



**Unitarian Church of Underwood
May 2015 Newsletter
www.ucofu.org**

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.

May 3 – Bob Worner- Living in a World of Pain, Principle #2- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

May 10 – Margaret Carignan, “Spiritual Journaling, A Pathway to One’s Inner Truth”

May 17 – Stefan Jonassen, “Life is Now Prevailing.” This day is Syttende Mai, the day when Norwegians celebrate their national constitution of 1814 and Americans of Norwegian ancestry celebrate their heritage. **Pot luck following service, maybe offering some traditional Norwegian foods??**

May 24 - Diane Johnson, "Agora" - the interdependent web of community within the farmers market. UU Principles # 6 & 7.

May 31 - Linda Winkler and Lydia Liu, Foreign Exchange Students, Principle #1, the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Note: Prior to beginning of service, at 10:20 a.m., there will be issued a “Call to Gather” to alert folks to assemble in the sanctuary so that the service can start promptly.

Upcoming Religious Education

May 3 - 9:15 a.m. Discussion of Emerson’s Essays 9:15 a.m. led by John Minge

May 3 - 10:30 a.m. Children’s Religious Education – No Teen’s Coming of Age but help with the younger kids by our teens would be appreciated during Kids RE and after for the Young Women’s Gathering (see below).

May 17 - 9:15 a.m. Adult RE Study of the Gospel of John led by Bob Worner.

Adult and Children’s Religious Education will not meet during the summer months but will resume again in September. Beginning June 7-August 30, Sunday Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

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Other Meetings @ church:

May 20 - 5:30 p.m. Speakers Committee

6:30 p.m. Board Meeting

May 27 – 5:30-7:30 Membership Committee

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

More about May Speakers

May 3 – Bob Worner, *Living in a World of Pain*, Principle #2- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. “Living in a World of Pain” a look at how suffering is deeply embedded in each life and how as a church we can stand together when it happens in our midst and in the world. Bob is using the 2nd UU Principle “justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

May 10 – Margaret Carignan, “Spiritual Journaling” - Spiritual writing, a pathway to one's inner truth, is a technique I learned right here about one year ago that has changed my approach to writing. I am a yoga instructor these days and I have had a busy and fulfilling life. The most important position that I have undertaken is one of being mother to five wonderful individuals (including Stan Carignan). I have a BS from Northern Michigan University and a MA from Loyola New Orleans. Teacher, Religious Education Director, Pastoral Associate are but three of the positions that I have enjoyed exploring on this wonderful journey we call life.”

Happy Mother’s Day!

May 17 – Stefan Jonassen, “Life is Now Prevailing” – In 1888, the Norwegian poet turned Unitarian minister, Kristofer Janson, was surprised to receive thirty subscriptions for his monthly magazine from the Underwood area alone. So he decided to take the train north from Minneapolis to explore this neighborhood, which seemed to be overflowing with religious liberals, relative to its size. It’s reported that 150 people came out to hear him speak, despite “drizzling rain and fearful muddy roads.” Not long afterward, a young farmer wrote to Janson to describe the difference his visit had made in the community, declaring that “life is now prevailing.” It’s Syttende Mai, the day when Norwegians celebrate their national constitution of 1814 and Americans of Norwegian ancestry celebrate their heritage. What better day, then, to celebrate the distinctive Norwegian contributions to Unitarian Universalism?

Rev. Stefan Jonasson, of Winnipeg, is the editor of Lögberg-Heimskringla, the Icelandic community newspaper in North America. For nearly 24 years, he was a member of the professional staff of the Unitarian Universalist Association. He is a regular guest preacher in Underwood, having first spoken here in 1986.

Bring a dish to share for a Pot Luck following the service.

May 24 - Diane Johnson, UCU Member and Organizer of the Fergus Falls Farmers Market will talk about the UU MARKET PROGRAM, “**Agora**” focusing on the interdependent web of community within the farmers market (UU Principle # 6 & 7). Now in its fourth season, the Fergus Falls Farmers Market will be expanding its focus and function in the future. The four goals governing its development have been:

1. To provide a place to purchase local, healthy food;

2. To maintain a venue for local growers and artisans;
3. To put money directly back into our community;
4. To minimize the ecological footprint by lessening the need to ship, warehouse and refrigerate goods across the country.

This year the market will also be adopting the model of the “Agora,” an ancient Greek concept which refers to “an assembly, a gathering place, a marketplace” where the community can come together to sell and shop, as well as share the artistic, spiritual and political life.

Each market day a local organization will be given a free space and canopy in order to promote their membership, special projects and fundraisers, and local musicians will be welcomed to perform. The “Agora” then, will relate to the sixth and seventh UU principles with a goal of community and respect for the interdependent web of all existence and of which we are a part.

May 31 - Linda Winkler (17) and Lydia Liu (15) , Foreign Exchange Students who, for the past school term, have attended Perham High School and lived with host mom, Mary Anderson. They will present the speeches they did for the speech contests: Linda: “Every Truth has Two Sides” based on extracts from the book, Empty Chairs by Annalee Woodstrom; Lydia: “I Come from Taiwan,” an original oratory based on Lydia’s frustration on how many thought her Chinese. The girls will also play special music as they have done at UCU several times: Linda on baritone saxophone and Lydia on violin and piano. Both girls were in the Perham Choir and Band. Linda also participated in jazz ensemble and Lydia helped with violin lessons with the middle school students and continued piano lessons. The ladies will sum up what this year has meant to them. They depart for their homes on June 6 so we will have special treats during coffee hour to say good-bye.

Song and Wine and Cheese

Our choir will sing some familiar hymns for special music on Sunday, May 10th. Anyone who enjoys singing is welcome to participate.

If you can be at one of two remaining rehearsals (or both), join us. The rehearsals will be:

Wednesday, May 6, at 7pm at Worner’s house (with wine and cheese)

Sunday, May 10th, at 10am at church preceding Sunday service

The hymns we will be singing in parts are 74, 21, and 282 from our hymnal and in unison, “All Things Bright and Beautiful.” Mary Worner will hand out the music for the last selection at the rehearsals.

For more information contact: maryworner@gmail.com or 218-826-6998.

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas and articles for the Newsletter to: maryanderson8380@msn.com. Editing is provided by Stephanie Sanderson and emailing/ mailing is provided by Ellen Eastby and JoAnn Larson. Mickie Edmonds provides one of her paintings each month for our appreciation! When you have photos of a UCU event and are willing to share, please forward them to Mary. Feedback is appreciated.

Handicap Accessible Parking

Please be aware that the curb immediately in front of the church entry has been painted blue to designate handicap accessible parking for those with handicap parking stickers. Please extend every courtesy to assure that persons in need are accommodated.

The Month That Was

April 5 - Ellen Eastby led the service and gave the address: **“What Do I Do with That? Making Easter Meaningful in a Unitarian Universalist Church.”**

Ellen in her 40+ hours of preparation for this talk started with a clear thought that morphed into something else. Garrison Keillor pokes fun at the UU and has even mentioned the UCU on a spoof on football. For Easter, UU's usually talk about the beauty of spring, according to Keillor, “not talk about ‘you know who.’”

Ellen checked the UUA website and there were many sources on Easter, but for UUs, it is complicated. 1986 Chicago Tribune ran a piece titled “Unitarians Making Peace with Easter.” Rev. Bill was quoted as saying that “for some...Easter is a difficult and perplexing holiday to observe, not unlike attending a party at which the guest of honor is someone you don't know.” UU columnist, Doug Muder, “I don't want to show up on Easter...I just don't know what I am celebrating.” UU's come to Easter Sunday service for many different reasons, which sometimes are conflicting.

Then Ellen thought what is meaningful to me, may not be what you want to hear. Why you come is serious and important. We have expectation when we come:

- 1) How we are treated – the seven principles set the bar high
- 2) We have expectations for Sunday speakers that relate to the 7 principles.

A Jewish couple with their 5 year old was attending a service where the author had played Jesus of the Passover week, ending in a tomb. The next week, the 5 year old saw him and said “There he is, Jesus.” The family did not return. We don't want anyone leaving UCU because of a topic of a single Sunday.

There is a song in our hymnal “Spirit of Life,” “roots hold me close, wings set me free.” Ellen looks back on her years in Christianity giving her “roots.” But she looks at UCU as giving her “wings.”

To bring meaning to Easter and other traditions, “be each other's community.” The celebration of Seder by a Jewish man formerly in our congregation was his community celebrating the

Jewish holiday with him. We don't have to believe the same but we can honor other's celebration of their belief.

It is us, ourselves, who make Easter meaningful. Open up our self to those messages. Take the past and make meaningful to us now – as we give, we gain.

April 12 - "Second Chance for Felons" presented by Sue Watlov Phillips, Executive Director of Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing (MICAH). She has worked for 44 years in social justice with emphasis on serving people at risk and/or experiencing homelessness and housing crisis. She developed one of the first transitional housing programs and prevention/rapid rehousing models in the country in the early 1980s, which has been a model for Local, State and Federal Legislation. Over the last 3 decades, she has helped to write and advocate for many of the Minnesota and Federal Laws passed to fund homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, transitional programs and affordable housing. She is President and CEO of Integrated Community Solutions, Inc.

Sue is a consultant, teacher, writer, and speaks at workshops, conferences and teaches Bible Studies. She has authored/co-authored several books and publications including: *Re-Covering in God: 40 Days Wrestling with God* (2013), *Bringing America HOME: Living Our Faith* (in process,) *Rapid Re-Housing Manual* (2010) *Foreclosure to Homelessness* (2008 and 2009) and Contributor to *Without Housing* (2010). (see <http://micah.org/home/micah-staff-revised>).

Sue's grandparents are from the Underwood area and her father grew up here. As Executive Director of MICAH, an interfaith social action agency working for affordable housing and state and Federal legislation on housing: "do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with God." They agree to disagree- are welcoming and treat others as ourselves and "our community."

Most of us have at some time in our life, rented and may wind up in assisted living. The largest group of homeless over the next years will be the elderly. Everyone needs a home. We need to design options so everyone has a place to call home. They added "accessible" to the criteria – because too many have criminal records, credit or prior rent issues. During the '60s-'70s, you could work part-time and afford housing. Now to afford housing, you need to earn \$12-\$15/hour.

The politicians will quote Scripture saying, "The poor are always with us." But Scripture goes on to say, "But wherever you are, you can do Good."

Felons who have served their time have difficulty obtaining a job, finding housing and 60,000 in Minnesota cannot vote. They cannot vote until "off paper" – off probation, parole.

25% of Minnesotans have a criminal history. So many laws, so much discrimination. 25% of African American males have a criminal record. Most, if not all of us, have committed some offense – we have just not been caught. But say, you had some drinks on top of the cold medication you were taking, were driving less than the speed limit and suddenly, had an accident and another party was injured. Because alcohol was involved, it is an automatic

felony. If you have no \$'s, no attorney, you are looking at huge fines and/or 4 years in jail. Poor people cannot afford an attorney, cannot afford the fines so they are "set up to stay stuck."

This situation could happen to anyone. It happened to Sue. She had drank, drove, had an accident, went through treatment at Hazelton, served time in jail, has had 3 ½ years of probation, will miss voting in 3 elections, and wrote the book: *Re-Covering in God: 40 Days Wrestling with God* (2013).

But being a felon is not the only problem hindering accessing housing. Minnesota is the 3rd worst state on discriminating on housing to persons of color. There are 18.6 million vacant units in the US that could be redeveloped for home ownership. Immigrants need training on home ownership: credit, how to budget, long-term home ownership.

To help support Housing Opportunities Made Equitable (HOME), call your Senators on the Senate Finance Committee regarding SF282. Ask them to please invest \$100 Million into HOME law to build and rehab homes, create jobs and expand our tax base for people of color to access mortgage financing and enhanced financial capacity training to increase successful homeownership. (See flyer insert in bulletin). Senator Ingebretson (R) 651/297-8063 or Representative Budd Nordess (Ways and Means Committee), 1-800-336-8017. Over the next years, it is expected that 40% of new homeowners will be non-white and we will live in more diverse neighborhoods. Those who move into their owned home will leave apartments open for others to move into. All good.

April 19th was Annual Meeting day. Breakfast was provided and served by the Perham U Group at 9:15 a.m. Then there was a short service beginning at 10:30 a.m. with three readings, special music provided by Mikkel Thompson, Anders Persson and Susan Groff and a hymn we sang together. The Annual Meeting immediately followed the service and was well attended. The annual reports are available on our website @ www.ucofu.org.

April 26 – Janell Miersch introduced Athena Kildegaard whose title was "Hunger for the World: A Contemplation of Poetry and Science." UU Principle # 7. Athena lives at Morris and is a professor at U Morris. She has published three books of poetry and is editor of the Lake Region Review. She is not Norwegian, nor is her husband. Arnie is Danish.

Athena read several thought provoking poems by various poets. Poets and scientists both find wonder in the world. If something happened to poetry right now, before nightfall there would be poetry. The same was said with science; it, too, would exist before night. Scientists and poets pay attention to the world. Both seek meaning of the world. Poets don't find conclusions but seem to be ok with the ambiguities. Scientists are eager to find the next question.

The worst sin is despair. It is the eighth deadly sin. The 8th virtue would be "wonder."

Todd F. Davis is a MN poet and has been read by Garrison Keillor on *Writer's Almanac*. Billy Collins could be called the "rock star of the poet world." His poem "Replacement" suggest that

even the death of a species makes room for more. The death of a person makes room for another person. "Face me up into the light."

There is a deep hunger for poetry. Poetry today is as rich as it could possibly be. On line journalists have immediate access to poetry, including Athena's and readers don't have to find or buy the book to read and enjoy poetry.

Children's Religious Education & Coming of Age for Teens

JoAnn Larson and Betsy Wells have coordinated the Religious Education program for children, meeting once a month with the date determined by the convenience for the majority of the families involved. There have been up to 17 children in attendance representing 10 families.

JoAnn, assisted by Alisha Piekarski and Chanda Brandt, worked with the younger kids (ages 1-6th grade). The monthly focus (per parent consensus), during the fall, 2014 to spring, 2015 has been exposure to the world religions represented by Charles Beck's piece, "Conglomerate of World Religions" that hangs at the front of the sanctuary. The children focused on one symbol per meeting and incorporated children's stories, art, food, sound, and play. Celebrating friendship Sunday mornings was also cultivated as we enjoyed our time together!

Betsy, along with John Minge worked with the teens. Most of their focus has been on developing a Coming of Age program. This program will continue in the next fiscal year.

Children's Religious Education will not meet in the summer but will resume again in September.

Regional Assembly April 18-19 @ Naperville, Illinois

Stan Carignan and Bob Worner were our delegates to the Regional Assembly held in Naperville, Illinois. Mary Worner also attended with them.

From Bob: "The conference featured great music, speakers and enthusiasm. The large group sessions packed the house and the breakout sessions permitted us opportunities to look at many (6 in all) different issues. I attended one on Worship and one on church growth. Mary went to one on Stewardship and one other. (Stan reports below). I found some great reading and am full of ideas for church consideration. It was nice for the three of us to have time together as well. Next year it looks like Minneapolis and we should promote it well."

From Stan: "The Mid America Regional Conference of the Unitarian Universalist Association was as interesting as I thought it would be. The theme for this year's convention was "The New Era of Unitarian Universalism". There were two key note speakers who worked in tandem to explore what this new era means to us as UU's. The Reverend Rosemary Bray McNatt is the President of Starr King School for Ministry in Berkeley, California. The Reverend Dr. Marlin

Lavanhar is the Senior Minister at All Souls Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the largest UU church in the United States. First, it was noted that Unitarianism is experiencing the same slow decline as the major conservative Protestant denominations. This decline is happening at a time when the younger generation are increasingly seeking “spiritual, but not religious” solutions and meaning in their lives. Our decline was contrasted with the growing evangelical movement in the United States that is characterized by modern music, singing, dancing and spirit filled worship that leaves people feeling good about themselves and gives them a distinct spiritual experience every week. There was a sense that we as UU’s need to embrace some of this new spirituality to attract a younger audience to remain viable as churches.

This theme and presentation left me skeptical and questioning. I do not want to be negative or turn into the old man who cannot change and screams at everyone to “get off my yard”. That being said, I came away feeling very good about our own little church and the good we do in the world. I think we are getting most things right and that we are headed in the right direction. I believe that we have some very real and fundamental beliefs that make us different and special, and that will continue to speak to people who need a spiritual home and don’t fit in other church groups. Maybe it doesn’t matter how we package our principles. If wrapping it with an experiential, emotional bow gives it greater appeal to younger people, then maybe we have to consider some change. There are not as many stoic, Norwegians farming the prairie as there used to be!

What we can say is that we as a congregation need to keep exploring how to grow both as a spiritual community and as an organization committed to social justice. Those have been and will continue to be our touch stones that will guide us into the future and ensure that the Unitarian Church of Underwood has another 125 years. Bob and Mary and I had several very substantive conversations about how we can realize this future. I am of the opinion that if we are serious about our mission, and I believe most of us are, then we need to operate like we are serious. To me, the UCU operates more like an all-volunteer club of well-meaning people, than a committed, organized, and highly effective vanguard whose mission is to transform the world we live in according to our Seven Principles. I think it may be time to begin a serious discussion within our church about hiring more staff. Does that mean a Minister? Does it mean a Program Coordinator? Does it mean full time, half time, quarter time? Can we share with Fargo? Can we share with a couple of other UU churches? I don’t know what the answer is, but I believe we need to look hard at more paid staff. The 20 – 30 people who constitute the corps of volunteers in our church are maxed out. Almost everyone I talk with who is on the Board, a committee, is a worship leader, or organizing one of our events says the same thing – they don’t have time for any additional commitments. So the only solution to grow or even survive, considering the age of our congregation, is to move forward and get help. As a new Board member, it will be one of my topics of interest.”

Update on Community Outreach

The annual **Chili Dinner** held March 27 netted over \$1200 for the Underwood Senior Nutrition Program. It was the work of many hands.



Doug & Betsy Wells Helping Prepare for the Chili Dinner

For the **Habitat for Humanity Fundraiser**, Bob Worner reports: “The Habitat for Humanity fundraiser was a good event. It was a difficult sell this year perhaps because of the change from fall to spring and perhaps because we needed to charge for tickets. The accounting system is different this year in that we counted only the event itself, not pledges made that came in later. We will have cleared somewhere between \$9-\$12,000 dollars with all bills paid. It leaves us short for the house we intend to build, but more funds are coming in daily and we’re on the way. Our church accounted for about 20 people at the dinner and at least seven families brought things for the silent auction. Nice work.”

The 2015-16 **Empowerment Grants** have been distributed for the total of \$9,000. There is reference to some of the grantees throughout this Newsletter and we will continue to report on the progress throughout the year.

**Invitation to a
Gathering of Younger Women of UCU
Following Sunday Service, May 3, 2015**

We have been thrilled to observe the numbers of younger people, many with families that are now attending the Unitarian Church of Underwood. We recognize that there are special opportunities and challenges to your years and we want to lend our spiritual community to you in support.

We invite you to attend a gathering of our younger women (not to exclude all the women of UCU young at heart) to hear about you and share with you some of our ideas for your further inclusion and your thoughts on how we can support you spiritually and emotionally. Please join us immediately following Sunday services, May 3 in the upstairs foyer with your coffee and

treats. Child care and kid treats will be provided by our teens and some fathers for the hour we meet. Please join us!!

New Member Invite

We celebrate the addition of new members twice a year, usually the 3rd Sunday in March and October. However, you can become a new member of UCU at any time by signing the silver book. Please see JoAnn Larson, Administrative Consultant, on becoming a member and the many ways you can become involved with our UCU community.

Invite to Summer U Group

The four regularly scheduled U groups have completed their seasonal series. If you are interested in trying out or continuing in a U Group, the U group facilitators will offer a summer U Group for June-July-August, to meet once monthly. The location will be dependent upon where those interested live so we can meet at a centralized, convenient location. Or if you are interested in a different time frame – say June through October (avoiding the Minnesota winter months), we'd entertain your ideas and interest in starting that group. Please contact Connie Stigen at dcstigen@gmail.com or phone: 218/731-1445 or Tere Mann at teremann@gmail.com or phone: 218/205-4931. More on U groups below.

New UCU Board Members Unitarian Church of Underwood 2015-16 Board of Directors

We have three new Board members: Lee Becker, Stan Carignan and Diane Johnson and three elected to 2nd terms: Mary Anderson, Norm Kolstad, and David Wass. Special thanks go to Ellen Eastby, Mary Worner and Donn Siems whose terms ended. Ellen served as President the last three years of her 2nd term, Mary Worner, served as Program Chair and Donn served as Vice President for a portion of his three year term. The new slate of officers will be selected by the Board members at the Board meeting, May 20.

In Memory of Melva Johnson

The family of Melva Johnson made a donation in her memory for which the UCU Board approved purchase of additional hymnals inscribed with Melva's name. We appreciate this remembrance.

If any of you are interested in ordering a hymnal of your own, please let JoAnn Larson know so she give you the price and include it in the order.



"Scilla" - Painting by Mickie Edmonds
"In your spring garden, RIGHT NOW! (Rejoice)"

FRAGILE AND ROOTED

See a blossom in your mind's eye
Allow it to fill the interior of your imagination.
Greater perfection of form in Nature cannot be imagined.
With inward gaze absorb each
Wondrous fluted petal.

Slide down its humid surface
Until you drop as the dew into its velvety core.
Immerse your senses in this safe
Chamber.

Slowly reverse the journey,
As you ascend the shaft toward
Wider light, turn your
Imagination around and around
To see its many facets.
Stored within the memory of all flowers.

Marvel that this creation, while utterly fragile-yet undaunted,
Boldly buds forth turning resolutely toward the sun.
We, too, shimmer with expectation, exuding our
Own illumination, color, pulse, and scent.

Vulnerable, still we venture our
Lives courageously toward hope
And light, at once fragile and rooted.

Carolyn S. Owen-Towle (Page 492 from Singing the Living Tradition)

New Offering Mindfulness Practice

Stanley Carignan and others have been taking about offering the opportunity for those interested to practice “Mindfulness.” Here is what Stan tells us about Mindfulness practice.

“Background on Mindfulness Practice in UUA

A quick Google search for “UU Mindfulness” displays a large number of UU congregations around the country that have incorporated Mindfulness as one of the practices in their congregations. It is wide spread and widely accepted by UU congregations. An informal look into our own congregation shows that we have at least a dozen members who practice on their own. While individual practice is essential for personal growth, it is also true that practicing as a group has benefits not accrued to the single practitioner. Just as people find joy and happiness in worshipping together, singing together, eating together, and a whole host of other things, shared silence can lead to deep and intimate relationships – the basis for a committed and welcoming community such as ours.

Mindfulness Practice and the Seven Principles

Mindfulness practice is one way for the members of UCU to encourage the spiritual growth of one another – one of the Seven Principles. In fact, the fruits of mindfulness practice include increased peace within us, greater compassion for ourselves and others, clarity into our own minds and lives, and finally, courage to act on our convictions. These are some of the reasons that Mindfulness practice has been so popular with UU folks. It also fits very well with our UU call for a free and responsible search for truth and meaning. In the Zen tradition of mindfulness, there is no doctrine to believe, there are no spiritual rituals that must be done, and there are no scriptures in which we would look to for answers. There is only the individual, sitting in silence, following their breath. That is it. Yet, this simple act, opens up the mind and like a stormy body of water that is now still, we can see into the depths of our being – it is there that we encounter our truth. It is there that we experience the truth of the interdependence of all existence. It is there that we understand the worth and dignity of all people and that the fight for peace, liberty, and justice for all becomes our own personal struggle.

The Way Forward

I would like to start a conversation with all those in our church who might be interested in beginning a group mindfulness practice. Initial feedback has been positive but cautious as many of us have very full lives and schedules. I would not encourage anyone who is already maxed out for social activities to add this to their schedule. Nor would I ever pressure anyone to try sitting meditation. Mindfulness, like many spiritual practices, takes a deeply personal commitment and is not for everyone. But, if you believe like Thomas Merton that “every moment, and every event, in every person’s life, plants something in their soul”, then you may have a desire to become aware of the thousands of seen and unseen spiritual seeds that are planted within each of us at every moment. This life of awareness naturally leads us to a greater compassion for others and a gratitude for our very lives as we are overwhelmed with our connectedness to the whole world and all of life around us.

One of the miracles of mindfulness is that as we slow down and sit in perfect contentment, we actually have more time as we have greater clarity into what is most important to us and where we want to put our precious time and effort. But, I would caution anyone who has never sat in silence – it is hard. It stands in complete opposition to the instant gratification we are used to in our society. The benefits do not come quickly and they cannot be demanded. The hardest part for new sitters is that you will come face to face with your deepest thoughts, your deepest emotions, your deepest memories, and your worst fears. Many people in our fast paced society have never had to confront themselves, and many are running from themselves. Many people may not even be aware that they are constantly busy to avoid being alone with themselves. Sitting can be extremely disturbing at first.

I hope that some of you will want to join me. I have been practicing mindfulness for twenty-five years on and off, sometimes more, sometimes less. I am not a teacher and do not intend to teach anyone how to sit. I can point interested people to some basic instructional books by reputable teachers such as Thich Nhat Hanh. I am simply looking for fellow sitters who want to extend their practice into a group practice – maybe just monthly at first, maybe once a week if a shared time can be identified. It doesn't cost anything to practice and no special equipment is needed, although many people who continue to practice, buy cushions designed specifically to sit on the floor.

I want to thank you for reading this and sharing it with those that may be interested! I will be moving forward with this idea as people show interest and the idea begins to show promise.”

To indicate interest or find out more, contact: Stanley.a.carignan@gmail.com or 218/841-2657.

Underwood Community Rummage Sales Coming June 6, 2015

Time to clean out your closets, do some of that downsizing, rid yourself of clutter and contribute your cast-off treasures to the UCU Rummage sale, part of the Underwood Community All City Wide Rummage Sales, scheduled for June 6 from 8 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We are counting on you to drop off your contributions of clean, saleable, household items Friday, June 5 from 4-7 p.m. If you want to help Kris Warhol in any capacity, she'd welcome the help. Contact Kris @ 218/826-7540 or kriswarhol17@hotmail.com.

Underwood Centennial Railroad Park Upgrade

Kris Warhol is serving on the community planning committee to upgrade the Underwood Centennial Park, a park that our UCU children often take advantage of and a project that just received UCU Empowerment Grant funds of \$570.00. Proceeds from the Battle Lake U Group breakfast April 26 and proceeds from the June 6 rummage sale noted above will also be contributed to this endeavor.

Mark Your Calendars & Save These Dates

August 12-16

Monarch Festival



This will be the first year of a new city-wide Monarch Festival to be held in Fergus Falls August 12-16. The Festival is being organized by UCU members Tere Mann and Deb Wallwork, with participation from Janelle Miersch and Diane Johnson and other UCU members/friends. Partial funding has been received through grants from Lake Region Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. The Monarch festival is also one of the recipients of a UCU Empowerment Grant.

We are planning a multidisciplinary arts festival, and our ultimate goal is to celebrate and promote awareness of Ottertail County's significance as both an incubator for butterflies, and as an important nectar stop for thousands of monarchs that pass through here in the Midwest migration. We hope to inspire efforts to build pollinator friendly habitat in our area, as well as to educate landowners and gardeners who want to move in that direction.

The kickoff for the festival was a workshop put on in April by Springboard for the Arts. The first talk by Michele Anderson from Springboard was about Festivals through history and how they serve to organize transformative energy in communities. Next, was a power point presentation Doug Wells who talked about the threats to monarchs and other pollinators, and especially how the wetland management program, CRP, and other government grassland habitat programs are critical for our pollinators in the Midwest corridor.

Sally Finzel followed that up with a talk about Native plants that attract and support butterflies. She also gave a short history of her greenhouse business, Morning Sky Greenery in Morris that she originally started with the two Daves, UCU member Dave McRoberts and David Fluegal. Helen Johansen followed with a talk about her passion for monarchs, explaining the monarch life cycle, the phenomenons of metamorphosis and migration, why Ottertail County matters, and the whys and hows of raising monarch butterflies indoors.

Teresa Jaskiewicz from Prairie Wetlands Learning Center gave us a tour of the Prairie Wetlands greenhouse, and explained how we have one of the few programs where school groups learn about growing native plants and actually contribute toward the Center's plant diversity. In the afternoon, there were various activities to spur the attendees to think about what art and

performance events we could create for the Festival to celebrate the monarch and raise awareness of our concerns about pollinators. The day was unanimously considered by everyone who attended to be a fascinating and rewarding experience.

It was clear that everyone involved was pumped for our own Monarch Festival and there was a lively discussion about activities we could do that are celebratory but also informative in making the Festival a memorable event.

Events of the festival already scheduled include visual and performance arts, children's activities, writers' readings, kite flying, presentations by local experts, and a music event at Art in the Park, Patty Kakac at Art in the Park (8/13), and guitarist Dean Magraw at the Center for the Arts (8/15).

The UCU Empowerment grant is funding Heart of the Beast puppeteer, Laurie Witzkowski, doing her show "The Way of the Monarch" with performances scheduled at the Fergus Falls Farmers Market and at another downtown location downtown August 15. It is specifically one to bring your kids/grandkids too.

We are working on possibly even having a parade! And Deb Wallwork is going to Premier her new documentary on the Monarchs!!

The Kaddatz Gallery has an open call for art for the Festival from 7/7-8/28. The deadline to get your pieces to the Gallery is June 15th. Anyone can submit work. The exhibit will be held throughout August, and the Gallery will host workshops on botanical art and printmaking and other activities. There will be a series of presentations at the Library on gardening for monarchs, raising monarchs, teaching with monarchs, photos of the Mexican sanctuaries, grassland management for pollinators, and whatever else we can make happen.

Tere Mann has some wonderful embroidered pins to offer you for a donation of \$20. For more information, please check out the facebook page Fergus Falls Monarch Festival, or our website www.monarchfestff.com as we will be updating them with all the events as they get scheduled and finalized. You can contact Tere Mann at 218/205-4931 or Deb Wallwork @651/216-4610 or dwallwork@mac.com or monarchfestff@gmail.com to volunteer or for further information. We'd love to have you join us!

August 29, 2015

Underwood Harvest Festival

Last year in celebration of our 125 years, the Unitarian Church of Underwood joined in a big way the Underwood Harvest Festival held the last week-end in August each year. No real plans have yet been made for this year's celebration but one idea we're floating is to have the RE Kids do a morning bake sale to raise funds for their activities and the Shan refugee children. People might also have some garden produce or things to donate in addition to baked goods, so we could sell some of those items too. In thinking ahead and knowing that now is the season, how about

you plant a little extra in your gardens so the kids have the fresh produce to sell? JoAnn Larson's idea – "Baked Goods and Garden Abundance Sale."

Unitarian Universalist Association
Off-site Registration for General Assembly
June 25, 26 and 27, 2015

Off-site registration is available for delegates and non-delegates.

[Off-site Registration \(for delegates and non-delegates\)](#)

[More Information for Off-site Delegates](#)

Programs for Off-Site Registrants

Off-site registrants will be able watch live webcasts of nine workshops from General Assembly (GA) and type in questions to presenters.

Off-site registrants will be able to listen to the mini-assemblies on the proposed bylaw amendments and the proposed Statement of Conscience on Reproductive Justice. Delegates will be able to propose amendments.

Off-site registrants will have access to a chat room to build community and share ideas with other offsite registrants.

For complete information see: <http://www.uua.org/ga/registration/site-registration>

U Groups

As one of their church projects, the **Perham U Group** served breakfast on April 19 prior to the abbreviated service and Annual Meeting. The quiche, rolls and fruit were delicious!

For the second year in a row for their community project, **the Fergus Falls/Underwood Evening U Group** will be stuffing 1000 bags for the One Veg One Community project. "Stuffers" gathered at Diane Johnson's house over a number of days as they folded, taped, stuffed, tied - all the parts to getting the seed kits prepared for distribution.

The bags contained seeds, growing instructions, recipes, garden stakes and project ideas which will now be distributed for free and can be picked up at the FF Library, YMCA, Historical Museum, Chamber of Commerce and Meadow Farm Foods.

The idea behind the project is to promote fresh, healthy food and to rally the community around growing and cooking a single vegetable and then sharing their experiences. This year's choice is edamame, which in Japanese means "beans on a branch."

The **Battle Lake U Group** served a wonderful pancake, sausage, potato, fruit and juice brunch on April 26 following the Sunday service. The presence and working together of the Battle Lake U group members made it even more special. Proceeds collected will go to the Centennial Park upgrade.

Special thanks go to the U Groups Coordinators: Connie Stigen and Tere Mann, all of the U group facilitators, the hosts and participants. Each U group completed their community and church projects on a meaningful and timely basis and we declare the year a success!

If you wish to join a U Group, you are welcome at any time. Just contact Connie Stigen at dcstigen@gmail.com or phone: 218/731-1445 or Tere Mann at teremann@gmail.com or phone: 218/205-4931. Each U Group has a chair empty at each meeting to welcome a new member. The U Group Facilitators met April 27 and discussed the interest again for a summer U group or a change in months to meet. If interested or if you'd like more information, please contact Connie or Tere.

- Battle Lake Afternoon Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month beginning at 2:45 p.m. co-facilitated by Bob Worner and Joanne Cress or Kris Warhol at the home of Ross and Mary Larson
- Fergus Falls/Underwood Evening Group – 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. co-facilitated by Diane Johnson and Carole Mitchell at the home of Sandy Barnhouse (corner of Highways 1 and 35)
- Fergus Falls Afternoon Group – the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4:30-6:30 p.m. co-facilitated by Tere Mann and Bonnie (Bell) Albers at the home of Diana Ziesemer
- Perham Afternoon Group – the 2nd Thursday of each month co-facilitated by Mary Anderson and Mary Worner at the home of Mary Anderson.

April Topic: "Changed by the Church?"

"Church is not just about providing ecclesiastical services; hopefully, it does things not just for you, but to you. Religion is not just about giving and getting; it is not just about services rendered, it is about change." From *Consumer Religion* by Rev. Stephan Papa

And a true story that comes from Pat West, member of the Perham U Group: "A friend of my daughter, when she was 6 was asked by a grownup- 'So what religion are you?' She said 'I am a Unitarian Universalist.' The grown-up said 'What is that?' The girl thought for a moment and said, 'Well, I'm not sure, but I think it is for people who don't want to go to church anymore but they come for the cookies.'"

Unitarian Church of Underwood Approved Board Minutes for February 18, 2015

Board members present: Ellen Eastby, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Mary Worner, Donn Siems, Mary Anderson, Alisha Piekarski, David Wass, John Miersch, and Kris Warhol. Absent: none. Also present: Administrative Consultant JoAnn Larson.

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board Chair Ellen Eastby at 6:33 p.m.

Kris Warhol shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Warhol/Sanderson).

The minutes of the January 18, 2014 meeting were approved as corrected (Anderson/ Miersch).

Reports:

Treasurer: David Wass

Administrative Consultant: JoAnn Larson

Program Committee: Mary Worner

Outreach Committee: Ellen Eastby

Facilities Committee: John Miersch

Membership Committee: Mary Anderson

Fifty additional church directories will be ordered (Warhol/Sanderson).

Celebrants: Ellen Eastby

Foundation Advisory Committee: David Sanderson

Old Business: A resolution was introduced by John Miersch, supported by Mary Anderson, that the Unitarian Church of Underwood Board accepts the recommendation of the Foundation Advisory Committee to transfer the current value of the church's UUA investments to the UCU Foundation Endowment Fund from which interest will be withdrawn annually to fund Empowerment Grants; a final, deciding vote to implement will be taken after the 2015 UCU annual meeting. Voting for the resolution: Eastby, Warhol, Siems, Worner, Anderson, Sanderson, Wass, Miersch, Piekarski. Voting against: Kolstad. The resolution passed.

Tabled: Amazon Smile

Other topics: Safety task force report, snow removal, electric boiler, annual goals,

New Business:

Other topics: Administrative Consultant job performance review, budget requests.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Kolstad, secy.

Unitarian Church of Underwood
Approved Board Minutes for March 18, 2015

Board members present: Ellen Eastby, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Mary Anderson, David Wass, John Miersch, and Kris Warhol. Absent: Alisha Piekarski, Mary Worner, and Donn Siems. Also present: none

The meeting was called to order at the church by Board President Ellen Eastby at 6:36 p.m.

Ellen Eastby shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Warhol/Sanderson).

Approval of the minutes for the February 18, 2014 meeting was tabled.

Reports:

Treasurer: David Wass
Administrative Consultant: no report
Program Committee: no report
Outreach Committee: no report
Facilities Committee: John Miersch
Membership Committee: Mary Anderson
Celebrants: no report
Foundation Advisory Committee: no report

Old Business: Empowerment Grants totaling \$9,000 were awarded to nine groups (Anderson/Miersch): Underwood Pre-School, Underwood Centennial Park, Stand For Food, Opportunity Africa, Shan Refugees, Monarch Festival, Haiti Medical Mission, Nonviolent Peaceforce, and Habitat for Humanity. Church sponsorship of a biking fundraiser was approved (Anderson/Sanderson). Payment of \$2,000 to Duane Swenson for groundskeeper services was approved (Miersch/Warhol). Other topics: Safety Plan, Annual meeting.

New Business: none.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Kolstad, secy.

Unitarian Church of Underwood
Approved Board Minutes for March 31, 2015

Board members present: Ellen Eastby, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Mary Anderson, David Wass, John Miersch, Mary Worner, and Don Siems. Absent: Alisha Piekarski. Also present: Stan Carignan and Connie Stigan.

A special meeting was called to order at the church by Board President Ellen Eastby at 6:31 p.m.

The board action taken at the February 18, 2015 meeting regarding the UCU Foundation Endowment funding was rescinded (Miersch/Anderson).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Kolstad, secy.