



Unitarian Church of Underwood July 2014 Newsletter

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.

Coming up in July

Sunday morning service begins at 9:30 a.m.

July 6 – Rosemary Golias, “Kundalini Awakening” & Film 11-12:30. After the Sunday Service talk, Rosemary will show the documentary film – KUNDALINI from 11-12:30 AM. Kundalini is an untapped powerful resource available within every human body. And yet this evolutionary force remains unexplained and mysterious. Discussion follows the film: informational resources about Kundalini, basic life practices and opportunities that can awaken Kundalini, and impact of awakened Kundalini on daily life.

July 13 - Dr. Roger Parks - “Culture of Gratitude” How is life shaped for us when we live within a culture of gratitude, for everything we are given and share. **Annual summer potluck** at Bob & Mary Worner’s following this Sunday service.

July 20 - Chris Hyslop returns to update us on international and U.N. issues; Sudan and Myanmar. **Board meeting following the church service**

July 27 – Teresa Jaskiewicz – “Bee Crisis,” Teresa will inform us about the importance of and danger to bees, with pollinating taste exhibits with apples and Xerces society handouts.

Note: Prior to beginning of service at 9:20 a.m., there will be a “call to gather” to alert folks to assemble in the sanctuary so that the service can start promptly.

Sunday morning classes will resume in September.

Other meetings:

July 9 - 12 Noon Facilities Committee

July 16 – 5:30 p.m. Speaker’s Committee

July 20 – 10:45 a.m. Board Meeting following Sunday Service (no potluck)

July 22 – 5:30 p.m. 125 Year Celebration Planning Committee and Membership Committee – joint meeting.

Note: AA Meets every Monday evening @ 7 p.m. at UCU

Summer U Group meets the 2nd Tuesday 5:30 p.m., July 8 and August 12 at the home of Bob and Mary Worner. Call Co-Facilitators, Bob Worner (218/826-6998) or Connie Stigen (218/731-1443) for full information.

Amazing Bees!

“Ah! The amazing bees! The sun shines and flowers grow. Pollen appears as tiny suns in the flowers. The bees visit the flowers, wiggling and jiggling in their important work of pollination. Because of the bees, the flowers produce fruit for us to eat. The bees carry nectar back to the hive, and through their ardent organizational abilities, voila! – they produce sweet honey!

Please plant flowers for the bees that are ‘clean’ – that are not treated with chemicals that impair the health of the bees or other pollinators. A list of flowers good for pollinators: clovers, dandelions, cone flowers, black-eyed susans, bee balm, wild roses.

“For to the bee a flower is a fountain of life,
And to the flower a bee is a messenger of love...”
...Lebanese-American poet Kahlil Gibran, the Prophet, 1923

(Above both taken from May Day Celebration Program of Sunday, May 4, 2014)

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas and articles for the Newsletter to: maryanderson8380@msn.com with assistance from Norm Kolstad @ kolstadn@yahoo.com. Feedback is appreciated.

The Month That Was

June 1 – Dr. Hilda Koster, “Green Religion” A call for an earth-honoring faith in an age of ecocide. Dr. Koster is a professor of religion/theology and environmental ethics at Concordia College. She began her presentation by leading us in a short mindfulness/focusing exercise. Then she discussed the following points:

In this time of environmental crises, how can religious people relate to the issues? The current age can be called the Anthropocene (Human) Era; an "age of unprecedented human influence on earth systems, which started with the Industrial Revolution." (Christianity is the most anthropocene of the world's religions). The earth's population has been increasing rapidly. Our impact can also be called the Age of Ecocide. The earth is losing 3 species a day. 56% of the world's people lack access to clean water. And yet we are pouring water into fracking wells. In many circles, this would be considered a sin. There is a huge disparity of wealth. This is not just an issue of sustainability, but one of social justice. The parts of the earth most affected by these issues are the ones who have the least impact: the poor and indigenous people of the world, non-human species, and future generations.

These are religious issues because:

- Institutions and people of faith have a long tradition of helping the poor and marginalized

- "Love thy neighbor" is a theme common to all major religions
- Religious traditions have the power to change people's hearts

To "change people's hearts" there needs to be a paradigm shift in attitudes (perhaps particularly of Christians). Dating back to Greek philosophers and early Christianity, a dualistic attitude can be seen between the body and the mind/soul. The focus in Christianity (and other religions) is not on the life in this world, but in the afterlife; that this life is a "stepping stone." However, the earth is God's creation and we are a part of it. We often find God in nature, but where is God when the environment is polluted?

In biblical terms, humans are often interpreted as being the pinnacle of creation (more divine than other species), when actually we were the last part mentioned in the creation story. We are actually dependent on the rest of nature. In "Green Readings in the Bible," other references to the relationship of humans - as one of the millions of species - to the earth are highlighted, doing theology as if the earth matters. We need a change in metaphors - that the world is "God's body"; that the chemicals spilled into rivers are polluting God's veins; that as spirited bodies, we are a part of the earth and we need to take care of this earth body.

June 8 - Bob Worner: "Changing Times" UU Principle #1. Bob tries to fulfill three things in his talks: 1) to address one of the 7 UU Principle; 2) to unify the church body, our voice, purpose and reason for existing; 3) to address the individual within that body. We don't all think alike. Things change. The church 20+ years ago differed from its maturity of today. Two weeks ago, we honored members who had been here since the turn of the Century. Some of the changes in this church include going from 18 Sundays per year to now 52. Additions include the new building, the chalice lighting and long range planning. Today we are vital and energized. A remarkable change is the number of new faces.

Some of Bob's dreams for UCU have not materialized. Other aspects have surpassed what he dreamed for us. All of us resist change at some time - "enough is enough." Others welcome change. We celebrate the differences and welcome the common between us.

Not all change is for good but change happens. The good things change brings must be managed or the change that follows will be disappointing, e.g. Johnson's Great Society. Racism, health care are still with us. The more things change, the more they stay the same but for us as UUCers - we continue here to be the "light of the prairie." We have these: 1) commitment to liberal tradition, 2. commitment to one another - sober and humble with unshakeable support, 3) commitment to the larger community and world, 4) commitment to the arts - music, poetry, create with our hands, 5) commitment to service - not lost in ourselves but to act and to move forward. We should always have dreams that exceed our ability to accomplish them to keep us moving forward.

June 15 - Dr. Roger Parks, "Life Down Stream" May what I do flow like a river. The origin of a river is unknown. Allow your mind to flow with that stream to a yet unknown future. That future is flowing into eternity. You can either flow freely with the water or be in a capsule.

Some believe our world was created in seven days seven thousand years ago. They are not listening to the scientists. “I have synthesized the scientific understanding with the spiritual. God did it somehow or other, but it is done. The future is calling us forward. We are the conscious process of creation. The same elements that are in the stars are in us.”

Dr. Parks started with God, not as a noun, but as a verb that pulls us toward a future. We are co-creators with the universe, and a product of everything before us, but the past does not determine the future. Fourteen and a half billion years ago we were literally stardust. The elements that make up the big bang are at work today. We can make decisions of what is to come. God is not that little bug that is waiting to get us.

Peirre de Chardin’s philosophy – becoming is the love of God – go deep to the core of our being. Care for our inner life is critical. We need to listen to the sounds of those who are concerned. The future is not despair but hopeful. What is downstream is worthy of us; what we do now makes a difference. We can build bridges of hope or tear them down. Native American wisdom – Braiding Sweet Grass- connectedness to presence. Not available in hard cover, only through your Kindle.

“The intuitive mind is a gift,” said Einstein. Will the world downstream be more accepting of others? The future is yet to be.

June 22 – Peggy Maxwell “Let There Be Light ... And Dark!” Peggy E. Maxwell, a longtime member of UCU, followed her dream and attended the Phoenix Institute of Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture beginning with acupuncture in 2005 and the title of her master’s thesis was thus.

Her breast cancer in 1996 alerted her to the need for further study. She had used organic foods, worked with people she enjoyed and led an otherwise healthy life so she was puzzled by the cancer. She has learned the importance of sleep - it can reduce the risk of heart disease. You can optimize Circadian Rhythm by massage or tap the Horary or the Yuan Source point. From her thesis: Meridians are lines that run through your body and there are points along those meridians that correlate with different organs.

Melatonin is produced at night. Light limits melatonin. In 2007, cancer research found that night shifts are carcinogenic. Melatonin limits cancer growth, and is effective treating such diseases as Alzheimer’s and strokes. Modern society is addicted to light at night. Recommended for sleep: a dark room, regular hours, stretching, exercise, massage and meditation. Refrain from over-indulgence of any kind. Of interest: Jet lag takes one day per time zone for recovery. Tests in a cave showed that natural day length is 25 hours rather than 24.

Peggy has been fascinated by Chinese medicine, the dynamic interplay between opposites, the Yin/Yang of our symbol, Taoism, the natural daily rhythms of our physiology.

June 29 – Flower Communion, Songs, Poetry Readings, picnic at Phelps Mill. Celebrant, Ellen Eastby was service leader and Mikko Cowdry with his guitar furnished the special music.

Readings were offered by: Sandy Barnhouse. Liz Sweder, Rod Broding, Tudy Cowdery, & Diane Johnson.

Sandy Barnhouse told about our Unitarian ancestors, Thoreau and Emerson. Although Thoreau became interested in another church, the UUs still claim him. He worshiped nature, was eccentric and shy. He never knew a companion as warm as solitude, ate no flesh and no wine. His alma mater was Harvard (1837). He had contempt for congressmen – even more intense than for preachers and churches. For his civil disobedience, he spent a night in jail. Gandhi carried Thoreau at all times. He tutored Emerson's nephew, Emerson allowed him to build a cottage on his land. He liked living in the woods where he wrote Walden. One of the best nonfiction books by an American author says Google. Thoreau returned to Emerson's home and died there of TB at the age of 45.

Liz Sweder said she has been writing a memoir for four years. She writes of the flowers of her childhood, which they took home to their delighted mother, who delighted in the vistas of the prairie. Prairie rose, pasque flower, marsh marigold, trillium, harebells or bluebells. They bought gallon pails of honey. They climbed to the top of the hill near Opperman Lake. (A great line: Lilac time, lilacs slurping from syrup jars on every kitchen table in town). Book by Candace Kroslak and Angela Sun.

Rod Broding said that from an early age, he loved Thoreau. As a teacher, his room was decorated with nature. One friend, who is no longer with us, spent a lifetime with nature: Dann Siems. (Son of our Donn and Marlys Siems). (Dann Siems and Budd Andrews co- presented a week at Camp Unistar on Star Island in 1996: Wildwood Wisdom. Budd about what's on land, and Dann, what's in the waters).

Tudy Cowdry read "Lost Things" and "Prayer at 60" that now should read "at 70!" plus some great rhymings with the word gold. She mentioned writer, Kate Farrell.

Diane Johnson read on "A summer Sunday".

Following the readings, we held a traditional Flower Communion, which started in 1923, in Prague, Czechoslovakia by Norbert Čapek. We celebrated with a Bouquet of Splendor: "This bouquet is a thing of splendor. It is made up of many unique and beautiful flowers, all held together by a vase. We are like the flowers, the congregation like the bouquet, and the church like the vase. We all bring our own unique and beautiful gifts to the church to make a congregation that is truly a thing of splendor."

Garage Sale & Kids RE Bake Sale

Thank you to all who brought gently used items and baked goods for the combined garage sale and Kids' RE Bake Sale. The sale brought in over \$680.00. Proceeds will be given to Bernice Johnson for the Schools for Shan Refugees and to Kinship and church projects. Special thanks to Kris Warhol for organizing the rummage sale and JoAnn Larson, Alisha Piekarski and friend Sam, Mary Anderson and the kids, Skylar & Jewel Swanson, Sterling Czeck, Mary Wunderlich, Sequoia Ann and Lily for all their work at the bake sale. The baked goods sold out!

Want to Change the World?

Drink a cup of coffee!

Kathy Kensinger is now coordinator for the Equal Exchange Coffee for sale at the Unitarian Church. The wholesale purchase of the coffee goes to Equal Exchange and profits through sale of the coffee by the church have gone to the UUA Social Justice Fund. You have your choice of these varieties at \$9/package:

Organic Eight Rivers Coffee -- whole bean. This coffee comes from the El Imposible National Park in El Salvador. Our co-op partner for this coffee is Las Colinas, whose members are committed to sustainable practices that enrich both the local environment and their farming livelihood.

Organic Proud Mama Coffee -- drip grind. Honoring proud mothers and families everywhere, this blend lifts up women farmers who are becoming leaders and sending their children to school. Feel the pride when you savor this coffee's notes of fresh caramel, chocolate and savory spice.

Organic Congo Coffee Project -- whole bean. The Congo Coffee Project supports the growth and healing of the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo. For every bag of coffee sold, Equal Exchange will donate \$2 to the Panzi Foundation, which supports the work of the Panzi above Hospital and educates the public about issues facing the D.R. Congo.

Pipeline Protest

Winona LaDuke is conducting a horseride July 7 in protest of the proposed Sandpiper pipeline extension into Cass and their nearby counties. As this is a work in progress, this is to alert those along the route who might want to participate in some manner. Please call Mary DeYoung, NUUF news director, for details, [218-587-2543](tel:218-587-2543).

Save the date: August 30 - Underwood Harvest Festival and Celebration of UCU's 125th Year

The 125 Year Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee and the Membership Committee are working together to plan UCU's participation in the Underwood Harvest Days on Saturday, August 30. We'll be part of the parade with our own brass ensemble, have dressed up characters portraying famous Unitarian Universalists, showcase our artists, have a musical festival featuring our musicians, slideshow with a historical overview of our 125 years, Habitat

for Humanity playhouse raffle, and hand out orange soda and root beer floats to show our appreciation to the community. We're inviting you and many guests to participate as we celebrate the Unitarian Church of Underwood being a "light on the prairie" these past 125 years.

Gifts It Brings: Our Church Building

There were two known celebrations in our church in the month of July. The first was July 10, 1889 when the church was dedicated and the other, July 18, 2004 when the church remodeling was completed. So in this July 2014 Newsletter, we acknowledge the gift our church building is to us.

Rev. Stefan Jonasson during his January 19, 2014 presentation at our first celebration of our 125th year, spoke about the history of our church. He told us that the building we occupy was first built as the Union Labor Hall in the late 1800's by Unitarians and a few Lutherans and Congregationalists. The first services of the Unitarian congregation were held in member's homes or at the liberal Union Hall. There is some discrepancy in the records on when the building was actually purchased: One place says 1894, another 1904 – whenever, the congregation purchased the Hall for \$300. But Norm Kolstad has done extensive research and finds two pages from the book, "Kristofer Janson in America" that support the notion that the Union Hall was built in 1889 and dedicated July 10 of that year.

From the book: "They began in May and arranged things so expeditiously that the building was dedicated early in July. Adopting the same motto as that of Nazareth Church, they immediately announced that the building would be available for all religious groups as well as for other meetings and community get-togethers. Janson promised to visit them at least once every other month, but otherwise Otto Nilsby took charge of services and was superintendent of the Sunday school. Janson was able to report the formation of this new congregation at the Western Unitarian Conference in Chicago in mid-May, and, when the Minnesota Conference was held in June, his report was said to have stirred "the latent missionary zeal in all hearts."²²

The history book, "Underwood through the Years," published by Ron Shebeck last year has this on page 15: "A Union Hall was dedicated July 10, 1889 on Main Street North. This building was later remodeled and became the Unitarian Church."

Then there is this quote from a booklet about Underwood made for the Minnesota Centennial in 1958: "At the time Underwood, Minnesota, was hardly more than a clearing in the woods; it had a railroad station, three stores, and a few houses. However, thirty people in the community subscribed to Saamanden, and Janson was inclined to think the paper had been the actual missionary. The town was not ordinarily on his lecture route; Janson usually chose bigger places, nearby Fergus Falls or Rothsay, some twenty miles away. He did, however, have an earnest admirer in Otto Nilsby—a young man who had spent three years preparing for the Lutheran ministry at Augsburg Seminary, had withdrawn because of his interest in Janson's teachings, and had later persuaded his parents to his point of view.²¹ He had been instrumental in forming a group; when it had thirty-two members, it had elected officers, choosing as president

Hans P. Bjorge, a man already prominent in the Farmers' Alliance and soon to be a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives. Other officers were Nilsby, John Trondson, John O. Kolstad. Anna O. Kolstad, and Josefa Medjaa. Either just before this election or immediately after, they invited Janson to visit them, the result being the formation of the Free Christian Church of Underwood. Because the village had no building large enough to hold more than forty people, they at once raised money to build a town hall seating two hundred.»

Norm says we have a book in our archive labeled, "Union Hall." The first page, in Norwegian, lays out the organizing principles of a community building. The 7 principles/rules that were adopted at the building of the Union Hall, translated from Norwegian, talks about using the Union Hall for religious, political or social purposes. The hall is to be used for no other purposes. Other rules included "no drinking". The next page lists the contributors/subscribers for construction. The first name on the list is Kristopher Janson. Officers will be: President, Secretary and Treasurer and they will serve one year terms. Apparently the expenses were paid by annual basket socials. The records cover the years 1889-1904. From then on, it would have been the Unitarian Church.

Norm believes this must have been written in the spring/summer of 1889, shortly after the congregation was organized.



Early Union Hall

Norm's research also found this quote from *"Underwood through the Years"* (page 8). It is attributed to *The Underwood Independent* [newspaper], September 17, 1931:

"September 4, 1913 at the Free Christian Church, the Underwood Chapter of the Red Cross was organized with a membership of 22. The members of the Church Ladies' Aid sold lunch which netted them \$12.60, which started the fund with which to buy material. Thirty-four new members were added during the year. From the date of organization to November 14, 1918 the receipts amounted to \$1,847.16. Of this amount \$534.58 was sent to the Red Cross Headquarters. The balance was used for the purchase of wool yarn which was knit into hose and sweaters. Aside from knitting, time was spent in making gauze bandages, gauze masks, first aid kits, bed jackets and pajamas. Sixteen young men left the village in answer to the call of service."

In 1916 the church building was elevated to allow for a basement and installation of the gothic ceiling.

Norm also uncovered:

"This brief history of the Free Christian Church (Unitarian) of Underwood, Minnesota, submitted by Mrs. T. W. Rolfson.

Dated: July 36, 1938.

"Another business meeting was held in October, when the money problem was discussed. Subscriptions were made and it was decided to invite Rev. Kristopher Jansen to hold services several times a year."

"A building committee had been functioning during these years. They bought The Union Hall at a public auction on April 25, 1904 for \$300.00. This building has been extensively remodeled and is an attractive little church with parlors in the basement."

"In May 1890 they bought an acre of land for \$20.00 from Ole Foss, to be used as a cemetery."

But Norm went even further and unearthed information on our wooden chairs!

Kellogg Chairs: 1881-1889

"When a branch of the Northern Pacific Railroad was being surveyed through the county in 1881, New York native Timothy Kellogg, who was planning to build a chair factory, purchased several acres from Ole Foss and platted a townsite, later called Underwood in honor of A.J. Underwood, owner of the Fergus Falls Daily Journal. The factory was built a block west of the depot on the north side of the tracks.

Three types of chairs were made: The common type, still seen in this area – sold for three dollars a dozen. They were made of elm and oak and had an arched bentwood back; Boston rockers and slipper chairs were also made. The chairs had the distinctive feature of a wood spline in the seat with the grain positioned at 90 degrees from the grain in the seat, thus preventing wood in the seat from splitting.

Kellogg moved to California when his business failed in 1889. The cordwood industry followed and farmers were able to make money while clearing their land. Fifteen to 20 carloads a day were shipped from Underwood and hauled by wood-burning locomotive to North Dakota for fuel.

Underwood's first Fourth of July celebration was staged in 1885 when the chair factory was doing well. Timothy Kellogg and his son, Ed, helped promote the celebration. They built a bowery close to Bass Lake, added lemonade and ticket stands and built a bandstand on posts eight feet above the ground. John Anker and his band provided music."

The chair factory did not produce chairs until 1882; the land was purchased in 1881. They went out of business in 1899.

We are still using 28 of the Kellogg chairs! You probably sit on one each Sunday.

Norm had a number of sources. Most are reprinted in "Underwood through the Years," a local history book published by Ron Shebeck in 2013.

His other sources included:

- Fergus Falls Daily Journal Wednesday, June 17, 1981
- An Underwood History booklet published for the Centennial in 1958
- A letter from Hans P. Bjorge about Underwood's early years.
- The sentence about the spline in the seat is Norm's and is from a conversation with Chris Schuelke at the Museum.

It seems little more was done to the church after 1916 when the building was elevated for the basement and installation of the gothic ceiling. We know from our current members who attended late last century that they only met two times/month and that Kids' Religious Education and other activities were going on downstairs while adults met upstairs for lectures/discussions.

Personal recollections:

"I believe in the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, and salvation by character." This is the creed that Beverly Eastby, mother of Ellen Eastby remembers learning for her confirmation that took place at the Unitarian Church of Underwood on July 2nd, 1945. Beverly is the daughter of Otto and Jennie Kolstad, great granddaughter of Christian and Lydia Kolstad. Christian Kolstad is a founding member of our church.

Ellen Eastby's interview with her mother continues: "During the confirmation classes it wasn't just the creed that the kids would have to know. She said they had a lot of learning to do, including memorizing the books of the Bible. They used a little black book for much of their classes and she believes she still has it somewhere in our home. The minister that confirmed her class was Philip M. Petursson of the First Federated Church of Winnipeg. The girls got

dressed up in white dresses for that special day. The picture of her confirmation class still hangs in the lower level of our church today.

Beverly Kolstad married Vernon Eastby in the church on November 2nd, 1950. She remembers the day well. The minister, Reverend Ewing from Staples, was running quite late. Mom was waiting outside for him and her cousins played their violins for guests inside the church. The violinists had to play and play and play while waiting for the minister. Finally, Mom spotted a Model A coming up over the hill with Rev. Ewing standing on the running board, putting on his robe. He had had a flat tire and hitched a ride into town with someone. That story ends well for everyone. My parents were married one month short of 59 years, when my dad passed in 2009.

It isn't just major life events that Mom remembers about the church. There was Sunday school for the children and they would perform Christmas pageants for the congregation. Ethel Gronner was a Sunday school teacher and the kids went to her home for rehearsal. One year they did a scene from Little Women. Mom was thrilled to play the part of Beth. The Sunday morning music was as good then as it is now. The Moen sisters would sing regularly. Mavis Johnson would play the piano while Valdeen Moen played the organ. 'There was a concert every Sunday' my Mom said. There was also a Ladies Aid at the time. Her mom would sometimes sing at a Ladies Aid meeting or maybe during church. (I did not know my Grandmother could sing, but I knew that she played a mean harmonica!)

The building itself has changed over the years. When Mom was young, there was a heating grate at the front of the church. The children would play and the grown-ups would visit while standing on it as the church warmed up on Sunday mornings. There was also a plaque with the creed, mentioned earlier, hanging on the basement wall at the front of the coffee line. Up until a few years ago, the staircase was on the outside of the church and you entered the lower level from a door to the side and under the stairs. For the younger ones that passage was a little scary and I remember it as being that way too.

Mom accompanied me to church in May. It was the first time she had been in the building since it had been remodeled. She thinks the addition to the church is beautiful and couldn't get over how you could walk right in the front door to the lower level. She looked at the pictures that hang on the wall from her childhood. Pictures that we have all looked at and perhaps wondered who they were and what stories they might have to tell. Now we know a bit of one person's story. Thanks Mom for sharing with us a little bit of your history, a history that as a church we share together." – Ellen Eastby



Building Prior to 2004

Bonnie Bell, current member, marveled at our building now compared to when she first came in the mid 90's to what could have been a "spook house: steep, crumbling steps to enter that were especially scary when it was icy, dark paneling, old stairway, antique looking – not like the bright, beautiful church we have today."

Beautification started sometime in the 1990's when Susan Groff and Bob Timm decided to paint the church exterior. When asked how long they would work, Susan answered, "every day until it is done." Townsfolk came by as they worked, and the Underwood banker invited everyone who had worked on it, whether for twenty minutes or twenty hours, to come to the local cafe for lunch - funded by the banker. That seemed a turning point in acknowledgment and acceptance from the community.

Then under the leadership of Ron Roller, board chair 1998-2003, members began planning to make the church more accessible. Mary Worner was chair of the building committee comprised of: Ron Roller, Sandy Barnhouse, Tim Hanley (deceased), Kati Sasseville (deceased) and David Wass. When David, a member of that committee, was asked, "How come the remodeling was so successful?" he said, "Mary Worner! She had had experience and she liked doing it." Tim Hanley had donated \$6000 to hire an architect, but then they had to admit they did not have a dollar! In fact, that's what Mary told the architect when they were going to go out for bids. During this time, some members knew that Frances Ellison was leaving a bequest to the church but they had no idea regarding the amount. Ron Roller said when he opened the envelope the bids, there was the check from the Frances Ellison estate. He first read it as \$46,000, which was a shock, but the next time he looked he saw that it was \$460,000 – "that was even more of a shock as nowhere near that amount had been expected." Frances had stipulated that a portion of her bequest be used to modify the church building.

This bequest allowed for a significant remodeling. An addition was added which made the building handicapped accessible. The addition included an interior stair to the second floor when before the entrance stairs were on the exterior (and icy in the wintertime), a lift, and a handicapped accessible bathroom. Also, the heating system was replaced and steel siding installed.

The architect was Richard Hagemeister who had an office in Fergus Falls. He has since retired and moved to St. Cloud. Richard did us a favor by taking on the project as he had multiple sclerosis and by mid-day would be very tired. It was one of his last projects.

The general contractor was Woessner Construction from Fergus Falls. We had a few disagreements with the contractor, which is to be expected, but generally they worked well with us. They did have to tear up the concrete floor of the new bathroom twice and re-pour it because of their errors.

The budget was \$183,000 and the actual cost was just under that by a few dollars. Everyone on the committee cooperated to stay within budget. The refurbishing of the kitchen was not included; a different committee did that project.

The improvements made to the original building were: insulating the exterior walls and the ceiling, adding steel siding, replacing the heating system, and some re-wiring. The extras we added after learning we were given the Ellison money were: extending the front of the building two feet (the maximum allowed by the city), putting a rounded ceiling in the addition upstairs, and using a wider baseboard. The rounded ceiling and baseboard were added in an effort to better blend the old and new sections of the building.

On July 18, 2004 there was a grand opening ceremony that Kris Warhol described as one of her favorite memories of UCU. All the members gathered downstairs and then proceeded upstairs to view all at once the work that had been done to make our church the open, bright, beautiful space it is today. Special recognition should be given to Mary Worner who led the remodeling efforts and all of her crew of that time.

The wall-hanging at the front of the sanctuary was created by Fergus Falls artist, Charles Beck. The idea came to him from a mid-1970's UU Christmas card. The design is called "Conglomerate of World Religions" and hangs in our sanctuary.





Photo by Norm Kolstad Winter 2014

We have John Minge to thank for our current wayside pulpit in front of the church that he built in 2012. The church had been without a wayside pulpit for a while. The old one was worn out and eventually its remains went into storage at the Worners. When building the new wayside pulpit, John tried to take from the old and incorporate into the new, but was unsuccessful. The new one is entirely John's design. "I tried to make something that would fit with the church building and that would be pleasing to the eye," John said. He was definitely successful with that. Not only is it beautiful, but it is made to last. It is made out of cedar that John carefully selected himself. There are few, if any, knots in the wood and is very straight-grained. It's mounted on two galvanized pipes that go four feet into the ground and are set in concrete lighting.

And so for the last several years, we have just enjoyed our remodeled building. Then in 2013, there were questions regarding the soundness of the 100 year old structure and after a building engineer's inspection, a second post and steel beam were installed in the basement. During its installation, a city water leak was found, that undiscovered might have caused more extensive damage from seepage and that was also repaired.

In the early fall of 2013, Susan Groff (once again!) with a volunteer crew completely painted the interior getting our beautiful facility ready for our upcoming 125 year anniversary celebrations and our first hosting of an area fall workshop held November 9, 2013 and attended by 60 members of 7 other churches and our own members.

And so we give thanks for our church building and the sacredness we experience in its sanctuary and the connectedness we experience in our fellowship together.

We also give thanks to our facility committee: John Miersch, Susan Groff and Dave McRoberts for attending to the upkeep of our building and for all those who work to keep it whole.

*“May we be reminded here of our highest aspirations,
And inspired to bring our gifts of love
and service to the altar of humanity.
May we know once again that we are not isolated beings
But connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe,
to this community and to each other.”
(#434 Anonymous from Singing the Living Tradition)*

MidAmerica Region Nominating Committee Seeks Candidates

The Nominating Committee of the MidAmerica Region of the UUA is currently seeking potential nominees for two vacancies to be filled this summer:

- Camp UniStar Foundation (CUF) Board and
- MidAmerica Region Nominating Committee

The purpose of the Camp UniStar Foundation (CUF) is to manage and use the Camp UniStar property on Star Island in Beltrami County, Minnesota, to offer camper programs and experiences that:

- 1) Promote the values and ideals of Unitarian Universalism, and support the mission of the MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- 2) Enhance personal and spiritual growth through safe, healthy, and educational programs at a north woods island camp in Minnesota.
- 3) Are sustainable in the long-term - both financially and environmentally - driving positive changes for the camp, the island environment, and the surrounding community.
- 4) Foster a close-knit, caring, and accepting camper community, with an informal, intergenerational, and volunteer culture.

CUF is currently seeking new Board members to help carry out its mission. One member of the CUF Board is appointed each year by the MidAmerica Region Board, with assistance from the Nominating Committee. Eligible appointees must be at least 18 years old, be members of a UUA MAR congregation, have a demonstrated commitment to the camp and its mission, and have attended, worked at, or volunteered at Camp UniStar. Positions are for a three year term.

MAR Nominating Committee

The MAR Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying potential candidates for open positions on the Regional Board, Regional Nominating Committee, Midwest Unitarian Universalist Conference Board and Camp UniStar Foundation Board. The appointment would be to complete the remaining year of an unexpired two year term.

Contact the Committee

If you are interested in being considered for an appointment to the CUF Board or MAR Nominating Committee, please contact the MAR Nominating Committee via Tammy Lemmer at nomcom@midamericauua.org or 517-648-0689.

UU's for a Just Economic Community & Social Justice

Emails recently received by Ellen Eastby for sharing

"Attention: Social Justice Chair or Minister

From: dickburkhart@comcast.net

Date: Fri, 6 Jun 2014 01:41:35 +0000

At times I think we forget that we are a part of something bigger. That we aren't just our own little church that can make stuff up as we go along. Well, we kinda can, in a way. But, we are part of UUA. I wonder if people know that UUA stands for Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Adding the "of Congregations" makes it sound like we have a reciprocal relationship with them. Maybe that is just me that thinks that. I dunno know.

If you have delegates going to the General Assembly in Providence this month, please encourage them to join former UUA President and current UUSC President Rev. Bill Schulz to vote for "Escalating Inequality" as the next four year Congregational Study Action Issue (2:15 pm, Friday, June 27).

Bill Schulz joined current UUA President Peter Morales in asking the hard question: What was the Occupy Movement really about? And what can we do? Their short answer was: The system is just not working; inequity is increasing, so let's start by raising the minimum wage. But they know that the real answer is far more complex, that we need a much deeper understanding of the human predicament in the 21st century and new ways to challenge conventional thinking about what is possible. This is what the "Escalating Inequality" study action is all about.

Your delegates can learn more and join the fray at the Thursday afternoon discussion session (12:30 to 3:30 pm, June 26) and read the text at <http://www.uua.org/statements/current/index.shtml> or in the GA agenda. Economic inequality affects just about everything in our society, so the field is wide open as to what you could do in your congregation. Thomas Piketty has created quite a stir by calling for a progressive tax on wealth, while in Seattle the city council just passed a \$15 minimum wage, phased in over several years, propelled by protests from fast food workers and strong public support.

Others are asking about debt forgiveness for student loans, about the increasing stratification of social class, about the corrupting influence of money in politics, or about how violence and poor education and health are linked to inequality. Still others are looking at inequality in a global context of dwindling resources, climate change, stressed ecosystems, predatory finance,

inequities in ownership and trade, civil strife, or the rise and fall of empires and civilizations.

“The times, they are a-changing”, so let’s figure this out and answer the call of history.”

Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance June 9, 2014

Dear Ellen,

On behalf of the MUUSJA board, I am delighted to report important changes in leadership that will serve us well to build our capacity as Unitarian Universalists working for justice in Minnesota both now and in the future. Today's e-news includes news about our incoming Executive Director, our new Board Chairs and important dates to put on your calendar.

STAFF UPDATE

I am delighted to report that we have hired Rev. Ashley Horan as Executive Director who will begin the week of July 14, 2014. Ashley will be replacing Laura Smidzik who has served us well as Acting Executive Director and will begin as the Director of Membership at White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church located in Mahtomedi, MN in late July. We send Laura our sincere thanks and very best wishes for this next stage of her career.

Meanwhile, we extend an enthusiastic welcome to Ashley who brings a wealth of experience and skill to this position including two years as the Consulting Minister at the Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet, IL. She is a graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological School and is a lifelong UU with a lifelong passion for social justice. Throughout the years, her work for justice has included reproductive, racial, economic, sexual/gender and environmental issues. Most recently, she has been deeply involved as a member-leader on a local and national level with Resource Generation, whose mission is to organize young people of wealth and class privilege to become transformative leaders working toward the equitable distribution of wealth, land and power. Ashley grew up at Unity Church-Unitarian in St. Paul and is still a member there so she is already known to many of you. Please join me welcoming Ashley and her family!

Summer U Group

The first Summer U-Group was held at the Worner's lovely home and it was a delightful evening! There were five in attendance plus the two co-facilitators: Bob Worner and Connie Stigen. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this happen.

The topic was: "Being Listened To" and, as we so often see, the responses were very insightful and varying. It is so amazing to see all the different perspectives on the same topic.

We anticipate an even larger gathering next month. We will meet again at the Worner's on the following dates:

Tuesday, July 10th - "Claiming Happiness"

Tuesday, August 12th - "Who Am I?"

Lesson Quotes:

“We learn to listen by being listened to.” – Robert K. Greenleaf

“One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody’s listening.” – Hubert Humphrey

“When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. You know how when people laugh at your jokes you become funnier and funnier, and if they do not, every tiny little joke in you weakens and dies. Well, that is the principle of it. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to....” – Brenda Ueland

Unitarian Church of Underwood Board Minutes for May 21, 2014

Board members present: Ellen Eastby, Norman Kolstad, John Miersch, David Sanderson, Mary Worner, Don Siems, Alisha Piekarski, Mary Anderson, and Kris Warhol. Absent: David Wass. Also present: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson.

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Ellen Eastby at 6:34 p.m.

Ellen Eastby shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Miersch/Sanderson).

Officers for 2014-15 were elected on a consolidated motion as follows: Chairperson, Ellen Eastby; Vice Chairperson, John Miersch; Secretary, Norman Kolstad; and Treasurer, David Wass (Anderson/Warhol).

The minutes of the April 23, 2014 meeting were approved as printed (Siems/Miersch).

Reports:

- Treasurer: none
- Program Committee: Mary Worner
- Outreach Committee: none
- Facilities Committee: John Miersch
- Planned Giving: David Sanderson
- Membership Committee: Mary Anderson

Old Business: Wes Binner was present to answer questions about the first reading of a policy/procedure establishing a Church Foundation. A Celebrants’ brochure was approved (Kolstad/Warhol). Mary Anderson reported on 125th anniversary events.

New Business: Underwood City garage and bake sale proceeds will go to Kinship and to Bernice Johnson to support Shan refugees (Sanderson/Siems).

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Kolstad, secy.