

Unitarian Church of Underwood July, 2012 Newsletter

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people who gather to reflect, to find refuge, spiritual renewal and intellectual growth; to improve our understanding of the world; to build bridges towards peace and understanding; and to improve lives and opportunities across our communities.

Coming Up in July

Sunday Services – 9:30 a.m.

July 1 – Bob Worner – The Tie That Binds

July 8 – Chris Hyslop – Chris will be talking about the conundrum between humanitarianism and war. The quotes from several of the world religions highlight what these traditions say on humanitarianism and war.

July 15 – Four local artists including Chuck Christianson, Scott Gunvaldson, and Ramona Jacobs, will muse about questions posed by the moderator and later by the audience.

July 22 – Dr. Beverly Brooks, whose home has been Afghanistan for a decade, will share her experiences.

July 29 – Ralph Wymen – Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) – The Arc of the Universe: Bending Towards Justice

Meetings

Sunday, July 1 – 8:15 a.m. – Adult RE

Tuesday, July 10 – Noon – Women’s Heart Group Meeting

Sunday, July 15 – Board Meeting and Potluck – Following Sunday Service

Tuesday, July 17 – 5:30 – Speakers Committee Meeting

Sunday, July 22 – 8:15 – Social Justice Committee

More About The Sunday July 29th Service

The Arc of the Universe: Bending Towards Justice

“Few will have the greatness to bend history; but each of us can work to change a small portion of the events, and in the total of all these acts will be written the history of this generation.” – Robert F Kennedy

Are we UUs willing to take up the implicit challenge in RFK’s words and find ways to aim towards a totality of acts? If so, how? And with whom? How does collective action work in a denomination that derives much strength from individualism?

We know, as Martin Luther King told us (inspired by Theodore Parker) that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice. We’ll explore ways that UUs are bending history in that arc of justice, and reflect on our big experiment in the desert: Justice GA.

U-Groups

U-Group facilitators are gearing up for the fall sign-up for new U-Groups which will start in September. There will be a kick-off U-Group Sunday on August 26 when you will have the opportunity for a brief U-Group experience. Registration for fall groups will begin in August – watch for sign-up sheets.

We are holding an evening facilitator training on July 17, and are still looking for a couple of people who might be interested in co-facilitating a group. Facilitators work in pairs and are responsible for coordinating the meeting and introducing the topic. The Facilitators Group meets once a month to prepare and together go through the topic for the month. All U-Groups have the same topic for discussion. The process is supportive for beginners, so even if you have never facilitated a group before, you will find this a rewarding experience.

We are happy to announce that Mary Anderson will be a facilitator this fall and will offer a new U-Group in the Perham area! We expect to have at least 2 groups continue in the Fergus Falls area. We hope to expand the number of U-Groups to make membership in a U-Group as convenient as possible. If interested, or for further information, please contact Ron Graham, universeron@hotmail.com; or Stephanie Sanderson, highlife@prtcl.com.

Member Profile: Ron Graham

At Christmas in 1977, he was baptized in the River Jordan by Pat Robertson. Can you guess who that could be? Pottery ties him to the past through the earth-old clay he molds, sometimes into useful forms, sometimes into whimsy. Now do you know who I'm talking about?

Ron Graham and his wife Barbara have been married for 39 years. They have 3 married sons living in the Twin Cities area: Mark works for Fed-Ex, Scott is a mechanical engineer for Cummings, and Matt is a patent attorney. Ron and Barbara have 7 grandkids, ages 3 to 21, and Ron says, "Everyone thinks their grandkids are the greatest. Mine really are." For the grandkids, it's "super-drop everything else – we're going to have fun". The kids know they have his total attention but also that some things are not negotiable. Ron's mother is 91 years old, and lives in Tennessee.

Ron's dad was in the Navy, so he "grew up all over." He graduated from Iowa State, and then seminary in Ohio. He served a few Methodist and Presbyterian churches off and on for about 20 years, and then became the Executive Director of North Country Food Bank in Crookston from 1988-2006. During that time he increased his skill in the building trades by "rehabbing houses nobody wanted and renting to people nobody wanted." This turned out to be a profitable venture because "my folks appreciated the respect and service that others might

have taken for granted.....my numbers were better than those who rented to middle class tenants.”

When he retired from the Food Bank, Ron built his get-away cabin in the woods near Gooseberry Falls on the North Shore. Ron did a two year renovation of the log house on Wall Lake where they currently live. So now he can escape from the lake to be in the woods, and the woods to be at the lake. (“Boohoo,” I said). Ron and Barb have hosted many groups for church events in their welcoming and charming home. Ron built his pottery studio last fall and finds a lot of sanity working with the elements – earth, water, air and fire. He has turned out a lot of pieces, some of which you see in our church, including our chalice.

You’ve read the poetry Ron has shared in this newsletter. He is a song writer and guitarist as well. He enjoys playing a variety of musical instruments with, he says, “more enthusiasm than talent” – like the time he played a 70 rank pipe organ for a funeral because the regular organist refused to play the requested gospel hymns. He claims he is “not a performer” so most of his “performances” are playing his own songs for himself.

Ron has been traveling and especially enjoys “extreme day hikes” with two of his sons and a grandson. They have done Half Dome and the “DO NO ATTEMPT” hike at the Grand Canyon. In August, they are hiking Mt. Albert in Colorado. Recently he spent 6 weeks in Japan/Taiwan, 5 weeks on a solo CA National Parks tour and is now watching his air miles close in on doing Australia/New Zealand.

He believes his purpose in life is to, “relax and enjoy”. To do this he puts some attention to maintaining good health. His approach is to be active physically, eat a fairly healthy diet and, most importantly, to seek inward wisdom and sanity. He thinks it important to be authentic and to not be guided by external influences including wealth or even supposed events after death. “My effort is directed toward the present, not promises or threats concerning some afterlife.”

After 70 years of observation, Ron says his theology is greatly simplified. His religious beliefs used to include lots of words, ideas and explanations. Now his belief is essentially, “Something is going on”. Our job,” he says, “is to realize our oneness with the multiverse.” He is delighted he found the Unitarians. “Finally I can be totally me – no pretending, no being expected to believe what reason will not let me believe. I can seek truth, wherever it may lead.”

Ron was instrumental in initiating U-Groups. He continues to provide leadership in the facilitators group and in developing meaningful topics. He serves on the Speakers Committee.

Thank you, Ron. In addition to a thought-provoking and inspiring conversation, I came home with my lovely plum colored urn which has taken up its place on my old family piano.

Steph Sanderson

Thank You Ken Hamrum

We've come to expect good music on Sunday mornings, thanks to a few members of the church. In a past newsletter, we have thanked Mary Worner and Susan Groff for their musical contributions. In this newsletter we want to thank Ken Hamrum.

Ken says that he does his best to bring a variety of styles of music to our Sunday morning. This was certainly true on a recent Sunday when he and guest musician Alvin Olson played a swing tune, a new age tune, an old Irish tune and Ghost Riders in the Sky. He played a classical tune with Carl Kuyath a couple of weeks before that and 20th century pop with Courtney Walkup two weeks before that. Thanks too, to all of the musicians who play with Ken!

Speaking of variety, one never knows what instrument they will see in church on any given Sunday. Although he plays trombone best and he owns several of them, he also has many other instruments and plays them all well enough to give us mini concerts. So don't be surprised if you come to church some Sunday and see a hurdy gurdy, psaltery, recorder, harp, baritone or one of many other instruments from his collection.

Ken also arranges for other musicians to come and play during our time of special music. If you have musical talent, step forward and volunteer for special music Sunday morning. Just let Ken know that you are interested or that you know of someone who is interested. He would love that.

Thank you, gracias, merci, grazie (I'm trying to add some variety to my thank you) to Ken for bringing us such a wonderful mix of music Sunday morning.

Wish List

We are looking for a couple of items for the church. If you would like to donate either of these items please talk to JoAnn or Dave McRoberts. Please do not drop them off at the church without having first discussed it with JoAnn or Dave. Thanks so much!

Easel – aluminum, portable, collapsible

Fireproof File Cabinet – locking, with keys, and in good shape

500 Conversations

Minnesotans United for All Families, the campaign that will defeat the amendment that would limit the freedom of same sex couples to marry, has a strategy based on conversations. In fact, according to Minnesotans United the single most important action you can take towards defeating this harmful amendment is to start a conversation about why marriage matters with your friends, family and the people you see every day. It is so important that the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) has committed on behalf of the UU churches across the state of Minnesota, to have 25,000 conversations. The Unitarian Church of Underwood's Social Justice Committee thinks that we, as a congregation, can provide 500 of these conversations.

Having a conversation is simple. Just talk to your friends, family, and neighbors about why marriage matters to you. These are the same reasons same sex couples want to marry. This is a conversation not a confrontation, so keep the dialog respectful. Don't forget to mention that it is a no vote we are looking for. The language on the ballot can be confusing. Have conversations with everyone. That includes those who you think will vote no and those who you think will vote yes. There is someone who would like to come and train us on how to have conversation. If you are interested in having that type of training please contact Ellen Eastby as soon as possible at eastofellen@hotmail.com or 218-731-0803. If there are enough people interested, we will get someone here to do the training.

We will be tracking the conversations with a rainbow paper chain. With each conversation you have, add a link to the chain. The supplies to add a link to the chain will be found in the lower level of the church, where the chain will be displayed. We hope to have 500 links by the time the election rolls around.

The kickoff for this event is Sunday, July 29th. That is when we will make the big announcement in church and the supplies for the rainbow paper chain will be available. Ralph Wyman from MUUSJA will be speaking during the service that day. (See the first page of this newsletter for more information). You won't want to miss that day if you are interested in the social justice issues of the UU churches. If you have any questions you may contact Ellen Eastby.

UU Quotes

And each life shall burn with a light of its own and not be quenched,
Though each burn with a different light;
For the power of each shall be as the strength of all,
And none shall be afraid

Robert Terry Weston (Unitarian Universalist, minister)

It is in the round of the common everyday life that to many of us religions must have meaning, if it is to have any meaning of all. Not in formal observances, not in creeds or doctrines...but in the lives we live, in the home, in the community, and in the world, is the religious way to be found. A religious person is one who fulfills one's highest function as a human being in one's relations with other persons. – *Clinton Lee Scott (Universalist, minister)*

UUA Mobile App Now Available

Posted in [UUA Announcements](#) on June 7th, 2012 by Don Skinner

The first Unitarian Universalist Association mobile app is now available. Called Illuminations, the app is free from the [iTunes App Store](#) online.

Currently the app is only available for iPhones, iPads, and the iPod Touch, but a version of the app for Android phones is expected to be available by June 20. The app provides more than 350 daily inspirational quotes, which can also be used to open and close meetings and for worship readings. The app also lists and describes the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism and it has five different chalices which can be “lit” and then extinguished by blowing on the phone.

Larry Stritof, Information Technology Systems analyst for the UUA and one of the developers of the app, said Illuminations works offline and does not require an internet connection unless the sharing feature is used.

He said more functions will likely be developed for it. More information can be found on the [Illuminations Facebook](#) page. Email app.support@uua.org with questions.

“I’m hoping to see folks use the app at GA,” said Stritof, “including holding up the lit chalices during witness events.”

UUA President Releases Statement On Supreme Court's Health Care Decision

June 28, 2012

BOSTON – In response to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), UUA President the Rev. Peter Morales has released a statement:

"As president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, I applaud the Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. For more than 50 years, the UUA has called for health care reform, as it speaks to the protection and inclusion of some of our most vulnerable populations, including women, children, elders, and those with chronic illnesses.

"To take steps toward providing basic care for all is a moral and spiritual imperative, and it is encouraging to see our Supreme Court justices consider the better health of the millions of Americans who benefit from the provisions of the ACA. We are thankful for their thoughtful work.

"Unitarian Universalists hold among our principles the affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of every person. As people of faith, our principles call us to speak up for those who have been silenced, forgotten, or pushed aside in our society. Today, I am proud to say that we and our allies in social justice have been heard. Health care is not a luxury; it is a fundamental human right. And while we celebrate today's decision, we also will continue to advocate for this fundamental human right until it is available to all who seek it."

The UUA is a faith community of more than 1,000 congregations that bring to the world a vision of religious freedom, tolerance, and social justice. For more information, please visit our [press room](#).

Newsletter Submissions

We are looking for submissions for the newsletter. If you have an original piece or poem you would like to share with us, please send it in. If you have article you would like considered, send that in. We would love to have contributions from others! You can contact either Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com or Stephanie Sanderson at highlife@prtel.com. Thanks!

Minutes of the May 16, 2012 Underwood Unitarian Church Board

Present: Ellen Eastby, Luke Anderson, Donn Siems, David Wass, John Minge, Norman Kolstad, Alisha Piekarski, Mary Anderson, and Mary Worner. Absent: Dave McRoberts.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Eastby at 6:35 pm. John Minge offered a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Minge/Siems).

The minutes of the April 18, 2012 meeting were approved as corrected (Wass/Siems).

David Wass presented the treasurer's report. A motion passed to keep the chili dinner income in the general fund until the end of summer (Worner/M. Anderson).

Eastby presented the Finance Committee report. A motion passed to accept the Finance Committee recommendation to purchase a certificate of deposit with cash available and use CD's maturing in July for a possible UUA investment and to ask the Finance Committee to produce for the July Board meeting a recommendation for investment in the UUA Endowment Fund (Worner/M. Anderson).

A motion passed to invest \$150,000 in a 30-month CD at 1.5% interest at the Farmers State Bank (Worner/L. Anderson).

The Stewardship and Underwood Unitarian Endowment Committees will be combined into one standing committee that will report to the UCU Board (Worner/Wass).

Chair Eastby appointed Mary Anderson, Luke Anderson, and Mary Worner to the Stewardship/UCU Endowment Committee.

Luke Anderson described the strategic planning process and volunteered to facilitate it.

The next meeting is scheduled for June 20, 2012 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm (M. Anderson/Siems).