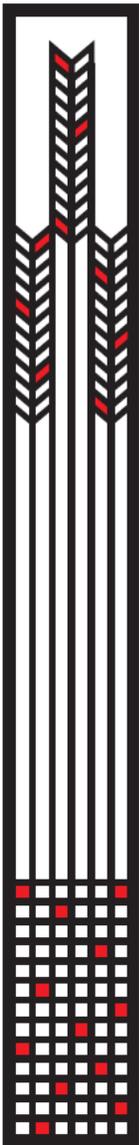




# THE TOUCHSTONE

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*Spring 2020*



In April, 2019, the Beautification Committee was formed to enhance our physical space in preparation for our 150-year anniversary celebration and for our next 150 years. At the inaugural meeting the committee came up with a list of five shared core values: community, authenticity, inspiration, growth, and, lastly, legacy. These core values guide our work as we have identified and evaluated an assortment of potential improvements, ranging from quick “punch list” items to long-term projects. Throughout our meetings, one word has returned over and over again: “Welcoming”. It is important that our desire to be a welcoming congregation is manifested in both our words and actions and in the physical space our church provides. This includes not only visitors and guests as they enter our church for the first time, but also our fellow members as we join for service or commune in our offices and living rooms.

To that end, the committee has decided on three areas of focus. Firstly, the architectural beauty of the church entryway can be accentuated through improved lighting or an art installation. We envision this area drawing passerby’s from the street and inspiring them upon entry. Secondly, the paint in the church is ready for a refresh. By utilizing talent in our congregation, repainting the church is a relatively low-cost activity which will provide disproportionately high value. Thirdly, limited but impactful recarpeting of the RE building is long overdue and will significantly improve its aesthetics while creating a better work environment for our invaluable staff.

We know that this is an important period of transition for all of us, and we must be respectful of all our church’s resources. We recognize that as we continue our research these priorities may have to be adjusted. But we feel these are projects that can be completed within our means and will have substantial and long-lasting impacts on our church community.

We welcome anyone interested to meet with us in the sanctuary at noon on Sunday, March 15 to discuss the progress of the Beautification Committee, how we’ve arrived at these priorities, and our vision going forward. We will also be updating the congregation through News and Notes as news arises. Finally, you may always reach out to the committee by contacting Karen McDowell, Thom Brackett, Reverend Pam, Pam Fodor, or Gene Schafer.



**Worldwide Vegan Bake Sale** - Animal Ministry needs YOU to help make this the best, biggest, tastiest bake sale yet! Our annual bake sale will be Sunday, April 26 following the service, and we'd love to see everyone volunteer to bake one item! Buyers are appreciated, too! Bakers can email [uchanimalministry@gmail.com](mailto:uchanimalministry@gmail.com) to volunteer. We'd also be happy to help you convert your favorite family recipes. This year's proceeds go to Catnap from the Heart rescue ([catnapfromtheheart.org](http://catnapfromtheheart.org)).

Please also join Animal Ministry on March 15 after service at coffee hour, where we'll be sampling some meatless goodies for National Meat Out Day (March 20).

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## **Our New Heating & Cooling System: What You Need to Know**



Last November, we celebrated closing out the Green Home Campaign and having all the final projects completed – hooray! Now begins the transition to adjusting to the differences in our new system in real life. These new a/c and heating units deliver a much different kind of heat than the old boiler system did. With that, water boiled, and very hot air entered our shared spaces quickly warming the area when the thermostat was raised.

Our new system is designed to be much more energy efficient and behaves differently. It functions by taking heat out of air and pushing it inside during cold weather and outside during hot. The air that it moves is much cooler – around 100 degrees – rather than the 140 degrees produced by the old boiler system.

What this means in actual use is that it takes much longer to bring a room to the desired temperature. This fall, your staff has been experimenting with how long it takes to warm a room and how much we can set back the temps to save energy. What we've learned is that it takes a very long time – and that raising the temperatures on the hand-held controls do little to raise (or lower) the temperature in the short term.

This has led to more than a few times when someone has boosted the controls to 80 degrees, hoping to get the room warmer faster without success; however, by the next morning, the room has become very hot.

Another challenge is that all units must be in the same mode or the system freezes up and shuts down. Thus, you cannot have one unit running heat and another running air conditioning. We've had a few instances where people have turned the unit to a/c in the fall because they felt warm, and we later came in to find the system on standby.

Because of this, we are removing all the handheld controls from the rooms now that we have achieved a good temperature for each of the spaces. There will be a little more adjustment in the summer months, but for now, the temps have been set, and we trust, with the excellent insulation in the roof and the wonderful air-tight windows, will remain comfortable for our meetings and events.

If you have questions about our ongoing adjustments, please ask Rev Pam or any member of the Green Home Team. We are excited about a new relationship with the earth and a system that uses the clean energy produced by our solar panels and keeps us comfy throughout the year.



## Parole Advocacy Update

Thank you to all of those who helped make the Parole IL Forum a success by your participation in planning or attending it...or both! Our objective was to make people aware that there have been no parole opportunities since 1978 in Illinois. When we talk about parole, we mean that those who are incarcerated have the opportunity to go before a parole board to show their rehabilitation and to show they are not a risk to public safety, perhaps to be released early. The UCH team sees our role to research, educate and advocate.

We both came to this work after having written to pen pals in the prison ministry program, through UUPMI. We have gotten to know our pen pals, and we know they are not the same

people who they were 30 years ago. They should at least have an opportunity to state their case to a parole board, but they don't. One, for instance, is working on his master's degree in theology and hopes to have a ministry to at-risk youth, specifically young adult black men. He, however, has served 30 years, and has 30 years to go.

Since our forum, we have been researching what is happening with a parole bill this session as well as getting to know the criminal justice landscape. We're making connections and listening to many advocates including those incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. We've connected with other groups who focus on this work - Parole Illinois, UUPMI, Restore Justice, and Justice Debate League.

We have also learned there will be a parole bill that would establish the right to be reviewed by a board if the person is 60 years and older and has served 20 years, or if the person has served 30 years. This bill is sponsored by Rep. Anne Stava-Murray of the 81st district. As of this writing, the bill was being written and did not have a number.

However, there may be another parole bill as well that is more inclusive and not based on age.

When we have more details confirmed, we will be looking to you to 1) send witness slips so the bill makes it out of committee and then 2) call or visit your legislator to say you support the bill. For now, know who your state legislator is and get your computer and phones ready for action. We'll send you the details when we know them.

How does this fit in with our faith? Overall, we are working to advocate for the worth and dignity of all persons, including those incarcerated. We all know the prison system is an example of structural racism, so working on this is addressing this racial injustice. If you want to be more deeply involved in this work, please contact [socialjustice@hinsdaleunitarian.org](mailto:socialjustice@hinsdaleunitarian.org).

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