

Unitarian Church of Underwood March, 2012 Newsletter

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

Coming Up In March

Sunday Morning Services Begin at 10:30

March 4 – Rev. Art Johnson – Edvard Munch

March 11 – Readers Theater, organized by Sandy Barnhouse, will present a play about Margaret Sanger who is the founder of Planned Parenthood

March 18 – Joseph Demasi – Music Program

March 25 – Rev. Laurie Bushbaum – What Is Your Mississippi?

Sunday Morning Meetings

March 4, 9:15 – Adult RE

March 11, 9:30 – Green Group

March 18, 9:15 – Writing as Spiritual Practice

March 25, 9:15 – Adult Forum Regarding the Marriage Amendment

Children's RE will meet during the Sunday Service

Rev. Laurie Bushbaum will be holding an informal meeting after coffee

Winter Weather Related Announcements

Weather related announcements regarding church services and events will be on Lakes Radio Family of Stations – 103.3, 96.5, 99.5 FM and 1020, 1250 AM or online at www.lakesradio.net under "News;" KSAX TV Alexandria, MN or online at KSAX.com under "Weather;" or call the church voicemail.

Discussion with Reverend Laurie Bushbaum

Those who are passionate about creating and supporting a healthy and vibrant congregation are invited to share a pot luck dinner with the Rev. Laurie Bushbaum. We will meet at Ron and Barbara's house on Saturday, March 24th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Join an informal discussion about our church and enjoy shared food and visiting. You must sign up as space is limited

To sign up, call Ron & Barbara Graham at: 218-739-5669 or email Ron at: universeron@hotmail.com. Drinks and dinnerware provided. Note: Rev. Bushbaum will be speaking on March 25th and will hold an informal meeting after refreshments. We are thrilled to be having her back and want to take full advantage of her time here.

Adult Forum

On Sunday, March 25th at 9:15 there will be an adult forum regarding the proposed amendment to the constitution that would ban same-sex marriages in the State of Minnesota. This is a time to learn more about the marriage amendment, what is happening in the state to defeat the amendment, as well as, what you can do to help the cause. We will be voting at the Annual Meeting on April 15th whether or not we should join many other churches across the state in passing a resolution that opposes this amendment. If you have any questions about the amendment, this forum is an opportunity for you to get some answers. For more information please contact Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com.

Social Justice Committee

The Marriage Amendment Committee has been renamed and is now called the Social Justice Committee. As you may know the Marriage Amendment Committee was formed to address the proposed amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that would define marriage as being between one man and one woman. This proposed amendment will be on the ballot in November 2012. The committee's name change was made at the February Board Meeting. There was a feeling that there should be a group of people who will continue to meet after the election, as there are and will be other social issues to address. The Social Justice Committee will still do work around the marriage amendment and will continue to meet the fourth Sunday of each month at 9:15 a.m. Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information contact Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com

Poetry Corner

1/21/2012

I thank you God most

For most of what I see and hear today is your indelible subtlety

A hint of somber art in the murmur and waft

Today my skies fill and this earth shivers with your presence

You are not silent, distant, or unaware as some claim

I feel your creative sense and chuckle as the trumpeting swans take flight from the river

Rational me with tears flowing at the crystalline reed frost along the stark bank

The hint of your infinite extraordinary presence in nature

Is really no hint at all...

Cindy Johnson - Author

Outwitted

He drew a circle that shut me out –

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But Love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle that took him in!

Edwin Markham, "Outwitted" The Shoes of Happiness (1915) (Universalist, poet, social reformer)

UU Quote

To be able to smile at our mistakes means that we have broken away from the tyranny of the past and are free to live for the future.

Frank O. Holmes, "My Heart Leaps Up: A Lenten Manual for 1956." (Unitarian and minister)

Member Profile

Ellen and I had the pleasure of visiting Sandy Barnhouse at her home, Barnhard Arts. We were greeted at the car door by Monterey Sand, Sandy's big yellow Labrador. Sandy showed us through her stunning high ceilinged art galleries and her well-lighted studio. The big rooms of the thoughtfully refurbished school building make a perfect backdrop for Sandy's life and work.

Sandy has three children – David, Jenny, and Artemis. David and his wife are both professors at Michigan State University, David in theoretical mathematics and his wife in statistics. They have two little girls. Jenny lives and works in Sartell. Artemis is a nurse and lives with her family, including her 8 year old son, in Maple Grove.

Sandy discovered while getting her M.A. that it's interesting to do a dozen paintings around a single idea. After graduate school at SCSU, she became employed as university publications editor, a high-stress job she held for 20 years, which made it difficult to continue painting until she arrived here. She was attracted to Barnhard School because she was realizing her love of painting under high ceilings, and brought the property in 2000. Five years ago she had her first show at MState, Fergus Falls, and another big show there 2 years ago. More recently she has been working on her book, which is in the finishing stages, and has painted to loosen up her mind in order to write. She is currently working on a series of landscapes. Next will come a series using the visual imagery of the ideas she has been writing about.

What she really wants people to know about her is her life with autism and Asperger's Syndrome. She wishes people would read up on the subject and know more about it to better understand her and her orientation to life. Recommendations she gives are Oliver Sacks' An Anthropologist on Mars, and Autism, by Uta Firth.

In addition to her activities at UCU, she has been a long time board member at Art of the Lake and has just become the board chairperson. She is a voracious reader and highly recommends Naomi Klein's The Shock Doctrine, and can't emphasize enough the importance of this book regarding Milton Friedman's theories and their impact on the world. She recommends anything by Thomas Hartman and is about to begin reading Metaphysics by Coomaraswamy.

On March 11, Sandy will present, with eight readers doing a "readers theatre" by Meg Bowman, the story of Margaret Sanger who was the founder of Planned Parenthood. An important topic and the timing couldn't be better. The presentation should provide much to think about and discuss together.

Steph Sanderson

CHILI DINNER - CHILI DINNER - CHILI DINNER
March 30th 5-7pm
Underwood Community Center

It's that time of the year again. Every spring for the last 10 or more years we have put on a chili dinner at the Underwood Community Center as a benefit for the Underwood Senior Dining Program. Due to pending governmental cuts in a variety of state programs, it is more important than ever to help this local program. Over the years, we have raised over \$12,000 for this program through this event, with an average of 150 people attending each year. This is a great way for everyone to get involved, either through ticket sales, food preparation, clean-up, or just showing up with friends for the three types of chili, breads, salad bar, and desserts. There will be sign-up sheets at church for volunteer shifts and desserts. Our goal is to presell all 200 tickets (of course you can pay at the door also). Tickets and posters will be available at the church for the next 4 Sundays or you can contact Ron Roller at rollerolson@gmail.com or JoAnn Larson at redswilds@gmail.com for more information.

Prairie Star District (PSD) to Explore War & Peace
PSD Annual Conference, April 13-15, 2012 in Bloomington, MN

As our country is engaged in war on the opposite side of the globe, all of us are affected by the enormous emotional and financial burden of conflict. Many of us have served in the military or have family or friends now serving. Others of us wonder if there are better ways to deal with conflicts. We invite you to join us for a deeper exploration of the costs of war, how to heal from it, and how we, as people of faith, can become instruments of peace in our everyday lives.

In addition to examining this profoundly moving theme, presented by two excellent speakers, you can benefit from workshops on a variety of topics, led by some of PSD's top talent.

It's not all serious, of course. Friday's opening event includes a banner parade and your very own UU "Homer Hanky." The evening will end with a jazz band and a cash bar. Saturday will close with a HUUtenanny presented by White Bear musicians.

Bring the family. Multiple activities will be available throughout the conference for children and youth. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow and enjoy meeting fellow UUs from our eight state area.

Registration deadline is March 14. Details and registration forms are online at: www.psduua.org/AnnualConference2012.

Nonviolent Peaceforce Workshop.

A workshop on the strategies and techniques used by the Nonviolent Peaceforce (an international peacekeeping group) was presented on February 5 at the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Sixteen people participated (11 UU members and 5 friends) in numerous role-playings and discussions on how to defuse a variety of conflict situations. The main strategy used throughout the workshop was CLARA, the primary tool used by the Nonviolent Peaceforce in its work internationally. CLARA is the process of Calming, Listening, Affirming, Responding/Repeating, and Adding/Asking. One interesting observation by a number of participants was the difficulty some people had with taking on a role that was directly opposed to their own belief, showing how hard it can be to put yourself in another's 'shoes', even in a role-playing exercise. It was also interesting to see that other participants really took on opposing roles with 'gusto'.

The presenter of the workshop was Adele Lennig, a NVPF volunteer from Minnetonka, MN, who has worked with the group in a variety of positions including organizational development and fundraising. The workshop was funded by a combination of participant donations and an Empowerment grant from the UU church.

Empowerment Grants for 2012

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is in its fifth year of the Empowerment Grant program. We are very fortunate to have significant invested funds that allow us to use interest monies to provide grants to other organizations in need. Over the last five years we have given over \$41,000 to a wide variety of causes (see list on bulletin board at church).

Empowerment Grants have been awarded for the year 2012. A grant committee meets yearly to review grant applications and make a recommendation to the church board of directors for approval.

Fergus Falls Food Shelf.....	\$1,000
Habitat for Humanity Annual Fundraising Dinner.....	750
Annual Chili Dinner for Senior Nutrition Program.....	1,000
Nonviolent Peaceforce Workshop.....	500
Someplace Safe.....	1,750
Underwood Three/Four Year Old Program.....	2,000
Total.....	\$7,000

Assistive Listening

We finally got our audio assistive listening system up and running! This system is designed to help hard of hearing people better hear and understand speech during the service.

The System Includes:

- 1 Base Station Transmitter
- 4 Belt Pack Receivers
- 4 In-Ear Headphones
- System Range: Up to 300' Line of Sight

We could have four people using the system at once. Just ask a service coordinator for a receiver and we will get you set up. Presently we are keeping them in the cabinet near the coffee that is for sale just outside the sanctuary door. They are in the second drawer down.

We are asking people to use the microphone when conducting the service so all could hear and partake in the service. This will allow the new system to work at it's best.

Any questions? Ask Dave McRoberts or Joann Larson.

UCU History

Taken from the May 11, 1979 issue of The Daily Journal, Fergus Falls, Minnesota:

Underwood Unitarian Church celebrates 90th anniversary

The Underwood Unitarian Church, one of only a few Unitarian churches in Minnesota, is celebrating its 90th anniversary. A special last Sunday recognized the milestone.

Founded by a group of men who were natives of Norway and had liberal ideas, it was organized Jan. 13, 1889 as "Den Fri Kristine Menighed of Underwood (the Free Christian Church of Underwood), at the home of Johan and Anna Kolstad. Guiding the organization were Kristopher Janson, Hans P. Bjorge and Otto Nilsby.

Janson, who was educated at Norway's greatest university, had lectured in America under the sponsorship of the American Lutheran Church and worked in Minnesota under the auspices of the American Unitarian Association and made six trips a year to Underwood from 1889 to 1890.

John Brauti became the first resident minister in 1891 and also served a fellowship in Fergus Falls. For the next 20 years there were two full-time ministers and others who served briefly. Oswald E. Helsing, a Dane, served as minister until 1928. Services had all been conducted in Norwegian and during his term they were alternated with services in English. John Flint served as minister for 10 years beginning in 1929. He had been a Lutheran minister at Bismarck and was fired because of his liberal theological preaching while he was in Alaska. During the 1930's he was active as county chairman of the Farmer Labor party.

The church structure, originally at Union Hall, was purchased at auction for \$300 in 1904 and a number of changes and improvements have been made over the years. The cemetery, Sunset Memorial Garden north of the church, dates back to 1890 when an acre of ground was purchased. Purchase of a parsonage next to the church was completed in 1929.

The period of 1940 to 1947 was a difficult time for the Underwood Unitarian Church. It was served from time to time by a few Unitarian ministers and ministers of churches in the area.

A field man for the Red River Presbytery in 1947 proposed an agreement for joint services with the Maine and Maplewood Presbyterian Churches. Twelve members who were intent and determined to change the church to Presbyterian left. Four of them were board members.

Ray Ewing of Staples and his wife, both ordained Congregational ministers, served the church from 1947 to 1954 when the Congregational Conference which supplied the Ewings, assigned the Rev. John Meyers of Maine to serve the church at Underwood. The congregation voted to discontinue his services in 1959.

Since 1960 the church has not had a minister but has been served by a number of visiting ministers and other speakers, usually on a twice-a-month basis. Members meet socially once a month and the Women's Alliance continues to function.

The history of the church is closely related to the Gronner family. John Gronner Sr. became an officer of the church in 1891 and altogether members of the family have held office for 128 years. John Gronner Jr. served as president for 24 years.

Unitarian Church of Underwood Website

The Unitarian Church of Underwood will have a new website. The new website will be located at www.ucofu.org. Although it may take a little time to get it completely finished, it will be operational no later than March 4th. This website will contain information regarding many aspects of the church and will be updated and revised frequently. If you have any questions you can contact Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com.

Paying Our Own Way +

The UCU Board expects to report a balanced financial position for this fiscal year, which ends on April 31st. While it appears we will not reach the \$32,000 goal for member contributions by April 31st in the 2011/12 budget, we do expect to end the fiscal year with a balance of income and expense. The main reasons are that heating costs have been lower than budgeted and the UCU Board has carefully controlled operating expenses. Thanks to all who contribute to helping our UCU thrive and grow.

All UCU members will receive a letter from the board in March asking for an estimate of how much they will be able to contribute toward the 2012/13 UCU operating budget. Your estimate will help the finance committee propose a realistic 2012/13 budget for congregational approval at our annual meeting in April. Your estimate will be kept confidential and will be a great help in budgeting income for next year. Thanks in advance for your help. – The Stewardship Team.

Submissions

Submissions for the April, 2012 UCU Newsletter should be given to Stephanie Sanderson at highlife@prtcl.com or Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com by March 25th.

Minutes of The January 22, 2012, Board Meeting Underwood Unitarian Church

Members present: Luke Anderson, Alisha Piekarski, Betsy Wells, Mary Worner, Dave McRoberts, Stephanie Sanderson, Wally Warhol, Ellen Eastby, and John Minge

Others in attendance: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson

The meeting was called to order by Luke Anderson (in the absence of Board Chair Kathy Kensinger) shortly after noon that the Church. the following items were discussed and the following actions were taken:

1. Agenda. Florence Thompson asked to be added to the Agenda. With that addition, the agenda was approved.
2. Minutes. The Minutes of the December 21, 2011, Board meeting were approved as presented. (Betsy/Dave)

3. Administrative Consultant's Report. JoAnn presented a written report. Wally said that a membership count is needed by February 1 for the purpose of determining what the membership dues of the Church are. (The dues per counted member are almost \$90 this year.) It was decided that this year's count should be increased to 55 members and that the count should be reviewed and adjusted annually with the goal of having the reported count eventually equaling the actual count so that annual dues are being paid for all members. (Wally/Betsy) There was some discussion of this issue before the vote on the motion.
4. Treasurer's Report. Wally passed out a "profit/loss statement" for December 2011. The investment income spiked in that month because of the receipt and deposit of the bulk of that income at the end of the year. Most of this income will go to empowerment grants. It was decided that \$7000 would be allocated for empowerment grants in 2012. (Wally/Mary) Of that amount, \$5312 comes from interest income.
5. Program Committee Report. Betsy gave a brief oral report on the activities of this Committee. Everything that needs to be done is getting done. The Committee continues to meet. Input from outside the Committee is always welcome.
6. Facilities Committee Report. Dave gave a brief oral report on the activities of this Committee. The Committee tries to meet monthly. the "hearing issue" – i.e., the extent to which some have difficulty hearing what goes on in the sanctuary – is being addressed. Dave Sanderson and a rep from the Fergus Falls Ares Center have been consulted. A few different sound systems are being looked at. Dave McRoberts thinks that a suitable sound system will cost about \$700. As such an expenditure has already been Board-approved, no action is now needed. Dave said that the system should be in place in a few weeks. Dave also mentioned that the downstairs carpet will be cleaned soon.
7. Outreach Committee. Ron Roller announced that the chili dinner is scheduled-at least tentatively-for March 30; A license from the State Department of Health is required. That will cost \$80. Ron also said that a "peace works" workshop is scheduled for February 5 and that participation will be limited to about 25 people. All of the money received from this workshop will be given to the Non-Violent peace Force. With regard to the empowerment grants. Wally said that eight applications for a total of \$12,500 are to be considered by the committee in the next few days.
8. Florence Thompson. Florence is a member of a "U Group" that wants to do something special for the Church. It has decided to sponsor a fairly formal dinner-presumably at the church. any money raised will be used to improve the acoustics of the basement of the church building. This event is likely to take place sometime in March. This activity was approved. (Stephanie/Mary)
9. Stewardship Committee. a written recommendation was received from this committee. It is recommending that the Gray money-about \$36,000-and the \$112,000 CD should put in the UU fund. This is NOT an endowment. It is only meant to be a better means of investing Church funds. A motion to approve the recommendation was made. (Mary/Stephanie) There was discussion regarding whether or not this should be done without some input from the congregation. The motion did not pass. It was decided-without

a vote- that congregational input should be solicited-possibly at the annual meeting.

10. Marriage Amendment. Ellen reported on this. It was decided that the Church should be added to a Minnesota LGBT list of “welcoming churches”- that is, or churches who are welcoming to those who are in relationships other than traditional marriage relationship.

11. Facilities Use Policy. Mary presented a proposed facilities use policy. It was approved as presented. (Betsy/Ellen)

12. Privacy Policy. A proposed privacy policy was presented to the Board. It was approved as presented. (Betsy/Wally)

13. Nominating Committee. there will be Board vacancies. The Board Chairperson is to form a nominating committee for nominations to fill those vacancies for the 2012-2013 Board year as well as anticipated vacancies in the Finance Committee.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting is February 15, 2012, at the Church in the evening.

Respectfully submitted,

John Minge Secretary