

UCU Newsletter May 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

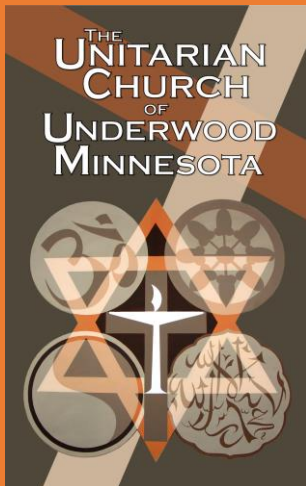


Photo courtesy of Glenn Frische, Willmar UU

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

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.
- Perham U-Group: **Last 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

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: 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)
@ucofu.org

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)

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.

Speakers for May Sunday Services

10:00 a.m.

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

Join UCU's Service at:

bit.ly/UCUSunday

Meeting ID: 970 8841 4602

Passcode: 424091

Call this number to hear the service on your phone: +1 312 626 6799

May 2 – Bob Worner (see Weekly for Title).

May 9 – Writers, Tribute to Mothers - Four of our UCU friends will share stories about Mother's Day: Diane Johnson, Edie Barrett, Kelly Barrett, and Melody Shores.

May 16 – Karen Lund, "The Globalization of Indifference." In 2015 Pope Francis spoke about the question of indifference. Today we need be concerned with indifference as through the last two years we have been living through great changes in our community, country, and world. Secondly, what is our personal challenge to indifference? A conversation on perspective, involvement and commitment will be the focus.

Karen grew up in North Dakota and after graduating from Minot State Teachers College, she ventured out into the world. Utilizing her teaching skills, she took advantage of opportunities that came her way, from a Recreation Director in Military Hospital to a Global Business Consultant. She has fused her 50+ years of listening, talking, observing, and analyzing organizations, communities, and individuals into many insights of the need for human involvement.

May 23 – Katy Olson, "Learning to Lead: Notes from UUA Leadership Training." Katy will share what she learned by attending the Midwest Leadership Training. How do we create Beloved Community? How does mission, vision, and purpose guide the work of the church; UUA and the value of circle style of leadership; resolving conflict, how are we together?

Katy Olson is a long-time member of UCU. She is a woman, mother, wife, sister, daughter, homesteader, iconoclast, radical thinker, yogi, water, and earth loving member of the natural world. Katy engaged with this training to be of service to this community. Katy says, "I am very grateful for the opportunity to take this training offered to me by the UCU."

May 30 - Athena Kildegaard (see upcoming Weekly for title and details).

Commented [ma1]:

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



Photo at right: **Stefan Jonnason** on his 34th visit to the Unitarian Church of Underwood on April 3, 2021, albeit his first visit via Zoom. And his first appearance as “bearded.”

Podcasts of previous programs at: <https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278> or click link in Sunday church reports.

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



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)

Church Happenings



Message from Board President, Norm Kolstad

We had a better-than-average turnout for the UCU Annual Meeting April 18. Thank you to all who attended. Also, thanks are in order to all the people who worked to prepare for, and present at, this meeting. Thanks especially to the tech people, who smoothed the way, and made it possible. A special thank you goes to those who helped revise the Articles and Bylaws, which were accepted by the congregation.

I also want to thank the outgoing board members - Shannon Smith, John Minge, and Tim Lanz - for their service to the Church. Congratulations, and welcome, to our new board members - Marianne Bryant, John Salmen, and Molly Delarbre; and to our returning member, Ron Roller.

Please take a few minutes to read the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting in this newsletter that are subject to approval at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

See you at church. *Norm*

2021 Annual Meeting Highlights

Members adopted revisions to Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

Plans progressing on hybrid worship.

New Board elected officers: President- Norm Kolstad; Vice President – John Salmen; Treasurer – Ron Roller; Secretary – Mary Anderson.

Note: Annual reports will be presented at Sunday services over the next months – click on <https://sites.google.com/ucofu.org/2021-annual-meeting-documents/home> for full annual reports, Financial reports, and revised Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. This same link is also on the church website, <https://ucofu.org/news.php> - (Under the Calendar, Newsletters, Events tab. April 2021 Annual Meeting documents).

Meet New Board Members

When inviting potential candidates for Board nomination, the Nominating Committee considers a wide range of qualifications to assure a diverse Board. Among those considerations are: gender, life experiences, skills, and length of UCU membership. We are pleased that our new Board members are relatively new church members bringing new ideas and perspectives, yet with the same commitment and passion as shown by long-term members.



Marianne Bryan (2017) one-year term to fill term vacancy. From Marianne:” I was born and raised in Otter Tail County and love it here! I’ve lived in Colorado and New York and it’s great to be back in Minnesota. I have a ‘tiny house’ on Swan Lake where I live part of the year and in St Paul part of the year. I’m a professional pianist and I enjoy sharing my playing at church. I am humbled to be asked to serve on the Board and I look forward to working together with the other board members.”

Molly Delarbre (2018) – three-year term. It was a long journey. Molly started with what she thought was a liberal church until it turned out to be not as liberal as she needed. Thus, began Molly’s google search for a faith community that would fulfill her lived experiences, beliefs and passions. For a time, she landed with Church of the Larger Fellowship, but she continued to search for a physical church. At long last, she found the UU church near her. She came through the doors of this church first for a Christmas Eve service. There she did not have to talk or interact much, but she was given a new visitor folder. It took a couple more years and she came to a Sunday service where she found herself welcomed, she felt like she fit in, and she has



been at just about every Sunday service since. In her time here, Molly has connected with UU friends through Facebook, attended UU workshops, is a member of the Membership Committee, the Social Justice Interest Group and has involved herself in other ways such as a participant in the Children’s Christmas program (pictured at right). Molly says she feels like a “born again non-Christian.” It is “so awesome. Nowhere else ever has made me feel so

valued and worthwhile. It is so amazing. I just want to share and tell others what I have found at the Unitarian Church of Underwood.”

Not only does Molly share with us her own interests and passions, but she brings with her at least four of her eight kids, Lorelei, Louise, Mabel, and Evangelinea. The rest of us have gotten to enjoy them since toddlers and babies, something of which we have not had enough of. .

Molly feels honored to now be a member of the Board of Directors.

John Salmen (2019) – three-year term. “These days, I’m into woodworking, tricycling, making music, watercolors, canoeing, and spending time with my partner and grandchildren. The journey to the ‘here and now’ is a long story, but what’s most important is that Ann Scher, and I raised two amazing daughters, the younger of whom married Jeremy Maxwell Parrish. In 2018, we purchased his grandparent’s property on Lake Alice, and established SlowCycle, a trust for our grandchildren and their progeny; created to further rejuvenate the property through Permaculture methods. This has allowed me to realize the sustainability dreams I’ve had since high school and college, and to utilize the accessibility and architectural design skills and resources I have gathered along the way to these stolen forests, meadows and lakes that we now care for.



I’m so grateful to Peggy Maxwell for introducing me to UCU, where I am finding joy, sincerity and purpose in the kindred spirits who gather under its banner.

Thanks for accepting me into your congregation, I am honored to now be counted among the leaders who have served this membership over the many years.”

Board Members continuing terms: Mary Anderson (2008), Amy Beckman (2017), Norm Kolstad (2012), Ron Roller (1985), Wally Warhol (2002), Mary Worner (2001). *Note: Membership date (in parentheses) often differs from first appearance date!*

The Board meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Watch for details in the Weekly prior to each Board meeting.

Covenant of Right Relationship

The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a place of safety and integrity for each person’s mind, body, and spirit. We are a supportive and nurturing faith community, honoring and respecting the rich diversity of those gathered here. Recognizing that warmth, beauty, kindness, and passion will shape us as a congregation of goodwill, generosity, and presence, we covenant to affirm and promise:

- **Honesty and authenticity in our relationships**

- Words that are supportive and caring, not belittling or demeaning
- A welcoming and non-judgmental attitude
- To respect each person's boundaries of mind, body, and spirit
- To listen to one another
- To refrain from displays of temper
- To honor the gifts and blessings of thought and deed.

This is our covenant of right relationship.

'Syttende Mai'



With its Norwegian founders, UCU often pays recognition to this rich heritage. Unfortunately, again this year because of COVID-19 restrictions, UCU is unable to celebrate with Florance Thompson's food and decorating, the Norwegian Constitution Day, the National Day of Norway. This is an official Norwegian national holiday each year on May 17th. Among Norwegians, the day is referred to as 'Syttende Mai' (simply meaning May Seventeenth), So to those of Norwegian descent and to friends of those of Norwegian descent, "Gratulerer med dagen" (congratulations on this day).



Old photos of the Unitarian Church of Underwood Shared from a member of the Unity Church Unitarian in St. Paul

Staying Connected

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

Invitation from John Salmen



UCU members and friends are invited to join us to help plant trees, or to just come and visit and see the transformation of a hay field into a Food Forest, and other cool Permaculture efforts.

Visitors will be welcome anytime between 2 and 6. We are asking Tree Planting Volunteers to arrive any time after 11:00 and will offer them free lunch from the UFDA food truck between noon and 1:00.

Volunteers are asked to bring work gloves, wear sturdy shoes, and bring a bucket for carrying water (if readily available). Please be prepared to get muddy!

This will be an outdoor event – Rain or Shine.

To try to protect everyone from Covid infection, we will be asking everyone to observe social distancing and sign in, when they arrive: providing phone and e-mail addresses and self-identifying if they have been vaccinated, so we can contact folks if we learn of an outbreak.

We will have:

- Tools and 500 trees for planting
- A field transforming a field into a prairie meadow.
- A Seed and Plant swap run by North Circle Seeds
- Hayrides and electric assist tricycle rides
- UFDA's Sustainable Food Truck – (by donation)
- Tours of our Deep Winter Green House (masks required)
- Kite flying – Bring a kite!

We hope for good weather and to see you on May 8! If questions, call John Salmen @ 218/346-9120.

Sponsors: Sustainable Farming Association

North Circle Seeds

Upstream Food Distributors Association

And of course, SlowCycle.

Please note the updates:

1. Tree planting volunteers get lunch from Noon until 1:00
2. Visitors (non-planters) are asked to arrive between 2 and 6 pm.

3. A drone will be taking aerial photos. (We will ensure that no-one is identifiable.)
4. Remember to bring plants or seeds to swap!
5. We were pleased to hear the recent CDC Covid guidance. It supports our social distancing but no-mask plan for our outdoor activities.
6. The 10-day weather forecast shows a high around 60 with a 40% chance of rain in the morning. Please watch the forecast and dress accordingly!

P.S. - We've got plenty of space for camping, if you are so inclined. Please give me a call and we can discuss what will work best for you. *John Salmen*

Celebration of the Lives of Donn & Marlys Siems



June 26 from 9-11 a.m.

@ Unitarian Church of Underwood

(Further details will be provided in the June newsletters and the Weeklys)

Living Out Our UU Principles

Join

UCU's Social Justice Interest Group

Thursdays, Bi-Weekly Meetings @ 6 p.m.

Time: This is a recurring meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92749849036?pwd=YnZ5MTljK2ZpYklyLOREK2VnS1ZSUT09>

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 is 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. Meetings continue on Thursday, May 13 and 27. Even if you don't attend the discussions, listen to the podcasts at <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 is on the UCU Calendar.



To view the video, click here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w23rNi20onLOKTJLDwK6Okj-Ctq3tf2p?usp=sharing>.

On February 8th, Katy Olson responded to an invitation from Interfaith Power and Light MN to encourage our elected officials to take Bold Climate Action now. And to encourage them to support President Biden in his climate initiatives.

The effort was two pronged: prepare a statement of faith from your faith community to present in person at a meeting with Representative Michele Fischbach. The second part was to prepare a short video representing as many voices as possible from District 7A urging Bold Climate Action now.

Katy enlisted the help of Melody Shores as she has the technical skills and is also passionate about climate justice. Katy drafted a statement and Melody edited it and the UCU Board approved it for dissemination on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media venues. We set up a filming date and two sites and invited members of our own congregation to come and share a

statement. We also sent the invite to the CCL group and through them we got participation from faith communities in Moorhead, and Detroit Lakes and Perham. Tere Mann and Katy Olson were the field recorders. Deb Wallwork edited the video. She received over two hours of recorded material and from that footage she crafted an immensely powerful statement about why we need to act now!

On April 8th at 1:00 we met with Sean from Ms. Fischbach's Washington office as Representative Fischbach was not able to join us. We shared 6 statements of faith on the interdependent web of life and creation care, and why we are urging Rep Fischbach to join Biden in addressing the climate crisis.

The video and statement of faith have been shared on social media and Rep Fischbach has received written copies as well as the video. We shared all the video that Tere and Katy gathered with the folks that came and shared their time and concern with us. Through the efforts of many people, we were able to make a strong statement of our values.

The statement approved by the Board is included in the Board minutes below.

Thanks to everyone who contributed. *Katy Olson*



Screen shot of attendees at meeting with Representative Fischbach's staff provided by Melody Shores

From Melody Shores: "I also wanted to report to you on the meeting we had last Thursday with Representative Michelle Fischbach's staff member, Sean.

By all accounts, the meeting on April 8th was encouraging and Charissa of Interfaith Power and Light said it was a powerful meeting.

- Five (5) congregations of various denominations including the Unitarian Church of Underwood were represented with over 45 people, and surely made an impression.
- One representative from each congregation read an environmental statement of faith. All of them were thoughtful and heartfelt and each was very different.
- On behalf of Fischbach's office, Sean showed that they had been keeping track of environmental issues and he listed several projects, including carbon sequestration that were hopeful approaches.
- We closed with how we hoped to be in further conversations with Sean and Representative Fischbach.

Our video and environmental statement of faith are posted on Facebook. The video has also been posted separately on YouTube, and the Environmental Statement of Faith is posted separately on Google Drive and they have been sent out in this and earlier newsletters.

Thank you to everyone who worked on any of these components and helped to organize them. Charissa, from Interfaith Power and Light gave us a list of follow-up items which would be great if we could do:

1. Send a follow-up note to Representative Fischbach (handwritten is best, email is good too!).
2. Post about the meeting (share a photo!) on social media and tag your Rep. in it. (Done)
3. Share about this meeting with your congregation, how it went, and encourage them to send a follow-up note/email to your Rep to multiply our impact. (Doing that right now) ;)
4. Write an Op-Ed about this meeting in a local paper (let Charrisa know if it gets published)

Here is **Rep. Fischbach's contact information**: Phone: 202-225-2331 Email: <https://fischbach.house.gov/>. Contact Mailing address - choose whichever office you'd like to write to:

1237 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 (THIS IS WHERE SEAN WORKS, IF YOU WANT TO THANK HIM DIRECTLY); or
2513 8th Street S Moorhead, MN 56560; or
2211 1st Street S Suite 190 Willmar, MN 56201.

Tips for the letters:

Send a handwritten thank-you note to Rep. Fischbach's office. We hope everyone does this - because 40+ handwritten letters will make a powerful statement! Rep. Fischbach's mailing address is right above.

- Sample language: “My name is ___ and I am part of [congregation]. I wanted to thank you for talking with faith communities in the district about climate action, and hope you’ll be a climate leader in 2021. [Share a sentence about why it matters to you.] Thank you!”
- Thank Sean (from Rep. Fischbach's office) for joining the meeting. You can also express your desire for Rep. Fischbach to attend a meeting in the future. The more people saying that, the stronger the statement will be.
 - Please also share why, as a person of faith or conscience, you want Rep. Fischbach to act boldly on climate and/or support a green economic recovery/infrastructure bill. Even one or two sentences is powerful - and the more personal, the better! Follow-up with your faith community (if you're part of one):
 - If you hosted a prep meeting in your congregation, send an email to everyone who participated in that meeting. Update them on how it went and work with them on how to engage the larger congregation! (Need to do this) Share about this meeting during worship:
 - Include a screenshot and share about the experience. You can say that 40+ people of faith from CD7 joined the call, and we heard from six speakers across the district! (Doing this morning)
 - Then, ask your congregation to email Rep. Fischbach's office to thank them for meeting and continue building pressure.
 - Write a short reflection to share in your congregation's bulletin/announcements, large group email, or Facebook page (done). Include a photo! Other ideas to keep in touch with Rep. Fischbach:
 - Share the picture from your meeting on social media and tag Rep. Fischbach and @MNIPL. Use the hashtags #BuildBackFossilFree and/or #FaithInAction
 - Give Rep. Fischbach’s office a follow-up call next month to ask for any climate updates, and to reiterate your support for climate action. Your calls matter!

Thank you so much again - this was a powerful meeting, and I'm so grateful to have been part of it with you! We truly are stronger together in the work for a better world.” *Melody Shores*

**Voice of Faith Statement from First Congregational United Church of Christ in Moorhead, MN
by their minister, Rev Michelle Webber**

“I am the minister of First Congregational United Church of Christ in Moorhead, MN. My denomination coined the term eco-justice and has formed a network of churches who are active in their communities, promoting creation justice.

Of course, my denomination is not alone in working on behalf of the earth, as indicated by the 5 denominations represented in our speakers today. We read in our sacred text that God created the world and everything in it and declared it good. It was good even before humans were created.

God holds the created world in very high esteem. We know that the Earth is a self-healing system. We have seen this past year as humans have curtailed our activities, that ecosystems

and species have sprung back to life. Air pollution has cleared, salmon have returned to spawn in long unused nurseries.

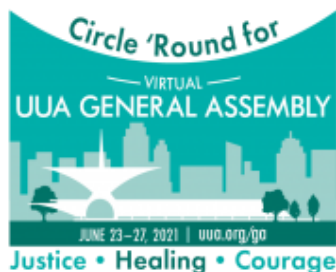
The question is, can we humans modify our behavior fast enough so that the earth heals itself in such a way that humans can still survive here? If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is how quickly and how completely we can change our way of living, our daily habits, our expectations for those around us. If we can put this dynamic adaptability of humanity to work for us during the pandemic, we can put it to use in the slower, but potentially more devastating crisis in our world, climate change.

In the past my church has changed the way we use our grounds, turning lawn into food growing space because it better filters the water that runs off our roof. We have worked with the City of Moorhead to create new codes, allowing homeowners to plant rain gardens instead of lawn in the berm. Inspired by the sacred stories we inherit; we do these things because they are in our power to do so.

Please ask representative Fischbach to make a pledge to use the power that has been entrusted to her by the voters of Minnesota to work to curtail the effects of climate change for all of our citizens, and for the earth itself. Thank you." *Rev Michelle Webber*

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.

Unitarian Church of Underwood

Board of Directors' Minutes

March 17, 2021

(To be approved at May 21 Board Meeting)

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

The meeting was called to order by President, Norm Kolstad at 6:06 p.m. Without objection, Norm Kolstad declared the Agenda approved. The Minutes of February 17, 2021 meeting were approved (Ron Roller/Shannon Smith).

Treasurer's Report: Ron Roller presented the Profit and Loss Statement and the Balance Statement that shows a year-to-date net income of \$16,730.77.

2021-22 Budget Proposal: Ron Roller on behalf of the Finance Committee presented and the Board approved their recommendation of the 2021-22 Budget Proposal of \$45,925 (Ron Roller/Mary Anderson). The budget will be presented for final approval by the membership at the April 18 annual meeting.

Empowerment Grants: Ron Roller presented as a motion (Ron Roller/Shannon Smith) the recommendations of the Empowerment Grant Selection Committee. The Board approved the list in its entirety. Ron will proceed to send a grant contract to all approved grantees, issue the grant checks prior to March 30th. After the signed contracts are returned, Ron will issue the checks to the grantees.

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

\$13,800

It was suggested that the name of the sponsor for each grant be included and Ron affirmed they will do that.

Congregational Administrator's Report: Bonnie Graham reported that she continues work with the Speakers Committee. They have adjusted the speaker fees. The Speakers Committee would like to see children involved in the service. Givelify (automatic giving application) is on the ucofu.org website. The Google Suites technical team is working on easier access with fewer passwords. She has attended UUA workshop offerings, including hybrid worship discussions by MidAmerica Region.

Norm Kolstad reported that the Personnel Committee completed Bonnie's 6-month performance review. Feedback was complimentary of Bonnie's work.

Records Committee: Norm Kolstad reported that recommendations for revisions to the church's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are in the final stages and will be forwarded to Board members and then presented at the Annual Meeting of the Membership for approval. Standards and protocols for Google Suites will be addressed by the Records Committee next.

Facilities: The family of Donn & Marlys Siems have requested use of the church June 26 for a Celebration of Life service. Approval for use passed contingent upon concerns on the level of local COVID incidents (Shannon Smith/Wally Warhol).

Safety Committee: Norm Kolstad reported that under the sponsorship of the Safety Committee, the first meeting of the Hybrid Worship Task Force is scheduled for Tuesday, March 30.

Nominating Committee: The nominating committee presented to the Board the slate of three (3) nominees for upcoming Board terms: John Salmen, Marianne Bryan, and Molly Delarbre. There will also be a call for nominations from the floor. The term currently filled by Tim Lanz will be eliminated to bring the Board number down to nine (9) per the February 17, 2021 Board resolution.

Membership Committee: Mary Anderson reported that members of the Membership Committee just did a second mailing to 85 members/friends, most of whom have not been regularly seen during COVID.

Communications Committee: Mary Anderson asked for feedback on the monthly newsletter. Reports show that the newsletter and the Weekly receive about the same number of opens for each (70-77) with approximately 50 clicks that seems to indicate viewing.

Program – Mary Worner, Program Coordinator reported that the Alexandria U Group facilitated by Lee Becker is full and unable to take additional members. Consideration will be given in the fall on adding another U Group for that area. Mary has monthly phone conversations to coordinate activities with Congregational Administrator, Bonnie Graham and meets quarterly

with the leads under Program. Mary will consult with parents and their children, members that have been involved in planning and delivering children's RE in the past, MidAmerica, UUA, other churches, and our UCU Administrator and program leads and more to make short- and long-range plans for children's RE when we are again meeting in-person.

Community Outreach: Ron Roller reported on behalf of Amy Beckman, Community Outreach Co-Coordinator that the Underwood Restorative Justice group continues work in the community. Mary Anderson provided Amy's report: the Social Justice Interest Group continues offerings of books readings, discussions. Plans have commenced for a workshop with the Poverty Institute. They are reaching out to other groups in the area for sponsorship and attendance opportunities. The Environment Justice group is working with MNIPL to produce a short video and faith statement to elected officials and others around climate change. (See more below.)

Unfinished Business

1. It was determined that any dates of meeting with Revs. David Pyle/Phil Lund – steps of transformation of board governance – would be best for June. Mary Worner will follow up.
2. Themes from member input via Viable Futures discussions were adopted (Mary Anderson/Norm Kolstad) to be incorporated as the 2021-22 Goals & Objectives Addendum to the Strategic Plan. They are:
 - 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 that we may: recognize our strengths and areas of vulnerability; be flexible and open to change; and prioritize goals with knowledge of ourselves and with considered, thoughtful intention.
 - 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.
 - Be mindful and intentional of what we can do and how we do it.
3. Mary Anderson stepped through the preparation materials for the Annual Meeting of the Membership, April 18, 2021. The 10-Day meeting notice and meeting materials will be sent out to the membership on or before April 8. To be included:
 - a. Meeting agenda,
 - b. 2020 annual meeting minutes,
 - c. Slate of Board Nominees,
 - d. Financial report,
 - e. Proposed Budget,

- f. Strategic Plan Goals & Objectives,
- g. Proposed revisions to Articles/Bylaws,
- h. Automatic Transfer of Funds form

Norm Kolstad and Mary Anderson with the help of the Social Justice Interest Group will prepare the report listed as a 2020 annual meeting action item: "The Board of Directors shall report at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Membership on progress on race equities and justice per the Resolution adopted June 7, 2020."

As President, Norm Kolstad will lead the now traditional abbreviated service prior to the meeting of the membership. Mary sent an email to committee chairs and others to prepare their annual reports and plan for oral presentations during Sunday services May-August.

New Business –

1. UUA MidAmerica Region is offering another workshop - Breaking Covenant: Repair, Restore, Renew, Saturday, April 10, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. It will be announced for those interested to register and notify Ron Roller and Bonnie Graham.
2. On behalf of the Environmental Justice Group, Katy Olson presented a request for the Board to approve their drafted "Statement of Faith for Bold Climate Action" - Approved (Mary Anderson/Shannon Smith). Faith communities and others are seeking the support of our Federally elected officials for bold action for climate. This statement and a 2-minute video will be part of the presentation April 8 to District 7 Congressional Representative Michelle Fischbach. (See attached.)

**Next Meeting: Annual Meeting April 18 @ Sunday, 10:00-12:00 via Zoom
New Board to meet immediately following for election of officers.**

Addendum: 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

**Unitarian Church of Underwood
Annual Meeting of the Membership Minutes
April 18, 2021**

To be approved at the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Membership

UCU Members in Attendance: Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Marianne Bryan, Molly Delarbre, Ron Graham, Susan Groff, Alison Francis, Barbara Honer, Diane Johnson, Norm Kolstad, Tere Mann, Janell Miersch, John Miersch, John Minge, Gayle Nelson, Katy Olson, Luce Reese, Ron Roller, John Salmen, Dave Sanderson, Shannon, Smith, Jon Solinger, Kris Warhol, Wally Warhol, David Wass, Betsy Wells, Bob Worner, Mary Worner.

Member Attendance: 28

Others in Attendance: Bonnie Graham, Congregational Administrator, Edie Barrett, Jerry Hendel, Linda Quigstad-Berg, Ozzie Tollefson, Mary Waller.

Other Attendees: 6; total – 34.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Norm Kolstad at 10:13 a.m. Norm declared that a quorum was present at this, the 131st annual meeting held virtually through Zoom due to the continued COVID-19 restrictions. Ten-day notice of the meeting had been duly provided to the membership. John Minge agreed to act as parliamentarian. Norm explained the voting procedures to be handled virtually.

The Agenda was approved (John Salmen/Amy Beckman).

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting of June 7, 2020 were approved as published (John Salmen/Janell Miersch).

Reports:

Congregational Administrator, Bonnie Graham reported that she works behind the scenes; acts as a connector between UUA and UCU; provides supports to the Speakers Committee and others; assures connections between members with development and maintenance of the church calendar. She showed attendees how to access the on-line Member & Friend calendar and the information that is found through that link.

Treasurer's Report: Ron Roller, Treasurer with the assistance of Tere Mann, Bookkeeper provided the financial report. Ron explained that finances fall under three legs: 1) the physical building and operations; 2) Sverdrup Suites; 3) Investments. He noted that it has been "a pretty good year." Checking, savings and a CD earning 3.5% interest provide immediate cash assets that as of March 31, 2021 totaled \$38,377.69. The 95% of funds invested in UUA have shown strong annual return with a gain of 30.37%. UUA is recognized as a national leader in investing contributing congregational funds in socially responsible ways.

The Profit and Loss (P & L) Statement shows the income and expenses of the church as ordinary income, other income, and Sverdrup Suite rental income. Ordinary income is derived from cash collections on Sunday, automatic transfer of funds, large collections and mailed checks.

The P & L included unactualized income/loss (increase/decrease in value) of \$108,689.42. Net Income without Unactualized Income equaled \$3,886.86.

Empowerment Grants: As Empowerment Grant Selection Committee Chair, Ron Roller reported that with the roll-over of 2019 grants and the \$10,000 budgeted amount for 2020, a total of \$13,800 was awarded in Empowerment Grants to the following:

- Nibi Walk for Ottetail 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

2021-22 Budget

The Finance Committee proposed a budget of \$45,925.00 (Ron Roller/John Salmen). Motion to amend the budget to include an additional \$5000 for empowerment grants approved (John Minge/John Salmen). The budget as amended was approved. Wally Warhol commented that the Board had transferred funds from the UUA investments to a readily available savings account so are accessible for this purpose.

For full details, the Year End Financial Statements and approved budget information are maintained at <https://ucofu.org/news.php> or <https://ucofu.org/news.php>.

Records Committee

Norm Kolstad, Records Committee Chair explained why and how the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws were reviewed and revised with work by him, Mary Anderson, John Minge and John Salmen. Articles of Incorporation are the foundational document, and the bylaws are the operational document. Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation were approved (Norm Kolstad/Marianne Byran. Amendments to the Bylaws were approved (Norm Kolstad/Janell Miersch. Note that the Board number was reduced from 10 to 9 in the new bylaws. The finalized approved Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are maintained also at the above links.

Nominating Committee

Susan Groff, Nominating Committee Chair, presented the nomination slate. There were no further nominations from the floor. Motion (Tere Mann/Amy Beckman) made to cease nominations and proceed on the slate of nominees: Ron Roller for 2nd 3-year term, John Salmen and Molly Delarbre each for three-year terms. Motion made to cease nominations and

proceed with slate nominee Marianne Bryan for one-year term to fill vacancy (Tere Mann/Mary Anderson).

Thank you to outgoing Board members: Tim Lanz, John Minge and Shannon Smith. Welcome to newly elected Board members: Ron Roller, John Salmen, Molly Delarbre, and Marianne Byran who will join current Board members: Mary Anderson, Amy Beckman, Norm Kolstad, Wally Warhol, and Mary Worner.

Report on Progress to address Racial Injustice.

Mary Anderson, Secretary reported the actions taken since the resolution of June 7, 2020 for UCU to address racial injustice. The report in its entirety is included with the annual reports found the links above.

Strategic Plan 2021 Goals and Objectives

Mary Anderson, Secretary referenced the 2021-22 Goals & Objectives that resulted from the Viable Futures Imitative discussions as (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.
- Be mindful and intentional of what we can do and how we do it.

These and other annual reports are found at the links above. Oral reports will be made at Sunday services over the next several months.

Unfinished Business:

There was no unfinished business.

New Business:

Hybrid worship - Norm Kolstad explained that the Hybrid Task Force has had one meeting and will proceed on development of the plan. Ron Roller commented that UUA is having an upcoming workshop on how to regather and invited participants. Susan Groff commented that

the sanctuary is being prepared to meet the need of the technical support team when Sunday services are resumed.

There were no additional items for new business.

Motion was made and approved for adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.
(John Salmen/Shannon Smith)

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anderson
Board Secretary