

Newsletter May 2020

*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.*

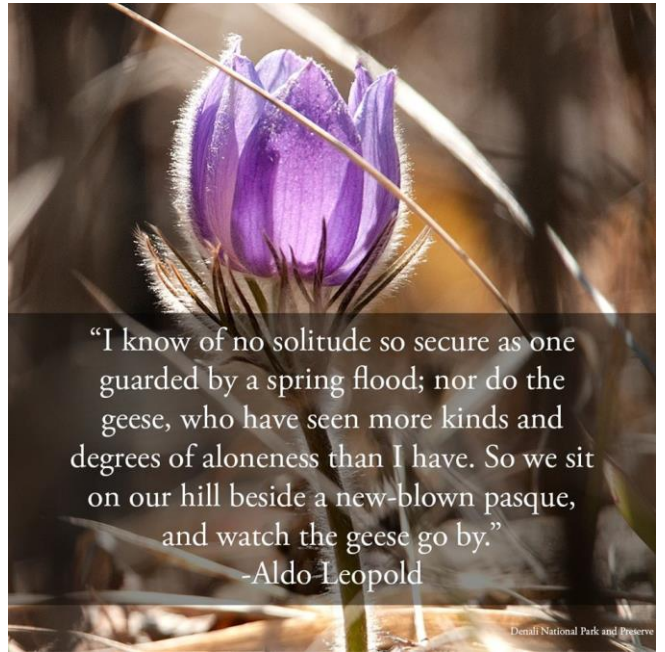
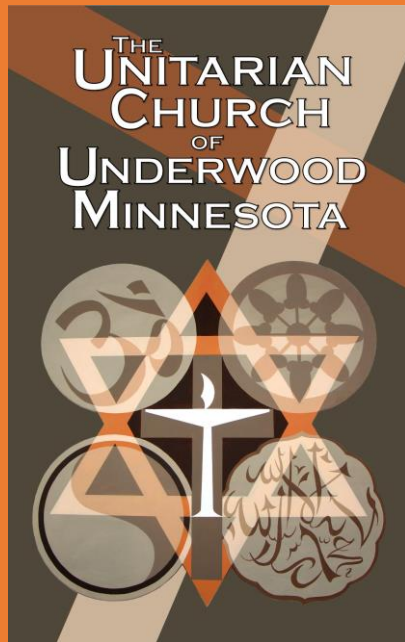
Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street
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Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



“I know of no solitude so secure as one
guarded by a spring flood; nor do the
geese, who have seen more kinds and
degrees of aloneness than I have. So we sit
on our hill beside a new-blown pasque,
and watch the geese go by.”
—Aldo Leopold

From Janell Miersch

**Due to continued precautions
against the spreading of the
COVID-19
church services, meetings &
activities are suspended until
further notice.**

Watch for ucofu@ucofu.org
messages and the “[UCU
Weekly](#)” and check:
www.ucofu.org or
www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org
u.org

Stay^oinformED

"Like" UCU on Facebook: see
www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org

Contact Wally Warhol for Sunday announcements
@ ucunderwood4@gmail.com

Contact Kris Warhol for local media notifications.

U Group Schedule Watch ucofu@ucofu.org for announcements of "Zooming" U Group Meetings

- Alexandria U-Group: 2nd Wed @ 7:00 pm
Alexandria: Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Battle Lake U Group, the 2nd Tuesday
Facilitators: Bob Worner/Kris Warhol.
- Fergus Falls U-Group: 3rd Thursday @ 6:30 pm.
Facilitator: Melody Shores.
- Perham U-Group: 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m..
Facilitator: Stan Carignan.

Each group holds an empty chair for anyone who wants to come and join the group.

To learn more or join a group, contact Lead Facilitator:
Shannon Smith @ shannonsmith20@gmail.com
Or 320/630-6229

New!!!

UCU Weekly

Watch for these and other
ucofu@ucofu.org email messages.

Participate in the **ZOOM** invitations for
Sunday service, social hour & other
meetings

Let's Stay Connected!!!

Newsletter Submissions due prior to Issuance the 1st of each month

Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to:

Writer/Editor: Mary Anderson

Editing: [Stephanie Sanderson](#)

Emailing/mailling: [Ellen Eastby and Mary Anderson](#)

Website: [Ellen Eastby](#)

Facebook: [Melody Shores](#)

Photos courtesy of Norm Kolstad & credited others.

Credited Articles

UCU Weekly:

Designed by Ellen Eastby

Editing by Mary Anderson

Note: Send Announcements for UCU Weekly and
monthly newsletter to newseditor@ucofu.org. As
appropriate, some will be forwarded for inclusion
@ www.ucofu.org and Facebook Page.

**Adult Religious Education Classes and
Mindfulness Sitting on Sundays are
Temporarily Suspended until further notice**

Governor's Stay at home Order Extends to May 4

Church Services and meetings

Continue Suspended due to Corona Virus Precautions

Watch for further announcements

Board of Directors

Interim Board Members Appointed

The Board of Directors has experienced additional challenges of decision making due to the pandemic shut down coinciding with the end of the church fiscal year when traditionally and under the by-laws certain decisions are required. Plans are underway to reschedule the Annual Meeting of the Membership. Watch for further notices and announcements.

Pending the Annual Meeting of the Membership, the Board appointed five interim Board members to fill five vacated terms: **Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Norm Kolstad, Wally Warhol and Mary Worner.**

Many thanks to the outgoing Board members: **Kris Warhol** who served as President the past two years of her six years of serving on the Board; **Darryl Booker** who served as Vice President the past year as he filled out the term vacated by Ellen Eastby; **Bob Worner** who served as Vice President the preceding year in his six years of serving on the Board; **Connie Stigen** resigning from her second Board term with two years remaining; **Bonnie Showers** who served a portion of her first year with two years of that term remaining. We appreciate each of you for your work and dedication!

The Board of Directors will continue to monitor health care directives to determine safety practices. The Board will continue to conduct church business to maintain and grow the church's mission and vision.

Spiritually Mission Driven Boards

“The church board is a covenant group devoted to the congregation, the community, and the Unitarian Universalist denomination’ is how Rev. David Pyle described an ideal church board. He presented the workshop, “Practices of Board Leadership,” at the annual meeting of the Mid-America Region of the UUA last Saturday, April 18. I attended via Zoom.

Churches have tended to follow a business or academic style of leadership which actually “run contrary to some of our values and principles as Unitarian Universalists” Pyle said. He advocated for boards focusing on spiritual leadership, using the church mission and vision as guides. He then presented specific points stating how boards can move in that direction.” *Mary Worner*

**Virtual Annual Meeting of the Membership
to be Scheduled**

The UCU Board of Directors are proceeding on plans to hold a virtual Annual Meeting of the Membership during the Sunday morning service hour. Considerations are being given to minimize the business items with vote to approve:

- April 14, 2029 annual meeting minutes
- Budget for 2020-21
- Election of board members

Full details will be provided by mailed and electronic notices with electronic access to membership voting materials. Watch for further announcements.

Virtual Sunday Services

Sunday services continue to be offered via Zoom video conferencing. The link is included in the ucofu@ucofu.org mailings each week. If you are a bit confused with all of this Zoom business, we have help for you. Click on the link to learn about Zoom. <http://www.ucofu.org/Zoom/Zoom.pdf>. And, we have three wonderful technical support people ready to help you via email or telephone: Tere Mann, Bonnie Showers and Melody Shores. You can reach them at techhelp@ucofu.org.



Coming in May

Watch for details in your emails from ucofu@ucofu.org

May 3 – Celebrant, Bob Worner with special music by Marianne Bryan

May 10 (Mother's Day) - Athena Kildegaard

May 17 - Diane Johnson

May 24 - TBA

May 31 – TBA

The prayer of our souls is a petition for persistence; not for the one good deed, or single thought, but deed on deed, and thought on thought, until day calling unto day shall make a life worth living. (by W.E.B. DuBois)

Applause and Thank YOUs!

to the all those keeping us going during these unsettling days.

The **UCU Connections Task Force** for coordinating efforts for care and support of the UCU membership – **Betsy Wells, Chair; Mary Anderson, Ellen Eastby, Bonnie Graham, Norm Kolstad; Tere Mann, Mary Worner.**

To Ellen Eastby for the new UCU Weekly to announce the weekly Zoom services and short notifications of weekly events and doings.





And again, to **Ellen Eastby** for maintaining the email list and sending out the many electronic messages. Of interest: Mail Chimp is used for sending and tracking electronic messages. Regular



reports are received as to the usage. For example: during the week of April 20-26, of the 533 delivered messages to the 182 UCU's Mail Chimp audience, there were 193 opens and 72 clicks.

To the **Speakers Committee (Betsy Wells, Carole Mitchell, Diane Johnson, Amy Beckman)** for continuing to arrange speakers for the Sunday morning programs; to **Mary Worner** for arranging them and to the **musicians** for providing the special music and for the **Sunday service attendees** continuing to gather and worship using Zoom.

To the spectacular **Technical Support Team** of **Bonnie Graham, Tere Mann, Melody Shores and Bonnie Showers** who set up and monitor our Zoom Sunday services and meetings. We would have limited UCU presence without their help!

To **Mary Anderson**, Newsletter Editor for keeping up with the rapidly changing news to be featured in the monthly newsletters. **Mary** does the *extra* so you can read all about it.

To the **Membership Committee and other volunteers** who called our members and friends to inquire on their well-being, ask about special needs and inform them of what is still being offered in care and support from the Unitarian Church of Underwood. They help make it known that this church has a presence, not just in a building but because of the people either within or outside that building. (**Mary Anderson, Alison Francis, Katy Olson & Ron Roller, Janell & John Miersch, Carole Mitchell, Dave & Steph Sanderson, Bonnie Showers, Mary Worner**)

To the **Board of Directors** for continuing to monitor health care directives to determine safety practices and for continuing to conduct church business to maintain the church's vision and mission.

To **Kris Warhol** for continuing contact with the Religious Education children by providing weekly cards, paintings and inspirational messages. One week's theme was: "Our imagination flies. We are its shadow on the earth."

To the "QuaranTEAn bag" Ladies: **Mary Anderson, Janell Miersch and Bonnie Showers** who mailed out tea bags in a note of comfort to over 60 UCU members and friends.

To **Each of You** for continuing to connect with and support each other! We each look forward to the days when we can physically gather again to, if not shake hands and hug, at least elbow bump and exchange pleasantries and laughter. Ah, the simple pleasures!

Notes from April Virtual Sunday Services

April 5 – Excerpts from the talk of Celebrant Ellen Eastby

Most of us are asking ourselves some hard questions these days. How long will we be dealing with COVID-19? Who will get sick? A family member? A friend? Me? As we ponder these questions, we may feel fear, stress, anxiety, maybe even depression. And to some extent we need those feelings. They are what keep us safe and vigilant. They are what make us wash our hands and sanitize surfaces. But what happens when we become overwhelmed with those feelings? What if it is more than we can deal with? How do we cope?



Some people use prayer as a means of coping... Meditation is helpful for many... Grounding is a specific technic to help with anxiety. It is designed to keep you in the here and now ... Then there is humor. One of my personal favorites in coping with stress. There is a meme that has circulated on Facebook for quite some time. It says this: The devil whispered in my ear, “You’re not strong enough to withstand the storm.” And I whispered, “I am the storm.” Quite the affirmation. The meme I have most recently seen is this: The devil whispered in my ear, “You’re not strong enough to withstand the storm.” I whispered, “Move 6 feet back jerk.”

What I really want to spend some time on today is the use of community to cope, As Mitch Albom wrote, “We are all connected. You can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind.” It speaks to our 7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Let’s let that principle be our segue into talking about our church community.

When the Governor’s orders became known, we locked the doors to our building. The doors to our church, however, were not locked. In fact, I would argue, that the doors to our church have been flung wide open. We are calling, texting, and emailing each other... We accept one another’s differences pretty much unconditionally. I think that is our strength as well as our comfort. To welcome all wherever they are on their spiritual journey expands and strengthens our church body. To know that we will be welcomed is our comfort. A Christian sharing a pew with an Atheist, is pretty big stuff.

Tony Blackshaw said, “It feels good to be in a community. Community, above all, is bigger than individuals - we are something much more than individuals when we are part of a community.” I think knowing that we are more than individuals is helpful in coping with this pandemic. Believing in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, we are not staying home just to save our own life, but also the lives of others. Those who live within our home as well as those who don’t. We are taking care of our communities. Doing service work. Getting out of self. As Henri Nouwen wrote, “Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another.”

I think what is interesting about being Unitarian Universalist is that we don't have to have common beliefs in order to be a church... Everett Dirksen said, "When all is said and done, the real citadel of strength of any community is in the hearts and minds and desires of those who dwell there." I have seen your hearts and minds in action. I have seen your desires to support the individuals who make up this community come to fruition. Our beloved community is a fortress, helping to protect all who are living in this time of COVID-19 from loneliness, fear and despair. May we continue this important work throughout the pandemic and beyond. So may it be.

Attendance: 30

April 12 Easter – Excerpts from the talk of Celebrant, Katy Olson, "Resurrection and Compassion."

Easter, or Resurrection Sunday, is a festival and holiday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead occurring on the third day after his burial following his crucifixion by the Romans. As we know; Easter began as a pagan festival celebrating spring in the Northern Hemisphere, long before the advent of Christianity. "Since early times, people have celebrated the equinoxes and the solstices as sacred times," The naming of the celebration as "Easter" goes back to the name of a pre-Christian goddess in England, "Eostre" who was celebrated at the beginning of spring. The ancient peoples also had a deep understanding that after the time of quiet introspection of winter, we had the opportunity to emerge ready to bring our better selves out into the world.



Whether you are a believer in Christ as your redeemer is not imperative to understand the importance of Jesus's life for highlighting of the values of compassion and mercy and dedicating oneself to improving the welfare of your fellow humans. His was a message of the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations are the cornerstone of his message for humanity.

Community is being curtailed in the physical sense, but I would argue that we have a clearer understanding how important community is and just how far reaching we can be in the affirmation of community now more than ever before.

According to the Bible, Jesus' death was a sacrifice for the sins of others, but his resurrection represents something even more powerful: the potential for rebirth, salvation, and renewal of faith. What will it mean for us to step out of the tomb of our own isolation? To leave behind the delusion of separation and embrace the idea that there is no 'other' wholeheartedly. How will we take up the work, in all its complexity, its sorrows and its awesome potential for resurgence, renewal and healing? What will our engagement look like, how can we build a better community? How will we embrace the work of mutual obligation?

Lent and Easter, like Winter and Spring, offer us the opportunity to let our old self die and so that we can once again dedicate ourselves to a life of compassion and the surcease of suffering for the whole biological world. Easter comes in the midst of Spring. The days silently stretch, holding the light a little longer as the leaves slowly return to the trees. The warmth from above returns to the cold fields and dormant seeds awaken from their slumber. *Note: The complete text was shared in the church report sent out April 13, 2020.*

Attendance: 33



Easter Sunday Service April 12, 2020 with 33 attending via Zoom



April 19 – Celebrant, Shannon Smith, spoke about Gratitude. She based her message on the April 12 *On Being* conversation between PBS moderator, Krista Tippett and David Steindl-Rast. He is a Benedictine monk, and a beloved teacher and author on the subject of gratitude. He’s the founder and senior advisor for [A Network for Grateful Living](#).

Thanksgiving and gratefulness are two cornerstones of living a grateful life; thankfulness for whatever comes our way, and gratefulness for the lessons in every moment. These are not reactions, but intentions. To

learn to be present in this moment, he suggests “Stop, Look, and Go”:

- Stop - for a moment
- Look - for the opportunities of this moment
- Go – avail yourself of the opportunities

He also points out that anxiety is frequently and naturally present in our lives. However, it lifts our awareness. Unless it becomes fear, it does not paralyze us.

Attendance: 33



April 26 – Janell Miersch spoke about the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which occurred on April 22, 2020.



In the year prior to the first Earth Day, people were becoming aware and alarmed at the increasing pollution of air and water. The Cayahoga River had caught fire. At the same time, the first pictures of the earth as seen from the moon let us see the beauty of this planet. A bi-partisan pair – Gaylord Nelson (Dem.) and Pete McCloskey (Rep) helped organize the first Earth Day celebration. In the next few years, several important environmental agencies were established, and legislation was passed including EPA, NOAA, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act.

Since 1970, there have been a multitude of environmental and natural disasters, many of which are linked to climate change; which was the Earth Day Network’s theme for the 50th anniversary.

The health of humans and the earth are inextricably linked. We need to remember that “Every day is Earth Day.”

Attendance: 28

Living Out Our UU Principles **Empowerment Grant Awards** **2020-21**

Empowerment Grant Objective: Increase visibility of grant awardees and their programs to recognize and promote the important work being done by UCU.

In 2004, a large legacy was bestowed to the Unitarian Church of Underwood by member, Francis Ellison. These funds gave opportunity for UCU to award the first Empowerment Grants in 2007. Annual grants have continued to be paid out since from UCU investments. After thirteen years, the awards given out now total \$115,000. Grant applications are made

by UCU members to go to an established non-government organization or entity with a proposed project that meets one or more of the UU Principles and is inclusive and non-discriminatory. Applications received are reviewed by the Empowerment Grant Committee and selections are submitted to the UCU Board of Directors for approval.

This year twelve (12) applications were received totaling over \$24,000; nine (9) were selected and awarded in total \$10,000, the annual amount approved for disbursement by the UCU Board of Directors

The Unitarian Church of Underwood’s Board of Directors has approved the following 2019 Empowerment Grants:

- Citizen’s Climate Lobby, Fergus Falls Chapter \$1000
 - Fergus Falls Farmer Market (Power of Produce Program) 800
 - Walk Otter Tail River 2600
 - Pelican Rapids Diversity Program 1600
 - Churches United for the Homeless (Fargo, ND) 200
 - Friends of Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (website dev) 900
 - Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light 700
 - Schools for Shan Refugees 1000
 - Fergus Falls Barn Dance for building community 1200
- \$10,000**

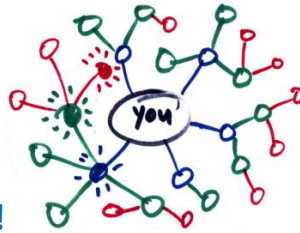
Special thanks to all the submitters and to the Empowerment Grant Selection Committee:
Ron Roller (Chair); Connie Stigen, Amy Beckman



Stewardship

During this time of year, the UCU operating budget for the coming fiscal year is established and members and friends are invited to consider what they wish to give financially for the coming year. With the cancellation of services, Sunday collections do not occur, but many operating expenses continue. To continue your giving to the mission and goals of the Unitarian Church of Underwood, you can mail your donations to: Unitarian Church of Underwood, PO Box 58, Underwood, MN 56586, Attention: Treasurer, Ron Roller. Or, please consider signing up for automatic transfer of funds. For the form to sign up, please contact Stewardship Committee Chair, Dave Sanderson @ his home phone # 218/736-2616.

Methods for the convenience of on-line giving are also being explored. Meantime, stay at home, but reach out. Give financially and your presence through your phone calls, emails and social media sharing and help in other ways as you can. *Stewardship Committee: Dave Sanderson, Mary Worner, Tim Lanz, Tere Mann.*



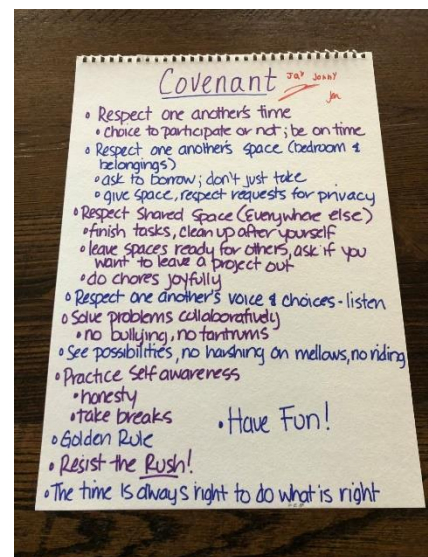
Hey – Connect! Here's Some Ways....

We know that our connections right now can be dangerous in spreading the Covid-19. But our stay at home connections can also be AWESOME in spreading love and beloved community. The Membership Committee with other volunteers will continue phone calls and email contacts to members and friends. Meantime, commit, reach out, share YOUR interests and talents and be part of this web of our existence and this body of fellowship.

Joan Vorderbruggen is offering to share a 27 minute audio guided Forest Bathing walk to anyone who would like it, available by contacting her at bircheart@gmail.com. You can find more information about Forest Bathing at her website @ <https://bircheart.com/journal/nature-s-health-and-healing-in-stressful-times>.

For ideas on **Parenting during a Pandemic**, see the article on uua.org from Rev. Jason Seymor:
<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/parenting-pandemic/family-covenant>. *“Stuck at home together, every family member’s behavior affects others some exponential degree more than usual. Families may wish to try making a covenant together.”*

The picture at right depicts what the Seymors’ adopted as their family covenant. A covenant is a promise between members of a group on specific ways they will behave to show mutual respect, kindness, and acceptance and to express their shared goal of right relationship. Covenanting is a grounding practice in Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and it is [central to who we are and have been](#) as a people of faith.



U Groups meeting via Zoom – you are invited to join.
Watch for dates and times via ucofu@ucofu.org messages

Host a gathering: Miss some of your most friends at UCU? Have special interests you’d like to share? Consider hosting small gatherings or even dinner parties. The UUA recently presented a webinar titled: how to do small group online gatherings. If you are interested, you

can watch the recorded webinar at <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/events/webinars/how-do-small-group-online-gatherings>.

An individual can act as the host and invite others via Zoom to knit together, discuss a book together, have happy hour together, etc., etc. We leave it to your imagination for the type of gathering preferences. Set up the Zoom meeting yourself or make the request to: administrator@ucofu.org.



Mary Anderson made 27 masks & mailed 4 to her son & family in Mobile, Alabama

How to make a Face Mask (from Linda Quigstad-Berg)

What you will need

Cotton fabric, a pretty print is best. –
Rope Elastic, beading cord elastic will work (you may also use 1/8" flat elastic)-
For each mask, cut 2 pieces of elastic 7" long and tie a knot at each end (DO NOT knot the ends of the flat)

You can make two sizes: Adult (cut fabric 9' x 6") or Child (cut fabric 7.5" x 5")

1. Put right sides of cotton fabric together with the elastic in-between.
2. Starting at the center of the bottom edge, sew to the first corner, stop. Sew the elastic with the edge out into the corner. A few stitches forward and back will hold this.



Kathy Kensinger has made over 200 masks; these 73 went to the Evansville Senior Care Center. She also provided 80 needed by Underwood School for the childcare and food/homework delivery system. The rest were given to friends and family. Kathy continues to sew more masks yet needed by the Opal Group Homes. Way to go, Kathy!!

3. Sew to the next corner, stop, and bring the other end of the same elastic to the corner and sew a few stitches forward and back.
4. Now sew across that top of the mask to the next corner. Again, put an elastic with the edge out.
5. Sew to the next corner and sew in the other end of the same elastic.
6. Sew across the bottom leaving about 1.5" to 2" open for turning. Stop, cut the thread. Turn inside out.
7. Pin 3 tucks on each side of the mask. Make sure the tucks are the same direction.
8. Sew around the edge of the mask twice.

It is so easy to make these.

Be sure any fabric design is placed horizontally.

Or for non-sewers, from **Joan Vorderbruggen**
DIY mask made from furnace filters.

<https://www.instructables.com/id/MOO-MASK/>

From UUA - Join Face Book Group

https://www.facebook.com/groups/617604658831151/?fref=gs&dti=245453892174963&hc_location=group

From Janell Miersch: a 4-minute video with wise words from a young poet. Enjoy!

https://www.cbs.com/shows/cbs_this_morning/video/3w53byOldg_awVnx6vzKHwIBzdF JTso/youth-poet-laureate-amanda-gorman-offers-words-of-hope-amid-pandemic/

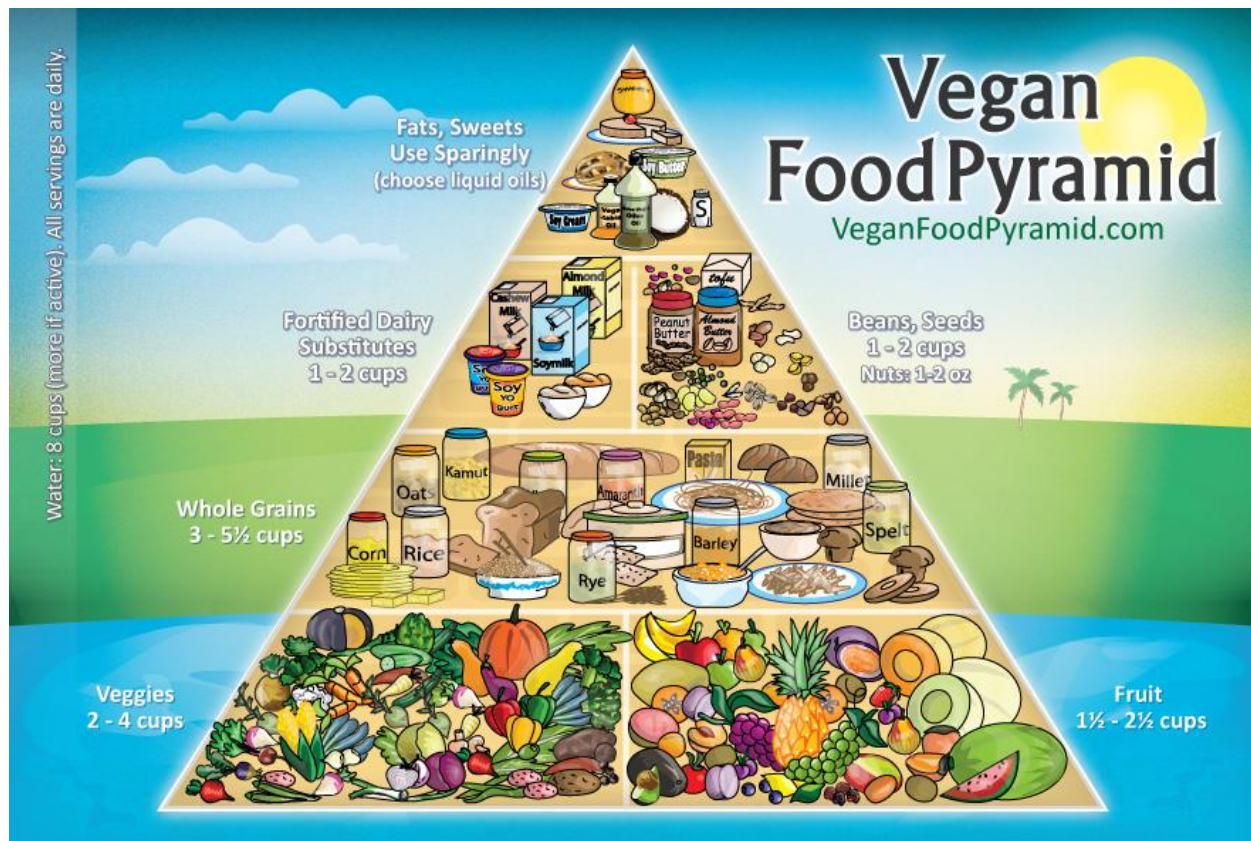
Entertain yourself reading UCU history:

Norm Kolstad happened to re-read this book excerpt [article today about Kristofer Jansson](#). The first few pages focus on the Hanska congregation, but starting on page 4 the UCU congregation is featured. Page 8 explains how the Union Hall, built in 1889, was connected to the Unitarians. Church and politics were not too separate even back then.

Take this Time to Work Toward Healthier Eating:

Veganism: A Voice for the Voiceless

By Bonnie Showers



When I first moved to the area from the Twin Cities, I had no idea that my differences, specifically my dietary choices, would cause such a stir. Sharing a meal is usually part of human interaction and while dining with new acquaintances, inevitably I knew I'd get asked why I'm

vegan. I struggle to answer the question, not because I'm unsure of my reasons but because the person asking has already made up their mind that I'm odd. My experience has been that no matter what I say, my dining companions have decided that they are "right," and I am "wrong."

If I turn the question around and ask meat eaters why they eat dead animals, the response is usually something like "we're meant to eat meat, that's why we have canine teeth" or "it's the natural order of things." To me, these responses are evidence that the person hasn't really thought about why they eat meat. It's just something they've always done. Most people I've encountered view themselves as animal-loving, compassionate people but they don't see a link between animal suffering and their food. I'm no psychologist but I believe this falls under the category of "cognitive dissonance."

If animals with a central nervous system share the capacity for complex emotions such as anger, fear, sadness and suffering; if they experience complex social behaviors such as altruism, cooperation, friendship and loyalty, aren't they entitled to our respect? The question isn't can they talk or can they reason. The question is can they suffer. If the answer is "yes," then I feel it's morally wrong to needlessly cause that suffering.

Let's disregard animal suffering for a moment and look at the environmental impacts of animal agriculture. A vegan diet is more sustainable than an animal-based diet, with a vegan diet taking about 1/10th of the resources (land, water, fuel, etc.) to maintain. (Source: Effective Altruism foundation.org)

As Unitarians, as humans with brains and hearts that are capable of deep compassion for those that live outside our own experience, we can choose to avoid the knowing exploitation of other species.

I'll close by including an excerpt from Joaquin Phoenix's Oscars acceptance speech, who more eloquently explains veganism than my stumbling responses over shared meals:

'Whether we're talking about gender inequality or racism, or queer rights or indigenous rights or animal rights, we're talking about the fight against injustice. We're talking about the fight against the belief that one nation, one people, one race, one gender or one species has the right to dominate, control and use and exploit another with impunity.'



From Editor's friend taken on her daily walk in Hawaii on Easter Sunday while we in Minnesota continue to wait for blossoms to awaken.

MAY 2020 Health Tip from The Welcome Place

If your church is printing a newsletter for May, thank whoever is doing it! At the time I am writing this (April 16), life is still on hold. We have learned to do church services, doctor visits, family visits, and education on the internet. Important events have been cancelled. I do not know if May will be the beginning of a return to normalcy or if normalcy will be very different.

Some things have not changed...spring is in the process of returning. Hopefully, we have seen the last of snow or if more comes, we know it will not last long. The summer birds are coming back (and the winter snowbirds are returning) and the lake ice is leaving. Early flowers have sprouted and those of us who garden, have had plenty of time to plan the perfect plant arrangement. (And try to figure out how to outwit the rabbits who seem to have reproduced like well, rabbits, over the winter). Births and deaths have occurred, along with illnesses and returns to health.

But I think it is safe to say we are probably doing more activities outside, even if it is just around our houses. So, the usual safety reminders are in effect: Sunscreen, easing into activities, watching little children around water, do not overdo it. Maybe we can visit with our neighbors, with a mask if necessary, and travel again. Maybe businesses will re-open and everything we took for granted before the virus changed our lives will be slowly returning.

If that is what is happening, appreciation is a big word to remember: for the healthcare workers, the store employees, other service workers, and the technology experts who helped us stay connected with all the new things we had to learn. Words like Zoom, Microsoft Meetings, and Facebook Live have become part of our vocabularies. So, thank you to all who helped, even if your contribution was staying home. Thank you to the workers. Thank you to

our church leaders who figured out how to keep us tuned in. Thank you to educators who figured out how to teach a new way. Enjoy and appreciate May. *Katherine Jordahl, RN, Pelican Rapids Welcome Place Retiree*

Innovation from Across the World



Former Foreign Exchange Student, Fikri Rahmat wrote his host mother, Mary Anderson about “disinfection chambers” now being used in Indonesia where Fikri and his wife live.

From his email of 3/31/2020, Fikri wrote: “One day in a meeting with my department, I suggested to run a campaign to fund the disinfection chamber which is proven to be effective against corona in Vietnam;

Indonesia had only one in the presidential palace. My suggestion was adopted, and my organization was the first one to provide such chamber until finally many similar NGOs started following our steps. Somehow, I am feeling proud that my idea was adopted and could be beneficial to others. It even made news nationally and regionally. The chamber is welcomed so much especially by local companies. There now have been dozens of chambers installed yet we got negative campaign by some groups saying that disinfectant liquid in the chamber was danger to humans. I regret that they did not research before they spoke since we never use disinfectant liquid but antiseptic liquid which is safe for humans. I also regret that at this critical time people are still politically and profit oriented instead of cooperating with each other.”

<https://jakartaglobe.id/vision/covid19-innovation-disinfection-chambers-installed-around-jakarta.> (Looks like a “people carwash!”)

As usual, Fikri sends greetings and well wishes to the Unitarian Church for which he has fond memories from his time here in 2012-13. He and his wife work from home under Indonesia’s stay at home orders.

Day of Promise

Robert T. Weston



Here is a day of promise!
May it be so with me, with everyone!
The gray clouds scudding overhead,
The storm clouds, rain and the breaking sunshine,
The apple blossoms bursting in pink and white.
The children gleefully running out to splash in puddles,
The grass green, and the buds
Straining into leaves on shrubs and trees,
And the birds singing, joyfully, in the dawn,
Strutting the lawns as proud possessors.
Everywhere life, life bursting through all fetters,
And the heart singing, protesting against gloom,
Shouting its defiance of clouds and cold;
The gay heart exulting in storm and sunshine alike.
This is a day that aches with the promise of life,
Life which will not be denied.
Let all hearts swell with glad acceptance,
Joyful with the sense of the always becoming,
For out of earth, into the air and sunshine,
out of ourselves
There rises a spirit in us.
Neither dark not threat shall thrust it down.
It rises irresistible in us.
This is the season's gift.
Shared by Alison Francis

We Are Part of the Larger UU

Fabulous Keynote Recordings from the UU at the United Nations Intergenerational Spring Seminar

Just prior to Earth Day, over 170 UUs from across North America were "All In for Climate Justice" at the UU-United Nations Office's Spring Seminar.



Hear directly from youth climate strikers fighting for change by watching the keynote conversation [here](#). UU climate activist Sophia Geiger leads a powerful conversation between youth climate strikers from the USA, Philippines and Scotland.

Watch the theme panel [here](#), highlighting Indigenous leaders and UN officials, moderated by UNO director Bruce Knotts.

Read the full recap [here](#).



Special Announcement

April 2020

Unitarian Universalist Association

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Dear Unitarian Church of Underwood,

Someone said to me recently, "We pull through this by pulling together." Those words have stayed with me. They remind me that I am not in this alone, that we are in this together, and that we are strong when we lean on each other and pull together.

This week marks the beginning of another holy season. Ramadan begins today for Muslims across the world. In this time of physical distancing, collective grief, and economic hardship, the shared ritual of daily fasting from dawn to dusk is an act that invites compassion for those who experience hunger, charity and generosity to ensure others have enough, a deepened attention to spiritual practices, and a powerful experience of connection and community.

Shared rituals and practices are important right now. They help strengthen connection despite our physical distance. As our congregations continue to meet virtually, the challenges of feeling connected can grow. I have found that lighting my own chalice

during virtual worship helps me feel more connected to the community and the experience.

This week also marks the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. What a time to remember how deeply interconnected our global world is. This isn't just about the spread of coronavirus; it's about how important global cooperation is for combatting pandemics and the climate crises; it's about the economy and how much our well-being and basic needs depend on others. On this Earth Day, may we remember we are knitted together and held by an inescapable social fabric.

This season elevates the values of interdependence, solidarity, and cooperation. Interestingly, Unitarian Universalism lives with an inherent tension between individualism and interdependence. The values of freedom, liberty, and the right of conscience are a core part of our principles as are the values of equity, responsibility, and interdependence. Ideally, this represents a middle path that celebrates the beauty of individuality and the power of beloved community, recognizing the Universalist message that liberation and salvation are not individual but collective.

Today, in our country, we see the stark tensions between these values on full display. We have people protesting stay at home orders in the name of liberty and public officials lifting them despite the risks to public health. On the other hand, we have one of the largest examples of global solidarity ever witnessed with people staying at home and doing everything in their power to help protect their neighbors, elders, those at higher risk, and everyone who must be out working in critical essential services.

Within Unitarian Universalism, our tendency toward individualism can create obstacles to caring for people in their most difficult moments. We are strongest at offering pastoral care, yet as financial and material needs grow, this is a time to take more seriously the practices and networks of mutual aid. How many times have you seen someone drop out of the congregation after being laid off or suffering a major setback? What would it take for Unitarian Universalists to make sure people have what they need to get through this time?

“We pull through this by pulling together.” Everything about this pandemic shows us how interconnected we are – how much we need each other. This is a time for connection, for community, for cooperation and solidarity.

During this season when our lives and world are so different than we imagined they would be just a few short months ago, may we lean in more to the rituals and practices that remind us of our interdependence. May we lean more fully into our relationships and our community. May we all find ways to give more generously, in whatever ways we are able, so that everyone in our communities, large and small, feel held and will have

enough.

May we invite the practices that keep us connected, compassionate, and loving in these days.

May loving community surround you and hold you.

Yours in love,

Susan

Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, UUA President spends her days strengthening the thriving mission of this faith.



**UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
March 2020 – no Board meeting**

**UNITARIAN CHURCH OF UNDERWOOD
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES—APRIL 14, 2019
(To be approved at 2020 Annual Meeting)**

Board members present: Connie Stigen, Darryl Booker, Shannon Smith, Kris Warhol, Ron Roller, Dave Sanderson, John Miersch, Bob Worner, Tim Lanz, and John Minge. In addition, there were about 20 Church members in attendance.

The Meeting was called to order at 11 A.M. by Board President Kris Warhol.

1. Kris opened the Meeting with a reading the Covenant of Behavior.
2. Agenda: The proposed agenda for this meeting was approved. (Miersch/Sanderson) Kris pointed out that, in addition to the Agenda, the handouts for this meeting included several written committee and task force reports.
3. Minutes of the April 15, 2018, Annual Meeting: The minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting were approved.
4. President's Report: Kris Warhol gave an oral and written President's Report.
5. Hiring Task Force Report: Mary Worner and Connie Stigen gave this report. The members of the Task Force are Connie Stigen, Kris Warhol, Mary Worner, Betsy Wells, John Miersch, and Bob Worner. The Task Force is looking for a replacement for JoAnn Larson who recently resigned from her administrative position. The Task Force has been meeting weekly and expects that it will take a few months for it to complete its assignment. The process that the Task Force is following was described. The Task Force has been given some detailed suggestions regarding the procedure from the Board and has also been using materials that it obtained from the national office of the UU Church. Connie Stigen said that the Task Force welcomes suggestions from Church members and is seeking clarification from the Board

regarding certain issues.

6. Treasurer's Report: Ron Roller and Teri Mann presented and went over a written Balance Sheet and a written Profit and Loss Performance Report for the church year ending on March 31, 2019. The proposed budget for the new church year beginning on April 1, 2019, appears on the Performance Report. The proposed budget is very similar to the budget for the year which just ended. There was discussion of the proposed budget and clarifications sought. The proposed budget was approved (with a few very small corrections/changes). (Bob Worner/Janell Miersh)

7. Stewardship Committee Report: Dave Sanderson reported orally and in writing on the activities of this committee which consists of six members. The committee is working with a UU stewardship consultant. A brochure designed to promote financial support of the Church has been prepared. It is to be used in lieu of an annual letter to Church members regarding such support. Dave also mentioned that direct payments (out of members' bank accounts) is being recommended as they make income more predictable. Such payments are being used by more and more Church members

8. Foundation Report: Dave Sanderson gave this report orally and in writing. Among other things, bequests are being encouraged.

9. Membership Committee Report: Mary Anderson gave this report orally and in writing. This committee meets quarterly. It welcomes new members twice a year. Mary generally described the activities of this committee.

10. Communications Committee Report: Teri Mann made brief comments to supplement the written report that was presented.

11. Records Task Force Report: Norm Kolstad gave this report orally and in writing.

12. Nominations Committee Report: Sue Groff gave this report. She recognized the departing Board members and mentioned that Mary Anderson is now no longer on the Executive Committee. John Miersch and David Sanderson are both at the end of six years, having served 2 three-year terms. This committee is nominating Alison Francis and Bonnie Showers as new Board Members and Connie Stigen to serve 2nd term. Nominations from the floor were requested. None were made. A motion was made to elect Alison and Bonnie to the two Board vacancies and Connie for a 2nd term. The motion was voted on and passed. (Teri Mann/Mary Anderson)

13. Celebrants' Report: Kris reported on the membership and activities of the Celebrants. A written report was also presented. Celebrant Shannon Smith reported that she and Ellen Eastby—another Celebrant—had each spoken at the Willmar UU Church.

14. Speakers Committee Report: Betsy Wells reported orally and in writing. She identified the members of this Committee.

15. Sunday Service Coordination Committee: Mary Worner reported orally and in writing on the activities of this Committee.

16. Mindfulness: Stan Carrigan reported orally and in writing on this activity. He also raised his concern regarding the appropriate use of the room that is used for this activity. He would like to see it treated/used as a sacred space.

17. Adult Religious Education: Brief comments were made by some of the teachers to supplement the written report that was presented.

18. Children's Religious Education: Mary Anderson reported orally on this to supplement the written report that was presented. This activity has been going very well with the help of several volunteers.

19. U Groups: Kris Warhol reported on this activity.

20. Facilities Committee Report: Sue Groff reported orally and in writing on the activities of this Committee.

21. Sverdrup Suites Report: Sue Groff reported orally and in writing on this.

22. Safety Committee Report: Norm Kolstad presented a written report regarding the activities of this Committee.

23. Community Outreach Report: Kris Warhol reported orally and in writing on this area of activity within the Church.

24. Social and Environmental Justice Report: Janell Miersch reported orally and in writing regarding this area of interest within the Church.

25. Empowerment Grants: Ron Roller reported orally and in writing on the Empowerment Grants. He reported that the Church has become known in the Underwood community for this granting activity. To date, \$105,000 has been granted by the Church to many non-profit grantees. Of the \$19,000 that was recently requested, \$10,000 in grants were just approved. Ron asked whether or not the Church wanted to continue granting \$10,000 each year. There was some discussion regarding whether or not we should give out more money each year as what we have been granting is not much of a sacrifice on the part of the Church as all that it amounts to is the Church giving out money that has been given to it. One suggestion was that, at a minimum, there should be an annual cost-of-living adjustments. No action was taken, but it is anticipated that this concern will be looked at more carefully before next year's granting process.

26. New Business—Space Planning Task Force Report: Mary Anderson presented this report orally and in writing. This Task Force has met five times to date. Most of its attention has been focused on the following three matters: (1) replacing/restoring the upstairs windows of the church building, (2) having an exit door built into the sanctuary, and (3) taking steps to improve air quality in the church building. There was considerable discussion regarding these matters. There was strong support for having the windows replaced or restored. (Everyone in attendance with a show of hands was in favor of doing something with the windows.) There was less support for the exit door. (Almost exactly half of those in attendance supported an exit door with the other half opposing it.) The biggest issues seemed to the undersigned to be the aesthetics of such a door, the need for such a door, and the cost of such a door—and not necessarily in that order. There was little real discussion of the air quality concern, and there was little support for it. (Only three people in attendance supported doing anything with regard to air quality.) Estimates of the cost of each of these possible projects were presented. However, the estimates were not based on any onsite inspections or detailed analysis of what would actually be required. Darryl Booker said that those estimates were not reliable at this point and could be high or low. No action was taken regarding any of these three potential projects. Even though the consensus seemed to be that the Board can decide on how to proceed with regard to each of them, it also seemed that there was significant interest on the part of the congregation with regard to the two larger issues—the exit door in particular—and that the Board is not likely to make any final decisions without further significant input from the congregation—perhaps even a special congregational meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at about 1 P.M.

Respectfully submitted this 30th day of April, 2019.

John Minge, Secretary