

a future with **HOPE**



deeply rooted



Community UCC
former members & friends

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Community UCC was the first church where we felt accepted, where we felt connected, and where we felt at home. I have not lived in Champaign for almost seven years, yet I stay connected and interested in the happenings at Community UCC. Why? Well, because CUCC impacted my family so much that I consider CUCC part of my extended family.

Family members teach each other, serve one another, and share life's joys and sorrows – CUCC did that for me. Families provide a setting for personal growth – CUCC did that for me. Family consists of the people who support and love you, and are people you can confide in and trust – CUCC continues to be there for me. Friends, did CUCC also serve you in ways that only family could? Perhaps does it still? Strong connected families try to make things easier for each other by supporting each other. From trivial things like responding to a Facebook post, to thoughtful things like sending a card when someone experiences loss, to more profound ways like sending financial support when you're in need.



I am proud of my CUCC family and all that it means to Champaign-Urbana. I am proud that during my time there we implemented hands-on mission work, and today, the mission program is strong for both youth and adults. I am proud that during my time there we were part of the first ever pride parade, and today the congregation continues marching and being an integral part of the LGBTQ community. I am proud that during my time there, CUCC members stood up to call out social injustices, and today, through their work with Jubilee Café, CUCC is making a strong impact in food justice, serving a weekly meal, free to anyone who needs it.

Our family is like branches on a tree: we all grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one. When I learned that the elevator was no longer repairable at CUCC, I cried. How would people with physical challenges, like me, access the sanctuary, the fellowship hall and Jubilee Café, or Pastor Leah's office? Our CUCC family needs help. This capital campaign will include overhauling the elevator, significant masonry/concrete work, roof repairs including full replacement of some sections, new paint/plaster in the sanctuary, resurfacing the parking lot, installing a projector in the sanctuary, and updating the parlor flooring/furnishings so that CUCC can make better and more varied use of that space. CUCC needs our love and support, and our gifts, to continue the incredible work of being the inclusive, open and affirming, progressive Christian church, filled with passion for a just peace, that we know it to be.

Support coming from family is not a burden and does not weigh you down because it is coming from where you belong. And we all still belong, because, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here... and we really mean it!" I hope you will join me in contributing to help CUCC continue working in Champaign. I hope you will consider a three year recurring monthly gift – any amount is greatly appreciated.

Michelle Franke, former member 2006-2013, former CLB Moderator

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The church, its ministers, and members have always been involved in social justice and mission work:

- In **1853**, CUCC's forebearers, abolitionists, founded what would become Goose Pond Church.
- In **1918** the decision was made to move to campus to be in ministry with students, professors, and university staff. The cornerstone was laid in 1919.
- In the late **1940s** and early **50s**, Rev. Theodore Taft led a boycott of Green Street barbers who refused to cut the hair of African American men.
- In the **1970s** and **80s** the congregation sponsored refugee families from Vietnam.
- In **1979** the church was part of a new men's shelter that rotated among several churches. Our church members continue to actively support care of people experiencing homelessness in our community through C-U at Home, the UP Center's work with homeless LGBTQ+ kids, and our own Jubilee Café.
- In **1987** a renovation added a new wing and an elevator, making the main and lower levels of the building accessible. We use the elevator on Sundays, as do community groups, along with guests and volunteers at Jubilee Café.
- In **1988**, CUCC covenants to become a Just Peace Church.
- In **1995** the church membership voted to become an Open and Affirming church. We promised to love, affirm, and support all persons, including people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender.
- In the **2000's**, CUCC covenants to claim our Progressive Christian Theology.
- **December 8, 2019** – 10th anniversary of Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser's pastorate at CUCC.
- **February 2, 2020** – 25th anniversary of our covenant as an Open and Affirming congregation.
- **February 23, 2020** – 100th anniversary of our building on Transfiguration Sunday.

In this age of conservative backlash, for so many, our building matters now more than ever.



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Pastor Leah reminds us, “Annually, students return to campus to find a warm welcome among us. The questions of students, and adults alike, are welcomed here. Pick up one of the rainbow “you are loved for who you are” hearts we hand out at Pride Fest, though, and have one question answered for certain: God loves you! And so do we.

Weekly, we feed more than hungry bellies at Jubilee Café, we feed people’s need for human interaction, care, and belonging. On Monday evenings, grad students sit alongside people who have graduated from the school of hard knocks, breaking bread together, all while being served by our expansive team of volunteers. If that’s not a glimpse of the Kin-dom of God, I don’t know what is. Weekly, we also provide space for three recovery groups, an international friendship group, and, new this fall, three English-as-a-second-language conversation classes. Our doors are wide open to the community – that, too, is a glimpse of the Great Banquet.

Daily, tens of thousands of people pass by the “church with the flags” and see with their own eyes that the gospel of love insists that peace will only come with justice. Each day, our church offers welcome and care to members of the wider community as well as one another. How often have I heard one of us refer to their “CUCC family” and mean it? It happens all the time! In our Sunday School, our children know they are loved and cared for. In youth group, our teens ask hard questions and cultivate hearts for service. With the help of committed adults, our young people learn and grow. At Pub Theology and at any of our myriad mid-week meals, folks deepen the bonds of friendship. With new programming from The John Bandy Center for Spirituality and Faith, housed in the Jack Good Library, we will all have the opportunity to deepen our faith life through classes, retreats, and the resources offered there. And, weekly in worship, through song and scripture, prayer and praise, in laughter and love we turn our collective hearts and minds to the care of our Creator, the way of Jesus, and the movement of the Spirit so that we might leave that sacred space renewed, committed to using our time, talents, and treasure to bend the arc of the universe evermore towards justice.

All of this, and more, happens in the little yellow church on the corner that is in need of some major TLC.”

Our very presence in Champaign-Urbana continues to be a symbol of hope for the greater community, and has become a refuge for those working hard to create a better, more just, world.



You can make your donation
by going to our website
community-ucc.org
and clicking **donate**.

Or, if you prefer, mail your donation to:
Community United Church of Christ
attn. Deeply Rooted
805 S. 6th St., Champaign, IL 61820