

Newsletter September 2020

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

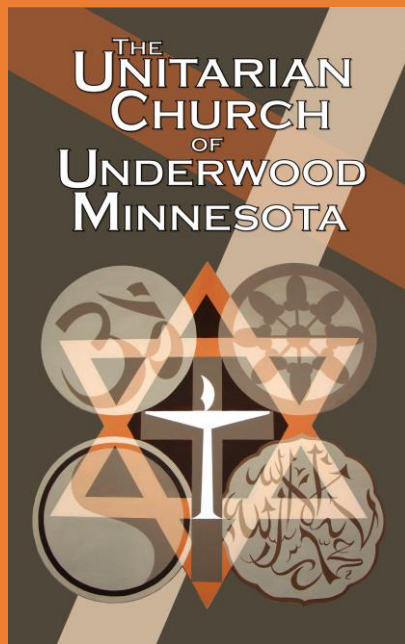
Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street
Underwood

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



Lee Hamness & Marguerite Andrews
Oh, for the days of those hugs!!

**Due to continued precautions
against the spreading of the
COVID-19**

**church services, meetings &
activities are suspended until
further notice.**

**Watch for ucofu@ucofu.org
messages, the Sunday "UCU
Weekly" and check:**

www.ucofu.org or

**www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org
[u.org](http://www.ucofu.org)**

To Contribute to UCU:

Sign up for automatic funds transfer or

Mail your check to: UCU

Attn. Treasurer

PO Box 58

Underwood, MN 56586

(Automatic collection payments will soon be
available)

Stay^oinformED

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

U Group Zoom Meeting Schedule

- Alexandria U Group: 4th Sunday each month @ 7 p.m. Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Battle Lake U Group: 2nd Tuesday each month @ 3 p.m. Facilitators: Bob Worner.
- Fergus Falls U-Group: 3rd Thursday @ 6:30 pm.
- Perham U-Group: 2nd Thursday @ 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Mary Worner

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

For details or questions, Contact Lead Facilitator, Luce Reese @ lucereese@gmail.com or 218/495-2449

Watch for information on special events and other offerings via the ucofu.org announcements with the Zoom links provided.

Building Access

For safety and sanitation purposes, if you access or need to access the church building, please call or text Susan Groff (Janitor) @ 218/205-0439.



See Below for Details on Google Suites Church Calendar And Givelify On-Line Giving

UCU Weekly

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

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

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

Need help with Zoom?

Email: techhelp@ucofu.org

Want to volunteer to be part of the Tech Help Team?

Also email: techhelp@ucofu.org

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

Please submit your ideas, articles and photos to:
Writer/Editor: Mary Anderson @ newseditor@ucofu.org
Editing: Stephanie Sanderson
Emailing/mailing: Ellen Eastby and Mary Anderson
Website: Ellen Eastby
Facebook: Melody Shores
Photos courtesy of Norm Kolstad & credited others.
Credited Articles

Note: For security, personal telephone numbers and email addresses will not be used within the newsletters except with the express permission of the individual.

UCU Weekly:

Designed and written by Ellen Eastby
Editing by Mary Anderson

Message from Board President, Norm Kolstad

Help for Our Students



No matter how old we get, September is when we think of the start of another school year. Fall marks a new beginning, with memories of new shoes, pencil boxes, and seeing our classmates again. Students this year, however, will find a different reality: masks, distancing, and, in many cases, virtual classrooms. Many students may have difficulty with this scenario and fall behind their classmates academically. Teachers will be challenged to respond to all the demands from this new paradigm; not to mention the threat to their own safety posed by this environment.

I am an experienced, certified high school substitute, but I have let the school know that, although I prefer not to work in person, they can call me for virtual help.

If someone in your family is a student, can you help? Have you thought about virtual tutoring, reading a story, or just being available to assist with homework? Ask your local school if they need people to help in some way. Volunteering at a school would require a simple background check.

We must not have students fall behind because of the pandemic. *Norm Kolstad*

August Board Meeting Highlights

Approved August 19th Board Minutes will be included in the October newsletter. See July 15 Approved Board Minutes at end of this newsletter. The following are the highlights of the August 19th Board meeting:

- Melody Shores demonstrated the benefits and features of Google Suites. Training to be scheduled.
- New Personnel Committee presented draft Personnel Policies, draft position description for Congregational Administrator and draft terms of employment agreement; all referred back to the Personnel Committee for finalization.
- Approved three to attend MidAmerica upcoming webinar workshops at a fee of \$150/participant.

Bonnie Graham

Permanent Congregational Administrator

Effective September 1, 2020

As most are aware, Bonnie Graham has been serving for the past six months in a temporary paid position for administrative supports to the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Effective September 1, the Board of Directors has entered into an employee agreement with Bonnie for on-going services as Congregational Associate. Bonnie's responsibilities are expanded to provide additional administrative support to the Board, Committees and Technical Support.

Bonnie came to us with over seven years of experience with the Olympia, Washington Unitarian Church. This along with her other knowledge and experience are welcome assets to UCU. Please relay your appreciation to Bonnie for all the helps she provides.

Speakers for September via Zoom 10:00 a.m.

Check in 9:45-10:00 a.m.

See the ucofu.org emails and Weekly for link specifics

September 6 – Bob Worner – to be announced.

September 13, Sharon Day, Ojibwa, “Nibi Walks.” Sharon Day, an Ojibwe elder, and director of the Indigenous Task Force will be leading a Nibi walk along the Otter Tail River. Sharon is the spiritual leader and coordinator of the Nibi Walks which are indigenous led ceremonial walks that bring attention to water issues from a cultural perspective.



Sharon is an enrolled member of the Bois Forte band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. She is an executive director of the Indigenous People’s Task Force which develops and implements culturally-appropriate programming, outreach service for education in the areas of HIV, youth suicide, teen pregnancy and tobacco cessation for the Native community in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. She is the spiritual leader and coordinator of the Nibi Walks. Sharon received CURE’s 2017 River Keeper Award recipient for her work as a water activist.

As Sharon says: “We need to change our relationship with the water if we are to survive as a species. We need to begin to see the water, the rivers, the streams the ocean, as sacred entities. The basic purpose of our water walks is of that spiritual nature. As Ojibwe women we are responsible for the water. It is our responsibility to take care of the water to pray for the water, to sing for the water, and to lift those spirits up. When we walk, we are praying to the water spirits. Nibi Manitou.

Every morning we start at exactly the place we left off. We offer our asema (tobacco) and one woman will begin walking with [a vessel of] water [from the headwaters of the river], and then when she has finished her rotation, she will hand it off to the next woman. We try to keep the water moving all day. We move like the river, and the river does not stop, it keeps moving, keeps on flowing.

When you carry that water, you have an intimate connection to it. Today, we have lost that connection, we see that water simply as a commodity. We understand how everything is interconnected. We try to teach the people that walk with us, there is a different way of being in the world. We try to restore those traditions and our connection to the water. We need to see

water as a living entity, not just 'turn on the faucet and it's there'. If we do not instill these values, how can our society change? If we can teach our children, then we can change."



September 20 - Chris Hyslop, "Walking the Path to Montana." Chris Hyslop rejoins UUC and will discuss his family's move out of the international life and return to the United States. Last year, they departed the United Nations and Myanmar and moved to Missoula, Montana. In part, to break from past practice as well as take a new path, Chris followed elements of Buddhist philosophy to make this change. He will talk about how mindful intent, right view and equanimity helped him and his family arrive and thrive in their new home.

September 27 - Deb Guthmann, Ed.D, "Advocating for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People." Deb,

a lifelong Unitarian has worked with deaf and hard of hearing individuals for the past 40 years. She was the founding director of the Minnesota Substance Use Disorder Program which is a residential program for Deaf individuals. Additionally, she is involved in validating several screeners in American Sign Language that are available online at no cost and are related to mental health and substance abuse. Deb has helped to develop tobacco and e-cigarette prevention materials for deaf individuals and does workshops and training related to addiction and its impact on the deaf community. Outside of Minnesota, Deb worked for 17 years at the California School for the Deaf where she was responsible for clinical services. Deb will share a bit of her story, knowledge, and some good things that have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Stewardship includes: "the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving "and "a sacred opportunity to return a fraction of the abundance we are given."

Members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Underwood have risen to the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions of in-person gatherings. We miss the personal greetings and hugs and being together with coffee and treats. But we are making the adjustments and using technology more effectively. The beauty of Zoom is that folks from a distance may more easily attend. Through the randomness of breakouts, we are meeting friends we previously knew less well.

More people have signed up to give through automatic funds transfer (AFT) while others continue to mail in their contributions. The Board of Directors has approved the online giving application using Givelify. Now with Givelify, it will be even easier to fill the collection plate. Watch for the button to give at www.ucofu.org.



UCU members and friends as stewards, show caring and preserving our personal spiritual needs and hence, our church community. Members and friends give in gratitude from their own abundance. Thank you for coming and for giving!

Pre-Zoom Average Sunday attendance:	Jan- March 15	Average: 33/Sunday
Zoom Services	March 29-July 31	Average: 30/Sunday
Total Collection Income: \$ 15,466.68 for the period toward the \$ 40,831.00 annual budget		

Stewardship Committee: Mary Anderson, Tim Lanz, Tere Mann, Dave Sanderson.

We Lift Up Our Hearts in Thanks

For the sun and the dawn
Which we did not create;
For the moon and the evening
Which we did not make;
For food which we plant
But cannot grow;
For friends and loved ones
We have not earned and cannot buy;
For this gathered company
Which welcomes us as we are
From wherever we have come;
For all our free churches
That keep us human and
Encourage us in our quest for
Beauty, truth, and love;
For all things which come to us
As gifts of being from sources
Beyond ourselves;
Gifts of life and love and
Friendship

We lift our hearts in thanks this day.

Richard M Fewkes # 515 from Singing the Living Tradition

Google Suites



Work has been in process for some time to transfer and update the Unitarian Church of Underwood's records to the Google Suites platform. Google Suites provides several benefits including record retention, added security, ease of use, ease of collaboration, fewer emails, better tracking, and better communication. Google Suites will also provide us calendaring features. Access to the UCU calendar will be available soon!

Google Suites Training, September 2, 6 p.m. via Zoom: How to Access your account on G Suites, access email, view groups, email groups, access google drive, set up google drive stream. This includes: Board members, Committee chairs, team leads, and others interested. (Watch your email for the invitation).

There will be additional training sessions at later dates for other topics like sharing documents, accessing the public calendar, subscribing to the calendar, making your own UCU calendars.

To get to the church calendar click here:

https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=c_nlpfeu0f2n32grc2m7i684fo84%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FChicago

Look at the date, find the event, click on the event and Woohee – you have the details! Thank you, Bonnie Graham!



Special thanks to the Google Suites Technical Team: Melody Shores, Bonnie Graham and Tere Mann; and to the Records Maintenance Committee: Norm Kolstad, Mary Anderson, John Minge and Bonnie Showers.

Adult Religious Education

"Thank you to members who have offered ideas for adult religious education. For instance, there may be a topic or a book that you would like to share as a participant or leader. We expect to be offering several shorter-term classes, with various start times throughout the year, on days and times that work best for the participants. Contact me at maryworner@gmail.com or 218-826-6998." *Mary Worner, Program Coordinator*

U Group News

U Groups, also known as small group ministry or covenant groups have been meeting since their establishment in 2010. This year, we welcome Luce Reese as our new U-Group Coordinator for the year. Luce has been attending the Underwood U-Group. Linda Quistad-Berg, also a member of the Underwood U-Group, has volunteered to choose the lessons for this year. A big welcome to Luce and Linda and all the energy, skills, and thoughtfulness with which they will lead.

U-Groups meet monthly, normally in someone's home but at this time, meetings are held on Zoom. U Groups provide UCU members and friends an environment in which they may listen,

speak, and engage in democratic dialogue. Each group meets at a regular time each month and holds an open chair for anyone who wants to join.

For more information contact Luce Reese: email at lucereese@gmail.com or phone at 218-495-2449. *Mary Worner, Program Coordinator*

Notes from August Virtual Sunday Services



August 3 - Diane Johnson, "Kindred Spirits and Sacred Spaces." Diane shared a personal touch stone she uses during this time of stress, depression, and agitation due to the pandemic: creation of our own sacred space. She learned 10 years ago at a workshop entitled, "Renew, Respond, Rejoice, session: how to create your personal sacred space. It was based on the writings of Inez Torres Davis, the Director of Justice in the Women of the ELCA organization.

- Choose a special spot by removing extras and cleaning using environmentally friendly products. Hers is at the top of her stair step landing where it juts out with a window to view the back yard.
- The blessing and the cleansing – to bless and cleanse the space, Diane used incense, smudge, bells, gongs, and essential oils.
- The Creation itself – "feeling and the filling." Add one element carefully at a time.
- Use the sacred space – be focused but gentle with yourself.

Whenever, Diane finds herself particularly agitated or stressed, her husband, Robert will say to her, "go to your room."

There is more: Either coincidentally or serendipitously, Diane and Inez Torres David connected.

See the text of Diane's complete talk at end of newsletter.

Attendance: 36



August 9 – Ellen Eastby, "Isolation Skills." Ellen shared a humorous piece that she posted on Facebook on April 1 (see below). She began by talking about "Isolation Skills"; her decision that she wanted to use the time of the shutdown to learn a new skill. She decided to try to learn how to fold fitted sheets (a challenge to most of us).

According to research, laughter can help to improve our health in many ways:

- After a good laugh, our whole body relaxes
- It can improve our immune system
- It triggers endorphins

- It burns calories
- And it can extend our longevity.

See Ellen's referenced Facebook post at end of newsletter.

Attendance: 29

Cheered by Our Community

Burton D Carley

Cheered by our community,
blessed by our covenant,
uplifted in mind, and renewed in spirit,
go forth with courage and in peace to meet the days to come. Amen.

Come Down off the Ladder

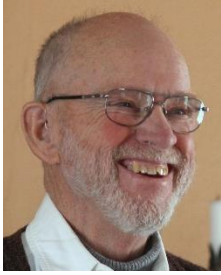
David S Blanchard

Come down off the ladder.
Wash out that paintbrush.
Shake the sand out of your shoes.

Get up off your muddy knees
and give the garden a morning off.
Fold up the newspaper. Turn off the coffeepot.
Close up your calendar,
already filled with dates,
and times,
and people,
and places that claim you.

This church is ready for you to fill its rooms,
to create its spirit, to generate its warmth,
to kindle its light.
This church is ready for you to make community,
to create beauty, to bend it toward justice,
to serve its ideals.

This church is ready for you to be here,
honoring our past,
invigorating our present,
and dreaming our future.
This is your church. Here we are home.
Here we are whole.
Let us begin.



August 16 - Bob Worner, "Where Do We Go from Here?"

We are experiencing a critical moment in time. These times come along periodically; probably the last critical period was during the Civil Rights Era. The future holds either promise or pain. What can we do? We can work together; not just turn away in disgust. We can vote and support our governmental institutions. Houses of worship have a crucial role through their impact on moral and ethical values.

Attendance: 29

August 23 – Last month, **Rev. Roger Parks** shared thoughts from a book he has read, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, by Yuval Noah Harari wherein the author in developing a history of our ancestors looking back at the effect of encounters between homo sapiens.



This time, we look forward through the writing of Father Richard Rohr, *The Wisdom: Order, Chaos, Reorder*. Father Rohr writes on the connectiveness to that which is beyond us – a new future. There is a pattern of growth: Order, Disorder (chaos), Reorder. Chaos is the order of the day that can bring us to a deeper life, a new way of being, a rebirth to the new order. "Born again" with death to one and reorder to a new life – a "resurrection" to be fully alive on this side of life, to love connection, to feel compassion for the whole.

In Order, we are shaped by laws, customs, family loyalties. We think that everyone is like us. There is security, predictability, impulse control, with a strong container and a strong ego structure. It feels secure and universalist. We are reluctant to relinquish this order. In Disorder, there is disruption to this order; devastating circumstances, we make mistakes, our order is challenged, and we question. With our premises crumbling, we lose security. We can accept and adjust, or we can fear, dig in, hold on, long for return to the known, or Reorder.

The key to reordering our own life is to start with a sense of wonder and awe – call to love beyond our own flesh and blood. See others as equal; count others as one of our self and share our commonality, accept that the other is part of me that I do not yet know. What matters is our attitude. We can stay the same and resist or we can evolve and look at our neighbor as part of our spiritual migration; not be controlled by fear but that we are discovering new.

COVID-19 has given us an extended long pause to reflect and resort to reordering. Although chaos may be the order of the day, it can bring as the bridge to a deeper life, a new way of being, a rebirth to the new order.

Recommended read: *Caste, the Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson.

Attendance: 33



August 30 - Ozzie Tollefson, "Words of Hope and Courage from Anne Frank." Tollefson shared "Words of Hope and Courage from Anne Frank." Included below are many of the quotes that Ozzie shared, that were written by a remarkable, eloquent young woman:

"Those who have courage and faith shall never perish in misery"

"I can shake off everything as I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn."

"I've found that there is always some beauty left -- in nature, sunshine, freedom, in yourself; these can all help you."

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

"Although I'm only fourteen, I know quite well what I want, I know who is right and who is wrong. I have my opinions, my own ideas and principles, and although it may sound pretty mad from an adolescent, I feel more of a person than a child, I feel quite independent of anyone."

"Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands."

"Women should be respected as well! Generally speaking, men are held in great esteem in all parts of the world, so why shouldn't women have their share? Soldiers and war heroes are honored and commemorated, explorers are granted immortal fame, martyrs are revered, but how many people look upon women too as soldiers? Women, who struggle and suffer pain to ensure the continuation of the human race, make much tougher and more courageous soldiers than all those big-mouthed freedom-fighting heroes put together!"

"The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be, and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles."

She wrote on July 15, 1944, just 20 days before they were captured by the Nazis.

"It's utterly impossible for me to build my life on a foundation of chaos, suffering and death. I see the world being slowly transformed into a wilderness; I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more."

"In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart."

Ozzie's brother Arthur died On March 26, 1945, while attempting to cross the Rhine River. He was just 19.....Two teenagers fighting against evil.

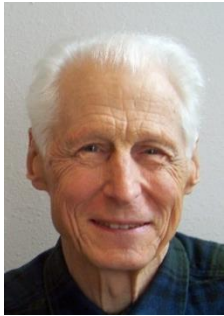
Attendance: 31

Link to Melody Shores and family song on the North Shore if anyone wants to watch/listen again: <https://youtu.be/-DMbmWHisr4>

In Celebration of the Lives of:

Don Sweder

Born 1933 - Died July 30, 2020



Donald Sweder, age 87, passed away July 30 at Broen Home in Fergus Falls, MN. Don was born in Duluth to parents who had immigrated to America from Poland. He graduated from the University of Minnesota's Navy ROTC program with a BA in Engineering, Mathematics, and Statistics in 1956. He married Elizabeth Eriksson of Minneapolis immediately after graduating and attended the Navy Supply Corps School in Athens, Georgia, prior to beginning his ROTC active duty commitment to the Navy.

Don became a Supply Officer and served on ships that travelled all over the world. He completed his Navy commitment in 1959 and accepted an engineering job with Lear Siegler in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The family moved back to Minneapolis when Don began a job at Honeywell in January 1968. He became a City Planner for Minneapolis, a position he held for 27 years until he retired in 1998. During his career Don earned an MBA from Western Michigan University and a Master of Planning degree from the U of Minnesota. Don and Liz moved to Edina in 1972, then built their retirement lake home near Fergus Falls, MN in 1999.

Don was preceded in death by his parents, his older sister Florence, and his wife Elizabeth. He is survived by daughters Meg (Wayne) and Betsy (Ron), and seven grandchildren. A private celebration of Don's life will be held in September. A video memorial will be shared with friends and family after the service. *Submitted by Meg Hanson, daughter*

Argyle Paulson

February 4, 1924- August 26, 2020

On February 2, 1924, Argyle was born on a farm outside of Dalton, Minnesota. His parents were Irene Kemnitz Paulson and Clarence Paulson. When Argyle was 6 years old, his family moved to Battle Lake. He told stories of walking to country school with his sister, Gwen, and about riding in a horse drawn sleigh to their Uncle Bill and Aunt Elsie Luning's on Ethyl Lake. When Argyle was in 6th grade, they moved to Pelican Rapids and stayed there for three years. In 1939, they moved to New York Mills. When he was 17 years old, he joined the Civil Conservation Corps and was based at Wall Lake. He spent 6 months with the CCC planting



trees, but when the war started the CCC fell apart. In 1942, he was drafted for WWII, but was rejected due to having Rheumatic Fever as a child.

On March 31, 1945, Argyle and Loretta Petersen were married. In the early years of their marriage, Argyle and Loretta moved around Minnesota and even lived in Seattle, Washington for a couple years (until the big earthquake that chased them back to MN). In 1957, they settled in Rochester, Minnesota where they built at least 200 homes and owned a neighborhood convenience store/gas station called, Paulson's Superette. They raised and showed Arabian horses and were very involved in the Democratic Party. As active volunteers for the DFL, they passed civic responsibility on to their five children and taught them the importance of being involved in their own communities. In 1987, Argyle and Loretta moved back to their hometown of New York Mills. They had a hobby farm and raised chickens, geese, sheep, and pigs. Argyle also worked at Wadena County Productive Alternatives and really enjoyed his co-workers and his crew at the recycling center. He finally retired in 1999. In 2005, Argyle moved in with his recently widowed daughter, Heidi, to help with her two young children. He lived with them in Fergus Falls until 2019 when his weakened legs required him to move into long-term care. He was a favorite of the staff at Broen Home and received a lot of love. He spent almost every Wednesday afternoon playing cards with his good friend, Maggie Meehan.

Argyle Paulson was the oldest son of four children born to Clarence and Irene Paulson. He was preceded in death by parents, Clarence & Irene Paulson; his wife of 57 years, Loretta; his sister, Gwen Birch (Garland); brother David (Arlene) Paulson; and grandson, Bryan Barnes. He is survived by his brother Clarence (Shirley); and his five children, Rhonda, Argyle Thomas (Carl), Giles (Katie), Garth, and Heidi (Frank); his grandchildren Susan, Erik, Caly (Dustin), Henry, and Sadie; and great-grandchildren Rhianna (Eljay), Cash, and Beck.

A small graveside service will be held at Oak Grove Cemetery in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, at 3:00 on September 3rd. Face masks and social distancing will be expected. Argyle was a member of the Unitarian Church of Underwood and Celebrant Ellen Eastby will officiate the service. Please feel free to share photos and memories on Karvonen Funeral Home's webpage for Argyle. <https://www.karvonenfuneralhome.com/obituary/Argyle-Paulson>. *Submitted by Heidi Paulson, Daughter*

Donn Siems

Died August 29, 2020



After a bad fall earlier in August, resulting in complications, Donn Siems died Sunday, August 29, 2020 surrounded by his loved ones. His wife, Marlys died February 16, 2020. Donn always stood ready for the hugs. Marlys was the first to introduce herself and welcome newcomers. It is hard to think of Donn without Marlys. She did the talking for them both while Donn stood by with a grin. Donn and Marlys held a special space in the hearts of many at the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Our hearts go out to the Siems family

and close friends. More information will be provided when received. *Mary Anderson, News Editor*

Susan's Black-Eyed-Susan's Bring Forth Memories of Harold and Blanche Gray



Photo Courtesy of Susan Groff

"Some years back, Harold and Blanch Gray asked one Sunday if I would be interested in some seeds giving me a warning that they self-seed and would pop up around our farm. David and I visited them to collect seeds and their gift has continued to delight us by truly popping up around our yard." *Susan Groff*

Some History: Harold & Blanche Gray were long time members of the Unitarian Church of Underwood. They left a large bequest to the church. In celebration of UCU's 125 years, at Marguerite Andrew's request, Victor Machart, Friend of UCU provided this information on the Gray's.

Excerpts from Victor's letter of March 12, 2014

"I had the unique opportunity to meet and get to know Harold and Blanche Gray as a teenager while a patient on the "Teen Ward" at the Fergus State Hospital.

Harold Gray was the social worker for the teens on that ward. Blanche Street (Gray...she and Harold later married) was the head nurse. Harold Gray was a rather small, quiet, soft voiced, thoughtful, dignified man. He had a broad range of intellectual interests. He was patient, kind, respectful and considerate. He looked out for the interests of his clients...both when they came in and when it was time for them to leave. Harold Gray could not be fooled or taken advantage of. And believe me being part of the teenage population I know that a lot of the boys and later girls would try all kinds of shenanigans to get their way with the staff. The kids liked and respected him.

Blanche Street was the Head Nurse. She oversaw the ward during the day and was usually there from eight to five. Like Harold Gray she was knowledgeable, patient, respectful and considerate. She was for all practical purposes the housemother and head housekeeper. She kept order, dispensed medicines, and handled emergencies. She was good at discipline. Like Harold she could not be fooled or taken advantage of. Like Harold, the kids liked and respected her.

When you consider the population Harold and Blanche Gray successfully worked with, they were very remarkable people.

Years later, in 1988, I met Harold and Blanche Gray at the Underwood Minnesota Unitarian Church. We kept in touch from then on. I was living and working as a speech language pathologist in North Dakota then. My mother was living south of Detroit Lakes and I had in the

meantime met and become friends with Marguerite and Budd Andrews. At any rate from that point on I made it a point to stop and visit with Harold and Blanche Gray when I was in the area both at their Vernon Street home and at the assisted living home in Fergus Falls until they had both passed away.

One of the things I remember about them when I visited them was that even though they were in their late eighties they were still actively working as volunteers helping children with their reading at the local schools.

Blanche continued to drive until she was into her nineties. She was careful though perhaps a bit slow and she was doing fine.

I hope this helps to give you a good picture of Harold and Blanche Gray.” *Victor Machart, UCU Friend*

As of 8/15/20 from Victor who has weekly phone calls yet with Marguerite – “Those were good years for me and then led to even better years. Much of it thanks to Harold and Blanche.”

Health Note from The Welcome Place September 2020

September usually feels like the beginning of a new year...school starts, young adults head off to college, school sports are ready to go, professional sports are on TV again, and the usual planning of schedules is underway.

This year feels different, like all the prior months. We are floundering a little or a lot, trying to get our bearings on what is going to happen, what isn't, who is doing what, what should we plan for? Sports are on hold, school is different, and life is different.

Maybe our key word should be Hope...We hope for a new routine, We hope for the end of a virus that has had the world spinning, we Hope for our lives to return to normal, whatever that is. There are some signs of Hope: two churches that I know of are welcoming new pastors who hope to make a difference in the lives of their people. Teachers are hoping for the opportunity to return to educating young minds, and workers are hoping for a return to a job similar to what they had.

There are people that we all know who are struggling with illnesses, lifestyle changes, sorrow...they too have hope that tomorrow will be a better day.

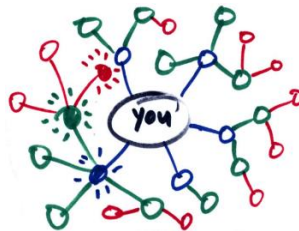
It appears that is our only option, to hope for a better day. Our parents and grandparents made it through depression years, world war years, and financially challenging years. We can make it through this too, this fall of uncertainty and change.

One benefit for many has been an increase in technology knowledge...virtual visits with family, virtual doctor appointments, on-line newspapers, and books.

As a reminder, The Welcome Place continues to host a virtual Caregivers Discussion group the third Wednesday of each month at 1pm in collaboration with Lutheran Social Services. Those who participate have learned how to go online, see people's faces, and discuss any caregiving issues for an hour. If anyone is interested, contact Alicia at 218-640-7737 for the online invitation.

Finally, the usual advice on dealing with stress applies....eat well, exercise, take care of your emotions, and take care of yourself. *Katherine Jordahl, RN*

Living our UU Principles



Here's Some Ways to Stay Connected....

We know that our connections right now can be dangerous in spreading the Covid-19. But our stay at home connections can also be AWESOME in spreading love and beloved community. Commit, reach out, share YOUR interests and talents and be part of this web of our existence and this body of fellowship. And do it through Zoom!

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

Host a gathering: Miss some of your most friends at UCU? Have special interests you'd like to share? Consider hosting small gatherings or even dinner parties. The UUA recently presented a webinar titled: how to do small group online gatherings. If you are interested, you can watch the recorded webinar at <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/events/webinars/how-do-small-group-online-gatherings>.

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

God's Work. Our Hands. Everywhere. Every Day.

Sverdrup Lutheran Church started GWOH projects September 2013. They have done many wonderful projects with Tingvold Lutheran Church, Underwood Unitarian Church and Sverdrup Lutheran Members over the past seven years. Sverdrup will not be focusing on any single day for GWOH in 2020, but will encourage completion of projects over time as can be safely completed in a modified version. These acts of service let us explore our basic faith/ life convictions of "Every Day and Every Where" loving our neighbors and making our community a better place to live.

And further borrowing the suggestions of Sverdrup Lutheran's Pastor Tammy Jacobson:

"In everything we do, we are encouraged to serve our neighbor. I encourage you to consider new ways such as:

- Identify members in your congregation or community who could use help with the yard work such as:
 - Lawn mowing
 - Window washing
 - Raking
 - Chopping wood
 - Clearing brush
 - Painting
 - Weeding
 - Planting
 - Washing cars
 - Clearing gutters.
- Pick up litter to care for creation and beautify your community.
- Write a letter. Think of someone who might enjoy a word of encouragement or thanksgiving.
- Pick up the phone. Call someone you have been thinking and let them know you appreciate them. Listen as they share their joys and concerns. Especially keep in mind those who have been isolated.
- Send a care-package. Express your gratitude for emergency workers, teachers, health care workers, postal and delivery workers, those in the military, and essential workers.
- Give life: Consider giving blood or plasma.
- Pray: Set aside a specific time each day to pray for our community and world.
- Think outside of the box: Think of new ways you can be God's hands in this world. As you 'think outside the box' be sure to share some of the things you have done." *Rev. Tammy Jacobson, Sverdrup Lutheran Church*



Social & Environmental Justice Opportunities

To continue educational and awareness efforts on white privilege and racial inequities, the Racial Justice Task Force is offering in their series of book reads and discussions, the following:

Role-Playing: Combatting Racism in Conversation

It is difficult to talk about race, it is difficult to confront others on their remarks, and even more difficult to recognize what we say that can perpetuate the problem. Let us take some time to:

- * learn some self-monitoring tools
- * plan responses so we can respond, rather than react
- * reframing our own questions or conversation starters
- * practice conversations and role-playing in breakout groups to try out responses and reframing

We will approach these conversations with compassion for ourselves and others - we have all made mistakes and have hurt people with our words when we hadn't intended to. It is important to remember that Impact matters, even if the Intent is good.

Dates/Times: September 14 6:30 -8 pm (if there is enough interest, we may add another event on the 21st).

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97824906036?pwd=UjR4dFNBZUxxQ1g4cnEwb1Nlb3lZZz09>

Meeting ID: 978 2490 6036

Passcode: 640356

Call in at: 1 312 626 6799



*Ancient native prophecies say:
“When the Eagle of the North and
the Condor of the South fly together,
Indigenous peoples will unite the
human family”.*



UCU’s Racial Justice Task Force and Environmental Justice Committee are teaming up to offer UCU members and friends the opportunity to view the film, *The Condor & the Eagle*. Join this Unitarian Universalist community screening and discussion with the filmmakers and co-hosts of the award-winning documentary.

This beautifully filmed documentary provided by the Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth (UUME) documents the stories of four well-known Native environmental spokespeople who are at the forefront of a perspective shift in the identity of their people, from forgotten voices to powerful and influential leaders. They have struggled with feelings of isolation their entire lives and are now discovering the power of their shared voices to bring change to the entire world.

The Condor & The Eagle premiered in October 2019 at the Woodstock Film Festival, was selected by 28 world-renowned film festivals, and has won 8 awards including Best Environmental Documentary at the 2019 Red Nation Film Festival.

UCU has registered for two viewing times for the film:

- Thursday, September 17 from 7:30 – 10 p.m. or
- Friday, October 2 from 5-7:30 p.m.

On the day of your choosing to view, go to

<https://event.webinarjam.com/register/110/9v10va24?fbclid=IwAR1n3pbFjXBPdQ-oTauf6x1LC9Ao5RvFmBdt90Nxl880i25zdfc-CN0Z4>. Click on Register and complete and submit the information.

There is no screening fee but UCU has donated \$100 to this cause. Individuals may also want to donate on your own. The donation link

is: <https://uuministry4earth.z2systems.com/np/clients/uuministry4earth/donation.jsp?campaign=90&>.



Depending on the number of participants, there may be a follow-up discussion on your reactions to the film, Monday, October 5 from 6-7 p.m. Watch for ucofu.org emails for Zoom link to the discussion.



"NIBI"

Honor the Otter Tail River Walk



Honor the Otter Tail Nibi Walk

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 to
Saturday, October 10th, 2020

Registration is now open. Please register by
September 13th. [Click link to get more info.](#)

[CLICK TO REGISTER NOW](#) or call (320) 269-2984

UCU Member Deb Wallwork is working with Ojibwa elder Sharon Day of the Indigenous Task Force, Peg Furshong, Director of CURE (Clean Up the River Environment), and Ojibwa artist Laura Youngbird to plan the Nibi Walk for the Otter Tail River, October 7-10th. Sharon Day will be the featured Sunday service speaker on September 13.

"Nibi" is the Ojibwe word for water, the sacred elemental force and source of all life. This walk brings together water protectors and river advocates with a series of ceremonial blessings along the route of the river. The walk will start from the source of the Otter Tail on the White Earth reservation and continue, over three days, on rural roads closest to the river to the Three Rivers Park in Breckenridge where the Otter Tail River has a confluence with the Red and Bois de Sioux rivers.



The Unitarian Church of Underwood provided an 2020 Empowerment Grant to help make this indigenous-led experience possible. Deb shares how much they appreciate receiving the grant, "We hope to connect members and our honoring practices with the seventh principle 'Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which are a part.'"

Stay informed by joining the Facebook page Honor the Otter Tail, the Nibi Walk at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/415217079426723>. There you will find a video posted to help folks learn more about the concepts behind the walk with information and ways to participate. You can also link to this information from the ucofu.org Facebook Page, ucofu.org. Please share information of this opportunity with other folks along the river route, and if there are non-UU folks you think would be interested invite them and let Deb know.

For interested participants, there will be a required Orientation meeting on Sunday September 13 that will be announced soon on the Facebook page. During this meeting we will go over Nibi Walk protocols and COVID precautions. ***Please sign up prior to September 13th or as soon as possible to help us determine if there is enough interest to facilitate this Nibi Walk.***

The plan is to welcome anyone who wants to attend the opening and closing ceremonies, wearing face masks and social distancing. The walks will be more organized groups - you should plan on your own transportation (per household), meals and lodging. Because of COVID and not wanting people to travel distances, this walk is intended for people who live on or near the Otter Tail River.

For this Nibi Walk you may sign up for as many sessions as you are available, but we are limiting each session to 8 walkers. In the other or comments session you should indicate which sessions (rank order) that you prefer. An organizer will be back in touch with you to confirm your walking slots.

If you have questions - please contact Deb at deb.wallwork@ucofu.org or call her at 651-216-4610." Or contact Peg Furshong at peg@cureriver.org.

Editor's Notes: From <https://ottertailcountymn.us/history/>: *Before there were roads in the wilderness area, the best method of transportation was by water; and as the Leaf Lakes drain towards the Gulf of Mexico. Otter Tail Lake toward Hudson Bay by way of the Red River of the North.*

The early explorer would portage from Leaf Lake (Leaf City) to Portage Lake to Donald Lake to Pelican Bay on Otter Tail Lake and be on his way through Canada to Hudson Bay.

The first explorers through this area about 1750 were a Frenchman and an Englishman. They met with a band of Indians on the shore of "Lac de la Queue de la Outer", which roughly translates to "Lake of the Otters Tail".

This is on record in the archives of Congress, and one would think that it was called that for many years before that as the name derives from the sand bar shaped like an otter's tail where the Otter Tail River enters Otter Tail Lake (on the North East end of the lake) and now over two centuries later the otter's tail sand bar is still there.

Note: On October 11, join the collaborative Sunday service with Northwoods UU Fellowship and UCU in which Northwoods' members will present *An Indigenous Peoples History of the United States* by Roxann Dunbar-Ortiz.

Continue Self-Education/Awareness on White Privilege and Racial Inequities With links provided by Melody Shores

Buy books from www.africanbookstore.net to shop black virtually."

Listen to podcast interview by Brene Brown with Ibram X Kendi here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/unlocking-us-with-bren%C3%A9-brown/id1494350511#episodeGuid=86b67286-7432-11ea-b57b-5b9a7214501a>

First Universalist, Rev. Karen Hunt- powerful message, shocking, but necessary to hear:

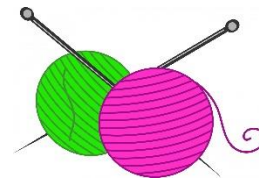
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=1AsebpS6010>

WHITE LIES - On Tuesday nights, Prairie Public Radio is running a 7-session series from NPR called "White Lies." It's about the murder of a UU minister, James Reeb, in Selma in 1965, and about how the crime was unsolved for many years. In 1965, Rev. James Reeb was murdered in Selma, Alabama. Three men were tried and acquitted, but no one was ever held to account. Fifty years later, two journalists from Alabama return to the city where it happened, expose the lies that kept the murder from being solved and uncover a story about guilt and memory that says as much about America today as it does about the past. Link to the Podcast: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510343/white-lies>

Volunteer for the Community

Bits and Pieces of Yarn

Do you have left over bits of yarn you don't need anymore? Marianne Bryan knits warm hats, scarves, sweaters, blankets and other items to help keep people warm during cold winters. She sends them to: ONE SPIRIT Okini - for Native American Indian Folks - items are distributed to the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations in South Dakota. If you have yarn you would like to contribute please contact Mary Worner (218-826-6998 or maryworner@gmail.com) or Linda Quistad-Berg 218-495-2663 or bergfarm@gmail.com and we will make arrangements to pick up your donation of yarn and get it to Marianne.



P.S - if you see yarn at a garage sale or for a good price at a store - consider buying it and donating it to this project.

Support the Schools for Shan Refugees



Photo courtesy of Bernice Johnson, Shan Schools Executive Director

“September brings the annual fundraiser for Schools for Shan Refugees (SSR), an organization that supports the education of child and teen Shan refugees. Shan families have fled their homes in Myanmar and are now living in migrant camps in Thailand. The UCU has supported SSR in a variety of ways over the years and continues to do so.

Last year Katy Olson and Ron Roller hosted a Thai dinner in support of the fundraiser. We had planned to do the same this fall. Because of the pandemic, Katy and I will be conducting the fundraising virtually.

The lives of the Shan, like ours, has been complicated by Covid-19 so maintaining our support is more important than ever. Our goal this year is to raise \$3,000 from UCU members and friends. You will be hearing more from us about the Shan families, SSR, and the fundraiser this month.

Katy and I, the SSR board members, and the Shan people are grateful for your on-going support. “ *Mary Worner, Shan Schools Board Member*



[Donate with Paypal](#)

Ready to Start!

Battle Lake remodel is 99% finished! The family should be moving in soon. The New Build in Fergus Falls is underway, and we will need volunteers on site. Our build schedule will be 3 days/week, Tuesdays-Thursdays 9am - 3pm. 1353 Lenore Way in Fergus Falls. Safety precautions for COVID-19 will be in place.

Volunteer or contribute to:

PO Box 434
1500 S. Cascade
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
(o) 218-736-2905
(c) 218-205-5739
www.fergushabitat.org
pmshol@gmail.com



Fergus Falls Food Shelf continues to need volunteers:



The Fergus Falls Food Shelf Organization is taking over Food Shelf that feeds an average of 30 families each day it is open. They need our help! Recently the danger of Covid-19 threatened to stop this essential service to local families. The food shelf has practices in place to insure the safety of the volunteers and the clients: only four volunteers are allowed inside the building, cloth masks are provided and social distancing is

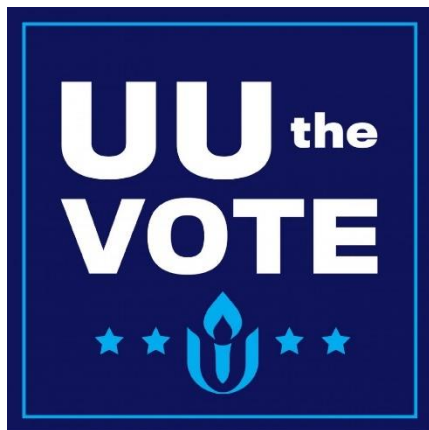
observed; clients now drive up in cars and pick a box of food with no need to go inside.

To volunteer, contact Kim Embretson at the Food Shelf @ 218-770-4885 to receive more details and sign up for a volunteer time slot or make a donation.

We Are Part of the Larger UU

The Time is Critical

Get Involved!!



One of the fundamental principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is the use of the democratic process. As an expression of our faith, many Unitarian Universalist congregations engage in voter registration, election reform, protecting voting rights and democracy, and Get-Out-the-Vote drives.

Defending the right to vote has been central to the work of the UUA and at the core of Unitarian Universalism for decades—from expanding enfranchisement for women and Black people to advocating for a path to citizenship for immigrants; from our history of civil rights engagement to taking on the 'New Jim Crow' and white supremacy today. As a faith community UUs are vocal and active about voting rights and have contributed to change throughout history. In the past several

years, UUs have been part of a groundswell of voting rights, electoral work, and democracy movements that have emerged and gained even more momentum since the 2016 US elections.

The UUA is supporting UU congregations, organizations, and individuals in a major effort for democracy and support of electoral justice in the 2020 elections.

Our prayer is for democracy to be a spiritual practice of accountability that resists fascism.

Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen

The [Fifth Principle](#) of Unitarian Universalism calls for the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

Why now? With the increasing control of our government by corporate and special interests, voter suppression, and the alarming rise of authoritarianism, we face many challenges to ensure democracy and a just society. We also have seen a rise in people's movements led by people of color, women, and others impacted by injustice, a rise in activism, and the election of progressive candidates. This is electoral justice.

[Analysis of mid-term elections and heading into 2020:](#)

“Politics is a struggle for power—over ideas and interests—and after this year’s midterm, two things remain clear. First, voter suppression and intimidation, racism, and corporate money continue to infect U.S. politics like a virus. Second, despite those obstacles, the United States is a much more progressive country than most pundits and political analysts believe. Voters last election cycle embraced many progressive candidates and ballot measures, even in so-called conservative states. The midterm election was viewed as a nationwide referendum on Trump’s leadership and presumably his corruption.” Progressive Victories Lay the Groundwork for a 2020 Groundswell, Nov 16, 2018, [Peter Dreier](#)



Come to the Table! The menu is ready to peruse & choose:

And we know you are hungry for "what can I do" to live out UU values in this election season when everything we care about seems to be on the table, too.

Here's the menu that MUUSJA has put together and can help serve as a balanced meal.

Join us on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm Central or contact us by phone or email to plan your preferences.

[A downloadable, printable, shareable copy of the menu is HERE](#)

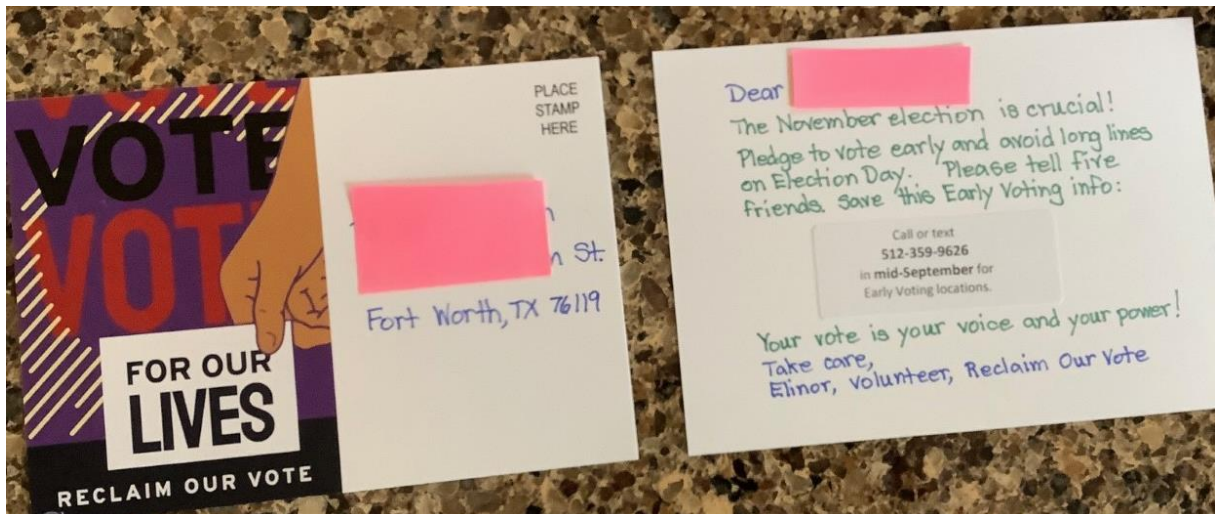
And an online copy is posted to MUUSJA's website

at <https://www.muusja.org/uuthevote-menu/>

Bon appetit!!

FOR MORE ON HOW TO TURN YOUR SENSE OF URGENCY ABOUT THIS ELECTION INTO SOME CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION... which relieves anxiety and kinda helps save the world.... check out the details at <https://muusja.salsalabs.org/99days> or just email or call us at Director@muusja.org or 612-927-2072. Let's talk about how you can feel better and make a difference... or help someone else feel better and make a difference. It all counts.

What we can do: Karen Wills, MUUSJA Executive Director has delivered for UCU and Northwoods UU Fellowship a package of 120 cards with stamps and labels to go to young and BIPOC voters in Texas who are victims of voter suppression there. Texas has a high number of voters who live in areas that aren't majority white. We are hoping to have them all in the mail by the end of September.



Karen also dropped off yard signs in English, Spanish, and Somali from the League of Women Voters. Racial Justice Task Force members have already stepped forward to send postcards and display the signs. If you wish to help address postcards, please contact Ellen Eastby @ ellen.eastby@ucofu.org or Mary Anderson at newseditor@ucofu.org.



LOVE *RESISTS*

Dear Unitarian Church of Underwood,

The [No More Deaths](#) camp in Arivaca, Arizona, provides life-saving medical services and supplies for basic survival needs to migrants lost in the Sonoran Desert while trying to cross the border. Two weeks ago, Border Patrol agents surrounded this humanitarian aid station in a stake-out, and waited until after dark to conduct a violent and intimidating raid on the camp in which over 30 people were detained, the camp was completely trashed, and volunteers' electronics were confiscated. All of this occurred on one of the hottest and most dangerous days of the year.

The raid included agents from the same unit, BORTAC, that has been terrorizing racial justice protesters in Portland. This is the second time that a major raid on a No More Deaths aid location has occurred less than 48 hours after the group released damning evidence of abuse and misuse of power by Border Patrol.

As a former volunteer myself, I think about the times I spent out in the AZ desert, and the beautiful sense of respite the camp provided. Playing guitar, or card games, with people who shortly before didn't know where or how they would find food and water. Now, seeing the aid station overturned, the canvas of the medical tent sliced open for no reason, is infuriating. It feels like psychological warfare as much as a very material, practical attack.

Love Resists is sharing two requests coming from No More Deaths

following the raid:

Please donate to help the camp re-build and get up and running again. Funds raised for No More Deaths during this time will go towards supporting those arrested at Byrd camp, rebuilding the humanitarian aid camp, and continuing their humanitarian aid work in the face of repression.

Please take action to #DefundBorderPatrol as part of the larger #DefundHate campaign. For the first time since the inception of ICE and CBP, the House has released a spending bill that proposes significant cuts - this possibility is more real than it has been in years. Use the below script as a guide to call or email your representative and senators (whom you can find through the links) about what you want to see in next year's funding bill:

"Hello, I am a constituent in your district/state and I am calling/emailing to urge you to fight for funding that reflects the values of our community. Your spending decisions have the power to help or harm us, so I am urging you to divest from harmful immigration enforcement carried out by ICE and CBP and invest instead in [x] for the people in your district/state. You need to hold these agencies accountable by ensuring that their Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations include dramatic funding cuts and stand for programs that support your constituents."

Much gratitude to some of our Southern AZ UU Ministers, Rev. Matthew Funke Crary and Rev. Bethany Russell-Lowe, who bore witness to the surveillance on the camp on Friday, as well as Janine Gelsinger of UU Justice AZ (UUJAZ) who has been coordinating local response.

You can also read and share the UUSC statement here, and learn more through news coverage by The Intercept and Common Dreams.

In Solidarity,

Hannah Hafter, Senior Grassroots Organizer at UUSC, and the rest of the Love Resists Team

Some Thoughts on Dismantling Systemic White Supremacy

Rev. Sharon Dittmar, Congregational Life Consultant

I recently attended the second part of an online course by the [Adaway Group entitled, Whiteness at Work](#) with the MidAmerica program staff. The workshop is designed for white people. The second session introduced us to the “Cycle of Socialization,” how American culture socializes its residents (particularly white residents) to inherit and replicate systemic white supremacy. Not surprisingly, we are socialized before we have words by family, media, teachers, and institutions (including religious). In my mind, it is like “drinking the Kool-Aid.” And, this socialization is deadly for BIPOC and historically marginalized groups.



Like many of you who are white, I have spent a lot of time thinking about this. [Robin D'Angelo's *White Fragility*](#) showed me how my white guilt is not useful (it does not change any systems – rather it keeps things in place). [Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Antiracist*](#) challenged me to make daily choices to act like an anti-racist instead of playing down differences or ignoring racism. As Kendi notes, this is daily work and a constant work in progress.

It is clear to me that I will never be “woke.” I am waking, and I hope to continue to wake for as long as I live. I am beginning to adjust to the fact that I make continual mistakes, even as I learn. I don't like this reality, because someone else gets hurt when I make mistakes. As a white person, I have an unfair amount of power and privilege given to me by historic racism and the cycle of socialization.

Parker Palmer writes, [“When the going gets tough, turn to wonder.”](#) I think about this now as well. How can I change systemic (institutional such as legal, political, housing, medical, educational, and religious) and structural (cumulative and compounding impact across institutions) racism? I ask myself a lot of internal questions while on this journey. What stakeholder is not at this table? What can I do to create a system where individuals can bring their full selves and acquire equitable outcomes? Who has more to teach me that I need to learn? Where can I find accountability?

I do more listening, observing, and reflecting than ever, and I continue to find myself part of the problem. And, this is the work. I am grateful I do not need to remain in my ignorance or guilt. There are so many dichotomies between what I was taught and what is, and so much historic and current pain, violence, and loss. Holding all of this long enough to learn from it is my work. This is where my change happens. As Marge Piercy writes, “The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real.”



Special Announcement

Unitarian Universalist Association

August 2020

Dear Unitarian Church of Underwood,

I am thinking of you and holding you in my heart. As we continue to learn more about what is happening in Kenosha, Wisconsin, it is all so infuriating, heartbreaking, and traumatizing. The violence inflicted on Black lives and Black communities needs our attention and response across this country.

I also want to make sure that each of us is doing what we need to do to take care of ourselves and respond to the needs of our hearts and souls. Please, today, tomorrow, and in the days ahead, take time for your well-being. Personally, I am trying to shift things on my schedule to put my attention where it is most needed, to make time to rest, and to show up where I feel called to be.

As religious leaders guiding congregations, I want you to know how much your work matters. There is so much collective grief that needs expression. There is so much organizing and resistance that needs support. There is so much compassion that needs to be nurtured.

Religious community is one of the containers to express our collective grief and to be strengthened by the knowledge that we are not alone. This experience of interdependence creates compassion and calls us to act from that place of love for the things we hold most deeply. It kindles in us the courage to confront systems of injustice and nurture new practices of justice and care.

***As religious leaders guiding congregations, I want you
to know how much your work matters.***

We hold in our prayers Jacob Blake, who is paralyzed after being shot in the back by Kenosha police. We pray for his family, especially his children who witnessed this violence. We pray for the loved ones of those killed and injured in Kenosha, after a white nationalist shot into a crowd of protestors. We pray for movement leaders and those witnessing for Black Lives Matter. We pray for people in California, Iowa, Louisiana, and Arkansas trying to survive in the midst of unprecedented fires and storms. We pray for our children and their parents, caregivers, and teachers who are navigating unbelievable challenges, while, at the same time, they are teaching little ones and youth how to love and thrive.

I also want to recognize those of you whose work is directly connected to supporting and responding to communities, leaders, and individuals that are in the midst of crisis situations. From organizing to communications, to pastoral care and disaster response—your work is deeply important. In this time, when nearly every day brings new trauma, you keep showing up. May you too take care of your spirit and know that is needed for the work as well.

And to everyone, I send my deep care to you and your loved ones and families. Thank you for the ways you bring so much care and commitment to your congregations, communities, and to this faith we share—Unitarian Universalism. I love you. I am with you. I am praying with and for you always.

Yours,
Susan

Rev. Dr. Susan Frederick-Gray spends her days strengthening the thriving mission of this faith. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and playing with their dog, Hercules.



**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Board of Directors
Approved Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2020**

In attendance: Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Norm Kolstad, Tim Lanz, John Minge, Ron Roller, Shannon Smith, Wally Warhol, Mary Worner. Also, attending, Bonnie Graham, Church Administrator.

President Norm Kolstad called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Mary Anderson read the Covenant of Guiding Values.

The Meeting agenda was approved (Shannon Smith/Mary Anderson).

The Board minutes of June 17, 2020 were approved as published (John Minge/Amy Beckman).

Treasurer Ron Roller gave the financial report. Due to a couple large donations this period, collections met the budget projections. For full details, see the Balance report, Profit and Loss Statement, P & L Previous Year Comparison, and Expense Details on Google Suites shared drive.

Re: On-line collection: Ron made recommendation for an on-line collection service through Givelify. Board approved (Mary Anderson/Shannon Smith). There is a 2.6% fee/30 cents per transfer cost per donation. Ron will proceed to complete the application and with the help of Tere Mann, establish the means for donors to use the application.

Re: Empowerment Grant re-allocation of funds: There are unallocated funds available from unclaimed Empowerment Grant awards. Motion was approved to send \$900 to the Fergus Falls Food Shelf (Mary Anderson/John Minge). Further action for fund disbursements will be considered pending organizations' declining any other awarded grants.

Bonnie Graham, Church Administrator reported that she is working on procedures for the technical support team and with Betsy Wells on new procedures in organizing Sunday services now using virtual means. She thanked the Board for her attendance at the UU General Assembly (GA). She is out of "responsive mode" and more into "here's how we want to do it."

Mary Worner, Program Coordinator summarized actions from the UCU Connections Task Force. The purpose of the Connections Task Force was to "hold us together." It was noted that UCU members/friends really like coffee time, being divided after service into random groups and like the abbreviated service. Her next plans as Coordinator are to organize the U Groups for fall.

The UCU Connections Task Force is recommending that UCU collaborate with Northwoods UU Fellowship and the motion was approved (Mary Worner/Mary Anderson). Pat Scott, Board President from Northwoods, will work with Betsy Wells on speakers/programs and a Northwoods member may join the Racial Justice Task Force.

John Minge commented that he is impressed and pleased with those who have given effort to making Zoom work for us on Sunday services and meeting accommodations.

Amy Beckman, Community Outreach Co-Coordinator, reported that the usual events are now limited but there are anticipated community outreach opportunities with the Racial Justice Task Force and restorative justice happenings.

Norm Kolstad had nothing to report from Facilities.

Mary Anderson reported:

Membership Committee: 22-34 in attendance at Sunday services via Zoom. That includes newcomers and potential new members. Membership lists are now on Google Suites shared drive.

Stewardship: Mary Anderson will act as committee facilitator. Stewardship Committee will welcome the option for on-line collection; will continue to invite/report giving.

Communications: without in-person gatherings, there is increased dependency on various communications means to share and pass information, ie., church announcements, website, Facebook and the newsletters.

Racial Justice Task Force: so far 5-person task force is determining how best to proceed on education and awareness of our white privilege and resulting racial injustice. With discernment as to level of awareness and interest, the Task Force will determine offerings of continued discussions, book reads, podcasts and movies. The Task Force will also seek community alliances. These aspects will be coordinated with Program and Community Outreach. Once the plan is established, the work may be moved to a social justice committee to carry it further.

Church chats – John & Mary Anderson take-away from July 5 chat regarding racial justice – think locally, act locally. Next church chat, Sunday, August 2 – Ron Roller & Mary Worner.

Report from Delegates to UU General Assembly

Mary Worner: GA theme “Rooted, Inspired and Ready.” Over 4000 in attendance. Business meetings were divided into blocks of time over the course of the 4 days. Each day began with worship service. 100 options in workshops. The list will be provided. Mary picked a session for each Board member to view:

Shannon – UU the Vote

Wally – Collaborative Planning of Highly Interactive Family Worship

Mary A. – Creating Community Communities

Amy – Connection Between Military & Law Enforcement & Sports

Norm – Visioning & Governance, Exclusive, Equitable and Co-owned.

John Minge – UUA Draft of an 8th Principle

Ron – Mobilizing Investment to Advance UU Values

Tim – Ready to Transform Gratitude as a Spiritual Practice

Open to all: Settler Colonization & History

A PDF link of these workshops will be provided to everyone.

For her portion of reporting on the GA, Bonnie Graham referred to: 1) a big report just issued from the UUA Commission on Institutional Change, "Widening the Circle of Concern." The report includes statements from Black people and others that UU is not inclusive. It also itemizes action items; 2) A resource that might be useful for our Adult Education is the Faith Forward materials from the Dallas UU that includes the facilitator's guide and lesson materials and manual.

Board Fiduciary Responsibilities:

Mary Worner presented information on a MidAmerica Region Assembly workshop (April 18, 2020), Practice of Board Leadership led by Rev. David Pyle with the focus on #2 of the 7 practices: Holding the Fiduciary Responsibility- to ensure that all of the resources and assets of the congregation are used to achieve and fulfill the congregation's mission. The assets and resources of a congregation are far more than money. Mary took notes of Board member reactions to the information to be used in later discussions.

Unfinished Business:

A personnel committee is designated with members: Shannon Smith, Norm Kolstad, Kris Warhol and Ron Roller.

Motion passed 5 to 4 that 1) the personnel committee provide a written description of committee responsibilities; 2) and that the personnel committee establish written personnel policies. (John Minge/Mary Worner).

New Business:

Transition to Google Suites – Mary, Norm and Bonnie Graham noted highlights of what has been accomplished and plans for training. All UCU members now have an email address of: first name.last @ucofu.org that when used is automatically converted to their personal email address; some groups have been set up on shared drive and some documents are now available there for access; Bonnie Graham and Melody Shores are working on the calendaring features; plans for introduction to and training for use of Google Suites is underway.

Next meeting: August 19, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m. via Zoom
Executive Team meeting one week prior.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anderson
Board Secretary

Full Texts of August Speaker Talks:

KINDRED SPIRITS AND SACRED SPACES

Diane Johnson, August 2, 2020

When we first moved to Minnesota over ten years ago, Pastor Sarah of the Shepard of the Prairie Lutheran Church of Hickson, North Dakota (the familial family spiritual home base) invited me to be her guest at a day-long women's retreat. The theme was Renew, Respond, and Rejoice and we covered the gamut from spiritual lessons to physical exercise. But the resource which resonated most for me that day, was a section on creating a personal sacred space, which came from the writings of one Inez Torres Davis, the Director of Justice in the Women of the ELCA organization.

Her recommended first step in the process, once you have chosen the special spot, is to remove everything within its circumference and clean it well – even to the admonition of using “mild, environmentally friendly soap.” I like that. And while you are scrubbing, hold a mental picture of the beauty and fresh new energy of the space.

The choice of my sacred space on (aptly named) Mt. Faith Avenue was easy. At some point in our old house's hundred- and thirty-year history, the top of the stairs acquired a strange, small – very small – landing to nowhere. It opened up from an upstairs room, jutting out above a stairwell with a railing on one side and on the other, visual access to the most wondrous view of the magnificent Siberian Elm, the long line of lilacs bordering the property, and my newly created pollinator gardens.

Once I had chosen and cleaned the spot, I was ready for the next step – the Blessing. The first suggestion was to use incense or smudging sage, wafting the smoke in all directions. I used both. And then she recommended calling upon healing energies by sounding the notes through bells, gongs, rattles or drums. I hung my Tibetan Bells from the ceiling and unearthed the old maracas my father brought back from his travels to South America in the 1930's. He loved Latin music and just shaking them about made me feel happy. The third cleansing step can come from blessed oil or water. I always envied the Catholics their holy water. It seems like such a comforting ritual. But I did have certain essential oils from my days of the Bach Flower Essence practice and I put a few drops of lavender and rosemary in the cleaning water for good measure.

After the cleansing and the blessing, you are ready for the creation itself – what Inez Torres Davis calls the “Feeling and the Filling.” A perfect description.

And before you begin to add chairs or candles, she says, you need to start with color. I chose a dusty rose for the walls, a hue I can just “sink into” and feel enveloped and relaxed. And a small soft red Indian kilim for the floor, an old lace curtain I had been carrying around from a previous Victorian home, which fit exactly the side railing, making the small spot soft and cozy while blocking the view of the stairwell. Then, a small wicker chair found at a local garage sale with a silk brown pillow that says “Dream” and my old faithful plant stand/pink slate table with my

praying Buddha statue, candle and incense. Behind the table, an old framed Christmas card of angels flying up past leaded windows. And on the wall above, my favorite – a large photo reproduction entitled “Descending Angel” with only the lower legs, encased by billowing white material, wafting downward. So, I have them coming and going! Both directions covered. But Inez Torres Davis specifies you must put into your sacred space whatever moves you and strikes your fancy. It could be a music source, inspirational books, photos of those near and dear, rocks and crystals, personal amulets, and icons. It could be busy or austere. She only suggests that you add one element at a time – carefully, with meditative thought about each specific significance.

And - your sacred space might just be a sequestered garden nook, a private bench beside a bubbling outdoor fountain, or even a fanciful recreation of Oberon and Titania’s Bower of Bliss. The garden possibilities are endless. (Yet perhaps better suited to year-round use in California than Minnesota.)

Finally, the most important part. Using your sacred space. Whether it be to pray or meditate or dance or just find peace and quiet, she says – “Be focused but gentle with yourself as you establish your rhythm and methods. Just know that the more used, the more blessings your space will provide.”

Thank You, Inez Torres Davis. It is where I now write in my journal. Or meditate. Watch the birds. Or just sit and think. Whenever I am stressed, my husband will say – “Go to your room!” But most importantly, one’s sacred space should and could become the daily and constant point of refuge and joy. And, especially in this time of sequestration and apprehension, it can become a haven and your personal savior.

ADDENDUM – “But wait, there’s more!”

One day a friend asked me how to deal with grief. She specifically turned to me because she knew we had both lost sons and at much too early an age, thinking I might best understand. Struggling to find the words for her, any words, I suddenly thought of the sacred space and the place I use for contemplation, joy and grief and I decided to print out the 13 page meditation booklet that I had received at that gathering of women a few years before.

I dug the brochure out of my file drawer, warmed up the computer, and while I waited for the printer to be ready, decided to check my emails. The first entry was from an Inez Torres Davis.

HUH? I thought.

The subject title was – “Sacred Spaces.” What!

Confused, I clicked open to read the message.

Inez Torres Davis was confused too. She had been advised, she said, to occasionally “Google” herself in order to see what was “out there.” It had been a year and a half since she had done it, but now she was surprised to see a picture of herself pop up alongside a picture of my

meditation space (who knows who, how, or why the internet gods decided to post that photo with her bio) along with a link to my blog (snowbirdredux.com) and the article about my project to create a sacred space based on her writings.

I sat at my computer, Inez Torres Davis' pamphlet in my left hand, ready to print, wondering why this person would be writing to me, just at the very moment I was preparing to photocopy her writing, which was in reference to my blog entry of a year and a half before.

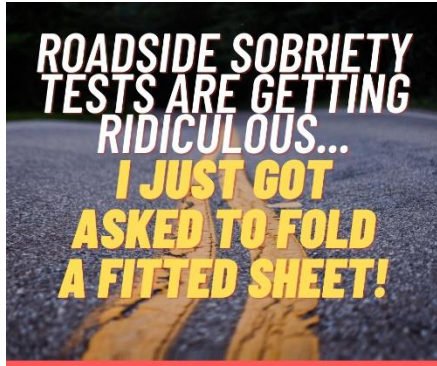
Once we both straightened it all out, and delighted in the amazing cross confusion and synchronicity, we began to communicate. Inez is the Director of Justice for the Women of the ELCA. In that office she primarily works on race relations. In my youth I was not just involved, but deeply in the trenches of the civil rights movement. She writes about the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. If you know me, even superficially, you know that I am passionate about the fate of our Mother Earth. Inez has worked with Bread for the World and writes beautifully about her experiences in Zambia, Malawi, and Tanzania. Bravo for all that. She is an AIDS advocate. I have been deeply in those trenches too. And she, is a passionate gardener. Need I say more.

Thank You Inez, my new kindred friend.

Ellen Eastby's Facebook post of April 1, 2020

I have kept busy while staying at home. I am making Christmas tree skirts for my Etsy shop and am also making one for a friend. I have been working on multiple projects for my church. I have started a video blog on YouTube. I'm writing. I thought though that I might like to learn a new skill. What might that be? Maybe I should learn a foreign language. I should definitely learn American Sign Language. I could learn how to better maintain my computer. An online course in some craft that I haven't done before would be fun. After thinking more about it, I decided none those really tickled my fancy, if you will. I need to learn something practical and useful. Something that will enhance the quality of my life. Something that will make me a better person. I want a Rock Star skill. After much consideration, I decided the skill I will learn is...drumroll please...how to fold a fitted sheet. I'd like a neat little stack in the linen closet instead of the piles of failed attempts. Sure, I can fold my pillowcases and flat sheets with ease. They are neat and tidy looking. But, under that tidiness is a fitted sheet that looks more like I rolled it up, threw it onto the shelf and shut the door quickly so I wouldn't be a witness to it falling on the floor. I would want to have to pick it up and try again.

Now you might think it is impossible to fold a fitted sheet neatly. I say that they came from the store folded, I should be able to restore it to its original shape. Your reply might be to tell me that the packaging is the result of incantations of dark magic. That I will need a spell book to dabble in dark magic. That is a real bummer because the library is closed. Perhaps I could strike up a deal with the devil. My soul for the ability to fold a fitted sheet like Martha Stewart. Or, maybe I could just go to YouTube and look for a DIY video. Off to YouTube I went.



YouTube has literally dozens of videos that teach one how to fold a fitted sheet. It turns out Martha Stewart has a video. You can view it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-a2FR1iwgg>. After watching hers, I am convinced she did sell her soul to the devil in order to fold that sheet. There is something unnatural about this skill. I'm not sure if we need the Winchester boys or Mulder and Scully to check her out. I found a video that answers the age-old question, how many people does it take to fold a fitted sheet? Apparently four isn't enough. Proof of that is in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKWluGqcXhY>.

After spending some time on YouTube checking out videos, I decided to give up my dream of becoming a fitted sheet folding diva. It just isn't worth the stress and frustration. So what if my linen closet doesn't look like the one in a Downy commercial. No one except for me sees it anyway. I can just close the door and pretend that all is well on those shelves. I am now back to square one. What skill should I learn while in isolation. Perhaps I will instead try something simpler, like walking on water or parting the sea. I wonder if YouTube has videos for those?"