



Community UCC

We're worth our words

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A Just Peace, Progressive, LGBTQ Open & Affirming Congregation

e-Communigram



Letter from Leah

Dear Community,

“When we look at the loaf,” Gunilla Norris says in *Becoming Bread: Embracing the Spiritual in the Everyday*, “we may think how we, too, must go through fire to become ourselves, to become sustenance for each other and for life itself. We are each part of this mystery.”

Now, this – this I have to mull over. *We become sustenance for each other....we are each part of this mystery.* Jesus comes to us as the “bread of life.” If we are to follow him, we, too, are called to life-giving ways—called to be bread for the world. We are called to be the bread of life too.

I was only on page 5 of this powerful little book and already I had to set it down to think about its words. In *Becoming Bread*, Norris offers an anchoring metaphor for our lives: that the process of baking bread is rich with wisdom concerning our relationship with the Divine and one another. She’s a poet and knows how to utilize an economy of words to the fullest. It is dense and rich with meaning; a wealth of wisdom is packed into its brief 85 pages. It contains illustrations and plenty of white space on the pages, places for your mind to wander while your synapses re-wire based on what you just read.

This is the book we’ll use to accompany us throughout the Lenten season. This year, Lent is late. Ash Wednesday arrives on February 26. Lent begins then and runs through Easter Sunday on April 12, thus making April 5 Palm Sunday, April 9 Maundy Thursday, and April 10 Good Friday. Each Sunday during Lent, the lectionary Gospel reading lends itself to diving more deeply into one of *Becoming Bread’s* theme. I want to encourage you to purchase a copy to read as Lent goes along. We will have several new copies available at church to purchase for \$15. You can also go online and find used copies.

I sat down with *Becoming Bread* a few weeks ago and read it in one sitting. It took a couple of hours only because I would stop to think and take notes. When I got to the end, I wanted to re-read it. The way the book ends makes the whole text take on new meaning. Knowing this, I would like to suggest if you do plan to use this book as an accompaniment to your Lenten journey, that you set aside a time in February to read the entire book before Lent begins, then read the themes as the weeks go along. Your Lenten practice will be deepened by having done this.

If you would like to deepen your Lenten practice even more, sign up to attend the Lenten retreat sponsored by the John Bandy Center for Spirituality and Faith, led by Pastor Connie and artist Barb England, on February 29.

We're creating lots of ways for you to journey through Lent this year: attend worship, read (and re-read) this book, go on retreat. What practices might you take on so that your Lent will be a powerful one in 2020?

As you discern, take a look at these themes for Lent. Below, you will find a scripture lesson and poem from *Becoming Bread*. A big thanks goes to Pastor Connie for these pairings. Because editions of the book have differing pages, I've listed poem names rather than strict page numbers which accompany each week.

- LENT 1 (March 1) SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:1-11 (Temptation), Norris, "At the Threshold"
- LENT 2 (March 8) SCRIPTURE: John 3:1-17 (Nicodemus), Norris, "Hunger"
- LENT 3 (March 15) SCRIPTURE: John 4:5-42 (Woman at the Well), Norris, "Seeing"
- LENT 4 (March 22) SCRIPTURE: John 9:1-41 (The Man Born Blind Healed), Norris, "Measuring"
- LENT 5 (March 29) SCRIPTURE: John 11:1-45 (Lazarus), Norris, "Yeast"

- PALM SUNDAY (April 5) SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-11 (Triumphal Entry), Norris, "Mixing Dough"

- HOLY WEEK Poems:
 - MONDAY—"On the Counter"
 - TUESDAY—"Rising"
 - WEDNESDAY—"Shaping"
 - THURSDAY—"Limits"
 - FRIDAY—"Fire"
 - SATURDAY—"Waiting"

- EASTER (April 12) SCRIPTURE: John 20:1-18 (Resurrection), Norris, "Texture," "Breaking Bread," "Plenty," "Beginning Again"

We have a lot to look forward to in Lent. Ash Wednesday will be a powerful experience, one adults and children will get a lot out of. It starts at 7 pm, February 26. Childcare for the littlest ones will also be provided. We will also have Ashes to Go and offer the imposition of ashes at Clark Lindsey that day. Details are forthcoming. In the meantime, purchase *Becoming Bread* at church or order a used copy online, then set aside a time to read it prior to Lent's beginning. Epiphany continues throughout this month. We will have communion on the first Sunday of the month, then our new Campus Minister, Nate Brantingham will preach on February 9. Youth Ministry's Director Jessica Smiley will preach on February 16. Her sermon will echo the TEDx talk she gave in January. The month ends with Transfiguration Sunday on February 23.

Blessings,



Moderator Musings

This is an exciting and hope-filled moment for our church.

We have just completed our successful Deeply Rooted capital campaign. Workers will be updating, repairing, and transforming our building over the next year. Our music ministry is thriving. Jubilee Café is thriving. Every Sunday there seem to be new friends joining us for worship. We have a wonderful new campus minister in Nate Brantingham. Pastor Leah's words and her example have comforted, encouraged, and inspired us for a decade, and continue to do so every week. We are an energized, committed church, working every day to make the world a better place. And we are these things because of you.

My hope is that in the coming year we can identify one or two areas of church life that we want to see succeed and thrive as the capital campaign, our music ministry, and Jubilee Café are succeeding and thriving. And that once we identify those areas, we can focus the world-changing energy of our congregation on them, and make them flourish.

I look forward to the coming year. And I offer my heartfelt thanks for John Murphy for his leadership and wisdom and patience over the past twelve months.

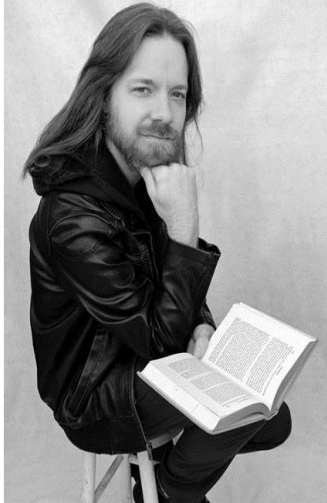
Have a wonderful month!

Jon

Ashes to Go

Lent begins February 26, 2020. Pastor Leah will offer communion and the imposition of ashes on the corner of Sixth Street and Daniel from 11:30am to 1:15pm. Pastor Connie will lead Ash Wednesday worship Service at Clark Lindsey on February 26th with the disposition of ashes. We will gather for worship at 7:00pm in the sanctuary. Childcare will be available. It will be here before you know it, so plan to attend now.





The UCC Campus Ministry Board is pleased to welcome Nate Brantingham as our new Director of Campus Ministry! Nate has a diverse educational background in computers, entrepreneurship, psychology, and most recently, theology and ministry. He grew up Presbyterian in Spokane, Washington where he attended a liberal and affirming congregation. Once he started to find ways to use his entrepreneurship skills in ministry, he was hooked and decided to pursue ministry full time. He then attended Princeton Theological Seminary where he recently graduated. Bringing all this together with his MDiv focus, he now specializes in ministry amidst change and is a skilled speaker and educator. He and his partner have recently moved to Champaign with their cat Nova, and new foster dog Marley, following his partner's hiring at the University of Illinois in the Material Science department. He is absolutely thrilled to be able to start working alongside such an amazing group of talented and diverse young people and within a vibrant church filled with such passionate support for the students (and others!). He hopes that in his new role as Director of Campus Ministry that he can work with the Church to show Christ's love for all the young adults in the community in meaningful and relevant ways.

Dispatch from Director of Youth and Children's Ministries

Dear Community,

CUCC youth are participating in weekly Sunday School. We also had youth group in January. We had an opportunity to reflect on the work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and what it means to be a good neighbor in our community. We have also been using our Bibles weekly and finding different stories that have been meaningful to us. I appreciate that the youth are eager to learn and so kind to each other. We start each group by introducing ourselves, sharing our preferred pronouns and checking in about the previous week.

I will likely not be at CUCC on Feb. 2nd since Mark will be recovering from surgery in Chicago. Youth (6th grade - 12th grade) will remain in worship on Feb 2.

We will have Sunday School during the Children's Moment on Feb. 9th and youth group following worship that day. Youth are invited to bring their lunch that day. We will meet at CUCC in the Tower Room and conclude activities at 1:00 p.m.

We would like to have CUCC youth (6th grade and up) participate in the National Youth Event (NYE) 2020. It will take place at Purdue University in West Lafayette Indiana July 22-25th. This event is centered around faith, leadership, service and social justice. The cost is \$300 per youth. More information can be found here: <http://www.uccpages.org/nye/>. CUCC will provide \$75 camperships to offset the cost. Additional fundraising will happen. Registration will be open February 1st and we would like registrations to be completed by February 29th so youth and families can have the lowest price possible.

On a personal note, I am having surgery (and a procedure - eek!) on February 24th with a recovery time of 7-10 days so I will not be in worship on March 1st. Youth will be invited to participate in worship with their families on that day. I appreciate your prayers for quick healing and recovery.

Peace,
Jessica

Our Children Planting Deep Roots

The Our Children Planting Deep Roots campaign only has one more month! The Sunday School children are collecting funds to give back to the environment. We will be gathering donations from the congregation to plant a tree in one of our parks this spring and will also be sending seedlings and saplings overseas through a donation to Heifer International. Please help us reach our goal by donating today – and join us for our tree-planting ceremony this spring. If you donate through the church envelopes, write Children's Trees to indicate where your funds are going.



Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for these CUCC events!

Wednesday, February -1, Friday, February 31

Saturday, February 1, 8:45am- 1:30pm, CUCC Leadership Retreat

Tuesday, February 4, 7:30am-9:00am, Habitat for Humanity Breakfast 1807 Neil St. Champaign, IL

Thursday, February 6, 7:00am-8:00am, Men's Breakfast, Urbana Garden Family Restaurant

Wednesday, February 12, 8:30am, Just for Fun Breffas at Perkins

Tuesday, February 18, 11:30am Retiree's Lunch, at Neil Street Blues

Tuesday, February 18, 6:30pm-8:00pm, Church Life Board Meeting, Conference Room

Friday, February 21, 7:30pm-9:30pm, Queering Faith 3.0, Fellowship Hall

Friday, February 21, 5:00pm-7:00pm- Individuals Together, Jazz Happy Hour, Black Bird Bar, Urbana

Saturday, February 22, 9:30am, Queering Faith Brunch, Fellowship Hall, Kitchen

Tuesday, February 25, 4:00pm-5:00pm, Canteen Run, Kitchen

Wednesday, February 26, 11:30-1:15pm, Ashes to Go, Corner of 6th Street and Daniel Street

Wednesday, February 26, 7:00-8:00pm, Ash Wednesday Service, Sanctuary

Saturday, February 29, 6:00pm-8:00pm, People's Super, University YMCA Latzer Hall

Jubilee Café

Volunteers, we are currently trying to collect information from people on what size shirts you need! Then we can place an order. Please submit your size by February 17, 2020 to Johnell Bentz or Anna Barnes!

Jubilee Café continues to serve a free meal each Monday throughout the year, and we need you to volunteer! Sign up here, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090e45a5ae2caa8-volunteer12>, or go to our Facebook page, Jubilee Café CUCC.

Questions? Contact Johnell Bentz | Johnell.bentz@gmail.com | 217-840-6483, call or text.

Tenor and Alto Church Section Leader Positions Available

Community United Church of Christ (CUCC) is seeking one tenor and one alto section leader for rehearsals and services from September 2019-May 2020. Full details can be found on CUCC's website at <http://community-ucc.org/section-leader-openings/>. Please contact Music Director Kathy Lee to schedule an audition or discuss the position further: K.Kew.Lee@gmail.com, 203-605-3830.

News and Notes

Mental Health and Climate Change connects with UCC "special advisor on climate justice to the general minister and president of the United Church of Christ".

An article in this month's American Psychiatric Association news featured Rev Jim Antal – previously the Conference Minister of Massachusetts. I was surprised to see that he was a featured speaker at the October national meeting of the APA. When I spotted the report I suggested to Leah and Jessica that the web page of Rev Antal as a climate change activist should be shared in our Communigram. Leah suggested that it needs more than just an announcement, it needs some sort of explanation. The web page address is www.jimantal.com.

Now for the explanation. At a national level, psychiatry has recognized the issue of climate change as a matter of medical ethics. Section 7 of the Principles of Medical Ethics asserts, "A physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health". The psychiatric ethical analysis has especially emphasized the fact that climate change disproportionately impacts the poor and people of color (for example the poor are more likely to inhabit trailer homes and those homes are most at risk with the increase in tornados spawned by climate change, as are persons living in island nations – all of which are developing countries. It is noted that 21% of people of color in the US live within 3 miles of a Superfund site. Carrying this conversation further, the old and the poor are at much higher risk from heat related death than are the affluent who can afford both air conditioning and to travel out of the areas most affected by changing climate.

Perhaps more specifically, the illness category of "ecological grief" has entered our professional lexicon as a way of allowing us to identify and legitimize the feelings of loss experienced by people such as Inuits in Northern Canada or farmers in western Australia. But it can also apply in settings such as California fires which eliminate whole communities or leave people chronically anxious that their community may be next. The APA has added climate change issues to its public website, as well as having supported the formation of the Climate Psychiatry Alliance posted at www.climatepsychiatry.org/whoweare.

It was in this context that Rev Jim Antal was an invited speaker at the Mental Health Services Conference in October. This was for me an example of positive identification of religion within the official world of Psychiatry. He is quoted as carrying forward the standard message that to avoid catastrophe, the world must make the biggest adjustment that has ever been made by human beings, but he adds to that the moral imperative to "carry out this transition in a way that rectifies the massive inequity and inequality that our current distribution of assets represents". Continuing in ways that connect to the APA recognition of Grief he says "such grief isolates the individual because it's hard for the grieving person to imagine anyone else can understand the pain he or she is feeling. But now, as a result of the actions of seven generations of humans, the experience of loss of the Earth we once knew is universal"

I'm proud that a UCC person has moved forward into this kind of leadership. This article re-awakened my somewhat latent motivation to work on things beyond recycling plastic bags. The entire article may be located <https://psychnews.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.pn.2019.12a22>

FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE COMMISSIONING

Community United Church of Christ, Champaign, and The Eastern Association of the Illinois Conference, United Church of Christ, invite you to a Service of Commissioning for Linda Morgan as Faith Community Nurse at 10:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 8, 2020 at Community UCC in Champaign. A reception will follow. Linda has served as the Faith Community Nurse at CUCC since 2002 and we are thrilled to move into this new season of ministry together.

NEWS FROM THE JOHN BANDY CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY AND FAITH

We have two exciting developments to share with you!

First, you are invited to join Pastor Connie and her good friend Babrbara England for *Preparing to Become: A Mini-retreat to Begin Lent*. Barbara is an ordained Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA), an alum of the Upper Room's Academy for Spiritual Formation, a gifted artist, and a former church educator. She and Pastor Connie have led retreats together in the past and are pleased to have the opportunity to do so again.

This mini-retreat will serve as both an introduction to the book Pastor Leah will be using for our Lenten worship series, *Becoming Bread* by Gunilla Norris, and an invitation to go deeper with the weekly themes throughout the Lenten season. Books will be available for purchase (\$15) soon. During the mini-retreat, Barbara will introduce us to a way of prayer that combines *lectio divina* and Praying in Color. We'll also make prayer journals and Lenten kits that can be used in a variety of ways before closing with communion.

WHEN: Saturday, February 29

Space will open at 8, with light morning munchies available

Programming begins at 8:30 and will end around noon

WHERE: St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 905 S. Russell, Champaign

REGISTRATION: \$15 to cover costs.

Register by emailing Pastor Connie (connie@community-ucc.org) or

by filling out the registration form in the Sunday bulletin and putting it

and your payment (marked "mini-retreat") in the offering plate. (If you register by email, please bring payment with you-- cash or check.)

We will be inviting members of Barbara's home congregation, McKinley Presbyterian Church, and members of St. Peter's to join us for this mini-retreat, so please register early.

Second, we have been thinking about how we might offer more, and more flexible, opportunities for CUCCers to engage in spiritual formation and growth. We have found a resource that we want to try out this year and see if it might help us meet those needs.

For 2020, we have ordered a group subscription to *The Prayer Bench*, a Canadian ministry led by Janice McLean, a minister in the United Church of Canada. By doing that we are able to offer several ways for folks to participate in their own way, at their own pace. This year, the Prayer Bench will offer:

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- 10 monthly email retreats, with expanded editions for Lent and Advent (limited to 10 participants-- watch the weekly email for info about how to register)
- Holy Week reflections to use at home
- Stroll for Your Soul (a 3-week email experience designed to help you get moving and energize your prayer life-- unlimited participants)
- Summer devotions to take with you when you hit the road
- "The Spirituality of Aging" small group study
- Another small group study for Advent (theme to be announced later)

These resources will be released throughout the year. First up will be the email retreat "How Then Shall We Live?" Watch for more information to be released soon. February's retreat will focus on Pilgrimage, while March will be a readers retreat. Pastor Connie has used The Prayer Bench for continuing education in the past and is eager to share these resources with you.

Since this is new, we will be figuring out how best to share information and resources, so please be patient! If you have suggestions, please let us know.

Looking forward to growing together in 2020,

Pastor Connie

Pub Theology Update

Pub Theology is reading and discussing a new book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari. "From a renowned historian comes a groundbreaking narrative of humanity's creation and evolution - a number one international best seller - that explores the ways in which biology and history have defined us and enhanced our understanding of what it means to be 'human'."

We meet on Mondays at 7:15pm in the Parlor for about 75 minutes. Get a copy of the book and come join us. Any questions can be directed to Tom Ward.

All Church Adult Mission Trip -- Save the Date!

August 1-8, all CUCC adults are invited to travel to Biloxi, Mississippi to spend a week working at the United Church of Christ's historic Back Bay Mission. Mission trips at Back Bay Mission are some of the best service-learning experiences in the United States. During our week on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, we'll have the chance to serve in three of the Mission's ministries, learn about the work Back Bay does on the Coast, explore how we can deepen the work we do in our community, and grow in both faith and fellowship. We are still determining cost, but think the trip will be in the \$350 range with individuals paying for 4 meals out of pocket. (Financial assistance is available, see Pastor Leah.) You can reserve a spot by signing up in the Parlor and paying a \$50 non-refundable registration fee. Place a check in the offering plate and mark "Back Bay mission trip" in the memo line. We can take up to 30 people on this trip. It will be a life changer. Save the date today!

Christmas Fund Results!

A huge thank you, to you CUCC! We received \$815 for the Christmas Fund between Christmas Eve and the Sunday following Christmas.

CUCC and The Peace Light!

Please take a minute to read this amazing article published in the News Gazette about CUCC and the Peace Light. You can get to it via this short link: <https://tinyurl.com/cucc-peace-light>

This is the complete version of the story that was “edited for space” in the print version.



CUCC’s newest social group, “Individuals Together” is excited to report we have held three activities since November. Our attendance has averaged 5-7. In January, we enjoyed a Game night, even learning a new game courtesy of Aiden Larkin and Dad, Lance. (See attached photo). Since there are always many options of things to do, we have decided to take turns planning our monthly activities, so that everyone will have a chance to do their favorite thing!

Upcoming events being planned are:

February 21: Jazz Happy Hour at the Blackbird Bar in Urbana (119 W. Main St) from 5-7 PM.

March 7: Testing our problem solving skills at an Escape Room on March 7. Details to follow

April: A free thought-provoking movie at church in Fellowship Hall. Date TBA.

Sound interesting? If you are a CUCCer who lives alone, no matter your age or circumstance, you are most welcome to join us for any or all activities. We KNOW there are more of you out there!

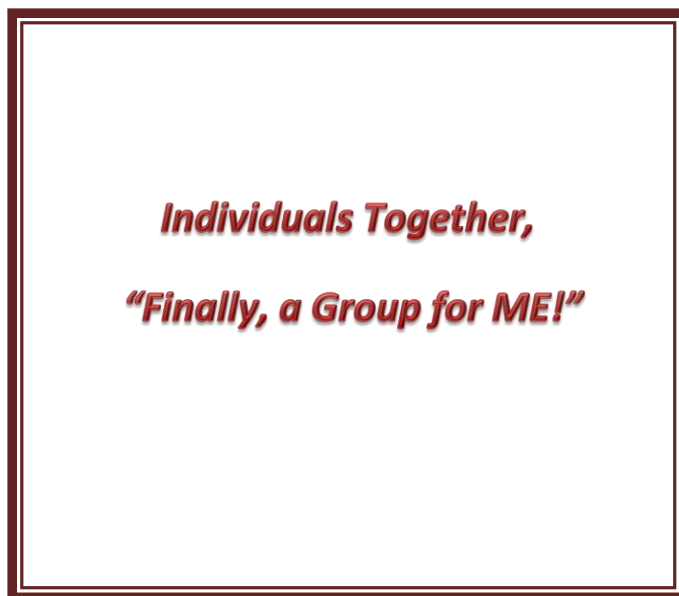
If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Linda Morgan, Faith Community Nurse.

If you’re interested in joining us, or have any questions, please contact Linda Morgan, Faith Community Nurse at 217-352-6375 or lindamorgan@sbcglobal.net.

This is a group for members of our CUCC church family who currently live alone (for whatever reason). The group will provide a way to connect with others on a monthly basis, for fellowship and fun activities of the group's choosing.

If you're interested in joining this group, or have any questions, please contact Linda Morgan, Faith Community Nurse at 217-352-6375 or lindamorgan@sbcglobal.net.

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RETIREE'S LUNCH

The Retiree's gathered on January 21, 2020 at The Courier Café for their monthly lunch. There were 20 people gathered for the celebration of Martha Seif's 90th birthday and Wally's birthday, a friend of Becky and Jan.

All retirees are welcome to attend the monthly lunch. Hope to see you February 18, 2020 at Neil Street at 11:30am.



Get Your New CUCC Travel Mug!

Take your love of CUCC on the go with a shiny new "We're worth our words" logo travel mug for only \$10. You can pay by cash or check in the offering plate or directly to the office (please clearly mark that your payment is for the mug) and then take your new mug from the display in the old entryway across from the Parlor door.

Hungry? We're selling our "Recipes for Success" cookbooks for \$10 as well--you can pay in the same way.

Check out CUCC's Library Inventory from the Comfort of Your Own Couch!



Our library is catalogued online at Library Thing-- www.librarything.com. Our username is Community-UCC (or community-ucc-- capitalization doesn't seem to matter). Our password is NB2016cucc. Or stop by the library in person and see what we have to offer!

Did you miss worship?

Don't fret if you missed worship last week, or even a month ago! Sermons are recorded live each Sunday and can be found at: www.youtube.com/communityucc. Just give us a couple of days to get the previous Sunday uploaded.

Contact CUCC:

805 S. Sixth Street, Champaign, IL. 61820 | 217-344-5091 | www.community-ucc.org | email: info@community-ucc.org
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday | 9am - 3pm