



The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people where our celebration of life and common search for meaning bind us together.



(Photo courtesy of Susan Groff, October 2015)

January 2017 Newsletter **Unitarian Church of Underwood**

**206 North Main Street
Underwood**

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



January 2017						
◀ December						February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Mel Duncan, Adult RE: The New Jim Crow 9:15-10:15 am	2 AA 7 pm	3	4	5	6	7
8 Bob Worner, Adult RE: Ancient Religions 9:15-10:15 am Children's RE	9 AA 7 pm	10 Battle Lake U Group 3 pm @ Groff/Wass's Speakers Committee 5 pm @ church (tentative)	11 Alexandria U-Group 7:00 pm @ Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg	12 Perham U Group 3:30 p.m. @ Louise Lovdahl's	13	14
15 Deb Dawson, African Soul, American Heart Board Meeting	16 AA 7 pm	17 Fergus Falls U Group 6:00 pm @ Tere Mann's	18	19	20	21
22 Teresa Jaskiewicz, "Winterscape for Animals"	23 AA 7 pm	24	25	26 Foundation Advisory Committee 5:30 pm	27	28
29 Dave Stoddard	30 EMPOWERMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE!!! AA 7 pm	31	Notes:			

January 1 – Mel Duncan, NonViolent Peace Force, “Hopy New Year” - Mel Duncan is a co-founder and current Director of Advocacy and Outreach for Nonviolent Peaceforce (NP), a world leader in unarmed civilian protection. NP provides direct protection to civilians caught in violent conflict and works with local civil society groups on violence deterrence throughout the world. NP’s unarmed civilian protectors are from many nations, and live and work in conflict-affected areas including South Sudan, Myanmar and the Mindanao region of the Philippines. They recently began a project working with grassroots groups in Syria. Two major global reviews for the UN cited and recommended unarmed civilian protection. Mel’s first exposure to unarmed civilian protection came in 1984 when as a volunteer he stayed in a Nicaraguan village to deter attacks from the Contra. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship honored Mel with their 2010 Peace Seeker award. The Fellowship of Reconciliation USA awarded him their 2007 Pfeffer International Peace Prize on behalf of Nonviolent Peaceforce’s “courageous efforts in conflict regions around the world.” The Utne Reader named him as one of “50 Visionaries Who are Changing Our World.” The American Friends Service Committee nominated Nonviolent Peaceforce for the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize.

January 8 – Bob Worner, “Healing, Helping, Holding On” - UU Principal #1. Bob will speak widespread funk following the election, and what we can do to move beyond it, learn from it, and work with people on both sides.

January 15: Deb Dawson, "African Soul, American Heart" – “Knowing first-hand how loss and trauma affect children, I was inspired when I met a Lost Boy of Sudan with a dream. With two others, we traveled to southern Sudan in 2007 to make a documentary to tell this story. Today, African Soul, American Heart, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is sheltering and educating girls at the ASAH School for Orphan Girls, protecting them from forced marriage at puberty and training them to be future leaders in their communities. To learn more, visit www.AfricanSoulAmericanHeart.org.”

January 22 - Teresa Jaskiewicz, “Winterscape for Animals – Winterizing yard for Best Benefits, including Mind & Soul.” Teresa serves as the Environmental Education Specialist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. At the PWLC, Teresa is responsible for educational programming, community outreach, coordinating special events, greenhouse management and a weekly radio show. What she loves at work (nature), she loves at home. She has created quite a wildlife friendly garden for all seasons which provides her with mysteries, wonder, excitement and sometimes even sadness (when there is a death in her wildlife family). Ask her about Butchy.

Teresa will be giving advice on how to make your yard, “Winter Wildlife Friendly.” Did you know that 94 species of birds and 92 species of mammals eat acorns?! Learn about what to do with your old pumpkins, gourds, and evergreen trees. She will answer what kind of seed is best to bring in a variety of birds; where to place feeders and how we can supply water and protection from predators (cats). She will also supply information on what and where to plant trees, vines, flowers and grasses.

January 29 – Dave Stoddard. To be announced.

Applications due January 30, 2017 for **UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD** **EMPOWERMENT GRANTS**

Full details are in the December 2016 Newsletter. Please contact Ron Roller at 218-770-0374 or at: rollerolson@gmail.com for further information and/or assistance.

Monthly Adult Religious Education Classes

1st Sunday Adult RE, 9:15-10:15 a.m. – **John Minge** leads a discussion of *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander with references to *The Third Reconstruction* by Rev. William Barber. For follow-up information as to what has happened since Michelle Alexander wrote *The New Jim Crow*, see: <http://www.citylab.com/crime/2016/09/life-after-the-new-jim-crow/502472/>.

Note: This class will meet January 1, 2017.

2nd Sunday Adult RE 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. – **Sandy Barnhouse** will lead studies on “Ancient Religions” (formerly “Women’s Spirituality”). Men and women are invited and encouraged to attend.

3rd Sunday Mindfulness/Quaker Quiet, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **Ellison Room**

4th Sunday Adult RE, 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. **Bob Worner’s** class will continue the study of the New Testament using John Shelby Spong’s book, *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy* with the emphasis on the Book of Matthew. For January, we are doing parts IV & V, pages 145-210 of Spong’s book.

Children’s Religious Education

Katy Olson and Betsy Wells will lead Kids RE on the 2nd Sundays of each month at 10:30 a.m. with the next class, January 8, 2017.

Child Care

Child Care is provided on the Sundays when there is no Childrens’ Religious Education. Thank you for bringing your children. They are vital to our church and are a joy to us all.

U-Groups

U Group Schedule

- Alexandria U-Group: 2nd Wed @ 7:00 pm @ the office building of Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg.: Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Note: The Battle Lake U Group will resume meeting the 2nd Tuesday @ 3:00 p.m. Facilitators: Bob Worner and Joanne Cress. When Joanne and Luke are gone for the winter, Kris Warhol will co-facilitate with Bob and the group will meet with a host to be announced.
- Fergus Falls U-Group: 3rd Tues @ 6:00 pm @ Tere Mann’s, 1319 N Park, Fergus Falls; Facilitators: Dianna Ziesemer/Connie Stigen/Mary Worner

- Perham U-Group: 2nd Thursday @ 3:30 p.m. @ Louise Lovdahl's, - 42720 490th Ave., Perham; Facilitators: Stan Carignan/Louise Lovdahl

Each U-Group holds an empty chair for anyone who wants to join with a group.

January Topic: To be announced

Notes from December Speakers

December 4 – Katy Olson, “Finding Peace in a Noisy World”- There is noise and busy-ness in every corner of our lives. We are obsessed with ‘doing.’ To find peace in our lives, we need to develop an inner peace. This comes through study and practice. As we develop inner peace, we can begin to accept the interweaving and interdependence of all parts of the world. We recognize ourselves (and everyone/thing else) as fragments of the whole.

Yoga and the writings of the Hindu Bhagavad Gita provide the guidance of this journey for Katy. Yoga and meditation help to still the internal chatter and focus the movement of our conscious thoughts. Through practice and study, we learn to train the mind, and to increase the capacity to pay attention to self and others. Gradually, we can come into the right relationship with ourselves, and find peace. Each of us is responsible for finding our own way.

December 11 - Maggie Meehan shared excerpts from “Dr. Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” For a full transcript of the letter, see:

http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf

December 18 – Betsy Wells led the program today which centered around the history of several holiday traditions that are common this time of the year.

Carols were originally dances that were accompanied by flute music. Over time, many of the tunes developed lyrics and were sung though out the year at celebrations. In the past couple hundred years, they have become associated with special Christmas time music. “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear” was written by a Unitarian minister in 1849, at a time of much social strife in the U.S. It focuses on the message of the angels’ song “Peace on earth, good will to men”

Evergreens have been used in winter festivals for centuries. Holly was originally called ‘holy’. Mistletoe was hung in the homes of ancient Druids to ward off evil spirits. The first Christmas tree was the ‘Paradise tree’, in medieval Germany.

St. Nicholas was born in 280 A.C.E. He was imprisoned for his Christian beliefs for a time, until the Roman emperor Constantine embraced Christianity in the early 300’s. Legend has it that Nicholas was a gift giver, and he helped a widowed father get dowry money for his daughters by dropping gold coins into their socks which were hanging by the hearth to dry.

‘Sinterklass’ was brought to America by the Dutch.

There were numerous celebrations around the world throughout history around the time of the winter solstice. A 12-day Yuletide celebration was held by Old Norse Pagans. The Romans celebrated Saturnalia – honoring Saturn, the god of the harvest, and Mithros, the god of light. In 354, Pope Gregory proclaimed Dec, 25 as the date of the Nativity. By the 1100's, Christmas had become the most important religious festival in Europe.

The origin of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" has several theories. One is that it was a mnemonic device to help Catholics remember important parts of their faith. A handout summarizing these will be attached.

We finished the service by asking people to share some of their favorite traditions. We followed this discussion by an enthusiastic performance by Budd's dancing dolls (one of UCU's favorite traditions.)

The Twelve Days of Christmas

Each verse begins with "On the ____ day of Christmas, my true love gave to me.
Here, my true love represents either God or Jesus.

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me a partridge in a pear tree.
A mother partridge will feign injury (much as a killdeer does) to lure away predators from her young. In ways, her sacrifice is similar to Christian's belief of Jesus' sacrifice of his life for his children/followers.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me two turtle doves.
The 'two' represents the Old and New Testaments.

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me three French hens.
It is quite likely that this song originated in France; partridge did not appear in England until the three represent faith, hope and love, or the Trinity, or the 3 gifts of the Magi.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me four calling birds.
Probably, originally these were "colly", which means black...in other words 'blackbirds'. Four represents the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me "Five golden rings."
Probably, this verse originally referred to ring-necked pheasants. Five represents the Pentateuch or Torah, the 5 Laws of the Old Testament.

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me 6 geese a laying.
The 6 probably represents the six days of creation (the 7th being a day of rest).

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me seven swans a swimming.
These might represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which include wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Or they could represent the 7 sacraments of Baptism, and Marriage.

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me 6 maids a milking.

These could stand for the 8 Beatitudes –

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me 9 ladies dancing.

These could probably stand for the 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit which include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, faithfulness, gentleness, and goodness.

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me 10 lords a leaping,

This is a reminder of the 10 Commandments.

On the eleventh Day of Christmas, my true love gave to me eleven pipers piping.

These are the 11 faithful disciples.

Finally, **on the 12th day of Christmas**, my true love gave to me 12 drummers drumming.

These refer to the 12 points of the Apostles Creed, which includes 12 proclamations regarding the Christian faith.

And there you have it – a year of catechism summarized in a song...Perhaps we can come up with a song that will help us remember the 7 UU principles...

December 24 – Ellen Eastby led the Christmas Eve service with a recitation of beautiful poems to the piano accompaniment of Mary Worner. Other musicians included: John Hanley, Shannon Smith and Deb Wallwork. Other readings were done by Lee Becker and Stephanie Sanderson. Candle light filled the church while Bob Worner read the Christmas Story from the Gospel of Luke. Many thanks to all who made this service so special, especially Ellen for its planning and coordination.

The Board of Directors approved that the Christmas Eve collection this year will be sent to the Pelican Rapids Multi-Cultural Center. Volunteers at the center provide a wide range of services to refugees and immigrants to our area.

December 25 – Services were cancelled because of inclement weather.

Newsletter Submissions

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

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

Note: The monthly Newsletters are included and many other items of interest are updated regularly and can be viewed at: www.ucofu.org.

Cancellation/Postponement Due to Weather

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

Once Again Successful Curry Dinner

“We served about 40 people at the recent curry dinner. The count would have been at least a bit higher had the weather been more friendly to the event. We made some changes--not big--to the menu which people seemed to like. In fact, I heard a few comments that, overall, the food was better than in the past because the spices were not quite as hot. We made far more food than was needed. I'm hoping in the future to promote the curry dinner more to get 50 or 60 people to turn out.

We'll continue to do the curry dinner. I may need more help as I inch beyond middle age and am finding the event to be more taxing. I would welcome any suggestions that any might have. My only bedrock principle is that the food should be as authentically Indian as possible.

Finally, thanks to the many who helped --both in food preparation and in the kitchen.” *John Minge*

Thank you, John, for preparing and providing this curry dinner that we now look forward to each year. It's tradition!!



Dr. Ross "Jerry" Gerald Larson

**January 13, 1931 - December 6, 2016
Resided in New Brighton and Underwood, MN**

Dr. Ross Gerald "Jerry" age 85 of New Brighton and Battle Lake, MN, passed away Dec. 6, 2016. Preceded in death by parents, Ellen & Gunard. Survived by his wife of 61 years, Mary; daughters, Kristine (Dan) Mrosak, Judy (John) Donovan; sons, Mark, Steve (Cindy), Brian; 9 grandchildren; and 2 great grandchildren. Jerry was an Air Force veteran and was the Northeast Metro's premier dentist for over 50 years. Jerry will forever be present in the gardens of New Brighton and Battle Lake. A memorial service was held on Saturday, December 10 with Rev. Laura Smidzig from Michael Servatus Unitarian Society of Fridley and Bob Worner from the Unitarian Church of Underwood presiding. A second service will be held at a later date in Underwood, MN.

When we learned of Jerry's passing, Bob called everyone in the Battle Lake U Group, not only to inform them, but to ask them to share how they remembered Jerry. Bob shared these and other thoughts at the Memorial service. From Susan Groff: "Jerry was such a delight with his insights, wit and humor. My favorite memories are playing music together: accompanying Jerry on the clarinet, Anders on the fiddle and me noodling out the bassoon part on the piano. He was a patient teacher. I was lucky enough to play the Clarinet Polka with him, one that my spouse, David Wass says is his favorite memory." Wally Warhol, a fine trumpeter himself, remembers playing with Jerry in several orchestras, particularly playing Dixieland. Wally recalls that when Jerry could no longer play that he gave away that music so it would continue to be played. Kris Warhol remembered his "quick, brilliant, right-on statements." Linda Quigstad-Berg found Jerry's statements "thoughtful, logical" - and remembered his love of plants, nature, the lake they lived on, and his pleasure at hosting us. JoAnn Cress and Luke Anderson relayed that "a group of us were discussing the value of having periods of silence in our busy lives. Someone observed, tongue in cheek, that Jerry must have had periods of silence while working

on dental patients. With a twinkle in his eye (which is a good description of Jerry) Jerry replied, 'Sure did, but they were often punctuated by loud screams.'

Bob further described that Jerry was unobtrusive and succinct in his sharing at the U Group. Others may have spoken for three to five minutes on the topic at hand. Jerry never went over 30 seconds. In two quiet sentences, he would richly and cleverly share his thoughts. At closing, Jerry might be encouraged to elaborate more than his first poetic statement and enrich us further as a group. But the time Bob most treasured with Jerry was over the lunch that followed when they could talk politics and world affairs. Jerry was well-read and informed. He was particularly concerned about the expanding world population. With former third world countries now wanting and accumulating what the US have, and with infant deaths declining and longer life spans, he knew us to be in trouble. He believed this explosion in population threatened all existence: not just the masses who would die of starvation or of wars for water or space to live, but that the earth could not handle the stress humans were putting on it and he grieved at the cost.

"Not just a family, not just a U Group, not just small UU churches in Fridley and in Underwood, but the world itself has lost a good man and a champion for justice, peace and equality and is the poorer for it, as it was richer for his dentistry, his music, his gardens and his loving presence among us." – *Bob Worner*

Just the day before Jerry's death, Mary Anderson had gone as a visitor to the Michael Servatus' church. She was delightfully surprised when she ran into the Larson family there, who after the service, invited her for lunch. Jerry rode with Mary to give directions to their place. Mary A. was unable to attend the Memorial service but has visited with Mary Larson on a couple of occasions since.

We, the Unitarian Church of Underwood family, grieve the loss of Jerry along with Mary Larson and the Larson family.

Many Thanks

From your Board President and Newsletter Editor:

As many of you know, I spent the day after Thanksgiving to December 24th in Minneapolis to attend to my daughter who died of kidney clear cell carcinoma on December 23rd. She was just 50, married, with 3 children (Heather the oldest) and four grandchildren: Skylar (15), Jewel (14), Sterling (10) and Precious (3). She had been diagnosed with this disease (hard to detect and far advanced when found, the day after Labor Day. It was a long, short journey for us all.

I am immensely grateful for the time we had together and for the many words of support sent me via your emails, and for Dave Sanderson, Vice President of the Board of Directors for picking up the pieces in my absence. However, publication of the new church directories had to be delayed due to my absence but I promise to get to them soon!!

I must tell you I was never so grateful for being a Unitarian Universalist than I was during this vigil. In fact, the chaplain who came to the room immediately after Gretchen's passing, said she was Unitarian Universalist!

We held a celebration to honor the life of Gretchen Pleimling on Friday, December 30th. I did the eulogy and included the following words:

“Lastly: There were some who were concerned about Gretchen’s afterlife, her disregard for traditional Christian beliefs and her unorthodox thinking. She considered herself a scientific thinker and non-believer of organized religions. She did not profess out-loud her beliefs. She didn’t feel she had to. Her religious community was YOU. She believed in life and living and trying to do her best each day and trying to be there for others who needed her. She accepted what was dealt to her and got on with it, even when life itself for her could be kind of “shitty.” Even then, she took the circumstances given her and lived her life to its fullest without self-inducing restrictions or guilt-felt recriminations. She gave more than she was given. She was fearless and she was tranquil.

I, her mom, continue unconcerned about the state of Gretchen’s beliefs because I knew Gretchen. For me, G-O-D translates to G-O-O-D. Gretchen was Good. We could all see the GOOD within her. She taught us in her living and in her dying: humor, courage, strength of character, dignity, integrity, compassion, honesty, love, mercy, selflessness. “Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever,” wherever or whatever that house may be.

And most importantly, Gretchen was not concerned about the afterlife. She held that energy returns to energy. She knew that we, in our human body are composed of the same elements as the stars. There is a life force, an energy in each of us. Energy never ceases, it just changes form. So now Gretchen returns to the elements with her life force continuing in a form unknown to us. The process of dying is awesome in its beauty and horridness. But it reminds us of the cycles of nature, the rebirth and resurrection. It causes awe and wonder at the mystery of our little lives in the realm of cosmic consciousness.

I believe that the inner force that we knew in the human form as “Gretchen LeMar (Anderson) Pleimling” is now part of the stars in the cosmic wonder of the universe of our Creator and that we are all part of the interdependent web of all existence and that there is plenty of love for us to receive and to share, just as she did.

**Earth Mother, Star Mother, Father God
You who are called by a thousand names
May all remember
We are cells in your body
And dance together.
You are the grain and the loaf
That sustains us each day,
And as you are patient
With our struggles to learn
So, shall we be patient
With ourselves and each other.
We are radiant light**

**And sacred dark – the balance-
You are the embrace that heartens
And the freedom beyond fear.
Within you we are born,
We grow, live, and die-
You bring us around the circle to
Rebirth,
Within us you dance
Forever. *Starhawk*”**

I was so happy to return home in time for the Christmas Eve service and receive your many hugs and expressions of sympathy. Thank you!! I was also grateful that I had the opportunity to have lunch with the Larson's the day before Ross died and visited again with Mary Larson after his death. There are deep blessings within all this. *Mary Anderson*

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

“Worth” takes endless forms.
As we find more expressions of our worth,
we grow richer as a church community.

We believe in justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

If we let rationalizations replace justice,
resignation replace equity,
or pity replace compassion,
our human relations are diminished.

We believe in acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation.

How do I withhold acceptance?
Do my fears stunt our congregation's growth?
When next I hesitate, can I extend my hand instead?

We believe in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

How much more will we learn if we share our search with travelers who set a different pace,
see from a different perspective,
or understand with a different wisdom?

We believe in the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within the congregation and in society at large.

For all to have a voice we need many ways of expression
and we need many ways to listen.

We believe in the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.
Just as "peace" means no violence, and "liberty" means no oppression, and "justice" means no prejudice, "all" means no exceptions.

And, we believe in respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

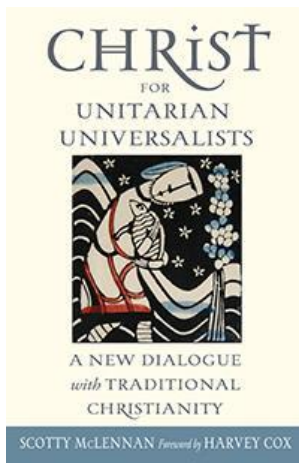
We gain strength from the support of others,
and we grow stronger as we support others.

Together we can weave our values
into an ever-stronger web of existence.

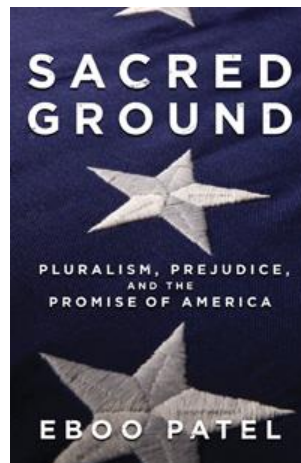
Michael Daeschlein

inSpirit
Your Search
for Truth and
Meaning
Begins Here

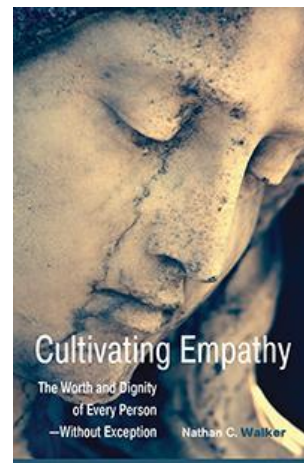
Looking to reignite your book group in the new year? These engaging and thought provoking books will stimulate thoughtful conversations and personal reflection. Additional resources and discussion guides are available from [Skinner House Books](#) and [Beacon Press](#). Not a member of a book group but still want to discuss these great books? Join the conversation online with Justice and Spirit, the Unitarian Universalist book club on [Goodreads](#).



***Christ for Unitarian
Universalists: A New
Dialogue with Traditional***



***Sacred Ground: Pluralism,
Prejudice, and the Promise
of America by Eboo Patel***



***Cultivating Empathy: The
Worth and Dignity of Every
Person***

Christianity by Scotty McLennan

A thoughtful inquiry into Christianity for Unitarian Universalists and other spiritual seekers. Rather than proselytize, Scotty McLennan seeks to stimulate dialogue about Jesus Christ, whether or not we find him central to our faith life.

In *Sacred Ground*, Eboo Patel offers a primer in the art and science of interfaith work, bringing to life the growing body of research on how faith can be a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division and sharing stories from the frontlines of interfaith activism.

Person-Without Exception by Nathan C. Walker

In this emotionally honest and personal exploration of conflict, Nathan C. Walker will help you nurture greater empathy-even for those you have previously held in contempt. Picked by *Publishers Weekly* as one of the top six books for a post-election spiritual detox.



The poster is for the 'Third International Women's Convocation' held at 'Asilomar Conference Grounds, CA, USA' from 'February 16-19, 2017'. It features a photo of bell hooks speaking at a microphone. Text on the poster includes 'International Women's Convocation', 'Presents', 'bell hooks', 'Writer', 'Professor', 'Feminist theorist', 'Activist', and the website 'www.IntlWomensConvo.org'.

International Women's Convocation

Don't miss the opportunity to hear bell hooks, one of the most influential voices in the American feminist movement, at the Third International Women's Convocation, February 16-19, 2017 in Pacific Grove, CA! Writer, professor, feminist theorist, and activist bell hooks is the author of numerous critically acclaimed and widely influential books on the function of race, gender, class, and culture. Her most well-known works, such as *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981) and *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984) focus on issues surrounding the invisibility of black women from common discourses of racism and gender. *Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2000) details her beliefs on the significance of feminist values in everyone's lives. [Register](#) for the convocation now, and

consult [the latest edition of the Program Guide](#) for more details.

Churches United for the Homeless

Letter: It's about dignity, decency

By Angelique Goulet from Moorhead on Dec 12, 2014 at 11:22 p.m.

Standing at a thrift store shortly before closing, the man in front of me at the checkout line looked familiar – he was elderly, frail, and struggled to walk with his cane. The young clerk was incredibly rude to him – after he'd bought three grocery bags worth of items, she practically threw his change at him.

Though it took me a minute to process what was happening as she checked me out, she audibly laughed as his bag ripped and he struggled to hold on to his items and manage his cane while

dropping his glove. There were probably five other people in line by that point and not a single one reached out to him.

I set down the chairs I had purchased and helped him pick up his items. I realized the clerk hadn't wrapped his breakables, which looked as though they were Christmas gifts and trinkets, but merely stuffed his items in bags. He bought new boots and wanted to put them on, he said. After seeing the condition of the shoes that he was wearing, I had a good idea where he was headed as I have spent the past year working at one of our community's homeless shelters.

"Can I take you somewhere?" I asked. "That would be great," he replied, and then offered to carry my chairs even as he struggled to walk with his cane. "That's all right – let me pull up my car," I replied and asked him to stay out of the cold while I did.

A woman overheard our conversation and actually had the audacity to tell me in front of him that I was crazy for giving him a ride. He just shook his head, and I responded to her that we were friends and that I would indeed be driving him. I held my tongue and tried as hard as I could to hold back tears because I was so angry at the entire situation, and I didn't want to embarrass him and make a scene.

I asked where I could take him though I already knew. He was going to a shelter in Fargo. We loaded the car, he got his new boots on, and he said "you know – I served my country and that's how people treat me every day." "I am so sorry," were the only words I could muster at that point, and I could feel my eyes visibly well up. After everything he was struggling with, he comforted me by putting his hand on mine, and telling me it was OK and that I made his day. I could barely keep my composure as I grabbed his bags and helped him to the door.

The majority in this community are incredibly kind, but the number of times I have run into this prejudice and mistreatment of people struggling with homelessness and poverty never ceases to amaze me. So many of us are literally a paycheck or tragedy away from poverty, and we can never know what the person standing next to us in line or on the street corner has had to bear. It is a disgrace that someone who has served our country is forced to sleep on the streets or in a shelter, and it is also a disgrace that with the overabundance of resources we have, people are suffering all around us. Treating people with the humanity and dignity we all deserve is the least we can do.

Truly, in my year at Churches United for the Homeless, I have had the privilege of meeting some amazing people who are survivors in the truest sense. They have given me the gift of seeing the issue of homelessness with a completely different lens and have changed my life and sense of purpose. My heart breaks, but situations like I witnessed only fuel the fire to do everything I can to help and break the stereotypes of people struggling with homelessness. I am thankful that I am constantly surrounded by people who serve in a variety of ways and have been mentors and sources of inspiration for me.

This is an extremely difficult time of year for people living daily in the depths of poverty. As someone who has come to know many of the heartbreaking stories and traumas of many of our neighbors who are struggling, I ask that as a community we go out of our way to show kindness

and, as a dear friend often tells me, to remind our neighbors in need of their own dignity and worthiness.

<http://www.inforum.com/letters/3633654-letter-its-about-dignity-decency>

Fargo Force night for Churches United for the Homeless is Saturday, January 21st! Tickets are \$15 with \$5 going back to Churches United for the Homeless! Bring the family and join us! Promo Code : CUFH
It is also "Hero" night to honor our military.



Churches United for the Homeless
(218) 236-0372
1901 First Ave North
Moorhead, MN 56560



Friends,

UUs for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC) is providing an opportunity for all UUs to stand for their values and show their resolve. UUJEC, with its partner in the capital region UUs for Social Justice ([UUSJ](#)), is hosting the *Reversing Inequality Conference* on April 3, 4 and 5 in Washington DC. This conference will focus on the crucial social and economic justice issues that the new administration is threatening. We will be joined by several of our justice allies, including Sister

Simone Campbell and Chuck Collins, build advocacy skills and spend time on capitol hill talking with decisions makers. This is an exciting and important time to be in our nation's capital. We urge you to join us in Washington.

Join a community of like-minded people making a difference by not only defending our gains for social and economic justice but also join people standing for a world that is more compassionate and just. **Conference details, registration information and local lodging options can be found here:** <http://uujec.com/ReversingInequality>

Embrace Festival
May 4-6, 2017
Portland, Oregon Art Museum
Featuring Author: Bishop John Shelby Spong

For the past two years, Bob Worner has led a monthly Adult Religious Education focusing on the books of Bishop John Shelby Spong. Bishop Spong is a teaching bishop and best-selling author who makes contemporary theology accessible to the ordinary layperson — he's considered the champion of an inclusive faith by many, both inside and outside the Christian Church.

Bishop Spong will be the featured author at the Embrace Festival, a 3-day, international, sacred community and social transformation gathering. This upcoming Festival will be held May 4-6, 2017 in beautiful downtown Portland, Oregon. It is for those wishing to positively transform their lives, their local communities, and the world.

In May 2017, people from all over the world will gather in Portland, Oregon to share knowledge and wisdom, learn from each other, celebrate, be inspired, and find the tools needed to create and enliven local movements within our communities. Together we will explore sacred oneness, Christ consciousness, eco-spirituality, social justice and the way of universal and personal transformation that honors the Divine in all. For more information see: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1638997779730892/> or embracefestival.com.

Unitarian Church of Underwood
Approved Board Minutes for November 16, 2016

Board members present: David Sanderson, Mary Anderson, Stan Carignan, Connie Stigen, Norman Kolstad and Alisha Piekarski, David Wass, Bob Worner, Kris Warhol, and John Miersch. Absent: none. Also present: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson.

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board President Mary Anderson at 5:32 p.m.

Mary Anderson shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Warhol/Sanderson).

The minutes of the October 16, 2016 meeting were approved as printed (Wass/Warhol).

Reports:

Finance Committee/Treasurer: David Wass – Speaking fee for Yahya Fredrickson to be donated in her name to the Center for Interfaith Projects in Fargo (Warhol/Carignan).

Administrative Consultant: JoAnn Larson – new visitor cards.

Foundation/Stewardship Committee: David Sanderson.

Facilities Committee: Kris Warhol – moisture abatement/drainage, noise abatement (materials ordered), lift repair, rent increase for Sverdrup Suites, snow removal contract.

Safety Committee: Norman Kolstad – emergency exits. A January meeting will bring the Safety, Facilities and Solar Committees together to make a long-term timeline and budget for the church building improvements.

Community Outreach: Kris Warhol – joint Thanksgiving services expected to resume next year.

Green/Solar Committee: Mary Anderson – UCU to apply for Minnesota grant.

Membership Committee: Mary Anderson – church directory in progress.

Unfinished Business:

The newly completed UCU Guide/Policy manual was adopted (Worner/Carignan).

New Business:

A donation to support Standing Rock DAPL protestors will be made when a proper entity is identified (Sanderson/Miersch). Discussions on new UUA dues structure, possible feature article for UUA magazine, Empowerment Grant deadline, hymnal order, safety pin symbolism, donee for Christmas Eve collection.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 14, 2016 at 5:30 pm

The meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Norman Kolstad, secretary.