

Unitarian Church of Underwood May, 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 May

Sunday Services

May 6 – 10:30 - Mickie Edmonds – *Heart Smart*

May 13 – 10:30 - Bob Worner – *Earth Mother's*

May 20 – 10:30 - Abdisachid Nur and Abdirashid Bii Dool – *Somalia*

May 27 – 10:30 - Dale Johansen – *PTSD and Project New Hope*

Meetings

Sunday, May 6 – 9:15 a.m. – Adult R.E.

Wednesday, May 16 – 6:30 p.m. – Church Board Meeting

Sunday, May 20 – 9:15 a.m. – Writing AS Spiritual Practice

Sunday, May 27 – 9:15 a.m. – Social Justice Committee

Children's RE

May 20th Fundraiser

The Facilitator's U Group will be raising money to be used by the UU Service Committee in Somalia and, perhaps, a nonprofit assisting local Somalis. We will hear from two local Somalis during the 10:30 service. That will be followed by a silent auction and a lunch made by the U group from Somali recipes. Please come prepared to bid on the silent auction items, enjoy the lunch and to donate toward our \$500 goal if possible.

Sunday Services will start at 9:30 a.m. in June, July, and August.

More Information about Sunday Morning Programs

May 6

Mickie Edmonds will be talking about women and heart disease. Mickie and Barb Graham are Womenheart Champions, trained at Mayo Clinic at the 2011 Science and Leadership Symposium, sponsored by Womenheart. They plan to share some of what they learned.

May 13

Bob Worner – The talk, Earth Mothers, will revolve around the 7th principle - respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

May 20

Abdisachid Nuur has been in the US since August 2007. He graduated from Pelican Rapids High School in 2009, and has worked as a volunteer at the Luther Social Services Refugee office in Pelican Rapids since 2008. In 2011 he was hired as a senior refugee specialist at the office. He is presently going to M State in Fergus falls working on generals and business management.

Abdirashic Bixi Dool has been in the US since June of 2007. He also graduated in 2009 from Pelican Rapids High School. He worked at West Central Turkeys through-out high school and still graduated with honors. He is now attending M State to become a medical lab tech, while working for West Central Turkeys in quality control. He is married and has two children a 2 year old son and a baby daughter.

They will speak about life in Somalia, in the refugee camps and in the US and probably also speak some about conditions in Somalia now.

May 27

Dale Johansen will speak about his experience with PTSD, and his involvement with Project New Hope. Project New Hope is aimed at helping any combat veteran who has problems.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are need for the many committees here are the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Among these committees are the finance committee, program committee, Sunday speakers committee, facilities committee, outreach committee, social justice committee, nominations committee and stewardship committee. If you would like more information or are interested in serving on a committee please contact Ellen Eastby. There is also a need for service leaders, greeters, and people to bring treats. Please contact JoAnn if you are interested in one of those opportunities. Thank you!

Writing as Spiritual Practice

You are welcome to join us every third Sunday at 9:15 A.M. at the Unitarian Church of Underwood where we share what we have written during the preceding month. We express ourselves through the art of the written word, much like art of making music, painting, or sculpture. Words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs are our tools. We write alone at home and share with the group, only when we are ready. We do not critique one another's work unless it is requested.

If you've ever cried out, "Damn-it!" or "Wow!" you have something to write. You can narrate – tell what happened. You can emote -- share your sensory experience. You can interpret – give meaning to the event. You can blend all three into one piece of writing.

Our group has listened, sometimes in tears and sometimes with laughter, as members have shared deep personal struggles, thoughtful insights, fictional tales, and life memories. Through the art and craft of writing we wrestle with our demons, celebrate our angels, and explore our own identities. That is how writing becomes a spiritual practice. Join us. You'll be welcome.

Luke Anderson

Marriage Amendment

During the April 15th Annual Meeting UCU joined many other churches across the state by passing a resolution that states: *We oppose any amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that prohibits marriage for same-sex couples.* At the April 18th board meeting a motion was made and passed to join the coalition with Minnesotans United for All Families. We join over 300 organizations, churches, and businesses that are a part of that coalition. You can visit their website at www.mnunited.org. The Social Justice Committee meets the 4th Sunday of the month. Beginning May 27, we will meet at 9:15. Please join us.

History Liaison

The Prairie Star District (PSD) sent the following email to churches in the district: *The PSD History & Heritage Committee is looking for a volunteer from each congregation to serve as liaison to the H & H Committee on issues related to history. The History Liaison will collaborate with members of the H & H Committee about items of historical interest in your congregation. If needed, the committee will provide assistance and advice on how to collect, record, and present historical materials to your congregation and beyond.* Norman Kolstad was interested and is now the History Liaison from the Unitarian Church of Underwood. If we are lucky we might even get him to write an article for the newsletter now and then. Thank you Norman!

Member Profile:

When I called to make an appointment to interview **Bob Worner**, he was busy putting up a fence around the vegetable garden he and Mary plant every year. He says it's going to be a more manageable size this year, but by his description, it sounds plenty ambitious to me. Bob says it always feels good in spring to get out and set up the garden, but by fall he wishes he would have been less ambitious. But, of course, they are still going to raise 25 chickens again this summer.

Ellen and I met Bob and Mary for lunch and the conversation started around the excitement about the concerts they will be attending. Bob and Mary really enjoyed all the concerts, theatre and museums that they attended during their recent month in Minneapolis. They are planning quite a transition in their lives which over time includes selling their farmstead on West Lost Lake, finding a smaller place on a lake in the area, and finding a condo in Minneapolis for a change of scenery, especially during the winter months. That involves lots of downsizing, taking bags and bags of unused belongings to Goodwill, and shredding, shredding, shredding. Bob says that the downsizing process feels good, even invigorating, but, hard, too, as everything he touches has special memories.

Marguerite Andrews has a favorite interview question – “What one word or event changed everything?” Bob said that actually it was two words that changed everything – “I do”. Bob and Mary bought their farmstead in 1987 while they were still living in Fargo, and moved here in 1991. In 1992 Bob resigned from the Methodist Church he was pastoring and gave up his ordination. They attended many churches in the area without finding a “home”, but one Sunday they attended the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Susan Groff and Bonnie Wahlin were playing their wonderful piano/organ duets. The decision to make UCU home was instantaneous. And we are all surely glad that they came and stayed.

Bob has two daughters – Diane, the principal of a school in Loveland, CO; and Kris, living in Thornton, CO, is the Director of Operations for TGIF Colorado. Mary has two sons about the same age as Bob's daughters – Donovan and his wife, and children, in Seattle; and Merlin and family living in CA.

For fun, Bob likes to read English mysteries by authors such as Ann Perry, P.D. James, and Elizabeth George. Bob has a wide range of reading interests. He is currently reading John La Carre's Our Kind of Traitor and Sinclair Lewis' Main Street. He enjoys the satirical writing of Kurt Vonnegut. While in the ministry, Bob read one church related and one “for pleasure” book per week. Now he averages three books per month for pleasure, current issues, and personal growth. He is involved in a three reading groups for the study of “Great Books”, a small men's group, and an Atlantic Monthly study group.

Bob has three heroes: Martin Luther King, Jack Kennedy, and Jim Armstrong from the Methodist Church. And where does he get his great ideas for the regular talks he gives at UCU? From his reading, observations, and conversations, all of which enrich us, to our great benefit.

Bob doesn't consider himself a Christian, but he does consider himself a follower of Jesus. He appreciates that Jesus was about "doing the job" rather than just talking about it. He is glad that he can be what he is inside the Unitarian Church, a community that professes the inclusion of differing belief systems.

Thank you, Bob, for the many ways in which you minister to us – especially for grounding us in the principles of Unitarianism through your thought provoking talks to us. And thank you for marrying us, burying us, and helping to birth two great services in our church – the Celebrants Group and U Groups. You have our deep and lasting affection and appreciation. Come listen to Bob speak on May 13th.

Stephanie Sanderson

Ode to Joy

Our little wren, large bug in beak, pops into the birdhouse to feed his children. Pops out again, perches on a nearby branch and begins a song of joy – of the lusciousness of bugs – of the satisfaction of new children in the nest – of the beauties of the day. His song fills the air and lifts me up.

Several days earlier I observed him in the bird bath. The one and only to use the bird bath this season. My but it seemed to feel good. He ducked under, shook water in a marvelous spray, stretched his wings. Were he a lady, he would have applied powder! Finally, well spruced up, he found a nice perch and launched into song. Surely it is joy. What else could it be?

Some days later, while he is in the birdhouse with his children, a red squirrel launches an attack. Sneaks across the deck and climbs the grape vine in great stealth. Out pops our wren and mounts a counter attack. Chases the squirrel down the grape vine and up the pine tree, pecking all the way. Mission accomplished, and song once again. Is it joy this time? A song of success and prowess? I cannot tell the difference in song on these different occasions, but it does seem he punctuates all of life's moments with song and it is clearly NOT a song of sadness. Would that I were a wren.

This was written by Mickie Edmonds last summer while recovering from a broken pelvis. She was kind enough to share it with us.

UCU Board of Directors

At the Annual Meeting of UCU on April 15, 2012, several new members were elected to our Board of Directors: Donn Siems, Norm Kolstad, Dave Wass, Mary Anderson. Current board members who were re-elected for another term include Ellen Eastby and Alisha Piekarski. Congratulations and thank you for taking on this essential leadership role. Those remaining on the board to fulfill their terms are Mary Worner, John Minge, Dave McRoberts, and Luke Anderson.

On Wednesday, April 18, 2012, the Board met to elect their officers:

President: Ellen Eastby – eastofellen@hotmail.com or 218-731-0803

Vice-President: Donn Siems – dmsiems@arvig.net or 218-864-5002

Secretary: Norm Kolstad – 218-731-6790

Treasurer: David Wass – davidfwass@gmail.com or 218-826-6235

Ron Roller was appointed Assistant Treasurer to assist in accounting and the production of reports. Ron will also serve as a congregational member at large on the Finance Committee.

Leaving the board are Kathy Kensinger, who has just completed a year as president; Betsy Wells, who served as chair of the Program Committee; Wally Warhol, who served as treasurer for 6 years; and Stephanie Sanderson, serving as president for two years and co-chair of the Community Outreach Committee for the past year.

As a lay-led growing and dynamic congregation, the importance of strong leadership cannot be understated. Thank you for your dedication to the vision of this congregation. We look forward with you to the development our next big five year plan as we envision yet again what we are to be.

UU Quote

Resistance to oppression is often based on a love that leads us to value ourselves, and leads us to hope for more than the established cultural system is willing to grant ... such love is far more energizing than guilt, duty, or self-sacrifice. Love for others leads us to accept accountability (in contrast to feeling guilt) and motivates our search for ways to end our complicity with structures of oppression. Solidarity does not require self-sacrifice, but an enlargement of the self to include community with others.

Sharon Welch (Unitarian Universalist, author, ethicist) *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*

2012 UU Living Legacy Civil Rights Pilgrimage

The next UU Living Legacy Civil Rights Pilgrimage is scheduled for October 6-13, 2012, and registration is now open. This unique bus trip is much more than a Civil Rights history tour throughout Alabama and Mississippi. We will be visiting historic sites and meeting veterans of the Civil rights Movement, but will also be spending time together and with guests exploring what racism, white privilege, and barriers to equality look like today in Southern towns we visit – and in our own hometowns.

Beyond experiencing first-hand the civil rights legacy, our goal is to develop commitment, vision and mechanisms within our group to work on issues of race, injustice and inequality that still bedevil our congregations and our society. The Living Legacy Pilgrimage is hosted and organized by the Reverend Gordon Gibson and Judy Gibson; the Reverend Hope Johnson; the Reverend James Hobart; Janice Marie Johnson; Annette Marquis; and Donna Sequeira, and co-sponsored by the Southeast District of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

For more information and to register, please visit www.uulivinglegacy.org. Don't miss your chance to be on the bus! Register early – costs are discounted for those who register before May 15th.

UCU Website

The Unitarian Church of Underwood has a new website. The new address is www.ucofu.org

Facebook

Follow us on Facebook at Unitarian Church of Underwood.

Newsletter Submissions

If you have something you would like to submit for the June Newsletter, please get it to Stephanie Sanderson at highlife@prtel.com or Ellen Eastby at eastofellen@hotmail.com by May 25th. We are also looking for original writings from members of our congregation.

**MINUTES OF THE
MARCH 21, 2012, BOARD MEETING
UNDERWOOD UNITARIAN CHURCH**

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

Other in attendance: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson

The meeting was called to order by Board Chairperson Kathy Kensinger at 7 p.m.

Luke read "Time Being", a composition of his.

The following items were discussed and acted upon as indicated:

1. The Agenda was approved with the addition of the discussion of "new member meetings".
2. The Minutes of the February 2012 Board meeting were approved with the correction of the number of Board members who have reached their term limit. There are two such Board members, not six. (See paragraph 6 of the February Minutes.)
Dave/Stephanie
3. Treasurer's Report. Wally passed out a February 2012 profit/loss statement and a year-to-date—to March 17—profit/loss statement. There was very limited discussion, and the reports were filed for audit. Kathy mentioned that a proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year needs to be ready for the annual meeting in April.
4. Administrative Consultant's Report. JoAnn passed out a written report. Luke thanked JoAnn for her help with the pledge letter to go out to congregation members. Stephanie thanked JoAnn for her help with mailing the newsletter.
5. Facilities Committee Report. Dave reported on the activities of this committee. He and Sue Groff have met. There's not much to report on. Someone is coming to inspect the elevator soon. The basement carpet is to be cleaned soon. That may necessitate moving the piano. The wayside pulpit has fogged over recently – may have been a fluke. Betsy said that the thermostat clock may need to be reset. There was some discussion as to what expenses regarding the facilities should be included in the upcoming proposed budget. It was suggested that the cost of having the elevator – the lift – inspected may be going up significantly. Stephanie will get one of the Church's paintings covered with glass. Some shelving will be done in the alcove in the Church basement. A new bulletin board will be built and placed on the south wall as people enter the building. Finally, Dave indicated that they've been receiving positive feedback on the new sound system.
6. Stewardship Committee Report. Luke and Mary recommended that the Finance Committee have operational tasks and some fund management tasks. After considerable discussion, the following motion was made and seconded: That the

Finance Committee be made responsible for making recommendations to the Board regarding the management and investment of endowed and unendowed funds, that the Finance Committee establish an endowment fund, and that the Finance Committee be expanded to consist of 6 to 9 members, including the Executive Committee – all of the pending such amendments to the By-Laws as are necessary to make the contents of the motion consistent with our governing documents.

Mary/Betsy The motion passed. John is to prepare a proposed by-law amendment and get it to Kathy so that it can be put on the agenda of the upcoming Annual Meeting. Stephanie then reported that Rev. Laurie Bushbaum – a UU minister from Minneapolis – would be at the next Sunday morning service which is “new member Sunday”. Stephanie urged everyone who can attend to attend. Stephanie also indicated that the Grahams were having an event at their home the Saturday evening before that would include Rev. Bushbaum.

7. Nominating Committee. This Committee consists of Kathy, Ron Roller, Bob, and Susan. Mary Anderson has indicated a willingness to serve on this Committee as well.
8. Ellen said that we are not registered as a “welcoming congregation” (where gender ID makes no difference). She thinks that the Church should follow up on this and become such a congregation. She invites comments on the Church website regarding this topic.
9. The Annual Meeting is scheduled for April 15. This includes a potluck lunch. Ellen will prepare an anti-amendment resolution (regarding the proposed marriage amendment to the Minnesota Constitution), John will make sure that the minutes to last year’s annual meeting are ready, committee chairs are to prepare written reports regarding what’s been done over the past year, Luke is to talk about the five-year plan, the by-laws amendment is to be on the agenda, Ron Graham (or someone else if he’s not available) is to talk about U groups, and a proposed annual budget has to be ready to be presented and acted upon. There will be an Executive Committee meeting on March 28 to get a proposed budget roughed out. The full board will meet on April 1 to finalize the proposed budget.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted.

John Minge
Secretary