

# THE VOICE

December 2023



**Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist**

**4980 Gordon Ave. NW Cedar Rapids, IA 52405**

[www.peoplesuu.org](http://www.peoplesuu.org)



# Minister's Musings



The Article II Study Commission has proposed that we Unitarian Universalists articulate our shared faith as seven [Shared UU Values](#) (see image below). Additionally, they also proposed an update to our bylaw's "Inspirations" – which is where this month's theme is drawn from.

For December, the theme is [The Gift of Mystery](#). Part of the draft text for the Unitarian Universalist Association's proposed bylaw change reads as follows:

## Section C-2.3. Inspirations

**Direct experiences of transcending mystery and wonder are primary sources of Unitarian Universalist inspiration. These experiences open our hearts, renew our spirits, and transform our lives. We draw upon, and are inspired by, sacred, secular, and scientific understandings that help us make meaning and live into our values. These sources ground us and sustain us in ordinary, difficult, and joyous times...**

When I meditate on my direct experiences of mystery and wonder, I feel a mixture of awe, gratitude, and confusion. It can be scary to admit that I don't know the answers; it's difficult for me to relax into the not-knowing. When I am able to finally embrace mystery and wonder as part of my spiritual life, I am more likely to lean into trusting that the wider universe of beloveds will be with me on the journey into the unknown.

Feel free to read for yourself and reflect on the [Final Proposed Revision to Article II](#) which was completed by the Article II Study Commission in October 2023. I'd love to hear where your minds and hearts wander when you consider the transcending mystery and wonder in your lives.

In Growing Faith,

Rev. Carin



## *What's an Installation?*

A UU ministerial installation is a formal way to honor the covenant between a called minister and the congregation. It is a worship service that celebrates the joy both parties feel in having found each other and an invitation to individual and communal transformation.

Our upcoming installation will include a service with invited clergy and congregants, followed by a reception. All Peoples members and friends are invited to attend. Look for more information as the date draws closer, including ways you can participate.

**In the meantime, save the date:**

***Saturday, April 27, 2024***

***2:00 p.m. @ Peoples Church***

Questions? Ask Laura McGraw, Installation 2024 Team Chair.

# Sunday Worship



**Sunday, December 3, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“The Gift of Mystery” Rev. Carin Bringelson,**

Photo by Tony Litvyak on Unsplash

December is the month when stories of mystery and wonder are prevalent. Whenever we are waiting for the unknown, it requires deep resources of patience and trust. How might this season invite us to pause and consider the gifts inherent in the mystery and wonder of not-knowing?

*Service will be followed by a Congregational Meeting in the sanctuary – see article elsewhere in the newsletter. After the meeting we will be celebrating the successful BLAST OFF Stewardship Campaign!*

**Sunday, December 10, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“The Mystery of Human Rights” Rev. Carin Bringelson, Minister**



Image from <https://www.thescienceacademystemmagnet.org/>

It's been 75 years since the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Given the ways in which today's wars and conflicts dominate the daily headlines, we might wonder – why is it so hard for human beings to treat one another with respect and dignity? Come explore the ways each of us can participate in supporting human rights.

**Sunday, December 17, 2023 @ 11:00 a.m.**

**“December Holidays” Julie Olson and Faith Formation participants**

Today the Faith Formation kiddos and youth will be honoring the array of observances that the month of December has to offer. Bringing together our many unique talents, perspectives, and connections, any and all who would like to contribute are welcome to participate! Feel free to sign-up on the Faith Formation bulletin board and/or talk to Director of Faith Formation Julie Olson, [faithformation@peoplesuu.org](mailto:faithformation@peoplesuu.org).



Photo by Elena Kloppenburg on Unsplash

**Thursday, December 21, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.**



**“Blue Holiday Healing Circle” Rev. Carin Bringelson and Marion Patterson**

*See information on page 4*

Photo by Joshua Sukoff on Unsplash

**Sunday, December 24, 2023 @ 4 p.m.**

**“The Mystery of Hope on Christmas Eve” Rev. Carin Bringelson, Minister**

This afternoon, an all-ages worship service celebrating the Christian holiday will include stories, music, and poetry chosen to honor the sacred celebrations of holy births, winter blessings, and holiday wonder. Come prepared to sing and enjoy candlelight. The offering will go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund. *All are invited to bring a plate of cookies to share after worship. (Please note that our usual 11:00 a.m. worship is moving to 4:00 p.m. for this special holiday.)*



***Please join us for coffee and treats in the lower level after worship.***

Follow [\*\*\*this link\*\*\*](#) to our home page where you can join a  
live stream of our  
11am Sunday Worship service.

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

As Cedar Rapids begins once again to experience winter weather, now is a good time to remind everyone about the Peoples Church Inclement Weather Policy which is found at: <https://peoplesuu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Inclement-Weather-Policy-2022.pdf>

It reads, in part: “In the event of bad weather, everyone is encouraged to prioritize their own safety and the safety of their family. Only come to church if you are comfortably able.”

We apologize for any confusion about worship service being moved to Zoom-only on Sunday, November 26, 2023. Rev. Carin is working with the relevant parties to develop a procedure to implement the policy. Please contact her with any questions at: [minister@peoplesuu.org](mailto:minister@peoplesuu.org).

## **The Lea Morris Connection**

Honor the Dark, as you do the  
Light  
Receive the Gifts that come to us by  
Day and by Night...

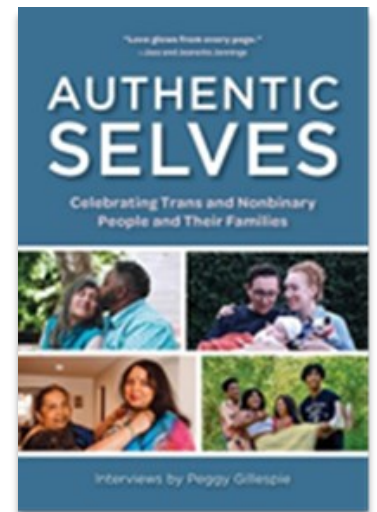
[https://youtu.be/oEztYa9uqKY?  
si=BtkvouRBd-Uy8raK](https://youtu.be/oEztYa9uqKY?si=BtkvouRBd-Uy8raK)



## Transgender Resources – from Rev. Carin

When I preached on “The Generosity of Genders” last month, I mentioned some resources that have been useful to me and might be useful to you. Here are some:

- Books for young people: [Trans, Nonbinary and GNC Voices](#)
- Recent book from the UUA’s publishing house: [Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families](#)
- Podcast from NPR Embedded: [All the Only Ones](#)
- Short training videos from a sibling UU congregation in Ohio: [Trans Etiquette Training](#)



Peoples choir will perform Sunday, December 3rd. There will be a practice at 10am that morning.

Questions to [pcuuchoir@gmail.com](mailto:pcuuchoir@gmail.com)

**Blue Holiday Healing Circle**  
**Thursday, December 21, 2023**  
**@ 10:00 a.m.**



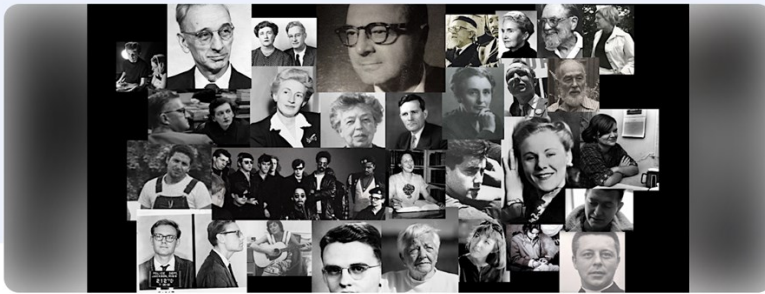
As the cycle of seasons changes, we find ourselves in the liminal space of both waiting and too much "busyness." Join Rev. Carin and Marion Patterson for a centering time. We will practice a technique to ground ourselves in times of stress while stepping into resiliency through appreciation. Join us in the Ely Room on Thursday, December 21, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. *Bring a bag lunch if you'd like to eat together afterwards.*



# SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Our First Sunday Plate Collection is to Great Plains Action Society

Organized and led by Indigenous People so that Indigenous voices, values and practices can be heard in Iowa and the upper Midwest. Campaigns of the group include opposing CO2 pipelines; increasing voter turnout; opposing big-ag practices that harm the land, air, and water; and Truthsgiving. The group led the efforts against the Dakota Access Pipeline and continues to fight pipelines that threatens the Missouri River and Iowa's border to the east.



### **White Antiracist Spirituality: Grounding Ourselves in the Historical Legacy**

Looking to deepen your White antiracist practice? Start your New Year off with a month of inspiration and grounding, by exploring powerful examples of White antiracist spirituality in U.S. history. You don't need to be a religious person to learn from and be inspired by these histories: This is for anyone seeking to embody a deeper, richer level of White antiracist practice

that will sustain your spirit and provide guidance for the long haul!

During the month of January, we'll meet each week to explore lessons to be learned from White antiracists throughout history, whose spirituality-in-action strongly embodied the following themes. While these themes may seem simple, each could be explored for a lifetime:

- Week 1: Building antiracist community.
- Week 2: Using our voice.
- Week 3: The wide tapestry of action.
- Week 4: Supporting Black & Brown led efforts.

*Everyone who signs up here on Eventbrite will be emailed Zoom links and readings for each session.*

To participate, click on the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/white-antiracist-spirituality-grounding-ourselves-in-the-historical-legacy-tickets-760713222727?aff=oddtcreator>

Facilitated by Lynn Burnett, creator of *CrossCulturalSolidarity.com* and *The White Antiracist Ancestry Project*. Lynn also hosts the monthly discussion group *Black Movement Thought*.

## Last Van Vechten Guild Event for 2023



December 11  
is our Annual  
Christmas Cookie Exchange!  
*All are Welcome!*

### Finance Team Update

The Finance Team met on 11/14/23 to review financial reports, ABC's of abundance, and related items.

Cash flow for October was positive:

- October income \$17,184
- October expenses \$14,960

### Popcorn! Popcorn! Come get your Popcorn!

Emily will be handing out popcorn orders THIS SUNDAY to anyone who was unable to receive their popcorn at the previous pick up. If you ordered popcorn and are unable to attend this Sunday to receive the order, please contact Emily's dad (Drew at [evans.drew.d@gmail.com](mailto:evans.drew.d@gmail.com) or (319) 721-5345) to arrange a separate drop-off/pick-up. Thank you so much to everyone who ordered popcorn from Emily. It was a very successful drive and she reached her goal of selling enough popcorn to cover next year's Scout dues!



**LIGHT FOR ALL with UU Ministry for Earth Wednesday, December 20, 2023**  
**at 4 pm PT/ 5 pm MT/ 6 pm CT/ 7 pm ET**

The Winter Solstice occurs when Earth's axis tilts away from the sun, making it the shortest day and longest night of the year for those living in the Northern Hemisphere. Join UUMFE the evening BEFORE the Winter Solstice for music, reflection, meditation, and spiritual grounding.

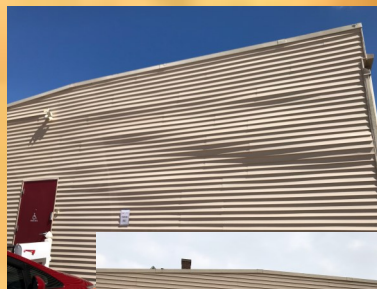
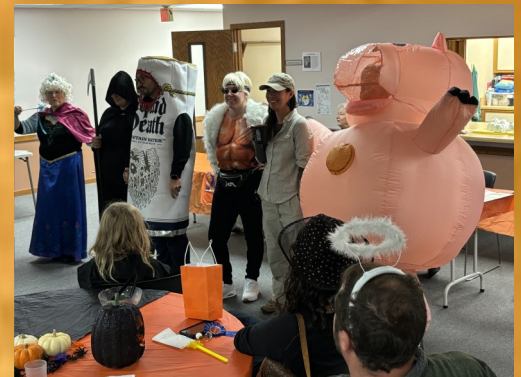
On this longest night, we will be featuring the work of the [Energy Democracy Project](#) and sharing a portion of our offering with them. Let's work for light for all on the longest night of the year. Our service is part of the larger arc of Clean Energy as a Human Right being led by Side with Love.

**Full information on speakers and music here:** <https://www.uumfe.org/support-for-activists/light-for-all/>

**Register to attend and receive the zoom link here:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZovcumurzgvGNfGw4IsyIL9eG3tGfc3ZGaL#/registration>

# 2023 the Year in Pictures





## The December Congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, December 3, 2023.

The meeting will take place in the Sanctuary and via Zoom immediately following our worship service.

This meeting is open to all members and friends; however, only members may vote on agenda items.

The meeting documents are available through this link to our website: <https://peoplesuu.org/documents/> under 2023 December Congregational Meeting documents.

We hope you will attend so that you can review and vote on the 2024 budget and on the Social Justice priorities and First Sunday Collections for 2024. There will be other information discussed at the meeting.



## General Assembly Coming to YOU

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles. Please join us online Wednesday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024 for this 4-day immersive experience where we participate in inspirational worship services and informative workshops, reconvene with friends and colleagues, and explore our virtual exhibit hall. GA is an unforgettable experience for the thousands of UUs who participate. You'll leave with renewed energy and innovative ideas to share with your congregation and community-at-large!

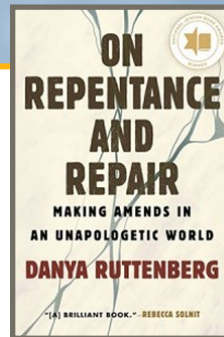
Watch this short video to learn more: <https://vimeo.com/884993935>

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST 8 PRINCIPLES

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
8. Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse, multicultural, Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions

## About this year's Common Read

The 2023–2024 UU Common Read is *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World* by Danya Ruttenberg.



This book invites us to explore a process, informed by Jewish tradition, that can help us take actions for meaningful atonement in our personal, community, and national lives.

Rooted in traditional Jewish concepts, while accessible to people from any, or no, religious background, *On Repentance and Repair* is a book for anyone who cares about creating a country and culture that is more whole than the one in which we live, and for anyone who has been hurt or who is struggling to take responsibility for their mistakes.

Readers will explore the call to be accountable in these modern times as they follow Rabbi Ruttenberg on a powerful journey into what it means to be human and accountable in a world filled with both pain and joy.

Learn more about the Common Read book and resources at <https://www.uua.org/read>.

## Covid Precautions Update

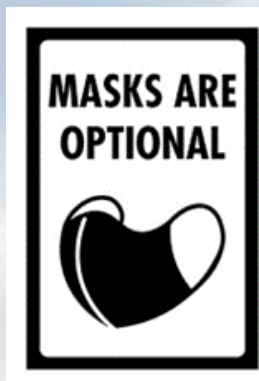
Peoples Church continues to care about you, your health, and the health of the congregation!

As of this writing (October 2023) hospitalizations in Linn County are low, and masking is currently optional in medical facilities. **Therefore, PCUU will continue our current policy of optional masking.**

If you are at high risk because of age or health conditions, please feel free to mask and social distance. Vaccinations are encouraged. Masks and hand sanitizer will continue to be available in the church. If you have cold symptoms or cough, please mask or better yet, stay home and join us online for worship until you have recovered.

Rev. Carin will work with nurses Paulette Montague and Kris Davis as well as the Board to update policies as needed. More information is available at:

[Iowa COVID Data](#)   [CDC Respiratory Virus Activity by State](#)



# Church Assistance



*Sign up here to be a greeter before Sunday worship!*



*Sign up here to help set up coffee hour before Sunday worship!*



*Sign up here to bring snacks for a Sunday coffee hour after worship.*



*Sign up here to bring flowers for a Sunday worship service.*

## Food Pantry Needs

- any canned vegetable *EXCEPT* green beans
- canned meat
- canned fruit
- canned pasta e.g. Spaghetti O's, Ravioli O's
- shelf stable juices
- peanut butter
- Jelly

- soup
- crackers
- cereal
- pancake mix
- granola and/or protein bars
- meals in a box
- potatoes e.g. instant, au grain



***As always, please check expiration dates!***

# December Events

3—Choir Practice 10am

Worship 11am

***Congregational Meeting 12pm***

8—First Day of Hanukkah (concludes the 15th)

10—Worship 11am

11—Van Vechten Guild 12pm Brown Bag Lunch and Cookie Exchange

12—Archives Meeting 10am

17—Worship led by Faith Formation 11am

20—Voice submissions for January are due

Social Justice Meeting 1pm

21—Holiday Healing Circle—10-11:30am (optional Brown Bag Lunch after)

24—Christmas Eve Service—***4pm***

*(You are welcome to bring a plate of cookies to share after worship.)*

26—Office closed

28—Board Meeting



## Good Neighbors December 2023

Kris Davis | 361-0280  
daviskris49@gmail.com

## Paraministers

Nov 20-Dec3—Rose Gabe  
Dec 4-17—Jan Federer  
Dec 17-31—Deborah Booth

## OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**President**  
Steve Hershner

### **Board of Trustee**

Members  
Kris Davis  
Sue Davis  
Marcy Mattison  
Cate Sheller  
Lu Wilcox

**Ex Officio**  
Rev. Carin Bringelson

**Treasurer**  
Gary McGraw  
(319) 373-9449

## QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

office@peoplesuu.org or  
(319) 362-9827

## OUR STAFF

Rev. Carin Bringelson  
**Minister**

(319) 362-9827  
Please email Rev. Carin to  
schedule an appointment

Julie Olson  
Director of Faith Formation  
(319) 362-9827

Christine Kullander  
Congregational  
Administrator  
(319) 362-9827

Office Hours  
Tuesday 8:30-2:30  
Wednesday 8:30-2:30  
Thursday 8:30-2:30  
Friday 8:30-10:30

Jackie Wedeking  
Internet Outreach Technician

Judy Mitschelen  
Pianist

Custodian  
Walter Robidoux

Childcare Provider  
Jordan Wylie

## PEOPLES CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

LEADING COMPASSIONATE LIVES  
THROUGH SPIRITUAL GROWTH  
AND JUST ACTION.

