

Unitarian Church of Underwood  
Annual Meeting Agenda  
April 21, 2013

**Mission** – The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people who gather to reflect, to find refuge, spiritual renewal and intellectual growth; to improve our understanding of the world; to build bridges towards peace and understanding; and to improve lives and opportunities across our communities.

**Agenda** –

Call to Order  
Meditation/Reading  
Approve Agenda  
Approve Minutes of the April 15, 2012 Annual Meeting

Reports

President's Report  
Treasurer's Report  
Administrative Consultant Report  
Program Committee Report  
Outreach Committee Report  
Facilities Committee Report  
Membership committee Report  
Stewardship Committee Report  
Nominating Committee Report

Old Business

Other

New Business

2013-14 Budget  
Strategic Plan (5 Year Plan)  
By- law change (Mission Statement)

Current By- Law (Mission Statement) - *The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people who gather to reflect, to find refuge, spiritual renewal and intellectual growth; to improve our understanding of our world; to build bridges towards peace and understanding; and to improve lives and opportunities across our communities.*

Proposed By-Law (Mission Statement) – *The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people where our celebration of life and common search for meaning bind us together.*

Other

## President's Report – By Ellen Eastby

This has been an incredible year as I have gotten to know all of you and the church itself much better. I first want to thank each and every one of you for bringing your own unique gifts and perspectives to the table as we worked together to make progress in many areas of the church, which I will mention in a moment. I also want to thank those people who served on the board of directors this year. They are Donn Siems – Vice President, - Norman Kolstad – Secretary, David Wass – Treasurer, Luke Anderson, Mary Anderson, Dave McRoberts, John Minge, Alisha Piekarski, and Mary Worner. They are some of the most dedicated people I have met and they have tolerated some mighty long board meetings this year. A big thank you goes out to JoAnn Larson our Administrative Consultant, who works very hard to empower the processes and members of the church to make us the great congregation that we are. There are others that I would like to thank, people like Ron Roller who does our books, Susan Groff who does the janitorial work in the church, Marguerite Andrews who sends out the weekly report, and the many others who are indispensable in carrying out the mission of the church. I just can't mention you all. Thanks to all of you.

As you know, it has been a busy year. We developed a strategic plan that will be voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting. We installed a new sound system. We created a Membership Committee. A banner was designed, made, and is now displayed upstairs. We are now part of the Adopt A Highway program. We are advertising on MPR and in the *Fergus Falls and Surrounding Area Visitors Guide Magazine*. We invested money with the UUA Endowment Fund. We were part of the Community Thanksgiving Service in Underwood. We installed ceiling fans in the sanctuary. We took a stand on Marriage Equality with a Vote No campaign. The annual Chili Dinner was held. We have wonderful speakers and music at each Sunday Service. We continued to provide monthly newsletters. We have a website- [www.ucofu.org](http://www.ucofu.org). And there is much more. Whew!

I would like to mention a bit more about the new sound system. We had been talking about what to do to make the sound better during Sunday Service for a long time. We decided it was time to just go for it. So we did, with a lot of help from Bill Nead from Sverdrup Lutheran church. He researched, developed, and installed the new system for us. Thank you Bill! Wally Wrahol donated the sound mixing board. Thank you Kris and Wally! We will also have a laptop donated to us that will be connected to the sound system and that will help us in some mysterious way. We have two new headset microphones and two new hand held microphones that we are still getting used to, so please be patient with us. We have a camera installed in the sanctuary that will broadcast to a television downstairs. This will allow people who work in the kitchen or those who are with children downstairs to not miss a thing during the service. It will also be helpful when there is overflow, which may happen with a funeral. I'm sure I have forgotten some of the features of this new system. Once it is all up and running, there will be a training for those interested in learning how to operate the system. This will make things run more smoothly during Sunday Service.

This next year will be another busy year, as we write goals and objectives from our new strategic plan. I can't say for certain what those goals may be, but they will probably include creating a planned giving program, setting up a cluster workshop for regional UU churches, and fixing the floor. As far as this next year goes, as I am known to say, "it'll be great!"

**NOTE** - If you ever have any questions, feedback, praise, or constructive criticism, please do not hesitate to contact one of the board members. They will be happy to listen or answer questions. Their contact information is located on the bulletin board in the hallway as you enter the building.

## **UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD MINNESOTA ANNUAL BOARD MEETING, APRIL 21<sup>ST</sup> 2013**

### **SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE REPORT**

Committee members: Sandra Barnhouse, Ellen Eastby, Kae Honeman, JoAnn Larson, John Minge, Ron Roller, and Betsy Wells (chair)

- Committee working together, with congregation, and in community to recruit excellent, inspiring, and informative speakers who speak to the UU 7 principles. Reverends to scientists, a diverse array of topics and speakers.
- Committee is scheduling 1-2 months in advance now. We also have gratitude for our last minute speakers, including Bob Worner, who fill-in when the schedule breaks down...or snows us out! The committee also has back-up sermons ready and at the church.
- Below budget with the help of the congregation's participation this past year.
- Always looking for ideas, sheets at the back of the church.

### **Administrative Consultant Report**

#### *Some highlights from the year-Old business*

- Serving on speaker's committee, membership committee (a new committee!), and attending board meetings.
- Assisting in coordination of Sunday services
- Assisting Sunday mornings, including an office hour before Sunday services
- Maintaining church membership lists, church documentation, etc.
- Continuing to get speaker info. out to congregation
- Continuing to assist with special events, projects, and board activities
- UUA Report submitted on time, PSD info, available to community

#### *New Business*

- Committee lists needed: please email chair of committee and committee members list to me.
- Looking forward to summer! and new year of services and events!

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT  
UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD  
April 21, 2013, Annual Meeting

The program of the Church has several parts. They are all dynamic and need little encouragement or direction. They all point to the fact that the heart and soul of the Church is found in its content probably more than anywhere else. In the Report, I will list the component parts of the Church's program and briefly describe the activity of each part.

Speakers: The Sunday morning speakers appear collectively to be the most important part of the Church's program. (The "speakers" occasionally include musical performances and other presentations of a broad range of cultural activities.) There is an active group of Church members – led by Betsy Wells – who field suggestions regarding speakers and other Sunday morning programs, who evaluate and process those suggestions, and who schedule those who are to present either as a speaker or in some other fashion on Sunday morning. The congregation is the beneficiary of these efforts as all indications are that there is a high degree of satisfaction with what is heard and otherwise experienced during the Sunday morning services.

Music: Music is another critically important part of the programming of the Church. Ken Hamrum leads in the coordination of the music that is heard every Sunday morning. As is well known, Ken and several other Church members contribute significantly to the musical experience that is shared by all each Sunday morning. It's hard to believe that there is so much talent in such a small congregation.

U Groups: U Group participation is a relatively new activity in the Church. The focus of the U Groups is on more spiritual matters. There are four active U Groups and a fifth that is just beginning. One group is in Battle Lake, another in Perham, and two in Fergus Falls. The group that has just recently started meets in Katie Sasseville's home. The U Groups meet monthly and consider topics that are selected and developed primarily by Stephanie Sanderson and Ron Graham. The topics are of great interest and would generate more discussion than the selected format allows. (The format emphasizes listening to and quietly pondering the topic and what each group member has briefly said regarding the topic. The format is not intended to generate the more open-ended discussion that we are used to.) About 40 Church members participate regularly in this activity.

Religious Education: Adult Religious Education (RE) has become a more regular part of the Church's programming in recent years. The Adult RE group meets the first Sunday of each month before the service. A group of anywhere from about six to 14 attends these sessions that are led by John Minge. The topics vary widely. This year the group has been discussing a book about the "founding fathers" of the United States, the nature of their religious belief systems, and the manner in which those belief systems have been woven into – but kept at arm's length – the fabric of the United States. The discussions are usually quite lively. It has been more of a challenge to do anything systematic for children as there are, at present, few children in the

Church and their attendance is somewhat unpredictable. It is hoped that the number of children will increase so that there is an opportunity to develop a Children's RE that is well and regularly attended. (There are signs of this beginning to happen!)

The Writer's Group: This group consists of several Church members who are writers of poetry, short stories, and the like. It meets monthly and discusses topics of interest to the participants and shares and comments on some of the things that have been written by participant. Luke Anderson is one of the participants and can be contacted by anyone who wants to know more about the activities of this group.

Anyone who is interested in participating in any of the program activities should contact those who are leading those activities or the Program committee Chair. If anyone would like to see something added to the Church's program, they are encouraged to pass on the word. Ours is a dynamic church that is open to and excited by new things and by change.

Respectfully submitted this 21<sup>st</sup> day of April, 2013,

John Minge  
Program Committee Chair

[Note: A new chairperson will be appointed in the nears future.]

## **Unitarian Church of Underwood**

### **Outreach Program 2012-2013**

#### **A. Empowerment Grant Program:**

The Empowerment Grant Program has given another \$5,500 in funding to four projects for the 2012-2013 year. Recipients for this period were the Non-Violent Peace Force (\$1500), Habitat for Humanity (\$750), MState Sustainable Food Production Program (\$2250), and the School for Shan Refugees(\$1000). This program is funded with interest monies from church investments. Over forty projects, local, regional, and international have been funded for over \$42,500 in the last five years. We hope to continue this program into the future, as giving is just as important as getting.

#### **B. Chili Dinner Benefit:**

This year was our 13<sup>th</sup> annual Chili Dinner benefit for the Underwood Senior Nutrition program. As we all know, many essential human services have been, or will be cut in the near future, including portions of this program. Our continued financial support is crucial in maintaining some of the services this nutrition program offers. We have generated over \$15,000 over the years for this program, and hope to continue.

This years Chili Dinner served about 150-160 people and made about \$900. A big thanks to all the helpers in this endeavor, cooks, servers, kitchen, set-up ,and clean-up. Next year we will attempt to get to our perennial goal of having over 200 happy chili eaters.

Note: A number of people have been asking for the recipe for the chili, but unfortunately this recipe is a closely held family secret. Sorry!

Outreach Committee Chair, Ron Roller

4-16-03

## UNATARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD MINNESOTA

### FACILITIES COMMITTEE REPORT: ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Committee members: Susan Groff, John Miersch, Dave McRoberts (chair)

Proposed budget: \$7200 (building maintenance and repair)

Completed in 2012-2013:

- Annual elevator and furnace inspection.
- Clean lower level carpet. (Thanks UU Group)
- Upgraded sound system in sanctuary (speakers, mixer, wireless microphones)
- Got rid of many unwanted/used items at church
- Made entry of church more inviting and astatically pleasing
- Came up with plan (TV monitor) for alcove in lower level and implemented
- Kitchen shelving improved
- Ceiling fans purchased and installed

Plans for 2013-2014

- Fill vents in and paint sanctuary floor
- Come up with viable plan to help acoustics in lower level
- Come up with plan to have dishwasher work or replace dishwasher
- Finish painting interior including sanctuary
- Check into refinishing/repairing church pews.
- Seek ideas from others to continue to improve the appearance of the church and grounds
- Stabilize sanctuary floor
- Build cabinet for sound system in narthex
- Fuel tank painted
- Serviceability and appearance of building and grounds will be maintained and improved where needed
- Move UCU Symbol up to be more astatically pleasing

**Membership Committee  
Report to Membership  
Annual Board Meeting  
April 21, 2013**

Membership Committee Members: Alisha Peikarski & Mary Anderson – co-chairs; Bob & Mary Worner, John & Janelle Miersch, Ellen Eastby, Joanne Larson, Shannon Smith

**Decisions:**

- UCU will conduct New Member Orientation 2x/year with 2 orientation meetings prior to ceremony conducted by UCU Celebrants- March & October. Three new members were welcomed in March.
- Packets for Visitors and New Members were assembled and are available for distribution.
- We defined the scope, roles & responsibilities of the Membership Committee and presented it to the board.
- We assumed greeters' responsibilities for the upper level in conjunction with the Perham U group.
- We reviewed the decision by the board to table a by-law change to "definition of member" pending UUA's potential change in charging dues and we reviewed the record keeping process of membership. We also tabled action pending UUA decision.
- We merged the former Community Supports Community under the responsibilities of the Membership Committee and renamed it the Caring Team.
- We assumed "watch-keeping" on members needs, successes, concerns so that we and other members can make appropriate follow-up and lend supports.

**Recommendations:**

- We recommended that board members contact members via phone or email at least once annually to connect, get feedback and build relations
- We presented to the board the idea of a church directory and are seeking input from members on need and feasibility.
- We will continue work on updating & maintaining current membership listings

Respectfully submitted

Chairs: Mary Anderson & Alisha Piekarski and Membership Committee members

Attachment: Membership Committee Roles & Responsibilities



## Membership Committee Role & Responsibilities

**Overall Responsibility:** Greet visitors each Sunday, hold New Member UU sessions 2x/yr, help visitors & members find places to connect within congregation, provide packets & publications, be attentive to member needs, provide caring supports.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Oversee assembly and availability of New Member and Visitor Packets
- Organize New Member Orientation 2x/yr, including photo of new member(s) for bulletin board
- Conduct interest survey of members and help connect members to RE & other offerings
- Track attendance, mingle at coffee, note cares and concerns for follow-up, be alert to & aware of members' contributions, recognize and show appreciation and support to members.
- Assist in determining membership status for UUA annual reporting
- Upon board approval, produce a Membership Directory
- Provide follow-up phone call, e-mail to friends or members missed.
- Promote annual contact to each member from a board member.
- Provide cards, visit, meal, treats when to members in need.
- Meet periodically to discuss/recommend ways to serve members
- Report regularly to the UU Board of Directors

**Membership Committee:** Co-Chairs: Alisha Piekarski & Mary Anderson; Joanne Larson, Administrative Assistant, John & Janell Miersch, Shannon Smith, Bob & Mary Worner, Ellen Eastby

**Unitarian Church of Underwood  
Annual Meeting – 2012/13**

**Stewardship Team Report,**

The job of the Stewardship Team was two-fold:

1. To inform the congregation regarding the status of UCU's operating budget throughout the 2012/13 fiscal year.
  - Several updates entitled "Paying Our Way +." Were published in the UCU Newsletter.
  - Information that we were slightly behind budget was shared with Sunday announcements.
  
2. To initiate and lead discussions about establishing a "UCU Endowment Fund."
  - Discussions with Board members and others to explore and define "endowment fund."
  - Gathered and shared information about how the UUA Investment Fund could be an important component of "UCU Endowment Fund."
  - Studied endowment brochures from a variety of organizations with planned giving programs.
  - Recommended the UCU board hire consulting specialist to help develop policies and guidelines for a "Planned Giving Program" before completing brochure design announcing a "UCU Endowment Fund."

Mary Worner  
Luke Anderson  
Mary Anderson

# Unitarian Church of Underwood

DRAFT

## STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

DRAFT

2013 to 2018

### OUR MISSION: (Our purpose)

- The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people where our celebration of life and common search for meaning bind us together.

### OUR VISION: (How we will describe ourselves in 2018)

- UCU offers many opportunities for liberal religious expression and fellowship.
- Stimulating Sunday services are held year-round in UCU's attractive Underwood facility.
- Over one-hundred people of diverse ages, sexes, ethnicities, religious traditions, sexual orientations, and family compositions are UCU members.
- UCU members are activists in serving the wellbeing of people at all levels of community.

### OUR PRINCIPLES: (Our values)

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relationships;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation and society at large;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

### OUR STRATEGIC GOALS: (Our key organizational efforts)

- **Governance/Administration:** Manage the fiscal and human resources of the church in a manner that is inclusive, transparent, efficient, and effective.
- **Program:** Attend to the spiritual needs of members by providing a broad range of opportunities for personal reflection, discussion, intellectual stimulation, artistic expression, and social interaction.
- **Community Outreach:** Encourage and support members, affiliates, and collaborators to engage in community service, social justice efforts, and environmental causes from local to world levels.
- **Facilities:** Maintain and improve the buildings and grounds of the church for maximum serviceability, efficiency, and longevity.

## OUR LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES:

- **Governance/Administration**
  - Continue UCU Newsletter and website development.
  - Clarify committee nomenclature, roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.
  - Improve member intake, hospitality, and retention.
  - Develop annual budgets that reflect our values and finance our priorities.
  - Organize and secure church archives.
  - Develop and implement a planned giving program.
  - Study the need and feasibility of hiring ministerial as well as administrative staff.
  - Explore collaborative activities with area UU churches.
  - Determine the viability of developing UCU “outposts” in outlying communities.
- **Program**
  - Encourage new and support existing U-Groups.
  - Recruit quality Sunday speakers relevant to UU mission and principles.
  - Feature “home-grown” musical and artistic talent.
  - Study the need for ministerial staff and make recommendations to the Board.
  - Engage UCU Celebrants in a spiritual advisory capacity.
  - Offer pre-service Adult and/or youth R.E. activities four Sundays each month.
  - Offer children’s R.E. activities to serve various ages and attendance patterns.
  - Encourage opportunities for members to socialize.
- **Outreach**
  - Decide whether to drop or accelerate independent grower coffee sales.
  - Conduct Chili Dinner as a community fundraiser and evaluate use of proceeds.
  - Administer empowerment grants and improve follow-up.
  - Support UCU member involvement in Habitat for Humanity.
  - Collaborate in sponsoring the Underwood Area Community Thanksgiving event.
  - Collaborate in sponsoring area community events.
  - Explore ways to sponsor public music and/or art events at UCU.
  - Offer “Social Justice” workshops during R.E. time on fourth Sundays
- **Facilities**
  - Keep the church grounds in attractive shape.
  - Maintain the physical condition and aesthetic appeal of the building.
  - Schedule maintenance of building service systems.
  - Install and update communication technology as needed.
  - Maximize the flexibility and utility of the church’s space.
  - Evaluate and implement the most efficient/effective cooling system.
  - Recommend targets for growing and policies for spending the building reserve fund.

## **Vice President Report**

As a fairly new member of this church and also a "new" member to the board, a few thoughts about this Board come to mind. In about 60 years of being on different boards, I believe this board is the most dedicated board I have ever been part of. In the past year every action this Board has taken has been discussed with the pros and con several times before any decision was made. Projects that come to mind are the sound system, reinforcing the floor, controlling the summer heat issue, the church banner and also all the work on the strategic plan.

Donn Siems  
VP of the Board

## **Celebrants**

Celebrants are the people in our church who have been board approved to officiate life passage ceremonies, such as weddings, funerals, and dedications. This year they also performed the New Member Recognition Ceremony and the Flower Communion, and gave talks about the holidays that occur around the winter solstice and spring equinox. The celebrants are Bob Worner, Stephanie Sanderson, Florance Thompson, Deb Ferguson and Ellen Eastby. Ron Graham resigned this year. If you have questions or would like more information about the celebrants and what they do you may contact anyone of them. They would be happy to talk with you.