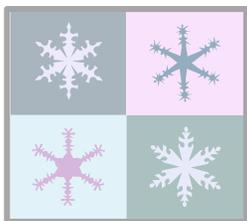
Margie Miller



## IOWA CANTERBURY FORUM

The Forum Coordinators met in mid-October and going into the new 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. We should have more information coming soon from Ruth and Doug on those programs so watch this space for more information.



When you leave the church parking lot on a wintery day and head up the drive toward the road, do you ever think back to when that incline wasn't so user-friendly? For years it was steep enough that if the surface was snowy or icy, front tires just couldn't get a grip.

When the city rebuilt Cedar Heights Drive by the church some years ago, it was *John Miller's* foresight to speak with them about our problem, and the solution was to make more of a ledge where our drive meets the sidewalk. That's why there is a place to rest your front tires while you watch for clearance to enter the road. We've thanked you before, John, but as winter is upon us, it was time to thank you again!

*The Church Mouse*



## IUUWAN NEWS

### Red Earth Nation - The History of the Meskwaki Settlement Community Book Read

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, Decorah Unitarian Universalist is hosting community book discussions of *Red Earth Nation* by Eric Zimmer and Meskwaki Historians, Johnathan L. Buffalo and Dawn Suzanne Wanatee Buffalo. These are free and open to the public.

Discussions of *Red Earth Nation* will be held on Tuesdays, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the Mott room\*, Luther College Student Union, and on Zoom. (\*Walk straight into the Student Union, go all the way to the back windows, take a right and go all the way to the Mott room.)

If you wish to receive email reminders or access the Zoom link for the discussions of *Red Earth Nation* reply to <decorahuu.contact@gmail.com>.

"In 1857, the Meskwaki Nation purchased an eighty-acre parcel of land along the Iowa River. With that modest plot secured as a place to rest and rebuild after centuries of devastation and dispossession, the Meskwaki, or "Red Earth People", began to reclaim their homeland—an effort that Native nations continue to this day in what has recently come to be called the #Landback movement. *Red Earth Nation* explores the long history of #Landback through the Meskwaki



Nation's story, one of the oldest and clearest examples of direct-purchase Indigenous land reclamation in American history." – synopsis from the website of *Red Earth Nation*, University of Oklahoma Press.

- Free and open to the public,
- Need not have read the book to join the discussion,
- Okay to join one or all discussions,
- *Red Earth Nation* can be purchased at Dragonfly Books for a 10% discount.

This book was recommended by Shelley Buffalo from the Meskwaki Settlement. Copies can be found at the Cedar Falls Public Library.



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/>>.



*Winter*