

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the warm welcome back after my three-month sabbatical. The photo is of me at Chandragiri Hills in Nepal. I've been back almost 3 weeks and ask for your continued patience as I catch up with individuals and teams. You have been busy while I was away!

If you are new to UCE, welcome! 79 visitors filled out a visitor form while I was away, which means we had more folks than that visit us for the first time in the past three months. The new folks I have met since my return have shared with me about how welcome they have felt. Whether you are a new visitor or a long-time member, please continue to greet folks you do not recognize on Sunday morning and help each other get connected with our programs and teams.

The increase in visitors is, I think, largely due to the constant and chaotic communications coming from our federal government. So many of us are looking for a place where we can be our authentic selves, renew our faith in humanity, and take action within the context of shared values. Coming together for worship, for our Meeting our Interfaith Neighbors classes, and to be part of our support groups and our affinity groups are ways to nourish our spirits and meet folks who share our values and a vision for a future that at least tries to leave no one behind. If you aren't yet feeling connected in the way you had hoped (regardless of how long you have been attending UCE), please email me at sfrances@ucevanston.org and let's talk.

One way we come together to nourish our spirits is to join together in living our values out in the world. Please join me at one of these upcoming events:

- **Friday, April 4, from 12:00-1:30 pm at UCE in Room 3 for ACLU livestream watch party.** We will be viewing the livestream of the annual Bill of Rights Luncheon of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois (ACLU-IL). The program will feature keynote speaker Sherrilyn Ifill on the fight for a new American democracy. Bring your own lunch with you.

If you want to get involved in UCE's engagement with preserving and advancing American democracy, please fill out this form with our Catalyst for Democracy Team [\[insert link under "this form with our Catalyst for Democracy" - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSckOWrP6SvBa73wK2pwWxGARBBXE2atNxa_KczC68ghjT2Hlw/viewform .](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSckOWrP6SvBa73wK2pwWxGARBBXE2atNxa_KczC68ghjT2Hlw/viewform)

- **Saturday, April 5, starting at 12:00 pm at the Daley Plaza, 50 W. Washington Street, Chicago, for protest rally.** We will be joining the many organizations that are demonstrating across the U.S. The rally here in Chicago is called "Hands Off! Rally to Rise Up and Fight Back to Stop Trump and Musk's Power Grab." You are invited to meet me by 11:50 am outside the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State Street, and we'll walk over to the Daley Plaza together. I'll be wearing a bright yellow Side with Love stole.
- **Saturday, April 12, from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm at UCE in the sanctuary for UCE Justice Revival: Cultivating Hope.** Led by our consultants from the YWCA Equity Institute and members of our Anti-Oppression Task Force, we will gather for community

learning and feedback on the tools and systems the Task Force has put into place over the past four years as the Task Force winds down and gathers final input before submitting its report to the Board. Our anti-oppression work does not end when the Task Force ends. The Revival will ask each of us to make a commitment to being involved in our congregation's ongoing anti-oppression work. I hope to see you there!

Register Here for the UCE Justice Revival [\[insert link under "Register Here"\]](#) - <https://onrealm.org/ucevanston/PublicRegistrations/Event?linkString=OGIxMjdIOGEtZWJmYi00ZjJmLTliNmYtYjYjYjAxNmYxMDQz> .

I am grateful for being part of this community. I appreciate now more than ever the importance our faith community places on balancing rest and rejuvenation with social action and civic engagement.

Yours in faith,
Rev. Susan