

UCU Newsletter February 2021

*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.*

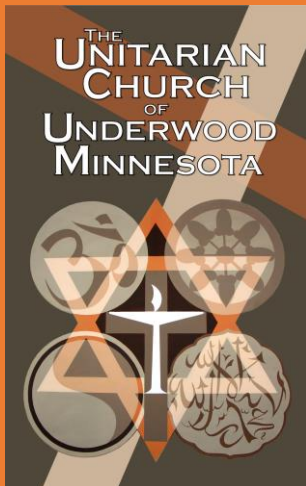
Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street
Underwood, MN 56537

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



“Winter Pitchers”

Photo courtesy of Susan Groff

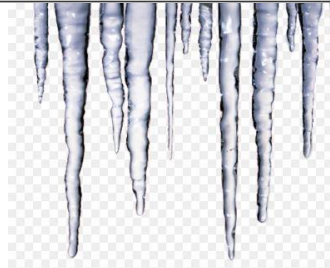
Due to continued precautions
against the spreading of the
COVID-19

In-person church services,
meetings & activities are
conducted via Zoom.

Watch for ucofu@ucofu.org
messages, the Sunday “UCU
Weekly” and check:

www.ucofu.org or

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



Stay Informed

U Group Zoom Meeting Schedule

- Alexandria U Group: 4th Sunday each month @ 7 p.m. Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Battle Lake U Group: 2nd Tuesday each month @ 3 p.m. Facilitators: Bob Worner.
- Perham U-Group: 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Mary Worner

You are welcome to join a U Group – watch for the Zoom links.

For details or questions, Contact U Group Coordinator, Luce Reese @

lucereese@gmail.com or 218/495-2449

UCU Weekly

Watch for these and other

ucofu@ucofu.org email messages.

Participate in the **Zoom** invitations for Sunday service, social hour & other meetings

Note: Send Announcements for UCU Weekly and monthly newsletter to newseditor@ucofu.org. As appropriate, some will be forwarded for inclusion @ www.ucofu.org and Facebook Page.

Need help with Zoom?

Email: techhelp@ucofu.org

Want to volunteer to be part of the Tech Help Team?

Also email: techhelp@ucofu.org

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

Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to:

Writer/Editor: Mary Anderson @

newseditor@ucofu.org

Editing: [Stephanie Sanderson](#)

Emailing: [Ellen Eastby](#)

Website: [Bonnie Graham](#)

Facebook: [Melody Shores](#)

Photos courtesy of Norm Kolstad & credited others.

Credited Articles

Note: For security, personal telephone numbers and email addresses will not be used within the newsletters except with the express permission of the individual.

UCU Weekly:

Designed and written by Ellen Eastby

Write & submit information for Sunday inclusion by the preceding Friday.

Gifts in Gratitude

To Contribute to UCU:

Sign up for automatic funds transfer* or

Mail your check to:

Unitarian Church of Underwood
PO Box 58

Underwood, MN 56586

*(For AFT form, contact

newseditor@ucofu.org)

Building Access

For safety and sanitation purposes, if you access or need to access the church building, please call or text Susan Groff (Janitor) @ 218/205-0439.

Church Happenings

Message from Board President, Norm Kolstad



A few days ago, a 22-year-old poet captured the hearts of Americans as a new president was inaugurated. A couple of lines of Amanda Gorman's inauguration poem seemed to encapsulate, and perhaps foreshadow, a movement that may cause many to re-evaluate the concept of justice-for-all:

"... the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice"

We have been hearing a lot about justice lately: racial justice, social justice, criminal justice, economic justice, political justice, and now health justice for vaccinations. These usually refer to some governmental function or law, but there are also "norms and notions" as Gorman says. These are the ways we act or react toward others; how we treat our neighbors and how we talk about those who are "different" from us.

We Unitarian Universalists value justice so much we include it in two of our seven basic principles: #2: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; and #6: Peace, liberty, and justice for all.

The Unitarian Church of Underwood has been, for a few months now, exploring ways to understand and counter racist views. The Intercultural Development Inventory has revealed gaps in our individual and collective tolerance for racial diversity. The Social Justice Interest Group is spearheading efforts to promote real change in how our community views diversity. We also promote economic justice by supporting for Habitat for Humanity and the Shan people of Myanmar (Burma). Many of our fellow members contribute time, talents, or money to other causes that are related to building a just society.

Our principles are not merely platitudes or paeans to lofty ideals. Our Congregation and Board are working to bring about the kind of societal change to turn what 'just is' into "just-ice."

Note: See full text of Amanda Gorman's poem at end of newsletter.

January Board Meeting Highlights

Continued learning about Practice of Board Leadership, #7 "Transformation."
Many upcoming UUA virtual training/workshop offerings for which the Board encourages participation (see details below).
Formation of a "Hybrid Worship" Taskforce planning team.
Approved certification of 77 members to UUA.

Note: Full approved January 20, 2021 Board minutes will be included in the March newsletter.

Speakers for February Sunday Services

Via Zoom
10:00 a.m.

(Check in 9:45-10:00 a.m.)

See the ucofu.org emails and Weekly for link specifics)

February 7 – Celebrant, Ellen Eastby, “Liniment for an Aching Heart.” Living in the time of COVID-19 isn’t easy. We have all experienced loss on some level the last eleven months. Sometimes it is minimal, like the inability to shake someone’s hand. Sometimes it is considerable, like the loss of a loved one. All of us have been touched by grief and sorrow. Our hearts ache and we yearn for normalcy. The good news is that we are coping. We are finding that we are stronger than we think and more resilient than we can imagine. Ellen will be speaking about life and loss, but mostly about our ability to get through these hardships. The liniment for an aching heart.



UU Principles related to this topic: 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person; 2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; 3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations.

Ellen Eastby is first and foremost a grandmother. In her spare time, she is active at the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Of the numerous committees she has served on or positions she has held, being a celebrant is nearest and dearest to her heart. She has officiated celebrations of life, weddings, a one of a kind “Celebration of Love”, and other ceremonies. During the summer of 2020, Ellen completed a spiritual companioning (lay pastoral care) course through the UU Leadership Institute and provides that service for her home congregation. Ellen attended the Unitarian Universalist Seminary, Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago in 2014, as a prospective student. She was able to take one class, which was taught by Rev. William Schulz, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The class focused on writing and delivering sermons, which she loves to do. Warm and witty, Ellen brings meaning to a variety of topics she holds in her heart, always in relation to the UU principles and sources.

February 14 – Rita Chamblin, “Line 3: What is going on right now?” Rita will bring us up to date on the Line 3 tar sands oil pipeline project in northern Minnesota. She will talk about how the issues of climate, race, water, and money influence our perception of Line 3. Plus: Who are the active organizations and individuals? What’s the status of legal appeals? What should we expect to happen next? And, what are we called to do in this moment?

Commented [ma1]:



UU Principles related to this topic: 1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person; 2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations; 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

A little background:

Rita Chamblin is a Unitarian Universalist lay leader, environmental justice advocate, resident of Northern Minnesota and Bemidji liaison for Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light. She has been active in Line 3 work since she moved back to Minnesota four years ago. Rita is retired from a career in financial services and business management.

February 21 – Norm Kolstad, “Lydia’s Lamp.” UCU church historian, Norm Kolstad will lead off with the “Origin” series beginning with the Unitarian Church of Underwood’s origin. The next installments will feature origin stories from other cultures and religions, and *perhaps* origin stories from friends and families of UCU.

February 28 - Tere Mann, “Living and Sharing in Community--Cohousing as an Option.” As we adapt to our changing world, the response of sustainable living becomes more imperative. What are our options and what do they entail? This presentation is an introduction to cohousing as one of many options of living and being in community.



UU Principles related to this topic: 2nd Principle: Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning; 5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large; 6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all; 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

More about Tere: In 1972, Tere was introduced to food coops, and the idea of cooperative living resonated with her experiences of growing up in a large extended family in a small rural KS town. She was part of cooperative living and exploring community in the 1980's (Linden Tree Community--with Ron Roller & Katy Olson, and others). Mary Lundeen introduced her to Cohousing in the late 1980's--early 1990's, by giving her the Creating Cohousing book. In 2005, Tere moved to Boulder, CO and found herself working with & for Jim Leach of Wonderland Hill Development Company, one of the leading developers of cohousing in the west. In 2007, her best friend moved into Nyland Cohousing, and in 2009 she moved in too and she was working and living cohousing. She helped coordinate the 2010 National Cohousing Conference. Tere still does bookkeeping for Nyland, which she started to do in 2010.

Tere has worked with and witnessed many forms of cohousing and its members over the years. It is one form of cooperative living with many variations. She is excited to share more about this option for intentional sustainable neighborhoods.

Notes from January Programs

For a summary of announcements, joys and concerns, and the notes from the January speakers, see the Church Reports issued via ucofu.org email the Monday or Tuesday following each Sunday service.

Viable Futures Planning

The UCU Board of Directors is conducting the Viable Futures Initiative in its ongoing efforts to review and refocus the mission and vision of the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Upcoming steps include: 1) looking at who and where we (UCU) are; 2) Discussing what we can improve/change; and 3) Discussing how we might move forward to meet the challenges and opportunities for UCU's future. We invite you to join us in three upcoming sessions. The first session will present information gathered from UCU members and friends through the Viable Futures Questionnaire, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) results, UCU history and other observations compiled into a Viable Futures Presentation on "Who we Are." The live session via Zoom will be recorded and available with the link later provided in the church report and the Weekly. A second session, "What We Like Being/Want to Be" will be an open forum discussion. Session 3 will focus on: "Where Do We Go from Here" and will encourage small group discussions of our mission and future direction.



Please join us at these Viable Future Planning sessions.

Recurring Zoom link

<https://zoom.us/j/96858270459?pwd=Ymx0YnUzY3kzWFYrQkRxVjFGTEE3dz09>

Meeting ID: 968 5827 0459

Passcode: 798289

Call in on your phone: 1-312-626-6799

**Session 1 – "Who We Are"
Monday, February 8 @ 6 p.m.**

**Session 2 – "What We Like Being/Want to Be"
Monday, February 22 @ 6 p.m.**

**Session 3 – "Where Do We Go from Here"
Monday, March 8 @ 6 p.m.**

Board members: Norm Kolstad (President), Shannon Smith (Vice President), Mary Anderson (Secretary), Ron Roller (Treasurer), Amy Beckman, Tim Lanz, John Minge, Wally Warhol, Mary Worner joined by John Salmen.

The Unitarian Church of Underwood now has a Public Calendar. It is available on our website at www.ucofu.org or [click here](#)



Commented [ma2]:

Use this link to the [UCU Members and Friends calendar](#)

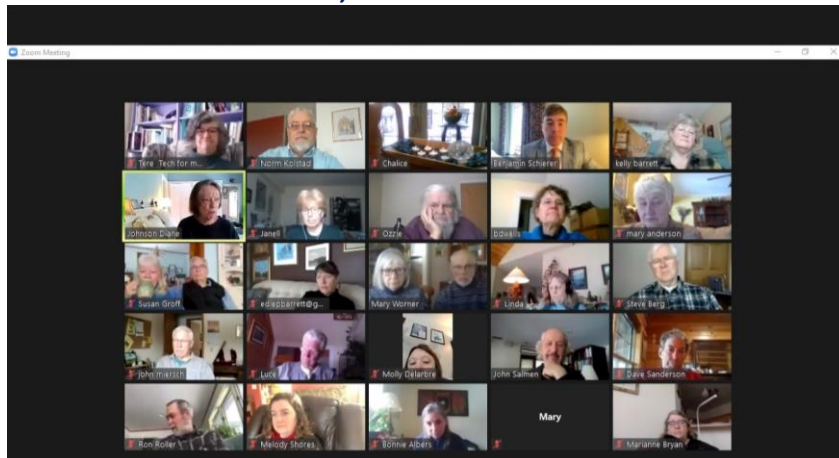
Sandy Sums It Well as We Languish Alone & Vanquish COVID-19



Longtime UCU Member, Sandy Barnhouse doesn't particularly like Zoom but she says, "occasionally it has been good to see everyone who shows up. I see that it was this same time of year when I was away taking my world tour; only now it is mainly a time to write, think and paint without much interruption. When we are all relatively safe again, I have every intention of showing up at church. We will have the real experience with hugs, not via zoom.

I want the experience of dealing with my windshield, driving down to Underwood, walking across the ice, into the building, hearing the musicians practicing, seeing the kids move around all over the place, looking out at the clear light, seeing extra veggies and eggs by the door, and watching all the adults find ways to express their love for each other. That can only happen in real life." *Sandy Barnhouse*

Meantime, We Continue to Zoom:





We know virtual church is not the same as actual church going - entering the 100+-year-old church building, being warmly greeted with hugs at the front door, moving up the stairs and through the Ellison room to enter the sanctuary with the prominently displayed Charles Beck symbol, finding a seat, listening to the musician, being inspired by the speaker, placing our contributions at the offertory... But, if you like what you've found by participating virtually and are interested in learning more about the Unitarian Church of Underwood, contact Membership Committee Chair, Mary Anderson @ mary.anderson@ucofu.org or 218/346-6638.

For 2021, the Board of Directors is certifying 77 voting members to UUA. Many friends also participate in our offerings. Our ucofu.org email list numbers 194. The Facebook interest group on Confronting Racism in West Central Minnesota currently includes 93 members. We honor your presence in each and every way with gratefulness!

To become a voting member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Underwood, you indicate your wish by signing the "silver" membership book. Due to the temporary inaccessibility to the "silver" book, anyone who wishes to become a member may express that wish in writing and email mary.anderson@ucofu.org.

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."

Long Time UCU member, Joanne Cress featured in the LRAC Art Headlines, Visual Artist Teacher & Arts Mentorship Program Mentor

Joanne Cress is listed in "Who's Who Among America's Teachers", a publication where our country's best teachers are recognized by students in the top 10% of their class. This life-long artist and art educator holds a master's degree in art education from the University of Minnesota. She is honored by her peers and loved by her students as an exceptional instructor. Joanne has instructed students of all ages throughout several states - rural Indiana, urban Washington, D.C., at the University of Hawaii, rural and suburban Minnesota, and finally in west central Minnesota, where she started her own private art school. While remaining active in both the art community and as a mentor to art students, her work in various mediums continues to receive awards in numerous juried art exhibits.

Joanne's philosophy about teaching goes well beyond the classroom. "The visual arts are about problem solving and are vital in a school program if we are to teach the whole child. A creative mind is essential in an ever-changing world."

Minnesota Winter Wonderland



"Snowy Day in the Northland"
Photo courtesy of Kelly Barrett



"Winter Wonder Walks"
Photo courtesy of Susan Groff

“Affirmation of Hope,”

by Dr. Loretta F. Williams

UUA as Director of Social Responsibility from 1980 to 1989.

We, bearers of the dream, affirm that a new vision of hope is emerging.

We pledge to work for that community in which justice will be actively present.

We affirm that there is struggle yet ahead.

Yet we know that in the struggle is the hope for the future.

We affirm that we are co-creators of the future, not passive pawns.

And we stand united in affirmation of our hope and vision of a just and inclusive society.

We affirm the unity of all persons:

We affirm the relationships, connections, and bonds that allow us to touch upon each other's humanity.

We affirm a unity that opens our eyes, ears, and hearts to see the different but common forms of oppression, suffering, and pain.

Yet we are one in the image of the divine, and we celebrate our hopes for human unity.

Within ourselves and within our gathered communities, we will discover the strength not to hide in indifference.

Affirming that hope, publicly expressed, energizes and enables us to move forward.

Together we pledge action to transcend barriers—be they racial, political, economic, social, or religious.

We pledge to make our tomorrows become our todays.

Adapted from the classic UUA Meditation Manual first published in 1991, [*Been in the Storm So Long*](#), a stirring volume that featured more than 40 selections from the spirited voices of 29 African-Americans.

February 2021 Health Tip from the Welcome Place

February is American Heart Month. Multiple observances occur during this month to focus on healthy heart care and education including wearing red. With the Covid-19 restrictions, many of these events have been reduced. People have also been avoiding medical tests and follow up to prevent exposure to Covid-19. Hopefully, as vaccines become more available, some of those fears will lessen.



Until then, here are 7 ways to strengthen your heart. (Remember to contact your health care provider either by phone or virtually to get their approval for any major changes to your activity. Also contact that person if you notice any new symptoms such as chest discomfort,

shortness of breath, dizziness with activity, or abnormal heart beats with activity. Follow up of any issues is especially important if you have recovered from covid-19)

- 1- Get moving. Your heart is a muscle and as with any muscle, exercise is what strengthens it.
- 2- Quit smoking. There are multiple techniques to achieve this; whatever works for you is fine.
- 3- Lose weight. Again, multiple techniques are available.
- 4- Eat heart healthy foods. A diet focusing on less red meat and more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is a good place to start. The Christmas cookies and candy should be all gone by now so that helps!
- 5- However, the addition of a little dark chocolate is a good thing. (I especially like this one and it came from the internet, so it has to be correct!)
- 6- Don't overeat. Portion control is a big part of a heart healthy diet.
- 7- Don't stress. Multiple stress reduction techniques are available, including yoga, meditation, increasing prayer time, and anything else that helps you relax. Find one that appeals to you.

We've all had a challenging 11 months, some more than others. Give yourself permission to grieve for what you've lost (time, activities, health, loved ones) and then start to look toward a better heart healthy future. *Katherine Jordahl, RN*



GIVING
what we can

Join the UCU Virtual Dinners

Celebrate



Tuesday, February 16 @ 6 p.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/96754347298?pwd=MIJMdUdtYm9CckZLaW94Z3I5SG5sUT09>

Meeting ID: 967 5434 7298

Passcode: 396871

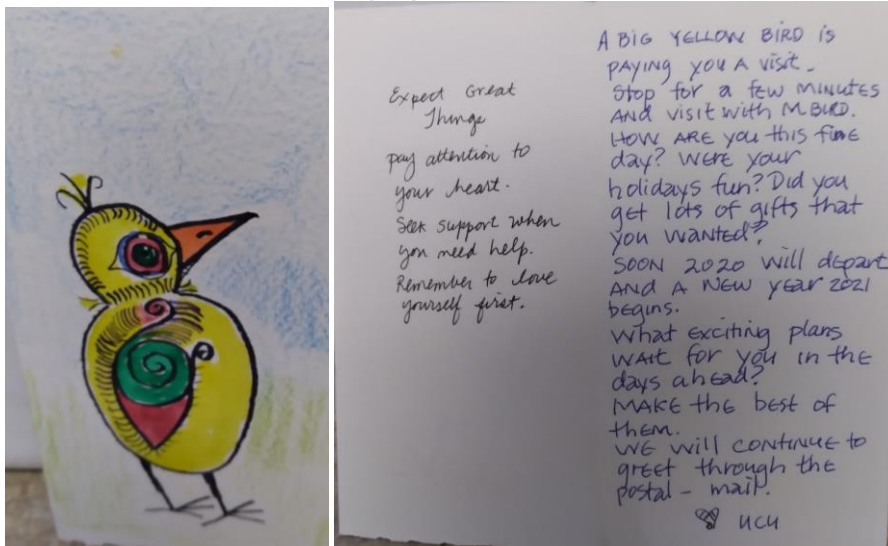


Alison Francis will host the virtual Mardi Gras dinner on Fat Tuesday, February 16 @ 6 p.m. Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday", reflecting the practice of the last night of eating rich, fatty foods before the ritual Lenten sacrifices and fasting of the Lenten season. It's also called Shrove Tuesday, Carnival Tuesday or Pancake Tuesday, depending on where the celebration is taking place. So indulge – whip up your king cake, mix your daiquiris, grab your masks and beads to join her! To find a recipe or share a recipe, sign into your church Gmail address, and go to: [Mardi Gras dinner recipes.docx - Google Drive](#).

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with hosts, Janell & John Miersch Saturday, March 13, 2021 @ 6:00 via Zoom link above. Watch for details in March newsletter.

To learn more on hosting your own virtual dinner, contact Janell Miersch at 218/531-1445 or janell.miersch@ucofu.org. Pick your theme, pick your date and time, pick your menu, and have some fun. April, May, and June are open!!!

The UCU Kids Enjoy Receiving Weekly Mail From Kris & Wally Warhol in Staying Connected!



Thank you Kris and Wally for these special efforts!

Living Out Our UU Principles

BOOK PROJECT RESPONSE



Thank you to all who contributed books for the Women's Prison Book Project (WPBP). This project gave us an opportunity to help women who are incarcerated to feel their inherent worth and dignity through gifts of donated books. Barbara Honer transported about 14 boxes to the gathering center in Minneapolis. Due to people's generosity, we were able to donate the extra books to the Otter Tail County jail. Officer Preston at the jail said thank you and was very appreciative of the books, stating theirs were quite worn out. He said the inmates would appreciate them.

Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?

By Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King

3-Part Book Discussion

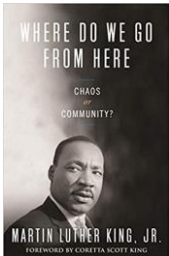
Sponsored by UCU Social Justice Interest Group

<https://zoom.us/j/93596770283>

Meeting ID: 935 9677 0283

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Please join us for the first of a three-part discussion of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*



In 1967, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., isolated himself from the demands of the civil rights movement, rented a house in Jamaica with no telephone, and labored over his final manuscript. In this prophetic work, which has been unavailable for more than ten years, he lays out his thoughts, plans, and dreams for America's future, including the need for better jobs, higher wages, decent housing, and quality education. With a universal message of hope that continues to resonate, King demanded an end to global suffering, asserting that humankind-for the first time-has the resources and technology to eradicate poverty.

- **Thursday, January 28, 2021 6:30 pm** Please read through chapter two: Black Power.
- **Thursday, February 18, 2021 6:30 p.m.** Please read through chapter four: The Dilemma of Negro Americans.
- **Thursday, March 11, 2021 6:30 p.m.** Please complete the book by reading through chapter six: The World House.

You can order the book from Amazon or the Willow Book Store in Perham @ thewillowbookstore.com or Lundeen's in Fergus Falls @ <https://victorlundeens.com>.

Hope to see you at the discussions! *Social Justice Interest Group:*

18th Annual
 **someplace safe**
 SAFETY. OPTIONS. HOPE.

 **Tea Fundraiser
 and Virtual Auction**

There are plenty of ways you can support the 18th Annual Tea Fundraiser and Virtual Auction from the comfort of your home!

Your donation provides safety, options and hope to local victims, survivors, and families!

- Mail your gift to: Someplace Safe, PO Box 815, Fergus Falls, MN 56538-0815.
- Donate online by visiting our website at www.someplacesafe.info/donate and selecting "FFTea" as the designation.
- Send the text "@sps" to 52014 to donate via text message.
- Participate in our Virtual Silent Auction! Register and bid at:
betterunite.com/SomeplaceSafe-teafundraiser
 Bidding Begins: Saturday, February 6th at 9am
 Bidding Closes: Sunday, February 14th at 10pm

 Check out our Facebook page for Tea updates:
www.facebook.com/SPSFFTea

 All proceeds support the programs and services provided by Someplace Safe. For more information contact 218.739.2853. 



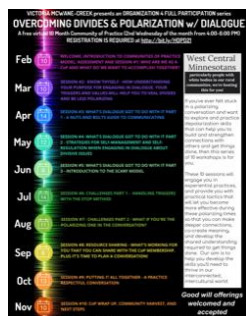
Information

about opportunities to learn and connect
 with other Unitarian Universalists:
Leadership and Social Justice

The UCU Board of Directors is encouraging as many of us as possible to take advantage of the following learning opportunities occurring February – May 2021. The Board will consider

payment of the fees. The board would then ask that attendees share their experiences with the congregation, at a Sunday service.

If you are interested in attending any of the following workshops and having the expense UCU reimbursed, please contact Ron Roller Treasurer at treasurer@ucofu.org or 218/770-0374 and/or Bonnie Graham, Congregational Administrator at administrator@ucofu.org or 218/841-4466.



Note: **Virtual Community of Practice with Victoria McWane-Creek IS FULL WAITLIST OPEN** for Overcoming Divides & Polarization with Dialogue. REGISTER/SIGN UP so that IF SPACE BECOMES AVAILABLE YOU WILL BE ADDED TO THE CLASS. <http://bit.ly/HDPD21> or <https://victoriacreek.simplybook.me/#book-class/service/10>. Numbers on the wait list will help determine if another set of the series might be offered by Victoria. Your signing up will help count toward that decision.

February:

Reflection & Readiness: MUUSJA UU Racial Justice Convening
February 16th, 18th, 20th, 23rd & 25th, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 6:30 - 8 p.m. Central Time;
Saturday 2/20, 10-12 AM

Reflection & Readiness: MUUSJA UU Racial Justice Convening is an opportunity to gather, reflect, and connect across UU congregations in Minnesota and North & South Dakota, to share how we've been learning and taking action towards thriving multicultural democracy, and discern next steps for collective liberation.

Join UUs from other congregations for a Convening grounded in worship and covenant. Each day, we will split into breakout rooms offering racial identity caucus spaces in which white people will practice calling each other in, process their privilege, and practice ways of being that will help mitigate harm as they interact with BIPOC UUs and community members. BIPOC will similarly explore our racial and UU identities, and find strength, inspiration, and healing with one another.

Unitarian Universalist values and Principles call us to racial justice work, and this Summit is open to all UUs who are committed to answering that call. Attendance at all sessions is encouraged, though not required. The conversations and connections begun at the Convening will continue long afterwards, encouraging collaborative UU racial justice work across congregations.

For details and to register, [click here](#) or see the MUUSJA website.

New Day Rising Conference National 2021

Saturday, February 27, 2021, 11:00 pm - 8:00 pm Central Time



Worship ~ Workshops ~ Caucusing
With plenty of breaks

Is your congregation ready to take a new step in changing white supremacy culture? Want to learn what your fellow congregations are working on, and how you might apply it at home?

Join a continent of UUs as we explore next steps in creating Beloved UU Communities

On Your Own: Watch compelling video TED-talk style testimonials from selected congregations around the

continent sharing their learnings, hopes and next steps in their quest for racial equity in their congregations.

Register Now

Cost will be a sliding scale fee of your choosing: \$20/30/40/50. Registration fees are on a sliding scale, based on your assessment of your ability to pay. Those who pay at the two highest levels are making a donation to help those in financial need for this event. Please remember that for a sliding scale to work, we need the same number of people with means to generously pay more to balance the needs of those who can afford less. (This is one way we try to build the Beloved Community!) *If you are part of a congregational team of three or more, please pay the lowest fee.*

Register here: <https://www.uua.org/leadership/events/new-day-rising-2021>

Sponsored by the UUC Congregational Life Staff

March

VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP SCHOOL: online, Saturdays, March 6, March 27, April 17, and May 8 9:00 – 12:30 Central time (Registration February – cost \$150 with a reduction to \$75 for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Trans, Non-Binary, and Young Adults. You will need to provide a reference from your congregation).

For more information: <https://www.mwls.org/>

We will cover identity, mission/vision, systems, and conflict, along with four incredible history presentations by the Rev. Connie Simon.

Each session will begin with brief worship, then history and theology with [Rev. Connie Simon](#), minister of First Unitarian Church, Cincinnati.

The rest of the time (with appropriate breaks) will focus on an area of congregational leadership. Rather than sitting for lectures, students will be given assignments to do before

each meeting—readings, videos, etc., that center the day’s topic. We will use our time together for conversation and questions about the materials.

***In addition to these four Saturdays, students will be expected to attend a weekly Credo session—a small group ministry session facilitated by one of our MWLS lay staff. These will be scheduled at a time that works for the group members.

The Saturday Sessions will focus on the following themes:

Session 1: Identity: Creating the Beloved Community, focusing on questions such as who is “us,” what covenants bind us together, widening our circle of inclusion.

Session 2: Mission Vision: Why Do We Bother, exploring the reasons your congregation exists, what your purpose in the world is.

Session 3: Systems: How Does it All Fit Together, focusing on congregational DNA, how things work, how to lead from a systemic position.

Session 4: Conflict: Being Together Across Differences, exploring how congregations resolve issues, and how to be together while disagreeing.

Each session will look at leadership with deliberate emphasis on two areas: dismantling systemic white supremacy culture, and congregational life in a world with physical distancing.

March-Mid-May

Beloved Conversations offered by the Fahs Collective at Meadville Lombard Theological School (\$150 US dollars per person Register February 1-20)

Tentative Dates for Spring Term 2021



February 1 - 20: Registration and payment for participation in the Spring Term
Beginning of March: First Lesson drops onto website, Meaning Making Session

1

Mid-March: First Learning Pod Meetings, Meaning Making Session 2

Mid-April: Meaning Making Session 3

Mid-May: Meaning Making Session 4/Spring Term Wrap-Up

Ongoing: Online Lessons, released every two weeks

Ongoing: Small Group Learning Pod Meetings, every two weeks

More information: website info: <https://www.meadville.edu/fahs-collaborative/fahs-curriculum-catalogue/beloved-conversations/>

FAQ Video: <https://vimeo.com/453375050>

Beloved Conversations—the signature offering of The Fahs Collaborative at Meadville Lombard Theological School—is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. In *Beloved Conversations*, we are here to heal the impact of racism on our lives, to get free together. Offered in three phases:

- *Within* (the individual, personal work we each need to do);
- *Among* (the institutional, systemic change needed in our congregations); and

- *Beyond* (the work outside our congregations, with our local communities)

The first phase "*Within*" focuses on the internal work that each of us needs to do as we engage racial justice. This work is different for White folks and for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and will be done entirely in race-based caucuses.

Within work will include individual **Lessons**, using videos, music, and readings, accompanied by reflection prompts and suggested conversations with **Critical Friends** chosen by the participants; bi-weekly small group conversations in a **Learning Pod**; and larger, monthly, facilitated **Meaning-Making Sessions** on Zoom.

Learning Goals and Outcomes

By the end of this program, you will be clearer about your own racial identity and personal history in relationship to racial justice.

This curriculum offers tools and strategies to continue to deepen your learning and your commitment to racial justice.

White folks' work focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of how we've been indoctrinated by patterns of white supremacy culture to believe in our own superiority and to not understand our own complicity in structures of racism and oppression. We will look at the ways we benefit from structural racism and endeavor to deeply understand the spiritual harm of white supremacy on our own lives, making it impossible for us to see the world as it really is and very challenging to engage in healthy relationships across difference. What are the barriers to and complexities of following the leadership of BIPOC in racial justice? How can we gain courage and learn practices for sitting with discomfort? How do we develop spiritual skills for resilience and long-haul commitment to liberation?

Recognizing the vast differences in our spiritual and learning needs, we are glad to offer this first *Within* phase of the program in completely separate courses for BIPOC and white folks.

Program Structure and Pacing

Each term is comprised of:

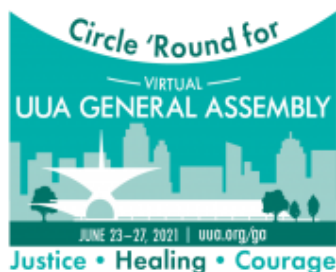
- 6 online **Lessons** with resources for learning, including videos, readings, music, and artistic resources, as well as questions for reflection and projects to explore your inner landscape vis-a-vis racial justice. These online Lessons are available via the learning platform Teachable and a new Lesson will become available approximately every 2 weeks, starting October 1. Participants may take as much time as they need with each Lesson. Lesson content will be available for up to a year following the start of the term
- 6 **Learning Pod** gatherings where you will engage this material in small groups of 4-5 other folks from this learning community. Pods will be self-facilitated and meet approximately every two weeks online. A suggested agenda and discussion questions for your Learning Pod will be included in each Lesson. We will be assisting you in connecting with folks in your same time zone and racial caucus to form a Pod. You will receive an email with contact information for the members of your Pod by the end of the registration period.

- **4 Meaning-Making Sessions** where we will come together in a large group via Zoom (in our racial caucuses) to worship, learn, and share our evolving understanding of this journey. Meaning-Making Sessions will be facilitated by members of the Fahs Team and our partners. Details about the timing of these sessions is below under Important Dates.

This curriculum does not require you to sign up as part of a larger congregation or community. However, if you choose, you can agree to engage the curriculum with folks you are already in relationship with—you can request to be placed into a Learning Pod together for that purpose at the time of registration.

More information: website info: <https://www.meadville.edu/fahs-collaborative/fahs-curriculum-catalogue/beloved-conversations/>

FAQ Video: <https://vimeo.com/453375050>



June 23-27, 2021 UUA Virtual General Assembly – Registration now open.

Registration is **\$200 per person**. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, Simu live, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (**new!**) GA mobile app.

Under Board of Directors' consideration for fall 2021:

Intercultural Development and Fluency workshops with Victorial McWane – added IDI individual assessments and series of classes to introduce skills and insights needed to live, learn, work and play in a diverse environment that appreciates cultural commonalities and differences.

Know Thyself: A Values and Self-Awareness Approach provides you with the chance to explore your own deeply held beliefs and values, while simultaneously learning the importance of connecting with others whose backgrounds, values and beliefs may differ from your own. You will:

- Explore how your values, beliefs and background influence intercultural interactions.
- Practice using greater awareness of self and willingness to engage across differences to make meaningful intercultural connections.
- Reflect on your own competencies and opportunities for building intercultural fluency.

Leveraging Dialogic Strategies workshop will support you in improving your interpersonal communication capabilities as you explore and practice dialogic skills and strategies that allow more adaptive, open, self-aware, and self-reflective engagement across cultural differences. You will:

- Explore communication and conflict preferences to enable more intentional adaptation and meaningful engagement.
- Practice dialogic techniques to engage more appropriately and communicate more effectively across differences.
- Reflect on your own competencies and opportunities for building intercultural fluency.

Pick your sessions, notify Ron Roller and Bonnie Graham of your interest, and register to attend!

We Are Part of the Larger UU



Special Announcement
Unitarian Universalist Association

January 2021

Dear Unitarian Church of Underwood,

This New Year, only two weeks old, has already wrought terrible pain and disruption. I am still reeling from the January 6th attack on the U.S. Capitol by a white nationalist mob trying to stop the certification of the Electoral College. And we are learning of possible mob violence at state capitols nationwide this weekend and in D.C. leading to Inauguration Day.

Last Friday, [the UUA issued a call](#) for the removal and impeachment of President Trump and accountability for members of Congress who participated in and incited these attacks on our democracy.

This is all unfolding during the worst phase of the pandemic, with several thousand Americans dying every day. These realities are deeply traumatic. Fear and anger are normal responses. It is okay if you are not okay. I don't feel okay. Now is the time to lean into relationships of friendship, family and faith. Connect and share with others, make art and music, engage in practices that

feed your soul, and offer to yourself and others gentleness, compassion and care.

As I rang in the New Year, I found my heart set on two things—remaining rooted in the values I hold most dear and praying for our democracy. In addition to praying, I know many of us are asking, “What can I do?”

30 Days of Love is a time to gather, learn from each other and movement leaders, and listen for the ways that love is calling us.

At this moment, our leaders at UU the Vote and movement partners are asking people to stay home, stay safe, and continue to call your elected officials to demand accountability for the attacks on democracy. In addition, we continue to develop the skills and relationships we need to keep organizing for justice, equity, and democracy.

This weekend, with the honoring of Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday, the UUA kicks off our annual 30 Days of Love celebration. This is a time to gather and learn from each other and movement leaders, and listen for the ways that love is calling us to show up in the world and for each other.

This year, 30 Days of Love will focus on four themes from the Commission on Institutional Change’s report *Widening the Circle of Concern*, reminding us that liberation in the wider world is indelibly connected to liberation within ourselves. You can [find information here](#) about all of the events planned, culminating with a Side With Love Sunday worship service on February 14th that can be streamed in congregations.

Despite the devastating events of last week and the possibility of more

violence, I remain hopeful and resolved. For in 2020, a year like no other, I witnessed the incredible courage so many people across the country—including members of our own congregations—showed to protect and expand democracy and work for a society where all people can thrive.

I am inspired by the ways we are growing our capacity for risk, for solidarity, and for community care. We have made a huge difference this year in the lives of our neighbors, in the care and protection of our communities, and in the strength of our democracy. This remains to me a source of hope and strength and joy. We are resilient. We have everything we need. We are enough. Love will continue to guide us.

Blessings to you all, your loved ones, and communities.

Yours,

Susan

P.S.

The UUA's statement in response to the attack on the U.S. Capitol builds on [the statement the UUA Board of Trustees made](#) during the June 2020 General Assembly calling for the immediate resignation, or removal, of President Trump.

Join Frontline, a coalition of movement organizations, for #ForwardTogether, an unprecedented mass organizing virtual event on January 16th from 3-6pm EST. The event gathers organizers and the everyday people who made recent electoral wins possible to discuss the issues that the new Administration and Senate Leadership need to center in their policy agendas. [Register here.](#)

Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray spends her days strengthening the thriving mission of this faith. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and playing with their dog, Hercules.





The Hill We Climb

Amanda Gorman, the nation's first-ever youth poet laureate, read the following poem during the inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20, 2021.

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished*

*We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one*

*And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man*

*And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another*

*We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division*

*Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare*

*It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it*

*We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated*

*In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us*

*This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves*

*So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free*

*We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens*

*But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with*

*Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution*

*We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and*

*every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful*

*When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it*

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Board of Director's Minutes
December 16, 2020**

Attendees were: Norm Kolstad, Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Tim Lanz, John Minge, Ron Roller, Shannon Smith, Wally Warhol, Mary Worner. Also, in attendance: Bonnie Graham, Congregational Administrator.

The meeting was called to order by President, Norman Kolstad at 6:08 p.m.

The Board Agenda was approved with the addition of the item, Finance Committee Recommendation under New Business (Mary Anderson/John Minge).

The Board Minutes of November 18, 2020 were approved as published subject to removal of the sentence on the IRS processing difficulties (Ron Roller/Shannon Smith).

Reports:

Practices of Board Leadership: Mary Worner continued sharing highlights on the Practices of Board Leadership, #6 *Relationship Building and Maintaining* as it was presented by Rev. David Pyle. Notes used are included at the end of these minutes.

Treasurer's Report:

Ron Roller, Treasurer presented the monthly financial reports. The \$20,000 CD was automatically renewed by the Underwood Community Bank for 2 years at 3.34% - a rate mistake by the bank that they will honor. Investments with the UUA in both the general fund and the endowment fund show a current yield of \$86,000 but continue dependent upon ongoing market fluctuations. Sunday collections are down but so are expenses with Sverdrup Suites maintaining regular incoming income.

The Finance Committee met December 15, 2020 and determined that UCU is doing well financially.

Ron will do an update on the Empowerment Grant status and collections at Sunday services. The Foundation Advisory Committee also needs new/additional members. Send your suggested names to Ron or Mary Worner.

The full financial reports are available on Google Suites shared drive.

Congregational Administrator Report:

Bonnie Graham reported that UUA Assembly, June 2021 will again be via teleconferencing with a \$200 registration fee/attendee. She is exploring tracking software. She had questions on contact names for the Social Justice Interest Group (use socialjustice@ucofu.org) because there is no designated chair. It was determined that the group members regularly consult among each other so a response from one who may be considered a response from the whole group.

Note: In accordance with Personnel Policies, the Personnel Committee will be conducting an end of 3-month performance review with Bonnie January 13 @ 6 p.m.

Records Committee

Norm Kolstad, Committee Chair reported that work progresses on the revisions to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. Mary Anderson reported that work progresses on updates/revisions to the UCU Policy and Procedures manual. Determination is being made as to who will need Google Suites training. The Records Committee will plan to meet in January.

Facilities Committee

Norm Kolstad reported that receipt is pending of the lease agreement from the Schei's who currently occupy Unit 2 and want to also rent Unit 1. Motion was made and passed that the damage deposit be waived conditioned upon the tenants routinely monitoring the conditions and utilities of the apartment. (Mary Worner/Mary Anderson).

Norm further noted that Gordon Hanson, former occupant of Unit 4 died. Knowledge of the plans of his wife, Mary are pending.

Alternate use of Sverdrup Suites Unit 3 will not be pursued.

Safety Committee

Norm Kolstad reported that the Safety Committee has work to do to develop an emergency action clause and safety procedures for the yet to be determined return to in-person services.

Stewardship Committee

Mary Anderson, News Editor will continue to carry information on contributing in the newsletters. Mary will send a reminder to Ellen Eastby to include it in the Weekly's.

Membership Committee

Committee Chair, Mary Anderson reported that calling circles continue, mailings have been sent and virtual dinners are being offered to encourage members' and friends' connections.

Mary was asked to send a reminder periodically to the volunteer callers for reports on members' and friends' status updates.

Communications Committee

Mary will ask Committee Chair, Ellen Eastby to call a meeting of the Communication Committee to review roles and responsibilities of Communication Committee members as communication tools now being used are even more key during times of COVID restrictions.

Program Coordination

Program Coordinator Mary Worner reported that there will be quarterly meetings of the chairs/leads of the committees under Program: Speakers, U Groups, Celebrants, Religious Education. She and Bonnie Graham, Congregational Administrator also will meet monthly to coordinate program plans. The Wisdom class facilitated by Roger Parks is being well received and well-attended.

Community Outreach

Outreach Co-Coordinator, Amy Beckman reported that IDI Administrator, Victorial McWane-Creek will be speaking January 10 at Sunday service on the meaning and results of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). There is a follow-up class on Cultural Fluency for \$1600 for up to 20 people with an additional \$800 cost for a 2nd workshop. You don't have to have taken the IDI to participate. These offerings might be considered by the Viable Futures Planning Team and or the Social Justice Interest Group as recommendations for follow-up actions.

The Social Justice Interest Group has just completed the film festival discussion groups facilitated by Alison Francis. Barbara Honer has organized a book drive for Women Prisoners. The Interest Group will be meeting in January for future planning purposes.

It was noted by Ron Roller that 2020 budgeted money remains available for training purposes.

Unfinished Business

The Viable Futures Initiative Planning Team is seeking to add one or more members to the team currently comprised of Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Ron Roller and Mary Worner. Planning will proceed for the first focus group to follow the Victoria Mc-Wane Creek presentation, January 10. After that, they will be planning for a Leadership Retreat.

New Business

Money Transfer: The Finance Committee recommends that \$20,000 be withdrawn from the UUA general investment fund and moved into a local cash storage account. Motion approved (Shannon Smith/Mary Anderson). Consideration on use of these funds is deferred to be determined as part of the strategic planning process.

Potential Alliance: Communications from the MN Council of Churches shows that they are active on anti-racism issues in Minnesota. Ron Roller will explore further whether membership is restricted to Protestant churches or if there are other ways for UCU to align with their efforts.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 20 @ 6 p.m.

Executive Team: Wednesday, January 13 @ 6 p.m.

Addendum – Rev. David Pyle’s 6th Principle: Relationship Building and Maintaining
Source: Practices of Board Leadership Workshop by Rev. David Pyle, MidAmerica Regional Assembly, April 18, 2020

- Building and Maintaining relationships as a Governing Board, not just as individuals
- Relationships within and beyond the congregation
- Think of anyone or any group invested in the success of the congregation and its mission
- Relationships are for partnering, learning, and accountability:

... the Board staying connected, staying in relationship with the congregation and other stakeholder groups seems like it would be the easiest thing.

In reality, it can be very difficult for congregational boards to remain in relationship with the members and other stakeholders, and it takes intentional effort and practice to do so. We often frame this as “listening” to the congregation and other stakeholders but building and maintaining relationship is so much more than this. It is being accountable to the congregation and other stakeholders. It is being pro-active in sharing with the congregation and other stakeholders the work of and focus of the governing board.

Think of it as building and maintaining the credibility of the Governing Board in the life of the congregation. The Board depends on that credibility to be trusted by the congregation, and everything depends on that trust.

You may have run into a theme in this workshop that prioritizing “professionalism” and “efficiency” over relationships is a pattern of white supremacy culture. ...sometimes the Board will have to choose to take the time or open the space needed to make sure that relationships, particularly with those at the edges of the congregation or the decision, are at the center.

I have said here several times the “congregation and other stakeholders” because the governing board’s need to build relationships goes beyond the congregation. It includes anyone to whom the success of your congregation is important.

- other congregations in your area, within and beyond Unitarian Universalism.
- justice organizations in your community
- regional and national UUA Staff
- the local government where your congregation is.
- those who have been members of the congregation but have chosen to leave for one reason or another.

...one way to start is by identifying everyone who might have a stake in the success of the congregation and inviting conversation with them. The key to this Board Leadership Practice is being pro-active of building and maintaining these relationships.