



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



(Photo courtesy of Susan Groff, October 2015)

April 2016 Newsletter


Unitarian Church of Underwood

**206 North Main Street
Underwood**

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May 2016						
◀ April						June ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Adult RE 9:15 "Prophets" led by John Minge (LL) Child Care Talk: Bob Worner	2 AA 7 pm	3 Battle Lake U Group @ Susan & Dave's 3:00 pm Erhard/Fergus Falls U Group @ Carole Mitchell's 7 – 9 pm	4	5	6	7
8 U Kids & U Teens RE 10:30- 11:30 Talk – Missy Hermes	9 AA 7 pm	10 Fergus Falls U Group @ Tere Mann's 6:00 p.m.	11 Alexandria U Group 7 pm @ Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg Executive Bd 6 pm @ church	12 Perham U Group @ Louise Lovdahl's 3:30 pm	13	14
15 Mindfulness Sitting 9-10 am Child Care Presentation: MidEastern Women	16 AA 7 pm	17 Worship Committee 9:30 am @ Susan Groff's	18 Speakers Committee @ 5:30 pm @ church Board of Directors 6:30 pm @ church	19 Foundation Advisory Committee 5:30 pm @ church	20	21
22 Adult RE 9:15-10:15 am LL Children's RE – U Kids 10:30- 11:30 am Talk – Ashley Horan/Workshop Sunday School Picnic	23 AA 7 pm	24 U Group Facilitators @ 7 pm @ Connie Stigen's	25 Membership Committee 5:30 pm @ church Celebrants 5:30 pm @ Katy Olson's	26	27	28
29 Child Care Talk: – Sex Trafficking	30 Memorial Day 	31	Notes: Meeting dates should be sent by the 28 th of each month to be included in the next Newsletter to: maryanderson8380@msn.com . The Mindfulness sitting is the 3rd Sunday of each month from 9-10 a.m. Please do not schedule other meetings during that time as quiet is preferred.			

May 1: Bob Worner –“Gray Matter” – How the arts and sciences inform religion and spirituality.

May 8: Missy Hermes - “From Suds...”

May 15: Sandy Barnhouse + friends, “MidEastern Women”

May 2: Ashley Horan, Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance Executive Director – workshop

May 29: Talk topic – “Sex Trafficking”

The Month that Was

April 3 - Bob Worner’s talk, “Acquainted with Grief” was based on the Bible book of Job, and relates to UU Principle #2.

By a unanimous show of hands, it was evident that all of the attendees have dealt with grief. The book of Job in the Bible is a fictional story depicting Job. Job is a “good man” - an upstanding citizen, well to do man with a family, etc. Following a conversation between God and Satan, he loses everything, and becomes ill with a skin infection. Three friends appear to help him. They ask “What did you do wrong? (Implying that his ill fortune must have been caused by something he did). But, Job says that he didn’t do anything wrong and credits God for good and evil; “Blessed be God”. When he does discuss things with God, God says, “You are so small; why do I need to tell you/explain?”

Bob contrasted the Bible story of Job with “J.B.,” the play by Archibald MacLeish in which the character, Job, sits throughout on an ash heap. Two old men depict God and Satan. Job’s wife Sarah, who is not named in the Bible story, is a central character in the play and at the end, Job is left with the love (compassion) she shows him.

Through all of this, Job experiences the 3 aspects of the 2nd principle:

- Justice and equity – We all suffer; it is universal but unique to each of us
- Compassion – We gain compassion and empathy through our experiences

Finally, even though we don’t understand the justice and equity in situations, we can respond with compassion and love.

Bob doesn’t just write a great talk – he also keeps you mesmerized with his articulate characterizations of the story.

April 10 – Guest Speaker, John LaForge pointed out that it is rare to meet someone who is both a convicted felon and Eagle Scout. He is such a person. Since the 1980’s, John has worked for the elimination of the nuclear warheads that have been contained in 1000 sites in the Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Through civil disobedience, discussions, letters, serving jail

time for trespassing, etc., he has worked to raise awareness about the dangers of this. Beginning in 1962, with the rise of the Cold War these were created as a “deterrent”. In retrospect, there were many conflicts around the world that were not deterred.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of sites has dropped to about half. These have been updated periodically and their destructive power is beyond comprehension. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima was 15 kilotons. The ones in the “silo sites” are 300 kilotons each.

Not only are the bombs really dangerous, access to them is easy – by walking through fields, or climbing chain link fences. Several were probably underwater during the Minot flood of 2012, and many lie in the areas in which fracking is being used. Accidents are not likely, but the potential danger is great.

Many, both of civilian and military backgrounds, agree that nuclear weapons are redundant and unnecessary. They also were outlawed by the Nuremburg principles which were created to define what constitutes a war crime. Conventional weapons are adequate.

It would seem logical to get rid of these missile sites, as well as other nuclear weapons. However, sometimes/often those blocking removal of the missile sites have political and economic motivations.

Note: Full Text of John’s speech will be included in the UCU May Newsletter.

April 17 - Kris Warhol’s talk entitled “God, Religion, and Community” was very thoughtful and articulate. She began by asking us to remember back to when we first came to UCU, and when we felt like we belonged. Our church has been serving the community for 127 years. Each of us comes with our own interpretation of God; our unique searches for truth. We share a common search for meaning and peace. We are “religious” in that we each have faith, and we worship as we gather together weekly to speak and listen and share. The gifts of our church are found in each of us. Everyone is welcome. UCU is a place for renewal. And it is building for the future.

Kris’s talk was a beautiful entrée to the Annual Meeting. She also provided sandwich fixings and fruit for treats prior to the meeting. Special thanks to Kris for doing all that!

Note: The full text of Kris’s talk is at the end of this Newsletter.

Note: Annual Meeting Reports and the Strategic Planning 2016-17 Goals and Objectives are now available on the website at: www.ucofu.com.

April 24 - Dr. Patrick West, “Climate Politics: From Understanding to Strategy.” In looking at celebrating Earth Day, there are a series of huge challenges – the earth will go on but who and what will be on the earth is questionable. The US Congress has us by the jugular in its failure to act. President Obama had to travel to Paris the smallest things done regarding climate change.

Climate change is the greatest challenge ever faced as we move through uncharted territory. There are three kinds of power that could be mobilized to counter the carbon sector:

- 1) Money power- who are the money powers that can match this sector?
 - a. Insurance Companies – will be paying out huge claims because of the forthcoming devastation/destruction. Paying out these claims will restrict the markets, create rising insurance rates and the insurance companies will become so boxed that to survive, they'll have to stand, turn, fight or die.
 - b. Mortgage Investors - homes will be lost to the natural disasters
 - c. Miscellaneous commercial sectors like Walmart, Niki, Bill Gates who are making investments to stem the tide.
 - d. Natural Resource Centers – like Cargill, Pillsbury, General Mills whose markets are dependent upon these areas of production/market being affected by drought, etc.

Some taking action and everything they do counts but need to do more. Need to find ways to counter the carbon sector, form coalitions and stand together.

- 2) Hit the Soft Underbelly – take them on for the LIES! “Legitimacy everything, raw power nothing.” Enron collapsed. Exxon is being sued for lying. Bring it all out and publicize the lies.
- 3) Break up the Monopoly – when the only show in town, because we want the service, we obey without command. Investment and development of new technologies to reduce carbon dependency/markets will break up the monopoly.

Civil society can't go up against the monopolies by itself. Need new coalitions so will take environmentalists plus businesses. The military and the intelligence community are seeing the problem. Need respected retirees to go on TV and speak.

Need to do everything with everyone doing what they can. Don't try to do more than you can – know your limits but find YOUR way. We will win, not if but when. And when (TIME) is the enemy. We are running out of time. There was a knight on his steed crossing the desert when he came upon a chicken with his legs up in the air because “the sky was falling.” Said the knight to the chicken – you can't stop the sky from falling. Said the chicken to the knight, “one does what one can.”

After treats, Pat led a one hour discussion of about 12-15 enthusiastic commenters/questioners in attendance. **Notes from the discussion are at the end of this newsletter.** Ideas and suggestions were shared. A number of those interested in continuing the discussion attended the Green Committee meeting held April 27. Some strategies were developed to take action on these and other environmental justice issues.

**Board of Directors
Letter to Members
April 22, 2016**

"Yesterday (April 17) was a gift. We are on the brink of being a break out Congregation. Exhilarating! Gifts waiting in the wings to fly." Kris Warhol, UCU Board of Director's Member

At the Annual Meeting, April 17, 2016, a momentous decision was made by the Unitarian Church of Underwood's Congregation, giving their approval to proceed on the purchase of the apartment complex, Sverdrup Suites, adjacent to the church property. Acquiring this property will address our space challenges to:

- Accommodate the children and their religious education program and activities
- Provide Mindfulness sitting a quiet place
- Provide needed storage space
- Provide meeting rooms and office space
- Provide some off-street parking.

The property was originally listed at \$275,000. Along with certain contingencies, UCU offered the City \$200,000 that was countered by the City with a price of \$240,000. At the Annual Meeting, the membership resolved that UCU accept this counter offer with the contingencies that the appraised value be equal to or in excess of that amount and that the building pass inspection.

The vote was 30 in favor to 5 opposed with two abstaining on the motion to proceed with purchase of the property.

The Board received from new member and long time attendee, Carole Mitchell, her expression of appreciation with this message: *"I am SO proud of being a (new) official member of UCU for several reasons. Firstly, the annual business meeting was held with great respect for all persons and viewpoints. From what I had heard beforehand, I expected some disagreements but was happily rewarded with very common sense opinions from several perspectives. All present seemed genuinely heard.*

Secondly, it's gratifying to be a part of a liberal congregation that samples everyone's view without judgment.

We traversed complex terrain and I so value that we ARE a beloved community who won't sacrifice, for our precious beloved connections, whenever we face decisions."

As published by the Unitarian Universalist Association: "Respectful opinions should be respectfully heard. Still, no one or two persons should halt actions that have broad support. All decision making is imperfect. All decisions are imperfect. Each member should search his or her heart and mind to discern the truly important from the personal preference and should take

care to listen with openness and to "speak truth with love." Above all, as participants in any decision-making endeavor, we should all mentally try on the phrase "I can live with that." Doing so may enable us to discover that even difficult outcomes need not define or undermine our commitment to our congregation."

In accordance with the resolution passed by the Membership at the Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors has directed the Property Expansion and Transition Task Force to proceed with the tasks to complete the transaction, all actions subject to final Board approval. On Wednesday, April 20, Incoming President, Mary Anderson and Incoming Vice President, Dave Sanderson signed the purchase agreement to accept the City of Underwood's counter proposal of \$240,000 subject to favorable financial terms, appraised value equal to or in excess of the purchase price, and meeting an inspection arranged by UCU as the buyer. The inspection is scheduled for May 2nd.

We now move forward to continue to grow our community in spirit, in connections and in space!

Sincerely,
John Miersch, Outgoing President
Mary Anderson, Incoming President
Dave Sanderson, Incoming Vice President
Board of Directors

2016-17 Board of Directors

The Board was called on April 20, 2016 for the reorganization meeting to elect the slate of new officers. The Executive Committee now comprises the following individuals:

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

After each serving one year of their terms, Lee Becker and Diane Johnson have each resigned from the Board. The nominating committee is seeking two new candidates to serve on the Board to fill the two year remaining term of each former member. If interested, please contact: Susan Groff, Ellen Eastby, Bob Worner or Mary Anderson. Thank you, Lee and Diane for serving!

UCU Members and Friends

Serve and Grow in Spirit

To follow up on Kris Warhol's wonderful talk of April 17 prior to the Annual Meeting and as your newly elected Board of Director's President, I'd like to invite you to involve yourself fully in the opportunities presented through our church and community.

The Unitarian Church of Underwood provides spiritual growth and service opportunities in a number of ways. How can you grow spiritually and serve to make a difference?

You can grow spiritually by:

- Attending Sunday morning services and enjoying the wide variety of speakers in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.
- Attending one or both of the Adult Religious Education classes to explore in depth the UU Principles and Living Traditions.
- Sitting in Mindfulness and reflecting together in silence the great mysteries.
- Joining a small covenant group, the U Groups that meet once per month in five locations, one near you – for a time of deep reflection on a selected topic, a time of sharing our inner thoughts and learning from each other.

Make a difference to the church, the community and yourself by:

- Signing your estimate of giving pledge card and commit to giving as generously as you can through Sunday collections, legacy and other gifting opportunities. You will help sustain the growing church needs and programs.
- Serving as a Sunday morning greeter – you will grow friends and acquaintances, learn names and others will learn your name.
- Serving treats and share your bounty – you will be recognized for your contribution and get to know others who work with you in the kitchen.
- Serving as service leader – you will grow in confidence, learn what is contained in the Seven UU Principles and Living Traditions and personally meet our fine speakers and presenters.
- Serving at any one of the community events, meeting your neighbors and making a difference on social and environmental justice projects.
- Serving on a committee, task force or work group – you will hone your process, organizational, diplomatic, decision making skills and practice using the democratic process.
- Serving as a Children's Religious Education leader or assistant – you will grow to love our kids and contribute to their upbringing and absorb the lessons they are learning.
- Serving by sharing any one of your talents, your music, art, writing, other creative expression – you will inspire the creativity in others.
- Sharing your smile and greeting in recognition of others and for recognition of self. "I see you" and in seeing you, I see the good of my own inner self.

Your presence is our gift. Thank you!! *Board of Directors Newly Elected President, Mary Anderson*

Annual Chili Dinner

About 130 people attended the annual community chili dinner that yielded a profit of \$850.00. Proceeds will be split between the Underwood Senior Nutrition Program and other local charities. Thank you for the hard work of everyone to make this such a spirited and fun event as we filled up on the variety of chili cooked by John Minge and Dave McRoberts and helpers that was supplemented with breads, veggies and desserts.

Save these Dates!

May 1 –Battle Lake U Group Pancake Breakfast following Sunday service

Also May 1 - Arrangements are being made with Outdoor Renovations, Underwood, for a 2 ½ hour afternoon gardening event – teaching time, creating our own garden pots, dish to share, etc. Watch for details.

May 22 – The maple trees from the Arbor Foundation that you ordered will be distributed at church on Sunday, May 22nd. They should be planted by Thursday, May 26.

May 22 – Sunday School Picnic – watch for details.

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

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

June 26 from 3-5 p.m. Mikko Cowdery and Friends. Mikko is new to our stage but not to those many area fans who love Celtic and sing-alongs for the entire family!! For each concert, please bring a snack or dish to share, your own beverage, and a folding chair. Suggested donation: \$20 per attendee or \$10 each for parties of four, so bring your families and friends! All donations benefit our professional musicians. NO RSVP, all welcome! On, rain or shine. Call 218/205-4828 if questions.

June 26 – Phelps Mill Sunday Outdoor Service

July 17 – Family Bike Ride from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, fundraiser “Ride for Shan Refugees”

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is sponsoring a dual fund raiser and family community bike ride in coordination with Sverdrup Lutheran Church and the city of Underwood.

“Ride for Shan Refugees” is in support of Bernice Johnson's education program in Burma. Bernice has helped education Shan children for the past 15 years. She is planning to be present for the bike ride.

The bike ride will be approximately 30 miles beginning in Underwood and looping to Battle Lake, through Glendalough and returning to Underwood. The free community/family ride will tour Underwood and provide an opportunity to make and/or renew friendships. Light snacks and drinks will be provided. Fliers will be posted with details closer to the event.



Save the Turtles!!

Every year about this time, JoAnn Larson gets up front with her scoop shovel and duct tape to make a plea to save the turtles crossing the roads. She uses the shovel to scoop up the turtle and heads in the direction the turtle was going, to take it to safety. And she uses the duct tape to patch any unlucky turtle's shell who can be saved.

U Groups

Attendance among all of the U-Groups this year varied between 32-46 participants/month. Many more are touched through the U Group church and community projects. Several U-Group participants are "snowbirds" during the winter months, but in spite of that, the participation remains strong. Several groups continue to bring in new members and this is amazing. Several participants do not regularly attend UCU, but are drawn to attend U-Group. This speaks highly of the inclusiveness and intimacy of the U-Group "brand" and all the facilitator's should feel very proud of how they have led their U-Groups.

Projects went well so kudos to facilitators and all U-Group members!!

- Facilitator's: assisting with church carpet cleaning & serving Someplace Safe Tea
- Perham U-Group: helping John Minge with the Curry Dinner and scheduling a Steve & Linda concert fundraiser - (Fall TBD)
- BLC U-Group: Steve & Linda concert and Pancake Breakfast May1
- Erhard U-Group: Kids RE assistance & Seed packets
- FF U Group: Decorating outdoor pots & maple tree distribution
- Alex - considering a community project.

2015-1016 U Group Schedule

- **Battle Lake Afternoon Group** – 2nd Tuesday of each month at Susan and Dave's @ 3 p.m. (see above). Co-facilitators: Bob Worner, Joanne Cress and Kris Warhol
- **Fergus Falls/Erhard Evening Group** – 2nd Tuesday of each month from 7-9 p.m. at the home of Carole Mitchell, 33928 County Highway 27, Erhard. Co-facilitators: Diane Johnson and Carole Mitchell.
- **Fergus Falls Evening Group** – 3rd Tuesday of each month, 6 p.m. at the home of Tere Mann, 1319 N Park, Fergus Falls. Co-facilitators: Bonnie Bell Albers and Tere Mann.
- **Perham Afternoon Group** – 2nd Thursday of each month @ 3:30 p.m. @ Co-facilitators: Mary Anderson and Mary Worner. The Perham U Group will meet June 9.
- **Alexandria Evening Group** – 2nd Wednesday of each month 7 p.m. at the office building of Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg. Co-facilitators: Lee Becker, Connie Stigen, Tere Mann.

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

Note: if you are interested in a summer U Group, please contact Tere Mann or Connie Stigen.

The Battle Lake group will meet during the summer and others are most welcome.

Green Gossip

Organic Grocery to Open in Perham - A Clean Plate Local and Organic Grocery will be located in the In Their Own Words Veteran's Museum (ITOW). This grocery is welcomed by those living in East Otter Tail County. Visit it soon!

Also, coming in May to Perham, **Whisk from Scratch bakery** featuring artisan treats. No chemicals will be used, products will be made from local ingredients and all made from scratch. Opening May 23 and continuing: Monday-Wednesday 7:30-6 p.m. and Wednesday-Saturday 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Bakery Owner Holly Flatau says, "We will have scones, muffins, caramel rolls, croissants, and then we will have baked goods like pies, cookies, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, cheesecakes and coffees. We will also have craft beer and wine at night." Now that's my kind of healthy eating!!

One Vegetable/One Community

One Vegetable/One Community (OV/OC) is completed, thanks to the Erhard UU group and helpers. The packets containing snap beans (green, purple and wax) will be available shortly at the library and other sites around Fergus Falls. They are packaged with growing instruction, recipes and information about the project. For more information about projects related to the beans, interested growers can go to www.veggieoftheyear.com. There will be classes and events around the seed library in coordination with OVOC. *Diane Johnson*

Green Committee

The Green Committee invited all those who had participated in the discussion led by Pat West to continue to discussion at the committee's meeting, April 27th.

Spring Joy!



The sandhill cranes on the Platte River of Nebraska.
Dancing for joy. Painting by Mickie Edmonds

Books to Read

From the UUA InSpirit Book Store

<http://www.uuabookstore.org/>

inSpirit

Your Search for Truth and Meaning Begins Here

"Let's be real: We live in a time when many of the people with the cultural megaphones are not sharing imaginative stories of hope and possibility. If we are to continue as a people, it will be up to regular folks like us, individually and collectively, to find ways to create a more just, more compassionate way forward together. This book provided me deep and real support for that work, and I am deeply grateful to Nate Walker for writing it."

-Rev. Meg Riley, Senior Minister, Church of the Larger Fellowship

Cultivating Empathy: The Worth and Dignity of Every Person -- Without Exception
by Nathan C. Walker

In this emotionally honest and personal exploration of conflict, the Reverend Nathan C. Walker introduces a creative and compassionate way to develop empathetic responses. He explores the concept of the moral imagination—a way we can project ourselves in a conflict and understand all perspectives, aware that understanding need not imply agreement.

Walker presents a series of engaging and thought-provoking vignettes, where he endeavors to find connection with skinheads, murderers, homophobic preachers, privileged 1-percenters, and Monsanto executives. As he experiments with this approach, he shows a model that can help us all nurture greater empathy for those we have previously held in contempt.

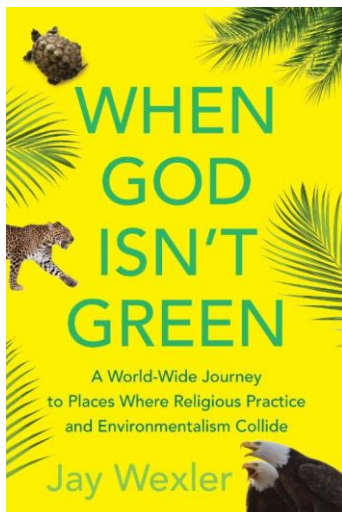
***Christ for Unitarian Universalists: A New Dialogue for Traditional Christianity* by Scotty McLennan**

The retired dean for religious life at Stanford University presents this engaging and thoughtful inquiry into Christianity for Unitarian Universalists and other spiritual seekers.

With his customary warmth and hospitality, McLennan poses and responds to a series of provocative questions. They address Jesus as historical figure and Jesus as the present Christ; they explore the reality and meaning of the Christmas and Easter stories, the Trinity, Christ's divinity, miracles, salvation, religious pluralism and exclusivism, and more.

Rather than proselytize, *Christ for Unitarian Universalists* seeks to stimulate dialogue about Jesus Christ, whether or not we find him central to our faith life.

New from Beacon Press



Even as religion begins to embrace environmental values, there are instances throughout the world where particular religious practices harm the environment. When Boston University law professor and church/state expert Jay Wexler began his research into how people of faith engage in religious practices that are environmentally unfriendly, he found that no one had ever succinctly focused on this intersection. [*When God Isn't Green: A World-Wide Journey to Places Where Religious Practice and Environmentalism Collide*](#) asks readers to consider how these two conflicting issues manifest themselves in different situations, how societies deal with them, and what possible solutions we can learn from these experiences. To follow and participate in this important conversation, follow the UUA and Beacon Press on social media and with #UUReds.

Film to View

Save the date! New film about Unitarians

On September 20, 2016, people will be talking about two historic UUs with a boost from documentary filmmakers Ken Burns and Artemis Joukowsky. Defying the Nazis tells how Waitstill and Martha Sharp, a Unitarian minister and spouse, helped people escape Nazi-occupied Europe at great personal sacrifice. UU congregations and groups can use this unique opportunity to



deepen their faith and share the UU values the Sharps embodied. Later this spring, faith development, interfaith dialogue, and outreach event resources will be available to engage with the film and the accompanying Beacon Press book. Using these resources, UUs can sign up to host local events for fall 2016. Visit our website for [updates](#).

Color Away!

Many people are finding or rediscovering coloring as a helpful way to turn off our multitasking brains and relax. Some have incorporated coloring into their personal spiritual practice as a support for meditation and mindfulness. We've got some beautiful coloring books that can help do just that.

Color in community: Host your own coloring party with a youth group, chalice circle or other small group, or just for a relaxing evening in with friends!

Soul Discovery Coloring

**Book by Janet Conner
with illustrations by
Christina Pensa**

This beautiful coloring book is structured around 22 questions to ignite the imagination and help readers reach deep within themselves to connect with the divine. The result? The reader not only colors a beautiful picture but also creates a beautiful life.

Coloring for

***Contemplation* by Amber
Hatch with illustrations by
Alex Ogg**

Each illustration has been inspired by an accompanying quote to aid your contemplation of its message while you color. Divided into three parts—mindfulness, insight, and inspiration—this book offers readers a coloring journey.

Trip to Make

Visit Iceland with Church of the Larger Fellowship

UUs are headed to Iceland this summer with the Rev. Stefan Jonasson and the Rev. Meg Riley, August 15-25! The group will spend time in Reykjavík, then hit the road towards Akureyri, the city along the north coast. They'll visit sites related to Hannah Kent's novel *Burial Rites*, see several places related to Icelandic Unitarian history, tour intact turf estates, visit the waterfalls Goðafoss (the waterfall of the gods) and Dettifoss (the largest in Europe), and more. This is a Church of the Larger Fellowship (CLF) tour for dreamers! [Learn more](#) and [register](#) by May 15 on the CLF website.



News from MidAmerica Region

New Congregational Life Consultant for the MidAmerica Region!

We are proud to announce that the Rev. Sharon Dittmar will be joining our MidAmerica Regional staff team, come August 2016! She will be filling the opening left when Nancy Heege retired this past December.

Welcome Sharon!

MidAmerica Regional Assembly April 29-May 1 with MUUSJA Workshop April 29

Mary Anderson, Stan Carignan, Ellen Eastby, Susan Groff & Dave Wass and Connie Stigen are attending the MidAmerica Regional Assembly in St. Paul. We anticipate they will have much to share upon their return!

**“MidAmerica Region is building
a new era in Unitarian Universalism,
where UUs visibly live our faith,
create connections, grow our membership, and
welcome all persons who share our UU values.”**

From MidAmericaUU.org

UCU Board Minutes

The yet to be approved meeting minutes of the March 16 Board of Directors meeting and the pending approval meeting minutes of the April 17 Annual Meeting will be carried in the June Newsletter.

“God, Religion and Community” (Full Text of Kris Warhol’s Talk of April 17, 2016)

Do you remember the first time you walked through the doors of this Church? Were you greeted, Welcomed? How long did it take you to join us for coffee? When did you feel that joining a committee felt right? And how much time passed before you were willing to become a member? When exactly did you feel home? That you belonged? That Unitarians were where you fit in?

Peter Morales wrote a vision paper- *Congregations and Beyond*. Stating "Our core Values, appeal to far more people than are attracted or likely to be attracted to our congregations. We have always treated this as a problem to be solved by devising ways to get people to become members of our congregations. The fact that so many share our values is an enormous opportunity, not a problem.

If our congregations only focus on serving the needs of their present membership, we become rapidly more insular and irrelevant to the larger community.

Our church as you know is doing both and has been for some time. We've carried the message along with doing the work of Social Justice.

Our values: Love is stronger than hate, each of us has worth and we will find truth and meaning if we search, matters. This church is a real force in a world that desperately needs core values. We do take our vision beyond our congregation.

This is transforming both within and outside our doors.

Our church has 127 years of transforming lives. We have a reputation outside these doors. Many of us past and present members share the good news of our services. Unitarians assert that hearts governed by a spirit of truthfulness, tolerance and service have true religion.

Each Unitarian holds reverently to their own individual religious doctrine, respecting the right of their neighbor to do the same. There is God here because each one of you brings your own interpretation as you enter of God. What we share in this religious life is bound by community. Bound by our work together, by our giving and by our receiving.

Grace brings us together. A state of sanctification by God. Together as a congregation we share what we learn, discovering that truth and meaning we seek could be as different and unique as each of us are, yet our desires for religious wholeness, or atonement - for our dreams, for our world, for peace is a common one.

We celebrate 127 years because of these intense and involved people who have gathered here. Together they have collectively explored their personal spirituality and have bequeathed us a community which is buzzing with endless possibilities.

Our church is religious. Religious is a general word applying to whatever pertains to faith and worship. In our church we practice our principles - definite in their moral responsibilities, difficult at times in the spiritual demands and stimulating in the unlimited opportunities for freedom. We uphold a common sense approach in worship.

Here we listen deeply to each other. Faith is risking an openness to something bigger than ourselves. Something from which we are made. And yet without which, we are not complete.

When traumatic things happen in the world and there is nowhere to place them or make sense of them...here is a group of people who gather weekly, people who will care enough to listen, people who

hear your concerns.

When we risk opening up and sharing, grace happens. The state of our minds and hearts begin to open. And that is the comfort we all crave so badly. The feeling we belong. That we are cared for and that we make a difference.

The holy things we need for healing and sustenance are almost the same as the ordinary things right in front of us. Our church is a gift, our church reminds us why each moment matters. It is in your eyes, your voices and the songs you sing. The gift of this church is in our service that sparkles with endless possibilities. The gift in our church is all of you.

Changes happen when you care enough to grab whatever you love and give it everything you have to give. Today we ask that you support us. Allow yourself to be open to something bigger than what you've ever felt. Let us share our wealth that be of time, talents or financial support.

We are growing and to accomplish this we ask all of you to give. Give what you can. You are being asked to give to a time in the future of which you may not see. The church remodeling ten years ago would not have happened as quickly without the gift of one person. Together we are building this church again and inviting you on this exciting journey.

We realize where you put your financial resources is the expression of your values and we ask that you value your church.

When newcomers walk through our doors we ask them to keep attending. Because the unexpected will eventually happen if it hasn't already. Even if you are certain that church is not for you. Eventually this will feel right. You will find yourself home.

Preparing a place that says: "Welcome, here you are accepted and honored." Few can resist such a welcome. We know as a congregation many are seeking Welcome. Here in Underwood is a Unitarian church, a place where you are accepted, honored and welcomed. A place where you can rest. It is a place where you are renewed and changed. It is a place to come home too.

**Synthesized Notes from the Group Discussion
Of Climate Change for Earth Day
Underwood Unitarian Church
April 24, 2016
[Summarized by Pat West, with Mary Anderson as recorder]**

I. General and Comments related to the structural politics of climate change mitigation and technological change.

· **What to read from the bibliography.**

The Al Gore books are basic of course, and the McKibben reader covers a range of topics from climate science to climate impacts to climate change movement debates and organizations. Climate change is like a big jigsaw puzzle with many pieces- The best things to read from the selected bibliography depends on your specific interests. Different readings and places in readings are related to different

pieces of the puzzle. Pat gave a few examples and can continue to give guidance related to specific foci of individuals' interests.

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- **Discussion of the mitigation/adaptation debate.**

If you just adapt, adaptation measures will soon be overwhelmed if you do not focus on mitigation. But some groups/countries focus on adaptation because of immediate pressing climate impacts and feel they can't affect mitigation efforts. [Mitigation is stopping and possibly reversing the release of greenhouse gasses; adaptation does not attend to this and just stresses adapting to climate change as it occurs. It's not either/or but a matter of debate over the balance of use of scarce resources.]

- **Why not redevelop nuclear power as alternative to carbon energy?**

- Going back to more nuclear would contribute much to cutting carbon emissions, but many environmentalists are deeply concerned about nuclear accidents and storage of plutonium with a storage need life of 2000 years. [Note: if fusion came on line – i.e. became technologically and commercially feasible- its nuclear element is tritium with a half-life of only 13.5 years.]

- **Decentralize alternative energy-** make it local, i.e., whatever technology is developed as an alternative to carbon, make it as much locally based as possible to cut transmission cost, energy waste/release and transmission line local impacts. [Note: e.g. local rooftop solar as opposed to large solar farms; or e.g. see individual wind turbines on the White Earth Reservation that power individual facilities there- drive up hwy 59 towards Mahnomen.]

- San Diego is going entirely solar by 2030, sets example for other towns and cities [This is part of former NY Mayor Bloomberg's cities approach to climate change.]

- **Use citizen social movement approach to fight carbon-** the Bernie Sanders approach to fund raising instead of relying on "counter corporate" strategies. Bernie's average donation was \$27. There are very many people in the climate change movement that are totally "anti-corporate" and want to go totally to the citizen social movements approach. Meanwhile Goldman Sachs has a coalition with the White House on climate change etc.]. This is a key debate.

- **Catastrophic crisis will change perceptions and interests-** shock into climate change awareness

- Hope for a big crisis to create WWII type conversion effort [note: This depends on a Pearl Harbor type climate crisis posited by the Gilding book in the bibliography- for example: six category 8 hurricanes ponding the entire Eastern and Southern coasts of the US in rapid succession. The top level hurricane in current level of experience in the hurricane rating scale is level 5; the biggest 5 in recorded history just happened in the eastern pacific this last year.]

- One participant likes Naomi Klein "This Changes Everything" Recommends it. Klein, like Gilding, stresses one big crisis that could cause WWII type response.

- There could be more specific smaller crises over time affecting specific different interests- [e.g. Cargill meat packing suffering from dying cattle in southwest; an east coast hurricane affecting Citi Bank's mortgage industry viability, conservative Republicans in CA affected by the worst drought in 1200 years etc.]

- Crisis does not necessarily make people more ethically moral but it can change how they view and redefine their self-interests- e.g. the California drought water crisis- access to clean water is a self-interest as well as an environmental ethic.

- **The EU is way ahead of us in climate change mitigation policy and reducing energy consumption** [about half the energy we use per capita in the US]. Use the EU as model for the US to emulate. [Note: This implies "high visibility" of this difference and hence much US media attention to this. Again the

Giddens book from the first talk, summarized for you by Maggie, is perhaps the best book on this contrast but is also discussed in the Dunlap book.]

- **Use a broad coalition of interests to counter carbon's power** [e.g. break away corporate, civil society social movements like 360, retired military etc. working in coalition. How could this coalition effort be stimulated and strengthened?]
- **Biblical [e.g. Genesis] domination of nature is part of the problem in our culture** [note: implies importance of religious institutions in motivating and legitimizing climate action. "Nature is God's creation" etc.] One participant noted that there was a recent PBS talk by an evangelical stressing that climate change is real and human caused. This is important because conservatives who are more subject to climate denial propaganda [Hoffman, Dunlap] will listen more to conservative religious leaders. [Note: Perhaps the best work on evangelicals and climate change is by Andy Szasz, UC Santa Cruz]
- **The question of the position of Catholics was raised, e.g. the Pope's cc declaration.**
[Note: The best book on comparative religion and climate change is Veldman et al. How the World's Religions are responding to Climate Change. This is not in the selected bibliography and includes Szasz. See Cha 9 on Catholics; chapters 14 and 16 on evangelicals.]
- The talk's focus on **property insurance** of the insurance counter sector needs to recognize health risks of climate change and thus health insurance is also very important. [Note: e.g. many poor people suffer heat stroke and many die from heat in urban heat islands with climate change heat spikes –see Pryor book chapter on Midwest
– some city forms are more vulnerable than others- and chapter in McKibbin on Europe cities where 2000 poor people died in 2003; Also e.g. there is growing evidence that high greenhouse gasses in the air negatively affect health problems like asthma etc.]
- **Political Culture is part of problem** in US-e.g. Rush Limbaugh [note: The Dunlap book and Dunlap citations shows how carbon's moneyed power manipulates cultural symbols and uses such outlets]
- **Population growth is a part of the problem.** [note: Dunlap book agrees but notes that most population growth is in third world countries that contribute little or nothing to greenhouse gasses; in developed counties it requires below replacement birth rates that takes two generations to have a significant impact when the children of this generation become of child bearing age.]
- **Build societal consensus on cc**, important for democracy to work, by reducing climate denial. The Hoffman book on the Cultural Divide is the best single book in the bibliography on how to do this.
- Coal and Oil interests own the "in the ground" reserves will not want to give up this economic value [The last chapter of Hoffman's Cultural Divide book stresses this using the analogy of how slave owners wanted compensation for the ending of slavery in the South.] This also relates to the "keep it in the ground social movement."
- **Factions in Military-** Some don't want more conflict and war from climate change; others want bigger budgets so they can have and fight more wars. One faction wants to expand US territory in the far north [the last US Manifest Destiny]. But all factions say it's real. How do we make this more visible to the public?
- The National Carbon Tax Legislation Movement should not be called a "tax." That word has a bad connotation. [Note: The new code word for conservatives is "fees."]

II. Individual Actions That People Can Take Locally

- Numerous Multiple concerns were expressed for individual actions at the local level- just doing what one can [those "spindly little chicken legs sticking in the air."] The chapter on "Consumption and Climate Change" in the Dunlap book is the best reading in the selected bibliography for considering reducing home energy consumption for example; but there is lots more out there especially the work

of Pat's colleague Ray DeYoung at U of Mich. and others in environmental psychology.

- How to counter manufacture of dissent causing climate denialism in the largely conservative/Republican public at the local level? What are the key questions to ask? Especially the question "Who do you trust and believe?" [E.g. if you know the person very well like family they are more likely to trust you. E.g. If you show them what the military has stated or what John McCain has said about it all being very real, they will trust these sources more [alas] than, say Al Gore or climate scientists. [Note: the Hoffman book on the cultural divide in climate politics is the best source on this in the bibliography- "credibility of the source of communications." (Pat is putting together the statements of the military and intelligence services for you.)]
- Also re Trust: you can trust the Webb pages listed in the selected bibliography because they were checked for accuracy when cited in peer reviewed publications.
- Re climate change locally in the Midwest see Pryor book on the bibliography [e.g. in Midwest only 2.8% of power plant generation is alternative energy – solar, wind, hydro. Exceptions are nearer the plains where strong winds are more prevalent- e.g. MNkota power 30% wind/ 10% hydro from the Missouri River.]
- Should we divest from coal and oil investments? Yes- examine your portfolio. [note: this also belongs in category I in the aggregate: While some banks like Wells Fargo continue to invest in coal, for instance, many billions are being diverted from coal and oil by other large institutional investors- one way to "undermine" carbon's power- and hopefully reinvested in clean energy.
- Put local consumer pressure on corporations to change. Start with local and regional offices. E.g. threaten to move your checking accounts from Wells Fargo.

III. Other Specific Kinds of Possible Individual Involvements in Organizations, Social and Political Movements in this Area or the Wider Region of MN.

- The main social movement acting locally is the McKibben 360 focusing locally on stopping Sandpiper pipeline that runs near here primarily through protests and testimony and Public Utility Commission hearings. Pat has several contacts along the route [at White Earth and in Grand Rapids].
- The main legislative proposal is ultimately proposed at the national level but has state and local coordinators a group active in N. MN.
- There was a carbon tax movement organizer at Pat's last talk- who was she? She would be best local person to contact locally. Pat has the key state contact and one in Grand Rapids.
- Otter tail DFL has a Progressive Forum group with committee working on climate change. Current work is on politics of climate change [influencing corporate, government, and scientific elites and networks approach] and local recycling. The more people that become involved the more we can do and the more dimensions of climate change we can address. Contact Pat West pcwest@arvig.net. The next meeting is at the Shoreline [in the back] in Battle Lake, Tues May 24. At 6:00. 6-6:45 dinner, meeting 6:45-8:15. We will debrief the UU talk with the summary in the Church Report and a summary of the discussion. The main climate change topic- further elaboration on multiple reasons for expected exponential growth in pace of climate change as a basis of urgency of addressing cc mitigation: Ocean saturation, methane, albedo dynamics and underestimated pace of ice cap melting in the far North, El Nino interactions with climate change and thus great intensification of tropical drought/famine tragedies of the Victorian era, destabilization of the Northern Jet Stream, and yes, the North Atlantic current. The second forum topic is poverty that evening.

IV. Comments about Going Green at the Underwood Unitarian Church.

- Join the Underwood UU Church Green Committee- next meeting 4/27 5:30 at the church. The more “person power” you have the more you can do re possibly going solar and other green actions by the church.
- Renew work on Task Force to determine feasibility master plan on solar energy. The church Executive Committee is having more of a role in this.
- Group decisions are more complex than individual decisions. [Consensus within yourself can be daunting enough!!!!] The important question arose in the discussion whether the church should aim at solar only for easier things like lighting and water heating or whether it should also aim for full heating of both the church and the new annex. One person said they were only interested in the church going solar if it was the whole thing including heating. [Doing the whole thing would involve increased investment costs and raises the question of what is possible with current solar technology in cold regions like N. MN with a lot of cloudy days especially in winter sub-zero temperatures when large space heating capacity is needed most. Church insulation also plays into this question.

Pat, not being an expert on the “tech” part of this last dilemma suggests that, if you have not already done so, you can easily contact key experts in the region. It’s easy to google the contact list information. One key company is in Brainerd.