



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)

June 2016 Newsletter **Unitarian Church of Underwood**

**206 North Main Street
Underwood**

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

Note: Summer Services June 5 – August 28, 2016 begin at 9:30 a.m.

June 2016 July ►						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 John Minge: "Prophets..." Green Committee 11 am.@ Church	6 AA 7 pm	7	8 Executive Committee 5:30 pm @ church	9 Perham U Group @ Carignan's @ 3:30 pm	10	11
12 Cheryl Doely, "Why Protestant Clergy..." Wally & Friends @ Erhard Nave 3-5 pm	13 AA 7 pm	14 Battle Lake U Group @ Joanne Cress's 3:00	15 Board Meeting 6:30 pm @ church	16	17	18
19 Roger Parks Spiritual Reformation.. Mindfulness Sitting 8-9 a.m.	20 AA 7 pm	21	22	23	24	25
26 Outdoor Service Phelps Mill 9:30 am/Picnic Mikkel & Friends at Erhard Nave 3-5 pm	27 AA 7 pm	28	29	30	Notes:	

Summer Program

Children's Religious Education and Adult Education Classes are not held from June- August. Mindfulness sitting will continue the 3rd Sunday, June, July and August from 8 – 9 a.m.

Sunday service begins at 9:30 a.m. June – August. Child Care will be available.

Battle Lake U Group will meet at Joanne Cresses June 14 and July 12 at 3 p.m.

Perham U Group will meet at Carignan's June 9 at 3:30 p.m. There is always an empty chair available for anyone to join.

The Board of Directors meet June 15 and August 17 at 6:30 p.m. at church .

The July meeting will follow Sunday services on July 17. These are open meetings so members are always welcome.

June Speakers/Presentations

June 5 – Celebrant, John Minge: "Prophets, Civil Disobedience, and Nimby." John's talk will focus on some of the high points of this past year's Adult RE and beyond.

June 12 - Cheryl Doely, "Why Protestant Clergy Are Becoming Orthodox?" Cheryl K Doely, a former pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will share her personal journey of why so many Protestant clergy are leaving their calls to join the Eastern Orthodox Church. A farm girl from Milan Mn, Cheryl was baptized into the Lutheran church in 1951 and confirmed her faith in 1967. She graduated from St. Olaf College (Northfield MN) in 1973 and Union Theological Seminary (New York City) in 1977. She was ordained into the ministry of Word and Sacrament ministry in 1982. 31 years later she resigned from the clergy roster to become a laywoman in the Orthodox Church in America. She was chrismated along with her husband David (also a former ELCA pastor) in 2013 at St. Seraphim Orthodox Church in Dallas Texas. Today they worship with the faithful at Holy Myrrhbearers Orthodox Church in St. Cloud MN. What possessed them to do such a crazy thing?

June 19 -- Roger Parks, "The Purpose to a Spiritual Reformation," the first in a series of three talks, June 19, July 24 & August 21 "I believe there is a looming significant change in spirituality in decades going forward, and the outlines of which are beginning to take shape is current spiritual literature."

June 26 – Phelps Mill Sunday Outdoor Service followed by potluck picnic. Nature, fun, food, friends, family!

The Month that Was

May 1 - Bob Worner, "Gray Matter." Complete text of Bob's talk is at the end of the Newsletter.

May 8 - Missy Hermes who has been with the Otter Tail County Historical Museum for the past 20 years and has fun features on Facebook. Missy's presentation was "**Soap Suds on the Prairie.**"

Missy had numerous items used by past generation women to help them perform their manual labors. Missy read statistics from 1920 obtained by the USA Agriculture in a survey of 10,000 farm women. They worked 11.3 – 13.12 hours per day, with no vacations, getting up at 5 a.m. to pump water or get spring water, help with the milking. The average house was 7 rooms, 96 % did the washing with only 50% having a washing machine. Other tasks included ironing, sewing, gardening, bread making, poultry raising and care of livestock. Add to that care of children and cooking. Sunday was a day of rest and recreation – except for mothers. Monday was wash day, Tuesday, ironing.

Some of the items, Missy showed were P & G soap, Argo starch, clothes pin holder and clothes pins, laundry tongs, scrub board, sad iron, agitator (aggravator), "magic" egg brush and a dampening bag used instead of sprinkling clothes that depicted an "oh so happy" woman. Spring and fall house cleaning were depicted in writings as "wives with a wild look and men meek, eating meals on the back slip." One lady in a nursing home said "you know what's good about the good ol' days – they're gone!"

Senator Amy Klobacher just reported that 81% of women over 18 are now working women.

Attendance: 45

May 15 – **Women of the Middle East**, the women's history program that was postponed from March's Women's History Month.

Through her vision and staging, **Sandra Barnhouse** provided for us some brief moments to experience a different culture. Petitioned off, the pews were turned sideways facing each other to seat young and old women wearing head scarfs. The men and boys, seated up front, were only allowed participation in the readings. The women could join in with the songs. These brief moments of separation between the sexes and the deference given the males, gave us a brief glimpse of what other men and women live daily based on their gender differences.

Players had researched the roles assigned and written their scripts.

Janell Miersh as **Theodora**, the bedazzling empress of the Byzantine Empire and the wife of Emperor Justinian I. They reigned from 527-548 A.D. Theodora rose from herself being a prostitute to instituting reforms and helps to prostitutes, allowing women to divorce, own and inherit, building aqueducts, bridges, churches of Byzantine architecture making Constantinople "a most splendid city."

A group of elders (**John Shaw, Dave Sanderson, Donn Siems, Bob Worner**), depicted scholars of the Talmud, coming forward to argue what ornamentations women might be allowed under Shabbat. This excerpt was taken from James Michener's "The Source."

Maggie Meehan, head uncovered, portrayed **Hanan Daoud Khalil Ashrawi**. She is the first woman elected to the Palestinian National Council. Hanan was displaced from her home with the Palestinian War of 1948. She attended a Quaker school. She has led activist movements and human rights projects, dialogued with Israeli women, under Arafat sought to negotiate for peace. "I think of myself essentially as a human being with a multidimensional mission. Basically, I am a Palestinian, I am a woman, I am an activist and a humanist."

Not all the women today are indigenous to the Middle East. One woman who had a great deal of influence in Mesopotamia at the beginning of the 20th Century was an Englishwoman, **Gertrude Bell** depicted by **Tere Mann**. Gertrude was born in 1868 in England. She was a co-hart of T.E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia. She was known as Queen of the Desert. Her travels and contacts of the Middle East were most useful to the English as they positioned Fasil as King of Iraq, put the minority Sunnis in power, denied independence to the Kurds; basically, a breakdown of the promises of self-determination. She made her home Baghdad and died at the age of 58.

Script for **Ayaan Hirshi Ali** was written by **Mary Anderson** and read by **Hope Bauck**. Ayaan Hirshi Ali is a current women's rights activist, champion of free speech, and best-selling author and founder of the AHA Foundation. Ayaan was born in Somalia, suffered FGM at 5, fled a forced marriage, sought asylum in the Netherlands where she rose to a Member of Parliament. Through her studies, she renounced Islam and continues to call for its reformation. Now in the US, she established the AHA Foundation that educates about and seeks reforms for honor killings, forced marriages, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) that threaten women around the world, including the US.

Bonnie Bell Albers, dressed in camouflage with her head bound with a gray scarf, gave a powerful, dramatic portrayal of a modern day **Peshmerga soldier**. There are about 600 Kurdish female Peshmerga fighters from 18-28 years old who, without pay, have joined their 150,000 male counterparts in the battle against the Islamic State (ISIL) to thwart any possible attack against Kurdish areas. They fight to defend their flag, their land, their nation and their homes. They know the dangers to women in particular, "Keep your hands on the trigger." Taking out her compact, putting on her lipstick, Bonnie, the Peshmerga soldier said, "If we die, we want to look beautiful."

At the close of service, the men exited first, followed behind by the women.

Attendance: 46 that included 6 youth.

May 22 – **Ashley Horan** based her talk, **Thicker than Blood** on one of Andrew Solomon's Ted Talks in which he identified two kinds of relationships: vertical and horizontal. Vertical

relationship are those of common ethnicity, language, biological where there is commonality. Horizontal are those with peer groups usually alien to parents who are trying to cure you of something or sometimes don't accept these models of love.

Seven years ago, Ashley came home from seminary in Chicago for the Thanksgiving holiday with her parents and younger brother. Preparing together food in the kitchen, her stomach was in knots as she blurted out that she "had met someone." She described the look of eyebrows raised in astonishment when she quickly rolled out that the "someone" was: yes, a Unitarian minister and a "her," Black, about 5 years younger than her parents and who had a 9 year old daughter. It has been a seven year journey of meshing her vertical and horizontal relationships.

The "chosen family" sometimes is a mechanism of survival as individuals seek to replace the family of origin that rejects your choices. "It is impossible to be human alone." So efforts are made to create our own families, "covenanted families."

Ashley then went on to talk about the "Iowa Sisterhood," prairie female ministers coming from the East to the wild frontiers where there were natural predators, indigenous people, and a harsh climate. Mary Safford and Eleanore Borden were two such pioneer women of faith who along with other women organized eighteen Unitarian societies in several Midwestern states in the late 19th century and early 20th century. They rejected motherhood and marriage. They saw that family and kinship were available and that each person deserved family and had the right to create it. They saw UU churches as home – an intimate congregational residence. There is diversity of affection and an equal sphere of kindness.

Now after seven years together, Ashley's partner, Karen will often just visit by herself with Ashley's parents (as they reminisce about the 70's!!). And on December 20, 2014, they were there to when Ashley gave birth to a baby boy. Now all are bound together as full family members.

Attendance - 34

Happy Birthday Marguerite!!

Following service, many gathered for the picnic at Phelps Mill to surprise Marguerite Andrews in celebration of her 90th birthday. Budd, her kids and her close friends were there to add to the surprise. Marguerite was delightful and delighted!

After, Marguerite wrote: "The last question I added for the forty years of interviews I have done was: 'WAS THERE EVER A WORD OR AN INCIDENT THAT CHANGED THINGS FOR EVER IN YOUR LIFE?' My mom said, 'Yes, when Dad sold the other farm; I no longer cared what he did with his money.' Cecil Femling said, 'Yes, when I was 12 and Mons Jacobson was murdered. They never found his murderer.'

I couldn't think of such an incident in my life, until I came to the Underwood Unitarian Church. My thinking was no longer suspect - here we have a right to think. That changed my life."

May 29 – Jeanine Thompson, Regional Youth Advocate with Someplace Safe. Jeanine relayed her personal story. She was one of 10 children raised in a home with domestic abuse and daily fighting. The children disappeared for weeks, not to be at home. School was her safe haven. From this she learned independence, having to grow up fast. You “did what had to do to survive.” She defines herself as a survivor “I can do all things in Christ who strengthened me.”

When offered, she did not want the job at Someplace Safe. But because of her own experience, she is able to identify and relate to these youth. Too many victims of commercial trafficking, abuse and violence are unreported and unseen.

Heartland Girl’s Ranch in Benson, MN is a home for these victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. They get a horse – connection to an animal that teaches responsibility. Some older girls move through to transitional housing for the girls to learn to live independently. They have a store where they sell some of the products they make.

Someplace Safe provides safety and supportive services to the 9 county area.

Minnesota is now a leader with Safe Haven Laws that go beyond the Federal Victim Protection Act of 1984 that defined sex trafficking as involving “force, fraud, or coercion.” Under the MN law, you don’t have to prove – sex trafficking can be “by any means.” Subjects are defined as “victims,” not criminals. There are penalties against buyers and to hold accountable the traffickers. There is a grooming process and young girls and boys are acting “in return for something of value” that is unique and self-defined by each person victimized. Drug traffickers can use “gorilla” tactics – threats, force, etc., or “exotic” tactics – victim supposedly being taken care of.

When working with victims, it takes a long time to gain their trust so there can be no pressure, must keep confidences, not show judgment.

Efforts have been underway for some time for training development starting with first responders (law enforcement), educating and building community awareness, working with Human Services, schools, medical providers, Lutheran Social Services.

The National Trafficking Resource Center is a resource. It is estimated that there are 27 million victims, 80% of whom are women and children. Sex trafficking usually starts with 12-14 year olds. The life span of a victim is 7 years. A stable of 3 females could provide a handler a half million per year. Some traffickers can even be parents selling their children. On line selling is prevalent and starts with pornography. New applications appear with rapidity. Where – home, social media, public places.

If you see or suspect abuse or sexual exploitation, report it to the police. If you receive a message of this type, DO NOT RESPOND, DO NOT DELETE, DO REPORT it to the police. They may be able to trace the URL address.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is 1-800-843-5678. Visit: www.someplacesafe.info or <http://www.heartlandgirls ranch.org/>.

Attendance: 46 (that included 9 youth).

Purchase of Apartment Complex Will be completed in early June

Closing date is expected soon to complete the Unitarian Church of Underwood's purchase of the apartment complex located adjacent to the church. The last contingency of the contract was met in that the appraised value must meet or exceed the \$240,000 offer. The appraised value came back at \$240,500.

Efforts are underway to obtain the services of a property manager, lawn care and snow removal. An operational guide has been developed and will be presented for Board approval on June 15. The guide contains the policies and procedures for management of the property, the 2016-17 operational budget, property manager position description and contract, rent terms and conditions, application and referral forms. Once approved, a copy of the operational plan will be posted on the church bulletin board.

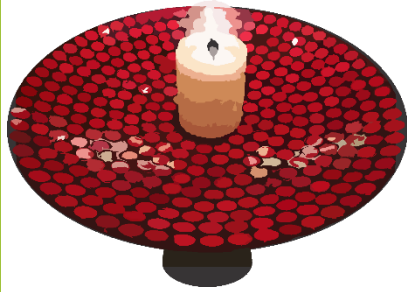
To announce new ownership, letters will be sent to the current tenants, surrounding churches and local businesses.

These actions will complete the purchase phase.

The next phase will be to gather information and ideas from members and friends for future use of the property and grounds. These ideas will be developed into a comprehensive plan that gives full consideration to UCU's mission and values and denotes our commitment to and presence in the community. That plan will be implemented next year. For now, we just want to settle down after the rush of all the tasks to accomplish buying the property.

Again, special thanks to the Property Expansion Task Force: Mary Anderson, Ellen Eastby, Susan Groff, Norm Kolstad, John Miersch, Dave Sanderson and David Wass. Early helps were given by Florance Thompson and Bob Worner. And then there was the input, suggestions, expressed concerns from many of you with a final all coming together to move forward. Thank all of you!

What We Learned at MidAmerica Assembly April 29-May 1, 2016 From Six UCU Attendees



Regional Assembly 2016

The **WHO** in the New Era of Unitarian Universalism

April 29 - May 1 • St. Paul, MN

MidAmericaRegionUUA.org/ra

Mary Anderson: "I attended the MUUSJA Workshop on Friday afternoon. For social action, take a breath, shift to partnerships, show up, involve multiple agents and multiple ages, do it with grace and humility. 'We seek to do justice because we are UU's; we are not UUs because we seek to do justice.' I'm looking forward to Ashley Horan doing a work shop in the fall with UCU.

Along with Dave Wass, we attended the workshop on Planned Giving 101 – It starts with gratitude – it is all a gift – there were generous people before us, there are generous people among us; talk about money, ask for money – it is a necessity; end with gratitude.

The other workshop I attended was: "Positioning Small Congregations for the New Era and Millennials. I found out that my granddaughter, Heather and her two daughters, Skylar and Jewel are all Millennials having been born between 1982 - 2004. Weird! From my notes: Millennials are known to be civic minded, looking for community, have confidence and tolerance, are narcissistic – (you think – with all those Snapchats!!) Have less need to keep up with politics, upbeat, trophy kids – got one for showing up, expect that everyone wins. Switch jobs frequently. Politically: many are socially liberal, ok with same sex marriage, less supportive of abortion, oppose animal testing for medical reasons, centralists, less religious, digitally connected – social networking gives them a sense of belonging, ethnically diverse, most educated. They put their lifestyle and friends above work, lack trust in institutions.

They probably will not make it for a 9:30 a.m. service so we should add ways to what we have to offer to them. They probably don't like sitting in silence. They love: coffee houses, poetry reading/music, the UU OWL curriculum, FOOD – focus on chocolate!

What I liked most about Assembly was hanging out with Susan, David, Stan, Connie and Ellen – we learned a lot about each other and a lot we are not telling!!"

And then that **Stan Carignan** goes and tells a lot!

"I would recommend the UUA Mid America Conference to everyone in our congregation, but not for the apparent reasons. While there are inspiring services and informative workshops, I have come to appreciate mainly the time to get to know others in our own spiritual community. Last year I was very

excited to connect with the larger UU community and came away a little disappointed as it did not live up to my expectations.

What I found instead was a quiet and very personal chance to spend time with Bob and Mary Worner. All of us lead pretty busy lives, and this applies double for the Worners, so I was excited to get them all to myself for a weekend. The foundation of our relationship was laid during that conference. It would bloom into my interest in volunteering for the Habitat. It was through the passion of Bob that prompted me to spend last fall working with the other volunteers building the new home in Fergus Falls. That experience led me to my current position as the Executive Director. I knew I wanted to know Bob and Mary better last spring, but never could imagine where that would lead my life.

So this year, I attended the conference with no expectations for learning, or spiritual growth or networking – I looked forward to getting to know the other people in our UCU community who were attending. I learned that Ellen is still pretty quiet, even away from the UCU. I learned that Susan is a firecracker and that you don't want to be on the opposite sides of too many issues with her, especially the issue of a part time minister. There is a spirited girl in her that can't be broken! I learned that David has a PhD. and still holds a grudge against a guy named Otis who had his eye on Susan back when they were dating. He still stomps on the name of Otis every time he gets on an escalator or elevator. I learned that Mary loves getting away for the weekend from time to time and that she never stops thinking about how we (UCU) can live our principles and put them into action. I learned that Connie Stigen loves her work and doesn't want to retire for the foreseeable future, that she is maxed out for a time and that she still wants to be on the Board!

I learned the kind of things that can't be learned in a seminar or a power point presentation. I learned about the people who I consider my spiritual family. The people I hope to be there for, the people I hope to be there for me. I went to the conference to build our church in the only way I really can – by getting to know and appreciate and to share myself with the others that attended. I would like to thank the Board for supporting our attendance and I encourage everyone to sign up for next year – I know I will be going to Oak Park and I can't wait to find out who else will be attending and who I will get to know just a little better."

Ellen Eastby – "One of the things that I found interesting at assembly was the emphases on "living in right relationship." The desire was for people to "use welcoming, inclusive language, serve as allies, speak up in the moment, focus more on impact than original intention, be open to learning (receive criticism gracefully), and speak from curiosity, compassion and respect for other's worth and dignity. We were encouraged to speak directly to those who were out of relationship, at the time of the occurrence. There was a Right Relationship Team. Their names, pictures, and cell phone numbers were printed in the Assembly packet that everyone got when registering. They were trained to handle all right relationship concerns and they could be contacted at any time if someone needed help. One could go to them if help was needed to speak up, to learn how to handle similar situations in the future, or to celebrate one's success. They also gave a short presentation during each gathering about what living in right relationship means. They mostly focused on race and LGBTQ issues.

I was signed up to attend a workshop that dealt with the technicalities of the new website we will be building at UCU. Unfortunately for me, the session took a turn and did not focus on the intended content. As a result of that, the leader of the workshop is giving me an hour or two of one on one help

with building our new website. Her pay scale generally starts at \$60 an hour and she is giving me some of her time for free. That was very generous of her and will be greatly appreciated.

Assembly was great. The key note speakers were highly engaging, worship was a blast, and workshops were interesting. The icing on the cake was the other individuals from UCU that attended Assembly. We had a lot of fun getting to know each other better and laughing. If you have the opportunity to go to Assembly some time, go. You won't regret it.

Susan Groff attended two sessions offered through workshops. 1) "Heresy in the Heartland: Humanism in the Second Century with Rev David Breeden of First Universalist, Minneapolis. He was raised Pentecostal so we have the same background. He spoke on the evolution of Humanism both for himself and Unitarians. One of the phrases I especially liked was 'free range UU's.' We have a smorgasbord of theologies and ideas to choose from. He also credited the Scandinavian immigrants for bringing an open dialogue that we also see in our own UCU background.

2) Navigating the TheistHumanist Gap with Creativity and Grace with Patricia D'Auria. She also addressed the diversity within the UUA and how we accommodate the variety of beliefs and rituals. It was reaffirming since we, again, do this at UCU. She used a floor exercise to demonstrate where we all are on a continuum and many of us are moving back and forth.

One of the best things was spending time with our own group from UCU."

Connie Stigen reports: "This was my first exposure to a UU Assembly. I was very much impressed and energized with most of what I heard and saw. I was most impressed by the young adults who were the featured speakers during the assembly. They were thoughtful and strong - presenting themselves with dignity and a touch of vulnerability.

I attended two workshops - "Heresy in the Heartland: Humanism in the Second Century" and "Sharing Our Whole Selves". I learned that the question that religious institutions should be asking is "what is meaning and purpose", not "what is the truth". I learned that we have much more in common with each other than we realize when we break down barriers of color, age, economic status, etc. Unfortunately, I did learn that there is some elitism in the UU family and it comes in the form of money and social/academic status.

The one conclusion that I think I can draw from my experiences at the UU Assembly is that I think the Unitarian Church of Underwood is doing a lot of things right and I think we are going in the right direction. I am more than happy to talk about this in more detail anytime. Oh, and the people I traveled with to the UU Assembly are really great people and insanely funny!"

David Wass attended the stewardship session with Mary, seemed to have no problem with his hearing when the personal stories were being told and for some reason, stomped on the first escalator step each time he rode it!!

U Groups

The Perham U Group will meet June 9 at 3:30 p.m. at the home of Lisa and Stan Carignan. The Battle Lake U Group will meet June 14 and July 12 at 3:00 p.m. at the home of Joanne Cress. Depending on interest, an additional summer U Group may be formed. There is always an empty chair left open for anyone who wants to join with a group.

We are looking for new/more facilitators for the Fergus Falls, Perham and Alexandria groups.

Note: if you are interested in facilitating or being in a summer U Group, contact Co-Facilitators: Tere Mann @ teremann@gmail.com or 218/205-4931 or Connie Stigen @ dcstigen@gmail.com or 218/770-7185.

Coming Late Fall Updated Church Directory

The Membership Committee will coordinate efforts for production of an updated church directory to include the many new members, friends and those not included in the 2013 Church Directory. Norm Kolstad has volunteered again to take photos. Photo shoots will be scheduled for July. Ellen Eastby and Bonnie Showers have volunteered to do layout. The Directory will include “in memoria” pages and we will invite members to submit names to be included in those pages. Mary Anderson will “drive” the process. We are looking for a delivery date of newly produced directories sometime in November. Watch for notices and updates. Meantime, SMILE – you may be on candid camera!

“Lily Pad”



“It feels like summer. Time to get out on the water. Put your canoe in on the Ottertail just below Phelps Mill. Lots of lovely things to see.” – Painting by Mickie Edmonds

Limerick by Stephanie Sanderson

Said a lass on the shores of Nantucket,

"Life is a wonder, come look 'it!

The sun and the sea,

and both you and me,

I hold all the world in my bucket!"

Coming in June

Sundays, June 12 and June 26, two great musical get-togethers in the Nave at **33928 County Highway 27, Erhard, 56534**



Wally Warhol, Dave Strom and friends

June 12 from 3-5 p.m. MOTU with Wally Warhol, Dave Strom and one or more friends. Jazz and Island music are only two of several genres you'll enjoy from these talented musicians. MOTU stands for a little island off from a bigger island or could be "Masters of the Universe." The three-some have been together over two years. The band started nine years ago as Island Time and has had many lives and many musicians in between. Their songs range from Jimmy Buffett to the Doors, Bob Marley to Johnny Cash.

June 26 from 3-5 p.m. Mikko Cowdery and Friends. Mikko is new to our stage but not to those many area fans who love Celtic and sing-alongs for the entire family!!

For each concert, please bring a snack or dish to share, your own beverage, and a folding chair. Suggested donation: \$20 per attendee or \$10 each for parties of four, so bring your families and friends! All donations benefit our professional musicians. **NO RSVP**, all welcome! We're on, rain or shine. Call 218/205-4828 if questions.

We're anticipating more concerts for July and August and will let you know details soon! Hosts:
Carole Mitchell and Cindy Johnson



Ride for Refugees

Family Bike Ride

A bicycle ride for refugees, sponsored by our church, will be held Saturday, July 16, 9:00 a.m. to noon. The proceeds will go to Schools for Shan Refugees, the non-profit headed by Bernice Johnson that our church has been supporting for the last few years.

Schools for Shan Refugees provides educational support for children and youth who have been forced to leave their homes in Burma and live in camps in Thailand. Completing their education gives them some hope they will be able to escape subsistence living, at the best, in the camps.

What better way to spend a summer morning in Otter Tail County than riding bike? The 30 mile ride will begin and end at the Underwood Park. The route includes Whiskey Road, the city of Battle Lake, and Glendalough Park. For families with young children, there will be family ride in Underwood. Refreshments will be provided.

The Underwood family ride is free. The fee for the 30-mile ride is \$50 per adult or \$75 per family. If you are not a biker you can participate by sponsoring riders, making a contribution, or volunteering to help with the ride.

For complete information see the flyer available at church or online at www.ucofu.org. For more information contact Katy Olson at 218-770-6681 or ucurideforrefugees@gmail.com.

Special Thanks TO:

From **JoAnn Larson and Sequoia**: 'Thanks to **Linda Quigstad-Berg** and **Steve Berg** for an amazing night of story and song! Wow--what a fun and engaging time! \$361 was raised, thanks to the generous support of family and friends, for the Shan children, and a great time was had by all on April 15th at JoAnn and Sequia Ann Larson's home. What a show and what a testament to talent and generosity in our beloved community... Joy! Thanks to all who attended & donated, and a special thank you to Steve and Linda, and to **Bernice Johnson!**'

And thank you, **Jo and Sequoia**, for hosting!

An Anonymous Doner!! One of our newer members who doesn't want any credit, donated a lap top computer to replace **JoAnn Larson's** aged one. Along with the computer, she transferred all Jo's old files and on top of that, prepared a delicious gourmet dinner for JoAnn and Sequoia. It doesn't get much better.

Judy Carpenter

Judy did all the work of organizing, ordering and delivering the silver maple trees from the Arbor Foundation. Fifteen people ordered 65 trees and Janel Miersch and DNR purchased 20 of the remaining 35 trees. Now from little twigs to shady trees!

Thank All of You for Your Gifts of Stewardship

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a lay led congregation, meaning that members and friends volunteer for virtually every aspect of the church's functioning. Nearly every member who is able contributes in one or more aspects. The UCU would cease to exist were it not for these gifts of service of your time, your skills, and your talents.

The UCU would also cease to exist if its members and friends did not give their gifts of money. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Long-time member and a past Board President, Ron Roller remembers when the UCU budget ran around \$3000 annually. Now because of 52 Sundays services each year and other expanded offerings and the growing numbers of members, the 2016-17 projected collections and budget is \$42, 515.00, a significant increase even over last year's budget. This year's budget represents a 22% increase in expenses over the 2015-16 budget of \$35,000. We ask members to consider this when they plan their giving. The congregation will continue to be updated on quarterly regarding revenues and expenses so we can measure our progress in meeting our budget.

For members and friends who attend infrequently or who prefer the convenience, UCU offers automatic withdrawal of payments to be deposited to the UCU account. Forms are available on the bulletin board or you can contact Dave Sanderson @dssand@prtel.com or 218/736-2616 to get the form.

We know the generosity of our members and friends – your belief in the mission of the Unitarian Church of Underwood and the UU Principles. Your gifts of yourself, your time and your money are given in gratitude for what you have and are received in gratitude for what you share. Thank you!!

Green Gossip

The Green Committee is reforming and will work in conjunction with the Solar Task Force newly charged. The Green Committee's goals are to promote and educate green living and bring awareness of environmental justice issues and actions. The Green Team will meet June 5 following the early morning Sunday service. If you are interested in these areas, please join us. Co-chairs: Ron Roller and Sandy Barnhouse; Recorder: Maggie Meehan.

For fun facts to share with kids (and learn yourself), check out

<http://climatekids.nasa.gov/sheep-marmots/>

The sky is still blue. Trees are still green. Wind still blows. Clouds are still white and fluffy. Rain still pours from the sky. Snow falls and it still gets really cold sometimes in some places. Earth is still beautiful.

So what is the problem? What is the fuss about climate change and global warming?

Well, after observing and making lots of measurements, using lots of NASA satellites and special instruments, scientists see some alarming changes. These changes are happening fast—much faster than these kinds of changes have happened in Earth's long past. (For the rest of the facts from this article, you'll have to check out the site above).

Check out MUUSJA E-News

See admin@MUUSJA.Org for updates and ways to donate to the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Organization and its work. Both Ashley Horan, Executive Director and Kevin Jaggoe, departing intern have spoken recently at UCU. You'll recognize them from their pictures on the site.



Photo courtesy of Mark Jacobson displaying Roses @ the North Mpls Home where he lived from 2007-2014. The roses came with the place and he did absolutely nothing to them except water and trim dead branches. "The root ball covered the ground so heavily that you could not get a shovel in the dirt anywhere near the base."

Unitarian Church of Underwood
Board of Director Minutes
March 16, 2016

Board Members present: Mary Anderson, Lee Becker, Norm Kolstad, Diane Johnson, John Miersch, Alisha Piekarski, Dave Sanderson, Dave Wass, Kris Warhol. Also present, JoAnn Larson. Absent: Stan Carignan. Members attending: Ron Roller, Florance Thompson, Bob and Mary Worner.

The meeting was called to order by President, John Miersch at 6:55 p.m. Lee Becker shared a meditation/reading.

The agenda was approved (Becker/Sanderson); the minutes of 2/17/16 were approved (Becker/Kolstad).

Reports: The reports were deferred for the annual meeting, April 17. Note: summit to Jo for copying by April 14 and to Ellen Eastby soon after to enter on the website.

Old Business:

Financial Audit will be conducted by Norm Kolstad/Wally Warhol after the annual meeting.

The Strategic Plan 2016-17 Goals and Objectives were approved (Sanderson/Warhol).

Completion of Roles and Responsibilities from last year's objectives will be included in the 2016-17 objectives.

Fair Share Assessment – Jo had contacted UUA and reported response they are looking at how the assessments may be done differently.

Motion approved (Miersch/Sanderson) to change status of Technology Task Force to ongoing Technology Committee.

New Business:

Empowerment Grant Award recommendations presented by Ron Roller, Chair. Approved 7 awards totaling \$10,000. (Anderson/Warhol) - see attached.

Solar Feasibility – Ron Roller presented information from TruNorth Solar

- Costs similar to other companies for 8 kilowatt
- 27 panels
- Payback decreases with/volume used – 15 yr pay back
- \$35,000 estimate with potential Federal tax credit of 30%
- Outside companies may finance to take tax credit
- Individuals can make the investment & receive tax credit

- Off-peak different pay-back
- More savings each year
- \$25,000 cost – 5 kw, \$40,000 – 10 kw (involves permits, etc)
- May apply to roof in good shape
- 30 year life

Ron will make presentation on solar feasibility at annual meeting per 2015-16 objective.

2016-17 Annual Budget presented by Dave Wass. Projected collections income of \$43,015 for balanced budget. Approved (Sanderson/Wass)

Purposed purchase of adjacent property – Mary Anderson reviewed the findings and recommendations by the Property Expansion Task Force for the identified issues/concerns. Motion approved (Kolstad/Sanderson) to submit purchase agreement from the Unitarian Church of Underwood for the property at 101 Woodlawn Ave East, Underwood (Parcel # **80000990036000**), at a price not to exceed \$200,000; and to include the minimum earnest money and with contingencies.

The handout used by Mary explaining Task Force actions and recommendations will be available to members, Sunday, March 20.

Board Nominations: John Miersch's and Dave Sanderson's first terms end; both are willing to be considered as nominees for 2nd terms.

MidAmerica Regional Assembly interested attendees are: Mary Anderson, Stan Carignan, Ellen Eastby and Connie Stigen.

Performance evaluation for JoAnn Larson performed by John Miersch, Mary Anderson, Betsy Wells. Contract Renewal approved for 15 hours/week effective April 1, 2016. (Anderson/Sanderson)

Annual Meeting – April 17.

Brunch/Program – Kris Warhol

Copying needed to JoAnn Larson by April 14

Agenda will include:

Annual Meeting Minutes from April 2015

Reports

Property Purchase Proposal for Membership vote

Strategic Plan 2016-17 Goals and Objectives.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Diane Johnson, Secretary

Unitarian Church of Underwood

Board Minutes for April 20, 2016

Board members present: Stan Carignan, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Mary Anderson, Diane Johnson, and John Miersch. Absent: Kris Warhol, Alisha Piekarski, David Wass, and Lee Becker. Also present: none

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board President John Miersch at 6:06 p.m. with a quorum present.

Reorganization: a slate of officers for 2016-17 was put in nomination, to wit:

President – Mary Anderson
Vice President – David Sanderson
Secretary – Norman Kolstad
Treasurer – David Wass

With no further nominations, the slate was approved (Sanderson/Miersch).

New Business:

Motion passed: Subject to final Board approval, delegate to the Property Expansion Task Force the responsibility to finalize the purchase of the apartment complex and to identify the tasks needed to maintain the property and to develop a plan to occupy one unit for church purposes (Anderson/Carignan).

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 6:30 pm.
The meeting was adjourned by President Anderson at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Norman Kolstad, secy.

Unitarian Church of Underwood Annual Meeting April 17, 2016

(These minutes will be subject to approval at the April, 2017 Annual Meeting)

Board members present: John Miersch, Dave Sanderson, Mary Anderson, Lee Becker, Norm Kolstad, Diane Johnson, Dave Wass, Kris Warhol, Stan Carignan. Absent – Alisha Piekarski. Also present: Joann Larson. Congregation members attending: 32 members present.

Meeting was called to order by President, John Miersch at 11:26 a.m. Lee Becker shared a meditation/reading.

Agenda was approved (Roller/Sanderson); Addition to the agenda: Ride for Shan Refugees; Betsy Wells Report.

Minutes of 3-16-16 approved as corrected - typo (Anderson/Katie Roller-Olson).

REPORTS: Handouts are attached - Presidents Report (John Miersch), Treasurer (Dave Wass), Administration Consultant (Joann Larson), Celebrants, (Ellen Eastby), Stewardship (Dave Sanderson), Foundation Advisory (Dave Sanderson), Membership (Mary Anderson), Worship (Mary Worner), Technology (Tere Mann), Communications (Mary Anderson), Program (Lee Becker), Speakers (Betsy Wells), Children's RE (Katy Roller-Olson), Child Care Project (Mary Anderson), Adult Ed. (Lee Becker), UU Groups (Tere Mann), Facilities (Susan Groff), Safety (Norm Kolstad), Outreach (Kris Warhol), Empowerment Grants (Ron Roller), Green Committee (Mary Anderson).

OLD BUSINESS:

Ron Roller reported on Solar information study (see attached information from TruNorth Solar). Motion to install in one year (Katie Roller-Olson/Edmondson). Katy Roller-Olson withdrew motion. The issue was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mary Anderson introduced Strategic Plan Goals (attached).

The fiscal year 2017 budget (attached) was approved (Bob Warner/Janell Miersch).

Mary Anderson introduced Plan to Grow Findings (attached).

Mary then went on to present information on the Property Expansion and Purchase of Sverdrup Suite Apartments, located at 101 Woodlawn, Underwood MN, parcel #8000990036000. (Information attached). Motion was made to 1) accept the counter offer of \$240,000; 2) authorize the Board to negotiate for a lower price if the appraisal comes in at a lower value than the \$240,000; 3) Direct the Board to negotiate the best terms of finance for a mortgage. Paper vote by congregation – Yes, 30; No, 5; 1, abstain; 1 marked “??.” Motion carried (Dave Wass/Maggie Meehan).

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD: John Miersch and Dave Sanderson, each for 2nd terms. Slate carried (Ron Roller/SusanbGroff).

BIKE RIDE FOR SHAN REFUGEES (information attached) Katy Olson. Sponsorship approved (Mary Anderson/Janell Miersch).

SOLAR PROJECT: Motion for action on solar: 1. Contact all potential parties to investigate potential larger solar community project. 2. Apply for lottery for solar program (January). 3. If community solar project seems unlikely, commit to solar installation by or before summer of 2018. 4. If community solar project seems likely, continue in planning for the larger project and form special task force for project. Motion carried. (Cedar Roller-Olson/Bonnie Bell)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Johnson, secretary

Unitarian Church of Underwood

May 1, 2016 Bob Worner

“Gray Matter”

Living Tradition: Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.

There has been a lot of gray in our lives these days: gray skies, gray areas about how to proceed as a church, gray to black politics, and on and on. Today I want to talk about “gray Matter” as a gift of the brain, and focus of the mind, to talk about intelligence and reason, science and art, as guiding forces, central forces of our lives as Unitarian Universalists.

This, as you know, is in stark contrast to religion as it is understood and practiced by many denominations, indeed by many religions. Goethe once said: **“He who possesses science and art also has religion; but he who possesses neither of those two, let him have religion.”** We are a church of intelligent people, you are more alive and challenging and provocative than any church of which I have been a part. Which is not to say we couldn’t do better. Sometimes we are silent when we ought to speak, reticent when we ought to proclaim, absent when we out to be present and give voice, and action. Sometimes we acquiesce even when we do not agree and when speaking out might have made a difference. Sometimes we let emotions, which are altogether proper, leap ahead of common sense. And yet we are a rational, thinking, investigative people, using art and science to move before us and enlighten us instead of relying on unchanging dogma of centuries gone by.

The traditional church has spawned both art and science. The greatest music of the ages was written for the church. The artwork of the centuries was essentially religious. Architecture spawned the great cathedrals around the world, built on the backs of, and with the food taken from the mouths of the poor. Scientists too were a product of the church. Although many of them could not reconcile their findings with scripture or a church’s inerrant beliefs, they tried. But the rub is, those scientists were routinely attacked by their churches, excommunicated, silenced, their work unpublished in their lifetime, laughed at, scorned, sometimes killed for discovering truths the church was centuries away from accepting. So it was with Copernicus or Galileo both of whom insisted that the earth was not the center of the universe, but indeed a small planet orbiting the sun. Galileo in 1610 was put on trial for those beliefs which were upheld in the Catholic Church for another 350 years until in 1992 Pope John Paul II said Galileo was right. Darwin’s Origin of the Species countered the Biblical creation myths and so endangered his life’s work. John Scopes a substitute teacher in Tennessee was put on trial for allegedly teaching anti-creation content in his classes leading to the famous William Jennings Bryant—Clarence Darrow debate. The church has not always or often been a source of reason. It has led some churches to contrast science vs faith, inquiry vs certitude, empirical thinking vs. dogmatic thinking, educated-thinking vs. 3000 year old precepts of Biblical inerrancy.

And so we come to the present era when there is not only within the church but society at large a debunking of intelligence and a promoting of ignorance. Perhaps It is not sold as such, but it doesn’t take much to see that it is true. Just quickly let me point out a few ways:

Global warming, which is indisputable is still being pawned off as non-existent, or simply a recurring pattern of weather that has happened through the centuries

Obesity: I saw a VA doctor last week who told me one of his interns did a study of his patients regarding obesity. Twenty years ago he has one obese patient in 2 weeks. This year two-thirds of his patients are obese, despite all the information on it.

Voting according to Party this means if your family votes Republican you do, regardless. You may have a skunk for a candidate or the Democrats for a change have a true leader and visionary, but You are a Republican.

Congressional Voting: Also along party lines. Local legislators vote against things that would strongly help their district, because that is how the party expects them to vote. National congress persons vote to hurt the other party rather than improve America.

Dehumanizing: Demonizing Muslims, systemically excluding blacks, Hispanics or Native Americans from the political process and instead incarcerating them for long sentences for minor crimes.

Disparaging Education: There is a strong anti-intellectual fervor inspired by the right wing, that makes light of what is being taught in our schools, seeks the elimination of public schools in favor of charter schools, the charters of which they can write, the non-necessity of higher education despite everything we know about STEM jobs being higher paid, and more in need, and more valuable to the nation as well as what a “liberal” education does to encourage thinking.

David Brooks says there is another issue here. We have long ago lost the bell curve in which a handful of students got A's and the majority B's & C's. Now an A is the vogue. We used to teach our children humility and diligence. Now we tell children that they are gifted without developing gifts, that they can do or be anything, without asking of them a full investment in such a course.

Fossil Fuels: Automobile manufacturers have long been able to produce cars that would greatly decrease or eliminate the need for fossil fuels, as have home builders, but we continue to fill our skies with CO2, clog our roadways and our lungs with its poison. When gas got cheaper we drove more and auto manufacturers came out with big cars again. And in the interest of ignorance we approve.

Health Care: We know, though seldom acknowledge, that we are the only first world country without national health care, and that it would cost less of our GDP to have it, and yet there are dozens of bills seeking to eliminate Obama care which does even less than half the job.

Civil Rights: Decreasing voter rights, shrinking eligible voters, locking minorities into slum areas, with poorer schools, fewer jobs, less health care, while all the time deploring crime, wishing for more workers in the workforce, and greater family values.

We have promoted ignorance and dumbing down instead of intelligent thinking. TV adds to this if we watch instead of read. Texting tends to limit our language skills and make a shorthand of them when language is the heart of intelligent thought. To create a sentence is a powerful thing. To create a story or a poem or a memoir is to be more fully alive. Email replaces the human contact of letter writing and we are the poorer for it.

One more thing here. We have become a nation of fear. Fear is sold us by politicians: be afraid of immigrants, of people of color, of ISIS, of weather (storm-tracker), of intruders (buy more guns and security systems), or terrorist acts (though it is far, far more dangerous to drive). And do you know why fear sells? Because we are afraid of what is different and of what we do not understand. In other words, ignorance produces and promulgates fear. If we are kept ignorant we will always be more afraid.

Now what can we, as a thinking, reasoning, rational church, do to combat ignorance and promote a world where science and art are part and parcel of religion and of positive everyday life? How can we make “military intelligence” something more than an oxymoron. In this month's Atlantic there was a long article about Obama's presidency, focusing on his dealings with Syria. He told Assad that should he

use chemical weapons it was a red line that would be met with a military response. And Assad did use chemical weapons and we prepared to respond with missile and perhaps troops. But Obama changed his mind to the chagrin of many of his advisors including Hillary Clinton. Yet, within a few weeks, negotiating with Russia, the chemical weapons were removed without military intervention. This is still seen as weakness by Washington standards, but Obama considers it his finest hour, the hour when he became his own man, broke with tradition to do something that had an even better result. How can we break through expected responses to more powerful, and profound thinking in the world close at hand?

We can use the arts to do this. Our music, and quilting, and painting, and poetry and writing, or sharing of books, our sculpting and pottery all are ways of promoting a new and better culture. Our Ugrouops take us beyond our churches four walls or existing membership to do it. We can let our voices be heard when overhearing some unthinking platitudes about politics or race, war or caring for the earth. We can speak to strengthening STEM classes in our schools, invite scientists to put on workshops here that go beyond gadgets to environmental change, saving the earth, exploring our options as a people moving forward in history instead of looking over our shoulders to a time that can no longer exist.

We can be sure we do not water down our message unwittingly, because of this age of ignorance in which we live. There are millions of people who are aligned with this view, but silent, isolated, intimidated and feeling the pain of the times. They talk of moving to Canada, when the talk ought to be one of transforming the United States. Admittedly, this is hard work. Certainly we are not sure of our next step, where to take it, will it be right, will it lead to a positive outcome?

In the past weeks we have made a decision as a church to purchase the property next door. It is an attempt to solidify and increase our presence as a church, to provide better educational space for children and adults, to provide quiet space for contemplation without which change will not happen, to provide safe, off-street parking, land for future expansion, new forms of ministry just emerging. On the other hand it reduces our cash reserves, may limit somewhat our Empowerment Grants, delays work on solar panels, requires deeper giving on the part of the congregation and is not guaranteed to succeed. But it is movement with the best of intentions and emulates the way forward for a thinking people engaging the world. We may be wrong, the future will tell us, but we are not going to be stuck in the past. And here I'm not talking of the new property, but of our theological thrust. We differ from traditional churches in that our thrust is forward, not back to the Bible or its age.

And of course the end is right action. David Brooks in his new book **The Road to Character** says that right behavior rewires the brain. If we would be an effective church our right behavior must continually rewire our brains to live in this complex time. On the other hand, poor behavior also rewires the brain. The Fargo Forum this week had the story of a young man on trial for a murder he says he did not commit. A few years ago he came to Fergus Falls to play football at the Community College. After that he drifted to Fargo, fell in with bad company, did alcohol and drugs, and stole to support his habit all of which, as a still bright young man, he admits. He says he made bad decisions, bad choices and is paying the price---as do we all, as does our nation, when we take easy answers, as when we let others set the agenda for our lives, as when we are silent when we ought to speak, or absent when we ought to act.

Freud says that when life, as we find it is too hard for us we find auxiliary measures to keep us from facing what must be faced:

1. Powerful deflectors, to make light of our miseries—deny their existence (global warming)

2. Substitutive satisfactions to diminish it (sports, or travel or anything to take our minds off reality)
3. Intoxicating substances to make us insensitive

Let's conclude as we began, with Goethe: **"He who possesses science and art also has religion; but he who possesses neither of those two, let him have religion."** Let it be our religion to think and create through science and the arts, and let us find ways to help those well-meaning churches and people who have only religion intersperse their thinking, their theology and their churches with science and art as well. And we shall grow the better as a world for it.