

Unitarian Church of Underwood April, 2013 Newsletter

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.

Coming Up in April

Sunday Morning Service Begins at 10:30

April 7 – Bob Worner – No New Taxes!

April 14 – David Schachtschieder – God Our Mother: on the re-cognition of the inherent divinity of nature and the mission-critical reclamation of the sacred feminine

April 21 – Annual Meeting – Potluck brunch at 9:15, abbreviated service at 10:30,
Annual Meeting at 11:15

April 28 – Kay Slama – Gather at the River: Water Justice

Sunday Morning Meetings Begin at 9:15

April 7 – Adult RE – Chapter 6 –

April 14 – Make-up Session of the New Member Orientation – Session 2

April 21 – Writing as Spiritual Practice will not meet in April due to the Annual Meeting Brunch

Weather Related Announcements

Hopefully, we won't need to use this for many months!!!!

Find weather related announcements on Lakes Radio Family of Stations – 103.3, 96.5 FM and 1020, 1250 AM or online at www.lakesradio.net under “News” or KSA TV Alexandria, MN or online at www.KSAX.com under “weather”. You can also check the UCU website at www.ucofu.org or the facebook page.

Sunday Service Speakers

April 7 – Bob Worner - NO NEW TAXES! - Principle #2 - justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

April 14 - David Schachtschnieder – God Our Mother: on the re-cognition of the inherent divinity or nature and the mission-critical reclamation of the sacred feminine.

About David: “I’m a highly imperfect, deeply well-intended, more and more humbled, ever-curious, ever-learning, maddeningly inspired, hyper self-critical, evolving, super-cooperative, awakening, humanity serving, nature-devoted, awe-struck, imagination carried, heart-driven, hopelessly optimistic, occasional pain-in-the butt, Source-possessed, and certainly helplessly eccentric, grateful human Earthling.”

The two UUC Principles that this talk will aspire to expand upon and honor:

- a) Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and openness to the forces which create and uphold life.
- b) Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

April 21 – Annual meeting – No speaker this day

There will be a potluck brunch that starts at 9:15, an abbreviated Service at 10:30, and the Annual Meeting at about 11:15.

April 28 – Kay Slama – Gather at the River: Water Justice

On this Earth Day, Kay Slama will ask us to consider water justice, a set of issues at the intersection of social justice and environmental justice. The service will include a water ceremony, in which we will be invited to bring water from our homes or another source near us, with a sentence about what it means to us.

Kay Slama is a long-time environmentalist, with roots in a North Dakota farm. She was first called a “treehugger” at a hearing nearly 30 years ago. She volunteers with a YES youth environmental team and is a member of the Sierra Club and its MN Legislative Committee, the Nature Conservancy, and UU Ministry for Earth. She serves as the UU Church of Willmar’s Social Justice Chair.

Annual Chili Dinner Benefit

The Annual Chili Dinner Benefit is scheduled for Friday, April 5th from 5-7pm at the Underwood Community Center. This is our main community event of the year and provides funding for the Underwood Senior Nutrition Program. Three types of chili, salad tray, fresh breads & desserts are served to an average of 150-200 people. We will need 15-20 volunteers on the day of the dinner (sign up sheets at the church) for serving, prep, and cleanup. Tickets and posters will be available at the church also. Our goal is to sell 200 tickets before the dinner this year. Contact Ron Roller at rollerolson@gmail.com for more information.

Annual Meeting vs. A Beautiful Spring Day

The Annual Meeting is being held Sunday, April 21st. It is certain that the date chosen will be a beautiful spring day. Possibly even the nicest day of the year so far. So we decided to try something a little different to get you home earlier. That way you don't have to choose between attending the Annual Meeting and enjoying the weather of a beautiful spring day.

We will start the morning with a brunch at 9:15 a.m. The brunch will be provided by the second Tuesday night of the month U Group. At 10:30 we will head upstairs for a short Sunday Service. There won't be a speaker that Sunday, but we will sing a couple of hymns, have some readings, and share our joys and concerns as we light the chalice. After the Sunday Service we will go back downstairs, grab a cup of coffee and get the Annual Meeting under way.

We have many accomplishments this year to celebrate and you will hear a little bit about those during the meeting. We also have the budget to approve, something we will have worked hard to design as a guide for the coming fiscal year. Another order of business is to approve the Strategic Plan. We gathered together as a congregation to provide input during the creation of the plan. It is exciting to see the final document that will serve as a guide for the next 5 year years. If you would like a copy emailed to you in advance, please contact Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com. Copies will also be available at the church. The last big piece of business we have to attend to is a by-laws change. We would like to change the mission statement of the church, which requires a change in our by-laws. For more information about that, see the following article in this newsletter or contact Ellen at the above email address.

It is hoped that on April 21st you attend the Annual Meeting. We have done everything we can to ensure that the meeting will be over early so that you won't have to choose between the Annual Meeting and a beautiful spring day. Personally, I just hope we haven't jinxed it by this attempt and we won't wake up to a raging blizzard. My fingers are crossed.

Ellen Eastby – President
UCU Board of Directors

Proposed By-Law Change

This year at the annual meeting the congregation will be asked to vote for a new mission statement. The mission statement is part of our by-laws. It states in our by-laws that "The by-laws may be amended by a 2/3rds majority vote of those present and voting at an annual meeting. All members shall be notified by mail or email of any proposed amendments or changes to the by-laws at least 10 days in advance of the meeting to amend." It is felt, that we need something that is succinct, easier to understand, and easier to use in publications.

The proposed mission statement would state 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.

The current mission statement states: 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.

If you are a member you should be receiving an email or letter in the next week to ten days We invite you to vote on this by-law change during the Annual Meeting on April 21, 2013.

Adopt- A-Highway

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is now participating in the Adopt-A-Highway program. We will be responsible for a 2 mile stretch on County Road 1 between Rostad Road and Waterstreet Road. We will be cleaning the ditches each spring and fall. We will let you know when the first cleaning day will be and invite you to help. There may even be food involved before or after we clean.

UU Humor

A Unitarian Universalist was worried, and confided to another UU, "I want to invite a friend to the Sunday service, but our minister uses that J-word so much I'm afraid it will make my friend feel uncomfortable."

"When has our minister ever mentioned Jesus?" asked the other.

"I meant 'Justice'."

New UU Banner & Flag

A team comprised of Mary Anderson, Alisha Piekarski, Sandy Barnhouse, Joanne Cress, Ron Graham, Mickey Edmonds and Kathy Stofer recently completed banner production tasks for our church. The banner and pole meet the UUA's specifications for banners used at UUA assemblies but the design could be chosen.

The teams' first criteria for the design was that it be "simple and elegant" and thus, they quickly decided to adopt the emblem at the front of the sanctuary. To remind you of the history of our emblem: it was created by Fergus Falls Artist, Charles Beck, now 90 and one of the most recognized artists in Minnesota. It is entitled "Conglomerate of World Religions. The ideas came to him from a mid-1970's Unitarian Universalist Christmas card. Included in this art piece are symbols representing:

- Unitarian Universalism - the Flaming Chalice
- Christianity - the Cross
- Judaism - Magen David for Star of David
- Hinduism - the Om
- Buddhist - Dharmachakra or Wheel of Truth/Law
- Taoist - the Yin/Yang
- Islamic- the Islamic faith forbids pictorial renderings of living things. This led to a tradition of ornate calligraphy that included the name Allah.

If you weren't at the Banners' Reveal, you can't miss the beautiful banners now displayed in and outside the church!!

A big thanks to the banner team!

UU Quotes

“People in difficulty, namely most of us, need to know that it is all right to be joyful in spite of the pain that besets the human way.” – Clark Dewey Wells (UU Minister)

“Unitarian Universalism is a faith in people, hope for tomorrow’s child, confidence in a continuity that span all times. It looks not to a perfect heaven but to a good earth. It is respectful of the past, but not limited to it. It is trust in growing and conspiracy with change. It is spiritual responsibility for a moral tomorrow.” – Edward Schempp (Unitarian Universalist, social activist)

Membership Committee

The recently reformed Membership Committee has been hard at work and their work has been evident. The committee's responsibilities include: greeting members and visitors on Sundays, coordinating New Members' Orientation and Welcoming two times/year; assembling and distributing packets of UU information to visitors and new members, being attentive to member needs and providing caring supports to those members in need.

The Membership Committee is comprised of: Mary & Bob Worner, John & Janelle Miersch, Alisha Piekarski, Joanne Larson, Shannon Smith, Ellen Eastby and is chaired by Mary Anderson.

On March 17, we welcomed three new members at the beautiful New Member Welcome and Flower Ceremony conducted by Celebrants, Ellen Eastby and Stephanie Sanderson. The new members are: Heather Czeck, Cedar Roller-Olson and Sara Lysaker (really five if you want to count the expected two new babies!!). The next New Member Welcoming will be on the 3rd Sunday in October so new member recruitment is again underway. As you become aware of a friend or visitor's interest in becoming a UCU member, please let Joanne Larson or another of the Membership Committee members know so they can follow up.

The Membership Committee wants to be alert to and aware of all member's contributions and show appreciation and support to members. Please let one of the membership committee members or the caring team know of special needs or special contributions by members for special acknowledgements. The Caring Team (formerly known as Community Supports) includes Mary Worner, Connie Hamrum and Mary Anderson.

The Membership Committee is considering production of a church directory and would appreciate your feed-back on the idea and your thoughts on what you'd like included.

Membership Committee Members and the Perham U group have assumed greeting responsibilities also now on the upstairs level.

If you have ideas or comments on better serving our members, please share them with the Membership Committee.

The Membership Committee also will report regularly to the UU Board of Directors.

More UU Humor

Three children were talking about their religions. "I'm a catholic," said one, "and our symbol is the cross." "I'm Jewish," said the second, "and our symbol is the Star of David." The third child said, "I'm a Unitarian Universalist and our symbol is a candle in a cocktail glass."

Membership Profile – Mary Anderson

Mary lives in Perham and was raised on a farm outside New York Mills. She graduated from Augsburg with a degree in sociology. She met Richard Anderson at college and they were married for 31 years until his death in 1995. Mary has two children who “multiplied.” There are now six grandchildren and soon to be 5 great grandchildren. She says she moved from Blaine, MN to Perham “to get away from her kids,” but they (Granddaughter Heather, her now husband, and three children) followed her. Her other grandchildren live in the cities, but one grandson is a “Berliner” (Berlin, Germany).

In 2003 she retired from her work. She was a manager/supervisor at the Child Support Enforcement Division for the state of Minnesota. She was one of the original 4 staff but at the time of her leaving the Division, it had over 250 people. Immediately upon retirement she went to Tanzania for 6 months where she worked with college students doing a 9 week internship. This involved finding each student internship placements and host families. During her three visits to Tanzania, she has enjoyed many safaris. Getting up close and personal with lions, giraffes, zebras, elephants, etc., beats out any other traveling experiences she’s had. The trick is not to get out of the land rover!!

Mary likes to make quilts with big pieces (she is the ‘get it done type’). She loves taking care of her flowers in the back yard. It is good that she also loves to cook because she is “mom” for the school year to Fikri and Elshan who are from Indonesia and Azerbaijan, both of whom have spoken at our church.

When it comes to involvement in our church, she pulls out all the stops. She would prefer to be behind the scenes, decorating the tables in the fellowship room or creating, with a team, our new church banner. But she is also using the talents she developed in her work by serving on the board, heading up the Membership Committee, taking her turn as Service Leader and working with kids RE. She transports a lot of kids to church!

Her philosophy of life is simple: “Live, Love, Laugh.” She does not like to be bored so she keeps busy and tries to live and enjoy each moment. Her kids taught her that fretting and nagging don’t much help the matter. That’s been tough for “Mrs. Fix-It!”. Her motto is “Just do it” with patience being an on-going learning experience.

Mary says the UU church has given her many opportunities to serve and she appreciates the many friendships here. Ron Graham

U Groups

March has been a busy month for U Groups as group members decide on projects for the church and community. U Group members served the church by volunteering as upstairs greeters, and one U Group will provide brunch for the congregation on April 21, the morning of the annual meeting. Plans are underway for a U Group to provide new dishwasher friendly silverware for the church. As a community service, one group bussed dishes at the Humane Society's fundraiser at the VFW in Fergus Falls. The Perham U Group community project is to sponsor the presentation Elshan and Fikri, Mary Anderson's exchange students, are planning to make on Islam (with some other Muslims as presenters as well). The events will be held at the ITOW Veterans' Museum and New York Mills Culture Center some week-end in April.

Through U Group activity, our church is expanding our participation in the community. Thank you, all of you, for your generous contributions, for your gifts of time, for stepping up to host groups, and for the many ways you are making your church and community a better place.

New Sound System

After much thinking, discussion, research, discussion, estimates, and well...discussion, the Board of Directors has authorized the purchase of a new sound system. This is very exciting news for the Unitarian Church of Underwood! This is going to greatly improve our quality of Sunday Services. We had out grown the old system as there were not enough places to input all of the devices. We also needed new microphones that were a little easier for people use. Our new system will include an amplifier, a mixer, speakers, wireless headset microphones and wireless hand held microphones, and a projector. We are also purchasing video camera and flat screen television. The television will be placed in the recess/cubby in the southwest corner of the fellowship room in the lower level. We will then feed the service from the sanctuary down to the television. This will be wonderful for people who have to bring their little ones downstairs or for people working in the kitchen. They won't miss a thing during the service. It will also serve overflow from the sanctuary when we have a larger funeral or event in the church. The television downstairs can be used for watching videos too.

Another exciting aspect of this system is that it will cost less than \$4,000. The low cost is due to a couple of reasons. One reason is that Wally Warhol has donated a sound mixer. Thank you Kris and Wally! Another reason is that Bill Nead who has assessed our needs, researched products, and will help with installation and will train us to use the new system, has donated all of those services to us. Thank you Bill! Of course, we do have to pay for the system. This was not budgeted for in our 2012-13 annual budget. So the amount that we are going to spend on the system is outside of our annual budget. We can take some funds from CD's and savings, but we would really like to give you the opportunity to make donations for the project. Please,

keep in mind that our regular offertory collections are down a bit from last year, so it would be helpful if your donation for the sound system was in addition to what you normally contribute to the church.

You can make a donation a couple of different ways. There are envelopes in the sanctuary that you can use if you want to drop your donation in the collection plate on Sunday morning. If you would like to mail your donation, please include "sound system" in the memo line of your check. Checks can be mailed to: Unitarian Church of Underwood, PO Box 58, Underwood, MN 56586.

POETRY AND JUSTICE

Rev. Meg Riley, Senior Minister of the Church of the Larger Fellowship, will lead us in a week-long exploration of Poetry and Justice at Camp StarTrail, a multigenerational summer camp experience to explore and celebrate Unitarian Universalism, July 28 - August 2, 2013. Located midway between Lincoln and Omaha, Nebraska, Camp StarTrail is the perfect get-away for those in MidAmerica and beyond. A combination of retreat, conference, and camp, StarTrail has something for everyone; writing groups, book discussions, crafts, children's programming, music, swimming, and as much free-time as you might like. Accommodations range from hotel-style rooms to tenting in the meadow. Register NOW!

<http://www.psduua.org/Camps/CampStarTrail>

CLF offers online worship, other services

The Church of the Larger Fellowship presents an online worship service three times a week, not only for the benefit of its members but also for members of other congregations who can't make it to church because of distance, illness, [disability](#), or other reasons. The services are Sundays at 8 p.m. and Mondays at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. All times are Eastern. Go to questformeaning.org and click on the [Live Worship](#) link at the top of the page.

Unitarian Church of Underwood

Visit our website at www.ucofu.org and on Facebook at Unitarian Church of Underwood - <https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/216475333813/>



Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly

2013 IS AN ELECTION YEAR

The UUA will conduct its next election on Saturday, June 22, 2013. Absentee ballots will be sent to congregations at least 45 days prior to General Assembly and will be due June 12, 2013. Positions to be elected at the 2013 General Assembly include many important positions including president of the UUA.

For more information, read about the [2013 UUA elections](#).

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

The GA Office and Planning Committee are committed to the goal of making GA accessible to the maximum number of attendees possible. Recognizing that traveling to and participating in General Assembly can be a costly venture, we would like folks to be aware of the following opportunities for financial aid:

- **Become a Volunteer** - The GA Volunteer Committee funds full-time GA registrations in exchange for 24 hours of volunteer work at GA (16 hours for those eligible for reduced registration rates). [Applications for volunteer positions](#) must be submitted by March 31.
- **Apply for a Scholarship** - Secure a pledge of support from your congregation and [apply for a GA Planning Committee scholarship](#). If your application is accepted, the Planning Committee may match your congregation's pledge (up to \$250) and also fund your full-time registration. Apply by March 31.

UUA General Assembly
www.uua.org/ga
generalassembly@uua.org

(quoted from a UUA General Assembly January newsletter)

Minutes of the February 20, 2013 Underwood Unitarian Church Board

Present: Ellen Eastby, David Wass, Dave McRoberts, John Minge, Norman Kolstad, Mary Anderson, Luke Anderson, and Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson. Absent: Alisha Piekarski, Donn Siems, and Mary Worner.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Eastby at 6:38 pm.

Mary Anderson offered a meditation/reading.

The agenda was approved (M. Anderson/Minge).

The minutes of the January 20, 2013 meeting were approved as printed (L. Anderson/Wass).

Reports:

Treasurer: David Wass
Administrative Consultant: JoAnn Larson
Program Committee: John Minge
Outreach Committee: no report
Membership Committee: Mary Anderson
Facilities Committee: Dave McRoberts

Old business:

Topics: banner, strategic plan, advertising, regional workshop, and the annual meeting on April 21st.

New business:

Topics: stewardship and a possible 125th anniversary celebration.

Mary Anderson offered a closing reading.

The meeting was adjourned by chair Eastby at 8:39 p.m.

Next meeting: March 20 at 6:30 pm.

Norman Kolstad, secretary.