



JANUARY 2026

THE COMPANION

ISSUE NO. 1

CUU'S MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

Minister's Message Grace Notes

Written by Reverend Kimberley Debus

I suspect that most of you encountered a version of *A Christmas Carol* this past holiday season – whether it was a live performance or other adaptation (and yes, the *Muppet Christmas Carol* is absolutely the best adaptation). It is a timeless story by English Unitarian Charles Dickens and is perhaps his most beloved work.

But no matter how you encountered it – even if just in your memory – you likely remember the moral of the tale – one of giving, generosity, and kindness. All worthy, important, and worthwhile messages to share, there can be no doubt. And just before Christmas, I saw a tweet from 2017, which read “*A Christmas Carol* is the heartwarming tale of how rich people must be supernaturally terrorized into sharing.” Indeed, the ghost story of *A Christmas Carol* is potent – four pretty terrifying ghosts in total, scaring an aging miser into giving.

But someone offered a corrected version of that tweet: “*A Christmas Carol* is the heartwarming tale of how the frank examination of past trauma can help people re-examine their maladaptive coping strategies.”



minister@cedarhurstuu.org

See end of article for Office Hours.

I love this – because it reminds us that, as we see in the story, Scrooge was not always the cold-hearted miser we meet at the start of the tale. This is a man who suffered a series of unfortunate events at Christmastime – from his absent parents abandoning him to a boarding school, to losing his fiancé, to his beloved sister dying. It's not that he naturally hated the holidays; it's that the holidays brought painful reminders of the traumas he experienced. And at every turn, people are telling him what he Should Do – donate, make merry, celebrate, decorate... when all he wanted to do was tend to his pain.

And tend he did, until his whole world became about it. Scrooge hid from the world in a cave of his own making to avoid further pain.

How many times do we hide from our own pains, sorrows, and troubles – and hide from the things that would remind us? It's a common strategy for all of us.

But what saves us – and what saves Scrooge in the end – is community. A friend who cares enough to point out what's happened. Other friends who allow us to confront the past traumas, and then show us healthier behaviors that help us cope with them. And then more people who create a loving, holding community of welcome.

Scrooge has his ghosts – including his best friend Marley – along with the Cratchits, and his nephew Fred, and even the charity workers and people on the street. We have each other – friends we know well or are getting to know, people we serve with on committees or sing with in the choir or work on projects with, or engage with in various discussion groups.

I'm thinking about that a lot as we enter a new year; we have an incredible community, right here, of people who care about each other and want to help, want to welcome. What might the year look like if we all remember to reach out to each other, check in with each other, create spaces and classes and discussions and events and festivities that bring us together?

May this new year remind us that we all have a story – and that all of our stories are welcome in this circle of love.

Happy New Year.

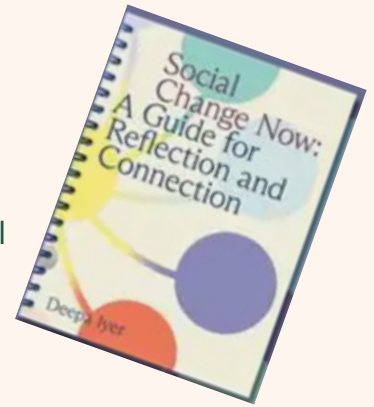
Blessings,
Rev. Kimberley

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.

Reading and Learning Together! *UUA Common Read*

We're going to join 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, will meet 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.





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To sign up for the group, please use this link: <https://forms.gle/cxkw7UVvysufRxe88>.

Meetings: 7 total sessions starting Jan. 20, then every first and third Tuesday from January 20 through April 21 (that's Jan. 20, Feb. 3 and 17, March 3 and 17, April 7 and 21).

Reach out to Rev. Kimberley if you have any questions.



 *Current Services are
Loaded to YouTube Every
Tuesday.*

Don't forget to  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](#)

Spirit Circles: GROUPS STARTING THIS MONTH!

Spirit Circles groups are starting this month, 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 (starts January 19)

Second Tuesdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Rev. Kimberley (starts January 13)

Third Thursdays at 7:30pm - on Zoom - with Beth Schilpp (starts January 22)

To sign up, visit Beth at the Welcome Table on Sunday morning, or email Rev. Kimberley at minister@cedarhurstuu.org.



Spirit Circles: Connecting to Our Spirits and to One Another January: Justice

Our theme this January looks at the spiritual call to Justice: What does justice mean to you? How do you connect justice with your understanding of Unitarian Universalism? What is the role of a congregation in social justice?

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.

President's Message

Written by Rich Dean

Before we look at the year ahead, let me first capture how this year is going so far. You can view the attached link of my report for an issue-by-issue discussion of the work of the Board and the action and status of each issue. The Board operates around the 4 Goals we set for the congregation at our September retreat and the report follows that format.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Aq3FjFqgsDOjYaYAG33MmTTI0DKxuc8h/view?usp=sharing>

Project Elevate! has been the focus of our work this year and our progress there is good. We have made some enhancements to the design of the kitchen. A few issues have arisen that will require extra funding. This is the addition of a 3-phase power through BGE and the renovation of our fire alarm system. These will likely consume the \$40k reserve in our base budget. Addition changes will be covered by our \$40k Chalice Lighters grant, and the reserve we added to our Capital Campaign. The Capital Campaign is going well. We are optimistic that we will achieve our \$230k goal. We are still about \$30k shy of that target, but waiting on many outstanding members. So, if you have not pledged yet please do so, and be generous. Special shout-out to David Pittman who offered up the \$70k matching challenge grant to the Capital Campaign. Thank you, David.



boardpresident@cedarhurstuu.org

Availability:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 4-6pm

An alternate appointment time may be made via email request.

We have made some real progress in organizing our business and capturing our history. This will include our Board activity, agendas, minutes, and more. It also has many, many pictures from our past. You can find this in our Google drive. Take a look with the attached link.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CriJE3UXsSqw2EuER9nD2P62fLD9-lrp?usp=sharing>

The basement is shaping up. The November 17 Working Party did wonders toward clearing out 40 years of clutter, opening up wonderful opportunities for restoration, furnishing and programs. Join us on February 22 for the Charette led by Lydia where we will be brainstorming possibilities for our programs and space.

The mold issue we had in the basement has been treated and the air testing shows that our indoor mold count is the same as the outdoor space. Good.

Looking forward, we can expect the completion of Project Elevate! around late Spring. We will have launched our outreach efforts and expect to see visitors and perhaps a few new members. We will have our Charette and a vision of enhance space and activity. We have such wonderful opportunities ahead!

I love you Cedarhurst.

Rich Dean
Board President



JANUARY'S THEME IS JUSTICE



January 4th

Dr. Harlow's lecture is called "The Presence of Justice." When we reflect on the distant past, most people can easily identify decisions and actions that were unjust (e.g., enslavement), as well as those that were just (e.g., emancipation). Similarly, it takes little effort to imagine an idealized future where justice has won the day. But what of the present? Why do we struggle with recognizing, identifying, and facilitating justice (and resisting what is unjust) in the here and now? What can we learn from our past to do better in our present?

January 18th

Rev. Crystal Saiyge's sermon will be announced during the month. Watch CUU's website for more information.



January 11th

Rev. Kimberley's sermon is titled "Be Ours a Religion." What is Unitarian Universalism? We will explore who we are and what makes us... us, as we begin a journey through our living traditions - a consideration of our foundational theologies.

January 25th

Rev. Kimberley's sermon is titled "A Mighty Fortress." We begin our Journey Through our Living Tradition by considering Unitarianism, and what we mean by the life of the mind.



CUU FOOD PROGRAM



Night-by-Night Westminster

December had ten people contribute food and drinks for our picnic themed meal of fried chicken, 40 sandwiches, sloppy joes, meatballs, pulled BBQ chicken, tater-tots, green beans, Mexican vegan dish, 6 salads, Texas Roadhouse honey glazed rolls, dessert and 5 assorted beverages! Guests were allowed to enter early since temperatures had plummeted.

January will be assorted casseroles.

Contact Pamela Malkin with questions or donations.

A delivery of your donations of hats, gloves and socks will be made to the Night-by-Night Shelter and Shepherd's Staff. An updated request from the shelter is a need of all sizes of underwear for both men and women.

JANUARY SPECIAL EVENT

Lunch at Fiamata's

Thursday, January 22nd at noon

Fiamata's is just down the street at 2900 Baltimore Blvd and has a good-sized parking lot. A couple of people have been there and say the food is very good.

Please call Beth Schilpp at 443-904-1304 by 5pm on Tuesday, January 21st so reservations can be made.



JANUARY EVENTS

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, January 5th at 5:30 pm* 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. **Please note time change for this month only.*

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



CUU IN-PERSON GAME NIGHT

Friday, January 9th at 6:00 pm in-person

Our monthly game night will begin at 6pm eating together - each person brings their own food and drink...it is not 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.



JANUARY EVENTS

CUU BOOK CLUB

Sunday, January 11th at noon on Zoom and In-Person at CUU

The book for January is *The Safekeep* by Yael van der Wouden.

A house is a precious thing...

It is 1961 and the rural Dutch province of Overijssel is quiet. Bomb craters have been filled, buildings reconstructed, and the war is truly over. Living alone in her late mother's country home, Isabel knows her life is as it should be –led by routine and discipline. But all is upended when her brother Louis brings his graceless new girlfriend Eva, leaving her at Isabel's doorstep as a guest, to stay for the season. ~Amazon

'Mysterious, sophisticated, sensual, and infused with intrigue, atmosphere, and sex, *The Safekeep* is "a brave and thrilling debut about facing up to the truth of history, and to one's own desires"' (*The Guardian*).

Please come and participate even if it is your first time....would love to have more people participating.

Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU website Calendar to join.



CAREGIVERS SUPPORT GROUP

Tuesday, January 13th at 5:30 pm 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. Linda Joy will open the meeting this month.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



JANUARY EVENTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING Wednesday, January 14th at 7:00 pm on Zoom

January'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.



NIGHT-BY-NIGHT: FOOD PROGRAM

Friday, January 16th at 6:15 pm

Night-by-Night Shelter in Westminster provides casseroles and assorted sides (we seek to provide a variety of food items).

If you are interested in helping, we provide a meal for 35-40 on the third Friday of each month. For January we will be preparing casseroles.

While much of the meal is cooked by our volunteers, some support the meal with store bought items like drinks, breakfast bars and fresh fruit. Every little bit of help makes a difference. Please contact Pamela Malkin at 443-487-1299 for more details.

(Donations are also welcome.)



JANUARY EVENTS

DRINKS AND DESSERT

Friday, January 23rd at 7:00 pm on Zoom

Zoom in to just chat - no agenda.

Call Beth Schilpp with questions.

Follow Zoom link on CUU Calendar to join.



WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 28th at 7:30 pm 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.





CONTACT

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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

JANUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 10:30am Sunday Service	5 5:30pm Congregational Life Committee Mtg.	6	7	8	9 6pm In-Person Game Night	10
11 10:30am Sunday Service 12 pm Book Club	12	13 5:30 pm Caregivers Support Group	14 7pm Board of Trustees Meeting	15	16 6:15pm Night-by-Night Shelter Dinner	17
18 10:30am Sunday Service	19	20	21	22 12pm Lunch at Fiamata	23 7pm Drinks and Desserts	24
25 10:30am Sunday Service	26	27	28 7:30pm Worship Committee Meeting	29	30	31
NOTES:						