

the **VOICE**

Embodying Resilience

FEBRUARY 2026



PEOPLES CHURCH
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

MINISTER MUSINGS



Loving the **WHOLE** body

by Rev. Carin Bringelson

It's been hard for me lately – and maybe for you, too. January was a doozy of a month and as I write this, many parts of the country are on the front lines of frigid temperatures and fights for democracy.

Times like these are why resilience is so necessary. Which is why this month's theme of Embodying Resilience might just be inviting us to return home to our bodies. Not simply our individual bodies, but our collective bodies, including...

- ✓ the body of our beloved planet, who provides for our sustenance
- ✓ the body of our international alliances, who crave the rule of law
- ✓ the body of our congregation, who connects across geographic space at various times

Our collective bodies deserve a love that prioritizes interdependence and natural transformation: we are never alone as we continue to grow and change. When love guides us, we might just have the resilience necessary to act for justice, to promote equity and diversity, and to share generously.

What do you do to embody resilience? What spiritual practices help you bounce back after hitting a wall? Which resources do you turn to when recovering from the shocks in your life?

For me, music making is one way to embody resilience. It helps me connect with my own body, with my fellow humans, and with Something Larger. It helps me feel grounded and strong. If you're interested in the Music Ministry at Peoples Church, please let me know. I'm gathering a group to do some dreaming – together.

Growing in Faith,

Rev. Carin



FAITH FORMATION



Do you just fit in, or do you truly belong?

by Interim Director of Faith Formation, Bridget Laflin

They tried to bury us; they didn't know we were seeds.

—Dinos Christianopoulos

As some of you know, I've been working with a 28-person Unitarian Universalist fellowship that formed inside Newton Correctional Facility near Newton, Iowa. For the past four months, I've been permitted to enter once a month to minister with them. In that time, I have learned more about embodied resilience than I ever expected.

The incarcerated men who founded this fellowship fought for more than two years just to have their UU group recognized as a legitimate religious body within the prison. Even after that recognition, they had to continue persistently and courageously advocating for permission to have outside clergy come in to lead worship and offer education about Unitarian Universalism. I was finally approved to volunteer in October.

These faithful men continue to press for the right to practice their UU faith in meaningful community. They risk retaliation by insisting on religious freedom, work against long odds to obtain even the most basic sacred objects, and

persist in seeking regular opportunities for worship, learning, and connection with clergy. No matter the barriers placed before them, they keep going.

The Newton UU Fellowship has had to fight for everything they have. And their resilience is extraordinary. When two of the leaders who helped establish the group were transferred to other facilities, others stepped forward to carry the work on. Now, one of those original leaders is beginning the process of forming a new UU fellowship in another Iowa prison. If the intent of those transfers was to weaken the movement, it seems to have done just the opposite.

When it feels like the world is burying you, remember that you embody resilience. You are a seed. Darkness can be a place of rest, of re-centering, and of growth toward something stronger.

Peace and Laughter,
Bridget Laflin
Interim Director of Faith Formation

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Embodying Resilience — Practicing

by Marcia Swift

Last month we explored practicing resistance. This month we are looking at practicing resilience. Just as resistance work takes practice so does building resilience.

I have been practicing social work for over fifty years. A good social worker not only works directly with marginalized and vulnerable people but also engages actively in social justice work. Without social justice action the systems which create marginalized and vulnerable people continue. Frankly, after fifty years of this work, I am tired. I am discouraged that I must keep repeating the same social justice actions over and over. What I did in the 60s and 70s to protest injustice I'm still doing today. It never ends! I am more than ready for the Mill? and Gen Z generations too take up the fight.

I rely on my practices of resilience to keep up the resistance. Perhaps some of these practices will work for you.

- ✓ Accept that I will die without seeing an end to injustice in our world.
- ✓ Appreciate the small steps I can make toward effecting social change.

- ✓ Engage in self-expression and emotional venting through my writing.
- ✓ Exercise most every part of my body daily.
- ✓ Listen to calming sounds especially while sleeping.
- ✓ Prioritize and focus on only a few social justice issues and actions so as not to become overwhelmed.
- ✓ Allow myself to be angry at injustice and yell at the news on the television.
- ✓ Celebrate the wins even if they are small.

Attend the Luncheon and VoC Service on February 8. 2026!

All are invited to experience an immigrant religious and cultural service in the building we share. The service will be in French with English interpretation. A soup lunch, made by our Faith Formation participants, will be served following our 11:00 am service.

SERVICES & FORUMS

Sunday, February 1, 2026

✓ “Still I Rise” at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Led by Danny Booth — On this first day of Black History Month, we use a poem by Maya Angelou to remember the resilience of a people that fought hard for their freedoms; a people who rose above the oppressive state which our forefathers placed upon them. We look to this inner strength to help us embody that same resilience today.

Sunday, February 8, 2026

✓ “Note to Self: Small Reminders of Sweet Resilience ” at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Led by Rev. Carin Bringelson — Tis’ the season for candies and flowers, but what messages do they send? Aren’t our bodies homes that are worth caring for in every season? How might we take care of our bodies – and the bodies of our neighbors – so that all might flourish with resilience? Today we will share reminders of a Liberating Love with each other.

Sunday, February 15, 2026

✓ Forum: Social Change Now at 9:45 a.m. in the Ely Room

People of all ages are invited to attend our fourth form to discuss the concepts presented in the books “Social Change Now” and “We Are the Builders” by Deepa Iyer. This week we will be learning about two of the roles people take in the social change ecosystem: Weavers and Storytellers. We will have hands on learning as well as discussion and creative activities. I would love to see you there! If you have any questions, please contact Bridget Laflin.

✓ “Dandelions and Other Role Models of Resilience ” at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Led by Rev. Carin Bringelson — Dandelions are the epitome of resilience. This morning we will explore dandelions and resilience through small group spiritual practices. Worship participants will choose between five different “practice rooms” (music making, storytelling, crafting, poetry writing, or movement meditation) before returning to the collective group. Come prepared to move with resilience around the building.

Sunday, February 22, 2026

✓ “Resilience for the Long Haul ” at 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Led by Josh Wagner, PCUU member — What does it look like to actually embody resilience when we’re tired? How do we show up for each other AND show up for ourselves to help make sure that we can return to a new normal baseline in our lives? Or maybe a “new normal” isn’t what we actually want? Come explore together.

February 2026

1 Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.
 Worship at 11:00 a.m.
 CUUPS Full Moon Ritual at 6:30 p.m.

3 Building and Grounds at 2:00 p.m.

8 Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.
 Worship at 11:00 a.m.
 Social Justice Lunch then Worship with Voice of Christ at 2:00 p.m.

10 Archives Committee at 10:00 a.m.
 Faith Formation Council at 6:30 p.m.
 Red Earth Nation Book Discussion at 6:30 p.m.

11 Social Justice Team at 1:00 p.m.

12 Farewell Zoom for David Kind at 12:00 p.m.
 Worship Arts Team at 6:30 p.m.

15 Forum: Social Change Now at 9:45 a.m.
 Worship at 11:00 a.m.
 CUUPS Meeting at 12:20 p.m.

22 Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.
 Worship at 11:00 a.m.

24 Journey Circle at 6:00 p.m.

26 Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

28 Journey Circle at 9:30 a.m.



PEOPLES CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

“Leading compassionate lives through spiritual growth and just action.”

BOARD of TRUSTEES

President

Robyn Miessler-Kubanek

Bob Butikofer

Emily Hoselton

Linda Levy

Josh Wagner

Lu Wilcox

Ex Officio

Rev. Carin Bringelson

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OUR STAFF

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Interim Director of Faith Formation

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Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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