

Unitarian Church of Underwood August, 2012 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 August

Sunday Services

August 5 – 9:30 – Kent Runge – *The Identification of Destructive Nationalistic Tendencies within Faith Communities*

August 12 – 9:30 – Rev. Roger Parks – *Democratic Habits Of The Heart*

August 19 – 9:30 – Michele Anderson – Springboard for The Arts – *Cultural Sustainability And The Ecology of Expression*

August 26 – 9:30 – Facilitators U Group - *Listening, Sharing and Connecting*

Sunday Morning Meetings

August 5 – 8:15 – adult RE – Earth religions will be the topic of Adult RE this summer.

Writing at Spiritual Practice will not meet in June, July, and August. It will resume September 16th at 9:15.

August 26 – 8:15 - Social Justice Committee - Everyone is encouraged to attend. We have some important work to do and we need people to participate in order to get that work done.

Submissions

In order to bring you a quality newsletter and to prevent burnout of its editors, submissions are needed from you. If you have something you think might be of interest to the readers of the UCU newsletter, please submit it to Stephanie Sanderson or Ellen Eastby no later than the 26th of each month. We would love to have your original poetry or prose. You can reach Stephanie at highlife@prtel.com and Ellen at eastofellen@hotmail.com. Thank you!

Member Profile

Look for the Member Profile of Luke Anderson in the September Newsletter. He has also given us a piece of his poetry to publish. You won't want to miss it!

More About Sunday Morning Programs

August 5th – Kent Runge – “The Identification of Destructive Nationalistic Tendencies within Faith Communities”. Kent Runge recently attended the Canadian School of Peacebuilding at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg Manitoba. Kent will be telling us about the two courses he took at CSOP (“cee-sop”), and stories about his multicultural, multinational and interfaith experience. “Peace” is difficult to define, and as a mere student of peace Kent will make no attempts to do so...rather his hope is that his stories will encourage, empower and share a bit of the hope for peace that he discovered.

Though Kent has spent most of his professional career in the Human Services, he’s now returning to school at the University of Minnesota in Morris to prepare for a career switch by earning a degree in Elementary Education. He was born and grew up in Anaheim, California and later moved to western Colorado. He met his wife there and they lived and worked in various communities in that area until 2001 when they made the move to Otter Tail County. They now live in Morris.

August 12th - Reverend Roger Parks – The title of my talk will be: “Democratic Habits of the Heart”. I am following the June talk, “Citizenship and the Common Good,” with more inspiration from Parker Palmers work “Healing the Heart of Democracy”. A quote from Walt Whitman will begin my talk in which he essentially says that democracy is more than elections or a party name. Democracy is found in the manners, in the highest forms of interaction between people and their beliefs.

August 19th – Michele Anderson – “Cultural sustainability and the Ecology of Expression”. (Michele was scheduled to speak earlier this year, but had to reschedule due to illness.)

Michele Anderson just moved back to Minnesota from Portland, Oregon, where she studied classical piano and composition at Lewis and Clark College, and later worked in the Oregon Symphony’s education department where she wrote scripts and designed teacher curriculum for youth concerts. Most recently she managed after school music classes and school assemblies for a nonprofit community music school, Ethos Music Center. Michele moved to Fergus falls in June to open Springboard for the Arts’ office and hopes to continue teaching music to students of all ages.

Michele writes: An emerging field that combine folklore, ethnography, social entrepreneurship and non-profit management to identify, enhance, and protect cherished places, traditions, and relationships that are at risk in an era of increasing homogeneity and globalization. When I first began my graduate studies in this field at Goucher College in Maryland, my focus on the role of the arts and family life and the ecology of expression brought me back home to Minnesota after 11 years living in Portland, Oregon. In June it was one year since I took a leap of faith and moved here and I’d like to share how I am applying theories of cultural sustainability to my work with local artists, my own creative practice, and my relationships with my family.

Thank You!!

There are many who put forth a lot of effort to make our church have beautiful grounds. They include: Susan Graff with flowers and general maintenance, David Wass with his mowing, and Joann Larson with her flowers and watering. Also, John Minge has donated his time and expertise in building the "wayside pulpit". There are many others who lend a hand or suggestion to continue to keep the property maintained. Thank you all!

500 Conversations

Minnesotans United for All Families, the campaign that will defeat the amendment that would limit the freedom of same sex couples to marry, has a strategy based on conversations. In fact, according to Minnesotans United the single most important action you can take towards defeating this harmful amendment is to start a conversation about why marriage matters with your friends, family and the people you see every day. It is so important that the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) has committed on behalf of the UU churches across the state of Minnesota, to have 25,000 conversations. The Unitarian Church of Underwood's Social Justice Committee thinks that we, as a congregation, can provide 500 of these conversations.

Having a conversation is simple. Just talk to your friends, family, and neighbors about why marriage matters to you. These are the same reasons same sex couples want to marry. This is a conversation not a confrontation, so keep the dialog respectful. Don't forget to mention that it is a no vote we are looking for. The language on the ballot can be confusing. Have conversations with everyone. That includes those who you think will vote no and those who you think will vote yes. There is someone who would like to come and train us on how to have conversation. If you are interested in having that type of training please contact Ellen Eastby as soon as possible at eastofellen@hotmail.com or 218-731-0803. If there are enough people interested, we will get someone here to do the training.

We will be tracking the conversations with a rainbow paper chain. With each conversation you have, add a link to the chain. The supplies to add a link to the chain will be found in the lower level of the church by the cards. We hope to have 500 links by the time the election rolls around.

Stewardship Committee Report

As of the end of June, we have been meeting expenses. Our Sunday offerings are paying the bills. We'll need to "up the ante" in our giving when the heating season rolls around but – so far, so good. Thanks to all who have contributed to our church life with Sunday offerings so far this fiscal year.

From The Web

The following is taken from the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations website. You can find this article and more like it at:

<http://www.uua.org/giving/news/generosity/index.shtml>

Celebrating the Marriage of Love and Justice

By Kieran Slattery

Weddings provide an opportunity for couples to share and celebrate what is most important to them. Recently, a few Unitarian Universalist (UU) couples chose to use their celebrations to stand on the side of love and raise awareness for social justice issues.

Jim Graham, a member of Valley UU Congregation in Chandler, AZ, was inspired to propose to his now wife, Carolina Krawarik, after a particularly moving experience at the 2010 General Assembly in Minneapolis, MN. [Watch a video](#) of the proposal.

During the GA event, Graham, a GA Delegate, and others helped to successfully secure Phoenix, AZ as the location for a social-justice focused “Justice General Assembly” in 2012, raising awareness about the passage of recent state anti-immigration law.

Inspired by the experience and feeling compelled to do more to raise awareness about pertinent social justice issues, Graham and Krawarik decided to host a “social justice” themed wedding.

In lieu of registering for traditional wedding gifts, the couple requested donations to Standing on the Side of Love (SSL), a public advocacy campaign that seeks to harness love’s power to stop oppression sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

“We have a lifetime of stuff,” Graham said of the couple’s non-traditional wedding registry. “The last thing we needed was more stuff, but what we do need to do is raise awareness at this critical time for these critical issues.”

Graham and Krawarik’s friends and family raised over \$1,000 for SSL.

At their wedding reception, guests donned bright yellow SSL t-shirts and celebrated with Graham and Krawarik over a potluck dinner. During the weekend, the couple also spoke with their wedding guests about what they could do to further advocate for social justice.

“If we were able to inspire other couples to take the initiative to reach out into the wider community in whatever shape they can, that would be the most incredible takeaway from the event other than having Carolina in my life,” Graham said.

Another couple that was inspired to use their wedding as an opportunity to raise support and awareness for the work of Standing on the Side Love was the Rev. Thom Belote, Minister of Shawnee Mission UU Church in Overland Park, KS, and his wife, Anne.

“We thought that one of the greatest gifts we could give as a part of our union and wedding would be to work and advocate for all couples to have the same rights that we do,” Rev. Belote said.

In the letter to the UUA that accompanied his gift, Belote noted that he wanted his gift to help support marriage equality, and recognize that there are privileges afforded to them that are not afforded to LGBT couples in the United States. The couple’s friends and family raised \$1,540 for SSL.

“This is a chance to tell people that we stand with people who are marginalized and oppressed, and that we’re not afraid to be courageous about our basic ideas about the worth and dignity of every person,” Rev. Belote said.

Rev. Belote says that, as a minister who has performed dozens of UU weddings, he anticipates seeing increased numbers of weddings that are social justice as a theme in upcoming years.

“There is a future for wedding ceremonies and celebrations that are expressions of couples’ deeply held values,” Rev. Belote said. “There’s a creative opportunity for that.”

These celebrations remind us to honor the common thread that binds us together: love. Echoing the SSL message of creating a just and equal society by harnessing love’s power, many couples are opting to use their special celebrations of commitment as a chance to honor those in our society who lack access to the same rights and resources.

Furthering this encouraging message, this February 14 is being recognized as the [Second Annual National SSL Day](#), as people are encouraged to Re-Imagine Valentine’s Day as a celebration of love and justice. It is an opportunity to honor courageous love by recognizing those whose words and deeds exemplify the values of inclusion, diversity, community, and equality.

“Love is about more than romance, greeting cards and chocolates. This is a chance to celebrate love’s power to transform communities,” said Dan Furmanky, Campaign Manager for SSL. In addition to marriage equality and LGBT rights, Furmanky said National SSL Day is focused on immigrant rights, promoting religious freedom and diversity, and advocating for a more just, inclusive society.

Many congregations across the country have already signed up to host their own National SSL Day services to mobilize their communities to conquer fear and oppression with love and hope.

Graham and his wife are co-chairs on the new SSL Committee at their church, and are helping to plan a SSL-themed service at Valley UU Congregation on Valentine’s Day weekend. In

addition, Graham says he hopes to bring a large contingent of members from his congregation to the Phoenix LGBT Gay Pride Parade, a tradition he began last year in honor of SSL.

“The reason I became a Unitarian Universalist to begin with related to looking for a faith-based community that accepted the people I love in my life regardless of whom they choose to love,” Graham said. “Love requires action...I think [National SSL Day] is about taking action to show that love, and inspiring the love in other folks.”

For more information about Standing on the Side of Love go to:
<http://www.standingonthesideoflove.org/>

UU Quote

We need not think alike to love alike. ~ Frances David (Unitarian, preacher, reformer)

Minutes of the June 20, 2012 Underwood Unitarian Church Board

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Eastby at 6:33 pm. Mary Anderson offered a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Minge/Wass). The minutes of the May 16, 2012 meeting were approved as printed (M. Anderson/ L. Anderson).

David Wass presented the treasurer’s report. A motion passed to create a designated category for special projects (M. Anderson/Minge). A motion passed to accept the recommendation of the U-Group Facilitators of donating \$250 of the amount raised from the Somali Fundraiser to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, UUSC Somalia and East Africa Relief Fund with the remaining approximately \$750 to be donated to Giving+Learning of Pelican Rapids, Minnesota (L. Anderson/Minge).

Joanne Larson presented the Administrative Consultant’s report.
No Program Committee report.

Dave McRoberts presented the Facilities Committee report. Minge moved, second by L. Anderson to purchase a wireless microphone for \$150. Motion failed.

Luke Anderson presented the Endowment Committee report.

Finance Committee: A motion passed to invest the approximately \$105,000 from a maturing CD in the UUA Endowment Fund and to renew for six months another maturing CD of approximately \$28,000 (M. Anderson/McRoberts).

Old/New Business:

- Chair Eastby will name a committee to work on the membership roster/contacts list.
- The Board will not meet in August. The next meeting will be Sunday, July 15 after the service. A five-year planning meeting will be on Wednesday July 18, at 6:00 pm.
- A suggestion to become a “Welcoming Congregation” to LGBT’s was referred to the Social Justice Committee.
- Mary Anderson reported on a UUAMP membership retention webinar.
- A motion passed to spend \$90 for U-Group facilitator training (Worner/Minge).
- A suggestion to have a “group read” was discussed.
- A motion passed to support the Five Hundred Conversations Challenge as recommended by the Social Justice Committee to raise awareness of the proposed Marriage Amendment (L. Anderson/M. Anderson).
- A motion passed to conduct an internal financial audit for the previous fiscal year (L. Anderson/M. Anderson).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm (McRoberts/Wass).

Norman Kolstad, secretary