STEWARDSHIP: A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

From Rev. Florence Caplow

As we approach this year’s annual stewardship campaign and the second half of my first year with you, there are a few things I’d like to say to you.

First of all, I want to say thank you. Thank you for taking the great leap of calling me to be your minister. Thank you for your kindness, to each other and to me. Thank you for your willingness to change, to experiment, to even sit through a 90-minute service without throwing things at me, as you did on January 14th! As I get to know you more, I am in awe of your strengths, of your powerful leadership, of your inspiring history and the potential future we could create together. I know many UU churches and this is the third UU congregation I have served. I just have to say: YOU ROCK. And I am one lucky, lucky person, to be your minister.

I am so curious to see how our future together unfolds, and how I can be part of the next chapter in your history. You – we- have the capacity to do extraordinary things together, at an extraordinary and challenging time in our world. Our faith has never mattered more than it does now.

In the spirit of shared ministry, let’s celebrate what your support has already accomplished, and then let’s build on this strong foundation for the future of this congregation, together. The stewardship campaign for the next church year will be starting off on February 4th, with a service dedicated to the joy of generosity.
UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday, February 4, 2018
“When Things Fall Apart”
Rev. Florence Caplow and Julie Laut
What do we do when things fall apart? When divorce, death, or loss come our way? Given the inevitability of change, how do we find our way when we find ourselves in the big gnarly waves that life sometimes sends us? We will explore this through music, poetry, and reflection.

Sunday, February 11, 2018
“The Joy of Generosity”
Rev. Florence Caplow
Recent scientific studies have shown that generosity is a powerful way of cultivating happiness. The Buddha considered generosity one of the "perfections" of human life. What's so great about generosity? This service is the beginning of our annual stewardship campaign, and the theme this year is "Celebration!" We will also be welcoming and introducing new members to our congregation. The Children's and Adult Choirs will be singing.

Sunday, January 21, 2018
“The Song Only You Can Sing”
Rev. Florence Caplow and Laura Robinson
What is your song? Each of us has a song, a unique gift to the world that only we can manifest, unrepeatable and shaped like no one else's. This service will invite us all to consider what our song may be and what encourages us to sing it.

Sunday, January 28, 2018
“Annual UUCUC Youth Service”
YRUU Group
In this eagerly awaited annual service, our high school youth emerge from the basement and lead our service. Want to find renewed hope for the future? Don't miss this service.

Upcoming Workshops with Rev. Caplow

Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Class
Thursdays in February, 4:30-5:30 pm, Channing-Murray
Rev. Florence will lead a four-part class in mindfulness and emotional intelligence. The classes will include meditation, talks, and exercises. No meditation experience necessary! Register at the first class on February 1st (please arrive early on the 1st to register).

Workshop on the "Art of Reading Aloud"
February 10, 1-3 pm, UUCUC Library
Back by popular demand! Rev. Florence will be offering an experiential workshop on the art of sharing prose or poetry through reading aloud, for those who might be interested in participating as readers in future services. No experience necessary! Register online or sign up at the HUB table.
SOCIAL ACTION NEWS

It’s Time to Start Working on the Next Two-Year Initiative!

What would you like the church to take on as a two-year social justice initiative for 2018-2020? Our previous church-wide initiatives have focused on food security, immigration, and racial justice. Repeating topics is just fine!

Bring your ideas to an after-church gathering in the children’s chapel on February 18, and participate in a fun exercise designed to bring those of us with similar ideas and interests together. Download this simple form, designed to guide both discussions and proposal preparation.

This year the Social Action Committee will provide opportunities to discuss and explore proposals with initiating groups before our annual meeting. This will help prepare us for a vote by ensuring everyone is well-informed and ready to make a decision.

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

- Aesop

Thank You, Backpack Donors!

By Sandy Hannum

One of the greatest joys of the holiday season is to give away filled backpacks to people at the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, to see their smiles, and hear their happy comments. The backpack giveaway took place at the soup kitchen on December 15, 2017. With the record-breaking cold this year, you can be sure that the warm clothing items were much appreciated.

Over 900 backpacks were donated by the entire community of Champaign-Urbana. I was gratified to know that our church provided 42 filled backpacks, along with various extra items, to this worthy project. This year I was also touched by the several comments I heard from people in our church who were filling backpacks. They took great pleasure in picturing the person who might receive their pack, and shopped joyfully for things that person might like to have.

This congregation can be counted on to help generously and enthusiastically. Thank you.
ECIRMAC (also known as the Refugee Center) exists to provide services essential to refugee and immigrant resettlement in East-Central Illinois and to aid in the exchange and preservation of their respective cultures. As an organization, ECIRMAC believes in the inherent worth of all human beings, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion, race, or cultural heritage. Services are regularly offered in English, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Russian. Other languages can be accommodated with advanced notice.

Among the many services offered are:

- Translation of documents and interpretation in community settings
- Advocate and liaison in clients' places of employment, schools, hospitals, courts, with landlords, etc.
- Aid in completing paperwork for citizenship, asylum, residency, family reunification, etc.
- Assistance with applying for government benefits for which an individual is eligible
- Case management and counseling
- Referrals to community resources
- Saturday morning tutoring and intercultural socialization for school aged children

In the last year, ECIRMAC served 1400 individuals with a variety of services. The Center submitted 189 food stamp applications, 125 medical card applications and 20 All Kids applications. ECIRMAC welcomed 22 new refugees/asylees and several families of immigrants.

Volunteer opportunities include serving on the Board, developing programs or workshops in basic skills (job interviews, customary hygiene, shopping), interpreting and translating for those with low literacy skills in their native languages.

Funding from the state accounts for 34% of income. Vouchers are paid slowly, creating cash flow difficulties.

The 11th Annual Fundraising Banquet to benefit the work of the East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center will be held on Saturday Evening, April 14th, 2018. We’re planning to put together one or two tables from our UU congregation. Contact Pat Nolan or see info at the Social Action Table.

FEBRUARY SHARED OFFERING

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MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

**PEGGY PATTEN, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**Thanks Hospitality Team A**
Thanks to Jenna Zeidler and Jennifer Greene, Hospitality Team Leaders for the month of January. Thanks to all the Hospitality Team A volunteers who assisted Jenna and Jennifer each Sunday during the month.

**SMALL GROUP MINISTRY BECOMES FOCUS**

**SHERRY BOHLEN, MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR**

**Small Group Ministry** is not new to UUCUC. Our church community has had covenant groups and chalice circles in the past. But what is new is a focus on development of new and inspiring groups that we hope will become a vital part of our congregation as they engage many more of our adult church community members.

Watch for emerging small group opportunities that will include 10-12 people and will meet regularly (usually monthly) to reflect on and discuss significant life topics. Each person in the small group will have the opportunity to share their perspectives, tell their stories, and listen deeply. The time together will be structured. There will be a trained facilitator. Groups will begin and end with a moment of silent reflection and centering readings. As these groups continue to meet and share, participants will naturally build deep connections with one another and with the larger congregation.

New small groups already meeting here at UUCUC include **New Member Covenant Groups** which support new members and friends as they make meaningful connections within our church community. We have a newly formed group called **Moving Forward** which is a place for those newly divorced or separated to meet, share and support each other. An organizational meeting for a similar group for **Widows and Widowers** will be held at 11 am on Saturday, February 10 in the church Library. By next Fall, many small group opportunities will be provided for veteran and newer adult members of our church community. Suggested concepts for future groups are welcome.

Small groups provide rich soil for planting and germinating the seeds of connection -- to other people and to ourselves. Watch for upcoming opportunities and take advantage of this opportunity to connect and grow.
UPCOMING RE DATES TO REMEMBER

**February 2018**
- 4 Regular RE Classes.
- 11 Regular RE Classes. CCS. 4th Annual Chef-A-Thon
- 18 Regular RE Classes.
- 25 Youth Sunday. Regular RE Classes.

**March 2018**
- 3 Pen Pal Reveal Break fast @ 9:30 am.
- 4 Regular RE Classes.
- 11 Regular RE Classes. CCS
- 18 Spring Break - No RE Classes. Special craft class.
- 25 Spring Break - No RE Classes. Children & Youth attend Worship

CCS - Children’s Choir Singing

On CCS Sundays, children and youth begin in Worship Service.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**CINDY WAKELAND, DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Do you need something new to do this month? You are invited to join and observe and cheer on the young chefs (UUCUC children, ages 4 – 12) and their sous chefs (their parents) for the Fourth Annual Chef- A-Thon. The chefs will gather this month on February 11, from 2:00-4:30 p.m. This year the theme is “International Flair.” There is a sign up sheet on the RE table for chefs. The dishes made may be an appetizer, salad, main course, or dessert. The chef’s dish must be made at the church—that means everything, including chopping, mixing, cooking, baking, and all. Each person will be given 30 minutes in the kitchen to use the stove or oven. This means they may be sharing the kitchen, and their sous chefs may be kitchen monitors. Chefs are always reminded that they are given a secret ingredient that they must add to their dish. Famous judges Erich Adickes and Deedy Marble will return. Come join the excitement, watch judges taste each dish, experience the chefs’ anticipation as the awards are handed out to each chef, including Best of Show.

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**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS!**

Happy birthday wishes to those who celebrate this month.

A list of our Members & Friends birthdays can be found on our website.
CHURCH CALENDAR— FEBRUARY 2018

Dates are subject to change. For the most up-to-date calendar, please visit our events page on our website.

February 4th, 2:30 pm, Fellowship Hall: RJI Film Screening, "In Whose Honor"
February 10th, 11:00 am, Library: Widows/Widowers Covenant Group Info Session
February 10th, 1:00 pm, Library: Workshop on the "Art of Reading Aloud"
February 11th: During Service - New Member Recognition & Stewardship Kick-Off; 2 pm Chef-A-Thon
February 18th, Noon, Children's Chapel: SAC - Two-Year Initiative Brainstorm
February 19th: Church office is closed for President's Day