



FEBRUARY 2026

THE COMPANION

ISSUE NO. 2

CUU'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

Minister's Message Grace Notes

Written by Reverend Kimberley Debus

I am supposed to be wise. Or at least inspirational. And to be honest, I'm struggling to find anything inspiring or wise to say in this column right now. Everything is bleak – January has been a thousand days long with nearly as many horrors and atrocities. Plus, the weather has been awful – as I look out the window, the sky is a greyish white and the trees are as stark and bare as my mood.

Yes. There's plenty to do – we are all called to put our faith into action, and as we are studying in the UUA Common Read group, there are many roles to play in the Social Change ecosystem.

But I'm without words today, without wisdom and inspiration.

Thank god for the poets. This morning, my Facebook feed presented to me this [***new untitled poem by John Roedel***](#). May you, like me, find wisdom and a bit of inspiration here.

Blessings,
Rev. Kimberley



[*minister@cedarhurstuu.org*](mailto:minister@cedarhurstuu.org)

**See end of article for Office
Hours.**

I am still wearing the same name tag I was born with.
 "Hi, my name is human," it reads.
 It is stuck to my skin,
 part birthmark,
 part warning.

I've tried to take my tag off
 so it reads something else,
 something better than human.

What is better than being a human?
 A god?
 No.
 Too much responsibility and incense.
 A flower?
 That wouldn't work.
 I'm afraid of bees.
 A giant star burning out near the edge of the
 universe?
 Maybe.
 But I think I would get too bored
 always being "on"
 for all of the voyeurs.
 A river otter?

Now we are talking.
 Lazy.
 Swimming.
 Smiling.
 That sounds great
 except for eating raw fish.
 That alone is probably a deal breaker.

The question I really need to focus on is this:
 why do I not want to be a human anymore?

Because being human right now
 means carrying the whole world
 in a pocket that won't stop buzzing.

It means being asked to have an opinion
 before you've had your coffee,
 to grieve in public,
 to be outraged on schedule,
 to scroll past sanctioned violence,
 ignorance, lavish weddings, and war
 with a tired thumb.

Because being human means staying present
 for things that hurt longer
 than I want to stay.

Because it means I still have to feel everything,
 even on days when I don't want to feel at all.

I don't know.
 I just know I'm tired.
 And today that feels like enough of a reason.

So yes,
 give me the river.

Let me be the otter.
 Let my biggest decision be
 whether to float or swim.
 Let me play in the mud.
 Let my hands hold only what I need.
 Let joy be immediate and unbranded.
 Let my smile not mean anything
 except that the water feels good today.
 Let me be wild and in love with the world again.

I will stay here
 until the buzzing in my pocket
 is replaced by the pulse in my wrists.

I will stay
 until my heart stops its frantic knocking
 and remembers how to hum again.

I will stay
 until the sticky name tag slips off and I am
 forever simply known as "Created For Love."

Let me be the otter.
 I may not be ready for
 the raw fish just yet.
 But the water is patient and the mud is warm.
 And I am finally
 ready for the river.



Rev. Kimberley's Hours

Rev. Kimberley is available [by appointment via Calendly link](#), and is usually available after worship when she is in the pulpit. Unless otherwise noted, she is always available by phone for emergencies, and will respond in a reasonable time frame to texts and emails for non-urgent matters.

Spirit Circles

Spirit Circles groups have begun, and it's not too late to sign up!

If you're looking for connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening, sign up for one of these Spirit Circles:

Third Mondays at 10am - in-person - with Becky Zimmerman

Second Tuesdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Rev. Kimberley

Third Thursdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Beth Schilpp

For more information, email Rev. Kimberley at minister@cedarhurstuu.org.



Spirit Circles: Connecting to Our Spirits and to One Another

February: Love

Our theme this February looks at the spiritual value of Love: What does love mean to you? What have you found or seen to be blocks to love, compassion, and empathy? What is the relationship between love and compassion?

To accompany our exploration is our Spirit Circles packet ([download here](#)). 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. Following that are more questions to ponder, and suggestions of other resources for further exploration. Finally, there is a chalice extinguishing to send you on your way.

Whether you dip in, use it as a focused guide, or share your insights at a Spirit Circle group, we hope you will find something that connects you to your spirit – and to others.

Reading and Learning Together! *UUA Common Read*

We have joined with the Unitarian Universalists of Gettysburg for a virtual book group, reading the UUA Common Read *Social Change Now! The group, co-led by Rev. Christian Schmidt and Rev. Kimberley Debus, is meeting virtually to explore the book, which provides a lens to explore shared values and different ways we can engage with our communities to make social change happen. It promises to be an excellent change for spiritual growth and community-building. You are invited to get the book (or e-book) yourself, or we can provide a copy if needed.*



Meetings: Remaining sessions are first and third Tuesdays through April 21 (that's Feb. 3 and 17, March 3 and 17, April 7 and 21).

Reach out to Rev. Kimberley at minister@cedarhurstuu.org if you have any questions or would like to sign up for the group.

A graphic for a YouTube channel. It features the YouTube logo in the top left, a circular image of a house, and the text "Current Services are Loaded to YouTube Every Tuesday." Below this, it says "Don't forget to" followed by a "LIKE" button with a thumbs-up icon, the word "and", and a "SUBSCRIBE" button with a hand cursor icon.

YouTube

*Current Services are
Loaded to YouTube Every
Tuesday.*

Don't forget to LIKE and

Check out CUU's new YouTube channel by following this [LINK](#)

You can find the currently available recorded sermon on the YouTube link located on CUU's website Home page!

[Home - Cedarhurst Unitarian Universalists](#)

President's Message

Written by Rich Dean

This month I want to share with you much of what is going on, and some of our upcoming activities. See my President's Report for details.

[President's Report - January 2026](#)

Project Elevate! is our #1 priority and progress there has been good. We are mostly on schedule and within budget. You can see the finishing of the entry way and the framing of our current porch. Right now everything hinges on the addition of 3 Phase/220v power to the building which will require poles and trenching to our building by BGE. Installation of the elevator depends on that, and the cost of this installation by BGE may stretch our budget and reserves.

Our Capital Campaign is wrapping up and, with your generosity, is largely a success. We have raised \$145,650 which with the generous \$70,000 matching pledge by David Pittman, brings us within \$14,350 or about 94% of our \$230,000 campaign goal. With the reserves we have in place, I expect we will complete the project with sufficient extra funds to create a Capital Fund which will support ongoing maintenance and renovation to our building for the future.



boardpresident@cedarhurstuu.org

Availability:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 4-6pm

An alternate appointment time may be made via email request.

Our new outreach effort under our GTE task force has begun. You will see a renewed presence in our lobby and welcome desk to embrace visitors and make them feel welcome. We expect to be drawing and welcoming more guests this year as we reach out to like-minded folks in our community to discover CUU and participate in our community.

Steve Hirsh has agreed to serve as chair of our Building Operations committee which will oversee maintenance and renovation of our building. See Steve if you can help. Lydia Dundon has agreed to coordinate our Social Justice work so we can appreciate all of what we do, and perhaps do more. This fills a void in these two areas we have had for a while. Thank you Steve and Lydia.

The Board developed an immigrant safety policy for the congregation. This follows from concerns with aggressive ICE tactics across the country. Our policy is available for your review here:

[Immigrant Safety Policy](#)

We are planning a Congregational Meeting for Sunday February 8 after services. There is no planned formal business for this meeting. It will be modeled after a Council meeting where our various committees and the Board will share what is going on and open the floor for questions and comments.

We are also planning for a Charrette on Sunday February 22 after service. This will open the floor for members to share their dreams, big and small, for our space moving forward. Lydia will be leading this effort and we hope for some inspiration for our way forward.

I love you Cedarhurst.

Rich Dean
Board President



Upcoming Congregation Event

Congregational Council Meeting

Sunday, February 8th to begin after service

A time for the Board, committee chairs, and members to meet with the congregation and share status updates. Let's see how far we've come this year!



FEBRUARY'S THEME IS LOVE



February 1st

Dr. Watley's lecture is called "Love Harder." To live a life in love is always the better choice, but rarely is it the easiest. We'll reflect on the discomfort that pairs with love. Perhaps we can ease some of the tension so that we can act with the deeper love that this moment demands.



February 8th

Rev. Kimberley's sermon is titled "What Wonderful Love." Our Journey Through our Living Tradition continues with a consideration of Universalism, and what it tells us about good and evil.

February 22nd

Rev. Kimberley's sermon is titled "For the Earth Forever Turning." The Transcendentalists of the 19th century mark our third stop on our Journey Through our Living Tradition, as we consider our relationship to the interdependent web and our own souls.



February 15th

CB's sermon is titled "Pathfinder, Trailblazer, or Whack-A-Mole? Part 1." During this time of increasing distress and depression, CB will share, through story in word, about the differences between habitual rutted paths of convenience and familiarity, the whack-a-mole at crisis after crisis; And how those practices can prevent us from figuring out who has the knowledge and experience to lead us in blazing a new trail. This is a two part worship exploration, which will be completed March 29.

GROWTH THROUGH ENGAGEMENT

Growth Through Engagement Committee - CONNECTIONS!

Growth Through Engagement (GTE) is the name of a new committee organized to refine how we welcome and stay connected with new people visiting Cedarhurst online and in person. These new efforts are a direct result of a presentation at General Assembly in June. There, the UU Congregation of Annapolis offered detailed information about how they grew their congregation by 88 members using focused techniques to greet, engage and stay connected to new people. It is the mission of the GTE-Connections Committee to develop similar techniques to help assure Cedarhurst's future.

The small GTE group is structured around two long-term members, who are Beth Schilpp and Barb Bradley; two medium-term members, who are Bekah Waters and Cindy Hirshberg; and two short-term members, Lydia Dundon and Holly Thompson. There are other participants who focus on specific needs. Terri Ebaugh is researching software packages that are easier to use and work better at staying connected to existing and new people at Cedarhurst. Sherry Dean is guiding the effort to host a Welcome Sunday for members, friends and newcomers on June 7th.



The group meets regularly to consider the experience of a new person arriving at Cedarhurst – what do they see, what do they hear, who do they talk to, are they welcomed and not pounced upon?

As a result of these reviews, several adjustments are underway in a structured pilot program to help make a visitor feel more welcome and stay connected to us.

- * Volunteers will serve as the front-door Greeter.
- * There are expanded follow-up tasks for the Welcome Desk and
- * A new role for a Host to be assigned to the visitor throughout their morning experience at Cedarhurst.
- * New style nametags where a first name is most prominent among other information.

The GTE committee is developing written information about each role for the Pilot effort. Please watch the Weekly CUUpdates for information about additional GTE-Connections projects, progress and other developments. Please lend a hand with these interesting and valuable new activities supporting our future.

Cindy Hirshberg



ELEVATE CEDARHURST!

Elevate Cedarhurst! Update:

Elevate Cedarhurst! started 2026 with a flurry of evident activity, as shown in the photos that accompany this update.

Walls were erected around CUU's front porch, but that doesn't prevent us from entering the building through the existing front door. Our minister's office will be housed in the area shown in the center and left of the photo of this enclosure. The area to the right will become a walk-through storage area, labelled "pantry" on the floor plans. Its new door will facilitate future catered events by providing access to the kitchen without walking through the sanctuary.

Windows and doors have been installed in the extension and in the new walls around the former front porch. (Doors were being installed while these photos were taken.) Each of these new windows is in the traditional 12-pane style of our existing windows. The extension will offer two entrances facing the parking lot. The double doors to the left will become the primary path into and out of the building. The single door to the right (located at the top of the new stairs) will serve as an emergency exit for people climbing the stairs from the lower level.

New stairs will soon be installed in the extension. Meanwhile, we're preparing to upgrade our electrical service (to support the new elevator) and enhance the outdoor lighting around the parking lot and the sign that faces Route 140. The March 1st *Companion* will provide up-to-date information about installation of the elevator.



Photos of the building extension and the former front porch.

CHARRETTE

What are Your **BIG**, and *small*, Ideas for Cedarhurst Unitarian Universalists?



On **Sunday, February 22nd at 12:00pm** Lydia Dundon will be chairing a "Charrette" in the CUU Sanctuary.

A Charrette is a Town-Hall meeting between a "Community" and a "Support Person". Lydia will be that "Support Person", in the role of "Secretary" and everyone who attends with an idea will be "the Community." The attached worksheet lists the questions that you might be asked about your idea. This is a space created for everyone at CUU to come forward with project ideas that might benefit Cedarhurst, and for these ideas to be heard by the people who need to hear about them. The end-goal of the Charrette is to provide the tools needed to propose ideas that you think would make Cedarhurst UU a better place.

[Link to Printable Charrette Worksheet](#)

The format of the Charrette will be: All will sit in the Sanctuary, in a circle, in chairs, and one by one go around explaining what project ideas everyone has.

EACH IDEA WILL ONLY GET TWO MINUTES OF PRESENTATION TIME, unless there is time to circle back at the end.

Lydia will write the project ideas down in a spreadsheet next to your name, and then hopefully be able to direct you to the right person to talk to about the idea you present. If anyone else has a comment about your idea, they can write it down and talk to you about it later. If you aren't able to attend, but want to present something, please use this worksheet and either hand Lydia a copy in person, or email her at: LMILLIKE42@GMAIL.COM

Just for clarification:

Projects will **NOT** be approved or rejected at this meeting. Lydia **WILL** be redirecting you to the right people to talk to about your project.

Lydia is **NOT** going to be in charge of your projects. **YOU** will be the one in charge of your projects (unless you hand them off to someone else, but that is also up to you).

Holding the Charrette is an act of hope. Lydia's hope is that people are inspired to do meaningful work for Cedarhurst UU, and are just looking for the right people to talk to about doing it.

CUU OUT HAVING FUN

Lunch at Fiamata's

A great time was had by all at January's community dinner at Fiamata's!



Left side from the front: Shirley Eatmon, David Pittman, Linda Prause, Terri Ebaugh, Don Ebaugh, Bob Niemann, Dave Joy, Linda Joy



Left side from the front: Rich Dean, Sherry Dean, Beth Schilpp, Ann Farmer, Sue, Barb Bradley, Lisa Galuardi, Holly Thompson

Right side from the front: Linda Joy, Dave Joy, Bob Niemann, Don Ebaugh, Terri Ebaugh, Linda Prause, David Pittman, Shirley Eatmon

Right side from the front: Holly Thompson, Lisa Galuardi, Barb Bradley, Sue, Ann Farmer, Beth Schilpp, Sherry Dean, Rich Dean

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bill Clarke Celebration of Life

**February 14, 2026 at 11:30 AM
in Krug Chapel Carroll Lutheran Village**



There will be a service celebrating the life of Bill Clarke who died on December 22, 2025. It will be held at Krug Chapel on Saturday, February 14, 2026 at 11:30 am. The service will be followed by a light lunch in the Chapel.

Bill was a laid back guy and did not like to get dressed up in a shirt and tie and suit so feel free to wear casual clothes to this gathering.



It's the return of
Tacos and Trivia with Rev. Kimberley!

**Saturday, February 21
Dinner starts at 4, the quiz starts at 5**



Join us for tacos with all the trimmings, and an entertaining pub quiz, full of familiar tunes, fascinating facts, and friendly competition.

This auction item still has plenty of room for you!

\$25 in advance or at the door (advance notice useful for food prep purposes - email Rev. Kimberley for details)

See you then!

FEBRUARY SPECIAL EVENTS

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

CUU's Board of Trustees, Committee Chairs, Members and congregants will meet for updates and reports on all of CUU's exciting progress since the Annual Meeting in 2025!

Sunday, February 8th at noon



DINNER AT COLLISION COUSE RESTAURANT

Their specialty is soul food and southern inspired cooking but they have a very varied menu.

Location: 61 E. Main St., Westminster 21157.

Contact Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 by February 12th at 5pm so reservations can be made.

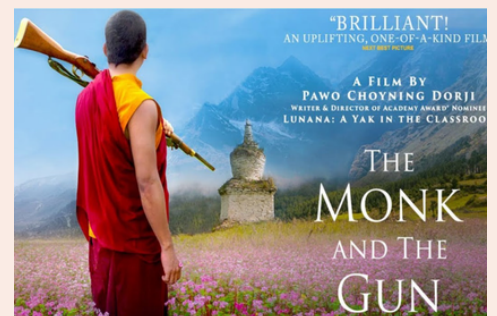
Monday, February 16th at 6:00pm



CARROLL ARTS CENTER FOREIGN FILM

The film is "The Monk and the Gun" which is in English and the language of Bhutan. It is a PG 13 comedy about an aging monk who is concerned about the changes coming to Bhutan and sends a disciple out to get guns. The disciple runs into an American in search of treasure and a James Bond adventure. The tickets are between \$8 and \$10. It is suggested getting tickets early because these films are popular. If you want to go to the 1pm show and sit with CUU friends contact Beth Blevins. If you want to go to the 7:30 show contact Beth Schilpp. Everyone is responsible for getting their own tickets.

Friday, February 20th at 1:00pm or 7:30pm



FEBRUARY SPECIAL EVENTS

CONGREGATION CHARRETTE

Sunday, February 22nd at noon

A Charrette is a Town-Hall meeting between a "Community" and a "Support Person." Lydia Dundon will be that "Support Person" in the role of "Secretary," and everyone who attends with an idea will be "the Community." This is a space for everyone in the CUU community to come forward with project ideas that might benefit Cedarhurst so that they can be heard by the people who need to hear about them. The end-goal of the Charrette is to provide the tools needed to propose ideas that would make Cedarhurst UU a better place. (see full page announcement earlier in the Companion.)

There will be a potluck lunch, and hopefully snacks!



FEBRUARY EVENTS

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, February 2nd at 7:30pm on Zoom

We are always looking for activities that bring us together for fun and/or learning. If you cannot come to the meeting please stop by the Welcome Table with your ideas.

All are welcome to attend on Zoom.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



CUU BOOK CLUB

Monday, February 9th at 7:30pm on Zoom only**

The book for February is *Killers of a Certain Age* by Deanna Raybourn.

“This *Golden Girls* meets *James Bond* thriller is a journey you want to be part of.” -Buzzfeed

Older women often feel invisible, but sometimes that’s their secret weapon.

They’ve spent their lives as the deadliest assassins in a clandestine international organization, but now that they’re sixty years old, four women friends can’t just retire – it’s kill or be killed in this action-packed thriller by *New York Times* bestselling and Edgar Award-nominated author Deanna Raybourn.

Please come and participate even if it is your first time....would love to have more people participating. ***NOTE: Different time and date - this month only.**

Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



FEBRUARY EVENTS

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, February 10th at 5:30pm on Zoom

If you are or have been physical and/or emotional support for another person, this could be the group for you. We have no experts, just people that are willing to share their experiences.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



SPIRIT CIRCLES

Tuesday, February 10th at 7:30pm on Zoom

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Tuesday's group is led by Rev. Kimberley on Zoom.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Wednesday, February 11th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

February's Board meeting will be on Zoom for all who wish to attend.

Board meetings are open to all unless otherwise noted.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



FEBRUARY EVENTS

CUU IN-PERSON GAME NIGHT

Friday, February 13th at 6:00 pm in-person

Our monthly game night will begin at 6pm to enjoy dinner together with each person bringing their own food and drink (no potluck). Games begin at 6:30. Please bring a game or games you love. As always, folks are welcome to just come and eat or just come to play games.



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

SPIRIT CIRCLES

Monday, February 16th at 10:30am in-person

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Monday's group is led by Becky Zimmerman at Cedarhurst.



SPIRIT CIRCLES

Thursday, February 19th at 7:30pm on Zoom

Spirit Circles groups offer connection, companionship, and spiritual deepening. Thursday's group is led by Beth Schilpp on Zoom.



Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

NIGHT-BY-NIGHT: FOOD PROGRAM

Friday, February 2th at 6:15pm

Night-by-Night Shelter in Westminster provides casseroles and assorted sides (we seek to provide a variety of food items). The Shelter is seeing high demand with all of our cold temperatures and snow. They have also had several days where they have opened early, so having sealed food available is now needed- like fruit cups and boxes of raisins and other snacks including protein bars and crackers.



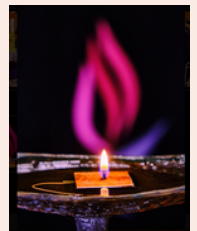
We will be delivering breakfast for dinner Friday, February 20. Several additions to our selection are needed, including fruit and some entrees. Please contact Pamela Malkin at 443-487-1299 for more details. (Donations are also welcome.)

WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, February 25th at 7:30pm on Zoom

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.



DRINKS AND DESSERT

Friday, February 27th at 7:00pm on Zoom

Zoom in to just chat - no agenda.

Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.





CONTACT

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

President: Rich Dean BoardPresident@cedarhurstuu.org

Vice President: Holly Thompson thompson.holly.2016@gmail.com

At Large Board Members:

Sherry Dean sherrydeann21@gmail.com

David Pittman d.s.pittman@verizon.net

Lydia Dundon lmillike42@gmail.com

Minister: Reverend Kimberley Debus minister@cedarhurstuu.org

Treasurer: Lisa Miller Treasurer@cedarhurstuu.org

Outreach Coordinator: Nalina White Outreach@cedarhurstuu.org

Header and calendar photos by Mark Pollitt

FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 10:30am Sunday Service	2 7:30pm Congregational Life Committee Mtg.	3	4	5	6	7
8 10:30am Sunday Service Noon Congregational Council Meeting	9 7:30pm Book Club	10 5:30pm Caregivers Support Group 7:30pm Spirit Circles on Zoom	11 7pm Board of Trustees Meeting	12	13 6pm In-Person Game Night	14
15 10:30am Sunday Service	16 10:30am Spirit Circles In-person 6pm Dinner at Collision Course	17	18	19 7:30pm Spirit Circles on Zoom	20 1pm & 7:30pm Carroll Arts Center- Foreign Film 6:15pm Night-by-Night Shelter- Dinner	21
22 10:30am Sunday Service Noon Congregational Charrette	23	24	25 7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting	26	27 7pm Drinks and Desserts	28
NOTES:						