

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

206 North Main Street

Underwood

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org

Sunday Services

*September 3- Katy
Olson*

*September 10 - Ník
Nerburn*

*September 17 - Ghazi
Hassoun*

*September 24 - Rev.
Stefan Jonasson*



September 2017 Newsletter

**Services Begin at 10:00 a.m.
year- round**

September 2017						
◀ August						October ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Underwood Harvest Festival Parade 1:00 pm 
3 Katy Olson “What I Learned at the Mosque, Muhammad, Islam & the Koran” Adult RE led by John Minge 8:45-9:45 am	4 <i>Happy Labor Day!!</i>  AA 7 pm	5 Speakers Committee 3:30 pm	6 Communication/Tech Team?	7	8	9
10 Nik Nerburn – Film: “Prairie Dreamers” Ancient Religions led by Sandy Barnhouse 8:45-9:45 am Children’s RE 10-11 am. Parent meeting 11:20 am	11 AA 7 pm	12 Battle Lake U Group @ 3:00 p.m. @ Susan Groff and Dave Wass’s.	13 Alexandria U-Group: 7:00 pm @ Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg.	14	15 Executive Committee 9:30 am	16
17 Ghazi Hassoun Mindfulness/Quaker Quiet Time Sitting 8:30-9:30 am	18 AA 7 pm	19 Fergus Falls U Group @ 6 pm @ Diana Zieseimer’s	20 Board of Directors 5:30 pm	21 Perham U Group 3:30 pm @ John Minge;s	22 DeMasi Brothers Concert @ Ron & Barb Graham’s 7-9 pm	23
24 Stefan Jonassen New Member Orientation/UU Refresher 8:15-9:45 am	25 AA 7 pm	26	27	28	29	30 Ride for Refugees 1-4 pm 

Coming in September

September 3 – Katy Olson – “What I Learned at the Mosque: Mohammad, Islam and the Koran.”

September 10 – Nik Nerburn - “Prairie Dreamers” an ‘irreverent little film’ about an organization called Springboard for the Arts and what they’ve been doing in a town in west-central Minnesota called Fergus Falls. Nik lived in Fergus for a month, documenting a period of transition where they moved into their new office. Springboard is known for helping artists get their financial and legal houses in order, but their work in Fergus also revolves around something called creative placemaking. Creative placemaking can look like a lot of different things, but Nik describes it as ‘taking a place people don’t want to be and making it a place they do’. In Fergus, much of that revolves around an old state hospital building that looms on the edge of

town. But their whole spectrum of rural life is also being reimagined. That's what the film explores. Also see http://springboardexchange.org/prairie_dreamers/

September 17 – Ghazi Hassoun - Retired theoretical physicist who taught at NDSU giving his story about being displaced by the Israeli Palestinian war of 1948 and his personal struggle to understand "Middle Eastern history, politics, religion, inter-community relations, economics, refugees" etc. His book is - *Walking Out into the Sunshine*.

September 24 – Rev. Stefan Jonassen, a long-time UU minister and friend of UCU who knows more of our history than we do.

For your gift giving to UCU, please consider direct debit. Your gifts support and sustain the mission of UCU through Program, Facility and Community Outreach. Thank you!!

2017 Fall U Groups

Stan Carignan & Luke Anderson have stepped up to lead the U Group Facilitators for the coming year. See details below. Thank you!

Adult Religious Education Classes Resume September – May

See details below

Children's Religious Education

**September 10 – Dance & Song
with Mikkel Thompson
Parents' Meeting Following**

See details below

Newsletter Submissions

Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to: maryanderson8380@msn.com.

Editing: Stephanie Sanderson

Emailing/mailling: Ellen Eastby and JoAnn Larson. Paintings: Mickie Edmonds

Note: The www.ucofu.org website is updated regularly to include the monthly newsletters and other current items of interest.

Wi-fi Now Available at UCU

See Bulletin Board or Bulletins for Password

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

New Member Orientation/ UU Refresher

Learn more about Unitarian Universalism
and the Unitarian Church of Underwood
September 24 – 8:15-9:45 a.m.
For more details, see below.

Notes from August Programs

August 6, 2017 - Bob Worner's talk entitled "Matters of Life and Death," addressed the UU 2nd principle of justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

One of Bob's favorite movies is *Groundhog's Day*. The main character, played by Bill Murray, repeatedly wakes up on Feb. 2 until he develops a routine of helping others, and thereby establishing meaning in his life. We all need to recognize the meaning in each day. Garrison Keillor states that "Life is good, no matter the disappointments."

And we need to embrace both life and death:

- We need to grow up, and let go of the parts of ourselves that are childish.
- We need to slow down and experience the wonder and beauty of each day.
- We need to accept ourselves – our gifts and limitations.
- We need to try to leave the earth a better place, even in small ways, than it was when we arrived.
- Being able to give thanks.

Bob ended with a reading, about how we are all created from mud...
"Lucky me, lucky mud. I got so much and most mud got so little."

August 13 - Special Guest Speaker, Dave Hage has worked in journalism for 35 years as a reporter, editorial writer, editor and co-author of three books, most recently as ghost writer for Walter F. Mondale's memoir, *The Good Flight*. He and his wife, Therese, have a lake cottage on Swan Lake, the center of the universe for their kids.

Dave continued where he left off from his talk to us last year regarding how the internet allows us to tailor our consumption of news and information so that America society is losing the ability to reach decisions based on a shared reality. He entitled his talk, "**Paging Galileo.**"

In 1610, Galileo, using his telescope, observed that there were 3 objects orbiting Jupiter and thus committed heresy by refuting the belief that everything orbited the earth. Even though he was forced by church demands to recant his theory, others observed the same facts so that the theory did not die. This was the birth of scientific revolution – observable facts could be shared and tested.

Now our world view is under threat that facts are tailored just for you. Author Eli Pariser wrote *The Filter Bubble* – information is so filtered that we live in a bubble. The history of Amazon, Facebook, Google based on your look-ups, presents back to you, narrow information tailored to you. Studies find that there is no overlap on what news services are preferred by consistent conservatives, consistent liberals, and voters in general.

Dave showed us the reaction of various news sources to the same news story with very different emphasis and evident biases.

Democracy is based on individual liberty but working together to solve problems and reach consensus. We are losing the common set of facts. In 1972, Nixon got consensus to establish EPA. In the 90's, Clinton was able to get consensus to pass the Deficit Reduction Act – there were sufficient common facts so that congress worked together to solve the problem.

Now we can't come to consensus based on common facts. We fail to see the issues from the other's point of views, thus threatening Democracy by failing to work together for the common good.

Dave has found that visiting with Walter Mondale gives him hope because former VP Mondale shares his wisdom, his hopefulness and his faith. He looks to get outside the bubble, he says: "you want to be on the right side of the facts" – so that your actions are supported by the facts.

The UU faith calls for an honest and open inquiry, to be curious and generous with openness of mind and spirit.

The UU Faith is evident in the 4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning. Dave closed by sharing the words of # 436 from Living Traditions: *"We come to this time and this place: To rediscover the wondrous gift of free religious community. To renew our faith in the holiness, goodness, and beauty of life; To reaffirm the way of the open mind and full heart, to rekindle the flame of memory and hope, and To reclaim the vision of an earth made fair, with all her people one."*

August 20 - Athena Kildegaard, "How Does a Poem Start?" Athena used the list of what Buddhist tradition monks need and applied it to what a "maker" of poems, art, or living needs.

- 1) *One robe for summer and one robe for winter* – tells us to prepare for what is to come, readiness.
- 2) *Pair of shoes* – makes possible to go anywhere- wherever it takes you. Shoes protect you and alert us to our own limitations.
- 3) *Begging bowl* – carry the bowl and allow it to be filled with whatever comes. Put ourselves in the way of experiences.
- 4) *Mosquito Net* – to be healthy – She's reminded that Mickie Edmonds is a maker who is not making right now. A net also has transparency and openings so that we can see beyond.
- 5) *Prayer book* – in her poems, Mary Oliver taps into the great spirit, asking for things that are not given, going to unfamiliar places, another dimension, the world beyond, letting go, acceptance, magic, entering – it takes practice and craftsman qualities.
- 6) *Umbrella* – provides protection; creates space around you so it becomes "my experience, my emotions, my response to it – that is shared and resonates – the poem speaks to us. A poet finds out truth of what the poem feels.
- 7) *Mat to sleep on* – rest, value of dreams that reveal things.
- 8) *One pair of glasses, if needed* – implies 20/20 vision so we can see with clarity to speak truth.

If we have these things, enlightenment will come.

Athena referred in her talk to Robert Duncan in written conversations with Denise Leverton. She read two poems: John Brehm's "The Poem I Have Not Written" and Thomas Lux's "An Horatian Notion" and her own, "After Harvest."

August 27 - Roger Parks' talk was entitled "***The Trinity – A Cosmic Dance***". **Roger** talked about thinking of the Christian Trinity not as a doctrine (static), but as a dance (dynamic). The source of the dynamics is in relationships – with God - the inherent life force and life energy. Love is that connection, as well as spirit. Love is not what we do, but who we are.

Discussion

Roger told a story about Al Franken who attended a pow wow, and was invited to dance. Eventually everyone joined him. This was an act of the Native Americans establishing a relationship with him (rather than his establishing one with them).

The Trinity does not need to be thought of father, son and holy ghost but as God, Spirit and Man's (as represented by the Christ) relationship.

How do we reach out to people with whom we disagree?

At a MUUSJA conference recently, the following was shared: Everyone has inherent worth and dignity; but not every idea has inherent worth and dignity.

September is the church "new year," what with many activities starting up or resuming after the summer. Mark your calendars!!

Adult Religious Education Classes

1st Sunday of the month, 8:45 - 9:45 a.m. – John Minge

John will be proposing to the Adult RE group that they read the book, "*A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*." It consists of 16 or 17 essays written recently by people with different racial/ethnic backgrounds with a strong connection to Minnesota, most live here. It challenges the assertion that we are as "nice" as we claim to be. John find the question that strikes at the heart of the matter appearing at page 201 of the book: "How can a place renowned for its hospitality and its progressive values have proven to be so profoundly inhospitable toward its people of color?" He goes on to say, "I have read the book and consider its content to be important and timely. I will be asking for input from the group before we select this book as the focus of the upcoming year's study."

John also emailed out a copy of the letter issued recently by some within the Vatican entitled 'Evangelical Fundamentalism and Catholic Integralism: A Surprising Ecumenism.' "This six or seven-page document seems to take the position that there is a sort of unholy alliance in the U.S. between the Catholic Church and right-wing evangelicals. It's very interesting, thought-provoking, and even encouraging. We will discuss that during our first session in September in addition to deciding what to do with the rest of the year." *Leader: John Minge*

2nd Sunday of the month, 8:45- 9:45 a.m. – Sandy Barnhouse leads the Ancient Religions Class. This year's curriculum will be two intertwined paths: (1) the study of ancient/extant religions in search of knowing whose philosophical origins included the love and worship of the Earth; was Earth worship present in Jainism, Mithraism, Zoroastrianism, the ancient religions of Egypt, Judea (Judaism), Persia, Afghanistan, and India (Hinduism)? and (2) a modern attempt to recreate a similar worship, by many people rediscovering the relationship between Earth, life, and spirit, as expressed through the ecofeminist movement of the late 20th century. This subject of learning reminds us that ancient earth religious recognition and celebrations lead us to the environmental justice awareness of today as we continue to honor and treasure our earth.

3rd Sunday of the month, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Stan Carignan leads **Mindfulness/Quaker Quiet Time Sitting**: “EVERYBODY, JUST TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND CALM DOWN! We have all heard someone say this – it's as old as the trees. We all know it works. When we get excited and need to compose ourselves, the simple act of taking a few deep breaths has a soothing effect on our bodies and minds. Most people don't give it a second thought.

The fact is that many of us through our daily lives, live in a state of elevated tension and stress. In this state, we ‘forget to breath.’ We do actually breathe, but the stress breath is shorter and shallower. Most of us have lived so long like this that we that we don't realize that it is not our natural way of breathing. Many people discover how stressed they are when they begin sitting and simply breathing. It is a wonderful feeling to let go of all your stress each day. To let go of the petty hurts, jealousies, or sadness from the day. To let go of all the worries about the next day or the next week. To simply give yourself the gift of being for just a few minutes.

Thomas Merton said something to the effect that, (I paraphrase): ‘The thing you have to be...is what you are.’

Our Creator, or Gaia, or the Transcendent, or simply Nature, created us as beings. Just as the Oak tree glorifies God (or any of the previously mentioned origins) by simply being an Oak Tree. So it is with us by simply being. We don't have to strive to be better, smarter, prettier, funnier, faster, more efficient, or anything else. We can simply be.

You are invited to give yourself the gift of peace by joining us on the Third Sunday of every month to sit as a group and simply BE community.” *Leader, Stan Carignan*

September 17, 8:45 – 9:45 a.m. and thereafter, 4th Sunday of the month beginning October 22, 8:45 – 9:45 a.m. Leader: Bob Worner. The class will begin the year with the book used by the Celebrants, *Fluent in Faith* by Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar. It is “A Unitarian Universalist Embrace of Religious Language” and/or further discussing our beliefs using and redefining traditional religious language.

"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." Nelson Mandela



**Children's Religious Education
September 10 with Mikkel Thompson
Scandinavian Folk Musician/Song Writer
And
Parents/Grandparents Meeting**

With the help of parents and other volunteers, we will offer Children's Religious Education one Sunday each month, September – May, from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. during Sunday services.

September 10 and November 15, direct from Sweden, Mikkel Thompson, composer, musician and promoter of Scandinavian Folk Music and Dance will direct the children's activities with fun and frolic!!

Following the September 10th Sunday service and Kids RE, we invite the parents/grandparents to gather in the Ellison room. We will determine: 1) what parents/grandparents are seeking for religious education for their child(ren); 2) if they can offer one Sunday out of the nine months to lead children's RE with a lesson of their choosing around their talents or expertise; 3) gather other ideas to make this a wonderful, fun time for our children.

We will then set up the 9-month calendar for Children's RE Sundays. Reminders and announcements will be made prior to each RE Sunday. Child care will be provided during the non-RE Sundays.

Some of the challenges to our Kids' RE program are the wide range of ages, the irregularity of attendance due to parenting times and other conflicts, and the need for parents to have this hour of respite for themselves. We do recognize and value our children and the need to provide them insight and instruction on our UU Principles. By working together, we can give our kids the best within us.

We invite others interested in assisting with Children's Religious Education or child care to contact Katy Olson @ katyjolson@gmail.com or 21/770-6681 or Kris Warhol @ mwarhol7up@gmail.com or 218/205-1644.

U Groups (UCU's Small, Covenant Groups)

"U Group Sign-up month! Groups are forming and re-forming now. Sign-up sheets will be available on the lower level coffee table.

This is an excellent way to get to know other members of our faith community in a much deeper and more genuine way. Small groups give individuals the opportunity to connect in a more personal way that just isn't possible at a Sunday Service or coffee afterwards. It has been said that real community happens between Sundays – that the connections and relationships we form outside of the church building actually make us church. U Groups have been key part of the resurgence of the Unitarian Church of Underwood and have been instrumental in making our church a welcoming community. We invite you to join a group and get to know some of our members in a more profound way." *Co-Facilitators: Luke Anderson and Stan Carignan*

U Group Schedule

- Alexandria U-Group: 2nd Wed @ 7:00 pm @ the office building of Widseth, Smith & Nolting Office Bldg., 610 Fillmore, Alexandria: Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- The Battle Lake U Group, the 2nd Tuesday @ 3:00 p.m. @ home of Joanne Cress and Luke Anderson. Facilitators: Bob Worner and Joanne Cress. When Joanne and Luke are gone for the winter, Kris Warhol will co-facilitate with Bob and the group will meet with a host to be announced.
- Fergus Falls U-Group: 3rd Tues @ 6:00 pm @ Diana Ziesemer's, 934 W. Linden St., Fergus Falls. Facilitator: Jacob McKnite with Mary Worner.
- Perham U-Group: 1st Thursday @ 3:30 p.m. September @ John Minge's. Thereafter, at Stan Carignans. Facilitator: Stan Carignan.

September topic: ***"Racism – UU and Me."*** "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, then, and only then, will the world know peace." *Jimmy Hendricks*

Each U-Group holds an empty chair for anyone who wants to join with a group.

"The membership committee always appreciates sending get well cards, thinking of your cards, etc. to our fellowship! We also enjoy making phone calls and visits. If you have an idea for a card, or see a way to support our fellowship in a time of need or change, please contact Mary Anderson, maryanderson8380@msn.com, 218-346-6638, or JoAnn Larson, redswilds@gmail.com, [218-405-0752](tel:218-405-0752)."



What it Means to be a Unitarian Universalist And a Member of the Unitarian Church of Underwood

New Member/UU Introduction Orientation

Sunday, September 24, 2017

8:15 – 9:45 a.m.

Visitors and new members often ask for further information on Unitarian Universalism and what the Unitarian Church of Underwood stands for. We have had several new members these past couple of years. We have friends who are now regularly coming through our door wondering if this is a permanent place for them. To help answer questions, the Membership Committee has developed a New Member/UU Introduction one-hour session. This class will be held in lieu of Bob Worner's Adult Education class on September 24. (Bob will instead hold his first class on September 17).

We invite all interested to come for a light breakfast beginning at 8:15 a.m., immediately followed by the hour's opportunity for sharing and information. Please join us!!



Invitation to Join UCU

As a Voting Member

Welcoming October 1 - During Sunday Service

To become a voting member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Underwood, you indicate your wish by signing the "silver" membership book. We invite you to participate in the welcoming new member ceremony that is held twice a year, **the next planned for October 1, 2017**. Plans are underway for new member UU orientation/refreshment session(s) – see above.

The UCU Policy Statement #2 Article II Definitions B. states that: "A voting member is one who has signed the membership book and completed any of the following: has participated in an activity of the congregation in the past year, has made a recorded financial contribution since the beginning of the fiscal year, or expresses verbally, or in writing, a desire to remain a member."

We, like other UU Fellowships, have voting members; others who though not voting members, attend regularly or come for our featured speakers or other offerings; some who consider themselves members but are unable to participate; and some who come sometimes as visitors. We welcome everyone: “no single belief includes us here, no disbelief excludes us.”

House Concert
DeMasi Brothers
September 22, 7-9 p.m.
Ron & Barb Graham's



Joseph & John DeMasi

Ron and Barbara Graham invite you to their home for a House Concert, Friday, September 22 from 7-9 p.m. Sign-up at church or contact them to ensure a seat.

The DeMasi twins, contemporary UU folk singers, return to our area for another concert. They have just released a new CD, “Wake Up America” and will be performing songs from this CD as well as earlier numbers. Their music is filled with a unique blend of harmonies and toe tapping rhythms with fun-filled folk music. Their show features John on fiddle guitar and vocals and Joseph on guitar and vocals. They draw upon the seven principles of UU as inspiration for their music. These professional musicians, who have toured the world, have consented to do this house concert on a donation basis (usual fee is \$300). Bring a treat to share if you wish. To sign up, get directions, etc., contact Ron @ 218/739-5669 or universeron@hotmail.com. See: www.thedemasibrothers.org/

In Memory



Eileen Louise Lovdahl

December 7, 1947 – August 31, 2017

Louise Lovdahl moved to Perham from Kenosha, Wisconsin in August of 2014. She appeared at the Unitarian Church of Underwood in the spring of 2015 and joined not long after. Louise acted as the Perham U Group co-facilitator and hosted the group monthly. She was known to some as the “Chocolate Lady” for those decadent chocolates she made and shared with us. Louise was diagnosed with acute leukemia on August 26 and only had a few days thereafter. Plans are underway to have a celebration of life ceremony for Louise at her beautiful home outside Perham on September 30 with more information to be announced.

“A spiritual harbor and the chance to see one’s gifts appreciated and acknowledged in a way that a paycheck never can; an assurance, as bones stiffened and hair begin to gray, that they belonged to something that would outlast their own lives – and that, when their time finally came, a community would be there to remember.” From *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama.

Heart’s Ease



**Painting by Mickie Edmonds -
Beloved Member of Unitarian Church of Underwood**



Marilyn (Mickie) Hurlburt Edmonds
January 23, 1936 – August 26, 2017

Mickie Edmonds, 81 years old, Battle Lake, MN died Saturday, August 26, 2017.

Funeral service will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Underwood, MN on October 6 at 1:00 p.m. There will be a time of visiting immediately following, at the Church.

Mickie was born January 23, 1936 in Madison, Wisconsin to Virgil and Julia Hurlburt. The family moved around, living in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Iowa, returning to her parents' families' Montana wheat ranches to help during harvest time. Eventually Mickie began her college career. She spent 3 years in an Art Program at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, returning to Ames, Iowa to continue her education at Iowa State University when her father took ill. There she met her life partner of 59 years, Richard (Dick) Edmonds.

Mickie married Dick June 23, 1958, and made a series of moves due to Dick's career. She continued schooling in Kentucky and West Virginia, eventually completing her Liberal Arts degree at night school at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. Along the way the couple had three children.

Mickie became a school teacher in the hollers of West Virginia before the family moved to Lincoln, Nebraska. At the University of Nebraska, Mickie earned her PhD in educational psychology. She taught college at Creighton University in Omaha, and then in the psychology department of the University of Nebraska.

After a few years of teaching, Mickie returned to her first love and life-long profession as an artist. The couple moved to rural Battle Lake when Dick retired, but Mickie was always quite clear that she did not retire. She used a variety of media, including pottery, acrylics, and oil painting. Her creative mind and ideas are reflected by button pictures, knit creatures, and the most beautiful home-made socks you have ever seen.

Mickie is best known as a watercolor artist. She loved to paint scenes of beautiful places she frequented, gatherings of people, draft horses, and many other subjects. Her art hangs around

Ottertail County and the country. She has competed in many juried shows, and has been an active member in several art galleries, including Art of the Lakes in Battle Lake, Gallery 4 in Fargo, and Avenue Art Gallery in Lincoln. She served on the Minnesota Arts Council, and lobbied for art funding at the Minnesota State Legislature.

In recent years Mickie has taken to providing paintings to hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, her church, and the Fergus Falls library. Her art has brought joy not only to herself, but to her friends, family, and the public. Each painting took about a month of work, and Mickie said by the time she completed a piece, it felt like a family member.

Mickie had many varied interests. She loved to travel, and spent considerable time camping in the western mountains with her family. She travelled abroad far and wide, including Scotland, Japan and China. She spent numerous autumns canoeing in the Boundary Waters Wilderness.

Following an initial bout with heart failure, Mickie became a part of the Women's Heart Program, bringing camaraderie and education to her heart sisters. She was a founding member of her Investment Club, and enjoyed the Battle Lake Progressive Club. She was a lap swimmer for many years. She gardened by the lake, explored the lakes and rivers in her kayak, and was admirable in a canoe. She enjoyed fishing, though not so much the toothy northern pike. Mickie would sail with Dick, but he figures she did not enjoy it all that much on account of the skipper gives the orders.

Mickie loved music, and listened to many varieties. Late in life, Mickie taught herself to play the clarinet, and played with the Battle Lake high school band and the Heart of the Lakes Band. She was an active member of the UU church, appreciating their inclusive, not exclusive approach. She very much enjoyed her weekly bridge group. She was a good, but reticent cook, providing many fine meals for gatherings of family and friends. A voracious reader, Mickie sought out many, many books and enjoyed lending them to her friends and family. She figured she listened to nearly all the books on tape available at the Fergus Falls and Perham public libraries, which she visited often.

Mickie is survived by her husband, Dick; sister Pat Ellison, and 3 grown children: Rick (Lori) Edmonds, Kelly (Ross) Barrett, and Robin (Neil) MacLauchlan. Together they have produced 8 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren, some of whom became quite close to her. She shared many of her interests with her family, but also had an extensive network of friends that reached beyond the knowledge of her children.

Everywhere Mickie went, she made incredible friends. They sustained her during difficult days, and she tried to return the favor. She was known for her sharp wit, peppery personality, and generous nature. We never can have enough time with such a remarkable spirit, but understand we know grief because we know love. *Submitted by daughter, Kelley Barrett.*

A Gallery of Mickie's paintings as previously provided by Mickie and featured in the UCU Newsletters:

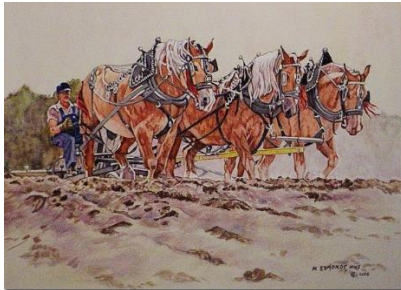
Floating the Otter Tail



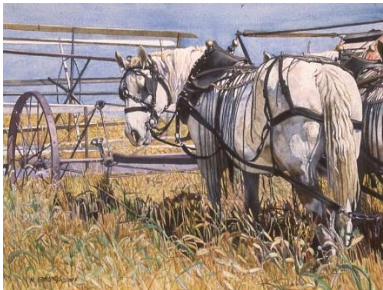
On the Fence



Four in the Field



Close-up of a Horse



Dusty Work



Social Justice Opportunities

Benefit for Shan Refugees Schools

Ride to Educate

Saturday September 30

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Registration 12:30 pm

Round trip—30 miles, Underwood to Glenadalough State Park

For Ride info: Katy Olson 218-770-6681

ucurideforrefugees@gmail.com

Sponsored by

Unitarian Church of Underwood

www.ucofu.org



Bernice Johnson & Shan Children

Schools for Shan Refugees is a 501(c)3 charitable organization established to help Shan refugees in Thailand get an education. For several years the founder, Bernice Johnson of New York Mills, taught English to Shan refugees from Burma, who had escaped to Thailand. She became knowledgeable about and sympathetic with their need and desire for education.

The goal of Schools for Shan Refugees is to help Shan refugee children who live in migrant camps get a basic education, while helping their teachers, young Shan adults, earn regular wages.

Schools for Shan support approximately one hundred Shan children who have fled from Burma to Thailand. Some of the children are in a migrant camp school that we support; students from other migrant workers' camps receive scholarships to attend Thai schools. We spend several months each year in Thailand, observing the schools and the methods being used and trying to find new and better ways to help refugee children.

Despite attending classes taught in a foreign language and despite their poorly paid parents' struggle to pay their share of school expenses, all the children in our tuition program have passed their yearly exams.



When Shan families can no longer survive in Burma, when their homes and lands have been confiscated, or when they cannot earn a living because the economy is in shambles, they flee to Thailand. In Thailand, they do not have official refugee status and are not the recipients of international aid, but are considered migrants and work at the worst jobs the country has to offer. They receive subsistence wages, seldom enough to allow them to feed their families and send their children to school. Without an education, the children are at great risk of being lured into the sex and drug trades in Thailand.

30 Mile Ride: Underwood Community Park to and through Glendalough State Park and back to Underwood. Support vehicle will be provided.

All Riders are required to register and must wear helmets. Riders 12-16 years old must be accompanied by an adult. Under 12 must be attached to adult's bike.
Bring your own water bottles.

There will be a mandatory bike safety clinic prior to the ride.

Riders are welcome to get pledges for miles ridden to raise funds for the schools for the children of the Shan families.

Registration Deadline

Sept 22, 2017

Fee: \$50/adult, \$75/family

To Register:

www.ucofu.org/shanride2017

Refreshments provided.

Questions: ucurideforrefugees@gmail.com

www.shanrefugeeschools.org

Schools for Shan Refugees is a 501(c)3 Tax Exempt Organization

Bike Ride to Educate

Benefit for Schools for Shan Children

Sponsored by Unitarian Church of Underwood

Saturday, September 30, 2017 1:00pm to 4:00 pm

12:30pm registration

Underwood to Glendalough State Park Round trip – 30 miles

Registration Form (Please complete a form for each rider)

Name: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City, State & Zip _____ Phone: _____

Registration deadline: September 22, 2017 (same day additional \$10.00)

Fee: \$50/adult, \$75/family

Make check payable to: Unitarian Church of Underwood

Mail form and check to: Unitarian Church of Underwood, PO Box 58, Underwood, MN 56586

Waiver and Release

I am entering this event at my own risk. In signing this release for myself (or named entrant when entrant is younger than 18 years of age) I have read and understand this release and agree to absolve all sponsors, organizers, and associated entities of all liability for any injury, harm or loss or inconvenience suffered from taking part in the Bicycle Ride for Refugees. I agree to wear a helmet at all times and obey all Minnesota Bike Laws. I grant UCU permission to use any photos, videos and recordings for any legitimate purpose. I understand that all entries are final with no refunds. UCU reserves the right in any event of national emergency or local or national disaster to cancel the race or to change the date and time and in the event of cancellation or change there will be no refund of entry fees.

Participant's Signature: _____

Dated: _____

Submit to: Katy Olson or drop off at church.

Bernice Johnson
Nominated for AARP Award: "50 Over 50"



For full information on this award see: 50Over50MN.org and [Pollen's website](#). There will be a luncheon honoring the nominees and announcing the winner of \$1000 for their chosen charity on Tuesday, October 17 from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Minneapolis Art Institute's reception hall in the Target Wing. Contact Mary Worner or Mary Anderson for more information. Cost of the luncheon is \$35.00. Of course, you know who UCU thinks the winner should be!

Retiree Finds Meaning Supporting Schools in Refugee Camps

Written by: [Mary Anne Casey](#) in submission of the nomination

"Bernice Koehler Johnson has accomplished more since she retired than most people do in a lifetime.

Bernice had a well-paying but otherwise unrewarding job. She bought property for a Minnesota county, frequently invoking eminent domain. She hated negotiating deals that forced owners to sell. She had grown up on a farm in northern Minnesota; she understood the deep connection people have with their land.

At 58, Bernice took a six-month leave of absence. She wanted to pursue a master's in creative writing, which at the time required a second language. So, she moved to Mexico to study Spanish and to see if she could live without her salary.

Learning Spanish was harder than she expected, but she stuck with it. She was afraid of failing, but told herself, "Just do the best you can." Slowly, Spanish seeped in. And she learned that if she lived frugally, she could get by. At the end of the six months, she returned to work, wrapped up a few projects, and quit.

She arranged her life around the seasons. Each fall and spring, she took courses. Each winter she fled Minnesota for warmer countries where she taught English. She looked for a new country each year: Spain, Indonesia, Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala. Each summer, she joined her mother on the home farm in northern Minnesota.

When she finished her master's in creative writing, she started a master's in liberal arts at the University of Minnesota. [*Tuition is cheap*](#) for people age 62 and over. Bernice's mother didn't value this late education. "You'll be eligible for social security by the time you finish." Bernice laughed and said, "I know. Isn't that great!"

In a philosophy course Bernice read Mary Oliver's poem, *The Summer Day*, which ends with, 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?' It was one of those before / after moments. You know, the kind of moment where you think of your life one way, then something happens, and you are different. Bernice suddenly realized that taking classes and teaching in warm countries gave her life "structure but not meaning."

Now, I'm no poetry scholar, but I don't think Mary Oliver was being judgy in *The Summer Day*. I don't think she was suggesting that we aren't doing enough. In fact, she tells us what she was doing: being idle, knee-deep in grass, examining a grasshopper. Mary Oliver was paying attention. She was aware of how she was spending her time. And she was inviting us to think about how we spend our time. No judgment. Just invitation.

Bernice accepted the invitation.

Outwardly, nothing changed. Bernice kept her seasonal schedule. But, inwardly she sought something more meaningful. She found it in Thailand.

In 2002, Bernice accepted a position teaching Shan refugees on the Thai/Burma border. The Shan are an ethnic group being persecuted by the Burmese military. Bernice taught children who had fled across the border, some leaving their families behind. They are considered migrants—not refugees—so they receive no international aid. Bernice felt like a surrogate mom to the children who were away from home. She changed her routine. Instead of finding a new place to teach, Bernice returned to the Thai/Burma border the next year—and every year since.

Bernice journaled because she didn't want to forget the kids. And she wrote letters to a beloved aunt who always encouraged her. The letters described the school, the children, the history of the area, and her experiences. Eventually she used her journals and the letters to write a book: [*The Shan: Refugees without a Camp*](#). Proceeds from the book help support the school.

Bernice never imagined herself a fundraiser, but after learning how little it takes to make a difference in the lives of Shan refugees, she started asking friends and relatives for small donations. As contributions got bigger, people wanted receipts for their taxes. In 2008, Bernice formed Schools for Shan Refugees, a 501c3 nonprofit.

With help from others, she created a board and a website, and organizes an annual fundraiser. Their goal is to help Shan children who live in migrant camps get a basic education, while helping their teachers, young Shan adults, earn regular wages.

When I met Bernice, I was struck by how tiny she is—maybe five feet and 100 pounds. I asked if her size caused her problems. She said it is just the opposite—Asian cultures respect elders, so looking like a grandma gives her power and status.

I asked Bernice if she is ever afraid. 'Of course! I am often afraid. And then I do it anyway. The key is to learn to ask for help.' When she was younger she thought she should be able to do things by herself. Now she understands that we need others to get things done.

Since leaving her job over 25 years ago, Bernice learned Spanish, earned two master's degrees, traveled and taught around the world, published a book, and founded a nonprofit. She is in her 80s and spends four months a year in Thailand, giving homeless kids love and a second chance. Bernice didn't have a long-term plan when she retired. She just followed an interest, which led to a new interest, which led to a new interest. And she paid attention to how she used her time.

I think Mary Oliver would be impressed with what Bernice Koehler Johnson did with her one wild and precious life."

Habitat for Humanity 2017 Fall Build

From Stan Carignan, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity: Plans are underway to have the foundation for the new home at 111 Lydia Lane in Fergus Falls, laid by the end of September. The plan is for a standard 12-week Habitat build. As the completion of the foundation nears, Stan will send out the build schedule with projected tasks and the number of volunteers needed for each day so that volunteers can match their interest and skills to the tasks needed.

Stan will call a Construction Committee meeting in the early part of September. If you want to be a part of this or volunteer for later tasks, please contact him at:
218/841-2657 or fergushabitat@gmail.com



Save these October dates!!

Sunday, October 8, 2017

Julia Nerbonne, Executive Director

**Minnesota Interfaith Climate and Light (MNIPL) Climate
Conversations: Connecting Head, Heart, & Will**

Ever wonder how to move forward in effectively and meaningfully engaging your faith community on climate action? Perhaps there are people already working on this but broader

and more passionate participation is needed to be successful? How can you build a core team of dedicated members taking sustained and powerful action? Climate Conversations, hosted by MNIPL, are a primary way that faith communities can become sustained actors in the growing interfaith climate movement.

Based on American Psychological Association's barriers to climate action and the work of psychologist and activist Mary Pipher, Climate conversations experientially draw participants into stories of connection and shared values. Drawing on that source of resilience and inspiration, we make the connections between the science and the social justice and environmental impacts of climate change.

Through dialogue, the community places this information in the context of their faith and draws on the sense of call and import embedded in these teachings to act as people of faith. We learn about concepts of climate action that are both concrete and impactful and how we can connect our community and individual actions to contribute to the larger movement.

Feminist Antimilitarist Network

Potluck/Gathering

October 10, 6 p.m.

At Katy Olson's

Special Guest: Carol Rojas

Continued October 11 @ Fergus Falls MState

(More details will be in the October Newsletter)

Celtic Music Concert Oct 13, 2017

@ UCU

Watch for More Information

Writer's Retreat

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

9 a.m – 3:30 p.m.

Barnhouse Studio

“Writing in a Rural School House”

(More Information in October Newsletter)



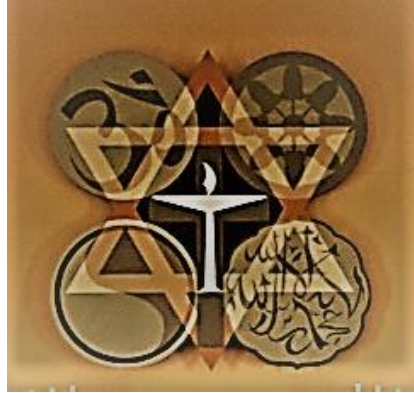
Area UU

Workshop

Many Volunteers will be Needed!!

October 20-21, 2017

See more below



UU Area Fall Workshop

Growing in Presence! Growing in Justice!

Friday, October 20 & Saturday, October 21

Friday, October 20

Registration: 12-1 p.m.

1-5 p.m. Social Justice Workshop with
Rev. Ashley Horan, Executive Director,
MUUSJA

5:30 - UCU Potluck Supper/Enrichment
Circles



For details see:

Registration Materials sent to your congregation

Return by: **October 1, 2017**

Hosted by:

Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO 58, 206 N. Main St.

Underwood, MN 5656

Website: www.ucofu.org/Facebook

Contact: Mary Anderson @ maryanderson8380@msn.com or 218/346-6638 or

JoAnn Larson @ redswilds@gmail.com or 218/405-0752

Saturday, October 21

7:30 – 9:30 a.m. “Forest
Bathing”

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. Mindfulness
Sitting

9:00-10:00 a.m. Coffee, Get
Acquainted

10:00 a.m. Opening Ceremony

10:30-12:00 Breakout Sessions

#1 Growing/Sustaining Members

#2 Growing in Social Justice

12 – 1 p.m. Lunch/visiting

1 – 2:30 Breakout Sessions

#3 Growing in Environmental
Justice

#4 Growing in Visibility

3 – 3:30: Closing Session

Special Guests: MidAmerica

Region Consultants: Rev. Ian

Evison & Rev. Phil Lund,

MUUSJA: Rev. Ashley Horan

“Growing in Presence! Growing in Justice! Growing in Spirit!”

Invitations and registration materials are soon to be mailed to 10 area UU churches. The theme of the workshop on Friday, October 20 and Saturday, October 21 is “*Growing in Presence, Growing in Justice, Growing in Spirit.*”

Registration will begin from 12:00-1 p.m. on Friday, October 20. Then **Rev. Ashley Horan, Executive Director of the Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Association (MUUSJA)** will conduct an afternoon workshop from 1 – 5 p.m. with focus on:

- The role of the church on social justice.
- How to build useful partnerships to embody our values.
- How to sustain spirit as we go about this work.
- Special challenges to smaller, rural fellowships usually isolated in the communities.

Ashley will be staying for Saturday. Our other special guests include: **Rev. Ian Evison and Rev. Phil Holt, Congregational Life Consultants from the UU MidAmerica Region.** Ian will be speaking at the October 22nd Sunday service. Phil specializes in social media production. Both will be available the workshop days for helps with congregational challenges.

Following the Friday afternoon workshop, UCU will serve an Italian supper (volunteers needed!). There will be an enrichment circle after to further dialogue application of the workshop learnings within our collective and individual fellowships.

Then on Saturday morning, guests will be invited to participate in an early Mindfulness Sitting (8:30-9:30 a.m.). We will serve a light breakfast (volunteers needed!) before the Opening Ceremony from 10:00-10:30 a.m. We will then break into two concurring break-out sessions (10:30 a.m.-12:00 N) on: 1) Growing and Sustaining Members and 2) Growing in Social Justice (facilitator and notetaker/timekeeper needed for each session).

We'll have lunch catered at the Community Center (volunteers needed for set-up/serving/clean-up). After lunch, we'll return for further concurrently running break-out sessions from 1:00-2:30 p.m. on: 3) Growing in Environmental Justice and 4) Growing Visibility (use of social media and other means). There will be a full gathering of attendees to close out in celebration from 3:00-3:30 p.m. Hopefully, all attendees will leave with feelings of renewed energy, power and spirit!!

As you see from the above, we have need for many volunteers. Sign-up sheets will be available during up-coming Sunday services. Volunteers needed include:

- Home hosting for Friday over night (motel lists will be provided but some of you may be willing to open your home and get acquainted with UU's from neighboring UU churches).
- Providing food items: breakfast muffins/rolls/juice, refreshment break treats (fruit, sweets, nuts, etc.), Italian dinner dishes (vegetarian pasta dish, regular pasta dish, gluten free dish, salad fixings, dessert items).
- Providing music!! (We always like to feature and show off our many talented musicians!!)
- Providing Technical support.
- Acting as greeters Friday and Saturday.
- Acting as facilitators, note-takers, time-keepers for the break-out sessions. Your subject matter expertise may also be called upon!!
- Helping with set-up/clean-up.

As you can see, there is a place for all to contribute in the way most comfortable to you. Sign-up sheets will be posted.

The cost of the 1 ½ day workshop to non-UCU attendees is \$25 for materials and food. We have reduced the cost to UCU members to \$20 because of the work you'll be contributing!! You'll recognize that we do have to pay for the materials and the catered meal.

Our UU Area Fall Workshop Task Force Members and the fellowships we've contacted are excited about the opportunity to again get together (it has been four years since the one UCU hosted in November 2013). We look forward to ALL of you joining us as we celebrate continuing growth in presence, justice and spirit!!

Thank you!!

Workshop Planning Task Force Members: Mary Anderson, Ellen Eastby, JoAnn Larson, Louise Lovdahl, Janell Miersch, Alisha Piekarski, Bonnie Showers, Bob Worner in consultation with: Janice Cheney (Bismarck-Mandan UU), Judy Foster (St. Cloud UU) and Kay Slama (Willmar UU).

FACILITIES PROJECTS COMPLETED!!!

Back Door Crash Door & Moisture Prevention

A new door with crash bar was installed. The overhanging roof was extended to help prevent rain accumulation that had contributed to some of the lower level moisture problems. However, in moving forward on the intended landscaping, some additional problems need to be addressed so the Facilities Committee will continue to work to

resolve these issues. Thank you, Facilities Committee: Susan Groff, Katy Olson and Kris Warhol.

The Great “Cover-up!”



Thank you, **John Minge** for completing the cupboard he previously built by installing the doors, thus covering up that mess that lay behind! Handles will soon be gotten to complete the project.

New Welcoming Sign



Photo courtesy of Norm Kolstad

Lift Repaired

The Board of Directors apologizes that the lift was inoperable for a couple of Sundays but is pleased to now report that Sanford Lift Maintenance Services have now inspected and replaced parts so the lift is again operational.

Sverdrup Suites Vacancy

Effective October 1, UCU will assume occupancy of a unit being vacated at Sverdrup Suites. Initial plans are to furbish the apartment for Adult and Children's Religious Education classes and meetings. More information to come.



The membership committee invites sending get well cards, thinking of your cards, etc. to our fellowship! We also enjoy making phone calls and visits. If you have an idea for a card, or see a way to support our fellowship in a time of need or change, please contact Mary Anderson, maryanderson8380@msn.com, 218-346-6638, or JoAnn Larson, redswilds@gmail.com, 218-405-0752."

Hurricane Harvey Relief



We'll have more communications about this going forward, as additional support capacity develops and we learn more about what's needed on the ground. But for the time being, please share this widely with your networks. The UUA now has a fund set up for Hurricane Harvey Relief:

<https://giving.uua.org/harvey-floods>.

Unitarian Church of Underwood Board Minutes

We did not have a quorum at the August 16 Board of Directors meeting so voting action was delayed. The approved board minutes will be included in next month's newsletter.

UUA News Alert

UUA President the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray issued the following statement in response to Donald Trump's directive banning transgender people from entering the military:

I condemn in the strongest terms President Trump's immoral directive banning transgender people from entering the military and revoking health care support for those currently serving. Unitarian Universalists unequivocally support the full humanity of people across the spectrum of gender and sexuality, including the right of transgender people to serve in the military. This is yet another attack from this administration on the humanity, dignity, and fundamental rights of people in this country. Even more disturbing, this attack targets those who have committed their lives to faithful service.



My heart turns to all the transgender and gender non-conforming people in the military who are showing up everyday to serve and protect our country, even as their commander in chief has made them a target. I am grateful for your service. Grounded in a belief that all people are worthy, and called faithfully to build the Beloved Community, I particularly urge my fellow cisgender Unitarian Universalists to join me to affirming, supporting and celebrating all of our transgender and gender non-conforming siblings. We are with you. We remain with you until we are all free.

This message is also available on [UUA.org](https://www.uua.org).

Press Audiobooks

Since launching [Beacon Press Audio](#) late last year, Beacon Press has expanded their [audiobooks collection](#) to include a broad range of voices. In [The Third Reconstruction](#), listen to the story of how Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II helped start the Moral Mondays movement. Haroon Moghul's struggle to forge an American Muslim identity is brought to life in the audio edition of [How to Be a Muslim](#). Dr. Danielle Ofri's latest book, [What Patients Say, What Doctors Hear](#), reveals the importance of doctor-patient communication. As Beacon Press director and audiophile Helene Atwan explains, "The great tradition of writing can be traced to an oral tradition of storytelling." Whether you're headed to work, traveling long distance for vacation, or preparing dinner, audiobooks are a fabulous way of consuming the written word. Check out [more audiobooks](#) on the Beacon Press website.



Online Small Group Ministry



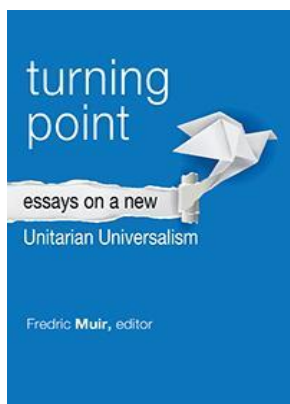
Finding places to be seen and heard is an important step on the quest for meaning. Whether your congregation has many small group options or none, you can add an online small group experience to connect even deeper with Unitarian Universalism. [The Church of the Larger Fellowship](#) has members all over the planet. Come learn together about what Unitarian Universalism looks like in other places. You might make a friend in another town, state, or country. The facilitated online groups meet twice a month to discuss a theme and connect with one another over a four-month period. Fall groups sign up in late August and September with meetings occurring October through January. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, contact

Kevin Jagoe at kjagoe@clfu.org to learn more.

inSpirit

Your Search for Truth and Meaning Begins Here

With a new church year nearly upon us and a newly elected UUA president, many congregations and individuals are looking ahead at the future of Unitarian Universalism. We recommend these resources as you imagine and work toward the future of our faith.



***Turning Point: Essays on a New Unitarian Universalism*, edited by Fredric Muir**

Outlining a bold vision for the future of Unitarian Universalism, 20 leaders issue a clarion call for change. In inspiring, fresh essays, they implore us to collectively liberate ourselves from patterns that prevent us from becoming a robust faith for a new age. This essential new collection outlines a liberal faith for the twenty-first century and inspires trust that Unitarian Universalism can deepen and grow once again.

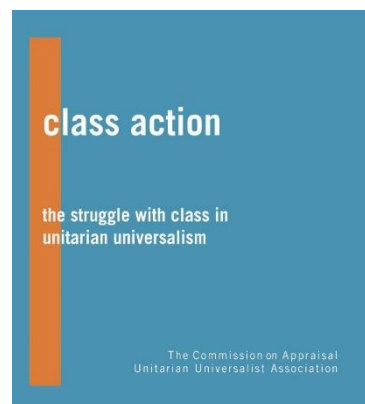
[Purchase today!](#)



***To Wake, To Rise: Meditations on Justice and Resilience*, edited by William G. Sinkford**

The 2017 edition of the inSpirit Series is an anthology of 29 poems, prayers, and reflections about resisting oppression and keeping the faith in social action work. Collected and introduced by William G. Sinkford, a former president of the UUA, and the first Black person to hold that position, these meditations are both a support for activists and a call to action in a new era of political and social division.

[Purchase today!](#)



***Class Action: The Struggle with Class in Unitarian Universalism* by The Commission on Appraisal**

In a time of vast and growing social and economic inequality, the 2017 Commission on Appraisal examines the impact of class and classism on Unitarian Universalism. With its in-depth analysis of our faith's history, theologies, and current structures and its final recommendations and resources for future work, *Class Action* is a must-read for all looking to live more fully into the faith and vision of Unitarian Universalism.

[Purchase today!](#)