



Unitarian Church of Underwood May 2014 Newsletter

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people where our celebration of life and common search for meaning bind us together.

Coming Up in May

Sunday Morning Service Begins at 10:30 a.m.

May 4 – Pagan holiday celebration, including a congregational “Spiral Dance”

May 11 – Honoring Mothers

Norwegian/Scandinavian Treats in recognition of May 17 de Mai (Norwegian Constitution Day)

May 18 – Karen Hering “Writing to Wake the Soul”

May 25. UCU 125th Anniversary Celebration in Tribute to Members of the 20th Century

Reminder: Beginning June 1 through August 31, 2014 Sunday Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

More about May Sunday Services

May 4 - Early May, Beltane, May Day, the May Pole. Remember when we made flower baskets as children to celebrate the first of May? This custom is left over from western European paganism, which continues to exist in the shadows of our culture, in similar sweet expressions. To commemorate, Tere Mann will lead the congregation in a spiral dance, hopefully outside, if weather permits.

May 11 - Mother's Day. You are asked to look through those old family photos and find a good picture of your Mom. Bring it to church this Sunday, and place it up front around the podium. You're encouraged to bring self-standing framed photos, or find some way to prop it up for viewing. Those who are interested in sharing stories about their mothers are welcome to come to the podium for up to five minutes. Prepare ahead of time, if you like. But do bring a photo, even if you decide not to talk about your mother.

Norwegian treats after service – in recognition of UCU's Norwegian history, please plan to bring your favorite Norwegian or other Scandinavian food to share at after service coffee hour. That could be *cookies, lefsa, knickabrod, pickled herring, pickled beets, cheese - whatever*. Please see Diane Johnson to coordinate items and sign up on the treat sheet. Then Florence Thompson and Diane Johnson will be decking out the tables in Norwegian décor to celebrate Norwegian Day May 17 and UCU's Norwegian heritage.

May 18, 2014 – Karen Hering, "Seeing Venus by Day"

Ancient navigational maps suggest that some sailors long ago developed the ability to see Venus by day to help them find their way across new waters. What capacity of vision might we need today to navigate the challenging and uncharted waters of our own times? Karen will draw from her new book, *Writing to Wake the Soul*, to consider how exploration invites us to see the world with "pilgrim eyes," opening ourselves to both ancient wisdom and new perspective.

Rev. Karen Hering serves as consulting literary minister at Unity Church-Unitarian in St. Paul and is author of *Writing to Wake the Soul: opening the sacred conversation within*, named one of the "Best Spiritual Books of 2013." In her ministry of words, story and poetry, she leads guided writing sessions and retreats that engage writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for social action. www.karenhering.com

Afternoon Writing Workshop 1-3 p.m. for Writers and Non-Writers – see details below.

May 25, 2014 Recognition of Long Term Members – a celebration and panel presentation by members who came to UCU in the late 20th century. If not for their dedication and perseverance, the Unitarian Church of Underwood would likely not be celebrating our 125th year!!

Note: Prior to beginning of each Sunday service at 10:20 a.m., JoAnn Larson will issue a "Call to Gather" to alert folks to assemble in the sanctuary so that the service can start promptly.

Sunday Morning Meetings Begin at 9:15 a.m.

May 4 – 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Adult Religious Education
10:30 a.m Kids Religious Education

May 18 - 9:15-10:15 a.m. Spiritual Writing – Karen Hering, guest speaker, will informally chat with the writers attending.
10:30-11:30 Kids' Religious Education

Other Meetings:

May 14 - 12 Noon Facilities Committee

May 21 - 5:30 p.m. Speakers' Committee Meeting
6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

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

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas and articles for the Newsletter to: medmonds@arvig.net and/or maryanderson8380@msn.com. Feedback is appreciated.

Open Page Writing Session Sunday May 18 1–3 p.m. at Unitarian Church of Underwood

Pilgrimage into Creativity: seeing with pilgrim eyes

A pilgrimage is a journey we take on inward roads as well as outward ones, developing “pilgrim eyes” that see the world and our own lives with new vision. This guided writing session, *for writers and nonwriters alike*, is an invitation to see with pilgrim eyes. Literary minister and author Karen Hering will offer an afternoon of reflection and an experience of writing as a spiritual practice that one recent participant called, “sacred, safe and illuminating.” With poetry, stories, small objects and visual images, we’ll thoughtfully and playfully travel the unmapped landscape of creativity. No writing experience is necessary. This session can be a tool for breaking down writer’s block and a chance to consider the pilgrim’s journey taken in creative writing and creative living.

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The fee is \$10.00/pay at the door. Please bring a notebook to write in for the guided writing exercises.

For more information see: www.karenhering.com or www.ucofu.org or contact: Diane Johnson at: bigsurmoon@msn.com or Luke Anderson at: luka@arvig.net.

Don’t Forget Underwood Annual Garage Sales Saturday, June 7 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

UCU is joining the Underwood city wide garage sale again this year. Bring your articles to church for the UCU Garage Sale and some baked goods, homemade pickles, jellies, etc. for the Kids Religious Education Bake Sale, Friday, June 6, between 4 and 8 p.m. Then come back to shop and get your baked items Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Kris Warhol is coordinating the free will offering sale and JoAnn Larson is coordinating the bake sale. Items not sold can be picked up Sunday. This is a great way for the community to meet us, get some useful items, have some coffee and cookies and support our RE Kids in their charitable work to raise money for the Shan Refugee Children.

The Month That Was

April 6 - Athena Kildegaard who presented Ruth Stone: A Poet of Complex Simplicity.

This is National Poetry Month but "It should be all year." Poet Ruth Stone was born on June 8, 1915 and died Nov 19, 2011 at the age of 96. Her poems – those Athena read today, were all pretty short, but well written, and appreciated by this responsive audience.

Stone's second husband committed suicide in 1959, and her reaction shows up in much of her work. Walter had typed her poems and sent them into the world. Money from a big prize afforded them a farmhouse in Vermont. Topography was her second book. *Being Human* was one poem – "that wildest hope that we will meet beyond the grave." Another line – See what you missed by being dead! Second Hand Coat, another book. *Where I come from*. "Father put me in my mother." Book -Simplicity. Stone said her poems are love poems, all written to a dead man. Cheap

Question period: "Are poets born or can it be taught." Kildegaard said "yes."

April 13 - The Power of the Heart given by Stephanie Sanderson, fitting the Seventh UUA Principle. Seven years ago, Stephanie had given this talk to UCU. She was so impressed by the reaction of this group that "I came back the next Sunday and signed the (membership) book."

A mystery of head and heart is how we human beings are put together. For herself, she believes that her best contribution to human kind is to cultivate a place in her heart of peace and harmony. The brain relates concepts to one another where we judge and compare, but we have a natural tendency to negativity. Ego is a construct of the mind and emphasizes our separateness. Chatter goes on constantly in the brain, making it a noisy, busy place to develop a feeling of peace.

Heart is common in our language: heart felt, soft (or hard) heart, heart of the matter, change of heart, and 'I gave my whole heart'. We associate the heart with feelings of connectedness. The heart has its own intelligence and is considered to have its own "little brain in the heart." Electromagnetic field of the heart is 5000 times greater than the brain, and can be measured up to 15 feet away. We are sitting in each other's energy fields. She said that her rational brain loves all of this. "Don't you love it when science tells us what we knew all along?"

We can learn to bring our bodies and brains into physiologic coherence through the power of the heart. This state of being is important for the many ways it promotes health. The underlying premise for the research done at The Institute of HeartMath is that by using the power and intelligence of the heart we can influence our own health and well-being, and maybe even the well-being of those around us.

April 20 – Bob Worner, "A New World Order" looking at UU Principle 6. Bob loves Easter mainly because after being a Methodist minister for some years, it is the conclusion of a very busy week. The Bible gospels were written 40-80 years after the death of Jesus and have been embellished and adopted but the mythology adds beauty, mystery and wonder to what took

place. This event set a new world order and the disciples would be amazed at their influence on the world.

1) Not all New World Orders are good; 2) No New World Orders are totally good; 3) No New World Order can sustain itself. There were numerous new world orders over the course of Jewish history and the history of America. But peace, liberty, freedom from hunger, justice do not prevail. But each new world order brings value, makes a difference. Some years ago, women earned .58 to the \$1 and now it is .79/dollar. The Affordable Care Act is bringing health insurance to millions. There is danger in pessimism, hopelessness. We must realize that the shelf life of a new world order means that that order will not realize all its dreams.

Easter is a time that gives new hope. The disciples could not have imagined what they'd done or how they had failed. But there are "extra-ordinary ordinary" people out there and among us. Let it Happen- rejoice, positive vision gives us hope. Any order that addresses UU Principle 6 leads us to life.

April 27 – Back Pack Fundraising Brunch, Abbreviated Service and Annual Meeting

The Fergus Falls Afternoon U Group and helpers served a delicious breakfast to raise funds for the Backpack program. We collected \$467 in donations on Sunday. After expenses, the balance and \$500 from the Empowerment grant will be given to Otter Tail County United Way for this program. For more details see the U Group feature.

The choir led us in singing and Celebrants, Katy Olson and John Minge led the abbreviated services with responsive readings. Katy used Kahil Gibran's The Prophet to speak about works of common man. "Work is love made visible." The annual meeting followed the service. The board minutes will be in the June Newsletter.



HERITAGE – A TRIBUTE

Written and read at the March 9 Sunday Service by Diane Johnson

My Mom was fond of telling the tale of how she came to California from Minnesota as a young bride and “saw the palm trees and the mountains and the ocean” and thought she’d “died and gone to heaven.”

But she also liked to reminisce about teaching in a little school house in Rustad, Minnesota in the early 1930’s and “making \$65 a month and buying a fur coat and going to the World’s Fair in Chicago.” Imagine that! She also described the coat as having a “Fitch Collar.” All those years I assumed that she didn’t actually have a full-length mink, and that she must have had a stylish but perfectly nice wool coat with a fur collar. And Fitch, I believed, must have been a style of the times, named after a place or person – like Eton collar or Nehru jacket. Imagine my surprise when I googled “Fitch” to discover that it referred to POLECAT! Yes, polecat – which indeed, was the lower priced popular fur of the early 20th century, and so just perfect for the young teacher who makes \$65 a month and goes on a road trip with her chums to the World’s Fair.

My mother was always the Fashionista. Well into her nineties, whenever the J. Jill catalogue would arrive in the mail, she would say to me – “Look in here and see if there is anything that would look cute on me.” She prided herself on her vast collection of sweaters and earrings. But she was so much more.

I was certain that Mom would make it to 100 and get the congratulatory letter from the president. She almost did. When she died she had no illnesses, took no medication, and looked to be many years younger than 99. It’s true she was way ahead of the crowd when it came to healthy meals and natural supplements and at eighty she was still reveling in 2 mile brisk walks.

Growing up I watched and absorbed the lessons of a mother who was often glued to C-SPAN, following a senate hearing, noting the number of each bill, citing the politicians and knowing who voted for or against, and following through by phoning her representatives and taking petitions around the neighborhood.

And yet, for all her passions, I never remember her being angry, or sharply critical or holding a grudge. And in spite of being widowed at a very young age, and having to struggle financially for a time, she was inherently happy and positive, had more fun and enjoyed life – truly so from the depths of her being - more so, than anyone I have ever encountered.

I had a mother who would teach herself reflexology at eighty, continue to make the best Swedish meatballs, stand up for her principals, truly believe in angels, revel in everything Christmas or Easter, and always enjoy a nice glass of wine.

My heritage? I couldn’t be more blessed.

Remember to bring pictures and stories of your mom for the May 11th Service.

Gifts They Bring

A number of our current members still active with UCU first came to the church in the last century. We plan to give these long term members tribute at the May 25th Sunday Service. To give you some background:

Budd and Marguerite Andrews are the oldest and the longest attending of our current members. Marguerite first showed up sometime in 1973 and Budd joined her sometime after that when he “suited up one Sunday and I asked what he was doing. He said, ‘It didn't look like you were going to quit, so....’” He is almost as addicted as Marguerite, but “not as wordy.” Over the years, Marguerite held positions as board secretary and president and many times as a program chair. Marguerite’s favorite story is still first coming to hear John Cummins, of the First Universalist Church of Mpls. “I just wrote - and wrote. Everything I always thought was said right out loud in church!” “After that, if the church doors are open, I try to be there.”

Marguerite notes some of the changes she’s witnessed: “So many folks attending now were not in the 2004 Directory. I have wondered, why the big influx? They not only attend BUT WORK and TAKE BOARD POSITIONS. Yes, the 'no belief excluded' has to be a big difference, but the building! It is a welcoming place. Once from the street level to the sanctuary, there were 26 steps. Look at the difference!!” “My mother's arm shoots out of my sleeve when I greet people -her example as a people person.” And between Marguerite’s welcome and her notes, she still is our people’s person and we’re happy Bud comes along!!

Diana Ziesemer gives us her history: “The **Ziesemer Family** was very active in the Mankato Unitarian Fellowship prior to our move to Fergus Falls. I was excited to know another Unitarian fellowship was less than ten miles away.

Food has been a big observation of any gathering of members of UCU. When we arrived in 1978 the UCU usually had outside speakers come Saturday evenings and stay overnight with one of the church members. To honor the speaker another family would host a discussion party that evening. All members of UCU would pot luck appetizers that evening. Then on Sundays we would have coffee with homemade treats after the Sunday service. I miss these monthly Unitarian gatherings in each other's homes. Food continues to be an observation in the UCU today. I was so excited to celebrate with the fellowship the Indian curry dinner in December.

What positions have I not participated in at the Church since arriving in the fall of 1978 may be easier to answer. I strongly believe that the future of our society lies in the investments we make in our children. My biggest contribution to UCU was as the Children Religious Director from 1979 to 1985. The biggest challenge during that time was the inconsistency in attendance of children at any Sunday Service. Attendance could vary from two to twelve children attending with an age range from two years old to fourteen. Flexibility and dedication were required.

Sometime during that period of our history the children’s R.E. director became part of the UCU

board. Some money was directed towards scholarships for UCU children to attend Unitarian Youth Camp in Willmar, attendance at youth multi-church sleep overs in the Twin Cities, and Easter Egg Hunts. With these activities and many more we began to see an increase in attendance of school age and preteen ages. The Coming of Age celebration that Dianne Long was responsible for was the crowning day for me.

The most difficult and painful position I undertook was attempting to find musicians for our winter services in 1985-86. I was so unsuccessful that I resigned from the board and slowly quit coming to church. The negative comments from musicians and their parents about the UCU tore my soul apart. So now to listen to the beautiful music created by all the UCU musicians fills my heart each time I attend church services. I am so grateful to hear the musical instruments and voices on any given Sunday or at a special event like the workshop in November.

My favorite remembrance of UCU is the enthusiasm and the anticipation of the UCU children prior to the Easter Egg Hunt with more than a dozen children from ages 18 months to 15 years of age in attendance. The song "Morning Has Broken" will always lift my soul with joy and memories of all the UCU children who walked through the doors of our Church from 1978 through 1989." (Diana Ziesemer, 2014).

During his college days at St. Cloud, **Gerry Ziesemer** did some research in the college library about different religions in a search to find something that felt compatible to him and the Unitarian group in St. Cloud seemed to fit. Sometime in the 60's he was a member of the Mankato fellowship but often also attended the Unitarian Church in Hanska and in Willmar.

"When I moved to FF in 1978 I transferred my membership to Underwood. Marguerite often told people how surprised she was that this was printed on the front page of the FF Journal under the caption for our family picture for welcoming a new family to FF. Diane Long was our Welcome Lady visitor who took our picture and submitted it to the Journal. I came to FF to replace Dr. Jack Newberry at the Mental Health Center and it also turned out also at the UU Fellowship. After Jack's retirement he took up touring on a motorcycle and skiing in France and Colorado and other fun things.

When we arrived at UCU, it was a rather traditional rural Unitarian Church with a mostly secular Humanism philosophy like many or maybe most rural Midwestern Unitarian groups. Mental health professionals and college teachers were prominent in the leadership and orientation. During these traditional Unitarian days we met every other Sunday and one Sunday was always a Unitarian Minister and the other Sunday would be an imported speaker or one of our members. Betty Mills from Bismarck was one of our favorite speakers. Catherine Gronner played the piano or organ for us. Francis (Ellison) and a few other generous patrons would bankroll our imported Ministers and other emergency repairs needed to maintain our building. I often attended the Fargo Unitarian church during this time too. At one time we considered sharing a minister with them but decided against it and they ended up partnering with Bismarck to share their minister for a while.

Decades ago we also went through a sort of rather militant atheistic period where we had no music or anything that looked like a regular church service. This seemed to be a low point for our church in membership and programming. This overlapped and co-existed for a while with the traditional Unitarian services. The anti-church phase passed rather quickly when the anti-church people moved away or died. Then we began a slow evolution toward a Community liberal Christian church.”

Gerry served on the church board for several years and was on the Board when “we began planning how to make our church more handicap accessible. Like many of our members I also spoke several times in Underwood on various topics and when we exchanged speakers with Willmar.

I helped with some of the Religious Education activities we had back in 80's when we had about a dozen children in our RE program. Most were teens or pre-teens and many attended the UU summer camp down in Willmar area as well as other youth experiences for UU youth like sleepovers at our church and other churches we visited, and a weekend at Jack's cabin in Maplewood to go cross country skiing. Our church actively supported all these activities for the children.

I enjoyed teaching and helping at the UU youth summer camps and have fond memories of when our teens went through a “Coming of Age” ceremony (confirmation equivalent) or when younger ones went through the “Dedication” ceremony (Baptism equivalent) and when our daughter graduated from the UU Summer camp program after attending there for several years.

I also remember our joy when music returned to our church with Bonnie on the Organ and Susan on the Piano and have really appreciated the many excellent music performances we have had over the years.

I have also enjoyed attending services in several other Unitarian Churches in other cities. The oldest Unitarian Church in USA in Marblehead, Massachusetts and All Souls Unitarian Church in NYC, one of the largest in the world, were two of my favorite ones.”

Gerry certainly earns the title of a long term, 20th and 21st Century Unitarian Universalist!!

In 1982 **Ron Roller and Katy Olson** were invited to sing either by Marguerite or maybe the Longs. It was here they found a “focal center of progressive liberal people,” many of whom were their friends already. But not only do they have friends here, they keep inviting more of their friends to come. Their daughter **Cedar** was just a baby when they began and now Cedar has a one year old herself and their son, **Hazen** joins us periodically with special music.

Ron remembers the structure back then for the 20-25 members as “pretty loose.” Over the years, Ron has served on the Board, was Board Chair for several years, retired this year as chief

chili dinner maker and still heads up the Community Outreach Committee. Katy is a current Celebrant, service leader, music provider and steps into other duties as needed.

What Ron sees noteworthy now is that the church has grown and has more structure. The budget back then was about \$3000/year and now it is more than 10 x that at \$32,000/year. But "it is the people here that give the most meaning" to both Ron and Katy. As Ron and Katy continue to make and maintain friends, they'll be bringing them along too!

Susan Groff "had been eyeing the UCU since we moved to Underwood in 1977. We were attending another church but I was searching for a different spiritual experience. An uncle by marriage was Unitarian and considered the black sheep of the family which really intrigued me.

I think we began attending in 1982 but my first signature in the guestbook is 9/22/1985. I signed the membership book in April 1989 after Jim Gray had approached David at the service two weeks prior. I asked to sign the book and was told that that was the act that made me a member. There was no other formal service.

We have really become a lively and vibrant congregation in a lovely and well maintained building. When I came, Catherine Gronner had resigned as pianist/organist so after sitting through a couple services without music I decided to volunteer and have been playing ever since. We had a group of atheists who were opposed to our hymnals and frequently voiced their opinions to me but I continued since others wanted music in the service."

Susan has held numerous positions in the church including pianist, UCU board member for six years and board president four years, facilities committee, volunteer organizer for painting both the exterior and interior-not the new addition though. She holds the paid position of janitor and is a member of the BL U group.

Susan tells a couple of her wonderful memories: "We have three generations of our family that are members and all four of my granddaughters have been dedicated at the UCU by Bob Worner. He also officiated at both our daughters' weddings which couldn't be held at the church due to space.

My favorite community memory is that when we were painting the exterior of our church and restoring it from a very shabby appearance the local banker, Ron Shebeck, stopped and told us that when we finished the bank would host every volunteer at a dinner at the local café on Main Street in Underwood. It really meant that our church was being accepted in the community and that was definitely a high point."

And from **David Wass**: "We moved to a farm north of Underwood in 1977 and were members of a Methodist Church. That wasn't working for us so we finally left and started attending UCU and signed the book in 1989. I was brought up in a conservative Christian church which never felt right to me. It took a long time for me to change course but I am very comfortable now

being a Universalist. I have recently become aware of the fact that my Great Grandfather was a lifelong Universalist so now I am thinking I have inherited that from him.

One of my early memories of the UCU is coming into the church while Bill Holm was playing the Maple Leaf Rag and thinking this is where I belong. I didn't know who Bill Holm was before that.

I was on the building committee for the new addition and am currently the board treasurer. Susan is the janitor and she has put me in charge of mowing and hauling out the trash." David often gets linked to jobs Susan signs up for – the sign of a true partnership!!

Roger Thompson, having been a charter member of the Unitarian Church in Fargo back in the 50's before the merger with Universalism and charter member again in Auburn, California, found himself back in Underwood in the mid 80's. He thinks it is "super" that there is a religious liberal church in the community – "that's what is needed in the world when we have the freedom to follow our own individual insights – that liberates the individual from dogma and nebulous doctrine. To develop our own internal belief system is liberating an individual rather than subjugating the individual – doctrine and dogma might give one security but not freedom."

In the earlier years, Roger said for services every other Sunday, they had speakers and discussion but there was no formal structure – no candle lighting or singing – those have been important additions. His favorite change is having services every Sunday. He thinks having younger people coming into UCU is also a significant factor for our growth. Roger probably has the shortest distance to travel living on Main Street in Underwood, just a quick walk. He likes being one of the "ancient ones." And Roger credits our next elder for all she's given to UCU.

And that is Betsy Wells who came with her children, then 3 and 8 in September, 1988. They had moved to Fergus Falls from southern Minnesota where Betsy had attended the Hanska Unitarian Church. An elderly woman there told Betsy she thought there was a Unitarian church in Underwood. As Betsy also tells it, UCU services were held twice a month September through May. There were about 4 families having a large number of children between them so while a program went on upstairs, the families with their children gathered downstairs for Kids Religious Education. The other families Betsy named were the Ellisons, the Roller-Olsons, Maxwells and the Longs. Attendance upstairs was between 20-25 people.

Gradually, attendance grew. The next step was to hold services 4 Sundays/month (not the 5th Sunday though!) and one time/month in the summer. When it was decided a few years ago to move to year round services, Betsy was a bit concerned – she'd liked her summers off – and she wondered how we'd manage the number of extra speakers/musicians/treats, etc. but "somehow we've managed."

Betsy has had many roles over the years, member of the board, Speakers Committee chair, past kitchen coordinator, and numerous years of leading Kids Religious Education. But Betsy says she comes here for the people who she thinks “hold a similar view of the world.”

Bob and Mary Worner recall that they moved to the area in 1993 and for the first year shopped other churches trying to find their fit. Then Katy and Ron invited them to attend UCU and soon after they decided, “this is the one.” Soon Bob was invited to speak and he’s been doing so on a regular basis ever since. About a year after starting at UCU, the Worners had a meeting of some UCU members at their home to talk specifically about the future of the church. That was preliminary to our now formalized strategic planning.

The Worner’s favorite recollections are the associations they’ve made over the years with people who have come and gone. Mary recalls visits with the Greys, especially Blanche. And meeting Tim Hanley who had worked with the space program. Tim considered himself an atheist but attended every Sunday and especially liked the part of our chalice saying, “No disbelief excludes us here.” Besides Tim, when Mary headed up the committee for the new addition she got to know other members better, including Katy Sasseville and Sandy Barnhouse.

Bob & Mary note the changes of a lot more people with diverse interests and skills including our musicians and artists and going from 2 services for 9 months to year round – or from 18 to 52 services per year. No wonder Betsy was a little concerned!!

Mary also thinks a huge change occurred with our ability to do community outreach with the empowerment grants, a direct result again of the Ellison gift that Wally noted. Now UCU was involved with local non-profits, like Habitat for Humanity, with the city through the Annual Chili Dinner donation to the Meal Program; to the other churches, Sverdrup and Tingvald and others through the Thanksgiving event. Mary thinks that these community outreach efforts make UCU more connected and less isolated. And Mary and Bob have not only been leaders but hands-on participants in all of those programs.

After living in Denver and retiring, **Doris Veden** moved back to her home town area of Wadena. Doris had attended the 1st Universalist Church in Denver and searched the internet to find a UU church somewhere in the area – she still had to drive an hour to attend. When she started at UCU in 1994, she saw UCU as a dying church. She, at 60 years old, was the youngest upstairs. She remembers sparse and irregular attendance but over the years attendance has grown.

Doris served on the board and for a time arranged for speakers and formalized the process a bit. She also printed out from her personal computer a Sunday morning program. She remembers the minister from Hanska coming who introduced the chalice lighting. Our chalice saying comes from the church in Denver that Doris had attended and aren’t we just grateful that she brought it to us.

What Doris likes most about UCU is that “we didn’t use the G word very much.” Although the drive now is too much for Doris, she is a member of the Perham U Group and keeps informed through the notes and newsletters.

Stephen Nagle was asked to speak at the church in the early 1980's. “The topic was political although I don't remember exactly. I was surprised that I knew almost everyone attending that morning. I commented to Larry Parrish that I knew more people at the Unitarian Church than I knew at my own church. Larry responded ‘Perhaps you are going to the wrong church.’ I began attending regularly in the mid-1990s. Bob Worner was the attraction. I love listening to Bob Worner.”

Steve served as a fund-raiser for numerous anti-poverty efforts over the years, including Habitat for Humanity, food shelves, food distributions, work camps and a few others. “Although the Unitarian Church was the smallest church I ever solicited it was the most generous, even before the church received the inheritance. The social justice attitude of UU members has always impressed me.”

Steve served on the board, the grant committee, led one service and has spoken a number of times, including last month on the CAP program in Wadena - Otter Tail counties. He’s also one of the chief chefs of the chili dinner each year.

Stephen recalls: “The Sunday after Paul Wellstone died, everyone shared their memories and sorrow over the loss. Eventually the congregation chanted ‘WELLSTONE...ORGANIZE.’ I was very moved and remember thinking there was nowhere else on earth that I would have rather been on that sad day.”

We’re glad to have Steve any day!

Bonnie Bell came to UCU probably around 1994 invited by guess who? Katy Olson, of course! Bonnie did not grow up “church going” but did graduate from a Quaker High School. The first time she came to UCU, she just welled up with emotion – “it felt so sacred, the spiritual quiet, the music and the charm of the church.” It was her first time to be a member of any church and she knew “this was it the first day.”

Bonnie marvels at our building now compared to when she first came to what could have been a “spook house: steep, crumbling steps to enter that were especially scary when it was icy, dark paneling, old stairway, antique looking – not like the bright, beautiful church we have today.”

Bonnie was on the board during the time of the remodel, serving during her time as secretary and vice president. She still relishes that time participating in leadership and developing warm friendships. She was on the 1st strategic planning committee and wrote the 1st mission statement, helped hire the first administrative consultant (Kris), helped with Kids RE and commented on the fun sleepovers with parents and kids in that spooky old basement. Bonnie attended training for service leaders and found that role very fulfilling for herself here.

She is grateful for the support especially of Bob Worner through her struggles. "Bob was like a father to me." And she is grateful to Marguerite "who is just like a magnet pulling out your history." The best Easter for her and her kids was going to the Andrews' sugar bush for cooking the maple syrup and having an Easter egg hunt along the trails whether the eggs were under a fallen log or they saw the decorated blown out eggs hanging from one of the trees.

Bonnie is looking forward with joyful anticipation to August 29th when she and Lance plan to have their wedding here.

Kris and Wally Warhol came in 1998 after discovering the church by chance as they were walking by. Wally grew up Unitarian in Minneapolis and was amazed - no shocked! -that there was a UU church in such a small town. Kris was surprised too.

Then in 1999. Kris assumed duties as the first administrative consultant to do outreach and visit those unable to make it regularly to service. She took on more and more duties: inviting speakers, doing up programs, greeting, following up with folks attending irregularly, visiting the home bound, etc., until she stepped down in 2011. Many of the things we do today originated with Kris first doing them. It has taken many hands to fill the role that Kris once held. She is amazed at how the church has grown over the last couple years.

Both Kris and Wally think that the growth of the church in membership and influence in the community has been the biggest change. Both Warhols commented also on how back "then we met only twice a month and not at all in the summer." Wally states that "the Frances Ellison gift was a game changer." That bequest allowed for the remodeling of the church and the establishment of the Empowerment Grants. Kris recalls as her favorite memory how thrilling it was when, in July 2005, everyone gathered below and then proceeded together upstairs for the first time to the newly done upper level.

Wally's fondest memory is the funeral service sometime in 2005 for John Orcott, a local musician who'd he played with in the group, Island Time. Wally says there were so many people in attendance it was like the old verbiage "they were hanging from the rafters!" At least twelve musicians played for the service and there were 75-100 more musicians among the crowd of nearly 300 both inside and outside.

Wally served on the board and acted as treasurer for a number of years. Not as often as we wish but sometimes, he provides us special music. More, more!!

It should be noted that **Norm Kolstad** was confirmed back in 1964 when the church was under Congregational affiliation. And even as a youngster at the time, he could be counted as one of our elders!! **Norm and Ellen Eastby** are descendants of the early members.

If there are others who came last century, please let these editors know so we can follow up with YOUR story.

Editor's Note: It has been so fun and so informative collecting these stories. A common theme strikes me – “moved to the area” or “moved back to the area.” So many before us and among us lived other places and seemed to come back looking for a church home that would continue to expand and open us to life's experiences and explorations, not just settling for what thinking we grew up with. I reflect on the founders from Norway wanting something more in the way of religion – we are continuous seekers and explorers and that might be one of the many reasons that draw us to Unitarian Universalism principles.

For June, we will feature our summer members and friends, some of who also started attending last century.

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

Gardening Opportunities

Growing your own food — and having the resources and opportunity to do so — is powerful. That's why, this spring, we're asking you to **grow a food garden of your own and sponsor one for a family in Haiti!**

You can grow a garden as an individual, or as part of a family, youth group, small group ministry, congregation, or community group. You can do it whether you live in a city, suburb, or rural area. These gardens are small and built in containers, and they produce delicious food! UUSC provides how-to resources to take you through each step in the gardening process.

If 100 individuals and groups grow gardens, and you each raise \$250 or more for one family in Haiti to receive training and materials for their gardens, **you can help 100 Haitian families grow their own food and achieve food sovereignty and sustainability!**

Once Haitian families don't have to buy all their food, they are better able to cover other basic expenses, like school fees for their children. Food sustainability can be at the heart of thriving families and communities in Haiti — and **you can help make it happen! Sign up now.**

Chavannes Jean-Baptiste, a seminarian from a peasant family in Haiti, set out more than 40 years ago with the belief that peasant families could live sustainably and control their own futures. Informed by liberation theology and popular education, he studied agronomy and launched an organization called the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPP). Now, MPP has grown to

reach tens of thousands of peasants of rural Haiti, providing opportunities for people to shape their own lives. And sustainable food gardens have been an important part of their success.

Urban families in Haiti, learning of the success of these food gardens, are also eager to grow their own food — and that's where you come in! UUSC knows firsthand that when families are able to grow food, their whole lives can change. That's why we've set the goal of helping 100 urban families in Haiti start their own food gardens — with your support. [Sign up now to grow a food garden and sponsor one for a family in Haiti.](#) **Make our goal of 100 food gardens for 100 families a reality.**

I hope you will join UUSC and me in this important movement!

Sincerely,
Rev. Katherine Jesch

PS. You can also help a Haitian family start their garden by making a direct donation.

Rev. Katherine Jesch is a Unitarian Universalist community minister. She helped launch the Green Sanctuary program and was director of environmental ministry for the UU Ministry for Earth until 2009. She currently serves on the steering committee for the Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns in the Portland, Ore., area and on the leadership team for the Community for Earth at First Unitarian Church in Portland.

Closer to Home Gardening

One Vegetable, One Community is being done in Fergus Falls for the second year in a row. Last year we chose kale, this year beets. The project idea started in other communities in answer to the question "How can we increase access to fresh, healthy food for everyone in our community?" We want to see the vegetable of the year growing in small gardens, in containers on front porches, in front of businesses and gardens everywhere. We provide free started kits with three varieties of beets - Bull's Blood (with red foliage), Golden Burpee, and Chioggia (striped red and white).

Free kits can be picked up at the FF Library, the Kaddatz, Higher Grounds, The Spot, Meadow Farm Foods, City Bakery, and Calleys.

Along with the growing experience, there will be other events - children's art (with beet juice), a juried show at the Kaddatz, cafes featuring beets on their menu, and a "progressive dinner" around town with prizes for beet tasting.

There is a Facebook page - www.facebook.com/one.vegetable.one.community and a website with more recipes and ideas - www.veggieoftheyear.com. For more information, talk to Diane Johnson.

“Garden Song”

*(Composed by David Mollett and sung often by Pete Seeger
Sung by choir and us at the April 27 Sunday Service)*

Inch by inch, row by row,
Gonna make this garden grow,
All it takes is a rake and a hoe,
And a piece of fertile ground.

Inch by inch, row by row,
Someone bless these seeds I sow,
Someone warm them from below,
“Till the rain comes tumbling’ down.

Pullin’ weeds and pickin’ stones,
Man is made of dreams and bones,
Feel the need to grow my own,
‘Cause the time is close at hand.

Grain for grain, sun and rain,
Find my way in Nature’s chain,
Tune my body and my brain
To the music from the land.

Plant your rows straight and long,
Temper them with prayer and song,
Mother Earth will make you strong
If you give her loving care.

An old crow watching hungrily
From his perch in yonder tree,
In my garden I’m as free
As that feathered thief up there.



Don't forget to grow a little food for the soul!
On the Fence, watercolor, Mickie Edmonds

U Groups

The Fergus Falls Afternoon U-Group did the brunch for the Annual meeting April 27 as a means to fundraise for the Feeding Backpack program. Otter Tail County Family Services Collaborative and United Way coordinate this program for youth K-6, placing food in 320 backpacks of hungry kids each Friday in all of our school districts! The cost of a bag averages from \$3.80 -\$4.00 with an average cost of \$144/year/child. This program provides food for kids that might not otherwise have sufficient food at home during the week-end. We collected \$467 in donations, so after deducting expenses, the remainder plus the \$500 from the Empowerment grant will be given to Otter Tail County United Way for this program. We will give more detail on total donations after a final accounting. Thanks to Bob & Diane, Janell and all you others who helped, especially with clean-up. And thank you for giving so generously!!

For more information on the Backpack program, see: http://www.uwotc.com/Our_Impact.php
http://www.uwotc.com/Other_Programs.php

P.S. It was discovered that there are some parts missing to our 3 roasters so please inform Susan Groff or Heather Czeck if you might know their whereabouts.

For the Humane Society Fundraiser Dinner on April 12, David Wass, Ellen Eastby and Susan Groff and several 4-H members served steadily for two hours for the good crowd attending that helped meet the goal of raising \$10,000.

The Fergus Falls evening U group has been stuffing beet kits - 1000 of them! - with the seeds, growing instructions, recipes, and a list of events and projects. Kudos to our group and thanks to the Mierschs for lending their dining room.

If you are interested in helping on any of the U Group projects, please contact Connie Stigen at djstigen@gmail.com (218/731-1443) or Stephanie Sanderson at highlife@prtcl.com (218/736-2616). It is just one way to serve our communities.

April U Group Topic: Finding Courage

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." - Nelson Mandela

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." – Winston Churchill

"Courage is being scared to death...and saddling up anyway." – John Wayne

2013-1014

U Group Meets:

Fergus Falls Evening Group

2nd Tuesday of the Month - 7 p.m.

Home of John & Janelle Miersch

Co-Facilitators – Diane Johnson & Carole Mitchell

Fergus Falls Afternoon Group

3rd Thursday of the Month – 4:30 p.m.

Home of Diana Ziesemer

Co-Facilitators – Bonnie Bell & Tere Mann

Battle Lake Afternoon Group

4th Tuesday of the Month – 3:30 p.m.

Home of Ross & Mary Larson

Co-Facilitators – Bob Worner & Stephanie Sanderson

Perham Afternoon Group

2nd Thursday of the Month – 3:30 p.m.

Home of Mary Anderson

Co-Facilitators – Mary Anderson & Mary Worner

Note: Summer Members and Friends interested in a summer U Group, please contact Connie Stigen at djstigen@gmail.com (218/731-1443) or Stephanie Sanderson at highlife@prtcl.com (218/736-2616). So far at least three individuals have indicated interest.

UCU Board Minutes March 19, 2014

Attending: Dave Wass, John Miersch, Ellen Eastby, Mary Anderson, Dave McRoberts and Administrative Consultant, JoAnn Larson. Dave Sanderson had to leave for an emergency so we did not have a quorum. Absent: Mary Worner, Donn Siems, Norm Kolstad, Alisha Piekarski

Meeting called to order at 6:38 p.m. Unable to take official actions because no quorum but board covered the following:

Meditation/Reading – Dave Wass read from book Norman Borlaug, winner of Nobel Peace Prize for wheat, green revolution saving billions in lives. He lived similar life and time to Dave's father.

Treasurer's Report – need \$2600 each month to meet our annual \$32,000 budget. Running a little short. Fiscal year ends March 31.

Program Committee Report – meeting of persons involved in planning & implementing Sunday morning services. New "Call to Gather" to start service on time.

Outreach Committee Report – Six Empowerment Grants totaling \$5,500 brought to board for approval.

- Kinship for lunch buddies reading program \$1315
- Sticks & Strings Naturalist Archery program 555
- Underwood Schools 3-4 Year Old Program 1315
- Shan School for Refugees Scholarships 1315
- Habitat for Humanity 500
- Back Pack Program- food for kids weekends 500

*Board will have brief meeting following church Sunday 3/23 for vote to approve grants. Checks need to be issued by end of month for this fiscal year.

Facility Committee –

- Ditch cleaning – will fix a date in May for clean-up
- Inline Electric Boiler – will get bids for installation, large cost saving in heating/cooling at off-peak rates
- Shades for upstairs windows
- Damp chaser needed to keep piano better tuned – New one costs \$250. John Miersch will order and install one.
- Considering refinishing upstairs floor.

Planned Giving Report – Dave Sanderson had to leave so no report

Membership Committee Report – welcomed 4 new members, cards & contacts to those in need continue.

Old Business

Reminder of Annual Meeting April 27 – pre-service brunch, abbreviated service and then annual meeting

*Celebrants – applications from John Minge & Shannon Smith need board approval.

Handicap Accessible Parking – neither county nor city see any problem with allowing 2 spots in front of door to be designated for HA parking – Ellen will follow up.

125th Anniversary Plans – Plan for having progressive dinners My 18 will be postponed. Will honor “old timers” May 25. Mary Anderson contacted Jodi Schmidt, Underwood Harvest Festival coordinator to get UCU included in festivities Labor Day week-end.

New Business –

Call for church records/history – church records scattered between various members – idea to collect. Dave McRoberts suggested Otter Tail County Historical Society good place for our archives.

Possible Board Officers – give consideration to an executive office

Review for JoAnn – Ellen, Mary Anderson and UCU member to be named

Next Meetings:

Scheduled meeting to approve *empowerment grants and celebrants 3/23 after service

Short Board meeting 4/23 @ 6:30 (prior to 4/27 annual meeting) to approve budget and renewing of JoAnn’s contract.

Meeting ended at 7:55 p.m.

Mary Anderson for Norm Kolstad

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Board Meeting
Sunday, March 23, 2014**

Attending: Ellen Eastby, John Miersch, Dave Sanderson, Dave Wass, Dave McRoberts, Mary Anderson.

The board met on March 19 but did not have a quorum so decisions were postponed to this meeting.

Meeting called to order by Board Chair Ellen Eastby at 11:45 a.m.

The recommendations to award six Empowerment Grants for a total of \$5500.00 was approved (Wass/Sanderson).

Kinship Program of Fergus Falls.....\$1315
(Lunch Buddies Reading Program)

Sticks and Strings Naturalist program.....	555
(Prairie Wetlands Kids Archery program)	
Underwood School 3 and 4 Year-old program.....	1315
Shan Refugees Migrant School.....	1315
(Bernice Johnson's school in Thailand- scholarships & Funding for migrant children education).	
Habitat for Humanity.....	500
(Annual Fund-raising dinner)	
Feeding Backpack Program.....	500
(Food/Nutrition program for children-provides food items for weekends for at risk kids)	
Total.....	\$5500

The minutes of the February 19, 2014 meeting were approved as printed (Miersch/McRoberts).

The recommendation from the current Celebrants and the applications of John Minge and Shannon Smith to become new Celebrants were approved (Anderson/Sanderson).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anderson for Norman Kolstad, Secretary