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## The Minister's Muse

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Just when we thought that life couldn't get any more complicated we brought home a puppy. Our new puppy is a handful. She's gotten over the phase when she sleeps a lot and now she wants interaction - stimulation for her growing mind. She's busy watching everything and learning as fast as she can. She's busy trying to figure out how to get us to do what she wants as quickly as possible and - like any small being - she seems unaware that she may not know best. Since we moved into this house these weeks have been some of the most chaotic as she bolts around the house attempting to run off with everything and anything and can't imagine why we are trying to stop her. We still miss Louiza terribly, but it's good to have this living creature becoming a new part of our family - handful and all. We decided to name her Pema - after Pema Chodron - a Buddhist teacher we all admire. And certainly, as little furry Pema races and skids around the house, she is a teacher - the sort who reminds you to take a deep breath and stay centered so you can handle everything she's offering. When she runs off with another pair of socks or pulls over a laundry hamper — when she takes a new pair of boots and tries to claim them as a chew toy - she teaches us how to slow down - remember that she simply doesn't know yet, and say no - with firm compassion and without getting stressed out. It's a good learning curve. Somehow, of course, you imagine that a teacher is going to be a mellow creature. Someone who sits peacefully and drops gems of wisdom into your laps. Those teachers are few and far between - far easier to find are the ones that push us back into ourselves and ask us to find our resources or lose our minds. She'll grow to be a big dog - a standard poodle. But, for now, she's a few handfuls of fluff. She's black and when she curls up on the floor she behaves just like my handbag - so quiet and dark I can't find it. She blends into shadows and, when she rests on her pillow - which is also black - she disappears altogether. It's a joy, though, to send her outside in the snow. There you can find her quite easily. And she loves the outdoors. She rushes out the door and buries her face in the snow - sometimes she looks like a doctor wearing an operating mask, sometimes like one of those ads - that say "got snow?" When she first arrived, her legs were so short that the snow was impossible for her to walk through. So Mark shoveled a path around the outer perimeter of the back yard for her to walk in and we all use it to take short strolls with her. Round and round. As it happens, though, when we aren't with her she still uses the path - she takes circuits around it like it was a path through the forest. But recently we started inviting other dogs over to play with her. They can run like maniacs through the backyard together and tumble through the snow. But her friends are bigger than she is. So they get to run and she gets to bounce bunny-like through the snow. When her friends are over, they are off the beaten path and they have filled the yard with paw prints. It was only today that finally, with all the tracks in the snow, I watched her, on her own, step off her walkway and head into deeper snow. One of the most important things that a puppy does, or in fact, that dogs do generally, is teach me to forget about the complexities, sometimes only for a few moments, but still... There is something compelling about her piercing eyes, her velvet ears, her sudden bursts of joy and sudden needs for rest, and something irresistible when I sit on the floor and feel her very light weight lean against me and she has magically shown up just to be close. No - she's no little bodhisattva right now - she's no puppy who can meditate in a half lotus and softly chant. She's more like a prayer wheel that spins and spins - and inside is a prayer and outside is a whirling beauty that teaches peace. So we named her aptly - Pema - for all she teaches and Chewdron - for all she chews. May we all find gentle teachers and recognize the other teachers who spin through our lives offering more challenging lessons. Sometimes, perhaps, they are one and the same.

### **UU Math: Or thoughts on being involved without getting toasted**

I was doing some math recently and I realized that with approximately 276 adult members of the congregation and then factoring in variables of availability and adding those who are participating but not members - if every one who could offered to make coffee - let's say 200 people to be conservative - then each person who volunteered would only have to make the coffee approximately once every three years. The same would apply to bringing a coffee cake or some cookies. But if you multiply that by the goodwill and great hospitality that it would create - the results are unlimited. I suppose that would apply to ushering and other areas of congregational life. So - consider making coffee - I am sure that there will be people who can help you to get it started and after that - it will be easy. If you just learn about it one Sunday for a few minutes and then sign up - we will always be ready for welcoming one another.

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## Religious Education (RE) News

### Calling All RE Teachers

It's Mardi Gras time, and the RE Council is organizing a teacher appreciation party for you - Saturday, Feb. 28, 11:30am - 1:30 pm! Watch for your invitation this week! We look forward to showing our appreciation for all you do to guide our children and youth!

### Thank you

Thank you to everyone who helped make last Sunday's all-church potluck a success. It's always good to gather for food and fellowship, and we greatly appreciate everyone who helped make it possible for all to enjoy!

### Guest At Your Table Raises \$1,038.17

A special thank you to all who participated in the Guest At Your Table program. Thanks to your generosity, \$1,038.17 was raised for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. Your donation will make human rights accessible, connecting the underlying values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to UU values. Together, you have shown we can make a difference.

### Path to Membership Classes

This three-session class covers UU history, traditions, Principles, practices and beliefs, as well as Countryside history, society, stewardship, and more. The classes include time for discussion, socializing and refreshments. The next classes will be held from 7-9 pm on Tuesday, March 31; Wednesday, April 8; and Thursday, April 16. It is led by members of the Membership Committee and Rev. Hilary.

Sign up on the kiosk near the greeter window.

### FUNdraising News

We have begun a fundraising program of selling quality gourmet desserts for the Spring Holidays. Please take an order form and sign up your friends, neighbors and co-workers!

### Souper Sundays

Starting soon ... if you love to make soup, please take a few quart containers and fill them with your home-made soup. Then bring them to church Sunday and let your fellow church family members buy your creations and enjoy a warm bowl after church. A great way to share, and raise money for our house!

Bread bakers? You can bring in a loaf to go along with the soup! (hint, hint)

Calling all helpers! If you would like to help in FUNdraising, please contact Deeya Pavelle.

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## In Sympathy

The sympathy of the congregation is extended to Mary Anne O'Toole and family on the death of her father, James O'Toole.

### Radical Hospitality At Work

We are asking all of you who are able-bodied to begin parking in the park district lot south of the church or the school district lot across the street on Sunday mornings, even if there are empty spots in the church's main parking lot. We want to save as many empty spots as possible in the main lot for visitors. We believe this will be more welcoming and friendly to those who visit for the first time, since we have no signs noting our additional parking. We are trying to make every aspect of the "Sunday Experience" visitor friendly. Thank you for your cooperation in our efforts. ...*The Membership Committee*

### Book Discussions

#### Book Circle

All are warmly welcome to join the Book Circle discussions. Our next selection is *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn. We will cover the first 12 chapters on Sunday, March 1, and the remainder on Sunday, March 29. Both meetings will be held at 6:30 pm in room 6.

#### Last Mondays Book Discussion

Please join us at 7 pm in the Stokes Room on the last Monday of the month. Our upcoming discussions are:

- Feb.23: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz. *Winner of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize.*

## focus

### Published by Countryside Church

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Church Office Hours *Mon, Tues, Thurs: 9am-2pm  
Weds: 2-8 pm; Fri:9am-Noon*

Minister *Hilary Landau Krivchenia*  
Director of Religious Education *Colleen Vahey*  
Music Director & Pianist *Jeffrey Hamrick*  
Minister Emeritus *Dr. Ruppert L. Lovely*  
Community-Based Minister *Dr. C. Scot Giles*  
Music Director Emeritus *John Denny*  
Congregational Administrator *Laurie Lantz*

#### Lay Ministers

Ken Bobbe and Trudy Kleckner, Coordinators  
Richard Chay                      Joyce Swedlund  
Larry Frank                        Kimberly Tilford  
Jane Matthews                    Dan Yokas

For assistance from our Lay or Care Ministries, please call Ken or Trudy.

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## Adult Faith Development News

### Dream Group Workshop - February 7

Saturday, Feb. 7, 1-3 p.m. Join us as we seek to understand the deeper meanings of our dreams. The workshop will be facilitated by Pat Cochran, Psy.D., Executive Director of the Carl Jung Center of Evanston. Suggested donation: \$10.

### Movies with Meaning - 2nd Friday Film Series

Join us the second Friday of each month, 7-9 pm, for enlightening discussion and exploration. On Friday, February 13, we will explore the theme of creativity and fulfillment and watch the 20-minute TED talk by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (this was originally scheduled for January and was re-scheduled due to bad weather).

### Thinking Scripture

7-8:30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays in March, April, and May

Encounter sacred scripture - beginning with Genesis and moving through the sacred texts of the world. Using story and discussion, we'll ask ourselves and share with one another what meaning can be found and what meaning may have been intended in these ancient texts. Rather than focusing on one interpretation of sacred story we will seek to find the meaning between our interpretations. This ongoing class begins with reading John Buehrens's Understanding The Bible and a number of hand-outs. Please register in advance by calling the church office (847-359-8440) or sign-up on the bulletin board across from the church office. Course facilitated by the Rev. Hilary Krivchenia.

### Save the Date: Journeys Retreat May 15-16

Our annual Adult Faith Development retreat will be held on the beautiful grounds of University of St. Mary's of the Lake in Mundelein. Lodging is available, or you may commute. Led by the Rev. Hilary Krivchenia. For more information or to register, contact the church office, 847-359-8440.

### Belly-Dancing

Sundays, 12-1:30pm, through March. To learn more, contact instructor and member, Caryann Wood, 708-305-7284, karimahilwa@hotmail.com.

For a complete list of ongoing AFD classes and events, visit <http://better-day.info/AFD/>.

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## Support, Talent, Ideas, Collaboration

### Special Meeting February 19

Are you struggling with your career/job, facing a lay-off or a forced retirement? Are you trying to re-invent yourself?

A few of us from Countryside Church who were in the same situation started meeting weekly to talk and offer ideas and support. We discovered how helpful it is when we put our heads (and hearts) together. Support, Talent, Ideas, and Collaboration (STIC) is what we're all about. We offer one another moral support, brainstorm about ways to use our individual and pooled talents to open up new opportunities, share business ideas, and seek ways to collaborate on projects under way.

This approach, which arose from ad hoc meetings over coffee, is still evolving and has offered us a forum for close sharing of ideas, concerns, and a supportive community. In fact, we think others might like to start groups like it. And we've decided we should help others in the church who would like to get these same rewards. We'd like to share what we do in the hope that it will spawn more groups like ours. In order to kick-start this we decided to hold an informational meeting to share what we have learned-and you are invited. If you're interested in finding out more, come to the open meeting at Countryside in Room # 1 on February 19 at 7 pm. Our group normally meets at a coffee shop in Deer Park, but we have scheduled this meeting at the church to accommodate those interested.

...K. Sepos, T. MacTavish, D. Wiseman, G. LaBedz, B. Bendix, H. Snyder, M. Gilley-Members of the Deer Park Consortium

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## Your Neighbors Thank You

Many thanks for your contributions to the Palatine Township Food Pantry. A carload of food items was delivered to the food pantry a couple of weeks ago, and the volunteers were really grateful.

The Palatine Township food pantry serves several hundred local families a month. You won't be surprised to hear that a December, 2008 study conducted by Feeding America confirmed that there is an increase in demand for food assistance this year. Food banks reported that the need is increasing between 25 and 40% due to the rising cost of food, increasing unemployment and underemployment, and mortgage/rent costs. A full 99% of the food banks reported seeing more first-time users recently.

Thank you for helping to put food on the tables of your neighbors in Palatine.

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## Gardening for “Eating Green”

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Do you know that what you eat for dinner has a greater impact on the environment than the car you drive or the lightbulbs you use?

An Eating Green Study and Support Group is forming to investigate the environmental, ethical, and health ramifications of the food choices that we make. Buying foods grown sustainably, avoiding processed food-like products, factory vs. humane animal farming, genetically modified foods, organic foods, government farm policy, fair trade and human justice for agricultural workers, food/fasting and spirituality, greenwashing, and planning next month’s shopping and cooking will be addressed. Field trips and sharing of local food deliveries and resource materials will also be attempted. The group will support each other’s conscientious food decisions and goals. It is likely that, just as we select different cars to drive, group members will make different food choices.

Countryside will be ahead of the curve as the UUA rolls out its Ethical Eating, Food & Environmental Justice Action/Study Issue in the coming years.

You are warmly invited to become part of the group. If you are interested in exploring the ways our food choices impact our planet, its inhabitants, and our health, and then setting personal goals for acting on that information, please join us for our first meeting after worship service on Sunday, March 1, when we will discuss What to Grow in Your Garden.

Countryside’s own panel of experts will help us get started. Donna Calwas, Linda Kuna, and Judy Miller will be on hand to provide guidance and answer our questions about successfully growing healthy and delicious fruits and vegetables locally—in our own backyards, on our apartment balconies, or in the church’s community garden.

Since March 1 is a potluck Sunday, fill your plate along the way, and bring it with you for an informative and inspiring lunch period. The meeting is expected to last no more than one hour. For more information, contact Miles Wrigley or Ron Vargason.

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### “Now is the Time!”

The UUs for Social Justice of Chicago and the Chicago Area UU Council present a workshop about doing effective social justice advocacy on Saturday, February 21, 9 am - 3 pm, at Third Unitarian Church, 301 N Mayfield, [www.thirdunitarianchurch.org](http://www.thirdunitarianchurch.org).

Adam Gerhardstein and Kat Liu, Directors of the UU Washington Office for Advocacy, will help us to be of use to initiatives that promote our Unitarian Universalist values. They’ll help us frame issues from an authentic, religious perspective and consider how we go out as UUs to serve the needs for social justice in our communities. They will look at how we connect with other faith communities to build broader circles of influence and share strategies for moving into wider circles of influence such as city, state, and national legislatures. The \$10 registr. fee includes materials, morning munchies, and lunch. Register by email to [info@cauuc.org](mailto:info@cauuc.org). More info: [www.cauuc.org](http://www.cauuc.org)

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### Young Adult Valentine Dance

The young adults of the Unitarian Church of Evanston invite you to a dance on February 14, 8-11 p.m. Tickets are \$25 (\$20 in advance by calling 847-864-1330); all proceeds go to the Evanston YWCA. The dance is open to all comers, high school-age and older. This is a welcoming event! UCE is at 1330 Ridge Ave., one block north of the intersection of Ridge and Dempster; 4 blocks west of the Purple Line “El” stop.

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### Job Ministry

If you have questions regarding St. Hubert Job Ministry Events, call Bob Podgorski at 847-925-6005.

- **Resumé Review. February 7, 9-11 am**, St. James Church, 820 N Arlington Heights Rd, Arlington Hts. Bring your resume for a personal evaluation by one of six HR, Search, or career counselors who will be on hand to give you their thoughts and suggestions. Bring a friend - this is for all occupations and levels.
- **Your Circle of Support. February 9\*\***, 7-9:15pm, St. Hubert Ministry Center, 729 Grand Canyon, Hoffman Estates. Long time friend of the Ministry and former Team member Jerry Koncel will present a program that will help you develop a strong circle of support surrounding you in your job search. Jerry is Editor of two B2B Magazines and a communications expert. His programs are always well received, helpful and practical.
- **\*\*For the Newcomer**: If you are new to Networking and/or job search, join us at St. Hubert, 6:00 pm, prior to our regular meetings on the second Monday of the month. We offer a one-hour program on how to participate in a networking meeting effectively; the tools you’ll need, such as an elevator speech, handbills; and how to generate leads and contacts.
- **Critical Job Search Tools. February 19**, 7 pm, Queen of Rosary Church, 680 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village. We are pleased to have Ralph Young from the Tricity Unemployment Group (TUG). He has developed insights over years of successful counseling Job Seekers.

## Upcoming Meetings and Events

A complete calendar of all events and meetings held in the building is on the website: [www.ccuu.org](http://www.ccuu.org). If your church meeting is not listed there, please fill out a room reservation form and submit it to the church office.

Wed 2/4	7pm	Palestine-Israel Forum	Sun 2/15	8:30am	Artist's Way Covenant Group
	7pm	Wednesday Kinship Circle		9am	Buddhist Dharma Group
	7:30pm	Menzgroup Covenant Group		9am	OWL (4th-5th grades)
Thu 2/5	7:15pm	Church Choir Rehearsal		9:15am	Open Forum Discussion
Sat 2/7	8:30am	Zen Wkshp, <a href="http://www.greatplainszen.org">www.greatplainszen.org</a>		11:30am	Chocolate Fest
	1pm	Dream Workshop		12pm	Social Action Meeting
Sun 2/8	8:30am	Conversations with God Covenant Grp		12pm	Bellydancing Class
	9am	OWL (4th-5th grades)		12pm	Nominating Ctte Mtg
	9:15am	Open Forum Discussion		12pm	OWL (7-9)
	11:30am	Meet the Minister		7pm	Youth Covenant Group
	12pm	RE Council Mtg	Mon 2/16	7pm	Christianity in the Age of Ideology
	12pm	Bellydancing Class		7pm	Experiencing God Covenant Group
	12pm	Movement for Fun Group	Tue 2/17	7pm	Board of Trustees Mtg
	12pm	Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting	Wed 2/18	6:30pm	All My Money Ctte Mtg
	1:30pm	Common Ground Lecture		7pm	Compassionate Comm. Support Group
	7pm	Youth Covenant Group	Thu 2/19	7pm	STIC Meeting (see p.4)
Mon 2/9	7pm	Christianity in the Age of Ideology		7:15pm	Church Choir Rehearsal
Tue 2/10	7pm	AFD DPC Forum	Fri 2/20	10am	Daytime Kinship Circle
	7:30pm	Tuesday Kinship Circle	Sat 2/21	TBD	Circle Suppers
Wed 2/11	7pm	Finance Ctte Mtg	<b>Upcoming Focus Deadlines</b> <b>February 16 and March 2 @ 9 am</b> Submissions can be submitted to the church office or e-mailed to <a href="mailto:ccuu@ccuu.org">ccuu@ccuu.org</a> .		
Thu 2/12	7:15pm	Church Choir Rehearsal			
	7:30pm	Amnesty International Meeting			
Fri 2/13	7pm	AFD Movie Night			
Sat 2/14	8:45am	Rise Up and Call Her Name			

Return Service Requested  
Time-dated Material - Prompt Delivery Requested

**COUNTRYSIDE CHURCH**  
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