

JANAURY 2025

THE COMPANION

ISSUE NO.

CUU'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Minister's Message *Grace Notes*

Written by Reverend Kimberley Debus

The countdown to the new year brings thoughts of making resolutions and starting new habits. We look at the new calendar as our golden opportunity to make a new start – of course, if we miss this one, we can take advantage of other chances the calendar provides: the Chinese new year, and the first day of spring, then the first day of school, then the holidays, and suddenly we're back to the new year and we might not have actually made that new thing a habit.

Maybe the change shouldn't be about something that will likely be discarded by Valentine's Day.

What if instead, on New Year's Day, we just decided to look at things differently?

We often use the phrase 'turning over a new leaf' to describe doing something new. When I hear it, I think about flipping the page of a book – turning a new leaf to a blank page where we can write our new story, and we think we can be something or someone new. What we forget is that we're still writing in the same book; it's the same story that we're continuing. Maybe we take it in a new direction, but it's still the same story.



minister@cedarhurstuu.org

Office Hours:
Wednesday 4:00-7:00 pm
Except New Year's Day - No
office hours

Zoom open office hours link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/96001
48952

Turning over a new leaf might actually be about looking at things differently.

I also think about tree leaves – especially in the summer, when the leaves turn to face the storm that's coming. It's still a leaf, no matter what direction it's facing, but now we see it differently, and we learn something from seeing this different perspective – whether it be that rain is coming or something deeper.

Imagine if we did this with other people too – learning from their stories, their experiences, their reactions. What are they teaching us from their perspective? Can we learn something about the world and ourselves when we look at it from the other side? What new story might we write?

And imagine if we did this with our congregation? How might we make a fresh start amongst the people we are in covenant with? What attitudes, perspectives, and commitments need to be renewed so we might grow? What new story might this congregation write?

In the coming year, I invite you to not make resolutions, or make promises to yourself that you may not be able or inclined to keep. Instead, I invite you to turn over a new leaf, listen to different perspectives, hear the stories of others – and yourself – in different ways. When we do this, we connect with more compassion, grace, and inclusiveness.

Let this be our year to turn over a new leaf.

Blessings, Rev. Kimberley





Spirit Circles: Connecting to Our Spirits and to One Another

January - Renewal

Our theme this month looks at the spiritual call to Renewal: What is renewal, and what calls for being renewed? How might you imagine a spiritual renewal? What is the relationship between hope and renewal?

To accompany our exploration is our Spirit Circles packet (download here). As highlighted last month, each packet is organized in a typical covenant group format: a chalice lighting/opening words, a check-in question, some questions to help you think about the theme, quotations and poetry, then an article or essay. Following that are more questions to ponder, and suggestions of books, movies, and television shows that reflect our theme. Finally, there is a chalice extinguishing to send you on your way.

Whether you dip in or use it as a focused guide, my hope is that you find something that connects you to your spirit – and to others.



President's Message

Written by Pres. Becky Zimmerman

Quick announcement before my column...please read David Pittman's article following mine in this *Companion!* He is looking for input on how our downstairs rooms might be used – now and after we have full access with an elevator. But come back to my column – I work hard to make it worth your while! Thanks!

"One day at a time — this is enough. Do not look back and grieve over the past, for it is gone. And do not be troubled about the future, for it has not yet come. Live in the present, and make it so beautiful that it will be worth remembering."

-Anonymous, from The 12 Step Prayer Book

While living solidly in the present, and excited (and a little scared) about the future, I'd like to take a quick look back at 2024, which I see as a pivotal year for Cedarhurst:

- We lost our former minister, Rev. Amy, but she found her true calling in chaplaincy, not regretting her years at Cedarhurst at all (nor do we).
- We carried on in the five months without a minister pretty darn well!
- We gained a new minister in Rev. Kimberley, who (according to word on the street) is a great fit for Cedarhurst!
- · We lost two beloved members, Doug Morgan and Pete White, who will forever be missed.
- · We gained a new Treasurer in Lisa Miller, and former Treasurer David Pittman filled a vacancy on the Board and was then elected to a two-year term in June.



boardpresident@cedarhurstuu.org 443-789-1886 9 am - 9 pm

- · Elevate Cedarhurst! was presented to you, with questions, discussion, some tweaks, and a month to ask additional questions. Then you voted "yes" at the Annual Meeting. Our own Dean Camlin was officially hired as architect for the project. Be nice to Dean.
- We held our first-ever Banned Books Read-Aloud and gained two new regular attendees in the process.
- We made and provided a LOT of food and drinks for our fellow Carroll Countians who struggle with food insecurity.
- · We represented Cedarhurst in the community at Art in the Park, Pride Day, FallFest and more, as well as in organizations such as Interfaith Alliance for Racial Justice and United Workers.
- · We added one more Board member, making the Board complete.
- We addressed numerous minor and major building issues thank you, Steve Hirsch! He and I have been learning together about all sorts of things we'd never have thought we had to learn...

So all in all, it was a very good year. My wish for the remaining six months of my Presidency is that you will call, text, or email me, or corner me on Sunday morning (after I've had my cookie) with a comment or question or complaint – I want to hear it all. I, and all the Board, are here to serve you.

Happy New Year!

Becky Zimmerman, Board President <u>boardpresident@cedarhurstuu.org</u> 443-789-1886



Coming Soon: "The Anything But Boring

Mid-Year Congregational Meeting"!!!



Sunday, January 26, 2025, after the service

Potluck lunch immediately following the service, then meeting.

ALL ARE WELCOME, members, friends, newcomers! If you forget to bring food, it's okay! Stay.

No voting taking place.

Agenda includes:

- Elevate Cedarhurst! update
- Building repairs (gotta do 'em...)
- Usage of our downstairs roomsthe reason for the elevator!
- Congregational Life news (Beth Schilpp)
- Worship Committee news (Maria Warburton)
- And some levity in between!



Elevate Cedarhurst! Update

After the service on December 29th, more than a dozen of us descended to the lower level to prepare the Boiler Room and the adjacent former classroom for repairs necessitated by years of water infiltration. There was much to relocate, recycle, or discard, and we made a lot of progress. We also ate some pizza, drank some iced tea, and talked about the space and how it could be used in the future. More decluttering and reorganizing will be needed as we progress with Elevate Cedarhurst! But now is a good time to step back and consider what we all want the lower level to become. The proposed floorplan for the lower level is dominated by classrooms, which is great as far as it goes. But classrooms are just boxes until you fill them with people and activities.

We're already preparing to spend a lot of time and money to make the lower level accessible to everyone. Now let's have a deeper conversation about what we'll do there when we have an elevator and better stairs. I don't mean just the typical Sunday morning ritual of sending children and youth downstairs for classes while we adults continue with our adult-oriented service in the Sanctuary. There's nothing wrong with that model IF that's what parents and children and youth want in 2025 and beyond, and if we adults have no other plans for that space. However, on this first day of 2025, I challenge you to think outside the box. In fact, I want you to think so far outside the box that you have to step outside the box just to see that far.

What have you and your children and grandchildren enjoyed doing at Cedarhurst (or any other religious or community institution) and want more of in the future? How could a different experience have been more meaningful and/or exciting? What can we do (on Sunday or any other day of the week) to transform Cedarhurst into a more vital part of Finksburg and the surrounding communities?

Please describe (using as much or as little detail as you wish) your vision of the new things Cedarhurst could do or become after Elevate Cedarhurst! If applicable, describe how your vision expresses and promotes Unitarian Universalism's core values: Love, Interdependence, Pluralism, Justice, Transformation, Generosity, and Equity. You might also describe what you would be willing to do to make your vision a reality. Then email your vision statement to survey@cedarhurstuu.org. If you'd prefer to remain anonymous, please say that in your message. I'll compile all of your responses and share them with the Board.

- David Pittman 301-801-8032

Night-by-Night Shelter Dinners



food for the hungry





A special thank-you for all those who contributed to the Dec 20 dinner of pizza, 48 sliders, soups, chili, salads, desserts and drinks. It was truly appreciated! The Night to Night shelter extended their hours due to the frigid temperatures. They are usually open 7 pm to 8 am. They opened Dec 20 at 6 pm and stayed open until Dec 23 at 8 am. A special shout out to CUU for their monetary donation each month and Weis Market for a gift card toward the pizzas.

Want to lend a hand? We provide dinner for about 50 hungry people every 3rd Friday of the month. Casseroles in January and chili in February.

Contact Pamela Malkin for more information.



The History of Hanukkah

December 25, 2024 through January 2, 2025

We know the story of Hanukkah (or the Festival of Lights) primarily from two noncanonical books of the bible – 1 Maccabee and 2 Maccabee (in Israel it is pronounced Maccabee – like the beer) and from other historical writings of the 2nd century BCE. Maccabee 2 describes the history of the Hanukkah story we are all familiar with – that is the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem and the lighting of the menorah but not the miracle of the oil that lasted 8 days. 2 Maccabees was originally written in Koine Greek by an unknown diaspora Jew living in Hellenistic Egypt. It was likely written some time between 150 and 100 BC. Eventually the 2 books were included in the Septuagint Bible – an ancient Greek bible but as noncanonical. Texts that were written by Jews and Christians, but are not included in the Bible today are also known as noncanonical, extracanonical, apocryphal. Other historical texts also describe the events of Hanukkah also called the Hasmonean revolts in the first and second centuries BCE – these include Flavius Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews and various other ancient Jewish religious texts such as the Megillat Antiochus a 2nd century Jewish text and the Talmud – ancient interpretation of Jewish laws and customs written 600 years after the Maccabean revolt. It is the Talmud that introduces the story/myth of the oil that lasted 8 days.

To understand the true history of Hanukkah and the Maccabees, you have to understand the politics of the time. And by this I mean the kingdoms and tribes that existed around the Mediterranean sea during the 2nd century BCE, i.e. 150 to 200 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. After Alexander the Great died in 323 BCE, his kingdom was divided among his territorial generals who fought for dominance for decades. Eventually, it was roughly split among his strongest generals, sometimes called The Successors or the Diadochi. These were Ptolomey which is today's Egypt and Libya, Macedonia – today's Northern Greece and Bulgaria, and the Seleucid Empire (a Greek state) – which is most of today's Middle East including Judea which is today's Israel and Palestine. So what we call Israel or Palestine today was then called Judea and was occupied by the Seleucid Greeks. Around the year 167 BCE, the Maccabees who were one of the principal tribes/families involved in the story of Hanukkah lived in Judea.

The Seleucids were a Greek state and originally allowed the Jews to practice their religious beliefs and customs as they wished. Over time, however, leadership of the Seleucids changed and later rulers tried to impose Greek religious and social customs and beliefs on the Jews in Judea.

The History of Hanukkah cont.

In 175 B.C. the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes came into power and tried to force Judeans to assimilate to Greek culture. The Seleucids captured the holy Temple of Jerusalem and defiled it by erecting an altar to the Greek god Zeus inside. Antiochus outlawed the Jewish faith and mandated the worship of Greek gods.

Writing in the first century A.D., Jewish historian Josephus recorded the brutal plundering of Jerusalem and treatment of Jewish dissidents who were "whipped with rods, and their bodies torn to pieces, and were crucified, while they were still alive, and breathed. . . . And if there were any sacred book, or the law found, it was destroyed: and those with whom they were found miserably perished also." Horrified by the Temple desecration and cruelty toward the Jewish people, Mattathias a Jewish priest of the Hasmonean family, along with his five sons, decided to rebel. As an Interesting side note, some of their followers refused to fight on the Sabbath, and as a result, many were massacred on this holy day. Mattathias and his sons believed otherwise. They said that the Sabbath was given to Israel to live and not die. So, they urged their compatriots to carry weapons even on the Sabbath. Eventually, many of the Jews joined the Hasmoneans in their fight for freedom.





The Hasmonean revolt continued after the death of Mattathias, with considerable success. Under the leadership of Mattathias's son Judah (called the Maccabee), Jewish armies defeated the Syrians in 166 BCE. As a result of these military victories, parts of Judea were liberated. After two years of defilement, the Temple was also purified and rededicated to the worship of the one invisible God. This dedication took place on the twenty-fifth day of Kislev, 165 BCE, and was celebrated for eight days. What became known as the holiday of Hanukkah.

After Mattathias's death in 166 B.C., his son Judah the Maccabee (the "Hammer") took his father's place in the fight and led the Jewish people in many victories over the Seleucids. In 164, Judah won back Jerusalem and restored the Temple, cleansing and rededicating it. The revolt of the Maccabees, as it came to be known, continued on and ultimately drove the Seleucids from Judea in 160.

The History of Hanukkah cont.

1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees have different authors, and they each portray the events of the Maccabean revolt from different perspectives — they each have a slightly different "truth." The author of 1 Maccabees portrayed the Maccabean revolt as a rising of pious Jews against the annihilation of their religion by the oppressive, Hellenizing Seleucid king and the Jews who supported him. The author of 2 Maccabees depicted instead a brutal civil war, an internal struggle within the Jewish community between "Judaism" and "Hellenism". There were Jews who wanted to assimilate, and the Maccabees put an end to that by massacring them and forcibly circumcising their sons. Therefore, the history of Hanukah is not so simple. Is it the story of the oppressed Jews fighting for freedom from the Seleucid Greeks or is it a more complex story of Jews resisting assimilation and struggling not only with the Greeks but also their own fellow Jews who took on Greek customs and beliefs. Just as American Jews have assimilated into the American/Christian culture.



Hanukkah, which means "dedication," commemorates the miracle of light that occurred when Judah rededicated the Temple to the Hebrew god. According to the Talmud (one of Judaism's holy texts written some 600 years after the Judean revolt), the Seleucids left only one intact vial of oil, just enough to light the Temple's candelabrum for one day. But it burned for eight days—enough time for the victorious Judeans to secure more oil—and the miracle became the foundation of a beloved holiday to thank God and celebrate the victory of light over darkness and freedom over oppression. But this is a story with no contemporary historical record of the event.

So again, the history of Hanukkah can be looked at two ways: one as a story of hope and freedom or as a story of religious oppression and religious zealotry.

In this time of political turmoil and partisanship, I like to think of Hanukkah as a potent symbol of resilience, as illustrated in the Isaac Bashevis Singer story "The Power of Light," about the lighting of a menorah during WWII in the Warsaw ghetto which ends with this: "That glimmer of light, surrounded by so many shadows, seemed to say without words: Evil has not yet taken complete dominion. A spark of hope is still left."

-From Alan Bogage's Hanukkah sermon





RE Volunteers Needed!

Our mission for life-long learning begins with RE-Religious Education.

We have a Nursery Aide and now are seeking Volunteers to work with our youngest participants.

Please consider volunteering in our RE program. Right now, we are looking for help on the 2nd and 4th weeks of the month. Volunteers must have a "Background Check."



Interested in getting on the Schedule? Let Jan know by emailing Jan.Pennington@comcast.net. We Need You!!!

HELP WANTED

Part-Time Companion for Roman

Our pianist Esther Shumatskaya is looking for a part-time companion for her son Roman who is 34 years old and autistic.

Possible activities could be to take him for a walk, to the movies, out for lunch, etc.

If anyone knows of such a person who might be able to help, Esther can be reached at (410) 790-0937 or by email

esthershum66@gmail.com



CUU Members Enjoy Carroll Wreath Festival





Linda Joy behind wreath, Beth Schilpp and Pamela Malkin in front of large wreath at Carroll Wreath Festival Thursday, Dec 4. Lisa Galuardi, Dave Joy, and Bonnie Kauffman joined the others for lunch at Mediterraneo, celebrating Lisa's last cancer treatment.

CUU Auction Open Events

Looking for things to do next year?

Here's a list of open events from CUU's 2024 Auction!

Your contributions support Cedarhurst operating expenses!

Event	Date	Time	Open Spaces	Price
Tacos and Trivia	2/1/2025	5:00pm	20	\$25
Dance Party: Rock Out!	2/15/2025	7:30pm	16	\$15
Zoom Cooking Class	2/22/2025	5:00pm	35	\$25
Music & Drinks at Bonnie's Place	4/6/2025	3:00pm	4	\$85
Celebrate Spring Afternoon	4/19/2025	3:00pm	7	\$30
Salon & Sandwiches	5/31/2025	2:00pm	1	\$35
Pool Party (clothing required)	6/21/2025	1:00pm	2	\$35
Skinny Dipping Pool Party	7/12/2025	1:00pm	7	\$35
Girl's Overnight at Georgetown	9/13/2025		3	\$50

Contact Linda Joy at 410-790-5496 <u>Línda Joy@verízon.net</u> or Terri Ebaugh at 443-789-2307 <u>Terrí Don Ebaugh@gmaíl.com</u> if you'd like to attend an event!



DINNER AT BASTA PASTA

Wednesday, January 22nd at 6:00 pm

Location: 5957 Exchange Dr. Eldersburg, 21784.

Please call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 by 5pm on January 21 if you can attend so reservations can be made.



MID-YEAR CONGREGATIONAL Sunday, January 26th at noon MEETING AND POTLUCK

Potluck lunch immediately following the service, then meeting.

ALL ARE WELCOME, members, friends, newcomers! If you forget to bring food, it's okay! Stay.

No voting taking place.

For full announcement, see post at the end of "President's Message" above.





LADIES WHO LUNCH

every Wednesday at noon on Zoom (except January 1st)

LADIES WHO LUNCH is a social Zoom gathering that is open to ANY woman who is a member or friend of CUU. We invite you to drop in any Wednesday between 12:00-1:00 pm. Whether you have 10 minutes to spare, or the full hour, you are welcome here!



Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 6th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

The Congregational Life Committee sponsors a variety of activities for friends and members of the congregation. The committee would love to hear new thoughts on activities that are fun, informative, or both to keep us connected. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING Wednesday, January 8th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

January's Board meeting will be remote for all who wish to attend.

Board meetings are open to all unless otherwise noted.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.





CUU VIRTUAL GAME NIGHT

Friday, January 10th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Zoom in to play games just for fun. We do not really keep score. The games we have usually played are Scattergories, Tribond or Taboo – mainly because the owner of the game can also play. However, if you have another game that you think will work on Zoom, please come and we can try it. Call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 with questions.



Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.

CUU BOOK CLUB

Sunday, January 12thth at noon on Zoom and in-person

The book for January is Banyan Moon by Thoa Thai.

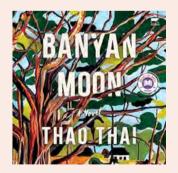
A sweeping, evocative debut novel following three generations of Vietnamese American women reeling from the death of their matriarch, revealing the family's inherited burdens, buried secrets, and unlikely love stories. ~Amazon

The book for March will be *Briar Club* by Kate Quinn. It is suggested to put on reserve now because it may be a little hard to get.

We'd love to have new folks participating in this group!

Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.







CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP Tuesday, January 14th at 5:30 pm on Zoom

Please Zoom in if you are or have been the physical or emotional caretaker for a loved one. We have no experts this is just a place to share your issues and experiences.

Call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 with any questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 15th at 7:30 pm on 700m

Interested in helping to create the Sunday worship services? Then this is the committee for you! All are welcome.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



NIGHT-BY-NIGHT: FOOD PROGRAM

Friday, January 17th at 6:15 pm

Every third Friday of the month we provide dinner for approximately 40+ homeless in Carroll County, a community service CUU has provided for over ten years.

If you'd like to help prepare food, we're doing casseroles in January and chili in February.

Contact Pamela Malkin at 410-857-5071 for more information on how to help.





DRINKS AND DESSERT

Friday, January 24th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

This is our no agenda social time – come with or without drinks and dessert to chat and enjoy each other. Maybe share your summer stories or whatever you wish.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



MONDAY MUSINGS has been discontinued.

Due to lack of participation, we have had to discontinue the Monday Musings gathering.

However, if a few people would like to discuss the questions and quotes from *Spirit Circles*, which are included in each month's *Companion*, please call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 and we can start a group again with enough interest.



Telephone: 410-861-8820

Email: <u>Outreach@CedarhurstUU.org</u>

Web address: http://www.cedarhurstuu.org

President: Becky Zimmerman <u>BoardPresident@cedarhurstuu.org</u>

Vice President: Sherry Dean sherrydeann21@gmail.com

At Large Board Members:

Steve Hirsch steveh46@yahoo.com

David Pittman d.s.pittman@verizon.net

Holly Thompson holly.thompson.2016@gmail.com

Minister: Reverend Kimberley Debus minister@cedarhurstuu.org

Treasurer: Lisa Miller <u>Treasurer@cedarhurstuu.org</u>

Outreach Coordinator: Nalina White Outreach@cedarhurstuu.org

Header and calendar photos by Mark Pollitt

CEDARHURST UU & JANUARY 2025

					NOTES:	Villa.
			Who Lunch 4 pm Rev. Kimberley's Office Hours			12 pm Mid-Year Congregational Mtg
	31	30	29 12pm Ladies	28	27	26
			6 pm Dinner at Basta Pasta			
	7pm Drinks and Dessert		4 pm Rev. Kimberley's Office Hours			10:30am Sunday Service
25	24	23	22 12pm Ladies Who Lunch	21	20	19
	6:15pm Night-by-Night Shelter Dinner		4 pm Rev. Kimberley's Office Hours 7:30 pm Worship Committee Mtg	5:30 pm Caregivers Support Group		10:30am Sunday Service 12 pm Book Club
18	17	16	15 12pm Ladies Who Lunch	14	13	12
	Game Night		7pm Board of Trustees Mtg		Committee Meeting	
	7pm CUU Virtual		4 pm Rev. Kimberley's		7 pm Congregational Life	10:30am Sunday Service 7 pm Congregational Life
11	10	9	8 12pm Ladies Who Lunch	7	0	U
11am-1pm Closed Event- Upstairs in Use						
4	3	2	1			
SATURDAY	FRIDAY	THURSDAY	WEDNESDAY	TUESDAY	MONDAY	SUNDAY