

Newsletter February 2020

*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.*

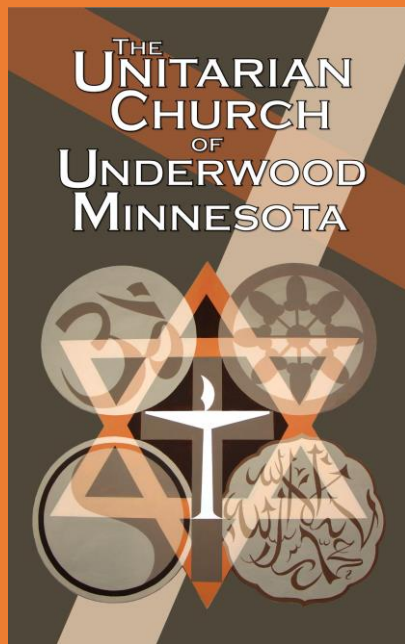
Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street
Underwood

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



Got to start them reading young!

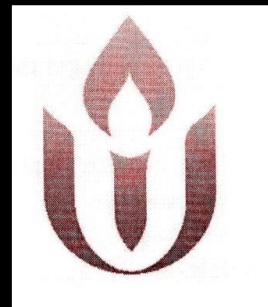
Sunday Services 10 a.m.

February 2 - Anna Wasescha "The
2030 Sustainable Development
Goals




February 9 – Bonnie Graham,
"Blacks Live Unitarian Universalism"

February 16 – Sean Coffman "Our
Human Family"

February 23 – Nik Nerburn, "Lost
Photos from the State Hospital"



February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 Anna Wasescha "Sustainable Development" "Church Chats" 11:30 Chili Dinner Planning 11:30 Children's RE 10-11 am #300 Mindfulness Sitting 9:15-9:45 am #300	3 Membership Committee 4 pm @ #300 Safety Committee 4 pm @ church AA 7 PM	4	5 Strategic Planning Review 5:30 pm	6	7 Welcome Place Chocolate Fundraiser, 4-7 pm @ Calvary Evangelical Free Church, Pelican Rapids	8
9 Bonnie Graham, "Blacks Live UU" Children's RE 10-11 am #300 Mindfulness Sitting 9:15-9:45 am #300 Speakers 11:30	10 AA 7 PM	11 Battle Lake/Underwood U Group @ Susan Groff's @ 3:00 p.m.	12 Alexandria U-Group: 2 nd Wed @ 7:00 pm @ Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg.	13 Perham U Group @ Stan Carignan's 6:30 p.m.	14 	15 Someplace Safe Annual Fundraiser MState, Legacy Hall, Fergus Falls – 10:30 am
16. Sean Coffman "Our Human Family" Children's RE 10-11 am #300 Mindfulness Sitting 9:15-9:45 am #300 UCU Member & Friend Orientation #300 11:30	17 AA 7 PM	18	19 Board Meeting 5:30 Records Committee 4 p.m. @ #300	20 Fergus Falls U Group @ Diana Ziesemer's @ 6:30 p.m.	21	22
23 Nik Nerburn, "Lost Photos from State Hospital" Children's RE 10-11 am #300 Mindfulness Sitting 9:15-9:45 am #300 Chili Contest	24 AA 7 PM	25	26	27 Mary Anderson's bd 	28	29 

Stay^oinformED

"Like" UCU on Facebook: see
www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org

Contact Wally Warhol for Sunday announcements
@ ucunderwood4@gmail.com or 218/205-4111.

Contact Kris Warhol @ 218/205-1644 or
mwarhol7up@gmail.com for local media
notifications.

U Group Schedule **(Meetings Monthly)**

- Alexandria U-Group: 2nd Wed @ 7:00 pm @ the office building of Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg., 610 Fillmore, Alexandria: Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Battle Lake U Group, the 2nd Tuesday @ 3:00 p.m. home of Susan Groff. Facilitators: Bob Worner/Kris Warhol.
- Fergus Falls U-Group: 3rd Thursday @ 6:30 pm @ Diana Ziesemer's, 934 W. Linden St., Fergus Falls. Facilitator: Melody Shores.
- Perham U-Group: 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m. @ Stan Carignan's. Facilitator: Stan Carignan.

Each group holds an empty chair for anyone who wants to come and join the group.

To learn more or join a group, contact Lead Facilitator:
Shannon Smith @ shannonsmith20@gmail.com
Or 320/630-6229

Newsletter Submissions due prior to **Issuance the 1st of each month**

Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to:

Writer/Editor: Mary Anderson

Editing: Stephanie Sanderson

Emailing/mailling: Ellen Eastby and Mary Anderson

Website: Ellen Eastby

Facebook: Melody Shores

Photos courtesy of Norm Kolstad & credited others.

Credited Articles

Note: Send Announcements for monthly newsletter to maryanderson8380@msn.com. They will be forwarded for inclusion @ www.ucofu.org and Facebook Page.

Newsletter comes out on the 1st of each month via email. They are also posted at www.ucofu.org.

Adult Religious Education Classes Sundays, **8:45-9:45 am**

2nd Sunday of the month class with Sandy Barnhouse resumes March 8.

3rd Sunday of the month class with Ellen Eastby resumes March 15.

4th Sunday of the month class with Bob Worner resumes April 26, 8:45-9:45 a.m.

Mindfulness Sitting each Sunday of the month, 9:15 – 9:45 a.m., led by Stan Carignan or others @ #300 Sverdrup Suites.



Monthly Greeting from Board President, Kris Warhol

Overcoming fear can be the work of a lifetime. Continuous learning and staying the course is enough to accomplish in one's life. Seven solutions to follow and make a practice of can change fear.

For safekeeping live for today and not be afraid. If your mind becomes clouded with nameless dreads release them and become in charge of those thoughts.

What happened in the past need not take up more time entertaining fear today. Remain open to the possibilities that today will be filled with goodness both seen and heard.

Learn to set boundaries. Be reliable, accountable and determined to release negativity. Choose a different way to respond or do not respond at all.

Be non-judgmental. Be generous and assume the best of outcomes from all these suggestions. Life wasn't meant to be easy. What life has to teach is not to allow others to drag us into their fights. We need to stay on the outside of a situation to discern what is really happening.

Each day choose to hang on to your distinctiveness even if fear driven. By working through fear, you will find a beautiful person that is unique. A person that doesn't rattle or become startled. We don't become people of love unless we have fully faced our fears.

We sense dread and fear daily on the outer rim through the media. That we can't control. If we can calm the inner being then bigger shifts take hold inside to ease trembling minds.

"Nothing in all creation is so like God as stillness" Meister Eckhart
From the heart - *Kris Warhol*

Speakers Coming in February

February 2 – Anna Wasescha "The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals" (*postponed from January 19*). West Central Initiative has a new three-year strategic plan that is grounded in the seventeen sustainable development goals that all 193 member states agreed to in 2015. These global goals are as relevant in our region as they are anywhere else in the world. Partnerships to achieve the goals is the seventeenth goal and perhaps the most critical. How can West Central Initiative work together with the Unitarian community to make progress toward a more sustainable world for everyone?

February 9- "Blacks Live Unitarian Universalism" webinar excerpts with **Bonnie Graham** facilitating. Hear excerpts from BLUU's symposium: "Proclaiming Black UU Theology," fall 2019 in St. Paul. What challenges do people of color face in UU congregations? How is BLUU organizing to create supportive spaces for people of color in UU? Do you wonder what black-led UU spiritual content would sound like? BLUU provided this opportunity to view UU from a Black

perspective and everyone was invited to listen and grow. Come this Sunday for an introduction and find out how to listen to the whole symposium.

Note: Speakers Committee meets following services and welcomes input from members and /friends.

February 16 - Sean Coffman "Our Human Family." Sean is the Executive Director of the Human Family and Director of the North Dakota Human Rights Festival. In his talk, he will explore the festival's history and submitted works. He will discuss how the works in the exhibition have encouraged discussion around difficult human rights, civil rights and social justice issues.

Note: UCU Orientation for Members & Friends, 11:30 a.m. @ #300 – see below.

February 23 - Nik Nerburn, "Lost Photos from the State Hospital." Nik, a documentary artist, will present his recent research and a selection of photographs from the private collection of Michael Loreno (former owner of The Spot Panini and Wine in Fergus Falls). Loreno's collection of photographs were shot by a mysterious photographer who was confined to the Fergus Falls State Hospital sometime in the 1960's. During this time, the unknown person photographed day-to-day life in the institution on a small 35mm camera. Most staff members thought that his camera was empty, not knowing that he had a brother in Fergus Falls who would regularly buy him film, and have it developed. His collection of photographs include: portraits, still lifes, documentation of field trips, occupational therapies, and walks around the then-active hospital grounds. As part of his artist residency with Springboard for the Arts, Nik Nerburn is scanning these 35mm slides and researching the life of this remarkable photographer. He'll share some of these images and his research during his presentation.

Note: Chili Contest at Social Hour following services. See below.

Church Happenings

**Make Membership Official
Become a UCU Voting Member**



**Participate in UCU Orientation for Members/Friends February 16, 2020
and New Member Welcoming, March 1, 2020**

The Unitarian Church of Underwood has expanded in numbers over the last several years. We continue to have friends who are regularly coming through our door wondering if this is a permanent place for them. Visitors and newer members often ask for further information on

Unitarian Universalism and what the Unitarian Church of Underwood stands for. To help answer questions, the Membership Committee offers a one-hour session, "UCU Orientation for Members/Friends" that will be held **February 16** following Sunday Service. Please contact Mary Anderson @ maryanderson8380@msn.com or 218/346-6638 to indicate your interest in attending.

New member welcoming is March 1 during the Sunday service. The New Member Welcoming Celebration is held twice a year, the first Sunday in March and October.

To become a voting member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Underwood, you indicate your wish by signing the "silver" membership book. To do so, see Kris Warhol, Board President or Mary Anderson, Membership Committee Chair. **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."



Children's Religious Education

January 5, Wally Warhol led Children's RE assisted by Vivian Napoli. Their lesson was on Circles: "Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle. The sky is round and....the sun comes forth and goes down in a circle..." *Black Elk. The four children attending* colored a Native American circle and named as many circles items as they could. They ended by having snacks and dancing to ipod music provided by Wally.

On January 12, Jon Solinger led with Kris Warhol assisting and attendance by Violet, Amari and Amari's friend, Riley. After opening words and chalice lighting, we heard the parable of the prodigal son as told by Jesus in the book of Luke in the Bible's New Testament. We talked about the meaning of the words *parable* and *prodigal*, leaving home and returning home, the motives and feelings of the characters, love and forgiveness.

The children made stick puppets and re-enacted the story (with some of their own non-Biblical content added). We had more conversation over snacks and returned to the church after our closing words.

Melody Shores and Bonnie Albers led Children's RE on January 19. They focused on the monthly U Group topic that was "The Power of Now." The topic was introduced by talking about times when we've been happy and "in the flow." We talked about different ways people use to stay in the moment when their mind is racing with worries about the future or sadness about the past. Some of the different ways to stay in the moment are focusing on your breathing, moving, dancing and singing. Then we taught the song "Sarasponda" with the actions. After we had a snack, we made washi-tape tubes and we put messages in them, initially to remind ourselves to "be here now" or "connect, pause" or "the universe is in me, I am in the universe." Amari wrote "potato" and Loralie drew hearts to put in hers. We finished in time to get some cupcakes served as treats at church by the Miersch's.

On February 23, Kris & Wally Warhol led Children's RE with Reece, Erick, Linnea, Lorelei and newcomer, Caylin in attendance. After opening words, the children put on name tags and we talked about where our names came from; what countries our relatives immigrated from how we sometimes name our animals or objects. We talked about meanings to words. One of many examples was why do we say we are writing something "down" when we really write "sideways." We brought Japanese drawings to color which has characters written downwards instead of across.

On to the main topic of diversity, we recognized that we are all different from one another and yet similarly the same. One thing that distinguishes us is our heritage. Another one of the drawings we colored was that of a kangaroo. The children were all aware of the bush fires in Australia.

We ended by eating fresh oranges and chatted more over lunch while Wally played soft music on the guitar with a little acrobatic exercise thrown in. Wally standing on his head was most impressive! Then we closed by extinguishing the candles.

Adult Religious Education

Due to decreased attendance during the winter months, Sandy Barnhouse, Ellen Eastby and Bob Worner will suspend their Adult Religious Education classes held on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays respectively. Classes will resume:

March 10: Sandy's class on Ancient Religions will hold the last discussion on Riane Eisler's, *Sacred Pleasures*, while also choosing the next course. If there is sufficient interest, the class may be held through the summer/fall months with a three-month suspension beginning in December 2020.

March 15: Ellen Eastby will resume leading the discussion on the book, *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo.

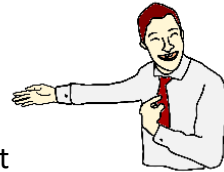
April 26: Bob will resume his class using the book currently under study by the Celebrants, *Turning Point, Essays on a New Unitarian Universalism* edited by Fredric Muir.

Sunday Religious Education classes are held from 8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

Mindfulness Sitting continues each Sunday from 9:15-9:45 a.m. in Sverdrup Suites, Unit #300. You are welcome to join any Sunday.

Sunday Morning Point Person(s)

The Unitarian Church of Underwood prides itself that it is a welcoming, all-volunteer, lay-led congregation. It begins at the front door and with all the Sunday morning preparation activities, there is need for volunteers to act as “point person(s).” Beginning in January, there will be a team of “point persons” responsible to:



- Arrive by 9:00 a.m.
- Unlock the doors, turn on heat or fans and lights and run spot checks of the bathrooms, and facility and grounds.
- Open Suite #300 and turn on the heat or fans.
- Check sidewalks for ice/snow or debris.
- Welcome greeters and assign areas & highlight responsibilities.
- Be available to answer questions, trouble-shoot, fill in gaps, monitor activities prior to service.
- Fold and print programs as needed, give to upstairs greeter.
- Be attentive to member and visitor needs and requests for information about UCU.
- Check in with Kitchen coordinator, help as needed.
- Fill in as needed.
- After service and social hour, turns off heat/fans/appliances, runs final spot check, locks doors of both church and Sverdrup Suite #300.
- Confirm that candles have been extinguished, windows closed.

To volunteer as a “point person,” please contact Coordinator, Katy Olson @ 218/495-3235 or katyjolson@gmail.com. Training for this important role will be provided. Katy would like to stress that with eight {8} volunteers, each would only be the point person once every two months. It's not too big of a commitment and it is really easy. It is more about being that welcoming presence and making sure that the bases are covered. Making contact with visitors is the most important. Please contact Katy Olson for details.

Empowerment Grant Applications

Empowerment Grant Committee Chair, Ron Roller reports that at least seven grant applications have been submitted to meet the January 31st deadline. The applications will be reviewed by the Empowerment Grant Committee to determine who will get the awards and how much will be rewarded each. The committee will then make recommendation for approval of these grants to the Board of Directors at the March meeting. Following Board approval, grant recipients will be notified, and funds will be disbursed to each recipient prior to March 31, the end of the church fiscal year. Thank you, Empowerment Grant Application Reviewers with *Ron Roller as Chair*.

Bulletin & Announcement Information

Beginning January 2020, Wally Warhol assumed responsibility for preparing and copying the Sunday Service bulletins. Please email Wally at ucunderwood4@gmail.com or call 218/205-4111 with the information on the order of service, hymn and reading numbers, announcements and volunteers. Thank you to Mary Anderson for having assumed these duties for the past year.

“Church Chats”

Beginning **February 2** and continuing with the first Sunday of each month following, Board members will be available for “church chats.” A table will be designated in the lower level dining room giving church members/friends the opportunity to visit and talk together with one or more Board member(s). Expected outcomes are not only to help bring attention to matters of concern and celebration but to open and expand communication between the Board and the membership; increase transparency of the business and build focus; and share visioning and mission opportunities in growing our future. Please join Board member, Ron Roller for the first of the “church chats.”

Strategic Planning 2020-21

There will be strategic planning meeting, **Wednesday, February 5** beginning @ 5:30 p.m. for the Board of Directors to enlist input from committee chairs and others interested in 2020-21 goal and objective setting. You can find the current 2018-23 Strategic Plan at [UCU Strategic Plan 2019 GO adopted by Board](#). You are welcome to attend.

Speakers Committee

The Speakers Committee will hold their monthly meeting on **Sunday, February 9** following Sunday services to give opportunity to members/friends to sit in and offer their feedback and suggestions on the Sunday programs.

Sound System

First, many thanks to Ellen Eastby, Communications Committee Chair who has led the Technical Team since its inception. Ellen is now stepping back from that team leader role because of her own “sound issues.” It was under Ellen’s leadership that speakers no longer need shout to be heard in the sanctuary and that sound equipment and the volunteer pool of technical support has expanded.

Meantime, the Technical Team is doing a review of sound issues and needs. The plan is to upgrade the headset microphone for the main speaker. Reminders will be given to other microphone handlers on proper usage. A loose connection with the audio speakers has now been fixed that was creating the recent hearing problems. Work is in progress to move the sound equipment into the main sanctuary and to improve other audiovisual and sound features.

Those of us, among the aging members of the congregation appreciate all efforts to allow us to hear! Thank you, Technical Team: *Amy Beckman, Tere Mann, Ron Roller, Melody Shores, Wally Warhol.*

Thank You, Facilities Committee & helpers!

From new coffee pots to new windows, the Facilities Committee oversees it all. They had the help of Lee Hamness along with Mary Teresa Alberg who installed 13 W LED lights to replace the 32 W bulbs in the kitchen. The Facilities Committee will hire an electrician to upgrade the lights in the dining room. Marlys Siems contributed funds to offset the costs of the new coffee pots. John Shaw spearheads the window project with refurbished windows now in place awaiting final install of the storm windows. Thank you, Lee, Mary Teresa, Marlys and John. Many thanks to the Facilities Committee for seeing through these and other projects: *Susan Groff, Chair; Darryl Booker, Katy Olson, Kris Warhol.*

Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary to the Mierschs!!



Congratulations to John & Janell Miersch in celebration of their 50th Wedding Anniversary. The only difference from their wedding photo is that they both have more hair! The Miersch's brought 50 cupcakes for treats to share on January 20, 2020. Here's to many more long and happy years together!

Save the Dates

Annual Fundraising Chili Dinner

Friday, April 5, 2018

5-7 p.m.

Underwood Community Center

The annual chili dinner raises funds for the Underwood Senior Nutrition Program that supports Meals on Wheels for local area residents. In addition to raising funds, the chili dinner has raised visibility of the church, binds members/friends together in work, provides a collaboration



opportunity with the City of Underwood and Sverdrup Lutheran Church, and provides a neighborly-get-together.

It was Katy Olson among others who conceived the idea for the community chili dinner. For the first years, Katy, Shelley (Beckland) Hedke and Bob Timm led the effort that continued with major chefs: Ron Roller, Dave McRoberts and John Minge, all assisted by others. John has been chief cook the past six years. In their roles as Administrative Consultant, Kris Warhol and JoAnn Larson did the logistics, publicity, ticket sales and volunteer coordination; Kris more recently with the help of Mary Anderson. Every year since inception, many UCU members have contributed to the work effort. The last two years, we invited Sverdrup Lutheran members to join us on the food preparation and serving making this a joint community project.

Once again it is time to transition major responsibilities of this event to incoming/upcoming volunteers so to continue seamlessly providing this important UCU community spring-time event.

This year, a chili dinner planning team will work together so that the menu planning, cooking, shopping, logistics, volunteer sign-up, publicity, tickets and money handling all come-together. Alison Frances puts it best: "It's pretty easy: make decent chili, get the word out, mobilize the caring and generous nature of the community to help support a vital program. We've got this!"



CONTEST

February 23 for Sunday Service Social Hour

The Chili Dinner Planning Team is inviting contestants to bring chili made from your favorite recipe and provide samples to UCU judges to determine the winners for the three categories of chilis to be served at the annual chili dinner on April 3. To enter:

- On February 23, bring your pot of chili to serve 10-15 during after service treats, **either a meat chili, a veggie chili or a white chili.**
- Samples will be provided to all wishing to vote on what they think the "best chili" in each category. Chilis will be labeled by numbers to be anonymous.
- Meantime, bowls of a chili of choice will be served to all takers.
- The chili chosen from each category will be the chili cooked and served at the fundraising dinner, April 3.
- Prizes for all contestants!

Rules:

- 1) The chili recipe chosen must be able to be replicated to serve 50-75.
- 2) The chili winner must provide the recipe and a listing of ingredients so they may be purchased to make the chili for April 3.
- 3) Recipe originator willing to provide any special spices.

To assure quality, winners of the chili recipe chosen may wish to volunteer as one of the chefs for the April 3 event!

Watch for further announcements and volunteer opportunities!! *Chili Dinner Planning Team: John Minge, Mary Anderson, Kris Warhol, Wally Warhol, Lee Hamness, Tim Lanz, Alison Francis, Robbyn Navatto.*

Notes from January Speakers

January 5 Holly Diestler with message, "Through the Lens."

Podcast @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/through-the-lens-holly-diestler-january-5-2020>

Attendance: 31

January 12 – Allison (Allo) Osberg, "Folk Futurism."

Podcast link @ @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/exploring-synthetic-waste-for-traditional-crafts-allison-osberg-january-12-2020>



Attendance: 40



January 19 – Bob Worner – "A Voice in the Wilderness." Podcast link @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/a-voice-in-the-wilderness>.

Attendance: 25

January 26 – Dave Ellison, "Choices that Matter."

Podcast link @ <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278/choices-that-matter-dave-ellison-january-262020>



Attendance: 49



My, how the Unitarian Church of Underwood has grown and changes!

In the last newsletter, I laid out the history of the growth of the Unitarian Church of Underwood that is evidenced in a changing membership and the changing culture over its many years. Here I give my thoughts on who and what we are today fed by my collection of resource materials, historical and membership data,

personal observations, conversations and sometimes, “hear-say.”

Where are we today? What is the Unitarian Church of Underwood and why does it exist?

In the coming goal setting months prior to the April annual meeting of the membership, the Board of Directors, committees and members look at where the UCU church has been, where it is now and what it can be in the future.

Back in the early 2000’s, it was Bob Worner, Stephanie Sanderson and Luke Anderson who had the foresight of the need for long-term strategic planning. We are now working off our 3rd 5-year Strategic Plan that is the roadmap for the Board of Directors and the working committees. The church’s mission, 5- year governance objectives and annual goals and objectives for each function are laid out in the plan. You can find the Strategic Plan at [UCU Strategic Plan 2019 GO adopted by Board](#).

With growing, changing membership, it is ever important that we determine and focus on who we are and what we are about. Are we moving in directions to assure our viable future and meet our mission and vision? What are our challenges? What are our opportunities?

Who are we?

Most fortunately, unlike many churches with diminishing membership, the Unitarian Church of Underwood has more than doubled in size over the past 20 years. The Membership Committee makes extensive effort to keep the membership rolls current even though membership is fluid due to life calls and circumstances. We keep a roster of names and contact information with lists for “voting members” and “active/inactive/friends.”

Data reveals that coming in prior and through 2008, there were 45 members, 25 of whom remain active, 13 are inactive but retain membership, 2 are seasonal attendees, 5 have moved. Those older, active members can be regarded as our “tall trees.” They are our roots. They are the branches with their historical relevance and wealth of wisdom and experience. We depend upon them for leadership and guidance.

From 2009-2019, 59 additional individuals signed the book to become voting members. Of those 59, 36 are active members, 11 are inactive but wish to retain membership, 2 are seasonal attendees, 7 have moved and 3 are recorded as having died.

For 2019, UCU certified to UUA 93 voting members. Of the total current 93 voting members: 61 are actively involved, 4 are seasonal attendees, 24 desire to retain membership but are inactive due to incapacitation or life circumstances, 12 have moved with 4 of the relocates wishing to retain UCU membership.

In addition, there are several friends who attend regularly, participate wholeheartedly but do not wish to be voting members.

Most incoming members indicate that they found UCU through their website search. Some are retirees relocating back to the lake and farm country with memories and friend and family connections from their younger years. These retirees are often sandwiched with responsibilities for aging parents and grandchildren, so their lives and time are mostly filled. Young professionals are finding UCU. Settling families seeking a religious education program for their children are finding UCU. Friends and family members of current members/friends are invited and find UCU. Some come from traditional religious backgrounds; some had no religious affiliation; some have always been UU. There is a range of ages but predominately middle aged to senior elders. Most, if not all, are of European descent; come married, unmarried, gay, non-gay; some are parents, many grandparents, even great-grandparents; a pluralism but predominately of white society.

Why do we come?

Most say they are looking for a community of like-minded thinkers. Some express that they've felt like outsiders, even seemingly misfits in this conservative area and are seeking other liberal progressives. Or they came because they saw advertised a speaker of interest and came to hear, felt so welcomed, they return. Most are seekers of higher meaning yearning for in-depth spiritual exploration. Many have concerns for social and environment justice. Some can "be talked into" being a part of the operational apparatus; others just wish to come for Sunday services, classes or special events.

Together, all these folks bring a blended mix of stories, experience, skills, talents and questions. They find here, a 131-year old church with rich heritage that feels welcoming and accepting, offering a beloved community. Those who are here and know and do, openly share the church history and invitations for active participation so to integrate others into the whole.

What do I want for the Unitarian Church of Underwood?

I want the vision of UCU re-affirmed and expanded. I want inclusion personified. I want all to feel a part and be involved to their level of comfort. I want fellowship and community expanded. I want barriers between us to come down. I want the walls to rock! I want the presence of UCU known in the community. I want to be part and parcel of those opportunities and happenings.

What I see as some challenges to UCU's continued and expanding existence:

It has become evident to me that the Unitarian Church of Underwood carries certain prides that are worthwhile: the intimacy of a small congregation, knowing everybody, each having their

place; being a no-minister, all lay-led, all-volunteer congregation; the history of strong opinionated voices, yet seeking consensus and democratic decision-making.

There are times remembered when small meant easier, a time when a few people could do it all and give it cohesiveness.

Once, it was just Marguerite Andrews standing at the door with welcome, greetings and introductions. Now many take turns to act as greeters at the front door and upstairs, first, having to introduce themselves before turning to introduce others.

Once, it was Kris Warhol and then JoAnn Larson as the administrative consultants who acted as the point person to answer questions and provide secretarial assists and coordination. A position we've been without for a while as the Board continues to work and move toward identifying necessary administrative responsibilities; determining how to hire and pay for them. UCU like many UU churches our size, is an organization without a minister who ordinarily would perform many of such duties.

Once, it was easy to communicate because members knew and saw in person most of their fellow members. Now communications are more challenging because they need to go up, down, between, across and out. The Board relies on members to communicate with them their concerns and vision aspirations; members follow Board minutes for their record of actions to address the issues and mission; communications need to flow from/to/between the Board and committees and committees to cross committees so all working to forward the mission and vision. Relevant information is relayed out to members and friends via the announcements, newsletters, the website, the Face Book page, telephone and email contacts. That isn't all easy!

Because communication is paramount, "church chats" beginning Sunday, February 2nd, will offer opportunities for sharing and listening between Board members and members. Join the table for discussion!

Once but for a long time, services were held only 2x/month but now are held every Sunday. Few attend every Sunday but most attend with regularity. Services held every Sunday places huge responsibilities on the Speaker's Committee to find and engage interesting, inspiring speakers. It also requires on a weekly basis: a pianist to accompany the hymns, musicians to provide special music, service leaders, greeters, kitchen coordinators and treaters, and the bulletin maker. The Celebrants are called upon more often to officiate at life ceremonies and rotate once/month speaking.

Once, Ron Roller recalls, an annual budget of \$3000. Now, there is an annual budget upwards of \$46,000, totally dependent on member and friends Sunday, automatic or mailed in giving.

Added Pressures:

With this changing, increasing membership, dynamics continuously shift creating added pressure on the Board and other leaders. There are more people to involve; more opinions to consider; more involved decision making trying to please the majority; dealing with the variety of strong-opinioned/no opinion individuals; dealing with increased plurality of backgrounds, ages, orientations; dealing with volunteers from some willing to “do-it-all” to those “just happy to show up”; recognizing shifting social demands and environmental justice concerns and building capacity to address such issues; finding a variety of speakers to meet the varying interests and to provide spiritual sustenance and build spiritual consciousness; determining capacity to expand offerings to meet the variety of needs; articulating and translating the mission vision; recognizing, finding and developing new leaders; meeting the operational and long-term expenses; preserving the history, the records, the building and grounds and for satisfying most of the people most of the time.... need I continue?

As one who served as President on the Board, serves on various committees and seeks volunteers to serve, I often hear great ideas expressed and can readily see ways for their implementation. I know that it can be a struggle just to keep up with the increasing needs and desires of members/friends and established directives even without new initiatives. There is intense labor behind the scenes so that members/friends/visitors attending Sunday service, classes or special events. Most times event participants see only the results and not the effort needed for their creation. When/if new members come into the process, they are not always given the information necessary to perform the expected tasks – it is “assumed” they know.

Not atypical for any organization, it is a small percentage of members that volunteer most often. No one person does everything, some do much and everyone does something. But it does put pressure on an organization relying for most purposes on a volunteer work force. Pressures mount to engage incoming members to find and take a place on the volunteer rosters and for someone to take time to explain the expectations for the volunteer’s role. Serving on the 10-member Board of Directors, a committee, task force or team entails the individual’s valuable time and effort. Most volunteers indicate they are at capacity with limitations of just their own life and family demands. So, although the church remains dependent on all volunteers, not many of us can do any more than we are already doing.

Like other churches, UCU has had to recognize the fact of an aging membership. With a “guesstimate” of ages, at least 58% of current UCU members are over the “middle age of 60,” some well over! In its planning, The Board determined that for UCU to maintain we need to: 1) to draw families and expand a children’s religious education program; and 2) further develop leadership among incoming and on-going members.

A huge step toward accommodating an expanding Children’s Religious Education program was the acquisition of the Sverdrup Suite apartments. At last, this gave us the space needed for children’s lessons and activities. We continue to heartily welcome new families with children.

On building leadership, we welcome incoming members and query them as to their interests, skills and passions and make suggestions of areas offered where they may find their niche. The

core element of leaders continues to lead, and new leaders are emerging among us. With guidance, from the “tall trees” they’ll readily assume the responsibilities.

Every organization is complex. It is even more complex for a church because its “products” are nebulous. How do you define or measure “spirituality”; identify and measure if a seeker found what a seeker sought; the limits and boundaries of “community,” “morality,” “justice,” “compassion,” “equity”?

Here at the Unitarian Church of Underwood, intellectual minds and talents abound! Skilled musicians perform each Sunday. Artists and writers share their works. Professional experts are called upon to share their knowledge and learned ones lead classes or Mindfulness sitting. Creative minds exist to imagine, envision, expand and prosper.

We return to the founders for the purpose for the Unitarian Church of Underwood: *“to serve a fellowship of seekers after truth, bound by no dogma, restricted by no creed, following the dictates of their own conscience. The purpose of this fellowship is to bring religious liberals into closer acquaintance and cooperation. Relying upon reason as our guide, and upon freedom as our method, we seek to grow in understanding of ourselves and of our neighbors and to serve our community.”*

How do we expand the circle (grow) and keep intact our significant values (vision)?

- We return to the basics by:
- Reaffirming/expanding the mission vision.
- Revisiting and updating the Strategic Plan.
- Visiting among the membership to learn about each other, what we believe, what we live, what we value.
- Assuring there are in place effective and efficient organizational structures and administrative supports.
- Following the democratic processes.
- Communicating decisions, plans and accomplishments.
- Acknowledging, honoring and respecting each other, and
- Moving forward recognizing the challenges and opportunities for this vital congregation with an attitude of celebration and gratitude.

And, so we continue ...

Mary Anderson with contributing thoughts from Alison Francis, Bonnie Graham, Ron Graham, Susan Groff, Norm Kolstad, Janell Miersch, Carole Mitchell, Katy Olson, Shannon Smith, Betsy Wells.

Next month: What the Unitarian Church of Underwood Is Becoming *(Your ideas welcomed! Submit your responses to maryanderson8380@msn.com)*

Living Out Our UU Principles

Sharing our Celebrant Speakers



The St. Cloud UU Fellowship invited Ellen Eastby to speak there January 26. Members of the Fellowship were taken with Ellen's words, "I am a Unitarian Universalist: and the bedrock of my faith is an unshakable belief that 'your guess is as good as mine.'" Someone suggested that statement might even be an 8th UU Principle. One 97-year-old gentleman said it "was the best talk on spirituality" he had ever heard!

Part of the Sunday service included Ellen doing a brief lesson with the children in which she gave each child two blocks. One represented themselves; the other something that was special to them. They put their two blocks together to form a connection. Then they built a tower with all the blocks to show we are all connected, like it says in our 7th principle. We also discussed that spirituality is often defined as a connection to something special like people, places, nature or God.

Norm Kolstad and Kathy Kensinger accompanied Ellen on this trip.



Conversations and Consensus Building With Art Raffle Barnhard Arts Studio Hosted by Sandy Barnhouse

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, March 15, from 1-5 p.m.** for the third **Salon** of the newly formed, bi-monthly **Consensus Art Raffle** at Barnhard Arts, corner of 1&35, six miles north of Underwood. All are invited. The art raffle will be held between 3-4 p.m. You must be present to win. To be eligible for the raffle you will have spent half an hour or more finding out what you have in common with someone who doesn't agree with you politically, whether you discussed politics, or not; send both of your names to Sandy Barnhouse, artdome43@gmail.com, and she will put them in the raffle jar. Congratulations to winners of the January raffle: Diane Johnson, Lee Hamness, and Bonnie & Lance Albers. They went home with watercolors by Becker County artist, Linda Doebbert.

Artists among us are encouraged to contribute future raffle prizes. Be sure to bring those people with whom you've established common areas of interest. Old raffle tickets will not be

removed. You must be present to win. Your finger food contributions are gratefully accepted, and not required.

Hearing what others said on other dates, the January Salon reflections were on the words of William Wordsworth in *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*. See: <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/ode-on-intimations-of-immortality-from-recollections-of-early-childhood/>. March Salon Consensus will be held on the *Ides of March* from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Host - Sandy Barnhouse

WELCOME PLACE FUNDRAISER HOSTED BY CALVARY EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

101- 10th AVE SE PELICAN RAPIDS
4pm-7pm • Friday, February 7th, 2020 • \$25 or \$40 for 2
Buy Your Tickets at: The Welcome Place Board Members
Calvary Church

There is nothing better than a friend and chocolate!
Be Part of the change you want to see. Donate your pocket
change to the Ministerial Association Fund of Pelican Rapids.



Note: If you are interested in contributing chocolate items for the fundraiser, please contact Barbara Honer@ bhoner@yahoo.com or call: 218-329-2883.

U Groups Serving in Community Projects



Julie Morgan is the Outreach Coordinator. Welcome Place has been a recipient of an Empowerment Grant from UCU.

For their church project, the Perham U Group greeted and served treats on January 22.

For their U Group Community project, the Perham U Group is taking turns 2 x 2 to serve lunch at the Welcome Place in Pelican Rapids. The two-person team takes a main dish and dessert to share with the 30-35 people who show up for lunch on Tuesdays.





Someplace Safe 17th Annual Tea Fundraiser
Saturday, February 15
M-State, Legacy Hall, Fergus Falls
10:30 am Doors open for Silent Auction Bidding
11:30 am Program, Luncheon & Tea
Adults \$25
Children 12 & Under \$15

Note: The Fergus Falls U Group is sponsoring a decorated table that Melody Shores is coordinating. Carole Mitchell is organizing servers. To volunteer as a server, contact Carole @ cmcarolemitchell@gmail.com or call her @ 218/205-4828.

Please join us for



**Minnesota
INTERFAITH
POWER & LIGHT**

MNIPL Climate Justice Night at the Museum

Thursday, March 5, 2020 | 6 - 9 PM

Science Museum

120 W Kellogg Blvd, St Paul, MN 55102

You are warmly invited to Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light's annual celebration and fundraiser, this year at the Science Museum on March 5th!

We'll gather for a hearty meal and inspiring program, featuring **Dr. Raj Sethuraju** of Metro State University as emcee, along with poet and educator **Louis Alemayehu**, MNIPL staff member **Analyah Schlaeger dos Santos** together with students from our Youth N' Power

program, and **Bob Klanderud**, Dakota/Lakota elder and educator. We're honored to be joined again by **Tiyumba Drum & Dance**, back by popular request from last year.

Guests will have the opportunity to view the Science Museum's engaging exhibits before the meal. Our program will also be an opportunity to recognize individuals and faith communities for outstanding climate leadership.

[Reserve your seat at the early bird rate through February 7th.](#)

In addition to museum access the evening of the event, guests will receive **complimentary admission for a future visit** including an Omnitheater pass for *Ancient Caves*, thanks to the Science Museum!



FROM MINNESOTA INTERFAITH POWER AND LIGHT (MNIPL)

The 2020 election is around the corner, and this is the year where the climate crisis must be a top priority for voters – in order to create the sweeping change needed to cut emissions 50% by 2030. Throughout the year we'll act together to build popular momentum to 'Prioritize Climate', sharing key actions to help make climate a top election issue for Minnesotans and build

a mandate for bold action in 2021. Attend your precinct caucuses on February 25 and make sure climate is a top priority for your party – **mark your calendars and [let us know you're planning to participate here](#)**! MNIPL will be leading trainings to help you invite family, friends, and members from your faith community–stay tuned!

[Caucus for Climate Training](#) Learn about MNIPL's 2020 roadmap to make climate a top priority for voters, candidates, and lawmakers in 2020—and how you and your faith community can play an important role! We have three big invitations for you to join this year, with the first being Caucus for Climate. Learn why precinct caucuses (February 25) are an opportunity to start 2020 with a powerful message: climate justice is a top priority for Minnesotans! Please visit the MNIPL web site for locations of training opportunities <https://mnipl.org/event/>

Note: Share your concerns and ideas with Janell Miersch, Chair - Social/Environmental Justice Committee @ 218/531-1445 or miers004@umn.edu.

Shan Schools Update

The Unitarian Church of Underwood supports through Empowerment Grants and member donations, the Shan Schools founded by now 86-year-old Bernice Johnson for refugee children from Myanmar residing in camps in Thailand. See shanrefugeeschools.org



Here's a picture taken in January of a traditional New Year's celebration at one of the migrant camps with Schools for Shan Refugees board members, Yvonne Garcia and Josh Kletschka. The man in the yellow on the bottom left of the picture is Hseng Merng. He was Bernice Johnson's student when she taught English in Thailand. Here is what Bernice says about him: "He's very bright. He loves the children and they love him. He teaches math in the schools in the migrant camps and he will go to great lengths to keep the children's attention, like wearing a yellow suit, helping make sure they have fun learning."

Hseng Merng and another teacher, who both live quite far from the camp, used to sleep at the camp three or four nights a week so they could teach the children. *Submitted by Mary Worner, Shan Schools Board of Directors.*

Hope by Vaclav Havel

*"Hope is a state of mind, not a state of the world
Either we have hope within us or we don't.
Hope is not a prognostication—it's an orientation of the spirit.
You can't delegate that to anyone else.*

*Hope in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well,
or the willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success,
but rather an ability to work for something to succeed.*

*Hope is definitely NOT the same as optimism.
It's not the conviction that something will turn out well,
but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.*

It is hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now.

In the face of this absurdity, life is too precious a thing to permit its devaluation by living pointlessly, emptily, without meaning, without love, and, finally, without hope."

We are Part of the Larger UU



SAVE THE DATE FOR REGIONAL ASSEMBLY 2020



Regional Assembly 2020 will be held at **The Unitarian Universalist Church, Rockford, Illinois on Saturday, April 18, 2020**. Our keynote speaker will be [Taquiena Boston](#), Special Advisor to the UUA President for Institutional Inclusion, Equity, and Change. The day will feature worship, the annual business meeting, lunch, keynote presentation, and select workshops. The annual business meeting and keynote speaker will be live streamed for those who cannot attend. On Friday evening, April 17, The UU Church in Rockford will graciously host an evening gathering for those in town. **Registration opens January 2020.**

Visit <https://www.uua.org> to find Unitarian Universalist resources on just about every subject matter and issue relevant to our organization and spiritual growth development.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

(As corrected at the January 15, 2020, Board Meeting)
December 18, 2019, BOARD MEETING

Board members present: Kris Warhol, Ron Roller, Tim Lanz, Bob Worner, John Minge, Shannon Smith, Connie Stigen, and Alison Francis

Board members absent: Darryl Booker

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 P.M. by Board President Kris Warhol.

1. Kris opened the meeting by reading the Board covenant.
2. The proposed Agenda was amended to include, under “old business” a stewardship item. The Agenda as amended was approved. (Shannon/Connie)
3. The minutes for the November 2019 board meeting were approved. (Tim/Bob)
4. Treasurer’s Report: Ron Roller presented a balance sheet and a profit and loss statement for the Church through November, 2019. Ron pointed out that there was \$17,000 in “investment income” during that period. Ron also pointed out that \$17,000 of the cost of the window repair project remains unpaid due to the fact that the work has not yet been completed. Generally speaking, Ron said that everything looks good.
5. Program: Kris reported that Wally Warhol will begin doing the Sunday bulletin effective January 1, 2020. The bulletin will be reformatted.
6. Windows: Kris reported that the refurbished windows will be installed before New Year’s Day.
7. Outreach: Shannon talked about a chapter in the book “Turning Point” that the celebrants have been reading that deals with what she referred to as “the trinity of errors”. The underlying issue that Shannon and others suggested this chapter might be relevant to is how the Church should staff itself and make other plans—for example, should the vacant staff position be only clerical or should it be more of an executive position or should it be some combination of both. The answer to this question depends on many factors such as: where does the Church want to go, what are the collective/shared goals of the Church members, do we want to grow and if so why, and so on. Some of the goals might be oriented toward social justice, some toward spirituality and spiritual growth, some might be oriented toward not allowing the Church to stagnate, and so on. Shannon said that the experience (as described in the book “Turning Point”) of the UU church in Des Moines could be instructive. It was suggested that the Board should think about these sorts of issues/concerns in more depth. Ron said that this discussion could be fused with the Five-Year Plan which already addresses some of the same topics. A lengthy discussion took place with many points being made about how to study and address some of the things that are mentioned in “Turning Point”. Shannon said that we may be facing an “all hands on deck” planning process in which everyone participates. Alison doesn’t think that the Church has a real identity and said that that could be a big problem. Ron shares that concern and pointed out that there are multiple opinions within the Church on virtually every issue that the Church is facing and that that makes it difficult to chart a course. Some suggested that the Church doesn’t follow through on things. Ron challenged that assertion by mentioning several things of significance that have been seen through to completion. There was also some discussion about the possibility of the board simply appointing someone to fill the vacant administrative/clerical position until we can better decide what the long-term solution is. Some of the pros and cons of making such

an appointment (as distinguished from doing a search and conducting interviews) and the wisdom of taking such a step were also discussed. Offering the position on a short-term basis was another possibility that was discussed. That would relieve the Church of some of the pressure that is being felt as a result of the vacancy and give the Church more time to sort things out. The discussion ended with the suggestions that a special board meeting is probably necessary to further explore the personnel matter and that a new job description for the position might be necessary. Connie, Alison, Ron, and Shannon are going to work on the job description and report back to the board before anything more is going to be done.

8. Stewardship: Ron said that the 5% minimum distribution requirement does not apply to the Church. However, the Church has committed itself to adhering to many of the principles that govern foundations.
9. Endowment: It was moved and seconded that \$150,000 be placed in the endowment fund now and that the Church consider, in each of the next five years, placing \$10,000 per year more into that fund (for the maximum total of additional monies put into the endowment over said five years being \$50,000). The additional contributions of \$10,000 would be decided year by year (Tim/Alison). The motion passed.

Board President Kris Warhol adjourned the meeting at 7:30.

Respectively submitted this 22th day of January, 2020.

John Minge, Secretary