



Unitarian Church of Underwood September 2014 Newsletter

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

Coming up in September Sunday morning service resumes at 10:30 a.m.

September 7 - Bernice Johnson will update us on her work with Shan children and View School, followed by a photo presentation by **Eitan Simanor**, who Bernice met in 2005 in Burma. Eitan will talk about Burma after the so-called reforms of 2009 and after the 2012 official visit of Hillary Clinton.

September 14 – Bob Worner COMMUNITY, principle #6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all.

September 21 – Ellen Eastby, Through the Eyes of a Child. While at Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago, Ellen had to preach two sermons for her class. In February she shared a little bit about the class she attended and presented a talk based on the first sermon she preached while in Chicago. That sermon was about giving and was called “A Rock in her Pocket.” The talk she is giving at UCU in September is based on the second sermon she gave at Meadville-Lombard and is about receiving. It addresses the first principle, the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

September 28 – Alternative Health Forum - Among us are knowledgeable UUs who are involved in health and alternative healing. A panel, consisting of Peggy Maxwell, David Sanderson, Katy Olson, Tere Mann, and Shannon Smith will share their views and experiences in this growing medical consciousness. Audience questions and discussion are welcome.

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

Fall Plans for Religious Education Sunday Morning Classes resume in September

From Mary Worner, Program Chair

There are several options for children and adults this fall for religious education (RE):

For the children and youth, Betsy Wells and JoAnn Larson are working together on planning. They sent an e-mail to parents to find a Sunday in September to meet. There will be two RE groups, one for the younger and another for the older. If parents and their children are interested, they will also offer Coming of Age sessions for our early teen-agers.

John Minge will lead an adult RE group meeting the first Sunday of each month. John has some ideas for topics and materials. A decision will be made along with the participants at their first meeting on September 7.

Luke Anderson and Diane Johnson will again conduct a spiritual writing group meeting on the third Sunday of each month. The class will begin by preparing to do a Sunday morning service as they did last year.

On the fourth Sunday of the month, Bob Worner will lead a class. He has been approached by several people, including some of our celebrants, to hold a class on the Bible. The class will begin studying the Gospel of Mark. If that study finds a sufficient audience they will turn next to the Old Testament Prophets.

Thanks to everyone who is doing planning and preparation to offer all these options.

September 7 Adult Religious Education

TBD - Kids Religious Education

Other Meetings:

September 9 – Fergus Falls Evening U Group 7 p.m. at the home of Sandy Barnhouse (2nd Tuesday of each month)

September 11 – Perham U Group 3:30 p.m. at the home of Mary Anderson (2nd Thursday of each month)

September 12 - 12 Noon Facilities Committee

September 16 – Fergus Falls Afternoon U Group 4:30.m. at the home of Diana Ziesemer (3rd Tuesday of each month)

September 17 - 5:30 p.m. Speakers Committee

6:30 Board Meeting

September 23 - U Group Facilitators (4th Tuesday of each month)

September 24 - 125 Year Celebration Planning Task Force/Membership Committee

September 25 - Battle Lake U Group @ home of Ross & Mary Larson (4th Thursday of each month)

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

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas and articles for the Newsletter to: maryanderson8380@msn.com. Mailing provided by Ellen Eastby and JoAnn Larson. Suggestions for articles and feedback are appreciated. **Please note: A volunteer is needed for 1-2 hours/month to do the final editing of each month's Newsletter and provide assistance to the editor on stories/ideas for features. Contact Mary at above address.**

The Month That Was

August 3, Bob Worner, "Conscience and the Democratic Process, UU Principle #5." At first the 5th principle seems to be TWO principles rather than one as we affirm the right of conscience and use of the democratic process. We need to balance the two concepts in our own mind.

1. Con- means with, science means knowledge. – conscience with knowledge. Inform yourself, give yourself something to play with. Frank McCord in his book Angela's Ashes says "we can't make up an empty mind." Use not only data, but experimentation. Conscience acts as a moral compass but needs knowledge or it may be dangerous. Our UU church serves as a framework to our conscience. But with knowledge, you have to combine data experimentation and FEELING. Bob's visit to the Church of Religious Science that their principles showed that they borrow, know, feel and act. With UU, we teach, study, learn, share and care. "All feelings, no knowledge or all knowledge, no feeling in religious institutions - both are lacking."
2. "With others" – Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, is an interesting study of an isolated self who had a conscience without community – the benefit of collective wisdom to temper his urges. Bob himself, though working for gender equality, saw some of its losses – it now took two people as wage earners leading to less time for family. Conscience formed by action – examples of father, mentor, community, just growing up with Midwest values. Collective consciousness is the gathering of these influences.
3. Conscience is expressed in action – belief in action. Either what we do or FAIL to do. Right spirit means having the courage to do/be. We will not stand alone – the students in Les Miserables stood up waiting for the community to respond, however the community slept leaving the students to stand alone.

Standing together leads to the democratic process. The individual conscience and action is an essential part of the whole. Even though our political candidate may lose the election, our vote counts as it may be the very vote that gives the win.

Looking back on a mentor may mean that they showed us dignity and joy for 20 years and thus our history is changed. Every human being is priceless and divine. Comments: don't judge a person on their political persuasion – just a different way of expressing their heart.

August 10 – Linda Friend, Award winning Film Maker from Madison, Wisconsin with the film "Overjoyed." Cameras were given to people in the Milwaukee neighborhood to record their own story. This was the story of Latara who had her first baby at 14 that died of SIDS. She had her second child at 16 and 3rd by the time she was 18. She said she was "looking for love in all

the wrong places.” Latara just wanted words from her mom saying “I’m proud of you.” Now, she has 4 children, is a teacher at Head Start and an active member of the community church. The neighborhood is rough with many abandoned buildings, crack houses, drug dealers. But she wants her four children to “have good times even if bad times.” She is “overjoyed” right now.

The Annie Casey Foundation came to this neighborhood with the cameras but did not show them how to use them and besides, the women knew it was unsafe to go out with a camera or they would be robbed. Linda Friend would not say the neighborhood had gotten better because of the efforts of the Casey Foundation so she lost the rights to the film. The job of a journalist is to inform. Teen girls know they will not have a good life, need to feel productive and so become a mom to have someone to love them. Teen boys turn to gangs.

Linda teaches at the University in Madison and regularly visits these neighborhoods. No one cares about these people because they are black, no one goes there because it is dangerous, there are no young black men on the street although there is a correctional center right there in the middle. Families occupy the abandoned buildings in winter, there are fires and some die.

Ken Hamrun said that black men are 27 times more incarcerated here in MN than whites. Linda visited the Boys and Girls Club in Detroit Lakes, saw kids in poverty and racial diversity there and noted they need technology and volunteers. She is quite disheartened as to what is happening in Wisconsin.

August 17 –Rev. Roger Parks, River of Life – Coming from a larger pool, flowing through life experiences we empty into a mighty sea. UU Principle # 7. Roger referenced John Philip Newell’s The Rebirthing of God – the need to rebirth essence of the spirit/Christian. Connect to the world around us, nature, one another, the larger earth. Let go and let flow deep within the God that courses through all. Recognize the spirituality of intimacy with the natural world, we are not separate, apart from. Connect with the wisdom etched within our very being and bring it forth. Thomas Burton describes the world as transparent, God shows through at all times. We need to open our eyes to see. Remember to be present.

Then Roger showed a program of fantastic pictures of beauty in nature. His intent was to get our reaction to the experience of viewing nature. Did we feel a connection? When asked where did he get all of these great shots, he said, “In Monet’s garden in France, at Four corners, Utah, in my wife’s garden” They are all his taken over more than 30 years!!!

August 24 – Mel Duncan, founder of the Non-Violent Peace Force, “The World Stands Disgraced.” The past two months have been excruciating for the planet and its people. The South Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza/Israel, re-escalation of the war in Iraq, Syria, Ferguson, Missouri, U tube showing of executions. The UN High Commission on Human Rights said in 2013 there have been more people displaced because of violence and persecution than since World War. And 2014 is even worse. We seem to have lost the membrane of global norms and preventions – it has been shredded by elected prime ministers and elected presidents.

The morning that Mel was emailing with Jo about coming today, the UN school was shelled by artillery in Gaza and so the words “The World Stands Disgraced.” But is it “loss of grace?” For unarmed peace keepers, “it’s a mess.”

Usually when Mel speaks, he relays the need, the effective response, some inspiring stories, some results and leaves us with hope. This time it was difficult for him. Anne Lamont describes it as “hitting bottom,” “great unknowing,” “muddled reflections of unknowing.”

We are not thinking differently – we react to violence with more violence. \$4.3 billion of excess military arms have now been given to local law enforcement agencies. Does Royalton need grenade launchers? No law enforcement agency in MN has turned them down. Today, President Obama called for review of this policy. We must separate locally based policing and locally based economies from the armaments of war. Not only do we need to stop the permanent war economy, we now need to stop war.

A quote from Martin Luther King - “Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can.”

Example of Derek and Andrius, two non-violent peace keepers who were assigned to protect 14 civilians, answered the militia with AK weapons, “no, we will not leave, we are here to protect civilians. This time the militants left.

Example of Mindamau – Philippines. The Christian government and the Moral Islamic Liberation Front came together and for four years now have had a peace agreement.

The NVPF is in Myanmar and in Syria- there they work with 50 civil society organizations.

Are we “disgraced? No, we are discouraged, disgusted but grace surrounds us. Rumni says “ours is not a caravan of despair.” Recognize and encourage the act of grace all around us.

August 31 – Meredith Albers, “Soil, Provider of Life.” Meredith, a UCU member now living in Great Falls, MT and employed by the USDA as a Soil Scientist speaks to us with great enthusiasm about the wonders of soil. We know less about the soil than we do about the cosmos. Last time she spoke, she cautioned us “don’t till it” and “don’t keep it bare, cover it.” We can micromanage our small garden plots but that becomes harder with large acreage. It is a trial and error process.

Soil, the provider of life is a “living, breathing skin of the earth.” It does many things for sustaining us including filtering water and treating our waste. “Probably more harm has been done to the science by the almost universal attempts to look upon the soil merely as a producer of crops rather than as a natural body worth in and for itself of all the study that can be devoted to it, than most men realize.” C.F. Marbut 1920.

The basics of soil are “cool” as Meredith described the different properties and size of sand, silt, clay and organic matter comprising soil. We live in a carbon based world and different degrees of soil hold to different levels water and nutrients with the binding and breaking down of chemicals that follow.

Montana where Meredith now lives has different challenges to managing soil because of so little rain and water resources, unlike Minnesota. We need new perspectives and need to try different ways. Meredith left us with a book, “Know Soil, Know Life.” She also reminded us that “everything we take, we have to rebuild.”

“God’s Work - Our Hands” Join Sverdrup Community Project, September 7

On September 7, 2014, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – 4 million members in nearly 10,000 congregations – will have an opportunity to celebrate who they are by taking part in “God’s Work – Our Hands.” This Sunday, is a day dedicated to serving the communities in which we live. You work every day to love your neighbors and make your community a better place. The ELCA is a church that rolls up sleeves, gets to work and serves our neighbors. Community service projects will be selected for all ages, and all mobility and physical capabilities. Some service projects will remain at Sverdrup, while some will go out into the community and immediate area.

Sverdrup has invited us, the members of UCU, to join them this year. This is a great opportunity for our church to serve the community and join in fellowship with other local churches. Anyone interested in participating please contact Ellen Eastby as soon as possible, but no later than Wednesday @ www.ucofu.org. She can be reached at 218-731-0803 or eastofellen@hotmail.com Please let her know which of the projects you are interested in. Details are in an insert in the August 31 Sunday Program or on our website: www.ucofu@ucofu.org.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to **Brian Larson** who made a large donation to buy pew cushions and thanks to **Ellen Eastby** for finding them on-line and ordering them so that we can sit in comfort.

Thank you **John Minge** for providing supplies and building the cabinet for under the TV downstairs so that we have more storage and the unsightly cords are hidden and covered for safety.

Thank you **Esme Larsen** for making your piano debut with us at UCU. Esme played the upper keys with Grandma Susan Groff on the lower keys while Anders Perrson delicately accompanied her sounds, both at the beginning of the piece and again at the end. Maggie Meehan commented: “what a gentle way to be introduced to playing for church.” Marguerite Andrews commented: “Esme is little! And good!”

And we have these words from Esme herself: “I started lessons last September through May. I start again with the school year. My teacher is Karen Hauck. I love her and she's a lot of fun. I think playing with Grandma is awesome. Anders is awesome too. Love, Esme.”

Thank you **Jen Walla** and **Anne Andersen** for stepping up as kitchen coordinators during the summer months and thanks to all of you who helped out by bringing treats.

And thank you, the great team of the **125 Year Anniversary Celebration Planning Task Force and Membership Committee** for all the work you did making the Unitarian Church of Underwood such a big part of the Underwood Harvest Festival August 30. Planning members included: **Mary Anderson, Ellen Eastby, Susan Groff, Miriana Ivanovik-Hoff, JoAnn Larson, John Minge, John and Janell Miersch, Alisha Pierkarsi, Kris Warhol, Bob and Mary Worner.** Thank you to **Chuck Adelsman** with his John Deere tractor pulling the Peoples' Wagon (“the best float in the parade”) festively decorated by **Ellen Eastby** and **Kris Warhol**; to **Norm Kolstad** for all the pictures for the slide show (“art work in itself”) and to **Kris Warhol** for narrating our history; to the musicians: **Ken Hamrun, Wally Warhol, Karl Kuyath, Alvin Olson, and Alex Munsterman, Katy Olson, Deb Walberg, Betsy Wells and Sally Avant** (We even had musicians waiting in the wings!); to our artists: **Lance Albers, Budd Andrews, Luke Anderson, Sandra Barnhouse, Joanne Cress, Mickie Edmonds, Ron Graham, Ashley Leuthardt, and Liz Sweder** and special thanks to **Sandy** for setting up the show so wonderfully; to the RE Kids, **Luke Andersen, Sterling Czeck, Skylar & Jewel Swanson and Mary Wunderlich** and the adult scoopers, **JoAnn Larson, Anne Andersen, Alisha Piekarski and John Minge** who served more than 200 ice cream floats and to Jo's friend, **John Sabbin** who brought the “mobile freezer.” To our Notable Unitarians: Beatrice Potter (**Janell Miersch**), Ralph Waldo Emerson (**Donn Siems**), Louisa May Alcott (**Mary Anderson**), Fanny Farmer (**Kris Warhol**), Edvard Grieg (**Mary Worner**) and to **Florence Thompson** wearing a *hellingdal brunard* costume from the 1800's designed by Clara Strand that depicted our Norwegian roots.

To the greeters and guides who welcomed our guests and led them to the displays and through our beautiful building. There were a number of visitors saying this was the first time they had been in the church or from others saying, they had been to the church years ago and marveling at what it looks like today. And to **all of you** who helped in these and other ways or were here to attend and make this community celebration so special. We, Unitarian Universalists this day were in unity with each other, our church and our community. All in all, we deem the day a huge success!!

Note that **Ken Hamrum and Wally Warhol and the brass ensemble** were carrying on the tradition of Underwood's Brass Bands for around 1882 Underwood's uniformed marching band first performed. We have a photo of the Bowery taken at Moen's Point dated 1885 with the band performing with women and children standing below. The Carlisle band has been performing for well over a hundred years. The Brass Ensemble above carried on the tradition.

Handicapped Parking

The curb immediately outside church is now painted blue; those two spots are handicap accessible parking. Thank you, Ellen Eastby, for all the phone calls to coordinate this and thanks to Sverdrup Church members for painting the curb in time for the Harvest Festival.

Puppet Makers Needed

Bernice Johnson is returning again to Thailand in November to work with the Shan children at their special school. Last year, a number of us made 55 puppets for Bernice to give the children. They were such a hit with them that this year Bernice would like to have 70 to take with her. So if you can help make puppets, please contact Mary Anderson @ maryanderson8380@msn.com or 218/346-6638. There is a basic pattern (mitten with an extra thumb) but after that it is up to you and your imagination in creating whatever characters you'd like. We need to have them done by late October to get them in Bernice's suitcase!



Shan kids with their puppets singing Tutti Ta 2013

UUA Common Read

The 2014-2015 [UUA Common Read](#) is *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square* By Paul Razor. In this important book, leading Unitarian Universalist theologian Paul Razor dispels the myth that conservative Christianity is the only valid religious voice in national debates on social policy. Showing that religious liberals are more numerous than many realize, Razor calls them to embrace their prophetic heritage and bring their religious convictions to bear on the issues of our time.

A discussion guide designed for your congregation and community will be available in October. [Learn more](#) at the UUA Bookstore. Buy in bulk and save: bulk orders of 5 to 9 copies receive an automatic 10% discount and orders of 10 or more receive an automatic 20% discount.

Luke Anderson Feature Story

For a feature story on Luke and how he helped found the Lake Region Writers Network (LRW), see OTC Family-Friends & FUN in Otter Tail County Fall 2014 Magazine. We are grateful to have

UUA Budget Shortfall

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) experienced a significant shortfall in the projected income for fiscal year 2014 (FY14 ended June 30th). This shortfall income also affected the projected income for FY15. The Board of Trustees has unanimously voted to approve the revised FY15 budget to address the challenges. For more information see the letter from President Peter Morales at the UUA website or the latest UU World magazine.

Beginning Experience Coping with Life Alone

Beginning Experience (BE), a Christian based support group in the Fergus Falls area, will begin sessions on Monday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls. All widowed, divorced or separated people are welcome. For more information call 218/998-3498 or email befergusfalls@yahoo.com.

Great Mystery

“Nothing in the world is static. No matter how firm or rock-solid a thing seems, it is always in motion, always changing, because that is the nature of creation. Nothing came from nothing. Everything comes from something that has been before. At the heart of the acorn are the atoms of the tree from which it dropped, and those same atoms have been in the soil of the earth before the oak drew them into itself, and before that they’d been in the water that had fallen from the sky, and long, long before that, they’d been a part of the beginning of the universe. The acorn, the oak tree, the sky, the earth, the stars, the universe, all woven into the same vast fabric of creation, all connected, all part of the Great Mystery.”

William Kent Krueger – Tamarack County.



Fall Reflections, Mickie Edmonds

Gifts They Brought

John & Catherine Gronner

The Gronner family has been prominent in the history of the Underwood church, members of that family having served in various capacities throughout the Church's history. John A. Gronner Jr., president of the congregation for 24 years, was presented the *Unsung Unitarian Universalist* award by the Unitarian Universalist Association "for making the most significant expression of Unitarian Universalist religion" in 1979. John Gronner Sr. was church treasurer for 20 years. John Gronner Jr.'s brothers Alfred and Hjalmer each served as president, Alfred for a total of 10 years. His mother, Emilie, sisters Ethel and Olga served for a total of 41 years in religious education. Ethel Gronner was secretary for 24 years.

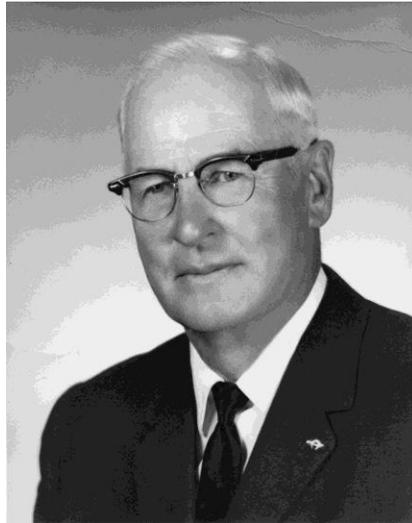
From John and Catherine Gronner's daughter, Sally (Gronner) Michener, August 2014:

"John Arnold Gronner was born on April 8, 1903 in Underwood, Minn. He was the son of Norwegian immigrants who came to Minnesota in the 1880's and who were part of a small group who started the Unitarian Church here. Dad's father was also active in other local affairs and both parents were liberals, somewhat socialistic in thinking. He was the youngest of 8 children and grew up on Woodlawn Farm outside of Underwood. He attended Crookston Agricultural School and while urged to attend University by his teachers, he instead returned home to farm. However, his father was disgusted that he had gone to school for four years just to be a farmer, so Dad moved in other directions becoming County Agricultural Agent, business manager for a lumber camp and other activities before becoming part of State Farm Insurance. He began as a district manager in the local area and did so well he was given the job as director for the state of Kansas where we moved in 1938.

Catherine Henney Gronner was born on Sept. 10, 1909 in Nebraska where her father (formerly a teacher) was completing his medical studies to become a country doctor in MacIntosh, Minnesota. He was often the Mayor and active in local activities. She had one sister, Alice Beryl. Their mother had tuberculosis and lived often in a separate tent. Grandfather took the family to Arizona by horse and buggy when Mother was 3, hoping for a cure. However, it did not help and her Mother died. The girls went to live with her aunt, Alice Smith in DeSmet, South Dakota, returning to live with her father and new wife later. In MacIntosh, Mother was active in Campfire Girls, played the piano for silent movies and spent a lot of time outdoors, curious about plants, birds and so on. She attended Moorhead State College where she played an Alto Horn in the band, among other things. After qualifying to be an elementary teacher, she came to Underwood to teach at the suggestion of Dad's sister Ethel (who taught first and second grade in Underwood for many years). They married in 1933 and had four children: Joan, me (Sally Alice), Jon and Eric. The 3 older children were born while our parents lived in Underwood, and then we moved to Kansas in 1938 where Rick was born.

Dad was a very successful and popular director of the State Farm Company in Kansas. He also helped raise money for a children's hospital there and was helpful in establishing a Unitarian fellowship. Dad had been a close friend of Dana Greeley (national Unitarian leader) after they met at a summer camp while teenagers. While in Kansas, his sister Ethel raised concern for

what was happening to the Unitarian fellowship in Underwood, and together they helped it survive. Apparently a local minister had alienated many of the "humanists" who left the group. (You have extensive files about this issue in the 1940's.) Dad always called himself a humanist, believing in doing good works in the here and now. He always had a Thoreau poster in his study/office with "it is better to wear out than rust out" as the maxim.



John Gronner

We returned to Underwood in 1951. Dad was president of the UHS school board for 12 years, Unitarian President for 24 years, given an award for leadership with Guernsey breeders, 50 years a Mason, Ottertail Senior citizen, helped preserve Foss log cabin, worked on BiCentennial Park, fundraised for Legion Hall, Tamarac Manor, William Douglas memorial at Phelps Mill, Community Cafe, president of Ottertail Historical Society and helped raise funds for the Museum in Fergus (which named a wing in his honor) and had intentions of being a Johnny Appleseed - planting trees in Sverdrup County (idea not realized as he was not good at issues like regular watering thereafter) He needed to be busy and useful in the Underwood community he loved..

He died of amyloidosis, at that time a rare, incurable disease, when he was 79.

Mother arrived in Underwood in 1931 to teach grades 3-6. She also directed plays. (When I was recently in Underwood for a school reunion several women whom she taught later in the 1950's when she returned to teaching for a few years, said she was the best teacher they ever had.) She was especially passionate about the arts, loving opera, classical music, visual arts and literature.



Younger Catherine

After marrying, Mother essentially became a homemaker. Her family was her greatest source of pride and joy. She was always ready to support, encourage and love all of us. (She also helped Dad write his many speeches. She stayed in the background, as women of that generation often did.) She made clothes for the girls all our lives, and was also skilled in knitting, needle point and crochet. She made sure we took piano lessons from the time we were 6, and later Joan played the cello, I the violin, Jack the flute, and Rick reluctantly, the trombone. We attended symphonies from junior high on. She also read to us and encouraged us to read good classics. She saw that we attended summer camps.

Mother continued playing the piano, but did not have much time until the 3 older children were in college. She was also an excellent cook. She was active in the Unitarian fellowship in Topeka, Kansas and again in Underwood, where she played piano or organ for Sunday services for many years. She helped found the local Women's Study Club. She was a longtime volunteer at the State Hospital in Fergus Falls. She was an avid learner and took many classes at the local college in Fergus and Elder Hostel classes across the USA. She loved travel and took many memorable trips (many featuring opera or music such as boys' choirs in Gothic cathedrals) to Norway, England, Italy, France, Portugal, Austria, Germany, Egypt, South America, Australia as well as extensive travel in USA, Canada and Mexico.

Mother died in 2004 at 94. Her last trip was a canal river boat trip with me in Northern England and Wales when she was 92. She loved feeding the ducks and was still game to try the local ales at historical pubs enroute!"

From **Marguerite Andrews**: "The biggest accolade John Gronner got was at the Annual Meeting of the UUA East Lansing Michigan in 1979 when I was elected to accept from President Eugene Pickett, The Unsung Unitarian Award for John because his health would not let him travel. My picture receiving this award was on the back cover of the UU World.

John and his sister, Ethel Gronner, sent money to Boston annually to be sure the church was up to date on dues. He was also active in Kansas where he was in the insurance business.

The BEST story of John...

John Gronner and Dana Greely met as young men and remained close. Dana was the first President of the national UUA in 1961. When I met Dana I told him that John's son's middle name was Dana, and Dana said to me, "And if I had a son he would have been named John." Dana came to speak here but John missed it. He was gone, but would have loved knowing that. He died in 1981.

Catherine Gronner was the elegant church pianist during that first decade I attended."

From **Kris Warhol**: "John had been gone several years prior to my meeting Catherine Gronner. Catherine lived in the man servant's house behind the main house on Green Acres in rural Underwood.

It was a lovely home filled with mementoes and treasures from all over the world. She was well read and her hobbies also included knitting, needlepoint and correspondence. She was with the DAR, Daughters of the American Revolution. Her father had served in the military. She played the piano up until her arthritis took over and after two Sundays of no music, Susan Groff began playing for us. Catherine served as the last secretary of the woman's alliance.

During one of our many visits she was telling me how much she enjoyed seeing Bill Holm playing an organ on Rural Churches, a Minnesota PBS special.

When I first attended in 1998 Catherine was still driving. Attending most Sundays she would sit in her favorite pew dressed smartly and wearing a scarf. She also wore a chain necklace of a spoon and name tag that read 'John.'

Catherine was dedicated to seeing our church thrive. No doubt her earlier efforts along with John's provided the fulfillment of their work tenfold.

Catherine was always pleased to enjoy a visit with a fellow church member. She called me 'a good social director of the church.'"

Found in a scrap book maintained by Kris, these words in Catherine's handwriting regarding the purpose of the Women's Study Group she helped start: "The purpose of this organization is to quicken religious life, to strive toward those ideas of personal and social living, to which its members are committed as Unitarians and to strengthen the principles of free religion in their home, their church, their community and their world."

From **Mary Worner**: "I visited Catherine weekly in her home for the last couple years of her life. She was always a lovely hostess and seemed to enjoy socializing. She liked to play games and we'd often play dominoes.

Catherine had many beautiful things in her home. In contrast, on the windowsill above her kitchen sink she always had an arrangement of a few carefully chosen small stones. They must have had a special meaning to her. I learned from her to appreciate simple things and I now also keep a few stones on my kitchen windowsill.”

Those who knew the Gronners say that we might not be here celebrating our 125th year, had it not been for the efforts of the Gronners. We maintain gratefulness for their perseverance and dedication.

U-Groups

First, reflections on the Summer U Group by Co-facilitator, Tere Mann:

We met by the lake, with gracious hosts, Bob & Mary.

Facilitated by Connie, Bob & Tere.

Deemed to gather summer folk.

What came?

The diversity of geography,

Rush/Buchanan, Fergus, East Lost, Little Anna & more

Some of the older members

With the newest.

Contemplating Who Am I, Silence and...

Grateful for the opportunities to...

To go deep within ourselves,

To share, or not,

In a safe container

Held by fellow seekers.

New U-Groups begin again in September 2014 and continue through May 2015.

This begins the 4th year for our small group ministry groups. For this coming year, the four groups that will meet are as follows:

- **Battle Lake Afternoon Group** – the 4th Tuesday of each month from 3:30-5:30 co-facilitated by Bob Worner and Joanne Cress at the home of Ross and Mary Larson.
- **Fergus Falls Evening Group** -the second Tuesday of each month from 7 to 9 pm co-facilitated by Diane Johnson and Carole Mitchell at the home of Sandy Barnhouse (corner of Highways 1 and 35).
- **Fergus Falls Afternoon Group** - the third Thursday of each month from 4:30 to 6:30 pm co-facilitated by Tere Mann and Bonnie (Bell) Albers at the home of Diana Ziesemer.
- **The Perham Afternoon Group** – the 2nd Thursday of each month co-facilitated by Mary Anderson and Mary Worner at the home of Mary Anderson.

To sign up for a U-Group, contact either one of the co-facilitators of the group or Connie Stigen @ dcstigen@gmail.com or call her @ 218/731-1443.

It'll be another great year of quiet reflection, deep sharing and togetherness. Join us!

September Topic: Absorbing Silence

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Approved Board Minutes for June 18, 2014**

Board members present: Ellen Eastby, Norman Kolstad, David Sanderson, Kris Warhol, Mary Worner, Don Siems, Alisha Piekarski, Mary Anderson and David Wass. Absent: John Miersch. Also present: JoAnn Larson.

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Ellen Eastby at 6:35 p.m.

Mary Worner shared a reading/meditation.

The agenda was approved (Anderson/Sanderson).

The minutes of the May 21, 2014 meeting were approved as corrected (Anderson/Warhol).

Reports:

Treasurer: David Wass
Program Committee: Mary Worner
Outreach Committee: no report
Membership Committee: Mary Anderson
Planned Giving Committee: David Sanderson

Old Business: The name of the Planned Giving Committee was changed to the Foundation Advisory Committee (Sanderson/Siems). Other topics: billing information form revision and the 125th Anniversary activities.

New Business: The board reviewed the Strategic Goals. John Miersch joined the meeting at 7:10 pm and presented the Facilities Committee report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 16, 2014 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Norman Kolstad, secy.