

UCU Newsletter April 2021

*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.*

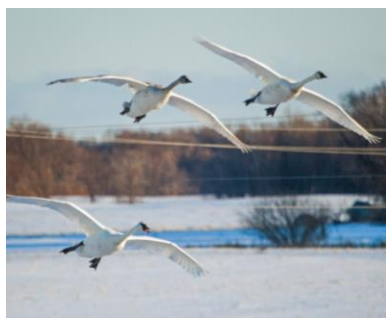
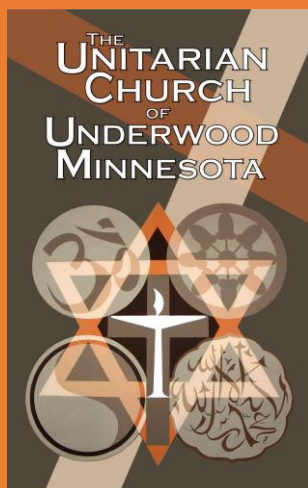
Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58, 206 North Main Street
Underwood, MN 56537

Phone: 218/826-6553

Website: www.ucofu.org

www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



Incoming Spring

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

In-person church services,
meetings & activities are
conducted via Zoom.

Watch for ucofu@ucofu.org
messages, the Sunday “UCU
Weekly” and check:

www.ucofu.org or
www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org



Stay Informed & Connected

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.
- Perham U-Group: 4th Wednesday @ 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Mary Worner

You are welcome to join a U Group – watch for the Zoom links.

For details or questions, Contact U Group Coordinator, Luce Reese @

lucereese@gmail.com or 218/495-2449

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: Ellen Eastby

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)

If there is something you would like to appear in The UCU Weekly, please send an email to the attention of Ellen at newseditor@ucofu.org by the Friday before the publication comes out. Please have the article written in its entirety using no more than 175 words.

As appropriate, some will be forwarded for inclusion @ www.ucofu.org and Facebook [Page](#).

Watch for these and other

ucofu@ucofu.org email messages.

Participate in the **Zoom** invitations for Sunday service, social hour & other meetings or see:

[UCU Members and Friends calendar](#)

Website Administrator: Bonnie Graham

Facebook Administrator: Melody Shores

Need help with Zoom?

Email: techhelp@ucofu.org

Gifts in Gratitude

To Contribute to UCU:

Use **Givelify**

(New Electronic Application)

or

Sign up for automatic funds transfer*

or

Mail your check to:

Unitarian Church of Underwood

PO Box 58

Underwood, MN 56586

*(For AFT form, contact

newseditor@ucofu.org or see below)

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.

Church Happenings



Message from Board President, Norm Kolstad

The year of the Covid-19 pandemic. Will that be how we remember the past 12 months? Consider another possibility; that it will be remembered as the year our church used technology to become unbound from geographical constraints. Some of our new members are trailblazers in this new paradigm, perhaps pioneers as much as any in our rich history. Can we imagine this future church, the limits of which are unknown? Can we imagine the benefits of having conversations with, and contributions from, a diverse and dispersed congregation?

Perhaps the first hurdle is to incorporate the virtual Sunday service with the in-person service. This problem, and others, will be the topics for a new committee, the Hybrid Worship Task Force. But some of the basic questions may already be answered. We have successfully conducted virtual services this year, and most members have been able to participate. We just need to incorporate the two modes.

Although our new members this past year may not have spent much time in the Church building, they have contributed to the rich tapestry of our congregation and have celebrated "life and our common search for meaning" that defines us as Unitarians. Welcome to all who join in our common quest!

March Board Highlights *Viable Futures*

The Viable Futures Initiative undertaken by the UCU Board of Directors was to discern who we are, what we want to be, and where we go from here. [Thank you to all of you who participated in discussions about the future of the Unitarian Church of Underwood.](#) The combination of a questionnaire, congregational input, and other discussions led to the areas for focus over the next year(s). And so, the Board presents to you the:

Addendum of

2021-22 Annual Goals and Objectives

(Adopted by the UCU Board of Directors, March 17, 2021)

- Continue/maintain Strategic Plan 2018-23 & Goals and Objectives.
- Determine safety, program, technical, and other requirements to return to in person services with "hybrid worship" when safe to do so.
- Encourage & continue practices of anti-racism and inclusiveness, other social and environmental justice work throughout church programming, operations, and community outreach.

- Continue introspection (interrogation) individually and as a community that we may:
 - Recognize our strengths and weaknesses.
 - Be flexible and open to change.
 - Prioritize goals with knowledge of ourselves and social relevancy.
 - give thoughtful intention in beloved community.
- Continue building community within and without the church.
- Provide added supports to families with children including enhancing the Children's Religious Education Program.
- Provide added support for UCU elders.

The Board encourages committees, task forces, interest groups, teams, and individuals to consider these goals and objectives when performing church tasks and initiatives.

If you have an idea or wish to participate in efforts to make these things happen, please contact your Board members: *Norm Kolstad, President; Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Wally Warhol, Mary Worner.* Note: *Tim Lanz, John Minge, and Shannon Smith's terms are ending, and new Board members will be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Membership, April 18. Watch for introductions to incoming members.*

Hybrid Worship

The UCU Board of Directors has appointed a "Hybrid Worship" Task Force to begin planning for regathering as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. UUA advises congregations to proceed with patience, planning, and flexibility as we move to this "in-between stage." We will consider: our core values, how to plan for multi-platform ministry, learn from other congregations and work within our public health guidelines.

To assure our values of safety, accessibility, visibility, and more, we have many questions including:

1. How to accommodate both those who attend in person and those who "zoom"?
2. How to adjust/modify/expand program offerings of Sunday worship service, Adult and Children's Religious Education programs, U Groups, and special offerings?
3. What will we need in technical equipment and support staff?
4. How can we safely socialize?

Watch this space for more details as planning proceeds. We are open to hearing your ideas and your concerns. *UCU Board of Directors*

Gifts in Gratitude

Give to Unitarian Church of Underwood by mail: Mail a check to: UCU, PO Box 58, Underwood, MN 56586. For routine giving, you may wish to consider setting up Automatic Transfer of Funds. To obtain the form, contact Ron Roller, treasurer@ucofu.org. Or you may wish to use the new electronically giving application, Givelify.com. How to use steps are included in the Weekly.

*Spring is Coming!
Swans in the Kolstad
Cornfield...*



Speakers for April Sunday Services

Via Zoom

10:00 a.m.

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

See the ucofu.org emails and Weekly for link specifics)

April 4, Easter Speaker, Rev. Stefan Jonasson, "Waiting for a Resurrection."

More than a year into the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed the lives of many, impaired the health of many more, and curtailed the normal activities of nearly everyone, we find ourselves awaiting a resurrection of sorts – not some biblical miracle, just a return to the marvels of everyday life as we have known it. Science has been our greatest ally in fighting the pandemic and minimizing its harm, but it has taken a spiritual toll on all of us. If science has given us vaccines, perhaps familiar myths and tales may help restore our hope.



Stefan's presentation will have less to do with one of the Seven Principles than it will with two of our Six Sources: #1, Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces that create and uphold life; and #4, Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Rev. Stefan Jonasson is a Unitarian Universalist minister and journalist who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He currently edits a bimonthly periodical and moonlights as minister of the Gimli Unitarian Church. For 24 years, he worked for the Unitarian Universalist Association as a district executive, director for large congregations, and director of growth strategies. He first spoke at the Unitarian Church of Underwood in 1986 and this is his 34th visit to the congregation – but his first virtual one.



April 11 – John Ikerd, Reconnecting through Food and Farming. Everything is interconnected with everything else. We can't do just one thing. This is the first law of ecology. Many of today's problems are a natural consequence of a growing sense of disconnectedness—among people within society and between people and nature. A reductionist philosophy of science and a blind faith in the free-market economy now threaten the social and ecological survival of humanity. Nowhere are the threats greater and consequences more perilous than in our food and farming systems. The

ecological and social problems linked to today's agriculture—from climate change to systemic malnutrition—are a consequence of a growing disconnectedness. Thankfully, increasing numbers of scientists, farmers, and eaters are working together to create agroecological, community-based food systems that restore the sense of interconnectedness among people with each other and between people and the earth. They are driven by a sense of purpose to

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contribute to the inherent goodness of the earth, of which we are but a part. John will touch on UU Principles 1, 4, 6, & 7.

John is a Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics, University of Missouri, Columbia. John was raised on a small dairy farm in southwest Missouri and received his BS, MS, and Ph.D. degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Missouri. He worked in private industry for a time and spent thirty years in various professorial positions at North Carolina State University, Oklahoma State University, University of Georgia, and the University of Missouri before retiring in early 2000. Since retiring, he spends most of his time writing and speaking on issues related to sustainability with an emphasis on economics and agriculture. He is author of six books which are available through Amazon.com via <http://johnikerd.com/books>. In 2014, Ikerd was commissioned by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations to write the regional report, "Family Farms of North America," in recognition for the International Year of the Family Farming. He currently resides with his wife, Ellen, in Fairfield, IA. More complete background information and a wide selection of writings are available at <http://faculty.missouri.edu/ikerdj/> or <http://johnikerd.com>.

April 18 Norm Kolstad, UCU Board President will lead an abbreviated service immediately followed by the Annual Meeting of the Membership. Watch for notices.

April 25- Sara Lewis, A Love That Never Ends. Sarah will begin with a Story for All Ages with the story of "Hosea Ballou and the Muddy Children." Then in her main talk Sara will explore the Universalist theology of boundless love, and how this teaching can be incorporated in how we live our lives and work for justice.



Sara has served as a religious educator at the Olympia UU Congregation for 13 years and is credentialed at the master level by the UUA. When not at the congregation, Sara lives with her family on a small hobby farm and strives to live sustainably and in harmony with the interdependent web of life.

Extracted from The Story of Easter

By [Sophia Lyon Fahs](#)

Some believed that Jesus was so holy and great that he would come back to earth and save the world. Others, including Unitarian Universalists, believe that this Jesus will never again live on earth. His body is not coming back. But his spirit never needs to die. His spirit is in his words and deeds which still give us wisdom today. For example, when he was alive, Jesus taught The Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated. Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount, where he said that people who are poor, hurt, and struggling are loved by God and therefore, we must love them, too.

When someone's physical body dies, the people around them who loved and valued them will keep their memory alive—just like the followers of Jesus have remembered his teachings and his spirit, long after his death.

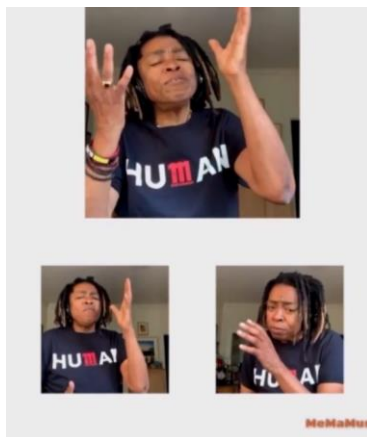
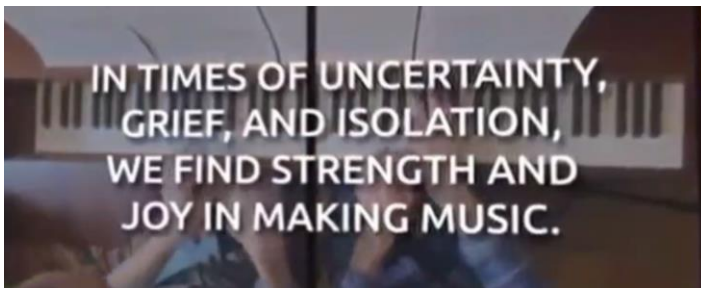
Notes from March Programs

For a summary of announcements, joys and concerns, and the notes from the January speakers, see the Church Reports issued via ucofu.org email the Monday or Tuesday following each Sunday service.

From the service of March 14, 2021



Rev. Erin Walters from Dallas, Texas





Zoom captures courtesy of Norm Kolstad

The Unitarian Church of Underwood now has a Public Calendar. It is available on our website at www.ucofu.org or [click here](#).



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Use this link to the [UCU Members and Friends calendar](#) (open with your ucofu email address to find meetings and events with the Zoom links)

**Notice of Unitarian Church of Underwood
Annual Meeting of the Membership
Sunday, April 18, 2021
10:00 – 12:00 a.m.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93915912538?pwd=SmF4M1N6a29ldFZlM0JpNHlrSDFBdz09>

Meeting ID: 939 1591 2538

Passcode: 314654

Dial in on your phone

+1 312 626 6799

The 10-day notice of annual meeting will be provided to all voting members with an invitation to attend the meeting. Voting members are those who have signed the membership book and “completed any one of the following: participated in an activity of the congregation in the past year; made a recorded financial contribution since the beginning of the fiscal year or provided verbally or in writing, a desire to remain a member.”

Meeting materials will be available at least 10 days prior to the meeting. They will include:

- Meeting Agenda
- Annual Meeting Minutes of June 7, 2020
- Annual Reports
- Proposal for revisions to the Articles of Incorporation (1974) and Bylaws (2018)
- Slate of Nominations for Board members
- Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Watch further for the notices and materials.

**Upcoming Proposed Revisions to the Articles of Incorporation and the
Bylaws of the Unitarian Church of
Underwood**



At the upcoming annual meeting of the membership, UCU Members will be asked to vote on revisions to the church's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.



The Records Committee has spent the past two years retrieving church records. As a result, they discovered Articles of Incorporation that had morphed into church bylaws and consequently, gradual non-reference to the Articles of Incorporation. Articles of Incorporation are a document or charter that establishes the existence of a corporation in the United States. Church bylaws are a set of standards that define the internal government of a local church body. They explain what a church believes and how it operates.

Members of the Records Committee met numerous times via Zoom to reconstruct UCU's governing documents to bring them current. The first Articles were written in 1889 in Norwegian, later translated into English. The last reference to the Articles of Incorporation (Constitution) appeared to be those of March 17, 1974: Articles of Incorporation ("Constitution") were typed by Mary Anderson, July 31, 2019 from "UCU Brief Congregational meeting" notes of March 3, 1974; "Special Congregational Meeting" notes of March 17, 1974; "Board meeting" minutes of May 20, 1976; and a preserved document with hand-written note "1980 active constitution except for section referring to cemetery."

HISTORY AND RECORDS NOTE:

The church was organized on January 13, 1889 and filed for record of incorporation August 13, 1889 as The Free Christian Church of Underwood Minnesota. The Articles of Incorporation were amended October 31, 1948; The Articles of Incorporation were further amended April 25, 1965 changing the name of the church to Unitarian Church of Underwood; again, on March 17, 1974, now referenced as "Constitution of the Unitarian Church of Underwood, and on July 30, 1979 divesting in ownership of the cemetery. Filing for the name change was made with the State of Minnesota January 9, 1976. Filing to complete the divestment and incorporation of the cemetery was made July 30, 1979. The Bylaws were established May 20, 1967 detailing the Duties of Officers. The Bylaws were further amended: May 4, 2008, April 15, 2012, April 21, 2013, April 23, 2017, with proposed amendments to be presented for adoption April 18, 2021.

The 10-day notices to be mailed prior to the April 18, 2021 annual meeting of the Membership will include links to the proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. Watch for this notice to prepare for membership resolution at the annual meeting.

Spring Adult Religious Education Book Read



This spring for adult education the study will be of the recently published book *Julian of Norwich; Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic - and Beyond* by Matthew Fox.

Here is what Gloria Steinem says about the book: Thanks to Matthew Fox, we can find a friend in Julian or Norwich, exactly the mental, emotional and spiritual vaccine we need now.

Here is part of a review from Amazon: *Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic—and Beyond*, is one of Matthew Fox's greatest books, and in this masterwork, he dives deep into the sacred and joyful vision of one of Christianity's greatest mystics, a woman who spent most of her life working in the black plague that killed two-thirds of Europe.

The tentative schedule is to meet the first and third Wednesdays of April and May in the afternoon on Zoom. The meeting time could be changed to fit the schedules of the participants.

The book is short, just over 100 pages. The cost is about \$15. Two sources are Lundeens in Fergus Falls by order or Amazon. It might take a week or two to get the book from Lundeens.

For more information and to sign up, contact Mary Worner, Program Coordinator at maryworner@gmail.com or 218-826-6998.

Staying Connected



Not recommended for staying connected – but to really find out who your friends are, have your email hacked and then see who all responds. Thank you to the many of you who did. Mary Anderson

If you see a suspicious email, do not open, do not reply to the email. You may separately contact the sender if known to alert them.

Move the file to junk and click on report.

If hacked, change your password immediately and notify your provider for the steps needed to recover your accounts. If you see again a suspicious email request, move the file to junk and click on report.

You may want to add malware protection (which is different from virus protection) and the basic plan for malware bytes is free

Be prepared as this is time consuming.

Join the UCU Virtual Dinners

<https://zoom.us/j/96754347298?pwd=MIJMdUdtYm9CckZLaW94Z3I5SG5sUT09>

Meeting ID: 967 5434 7298

Passcode: 396871

April 10, 2021 @ 6 p.m.

Seder Dinner hosted by Bonnie Showers



In recognition of the Jewish Passover, Bonnie Showers will host a Seder dinner April 10th. Bonnie is of Jewish heritage and although her family were not avid practitioners of the religion, they did observe the traditional holidays. The **Seder plate** is the special plate and focal point containing symbolic foods eaten or displayed at the Passover Seder. Whether it is an ornate silver dish or a humble napkin, it bears the ceremonial foods around which the Seder is based: matzah, the zeroa (shankbone), egg, bitter herbs, charoset paste and karpas vegetable. Bonnie will explain the significance of each food item. You can find or add your recipe to: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RmmKlwlcdOLsXebykTIDN3xwUnNOIMke/view?usp=sharing>

To learn more on hosting your own virtual dinner, contact Janell Miersch at 218/531-1445 or janell.miersch@ucofu.org. Pick your theme, pick your date and time, pick your menu, and have some fun. May and June are open!!! Maybe by July, we can have an outdoor picnic!!

Star Connections



NATIVE STAR STORIES PROJECT

Joan Vorderbruggen invites you to learn more about star gazing through a different lens - seeing the constellations that the Indigenous People of the area - the Dakota and Ojibwe - have related to for hundreds of years.

We want to share Your Star Stories: your impressions, observations, and insights as you view the night skies through a different lens than you're used to doing.

Indigenous People of all continents have had some of the most profound and intimate connections with the night skies. In this part of Otter Tail County, centered around the lakes area near Glendalough State Park, both the Dakota and the Ojibwe People and their ancestors have lived in inseparable partnership with the stars, planets, sun, moon, and other celestial events. Through the language of the cosmos and natural world, they have been connecting spiritually, emotionally, and physically through their own stories of Creator and creation, of birth, life, and death; stories of ancestors and spirit guides, and stories of instruction, community, and relationship.

Many of us are familiar with the Greek and Roman constellations such as Orion (the Hunter) or Ursa Major (the Big Bear - also known as the Big Dipper). Lesser known are the star stories that have been passed down through the generations of the Dakota and Ojibwe People who have lived here. While it may be difficult to comprehend the depth of relationship that Indigenous People have with the natural world, changing our lens to experience the night skies and constellations from a more local perspective can suddenly make the cosmos come alive and become more meaningful.

Here in Otter Tail County, we are still fortunate to have access to high-resolution, big-screen views of the stellar world beyond our planet. Star gazing with an open mind and an open heart is a form of deep nature connection that we typically may think of having only during daylight hours. If we approach the experience with a willingness of slowing down, with a sense of curiosity and wonder, then the sky is literally the limit to what might unfold!

Check out the Dakota and Ojibwe Constellations:

Makoce Wicanhpi Wowapi - D(L)akota Star Map:

<https://web.stcloudstate.edu/aslee/DAKOTAMAP/home.html>

Ojibwe Giizhig Anung Masinaaignan - Ojibwe Sky Star Map:

<https://web.stcloudstate.edu/aslee/OJIBWEMAP/home.html>

** This activity is part of the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project, a partnership between Rethos: Places Reimagined, the Otter Tail County Historical Society, and Springboard for the Arts, with support from Minnesota Historical Society. This project was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.*

Save the Dates
Permaculture Tree Planting Party
Saturday May 8, 2021 2 - 8 pm
(Volunteers 11am-10pm)
34861 405th Avenue, Richville, MN
Help Transform a Hay Field into a Food Forest



John Salmen invites:

Friends, Farmers and Family to a Permaculture Tree Planting Party

- Tour a Deep Winter Greenhouse (masks required)
- Learn about Sustainable Products, Services, Activities
- Bring Seeds and/or Plants to Swap
- Ride an Electric-Assist Tricycle - Take a Hay Ride
- UFDA's Sustainable Food Truck (by donation)
- Learn about Chicken Tractors
- See the "flerd" Transform a Field into a Prairie Meadow
- Bring a Kite and Celebrate Springtime

This will be an outdoor event - **Rain or Shine!!** If you would like to help plant trees, please bring gloves, wear sturdy shoes and be prepared to get muddy.

Hope you can stop by and share the fun with us! (Note: Tree planting help will be appreciated but is definitely not required!). Questions? Call John Salmen @ 218/346-9120.

Sponsors: Sustainable Farming Association

North Circle Seeds

Upstream Food Distributors Association

And of course, SlowCycle.

June 26 from 9-11 a.m.
Celebration of the Lives of
Donn & Marlys Siems
Unitarian Church of Underwood
(Further details will be provided in later newsletters and the Weekly.)



**"Hello" and "Thank you" are
More than Polite Manners,
They are Our Connectors.**

From News Editor: Mary Anderson

I am a collector of hats: felted fedoras, ladies brimmed hats, and berets tilted askew. I wear these as a nod to style, fun, and function. That said, the most rewarding hats

I wear are those of mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, long-time supervisor, and one of the (*ahem*) younger elders of UCU. I see my role as "hat wearer" as one who helps when it's needed, shows support, recognizes when to gently prod (or simply get out of the way), and lead by example. My intention is that my first example is one of good manners. Manners are important. Saying, "hello" and "thank you" are good manners, but they are also small ways of saying, "I see you", and "you matter". When we greet people, or share with them our appreciation of their efforts, we are making connections and strengthening our beloved community.

COVID-19 has challenged us in maintaining a sense of community. Social distancing has created just that, distance. We are aware of and concerned for people we haven't seen over these long months of COVID. We take small steps to not lose these connections: assuring dear ones they are not forgotten. Now, through virtual meeting limits, we've learned the importance of live presence and engagement. Despite all, our church community has continued, and in some ways, thrived. Much of this is due to a recurring set of volunteers: our own volunteer contingent who generously and without expectations don their work hats, step forward, again and again, to assure smooth presentation, operations, and opportunities so our services, church business, updates, and communications don't flounder.

The level of change, and adjustment UCU has experienced during the pandemic didn't happen on its own. Please, take a moment to reflect on those who are regularly present, and doing much of the work it takes to keep UCU active and vibrant. What steps can you take to thank them for their efforts, commitment, and value? How can you "tip your hat?" to our volunteers? A kind word or gesture is always welcome, and a powerful tool to fight off feelings of apathy, burn-out or even worse, a feeling of distance from this, our desired Beloved Community. Please, reach out to our volunteers, our service leaders and others involved in the Sunday service, board and committee members, tech leaders, and those providing the weekly, and monthly updates. Whether a mailed note, phone call, an invitation for a walk in the woods, a text message, or a wave and greeting from one car window to another - acknowledge their efforts, and your gratitude. With a simple gesture you say: "I see you. I hear you. I recognize you. I appreciate you. I value you. I give thanks to you, and for you." "I tip my hat to you."



Ours is a community rich with gifts, and we recognize these gifts through our own personal gratitude practices. Today, please make a connection, strengthen our beloved community, tip your hat, and turn your gratitude outward. It is good to share gratitude, and sometimes it needs to be heard.

It is with gratefulness that we give thanks for all the parts that make the whole.

Mary Anderson

Living Out Our UU Principles

Community Outreach



This past year the Unitarian Church of Underwood lost several of our annual traditions – the Chili Dinner, the Neighborhood Garage Sale, the Underwood Harvest Day Parade. And for those many years, it was long-time member Kris Warhol who was the face of Community Outreach for the Unitarian Church of Underwood.

It was Katy Olson's idea for the first Chili Dinner that raised funds for the Underwood Senior Nutrition Program. She and Kris did the advertising and ticket sales. Many others joined for the cooking and serving, and these past years, it was Kris' warm greetings and smiles at the entrance welcoming all those who gathered. It was Kris who did most of the work for the June rummage sale raising funds for special needs.



It was Kris who led the Harvest parade march. And it is still Kris who reaches out each week to the children from the religious education program still on hiatus due to COVID.

We acknowledge the losses because of COVID. We also

recognize that from these roots, there arose opportunities to expand community outreach and the Social and Environmental Justice Interest Groups have more than stepped in to make the Unitarian Church of Underwood visible and viable in the community. See ucofu.org/Facebook Page to keep up to date on happenings and join the conversation.



Thank you all who have gone before and thank you all for being there now – and for long into the future. Fortunately, the one thing that did not change for the Unitarian Church of Underwood’s Community Outreach was the Empowerment Grant Awards.

Empowerment Grant Awards 2021-22



In 2004, a large legacy was bestowed to the Unitarian Church of Underwood by member, Francis Ellison. These funds gave opportunity for UCU to award the first Empowerment Grants in 2007. Annual grants have continued to be paid out since from UCU investments. After fourteen years, the awards given out now total over \$125,000. Grant applications are made by UCU members to go to an established non-government organization or entity with a

proposed project that meets one or more of the UU Principles and is inclusive and non-discriminatory. Applications received are reviewed by the Empowerment Grant Committee and selections are submitted to the UCU Board of Directors for approval.

The Unitarian Church of Underwood’s Empowerment Grant Objective is to: Increase visibility of grant awardees and their programs to recognize and promote the important work being done through recognized community agencies.



Because of COVID, some 2020-21 Awardees were unable to complete their projects. That money was rolled into this year’s amount so that the awards total \$13,800.

The Unitarian Church of Underwood’s Board of Directors has approved the following grants for 2021-22:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| • Nlbi Walk for Ottertail River - | \$1,850 |
| • Friends of Fergus Falls Library (Earth Day Book Events) | 400 |
| • Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light | 1,250 |
| • Shan Schools for Refugees - | 1,500 |
| • Fergus Falls Farmers Market POP Program - | 750 |
| • Friends of Prairie Wetlands Learning Center - | 1,250 |
| • COVID Hunger Project (North Country Food Shelf) | 1,800 |
| • Underwood Senior Dining Program - | 1,000 |
| • The Backpack Project (United Way) - | 1,000 |
| • Healing Divides Community Series - | 2,000 |
| • Okini Project (One Spirit) - | 1,000 |

\$13,800

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

Join
UCU's Social Justice Interest Group
Thursday, Bi-Weekly Meetings @ 6 p.m.

Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92749849036?pwd=YnZ5MTIjK2ZpYkYLOREK2VnS1ZSUT09>

Meeting ID: 927 4984 9036

Passcode: SJIG

Or

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 927 4984 9036

The Social Justice Interest Group will be hosting a series of bi-weekly discussions exploring the foundations of race and white supremacy in the US. Using the podcast "Seeing White" and other resources, we will be exploring where the concept of whiteness came from. By recognizing and naming the traits of white supremacy culture, we can begin to do the work around dismantling systems of oppression. The initial meeting will be on **Thursday, April 1, at 6 pm**. We will be discussing the first 3 episodes (found here <https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/> or search your podcast feed for Scene on Radio). Contact amy.beckman@ucofu.org if you need assistance finding the content. The link for the Zoom meeting will be on the UCU Calendar.



April 8, 1-2 p.m.

This spring, MN Interfaith Power & Light is organizing meetings with our state's Congresspeople and people of faith in their districts. In these meetings, speakers will share a 1-2 minute story about why we need bold federal climate action in 2021. This is an important way to show the broad, deep support for climate action among people of faith.

Thank you to Katy Olson and Tere Mann for running and filming the video shoot making a 2-minute video to present to District 7's Congressional Representative Michelle Fischbach; to Deb Wallwork for doing the video editing; and to the 31 participants who helped create two hours of video. Deb will edit it down to 2-4 minutes with several other short videos that will be posted on the UCU website and Facebook page. Thank you to Katy Olson and Melody Shores for writing the Statement of Faith for Bold Climate Action that was approved by the Board.

On April 8, from 1-2 p.m., please join us and any other residents of congressional District 7 interested in acting on climate change. The first half hour will be a training and grounding for all attendees. Representative Fischbach's office staff will join the meeting from 1:30 – 2:00 p.m. We would like to encourage everyone possible to attend that meeting. You don't have to say anything, but numbers matter! [Please RSVP here if you can join!](#)

Statement of Faith for Bold Climate Action UCU Congregation

We the members of the Unitarian Church of Underwood are asking our elected official Michelle Fischbach to support President Biden's initiatives to address the climate crisis.

Our faith calls us to recognize and protect the interdependent web of all life. Climate change is threatening this web which we and all living beings depend upon.

We hold water as sacred, essential to life. Our economy, life and spiritual renewal are held in the life and health of the waters of West Central MN. A viable future for our children, grandchildren and their children's children depends on the actions we take now.

We must take bold action to address this crisis. The depletion of topsoil, the pollution of water, and the loss of habitat for species in decline can all be addressed by taking action to mitigate the climate crisis.

We are also called to recognize and protect the dignity and worth of every person. Climate change affects the poor among us more than most. Climate change threatens the cleanliness of our air, depletes our water sources and limits food supply. It disrupts livelihoods, forces families from their homes and pushes people into poverty. Those who have the least power and resources are being forced to accept the worst offenses to their water supplies and their land.

Not only is it morally right and necessary that we act now, but it also makes good economic sense as well. Carbon sequestration in cover crops and carbon credits can help a struggling farm economy. Green energy provides a living wage and long-term employment. Clean water and healthy air ensure the health of our tourist economy.

It is our moral imperative to act now. It is incumbent upon you, our elected representatives, to ensure a livable future for us and all living beings.

We want you to know that we are trying to do our part as well:

- Members of our congregation are involved with county and city planning to advocate for solar panels cradle to grave care.
- We regularly do Highway cleanups and recently have added riverbank cleanups.
- Members have advocated for various run-off solutions, including institutionalizing rain gardens throughout the city.

We ask that you follow the lead of industry: electric cars, wind generation and solar power are the economy of our future. Please help us to preserve the rich diversity of our area. The rusty bee, the monarch butterfly, the common loon, the playful otter, the yellow perch and so many other creatures need our help to survive. Join us in this critical work.

We would like you to consider this an introduction to our community and want you to know that we are acting on our values to help improve the public good. We look forward to hearing from you and hope to continue to reach out to your office with questions and concerns in the coming months. Please feel free to respond however it works for you; we welcome any form of correspondence or discussion.

A Prayer

Blessed be the Earth for providing us this food
Blessed be the Sun for helping it grow
Blessed be the Wind and the birds for carrying its seed
Blessed be the Rain for the water's loving flow
Blessed be the hands that helped prepare this meal, may those hands and
our bodies be quick to heal
Blessed be our friends, our families and our loved ones
Blessed be our Mother Earth, our Father Sky and Sun
- A Christian Blessing

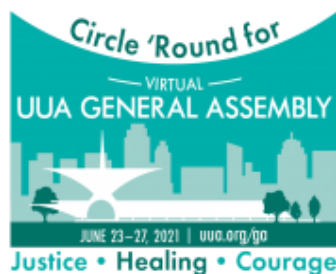
And this nice thank you in return from Charissa Verdoorn, Outreach & Policy Manager from Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL)

"Hi Katy, Melody, and Deb,

I wanted to say how impressed I am at your amazing organizing and leadership - first, with the 31 people who shared their climate story in your filming last weekend (amazing!), and then sharing with me so many names of interested individuals/congregations to speak with Rep. Fischbach's staff! I reached out to them and several will either attend the April 8 meeting or speak! These great new connections wouldn't be possible without your amazing leadership, so thank you. :)" *Charissa Verdoorn*

We Are Part of the Larger UU

Note: UUA and MidAmerica Region offer many resources, including virtual workshops. If interested, check out the uua.org website for sessions, dates, and times.



June 23-27, 2021 UUA Virtual General Assembly – Registration now open.

REGISTER NOW! If you haven't registered for Virtual GA 2021 already, there is no better time than right now! Registered attendees are among the first to hear program announcements, such as the Ware Lecturer and featured speakers, and only registered attendees will have access to the NEW! GA app. So, register early to join online discussions, familiarize yourself with the GA schedule, and find your place in our community of communities. Register here:

<https://www.uua.org/ga/registration>

Note: UCU is assigned two voting delegates. If you are interested in attending GA and having UCU reimburse expenses, please contact Ron Roller Treasurer at treasurer@ucofu.org or 218/770-0374 and/or Bonnie Graham, Congregational Administrator at administrator@ucofu.org or 218/841-4466.

Registration is **\$200 per person**. General Assembly registrants receive access to the 2021 Online Participation Portal, including live, Simu live, and on-demand video content, the virtual exhibit hall, chat features, support, and a (new!) GA mobile app.

GA WORKSHOPS SPOTLIGHT

We are pleased to highlight the following workshops which will be part of the 2021 Virtual UUA General Assembly. These offerings are just a handful of the fabulous **100+ live webinars and on-demand programs** that GA registrants will have access to. One of the best parts about virtual GA - if you miss a live webinar or have trouble choosing between options, you'll be able to catch up later on-demand! **GA Registrants now have an exclusive preview** of the full listing of workshops (both live and on-demand) on the new [GA app](#) powered by Whova.



Community in a Post-Isolation Age (UUA)

For the past four years, people have been traumatized by the 45th Administration and its response to the global pandemic. We also suffer the pandemic of white supremacy and police brutality. This workshop will explore the trauma inherent in both these scourges and help congregations build trauma-informed communities that address both.

Rev. Natalie Briscoe; Connie Goodbread; Christine Purcell; Rev. Jami Yandle

Harvesting Lessons, Planting Seeds: Reflections on Organizing, 2016-2021 (UUA's Organizing Strategy Team)

UUs have organized for justice in unprecedented ways since 2016. What have we learned about our congregations, movements, and the political landscape? What is possible and most urgent now? Join the UUA's Organizing Strategy Team to look back and plan forward for bold, faithful, strategic action for justice.

Nicole Pressley; Everette Thompson; Susan Leslie; Rev. Ashley Horan

Resourcing UU Theologies of Death and Dying (*Meadville Lombard Theological School and Starr King School for the Ministry*)

Drawn from UU theological foundations, this workshop provides participants with imagery and language for UU theologies of death and dying. In this time of pandemic response we find ourselves in need of renewed theological exploration to sustain our covenantal communities.

Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt; Dr. Elías Ortega

REWIRE: Rewiring Your Racial Consciousness (*All Souls Unitarian Church, Tulsa OK*)

Explore your own racial identity and identify next steps for your own development. With a values-centered approach, we white people can reclaim our wholeness and heal ourselves. A panel of leaders will open the workshop and then trained facilitators will work with small groups.

Rev. Barbara Prose; Dr. Chad Johnson; Lynda Jacobs; Shannon Boston

Rights of Nature: Who Speaks for the Earth? (*UU Ministry for Earth, DRUUMM, UUA Green Sanctuary Program*)

Indigenous Peoples and, increasingly, more communities are declaring that lakes, rivers, forest, grasslands, and all of the earth has rights. Human communities can fight for these rights and win. This program will provide education, spiritual inspiration, training, and embodied practice for UUs to join the movement for the rights of nature.

Winona LaDuke; Casey Camp-Horinek; Elliott Moffett; Freddy Lane

Starr King School for the Ministry President's Lecture: Art in Search of Justice

A choreopoem in memory of UU minister James Reeb debuted at the 1990 GA in Milwaukee. Co-created by Rosemary Bray McNatt and Reeb's daughter, Anne, it hasn't been seen for 30 years. Its creators reunite to present the video and reassess both their collaboration and the UUA's journey toward justice.

Rev. Rosemary McNatt; Anne Reeb

The Power of Story in Worship (*The First Religious Society in Carlisle*)

Our congregations struggle to find ways to keep the story element meaningful for all ages in worship. How can we harness the energy of intentional story as an essential part of the worship service? How can teens add their voice to crafting stories for worship? Let's put the storybooks down and the "All Ages" back into the Time for All Ages.

Pam Howell; Rev. Lisa Mobayed; Emmy McCormack; Ashley Bryan

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Board of Directors' Minutes
February 17, 2021**

In attendance: Board Members: Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Norm Kolstad, Tim Lanz, John Minge, Ron Roller, Shannon Smith, Mary Worner; Absent: Wally Warhol. Also in attendance: Congregational Administrator, Bonnie Graham; UCU member, John Salmen and presenters: Alison Francis & Melody Shores.

The meeting was called to order by President, Norm Kolstad at 6:03 p.m. The Agenda was approved (Mary Anderson/Ron Roller). The Minutes of January 20 meeting were approved (Ron Roller/Norm Kolstad).

Social Justice Interest Group members, Alison Francis & Melody Shores presented information on their attendance at a meeting of Transforming Rural Understanding of Equity (TRUE), "When Hate Comes to Town." The Board approved that the Social Justice Interest Group proceed with development of a Comprehensive Response Plan to be reviewed and approved by the Board (Ron Roller/Mary Anderson). The Plan will be a footprint on how UCU defines its community and what we stand for.

Reports:

Financial Report: Treasurer Ron Roller reviewed the financial reports.

Givelify, the application to donate automatically, is now available on the ucofu.org website. Per last month's Board decision, Ron made the request for UUA to transfer within \$10,000 from the common fund to the foundation fund. Collections are down but so are expenses and with Sverdrup Suites the church has a YTD net of \$14,541.95. The Finance Committee will meet in early March for 2021-22 budget setting.

Eleven (11) applications for the Empowerment Grants have been received totaling \$20,750 in requests for the \$13,800 available. The Grant Application Committee meets March 3 to finalize selections to present at the March Board meeting,

The full financial reports are available on Google Suites shared drive or call Ron Roller with questions.

Congregational Administrator's Report: Bonnie Graham reported that this past month, she has focused on: submitting the UUA certification information; work with the Speaker's Committee with most speakers determined through April; assumption of website administrative duties, including the Givelify link; resolving issues with Zoom; attending another UUA Hybrid Worship session that turned out to be primarily about technical issues; monitoring workshop sign-ups; meeting with Mary Worner for Adult RE offerings.

She and Ron Roller reported that so far one person has signed up for the Leadership Workshop and four for the Beloved workshop and no one yet for GA attendance. Motion was made, amended, and carried that UCU will reimburse up to \$3000 for those who register and attend the upcoming workshops (Mary Anderson/Amy Beckman). Board members should continue to encourage member attendance at these offerings.

Records Committee Report – Norm Kolstad reported that the Records Committee continues work on revisions to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Discussion ensued later in the meeting regarding a reduction in Board member numbers to be included in changes to the Articles and Bylaws and to inform the Nominating Committee (four terms to expire at the 2021 annual meeting with just one current Board member interested in another term). The Board reached consensus that the Records Committee and Nominating Committee work with (nine) 9 as the Board composition number pending final approval of the membership at the April annual meeting.

Facilities Report – Norm Kolstad reported no issues.

Safety Committee – No report other than a group will be gathered soon to formulate a plan for Hybrid Worship.

Membership Committee – No report

Communications Committee Report- No report.

Stewardship Committee Report – no report.

Program Coordinator's Report – Mary Worner reported that on completion of the Wisdom Adult Religious Education class, participants will have a panel presentation at the March 21 service. She is now looking at potential Adult Education offerings for spring and summer.

Community Outreach Report – Amy Beckman reported that Empowerment Grants are under consideration and that the Social Justice Interest Group continues book and movie discussions. They are also looking at forming or joining a Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Chapter. There was discussion on what meetings and/or events to include on the church calendar. Reminders will be given at Sunday services on how to use the Member/Friend calendar to track events.

Unfinished Business

Viable Futures Initiative – Mary Anderson & Ron Roller reported that the three (3) sessions to present and receive membership input is progressing and that information is expected to be of assistance with future planning. The first session was recorded, and the links will be provided in the Weekly and church reports.

Reviewed annual meeting preparation progress and the agenda.

New Business:

Next Meeting: March 17 @ **6:00 p.m.** via Zoom

Executive Team – March 10 @ **6:00 p.m.** via Zoom

