



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.



(Photo courtesy of Susan Groff, October 2015)

February 2016 Newsletter **Unitarian Church of Underwood**

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February 2016						
◀ January						March ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 AA 7 p.m.	2 Worship Committee 9:30 am @ Susan Groff's	3	4	5	6
7 Adult RE 9:15 Prophets led by John Minge (LL) Child Care Talk - May Our Spirit of Love Surround You – Ellen Eastby with Childrens' Dedication	8 Speakers Committee 9am- 12 N @ Judy Carpenter's AA 7 p.m.	9 No Battle Lake U Group til March Erhard/Fergus Falls U Group @ Carole Mitchell's 7 – 9 p.m.	10 Alexandria U Group 7 p.m. Ride for Refugees Planning – 9 am Roller-Olson's Green Team 5:30 @ church	11 No Perham U Group – will meet in March	12	13 Someplace Safe Tea Fundraiser 10:30 a.m. – doors open
14 U Kids & U Teens RE 10:30- 11:30 TALK – “What is Love?” shared readings	15 AA 7 p.m.	16 Fergus Falls U Group @ Tere Mann's 6:00 p.m.	17 Speakers Committee 5:30 pm @ church Board 6:30 pm @ church	18	19	20
21 Mindfulness Sitting 9-10 a.m. Child Care Talk:	22 AA 7 p.m.	23	24 Plan to Grow Task Force 4- 5:30 pm @ Roller/Olson's	25	26	27 Mary Anderson's Birthday!
28 Adult RE 9:15-10:15 a.m. Old Testament - Bob Worner, (LL) Children's RE – U Kids 10:30- 11:30 a.m. TALK – Victoria Creek, Creating A Soul Welcoming Environment Facilitators 12 N	29 AA 7 p.m.	Notes: Meeting Notices should be sent to maryanderson8380@msn.com by the 28th of the month for the next month.				

More about February Speakers and Events

February 7 – Ellen Eastby, “May Our Spirit of Love Surround You,” a day to celebrate the children in our church. Ellen will speak about the ups and the downs, the giggles and the snorts, and the “oohs” and the “aahs” of having children in the church community. She will also speak about the joyful, awesome, yet serious responsibility this congregation undertakes as we surround our children in the spirit of our love. Principles 1 and 3.

As part of that celebration, we will have a Dedication Ceremony during the service. Anyone who is interested in having their child dedicated that day; please contact Katy Olson, 218-495-3235 or katyjolson@gmail.com.

Following Sunday service, there will be a baby shower for John Henry, new son of Jen Walla and David Mertz at Roller-Olson’s.

February 14 – Being that Sunday, February 14 is Valentines Day, it seems like it would be appropriate to talk about love. **What is love?** People are invited to bring to share a reading or poem or song about love and what it means to them. Betsy Wells will be organizing the service. If you would like participate please let her know - betsyanddougwells@gmail.com or 218-736-4469.

February 21 – To be announced

February 28 - Victoria Creek, "Creating A Soul Welcoming Environment," to further the conversation from a year ago when she spoke on “Hosting Self and Others.” Victoria currently lives in Underwood, is married and has two almost grown children. She is employed at MnState in FF and is in process of receiving her EdD degree.

Thank you to Ellen Eastby for your faithful attention to the sound system on Sunday mornings. Ellen will no longer be available to attend to sound but Tere Mann, Luke Andersen and other assistants will continue that responsibility. Thank you all as well.

Meet and Greet

Greeters are needed for Sunday services for February and March. Please contact Donn Siems @ dmsiems@arvig.net or @ 218/864-5002 or contact JoAnn Larson @ redswilds@gmail.com or @ 218/405-0752. This is an easy and fun way to serve and to get to know other UCU members and friends.

The Month that Was

January 3 - Bob Worner’s talk was entitled “No Promises”, and was based on UU Principle #2. Each New Year is greeted with hopes of peace, health, and happiness. January 1, 2016 was no exception. However, there are no promises that this will be a good year. In fact in life, there are no promises of good things, and often the worst occurs in churches, families, politics, etc. Sometimes success and failure occur simply because of luck. Issues such as terrorism, homelessness, hunger, lack of universal healthcare illustrate some of the world’s failures and injustice.

So, what can we do to make 2016 a year for good? The major difference we can make are our “resolute determined efforts to make the world better” through our individual efforts and as we join with others. 1) We can be involved with local efforts to fight hunger and homelessness. 2) At UCU, we could have a justice committee to support justice issues in every aspect of the church. 3) We can work outside the political system, which often seems inefficient and ineffective, through NGO’s. We might influence the politics by bombarding candidates with our ideas (not just listen to them). 4) We need to demonstrate a love of the planet at all times, to ensure our future.

Bob mentioned several UCU members who have been/are active in local causes – environmental, homelessness, and social justice issues. He encouraged all of us to choose one cause to work on this year. That will make a difference. As we act, we will grow and be more alive and affect each other.

January 10 - , Patrick Hollister, Active Living Planner with PartnerSHIP 4 Health, a collaboration of Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties. The four counties work together to prevent chronic disease through sustainable changes that increase physical activity and healthy eating, and reduce tobacco use and exposure. Obesity and tobacco use are the largest contributing factors to chronic health issues.

Patrick tied his talk to UU Principle 2- **Justice, Equity, and Compassion in the Transportation System**. It has been learned in the past several years that our physical environment has an impact on our health.

- Trails: People who live near trails are 50% more likely to meet physical activity guidelines.
- Walkable Communities: People who live in walkable neighborhoods are 2 times as likely to get enough physical activity as those who don’t.
- Joint Use: The number of children who are physically active outside is 84% higher when schoolyards are kept open for public play.
- Recreational Facilities: Teens who live in poor or mostly minority neighborhoods are 50% less likely to have a recreation facility near home.

Patrick then, through pictures, gave examples of changes public health, urban planners and road builders are doing to include accommodations for pedestrians, bikers and people with disabilities. He also showed how Battle Lake incorporated art and pedestrian friendly ways to make their street reconstruction fun and safe.

Patrick suggested that the UCU might apply for Bicycle Friendly and Bicycle Community recognition for the town of Underwood. Dave Sanderson, Lowell & Judy Carpenter from UCU were especially active in this application process and resulting award of bronze status for the city of Fergus Falls.



UCU Members: Dave Sanderson, Lowell & Judy Carpenter & others accepting Award

In November 2015, Fergus Falls received Bicycle Friendly Community designation by the League of American Bicyclists. This award involves significant accomplishments in five areas: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation. Fergus Falls joins fifteen other Minnesota Bicycle Friendly Communities that want to make biking safe, fun and easy for everyone.

January 17 – Kris Warhol substituted for **John LaForge** who had been postponed due to distance and extremely low temperatures. **Kris** gave an introduction to **Betty Mills**, a UU minister from Bismarck who eloquently addressed UCU annually for many years. Then Kris read the talk that Betty delivered at the 100th anniversary of UCU. Betty said that UCU has been around for 100 years (+) for 3 reasons - the loving kindness; the beautiful and serene ambiance; and the intellectual challenges provided by its members. She quoted Wendell Berry, "No matter how much one may love the world as a whole, one can live fully in it only by living responsibly in a small part of it."

January 24 - Stephanie Porter from Land Stewardship Project and Amy Mondloch of the Toxic Taters Coalition shared information on the two campaigns: the Land Stewardship Project that moves toward a food and farming system that values the land, water and people; and Toxic Taters Coalition that is attempting to change RD Offutt's (large area potato grower) practices. We reflected on the fifth principle – "the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large." What is our responsibility to the land and each other – as residents of Minnesota, as consumers of food, as citizens – and how do we take power to make transformative change?

Stephanie talked about how the Land Stewardship Project focuses on land stewardship, justice and democracy - protecting township government so that people have a say in how our resources are used, helping small farmers live in relationship to the land so that the land is better cared for and all are free to contribute their voice to solve our problems. She, personally has had the opportunity to hear people's stories and act on them.

Amy shared that thousands of acres of pine forests in North Central Minnesota are being clear-cut for chemically-intensive potato farming, primarily by one company: RD Offutt, one of the biggest potato growers in the nation. RDO's intensive irrigation and use of toxic pesticides and fungicides are harming the health of people and pollinators and putting our water at risk.

The Coalition is working with DNR for an environmental assessment and working with Offutt to: 1) cut their use of pesticides; 2) tell the public what pesticides they use; 3) fund studies on the effect on human health; 4) adopt more sustainable practices.

To encourage healthy eating, the Green Team had invited local food producers to set up tables in the Ellison room to provide information and answer questions. **Diane Johnson** represented the **Fergus Falls Farmers' Market**. **Gretchen Boyum** represented CSA producers: **Boyum Farms and the Battle Lake Farmers' Market**. **Alicia Piekarski** staffed the table to order seedlings (more information below). **Maggie Meehan** attended the table to pass out the flyer (attached) and CSA Directory. **Stephanie and Amy** were available at their table to answer further questions.

Healthy treats from **Meadow Farm Foods** were featured and provided by members of the Green Team. Thank you especially to **Judy Carpenter** for organizing this event, obtaining the food and providing the labels to tell us what we were eating – happy and healthy!

January 31 - . Doug Wells - "Conversation about Monarchs," a cold, hard look at how the life for a monarch has become so precarious. Doug tied it to the UU Principle of interdependent web of all existence.

Factors that have contributed to the decline in Monarchs are: the loss of native prairie lands and the common milkweed on which they feed; the degradation of their wintering habitat (reduced to about 3 hectares equaling 2.5 hectares/acre; precarious weather conditions (climate change), and increased use of insecticides (the use of neonicotinoids or neonics).

Doug's recommendations:

- Increase milkweed plantings
- Change Federal farm programs so conversion to and management of grasslands is encouraged and rewarded
- Better management of roadsides with less/no spraying

Blanket Makers/Quilt Ties

Following this Sunday service, a number of UCU women gathered to share lunch, make blankets and socialize. The blankets will be donated to a charitable cause to be determined.



Chanda Brandes



Mary Anderson, Anne Andersen,
Gretchen Pleimling (Mary's daughter)



Susan Groff



Mary Worner & Katy Olson



Jewel, Sequoia, Mary W Maggie Meehan, Janell Miersch, Anne Andersen



"A Hot Mama"



Linda Quigstad-Berg & Bonnie Showers
(Photos Courtesy of Susan Groff)



Cedar Walters

U Groups

Everyone reported very robust discussions with last month's topic of "Understanding Differences." We are trying to coordinate topics whenever possible to UCU speakers. This was a good one!

The Battle Lake and Perham U-Groups are not meeting in February due to many people in each group not able to attend. They will use this month's topic in June. The Battle Lake U-Group will meet on March 8th at Dave and Susan's home. The three remaining U-Groups will be meeting at their usual times in February.

As one of their projects the U Group Facilitators, along with others, will serve at the Some Place Safe Tea, February 13. (See below).

2015-1016 U Group Schedule

- Battle Lake Afternoon Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month resuming in March at Susan and Daves @ 3 p.m. (see above). Co-facilitators: Bob Worner, Joanne Cress and Kris Warhol
- Fergus Falls/Erhard Evening Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. at the home of Carole Mitchell, 33928 County Highway 27, Erhard. Co-facilitators: Diane Johnson and Carole Mitchell.
- Fergus Falls Evening Group – 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m. at the home of Tere Mann, 1319 N Park, Fergus Falls. Co-facilitators: Bonnie Bell Albers and Tere Mann.
- Perham Afternoon Group – the 2nd Thursday of each month (no February meeting) @ 3:30 p.m. at the home of Mary Anderson, 455 5th St. SW, Perham. Co-facilitators: Mary Anderson and Mary Worner.
- Alexandria Evening Group – 2nd Wednesday of each month 7 p.m. at the office building of Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg. Co-facilitators: Lee Becker, Connie Stigen, Tere Mann.
-

There is always an empty chair left open for anyone who wants to join with a group.

February topic: Love, Compassion, and Empathy – *“Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action.” -Desmond Tutu*



13th Annual
someplace safe
SAFETY. OPTIONS. HOPE.

Tea Fundraiser

Saturday, February 13
M-State, Legacy Hall, Fergus Falls

10:30 am
Doors open for Silent Auction Bidding

11:30 am
Program, Luncheon & Tea

Featuring the
Fergus Falls School of Dance
& Fashion Show

Tickets \$20

You may purchase tickets at:
106 S. Union Ave., Fergus Falls, MN
or by calling (218) 739-2853
Space is limited.






All proceeds go to support programs and services provided by Someplace Safe

The U Group Facilitators and other UCU members will help serve at the tea. Someplace Safe has been a past recipient of UCU Empowerment Grants.

**Applications due February 15, 2016 for
UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD
EMPOWERMENT GRANTS**

See the December Newsletter for details and the application or pick one up at church or contact: Ron Roller at 218-495-3235 or at: rollerolson@gmail.com for further information and/or assistance.

**Invitation to Join UCU
As a Voting Member**

To become a voting member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Underwood, you indicate your wish by signing the membership book. We invite you to participate in new member orientation and the welcoming new member ceremony that is held twice a year, **the next planned for March 6, 2016**. Please see JoAnn Larson for further details.

The UCU Policy Statement #2 Article II Definitions B. states that: "A voting member is one who has signed the membership book and completed any of the following: has participated in an activity of the congregation in the past year, has made a recorded financial contribution since

the beginning of the fiscal year, or expresses verbally, or in writing, a desire to remain a member.”

We, like other UU Fellowships, have a number of people who attend regularly, those who attend periodically, some who consider themselves members but are unable to participate, and others who are not members but come to enjoy our featured speakers or other offerings. We welcome everyone: “no single belief includes us here, no disbelief excludes us.”

Plan to Grow

A compilation of the Plan to Grow Questionnaire Results are at the end of this Newsletter. Please address comments or questions to katyjolson@gmail.com or maryanderson8380@msn.com. The results have been reviewed by the Board and forwarded to Committee chairs for reference when completing the 2016-17 Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Planning Direction that will be presented at the April Annual meeting.

Web Enhancements

Growing visibility of the Unitarian Church of Underwood came out highest on the members’ response to the “Plan to Grow” questionnaire. One means recommended to help us to grow visibility is to enhance the UCU website and other social media presence. **Ellen Eastby** and **Bonnie Showers** are already at work to make this happen. They are asking for good photographs depicting our church life to add to our new website. Please send your photos to Ellen @ eastofellen@hotmail.com or Bonnie @ showersbonnie@gmail.com. (If your photo is used, you will be contacted to sign a photo release form).

This work will take some time so continue to use www.ucofu.org to stay current.

CALLING ALL WRITERS!

We invite anyone in the congregation to contribute an original piece of writing for our next Program on the Principles (to be scheduled). We will be creatively addressing the 2nd Principle – “Justice, equality and compassion in human relations.” This is similar to the 1st Principle, which centers around the inherent worth and dignity of every person, but takes it into a broader understanding that might encompass larger groups of people.

Our program usually includes about 5 contributors, with pieces being 2 to 5 minutes long. We also invite you to compose the Opening, Closing, and Responsive readings. There will be a pre-program meeting (to be scheduled) where we share our writings and decide which would be most suitable. Any questions – contact Diane Johnson, dbjohnson1938@gmail.com, (218)736-9001.

Green Gossip

Lee Hamness found LED lights at Home Depot for less than \$5/each so he, himself, purchased and replaced 23 of the church bulbs. Note: 23 regular bulbs burn 1725 watts when all on. 23 LED bulbs burn 207 watts. A LED bulb burning for 3/hrs/day is expected to last 22.8 years. If

one of the new LED bulbs is defective, Home Depot will exchange it for a replacement. WAY TO GO, LEE!!

Did you know that supermarket tomatoes are picked green and treated with ethylene gas before being shipped 1,500 miles across country?

"The organic gardener must realize that in him is placed a sacred trust, the task of producing food that will impart health to the people who consume it. He assumes an obligation to preserve the fertility of the soil, a precious heritage that he must pass on, undefiled and even enriched, to subsequent generations." -- from The Organic Creed by J. I. Rodale



Green Team

Sponsoring Sugar Maple Seedling Offer

Let's Celebrate Earth Day, April 22, AND Arbor Day, April 29. How? Plant a tree! Even a tree seedling, nurtured with care, will make a difference the day it is planted.

Order your own Sugar Maple Seedlings, 6-12", by Sunday, April 3. The Order Blank will be posted on the Bulletin Board. Order more than one at \$1.00 per seedling! Judy Carpenter will collect payment when you order OR upon delivery. The trees will arrive in May.

Did you know:

- The Sugar Maple tree is one of America's most loved trees.
- Perhaps it is best known for its syrup, or "Syrop" as the French explorers called it when they found Native Americans enjoying this spring delight.
- Today, about two million gallons of the liquid gold support an important rural industry in the United States.
- It also provides shade and fall beauty that are unparalleled in park and home landscapes.
- The Sugar Maple as firewood has few rivals - it splits easily, gives off an enormous amount of heat, produces few sparks, and ends in fine, rich ashes that pioneers turned into soap but today can enrich gardens.
- The wood of the Sugar Maple tree has always been highly valued for furniture because of its beauty, and for products ranging from flooring to bowling pins thanks to its extreme hardness.
- During the 2001 baseball season, Barry Bonds switched from the traditional Ash wood baseball bat to one made of Maple and hit 73 home runs, a new record!
- It has been used for medicine because of its bone-building phosphates that enhance calcium retention.

UUA Stewardship & Development

2015 Annual Report on Giving is now available at [www: uua.org](http://www.uua.org). The Unitarian Church of Underwood is recognized as one of the Honor and Merit Congregations because of our past 10+ years in meeting our fair share assessment each year.

For 2016-17, the UCU Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Membership Committee is reporting 70 certified members for whom we will pay \$85/member as our fair share to UUA and the MidAmerica Region. The total of \$5950 represents about 17% of our annual budget. .

inSpirit

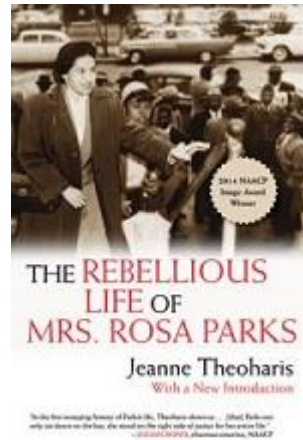
Your Search for Truth and Meaning Begin Here

The UUA Bookstore renamed to *inSpirit: The UU Book and Gift Shop*. Visit it at <http://www.uuabookstore.org/>.

The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks

Beacon #UUReads selection at the UUA Bookstore.

[*The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*](#) goes beyond the elementary school story of Parks as a tired seamstress and accidental activist; it documents her participation in a significant number of strands of the black freedom struggle in the 20th century. Her contribution to American history—and courageous role in the African American struggle for justice and freedom for more than a half century—far surpasses her act of defiance on a Montgomery bus. Based on years of archival research and interviews, this book gives Mrs. Parks her due as a lifelong freedom fighter. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* is now available at the UUA Bookstore.



New Resources for Older Adults



Older adulthood is a time to look back on one's journey and to affirm that which is of most importance. Most older adults face the physical realities of aging and the emotional realities of loss and grief at some point. While many older adults are active participants in familiar organizations and communities, for some this can be a challenge.

The Faith Development Office announces a new set of [web pages for older adults](#). These pages offer support for the older adult journey, whether you are an older adult yourself, a caregiver or family or member, or part of a congregation engaged in ministry with older adults. The curated resources are designed to enrich and support the journeys of older adulthood. Topics include: Body, Mind, and Spirit; Facing Death, Grief and Loss, Programs for Groups, Making Medical Decisions, Caregivers, and Legacy.

Love First

By Rebecca Parker

[Quest for Meaning, Feb. 2011](#)

“What we need is a revolution in our values, a revolution that turns our attention more reverently and responsibly to the interdependent, relational character of life. What we need is a spiritual and practical revolution that embodies love for neighbor and for the world through sustaining structures of care and responsibility....

Loving our neighbor implicates us in loving the whole network of life. Science has given us photographs of the earth from space. We can see we are one blue globe, wreathed with clouds. We know the crust of the earth floats on a core of fire. Even the rocks are part of a complex flow of elements that fold down into that molten core and rise again. We dwell in our cities and towns

on a living, breathing planet molded by transforming fire, flowing waters, the exhalations of trees, and the inbreathing of animals. This interconnectedness of all things calls for wisdom and reverence. We cannot trample this landscape of life as ignorant fools and expect to be safe. We cannot turn from our bonds and obligations for and with one another and expect everyone to be okay. We cannot love after the fact and expect love to be able to save life. Maybe in the end love will save us all, but it has a lot better chance at the beginning.

We need to love from the start—not as an emergency strategy when everything has gone wrong.”

Standing on the Side of Love

Mark Your Calendars for 30 Days of Love

Mark your calendars for [Thirty Days of Love](#)---a time for love, community, and prophetic action with Standing on the Side of Love. This year's 30 days, from Saturday, January 16 through Sunday, February 14, 2016, will be centered on racial justice as it intersects with other aspects of social justice including immigration justice and LGBTQ equality. Each week Standing on the Side of Love will send meditations and calls to action from partners working with Black Lives Matter and racial justice organizing.

Worship resources for families and congregations are available for [Share the Love Sunday](#). You can honor and celebrate people organizing for racial justice in your community with a [Courageous Love Award](#). Thank you for your support.

In 2015, the United States has seen more than 350 shootings in which four or more people were wounded or killed, according to the crowd-sourced website [shootingtracker.com](#), which keeps a running tally of U.S. gun violence.

Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



MUUSJA OPPORTUNITIES

<http://www.muusja.org>

The Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance has hired some interns to reach out to congregation members. Here are some excellent ways to learn more about UU social justice work:

MUUSJA is holding monthly **Convening Calls** for Greater Minnesota members interested in social justice on the second Thursday evenings. In these 90-minute meetings, using an excellent Internet meeting service or your phone, UU social justice leaders around the state of Minnesota (and beyond!) are invited to gather virtually to discuss a topic related to Social Justice work and get to know leaders from other congregations. Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://zoom.us/j/941766760>. Or join by phone: +1 646 568 7788 (US Toll) or +1 415 762 9988 (US Toll), Meeting ID: 941 766 760. To RSVP please email Kevin Jagoe at: muusjaintern@gmail.com.

❓ **Online Covenant Groups.** In the small group ministry style, these online groups are a space to get to know each other more deeply, find practices to renew yourself, connect to the sources of our UU faith and to other congregational leaders, and process the justice work you are doing. Our Justice Leaders' Online Covenant Groups will meet once a month for five sessions, January-May. Find out more and sign up on the MUUSJA website: <http://muusja.org/page-1075293>

❓ **Youth programs:** YoUUth SOALS is an experiential program designed to engage Unitarian Universalist high schoolers in faith-based activism, congregational organizing, and grassroots justice work. Meeting once a month between November and April, youth will dig deeply into the ways our faith calls us to work for justice, and to develop the skills to do this work effectively and accountably. Youth can participate via Internet. More complete description is at <http://www.muusja.org/YoUUth-So>.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee does worldwide. Here is a link for becoming a member (\$40), or just making a donation of any amount: <http://www.uusc.org/donate?gclid=CMP8o5uNosoCFQ8zaQodZxwJWg>

Register Now!



Regional Assembly 2016
**The WHO in the New Era
of Unitarian Universalism**

April 29 - May 1 • St. Paul, MN
MidAmericaRegionUUA.org/ra

*We'll be at the [InterContinental Crowne Plaza St. Paul Riverfront](http://InterContinentalCrownePlazaStPaulRiverfront.com)
11 East Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55101*

Mark your calendars now for April 29-May 1 and plan to attend the Regional Assembly in St. Paul. We are hoping to get a large contingency from UCU so we can go together and be together. Connie Stigen and Mary Anderson will act as coordinators for MANY UCUs who can plan to attend the workshop!!! For complete information on the assembly, see: <https://www.midamericauua.org>.

Shan School News from Bernice Johnson

“Here are some photos from a small scholarship ceremony for Shan students. Ten students received scholarships (the parents accept them, when possible) in migrant camp Karn Kanook One and four students received them in in migrant camp Karn Kanook Two. Scholarships (or sponsorships) are awarded based on need and on academic excellence and dedication. It is a heartwarming experience. (One of our teachers is awarding the scholarships in the middle photo).

We were able to give more awards because of last year's Empowerment Grant from UCU ! Actually, we put all of the donations we receive into one bank account, but as I recall we got a bit over \$1,000 from UCU. The secondary school (vocational and/or high school) grants range from \$200 to \$300, so the UCU money would have paid for more than three of them at that level. The neediest small children get \$30 each for uniforms and shoes. At that rate, your money would have paid for many more children!” *Bernice Johnson*
www.shanrefugeeschools.org.



Student being awarded scholarships 2016



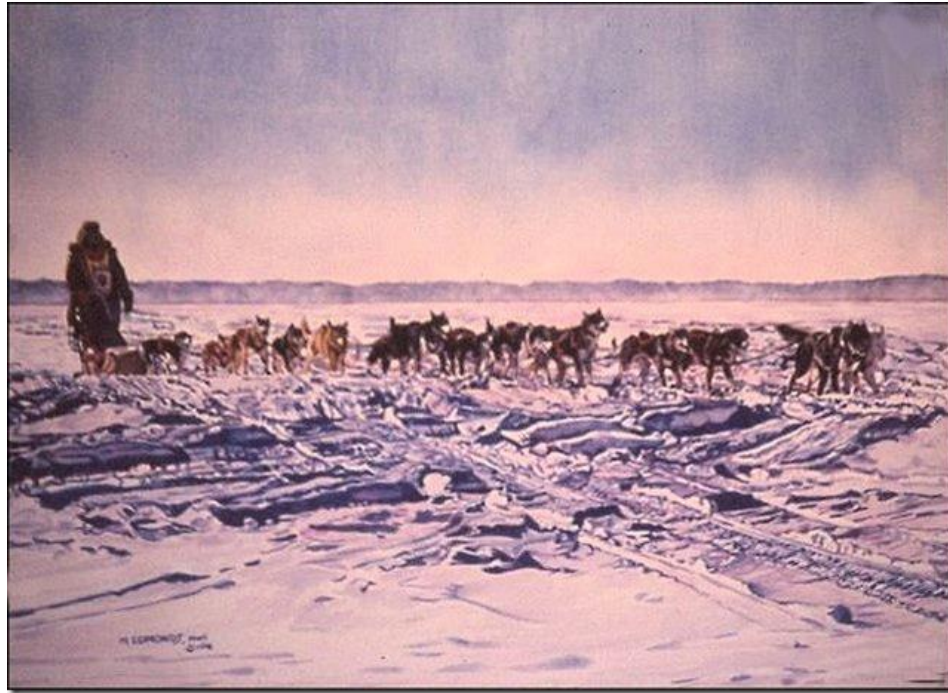
A little one who so liked her knitted hat made by Betsy Wells in the colors of their flag. The young woman Bernice is standing with was a scholarship student at this camp for a number of years. She is now a volunteer teacher there. She also has a paid job as a teacher at a learning center.



Home interior at one for the construction camps. A mother pulling a wagon to the water pipes with a little hitch-hiker making it more difficult.

"Plans are underway for the UCU to host a community bike ride, proposed date July 17. This ride will be to raise funds for the Shan Refugee Project. We will keep you posted as plans progress" *Katy Olson*

**Minnesota Winter
"Crossing Devil's Track"**



Mickie Edmonds

Beargrease Marathon where Mickie Edmonds and daughter, Kelly were spectators probably 10 years ago. It was bitter cold -- 35 below zero!!! Mickie had a grant to attend, and take photos for paintings. That year the marathon began in Duluth and went up the shore to Grand Portage and then back to Duluth.



And Then There are Our UCU Snowbirds!!

Even though we've had a mild winter here in Minnesota, when shoveling or shivering, we have reason to envy those folks who escape to warmer climates. So just out of curiosity as to where they are and what they do and to keep in touch, here is what they tell us:



Peggy Maxwell: "I escape the cold and icy roads by going to Tempe, AZ, for the worst of the winter months. I have had an apartment in a housing co-op ever since 2001, when my son Andrew and I moved to Tempe so that I could work on my doctorate in naturopathic medicine. Since then I have worked with corporate wellness programs in both AZ and MN, so I've kept my

apartment in Tempe. It works out quite well for me, since I find that not having to prepare for long cold winters frees up time for other things. There are always a thousand things to do anyway when I am at the "farm", so not having to deal with winter & winter prep works for me.

While in Tempe, I enjoy biking and hiking and day trips to the mountains. I also focus on continuing education requirements in naturopathic medicine and traditional Chinese medicine, attending workshops and conferences, where I reconnect with a very eclectic group of colleagues. But I miss my friends in OTC, also a very eclectic group: I feel blessed to know so many interesting people! I always look forward to my return and seeing all your beautiful faces."



Chuck Adelsman: "Greetings to all the UU'ers and wishing you all a Happy New Year.

It's the middle of my 12th winter in Cottonwood, Arizona, in the lovely Verde Valley about 90 miles north of Phoenix. In some ways it's better than ever as I get settled into my home and complete some renovations. Solar PV panels installed in December should cover my electrical usage for the next 20 years. Thank You, Az sunshine.

I'm enjoying watching birds at my feeders on the patio as I have my morning coffee. It usually takes until around 11am for the sun to melt the overnight ice in the hummingbird feeder. There are many small birds coming to the sunflower feeder as well as Cardinals and Doves.

It's been a colder than usual winter (El Nino?), but generally ranges from the 20's overnight to the 40's - 50's daytime. As the days begin to stretch longer we'll climb back into the 60's and 70's. Weather and comfort here is generally determined by three factors: 1. Sunshine or cloudy, 2. Windy or calm, 3. Elevation. Flagstaff just 50 miles north gets a lot of snow and ice because it's over 7,000 feet. Cottonwood at 3,000 feet rarely gets snow and is usually around 10 degrees cooler than Phoenix - a happy medium.

Activities include volunteering at the Habitat for Humanity Restore center each Thursday morning, keeping up with Facebook friends including several UUers, and tinkering with my old engine projects. I've been an active member of the Az Flywheelers which has a show each March and features old farm tractors and engines.

On my bucket list is a trip to the Sandhill Crane wintering grounds between Wilcox and McNeal in SE Az. I'm told it's an impressive sight-seeing thousands of them during their morning and evening flights.

The nearest UU group is in Sedona. I have been a part of a small local Quaker meeting but may try visiting the UU Sedona group one Sunday.

My buddy Maxxie is getting old like his old man but we're still hanging in there and send our love and all the best." Chuck



John Donahue is not a snowbird. He is a full time sunbird! John writes: "I do not consider myself a snowbird. I live full-time in Mexico. I have no USA home, but I tend to return to Otter Tail County once a year for 2-4 weeks. My small Mexican condo is in Queretaro, Queretaro, Mexico. It is a city of nearly one and a half million and is growing rapidly. The city is in the central highlands of Mexico and is far from either coast.

I enjoy the climate and the cultural activities here, and I spend 15 to 25 hours a week doing volunteer work. Mostly, I teach English--to a class of blind students, to some employees of a nice restaurant, to various adults who want to maintain their advanced levels of English. I also play the piano once a week at a very modest rest home. (I learned lots of popular Mexican songs from the middle of the last century.) Then I serve as "errand boy" for an American who is in another rest home and who has no family here. And, finally, I have become "Mr. Bean": Each week I buy between 25 and 35 pounds of dried beans, lentils, and garbanzos and deliver them to a soup kitchen.

My closest friends are Mexicans, but I also associate with a coterie of other foreigners who live near me in the historic center. I really enjoy living without a car and being able to walk to cultural events, to the market, and to the homes of my international friends

Last year I was delighted to have Bob and Mary Worner visit me for nearly two weeks. I think they can attest to my interesting, enjoyable, non-stressful life here."



And from **Luke Anderson and Joanne Cress**: "From San Carlos, CA. (near S. F.) Lots of welcome rain keeps flora green and fruitful, also stems the draught. In March we travel down the coast heading back to MN via Arizona. Looking forward to seeing you all."

And the Sights They Enjoy!!



Photo from Joanne & Luke, January 17, 2016

Unitarian Church of Underwood Approved Board Minutes for November 18, 2015

Board members present: David Sanderson, Mary Anderson, Stan Carignan, David Wass, Lee Becker, Kris Warhol, Alisha Piekarski, John Miersch and Norman Kolstad. Absent: Diane Johnson. Also present: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson.

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board Chair John Miersch at 6:38 p.m. JoAnn Larson shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Becker/Sanderson).

The minutes of the September 16, 2015 meeting were approved (Warhol/Becker). The minutes of the October 18, 2015 meeting were approved (Warhol/Becker).

Reports:

Treasurer: David Wass reported on bills to be paid, lag in collections from budget. One bank CD will not be renewed. The board authorized moving the current investments in the UUA Foundation fund to the newly formed UUA Limited Liability Corporation (Sanderson/Warhol). The board appointed David Wass and David Sanderson to represent the UCU to the new LLC (Becker/Anderson).

Administrative Consultant: JoAnn Larson

Program Committee: Lee Becker reported that a worship committee was being formed, a “children’s moment” is being considered.

Facilities Committee: Kris Warhol mentioned the many projects underway or being considered by the committee.

Outreach Committee: Stan Carignan reported on aspects of a Social Justice initiative.

Speakers Committee: JoAnn Larson

Membership Committee: Mary Anderson reported on the planned addendum to the church directory, women’s and men’s meetings, and the need for resources to deal with addiction and support for caregivers.

Safety Committee: Kris Warhol listed some of their projects – fire extinguishers, keys, lift issues, CPR/AED training, inventory, insurance, and threats.

Stewardship Committee: no report

Foundation Advisory Committee: David Sanderson reported that a new brochure is coming, further Sunday short talks.

Plan to Grow task force: Mary Anderson reported that four people had joined their task force, questionnaires have started to come in.

Solar Feasibility task force: no report

Green Sanctuary task force: Mary Anderson reported coordination with other committees.

Old Business: The strategic plan and roles and responsibilities documents were reviewed.

New Business: There will be a Christmas Eve service. Attendance at the Mid-America conference was discussed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 16, 2015 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Kolstad, acting secretary.

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. Paintings by Mickie Edmonds. Photos credited. When you have photos of a UCU event and are willing to share, please forward them to Mary.

Cancellation/Postponement Due to Weather

Cancellation/Postponement Due to Weather: for weather related announcements, tune to Lakes Radio Family of Stations – 103.3, 96.5 FM and 1020, 1250 AM or online at www.lakesradio.net under “News.” You can also check the UCU website at www.ucofu.org or the Facebook page.

Two women nominated for UUA presidency

Race for 2017 election of next UUA president begins with nomination of Alison Miller and Sue Phillips.



The Rev. Sue Phillips (left) and the Rev. Alison Miller are the nominees of the Presidential Search Committee for election as UUA president in 2017. (Courtesy of the candidates). For more information see: https://www.uuworld.org/articles/miller-phillips-nominated?utm_source=f

UCU Membership Questionnaire Response Summary 11/2015

Of the 91 questionnaires mailed, 40 or 44 % were returned completed. Of those completed:

AGE

<u>2</u>	% 16-30 years of age (1)
<u>10</u>	% 31-50 years of age (4)
<u>35</u>	% 51-65 years of age (14)

30 % 66-75 years of age (12)
20 % 76 + years of age (8)

Length of UCU Membership

32.5 % 5 years or less (13)
37.5 % 5-10 years (15)
10 % 10-20 years (4)
20 % 20 years + (8)

Miles Traveled from home to church

12.5 % 5 or less (5)
47.5 % 6-10 miles (19)
22.5 % 11-25 miles (9)
17.5 % 25 or more miles (7)

Attendance

75 % Most Sundays (30)
17.5 % Occasionally (7)
2.5 % Seasonally (1)
% Special speakers/interests only
2.5 % Unable to attend (1)

Spiritual Studies

15 % John Minge's classes (6)
17.5 % Bob Worner's classes (7)
12.5 % Mindfulness (5)
55 % U Groups (22)
12.5 % Have children in Religious Education (5)

Serve on Board/committees

47.5 % serve in 1-3 areas (19)
10 % serve in 4-6 areas (4)
2.5 % serve in more than 6 areas (1)
37.5 % do not serve in these areas (15)

Event/project participation

42.5 % participate in 1-3 (17)
% participate in 4-6 (9)
22.5 % participate in 7 +(1)
27.5 % do not participate (11)

Other areas of service

45 % serve in 1 capacity (18)
35 % serve in 3 or more capacities (14)
17.5 % do not serve (7)

Involved

27.5 % involved and open to do more (11)
62.5 % involved to capacity (25)
5 % not serving, want to be (2)

Topic	Itemize	Category
Like:	People Community Variety of programs/speakers/message Interesting, thought provoking speakers All welcome, all included Smiles & greetings Moment of silence Spiritual growth discussion & messages Music Acceptance/welcoming Openness Compatible values Progressive thinkers Freedom of conscience Freedom from guilt Non-judgmental Community involvement Opportunity to serve Expanding kids RE/seeing the kids UU Principles & purposes No sermons, prayers, doctrine Non-denominational Setting/aesthetics Liberal theology Open to “spiritual, not religious opinions Friendliest & kindest church individual has seen. Coffee time Fellowship & treats Religious Education Child Care U groups	Short Term Tasks referred to various committees for immediate implementation or to add to 2016-17 goals Big change- incorporate into strategic planning for next 2-5 years. <u>Celebrants</u> <u>Bob Worner/Ellen</u> <u>Eastby*</u> Spiritual growth discussion & messages Acceptance/welcoming Openness Compatible values Progressive thinkers Freedom of conscience Freedom from guilt Non-judgmental UU Principles & purposes No sermons, prayers, doctrine Non-denominational Liberal theology Open to “spiritual, not religious opinions Develop relationship with UUA for pastoral support/sense of direction <u>U Groups Tere</u> <u>Mann/Connie Stigen*</u> See Celebrant List
Like Changed	More space – kids RE/program/storage (9)	<u>Worship Committee</u> <u>Mary Worner*</u>

	<p>Better acoustics/sound reduction LL (8)</p> <p>More involvement Social Justice (4)</p> <p>More functional seating LL 2 instead of 3 hymns</p> <p>Longer moment of silence</p> <p>No summer service (1)</p> <p>Music for RE Kids</p> <p>Less liturgy, less “preachy” songs, shorter or fewer responsive readings – more time for Q&A. (2)</p> <p>Less corporate/advertising attitude (UUA Branding)</p> <p>More focus on honesty and inclusiveness</p> <p>Annual query of members (1)</p> <p>More congregational participation in service</p> <p>“Get Winona LaDuke back” (1)</p> <p>Bigger screen (1)</p> <p>Why have organ? (1)</p> <p>Too many Sundays with limited appeal speaker (1)</p> <p>Incorporate UU minister/trained clergy in Sunday services (3)</p> <p>Maybe have chalk/whiteboard with hymn #'s displayed</p> <p>Native American/Wiccan/Pagan speakers/program (3)</p> <p>More art/music events at or outside church (2)</p> <p>Solar panels (1)</p> <p>“Keep working to keep candle lighting/joys & concerns <u>brief</u> (1)</p>	<p>Recorded Services</p> <p>Children Appreciation</p> <p>2vs3 hymns?</p> <p>Longer moment of silence?</p> <p>Less liturgy, less “Preachy” songs, shorter or fewer responsive readings?</p> <p>New hymnals</p> <p>Choir</p> <p>Maybe have white/chalk board to display hymn #'s</p> <p>Keep working to have candle lighting/joys & concerns <u>brief</u></p> <p><u>Program –Lee Becker*</u></p> <p>See Celebrant & Worship Committee List</p> <p>More UU ministerial presence</p> <p>Age appropriate offerings</p> <p>1)Spiritual practice</p> <p>2) RE</p> <p>3) Personal growth</p> <p><u>Childrens RE – Katy Olson, Betsy Wells, JoAnn Larson, Cedar Walters*</u></p> <p>Music for kids</p> <p>Show children appreciated each service</p> <p><u>Music Team – Mary Worner/Susan Groff*</u></p> <p>Music for kids</p> <p>Why have organ?</p> <p>More art/music events at or outside church (2)</p> <p>less “Preachy” songs</p>
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	<p>Do not be so tight with the money, spend on what we need, ie., shades</p> <p>Better coordination of activities</p> <p>More promotion and publicity</p> <p>No need for change</p>	<p><u>Facilities – Kris Warhol/Susan Groff*</u></p> <p>More space – kids</p> <p>RE/programs/storage (9)</p> <p>Acoustics/Sound</p> <p>Reduction LL (8)</p> <p>More functional seating</p> <p>Bigger screen</p> <p>Why have organ?</p> <p>More pew cushions</p> <p>Solar panels (1)</p> <p>Don't change sanctuary</p> <p>Do not build/buy building</p> <p>Have all help clean church so not "junky looking"</p> <p>Update building/efficient heating</p> <p>Shades on windows</p> <p><u>Stewardship/Finance Committee Dave Sanderson/Dave Wass*</u></p> <p>Meet Budget (5)</p> <p>Do not be so tight with the money, spend on what we need, ie., shades</p> <p><u>Membership Committee – Mary Anderson*</u></p> <p>Welcome, open, accepting</p> <p>Assign "buddy" to newcomers/invite to coffee</p> <p>Involve old/new members together</p>
Not change	<p>Chalice lighting</p> <p>/joy & concerns</p> <p>Variety of speakers</p> <p>Art</p>	<p><u>Outreach/Community Connections Stan Carignan/Kris Warhol*</u></p>

	<p>Music Sanctuary Do not grow too much in numbers – loss intimacy Overall atmosphere E-mail reports Do not build/buy building Do not hire minister (2) Empowerment Grants</p>	<p>More interesting projects/community/civic involvement More involvement – social justice More art/music events at/or outside church</p> <p><u>Tech Team – Lowell Carpenter/Ellen Eastby*</u> Greater web presence with interactive capabilities (1)</p>
Need improvement	<p>Meet Budget (5) All help keep church clean so not “junky looking” Involve people we see rarely Greater web presence with interactive capabilities (1) Develop relationship with UUA for pastoral support/sense of direction Involve old/new members together Update building/efficient heating (2) Build greater understanding of UU Financial strategies Policies in writing</p>	<p><u>Plan to Grow TF – Katy Olson*</u> Do not grow too much in numbers – lose intimacy Numerous cons to hiring minister Consider Executive administrator Increase UCU Visibility</p> <p><u>U Groups – Tere Mann/Connie Stigen*</u> More focus on honesty and inclusiveness Involve old/new members together Develop relationship with UUA for pastoral support/sense of direction All welcome, all included Compatible values Progressive thinkers Freedom of conscience Freedom from guilt Non-judgmental Community involvement Opportunity to serve</p>

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Hire Minister	Pros	Cons
	<p>Consistent message/voice in community</p> <p>Better communication</p> <p>Coordination (2)</p> <p>Spiritual guidance</p> <p>Give focus & direction</p> <p>Add stability</p> <p>Consistency, Professionalism, expertise/direction</p> <p>Prevent volunteer burnout</p> <p>Ministerial visitation to individuals in need</p> <p>Ministerial presence – take over some responsibilities of volunteers</p> <p>Provide pastoral counseling</p>	<p>Cost (12)</p> <p>Lose variety of speakers (4)</p> <p>Unique perspectives</p> <p>Change our culture</p> <p>Change our vibe</p> <p>Power shift (3)</p> <p>Disempower congregation (2)</p> <p>Parishioners disconnected (2)</p> <p>Not of our community</p> <p>Too formal/structured become like other churches in tone</p> <p>Difficult to find someone who will complement congregational's views/focus</p> <p>Congregation rely too much on minister to take care of church needs</p> <p>"preached at"</p> <p>Prefer many speakers to just one</p> <p>Only one perspective</p>
Hire Executive Director	Pros	Cons

Viable outreach within church, incl car-pooling, ride sharing. Visits/meal to attendees in need/cheered. Easy to find info, ie., reading lists for helping/encouraging each other, elders, parents, medical concerns, other hard times.

Other Comments: Glad to have found UU, hope others can hear of it but don't want to recruit – they can come if they want. Direction depends on who are the members and their interests and talents