

UCU
Newsletter
November 2021

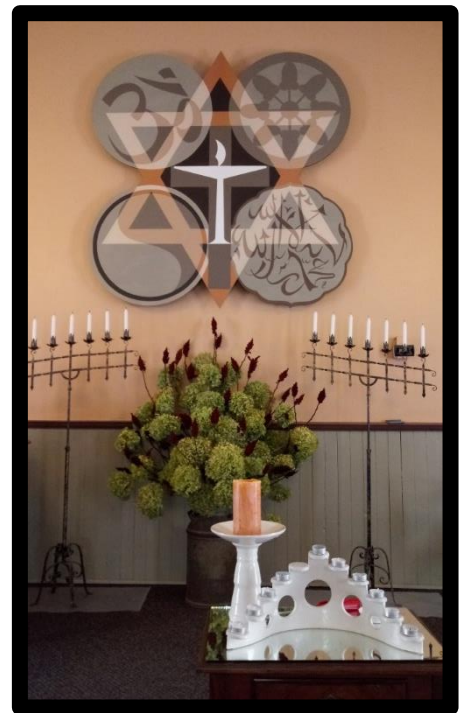


The Unitarian Church of Underwood is a welcoming community of diverse people where our celebration of life and common search for meaning bind us together.

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



Sunday Services will continue 10:00 a.m. via Zoom pending a decrease in COVID-19 variant risks.

(check in 9:45-10:00 a.m.)
bit.ly/UCUSunday

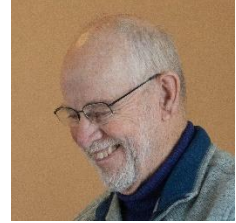
Meeting ID: 970 8841 4602
Passcode: 424091

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

Watch for ucofu@ucofu.org messages, the Sunday **“UCU Weekly”** and check: www.ucofu.org or www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org

Speakers for November Sunday Services

November 7 - Bob Worner, "Choices." One choice affects so much in your life. In making the choice, you pass up on other possibilities. What if you made the other choice what would your life be like? What would have happened? Every day we make those choices. In our church and the larger world how do the choices we make have an impact?



In his message, Bob will be touching on the 5th Unitarian Universalist Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.



November 14 - Sharon Day, Land Acknowledgements. A Step in the right direction to acknowledge the true history of this country? Or is it merely a check in a box to show we are "woke?" If we understand history, will that motivate us to change our current racist practices and move toward reparations?

Sharon Day, an Ojibwe elder, and Director of the Indigenous Task Force. is the spiritual leader and coordinator of the Nibi Walks that are indigenous led ceremonial walks that bring attention to water issues from a cultural perspective. Sharon is an enrolled member of the Bois Forte band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. She is an executive director of the Indigenous People's Task Force that develops and implements culturally appropriate programming, outreach service for education in the areas of HIV, youth suicide, teen pregnancy and tobacco cessation for the Native community in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. Sharon received CURE's 2017 River Keeper Award recipient for her work as a water activist.

November 21 – To Be Determined

November 28 - Sara Lewis, "Growing in our UU Faith: Spiritual Development of the Young."

Sara has been a religious educator for 13 years and will share both how we have arrived at our current models of religious education and explore possibilities of where we might go from here as we continue to grow in our faith. She will touch on UU Principles 1 and 4.



Sara Lewis serves in Olympia, Washington as the UU congregation's Director of Community and Faith Development. She has a master's in teaching, has been credentialed as a religious educator at the master level by the Unitarian Universalist Association, and is now serving as chair of the Religious Education Credentialing Committee. She's very involved and committed to the adventure of faith development for all ages within Unitarian Universalism.

Podcasts of these and previous programs are found at:

<https://soundcloud.com/user-927528278> or click link in **Sunday church reports.**

Note: The text of **Rev. Karen Van Fossan's** talk, **"The Incarcerated Body"** that she gave on September 26, 2021 can be found in the Shared Drive/Public/Sunday Service Speakers folder;

Link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bQGevaPEW_UOJqVIG-xKuVdM2HbJBLUG/edit?usp=sharing&oid=110453278634571122727&rtpof=true&sd=true

The Unitarian Church of Underwood Public Calendar 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



Our Church Personnel Committee presented a proposal at the October 20 UCU Board meeting, outlining a plan for increased support staff. Based on an assessment of work to be performed, conversations with other churches, and input from UCU leadership, the Board agreed that moving forward as an organization will require more time and expertise than what our mostly volunteer workforce can manage.

The Personnel Committee identified four areas that would require paid staff support: 1) Executive administration, 2) clerical, 3) children's religious education coordinator, and 4) technical and communications support. The broad strokes of the various job descriptions have been determined, but flexibility will be important in matching personnel with duties.

We are keenly aware that this will likely lead to a couple of years of deficit spending, but we believe now is the time to make the leap that can ensure the future of our beloved church. We will be reporting on our progress monthly in the Church newsletter.

Sam Waterston once said: “If you're not moving forward, you're falling back.” I believe we are moving forward in a thoughtful, deliberate manner that will pave the way for a bright future for our church.



Signing for the Purchase of Sverdrup Suites June 2016 – then also a “leap of faith”

Highlights of September 18, 2021 Board Meeting

(Full minutes will be published in the November Newsletter)

30 minutes were spent on the circle discussion on October’s Powerful Questions:

Round 1) “Tell us a story about one of your ancestors.”

Round 2) “Why do you care about the decisions the UCU will be making about staffing?”

Treasurer Ron Roller presented the Financial Report showing no changes in income or expenses. The investments are doing well with no significant changes.

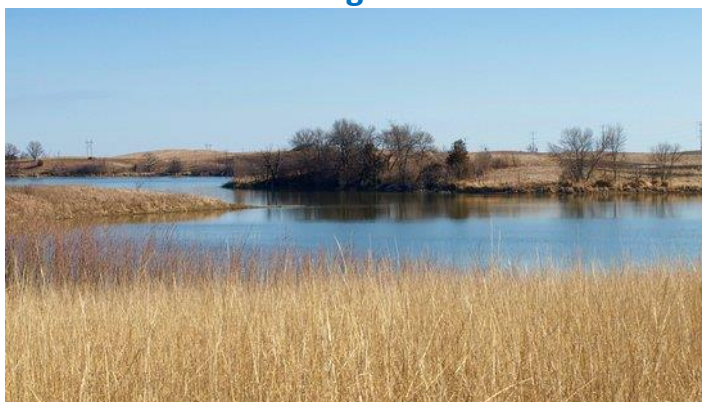
Guest, Cedar Walters joined the meeting via telephone to update the Board on Children’s Religious Education. The in person outdoor gatherings have gone well and have a core group of about 10 children. Cedar knows of other families interested in a consistent program with potential use of a private Face Book group to foster connections.

The Personnel Committee proposal for identification and hiring of staff was approved to move forward to include: 1) Executive Administrator, 2) Clerical, 3) Children’s Religious Education Coordinator, 4) Technical and Communications Support.

The Board of Directors will make phone calls to check on the well-being of congregational members and friends.

Arrangements are underway with Victorial McWane Creek to do a virtual Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) workshop on December 12.

Children's Religious Education



Children's Religious Education had a great outing in October at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. Five families attended, with approximately 10 kids and 9 adults. We had circle time, and then explored the prairie. We are all looking forward to another outdoor adventure in November!

In Remembrance of Nancy Stigaard

It is sad news that Nancy Stigaard, age 76, passed at her home in Florida last Sunday night. Her death was unexpected due to natural causes.

Nancy had a summer home near Vining, attended UCU services during the summer and was part of the Battle Lake U Group. She enthusiastically shared stories with us of her adventures around the country including attending UU camps.

Nancy provided support to her daughter and her family who live in Florida and had a special relationship with her grandson there. She also has a son and family in Seattle.

There will be a service, date to be set, in Florida which will be available to us virtually. The family may have a gathering in Nancy's memory here next summer.

The family requests contributions instead of flowers to Nancy's quilting group charity at the Tarpon Springs Spirit of Life UU Church. *Submitted by friend, Cathy Mason*

Living Out Our UU Principles

Reflections on the Nibi Walk for the Otter Tail by Katy Olson



At long last the Nibi Walk was upon us.” I can only give you one day,” I told Deb Wallwork, friend and walk organizer. In my white protestant heart, I felt that I had way too much to do... I had been gone for the week prior and the garden was looming large - literally, and figuratively! There was WORK to be done. So, I skipped out on the first day and ploughed through a bunch of work on the home front.

Early Monday morning I was at the start for the smudging and prayers for the beginning of the day's walk. “Let's get this bucket down the road” was my only thought. “What after all is the big deal about taking a bucket of water from the start of the river to the end of the river?” So, I got in the queue and began to walk.

The first change in my affect was the pace. I am a hurrier, faster must be better, right!? But this walk is at the pace of one step at a time. As my mind slowed and the prayer of “Ninga Izhichige Nibi Onji,” “I Will Do It for the Water, began to penetrate the hard fibers of my being, my heart and mind began to soften. But still I was just thinking of getting 'it' done.

In-between walking, we were moving the cars forward to the next mile and waiting for the walkers to arrive and hanging out and talking with Sharon Day, the walk leader and her cohort of regular water walkers. I listened to her tell all who asked about how the rivers need us to honor them, that the river needs to be reminded of her pristine state at the headwater when the water is released back to her at the confluence.

I have loved the Ottertail River since I have moved here to live near her winding path through our beautiful county. I have spent many happy hours swimming, paddling, and immersing myself in her healing waters. She has been my solace and salvation many times in the last 40+ years.

Although I loved the river and respected her power and grace, I did not revere her.... She was not a spirit-being to me. But something was changing for me. They needed walkers and somehow the chores at home could wait another day and so I joined for the 3rd day of the walk. The day was rainy and cool. Water came from the sky to soften the land and it softened me too. I slowed even more... I

began to hear the call of the spirit of the river, I felt her distress and desire for restoration. I walked and carried what had become a sacred vessel, not a bucket! I said the prayer with every step, “Ninga Izhichige Nibi Onji.” I carried the Eagle Staff of Protection high over the water walker, I heard and felt the call of the land and river. I heard my own call to become one with this place we call the Tail of The Otter in spirit and in my own restoration. A call into right relationship and by the end of that soggy beautiful day, I was all in for the last day of the walk.

It dawned sunny and gorgeous! But... still in my head I felt I needed to leave no later than day 3 so I could get home for my yoga class. As we neared the time that I had set for my end point, I approached Sharon to say goodbye and thank her. She expressed sorrow that I would not be there for the celebration at the confluence. I explained that I had missed class last week and as I respected my teacher, I did not want to miss this week. She looked at me with those soft kind eyes and said, “but you have been doing yoga every step these last three days. It is a thing of respect to the river to see her to the end.”

And of course, she was right. I released the last vestige of resistance to the call of the river. With a joyful heart I carried the copper vessel with the precious water of the Ottetail River to her merging with the Bois de Sioux in Wahpeton. We sang to the rivers, we made sacred offerings, we told each other what was in our hearts, and we held close for a brief time the shared experience of honoring the river. With hugs and laughter and some tears we closed the circle and went our separate ways.

I am forever honored to have walked with Sharon Day and her water walkers and my relationship to the Ottetail has moved beyond respect to one of true reverence. *Katy J. Olson*

Social Justice Interest Group

We will be resuming our biweekly meetings starting on Sunday, Nov 7 following the Sunday Service. Anyone is welcome to join our breakout room to discuss upcoming programming ideas, current issues, or local partnership opportunities. In the meantime, here are some upcoming area events that are focused on social justice issues.



Nov 2-6 North Dakota Human Rights Film Festival in Fargo, ND. Continues in other cities across North Dakota and online.

The festival features 96 films from 18 countries along with community conversations, educational workshops, and filmmaker Q&A discussions. The main in-person theatrical screenings and summit will take place in Fargo from November 2-6. The Human Family is partnering with the North Dakota Human Rights Coalition to integrate their 12th Annual Human Rights Summit into the festival. Summit discussions will be integrated with filmmaking workshops and seminars at the Plains Art Museum in the morning. Film screenings and community discussions will continue into the afternoon and evenings at the historic Fargo Theatre. Access to the festival's programming is entirely free and accessible to all. All passes and individual film screenings are pay-as-you-can. As an individual's situation allows, they are welcome to make a donation to the festival to help support our work. Highlights, descriptions of films & workshops, and schedule are available at www.ndhrff.org

Nov 17 The (R)evolution of Indigenous Food Systems in North America, 12 pm, virtual

Era to Act Virtual Speaker Series is featuring Oglala Lakota Chef Sean Sherman, founder of The Sioux Chef, to learn about decolonizing our food system. From growing up on Pine Ridge to an epiphany on a beach in Mexico, Chef Sean Sherman shares his journey of discovering, reviving, and reimagining Native cuisine. Chef Sherman recently opened Owamni, his first brick-and-mortar restaurant in Minneapolis, that features a menu of mainly indigenous ingredients, while eliminating most colonial ingredients like wheat flour, sugar, pork, and chicken. Register at <https://era2act.com/314-2/>

Invitation to support the Institution for Aspiring Abolitionists

Created by Jason Sole, formerly incarcerated abolitionist and current Hamline University professor in Criminal Justice, the Institution for Aspiring Abolitionists will provide opportunities for communities to learn effective ways to improve relationships and reduce harm through courses, workshops, trainings, and coaching. The goal is to reach 15,000 people in the Upper Midwest region through quality, interactive educational opportunities. The fundraiser is hosted by Kickstarter with a goal is to raise \$100,000 by Nov. 19. Currently, over \$46,000 has been pledged. If the goal is not met, no pledges will be collected. If you'd like to learn more about this project or to support it, visit <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/jmarquesole1978/institute-of-aspiring-abolitionists>.

Save the Date
Intercultural Development & Fluency Workshop
Saturday, December 11

The Social Justice Interest Group is excited to welcome Victoria McWane-Creek of The Organization 4 Full Participation as she presents a virtual workshop, "Intercultural Development and Fluency." The workshop will take place on Saturday, December 11th from 9 am until noon and will introduce skills and insights needed to live, learn, work, and play in a diverse environment that appreciates cultural commonalities and differences. The session will allow opportunities to define intercultural fluency, examine personal values and beliefs, explore strategies for managing change, and explore dialogic strategies. Look for registration information in the UCU Weekly towards the end of the month and in the December newsletter.

We Are Part of the Larger UU

An upcoming important event sponsored by UUA

COMPASS, Navigating the Paths to Liberation Together

Event format: Online

Date & time:

Saturday, December 11, 2021, 1:00 pm - Sunday, December 12, 2021, 4:30 pm EST

Saturday, December 11, 2021, 10:00 am - Sunday, December 12, 2021, 1:30 pm PST

Type of event: Webinar

Register now:

https://www.uua.org/leadership/events/compass?mc_cid=f885ce74a3&mc_eid=292c7a8742

Our own [Article II Commission](#) will ask for your input on our ever-evolving Purposes and Principles. This is Unitarian Universalism, our living tradition, at its theological best: striving to change and be better in a changing world, bending its arc toward a greater inclusivity and a more profound justice for all.

With so much uncertainty in the wider world, sometimes it can be hard to find one's bearings. Join us to find our collective "compass" as we explore interdependence as a path to wholeness. In February of 2020, the Commission on Institutional Change published its report, "[Widening the Circle of Concern](#)," which called for a deepening in relationship with and a call to explore our shared theology as Unitarian Universalists. The next month, the Global Pandemic caused a nearly complete shutdown of all gathering spaces, including our congregations and communities. This extended time of social distancing has taught us just how much we need each other as individuals and collectives; our interdependence has never been clearer. If the question is, "What is an everyday theology of Unitarian Universalism?" one way we have answered back is, "Interdependence."

You are invited to reach into your spiritual toolkits and grab your “compass,” your wayfinder, that inner voice that points you toward goodness, and join us in charting a path toward a deeper knowing of Unitarian Universalism. Join us for Compass: Navigating the Paths of Liberation Together.

UUA Common Read announced

https://www.uua.org/read?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=211016%20Seasons%20of%20Giving%20%20October%202021%20Issue%20Non-Sustainers&utm_content=211016%20Seasons%20of%20Giving%20%20October%202021%20Issue%20Non-Sustainers+CID_2dd87b8ca90c55c529d96951258d9f96&utm_source=stewdev&utm_term=View%20Common%20Read%20reflection%20questions

The UUA has chosen [*Defund Fear: Safety Without Policing, Prisons, and Punishment*](#) by Zach Norris (Beacon Press, 2021) as the next Common Read.

The UU Common Read builds community in our congregations and our movement by giving diverse people a shared platform for reflection and a shared focus for action. Further, a Common Read can take us on a powerful faith journey as we explore—each of us, and together—what it means to be human and accountable in a pain-filled world.

Guidance to the Reader: *Defund Fear*

As Unitarian Universalists, the matters raised in *Defund Fear* invite us to respond to public safety in the U.S. today through a lens of faith. We urge you to grapple theologically with big, tough questions about who we are and the meaning and purposes of our lives.

Resources will be available for a book discussion by the end of 2021.

Unitarian Church of Underwood Board of Directors

Approved Minutes of Meeting September 15, 2021

Attendees: Mary Anderson, Marianne Bryan, Norm Kolstad, Ron Roller, John Salmen, Wally Warhol, Mary Worner. Absent: Amy Beckman, Molly Delarbre, Congregational Administrator: Bonnie Graham.

The meeting was called to order by President Norm Kolstad at 6:06 p.m. Reference was made to the Covenant of Guiding Values with the addition of the land acknowledgment. John Salmen recommends as reference: <https://native-land.ca/>.

The agenda with the added item of bank requirements was approved (Ron Roller/John Salmen).

The agenda order was modified giving time courtesies to guest, Alison Francis who presented the revised proposal on “When hate Comes to Town.” The proposal was approved by the Board (Mary Anderson/Ron Roller). See the plan as an addendum to these minutes. The Board minutes of August 18, 2021, were approved (John Salmen/Marianne Bryan).

Thirty (30) minutes was spent dialoguing the question, "What do you assume the members and/or friends think of as the purposes of UCU."

The business meeting was then resumed with the Reports

Treasurers Report

Ron Roller, Treasurer reviewed the financial statements. There was little change the past month on the balance sheet. The church is doing reasonably well on income and expenses are lower, rentals from Sverdrup Suites remain steady, thus the net of \$4,051.89.

Motion was made (Mary Anderson/John Salmen) to authorize Ron Roller (Treasurer) and Norman Kolstad (President) to hold the keys to the general deposit box at Underwood Farmers Bank and for Norm Kolstad along with Dave Sanderson (Foundation Advisory Committee) to hold the keys to the safety box with Foundation documents. The motion was tabled (Ron Roller/John Salmen) to review the Foundation Operational Plan to verify who is to have keys to that box.

Congregational Administration: There was no report from Bonnie Graham who was absent from the meeting.

Personnel Committee: Norm Kolstad, Committee Chair reported that there is need for a comprehensive review plan of volunteer capacity and 2-3 staff may be required: a church administrator, clerical support, and technical support that could include website and google suite administration. Leadership input will be solicited. The Personnel Committees recommendation to extend the terms of employment for the Congregational Administrator to January 31, 2022, was approved (Norm Kolstad/Mary Anderson).

Facilities Committee: Norm reported after talking with Susan Groff that current tenants of Suite 100 may or may not renew but that work needs to be done in that unit. Outside landscaping was done and the bill submitted. The Board extends a thank you to Susan Groff and Ron Graham for their work outside that included power washing and general cleanup of the building in preparation for Underwood's Harvest Festival. Consideration will be given next year on roofing.

Safety Committee: Motion was made and passed that the UUA's recommendations on COVID precautions be added as an addendum to UCU's COVID Preparedness Plan (Norm Kolstad/John Salmen). Masks will be required inside and small groups that meet should follow mask and ventilation requirements as well. The full plan as amended is at the end of these minutes. If meeting in the church, meeting groups will be reminded to inform Susan Groff, Janitor.

Program Coordinator:

Mary Worner reported that families will be invited to gather the 3rd Sunday from 1-3:30 p.m. September-December to focus on rebuilding relationship between children, leaders, and families. The September meeting will be at Maplewood State Park.

The Board extends a big thank you to Kris (and Wally) Warhol for their weekly mailings to the children. Kris has agreed to continue these mailings until in person gatherings begin again.

Unfinished Business:

John Salmen reported that attendees from the Beloved Conversations offerings will do a presentation October 3 that may be a model for continued training and workshop participants to share their learnings with the congregation.

Mary Anderson asked for feedback on the Board members' review of the 2018-23 Strategic Plan with the 2021-22 Annual Goals and Objectives. The detailed review will be conducted prior to 2022-23 goal setting in February-March.

Review of the Powerful Questions Dialogue Process – After discussion it was determined that 1) this process was intended for board members to get to know each other for the purposes of board development and decision making; 2) this is a useful process to be continued for the next three (3) meetings; 3) Mary Worner will consult with the MidAmerica Region Consultants on powerful questions; 4) the dialogue will be held before the Board meeting is called to order; 5) the notes will not be included in the Board minutes; 6) we will talk further on how do we communicate and record the session for our own use and for transparency with the membership Motion was made and passed to amend the minutes of August 18, 2021 to refer to just the question and not the discussion (Ron Roller/Marianne Bryan) and further directive given to not include the notes in ongoing minutes. Motion was made and passed for John Salmen to draft for circulation of the Board a letter in response to Kelly Barrett's letter to the Board (John Salmen/Mary Anderson).

New Business:

Ron Roller brought to attention the upcoming activities of two Empowerment Grant Awardees: 1) the Nibi Walk to be held this weekend and 2) the Battle Lake Diversity group's plans to bring in on October 28th, Mark Seeley, climatologist with the U of M.

Next meetings:

Officer Team October 13 @ 6 p.m.

Board Meeting October 20, 2021 @ 6:00 p.m.

October Powerful Question, "How do you think the UCU can make a difference in people's lives?"

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.