



Unitarian Church of Underwood
August 2015 Newsletter
www.ucofu.org

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.

Summer Sunday services begin at 9:30 a.m.

August 2 – Shannon Smith, “How We Know God”

August 9 – Jason Bergstrand, "Posture or Purpose?"

August 16 – Laurie Witzkowski, “A Calling of Monarchs”

August 23 – Roger Parks, “Watering the Divine Presence”

Potluck Picnic to follow at Bob and Mary Worners

August 30 – Spiritual Writers, “The inherent worth and dignity of every person, UU Principle #1”

Note: Prior to beginning of service at 9:20 a.m. there will be issued a “Call to Gather” to alert folks to assemble in the sanctuary so that the service can start promptly.

Religious Education, Children Religious Education and Coming of Age classes will resume in September. The Full U Groups will also resume in September.

Other Meetings

August 4 – 6:00 p.m. Plan to Grow @ Worners

August 19 – 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting @ church

August 26 – 5:30 p.m. Membership Committee @ church

Note: AA Meets every Monday evening @ 7 p.m. at UCU

More about August Speakers

August 2: Celebrant, Shannon Smith will provide a summary and thoughts on Depak Chopra's book, **How To Know God.** In his book Chopra presents a complex theory of the seven stages of human response to God. Each stage represents a person's stage of readiness and need for God. The seven stages are the ways that the brain knows reality and understands the deity, ranging from Stage One: a powerful, protective God to Stage Seven: unity with the divine.

August 9: Jason Bergstrand, "Posture or Purpose?" - What motivates or inspires you to make a difference in the lives of others? Learn how Lake Region Takes Root community garden is:

- Improving community health by increasing access to healthy whole foods for families in need
- Teaching people all ages about the importance of growing their own foods
- Using sustainable food production methods to be ecologically sound
- Being a replicable model for other communities

August 16: Laurie Witzkowski, "A Calling of Monarchs" - In 1988, Laurie Witzkowski had the honor of visiting the grove of oyamel fir trees where all the continent's monarch butterflies gather to pass the winter together. Her imagination had been ignited by them years earlier, when as a teenager she had seen an article about them in National Geographic. The monarchs continue to call to her from their perch on the precipice of extinction.

In this talk Laurie ponders the many teachings that these magical creatures have for her and for all of us, and what their role is in a changing world. Touching on the nature of spiritual calling as well as the place we and the butterflies occupy in the great web of life, Laurie shares her brushes with the divine in the form of butterfly wings.

Laurie Witzkowski is a creator of theater, music, ceremony and gardens in both English and Spanish. A resident of St. Paul, she is an associate artist with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet & Mask Theater as well as freelance performer, composer, minister and interpreter.

August 23: Rev. Roger Parks, "Watering the Divine Presence" - The premise is that our inner life needs to be nourished--how do we nourish our inner life?

UU Sources: Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.

Picnic to follow at Bob and Mary Worners. The Worners will provide a meat dish, beverages, and dishes. There will be coffee at church for those wanting to visit but unable to attend the picnic.

August 30: UCU Spiritual Writing Group, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person, UU Principle #1"

The Spiritual Writers Group will be addressing each principle starting on August 30th with the first Principle and after that, working their way through all the principles.

The Month That Was

July 5 – Bob Worner spoke on **"Celebrating Interdependence Day"** - Our country began with a rag tag list of colonies with different attitudes. They came together but each wanted to retain their independence. Then they came together to fight against England, a war that they could

never have won separately. With a little help from France, the states' militias, the European political situation and a lot of luck, they gave up independence for interdependence.

Seventy Five years later North and South fought a great Civil War, won by the North. Since, there have been occasional calls for secession, and not just from the South. But 150 years later, we are still yoked together. But, consider the accomplishments that might have been achieved by each man had not MLK, John and Bobby Kennedy and Medgar Evers been killed. What if women had not been denied equality and imagine what the feminine mind could have accomplished had women not been limited. Yes, women's rights have improved as well as basic education, higher Ed, healthcare and jobs. But we lose when we absent the other ideals. What if we had not dis-regarded the rights of Native Americans? In many ways thoughts of interdependence were lost and we lost the positive gifts of compassion, hope, forgiveness, love.

Humility is needed so we can use 4 lines: I am sorry; I was wrong; I need help, and I don't know.

Rather than putting party first and nation second, Congress could work together, end homelessness, solve global warming, welcome immigrants. We lose gifts through exclusion.

If Jesus came now, "I doubt if he would come with a halo; maybe a helicopter." We encounter God in our own ways. God is found in and through others. Jesus is waiting to be discovered through the gift of love – interdependence. We are interdependent beings, and connected with the animal kingdom, the interdependence of our planet and its alternating life giving ability that we harm through our independence, not recognizing our interdependence.

We can celebrate if we take our interdependence seriously – recognition can happen. It begins here in church. When interdependence occurs, miracles happen.

To celebrate: Thank you. What a Good Idea. Let's Work Together. You are loved. Our world is one world.

July 12 – Chris Hyslop – "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" This is the 5th year that Chris has presented to us a conundrum. He previously spoke to us about his stay in Sudan. Now he is in Myanmar. His time in the Peace Corps gave him his interest that he now uses with the U.N. Migration is happening several places around the world, such as the Mediterranean and South East Asia. Crowded boatloads of people who may have to pay the equivalent of five years' salary to make their escape. In the year 2014, 60 million people have been forced from their homes in Syria and Bangladesh, etc. That number compares to the population of the 24th largest countries: UK & Italy.

"Should I stay or should I go?" Why did they get on that boat? They are desperate, poor, uneducated, leaving violence or forced to leave.

Burma is moving to a form of democracy but in its newly forming manner, people want the rights for themselves but not the responsibilities toward others. Among the population of primarily Buddhist, there is persecution of the Rohingya (Muslim) peoples. Muslims are put in camps, squalid conditions, wholly reliant on gifts. Food and water are limited. They have no rights, like freedom of speech, or any human rights. In camps, they are not citizens. To escape they try to buy their way onto a boat to arrive somewhere, but with no guarantees.

Consequently, they are further exploited and many are victims then of human trafficking. There are lasting effects – an ingrained sense of discrimination over ages so change difficult and the markets for human trafficking expand. The displaced workers have no official recognition and government turns away so becomes a vicious and ongoing cycle. Sometimes lead to radicalization – people make the radical choices.

Money and good intentions are not enough to resolve. “The Unitarian Universalist principles listed on the back of this program, line up with my talk.” Here is where the principles apply and how our actions translate. The market economy works to produce products for maximum profit. Thus, sweat shops but countries find that with the connection to the global economy, they need manual laborers. Economics may be a driver of change. Obama’s visit to Burma underscores the US support. “We are with you. However, there are human rights and laws that we expect observed.”

This has been the longest running civil war of 60+ years and people are deeply suspicious of the Burmese government and the military. A move for a cease fire agreement is under development.

July 19 – Roger Parks spoke and led a dialogue on **When Faith Meets Reason, UU principle #7**. Most of us had been raised to think in dualistic terms: x vs y examples. But maybe we should be thinking in more inclusive terms. We begin with where we live – not some religious text written in the past that depicted God on a throne above, man here on earth and below are the dead.

We are connected with all that is. Pieces of truth are part of all of us. He commented on Pope Francis’ Encyclical that recognizes the whole of creation. Ultimate purpose of all creatures to find the creator. We are called to lead all creation back to the creator.

Lee Becker: Buddhism teaches a metaphor of the gem within the lotus that has risen from the mud. Roger: “How do we treat the next mud puddle?”

July 26 – John Minge presented the message on **“Godless Morality.”** John is a professed non-believer and thus has examined his moral principles and whether it has a firm foundation. By “godless morality,” he means a morality that is not derived from a set of spiritual beliefs traceable to a supreme being or some other kind of ultimate power. As a non-believer, he considers his morality to be godless and questions whether or not it has universal truths and is,

in contrast, a morality that changes with the times and might be more a matter of convenience than principle. So he asks the following questions:

1. What are the ethical challenges that we are facing today?

Answer: many, varied and profound. Cultural and religious pluralism – how do we accommodate the cultural and religious diversity in a peaceful and respectful way. A rigid and absolutist morality is less likely to succeed in responding to this challenge than one that is not creed-bound and inflexible. Mobility and fragmentation uproot people from their base. The way bureaucracies and big businesses function for efficiency and profit create huge challenges that raise moral questions. Rapid advances in science may lead to moral questions.

2. Does my morality include any universally and eternally true principles? Or is it completely relativistic? And is every answer to an ethical issue that confronts me, “It depends”?

Answer: Godless morality still includes some hard and fast rules: human life is sacred. But equal to a determination of when life begins are adequate nutrition, affordable health care, capital punishment, pollution, etc. Fairness - doesn't require divine revelation to be discovered or the threat of divine punishment to be implemented. Both examples: sanctity of life and fairness are bedrock values.

3. Is it important for one's morality to have some universal, eternally true principles? What's wrong with looking at everything through the lens of moral relativity?

Answer: Yes, it is important to have such immutable principles. Some opinion that humans need to have flexibility to adapt to new challenges without hamstrings. But there are still universal principles that have been adopted by virtually every religious tradition, ie., the Golden Rule.

4. What are the sources of morality?

Answer: Some subscribe to the god-based moral code with ultimate punishment for those who morally transgress. Those of godless morality may say that human reason and experience has provided an effective moral code – we must cooperate. Or maybe it is genetic – making agreement between people as social animals striving to get along with laws, institutions, customs and morals.

5. What's the moral track record of some of the world's great religious traditions?

Answer: Mixed at best. Western religions not free of guilt.

Conclusions: Godless morality is a worthy morality. It takes effort to live without a belief in a god to live genuinely moral lives. It is not either/or. It is an alternative in the family of moral codes.

John showed the last few minutes of a TED Talk video. The whole thing is very interesting, but if you want to view only what we saw this day, start watching 12 minutes and 30 seconds into

it. We watched it from there to the end. Here's the link:
https://www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_do_animals_have_morals

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas and articles for the Newsletter to: maryanderson8380@msn.com. Editing is provided by Stephanie Sanderson and emailing/ mailing is provided by Ellen Eastby and JoAnn Larson. Mickie Edmonds provides one of her paintings each month for our appreciation! When you have photos of a UCU event and are willing to share, please forward them to Mary.

Handicap Accessible Parking

Please be aware that the curb immediately in front of the church entry has been painted blue to designate handicap accessible parking for those with handicap parking stickers. Please extend every courtesy to assure that persons in need are accommodated.

New Member Invite

We celebrate the addition of new members twice a year, now scheduled for the first Sunday in March and October. However, you can become a new member of UCU at any time by signing the silver book. Please see JoAnn Larson, Administrative Consultant, on becoming a member and the many ways you can become involved with our UCU community.

Watch for Upcoming Events

Underwood Harvest Festival Parade

September 5

(Contact kwarhol7@hotmail.com)

Progressive Dinners Planned for Fall

(To host - Contact maryanderson8380@msn.com)

August 12-16

Monarch Festival



This will be the first year of a new city-wide Monarch Festival to be held in Fergus Falls August 12-16. The Festival is being organized by UCU members Tere Mann and Deb Wallwork, with participation from Janelle Miersch and Diane Johnson and other UCU members/friends. Partial funding has been received through grants from Lake Region Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. The Monarch festival is also one of the recipients of a UCU Empowerment Grant.

A multidisciplinary arts festival is to be held to celebrate and promote awareness of Ottertail County's significance as both an incubator for butterflies, and as an important nectar stop for thousands of monarchs that pass through here in the Midwest migration, to inspire efforts to build pollinator friendly habitat in our area, and to educate landowners and gardeners who want to move in that direction.

For a full listing of the schedule of events, please check the website: www.MonarchFestFF.com or Facebook page: Fergus Falls Monarch Festival. There are offerings for everyday of the Festival.

Tere Mann has some wonderful embroidered pins to offer you for a donation of \$20. You can contact Tere Mann at 218/205-4931 or Deb Wallwork @651/216-4610 or dwallwork@mac.com or monarchfestff@gmail.com to volunteer to help or for further information. We'd love to have you join us!

Unitarian Church of Underwood Empowerment Grant Awards

Editor's note: During July part or all of the following article written by Mary Anderson was published in local newspapers. If you didn't get to see it there, here it is.

Beginning in 2007, the Unitarian Church of Underwood began awarding Empowerment Grants as a part of its Outreach Ministry to help make our community and world a better place. It has now provided Grants totaling nearly \$62,000 to a wide variety of charitable organizations for both international and local community projects. Applications for Grants are submitted by church members and affirm the Unitarian Universalist's seven Principles that include "justice, equity and compassion in human relations."

Dr. David Sanderson, a retired physician and member of the Unitarian Church of Underwood recently completed his second trip to Haiti on a medical mission in collaboration with the Nazarene Church of Fergus Falls. The UCU provided an Empowerment Grant with matching funds from the Nazarene Church to help purchase better lab equipment for their clinic in Haiti.

Dr. Sanderson was enthusiastic about the impact this modest contribution was able to affect in the medical care they were providing. "We returned to Bleck, Haiti in May and now had a new microscope and other updated lab equipment that allowed us to do tests that were not available on previous trips. With the new microscope, the lab tech exclaimed, "I can see things

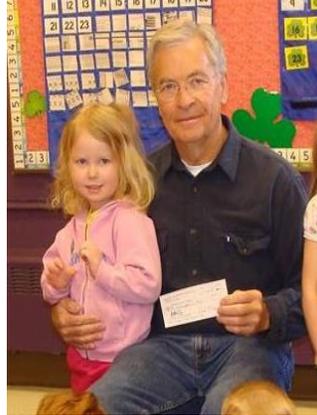
I couldn't see with the old microscope!" With the glucose meter to measure blood sugars we diagnosed and treated a number of people with diabetes and we also measured hemoglobins to detect anemia. Just having these simple diagnostic tools helped us provide better care for several hundred people seen in the clinic. We appreciate the UCU Empowerment Grant and the Nazarene funds that helped make this possible. Dr. Lonnie Berger will continue to make at least four medical mission trips annually to Bleck and I hope to again accompany him once or twice a year."

The UCU Empowerment Grant Program has also supported the Shan refugee effort led by Bernice Koehler Johnson. Ms. Johnson grew up in New York Mills and is a long term resident of Minneapolis. For the past 15 years, she has traveled annually to Thailand where she has assisted the Shan refugees from Burma. She recently provided an update to the Unitarian Church of Underwood about her charity and the two Schools for Shan Refugees that she established under a 501(c)3. The schools teach the children of Shan refugees who have fled persecution in Myramar (Burma). The first school teachers were former English students of Bernice's. Some of the current teachers received scholarships from her charity to complete their high school degrees and have since become elementary school teachers themselves at the charity's schools. The parents of the current students are migrant workers who are uneducated themselves but recognize the importance of educating their children. At these schools, just \$140 per year will provide a scholarship to a child to pay for their education. For more information see: www.shanrefugeeschool.org.

Members of the church have started a tradition of sewing bags, puppets and other items as gifts for the children.



Bernice Johnson with some of the Shan children she helps



Dave Wass delivering check to Underwood 3-4 Year Old Program with granddaughter, Greta Larson

UCU Empowerment Grants have also served as seed money to jump start social justice initiatives. Mel Duncan, Director of the NonViolent Peaceforce and a part-time resident of Pelican Rapids notified UCU recently that the NonViolent Peace Force Organization will receive 2 million Euro over the next three years for their project in Syria. Mel said “That process started with a grant from the Underwood Unitarians. Not a bad return on investment!”

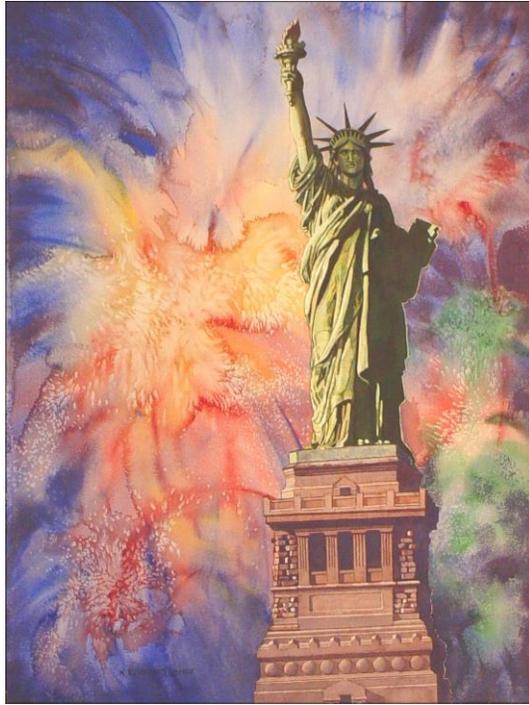
For 2015-2016, a total of \$9000 in UCU Empowerment Grants was awarded to: Underwood Schools Three-Four Year Old Pre-School Program, Underwood Centennial Park Upgrade, Stand for Food (Local, Sustainable Food Network), Opportunity Africa (Education), Schools for Shan Refugees, Fergus Falls Monarch Festival, Haiti Medical Mission, NonViolent Peace Force and Habitat for Humanity 500 Bicycle Ride.

Former grant recipients included: Kinship Program of Fergus Falls (Lunch Buddies Reading Program), Sticks and Strings Naturalist Program (Prairie Wetlands Kids Archery Program), Habitat for Humanity, and the Feeding Backpack Program (Food/Nutrition program for children providing food items for at risk kids on the week-ends).

The Unitarian Church of Underwood celebrated their 125 years in 2014. For more information, visit: www.ucofu.org.

Hats for Shan Kids

This year, Bernice Johnson has asked us to make warm hats for the Shan refugee kids. It gets cold at night, even in Thailand. If you have fleece fabric and/or a desire to sew up these simple hats, contact Mary Anderson @ maryanderson8380@msn.com or 218/346-6638. Mary has extra fleece, the pattern and can demonstrate how to make one with you. If you knit or crochet hats, that will work as well. Bernice leaves for Thailand in November so we have a couple months to fill her suitcase. Please bring your completed hats to Mary no later than October 25. Thank you hat makers!!!



"Sweet Liberty" painting by Mickie Edmonds

***We must remember that liberty is costly,
It needs unity.***

***Let us be united, let us be filled
With hope, let us be those who
Respect one another.***

Desmond Tutu

(Extracted from #593 Singing the Living Tradition)



NORTH CAROLINA IS OUR SELMA: MASS MORAL MARCH FOR VOTING RIGHTS

By Jill Goddard

On July 13, thousands of people including hundreds of Unitarian Universalists wearing Standing on the Side of Love t-shirts marched in Winston-Salem, NC, in support of overturning a vicious voter suppression law that was being argued just down the street inside a federal courthouse in the case *N.C. NAACP v. McCrory*.

Participants carried signs that read, "Protect Our Vote," "North Carolina is Our Selma" and "Black Votes Matter." The Rev. Dr. William Barber, II, leader of the N.C. NAACP's Forward Together Moral Monday Movement, led the march and rally.

"So you want to know why we've come to Winston-Salem?" he said. "You want to know why this is our Selma? We have come to recommit ourselves back to the movement. We will not let what was won be taken away. We will restore the dream."

The disappointing 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder* overturned key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that was passed in the aftermath of the historic Selma-to-Montgomery march. Following that 2013 ruling, voter suppression laws have proliferated across 22 states with more in the works.

These laws are aimed at suppressing the votes of young people and people of color by implementing new voter ID requirements and onerous voter registration drive restrictions. North Carolina's law, for example, eliminates pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds, disenfranchising many young voters.

Rev. Peter Morales, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), joined Rev. Barber in speaking at the rally. He told marchers, "We had good news when the Confederate flag came down, but the voter suppression law might as well have been printed on confederate flag stationery and it, too, must come down."

Morales was joined by Jim Key, moderator of the UUA; Rev. Carlton Elliott Smith, Congregational Life Staff of the UUA's Southern Region; Rev. Linda Olsen Peebles, president of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA); and Rev. Don Southworth, executive director of the UUMA, as well as civil rights and religious leaders representing many faiths from the state of North Carolina and across the country.

For full details and information on how to get involved, see:
<http://www.uua.org/news/press-release/north-carolina-is-our-selma>

U Groups

The U Group facilitators met July 21 to make plans for the fall sessions. If you would like to act as a facilitator or want to become part of a U Group, please contact: Connie Stigen at dcstigen@gmail.com or phone: 218/731-1445 or Tere Mann at teremann@gmail.com or phone: 218/205-4931. **Sign-up sheets for each U Group will be available at church the last two weeks of August.** Once the numbers are established, facilitators will be assigned. Day and

times to meet will be open to discussion within the group and so may change as the sessions get underway.

- Battle Lake Afternoon Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month beginning at 2:45 p.m.
- Fergus Falls/Underwood Evening Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. at the home of Sandy Barnhouse (corner of Highways 1 and 35)
- Fergus Falls Afternoon Group – the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the home of Diana Ziesemer
- Perham Afternoon Group – the 2nd Thursday of each month at the home of Mary Anderson.

Depending on interest, an Alexandria U Group may also be formed sometime in the foreseeable future.

The Battle Lake U Group met through the summer months and will continue meeting the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 2:45 p.m. at the home of Ross and Mary Larson. Bob Worner, Joanne Cress and Kris Warhol share the role of co-facilitators.

July Topic: “Change”

“The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” Albert Einstein

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Approved Board Minutes for June 17, 2015**

Board members present: John Miersch, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Kris Warhol, Lee Becker, Alisha Piekarski, David Wass, Stan Carignan, Mary Anderson, Diane Johnson.

Also present: Joann Larson

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board President, John Miersch at 6:32 p.m.

John Miersch shared a reading/meditation.

Mary Anderson noted additions to the Agenda with motion made by Kris Warhol, seconded by Dave Sanderson. Passed.

REPORTS:

Treasurer: David Wass – Went over balance and profit and loss for May.

A motion to approve an audit for financial records by Wally Warhol and Norm Kolstad was moved by Mary Anderson and seconded by Kris Warhol. Passed.

Administrative Consultant – No report

Program Committee – No report

Outreach Committee – Kris Warhol reported on ideas for community Projects including Underwood Harvest Festival September 5: banner, bake sale, slide show.

Facilities – Motion by John Miersch to approve installation of electric boiler, seconded by Kris Warhol. Passed. Faucet and elevator have been fixed.

Sound problem downstairs to be investigated.

Speakers – JoAnn Larson noted speakers are booked through 8/23/15. Diane Johnson introduced plan to reconfigure stage in sanctuary.

Membership – Mary Anderson said two more new members have signed book and plans will be made in August for fall progressive dinner.

Safety – Motion by Norman Kolstad and seconded by Dave Sanderson passed to adopt the Safety Plan and to name a Safety Committee comprised of Norm Kolstad as chair, Susan Groff, Tere Mann, Dave Sanderson, Wally Warhol.

Fire Chief inspection needed and need to review insurance policy if sufficient coverage.

Stewardship – No report

Celebrants – No report

Foundation Advisory – Dave Sanderson – Brochures to be handed out about information for giving.

OLD BUSINESS: Solar Panel Feasibility Study: Board discussed possible task force members. John Miersch will find chair. Completed study to be presented at annual meeting in 2016.

Organization Chart: Mary Anderson

NEW BUSINESS: Beverly Backstrom Memorial; News releases about Empowerment grant awards; Just Married, Same Sex Ceremonies to be available statewide at UU churches July 11th and 12th. Motion by Stan Carignan, seconded by Dave Sanderson to approve free use of the church for any requested marriage ceremonies.

Mary Anderson gave out information on Green Sanctuary for further discussion next meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for Sunday, July 19th after church service with a potluck.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Johnson, secy.

