

# UCU Newsletter September 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

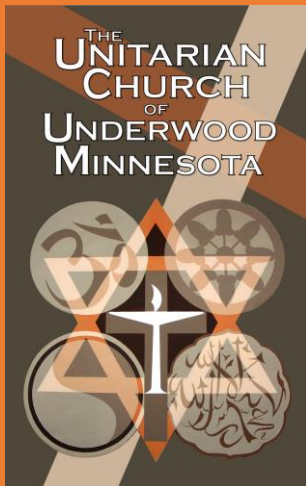
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Painting by Joanne Cress

### Fall Religious Education Classes Resume

(See details below)

**Sunday Services will  
continue via Zoom  
pending a decrease in  
COVID-19 variant risks.**

Watch for [ucofu@ucofu.org](mailto:ucofu@ucofu.org)  
messages, the Sunday "UCU  
Weekly" and check:  
[www.ucofu.org](http://www.ucofu.org) or  
[www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org](https://www.facebook.com/www.ucofu.org)

# Stay Informed & Connected

Commented [ma1]:

## Schedule

- Alexandria U Group: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday each month @ 7 p.m. Facilitators: Lee Becker/Susan Sanford
- Battle Lake U Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:lucereese@gmail.com) or 218/495-2449*

## Newsletter Submissions due prior to Issuance the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month

Please submit your ideas, articles, and photos to:

Writer/Editor: Mary Anderson @

[newseditor@ucofu.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.ucofu.org) and Facebook [Page](#).

Watch for these and other

[ucofu@ucofu.org](mailto: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](mailto:techhelp@ucofu.org)

## Gifts in Gratitude

To Contribute to UCU:

Use Givelify

(New Electronic Application)

[@ucofu.org](mailto:@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](mailto: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 September Sunday Services*

**10:00 a.m.**

**(For Zoom, check in 9:45-10:00 a.m.)**

[bit.ly/UCUSunday](https://bit.ly/UCUSunday)

Meeting ID: 970 8841 4602

Passcode: 424091

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

### **September 5 – Bob Worner**

**September 12 – Ozzie Tollefson, "The Beauty of Spoken Language."** After exploring the oral tradition before there were written words, Ozzie will do readings that exemplify the beauty of spoken words. He will stress the importance of teaching our youngsters to speak clearly, with proper diction.

Ozzie spent 15 years teaching English, speech, and drama. He left classroom teaching to create touring assembly programs for elementary schools. In 33 years, he did about 6,500 performances in 1,500 schools in 17 states. He currently writes a column for the *Fergus Falls Daily Journal* and is the author of "Mr. Teacher."

**September 19, 2020, Celebrant Ellen Eastby, "The Price of Being Free – How Much is it Worth to You?"** We so often associate Unitarian Universalism with being free. And there is a lot of freedom in being a Unitarian Universalist. But is being free, actually free? Think back to the old saying, "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Ellen believes that being free in Unitarian Universalism does come with a price. The question is: How much is it worth to you?

Ellen Eastby is first and foremost a grandmother. In her spare time, she is active at the Unitarian Church of Underwood. Of the numerous committees she has served on or positions she has held, being a celebrant is nearest and dearest to her heart. She has officiated celebrations of life, weddings, a one of a kind "Celebration of Love", and other ceremonies. During the summer of 2020, Ellen completed a spiritual companioning (lay pastoral care) course through the UU Leadership Institute and provides that service for her home congregation. Ellen attended the Unitarian Universalist Seminary, Meadville-Lombard Theological School in Chicago in 2014, as a prospective student. She was able to take one class, which was taught by Rev. William Schulz, past president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). The class focused on writing and delivering sermons, which she loves to do. Warm and witty, Ellen brings meaning to a variety of topics she holds in her heart, always in relation to the UU principles and sources.

### **September 26 - Rev. Karen Van Fossan, "Self-Compassion in Complicated Times."**

Self-compassion is not only crucial practice for enhancing personal aliveness and interpersonal relationships, but also an integral expression of our First, Seventh, and emerging Eighth

Principles. All are welcome to join us for this engaging look at the science of wellbeing, as well as a pathway forward through tumultuous times.

Rev. Karen Van Fossan is an ordained UU minister, Water Protector, licensed professional counselor, and author of a memoir, *“Almost Human: The Making of an Accomplice,”* forthcoming from Skinner House Books in 2022. She is honored to share her reflections with UCU.

Podcasts of these and 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](http://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)



*Susan's Autumn Splendor Sedum,  
Part of which will be transplanted in the Spring  
To UCU's Gardens.*

## *Church Happenings*

### **Message from Board President, Norm Kolstad**



The Underwood Unitarian Church's printed Sunday bulletin always contains the 7 principles of Unitarianism on the back page. Lately, because of the pandemic and zoom-only services, our primary tenets are less visible. I invite you to visit the site: <https://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/principles> as a reminder of our common values.

Where do these principles come from? Here are the six sources from which our Unitarian tenets are drawn:

- 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 which create and uphold life.
- Words and deeds of prophetic people which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love.
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life.
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves.
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Please note the wide range of experiences and wisdom that inform our "...common search for meaning," as celebrated in the chalice lighting ceremony. This is the basis for what I would call our 'Big Tent' philosophy/theology, in which "...no single belief includes us here; no disbelief excludes us." Unitarianism is unique in this regard: we indiscriminately value teachings and practices that advance our common human goals, regardless of the source.

Critics may say we lack focus. To me that is something to celebrate.

### **Outdoor Sunday Service held August 15<sup>th</sup> @ PHELPS MILL with Picnic After.**

After a stormy early morning, sun broke through the clouds and gave us slightly windy, but delightful weather for the August 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday service at Phelps Mill. Nineteen of us gathered for the service which included the singing of "Though I may speak with Bravest Fire" accompanied by Ken Hamrun's wonderful trombone playing, and special music provided by Deb Wallwork and John Heine. We enjoyed an informative discussion about participating in the General Assembly and the Discernment Circle discussion format, led by Bonnie Graham, Katy Olson, and Mary Worner. One important current UUA

issue is the re-evaluation of the Seven Principles as well as the proposed Eighth. Following the service, attendees enjoyed some old-fashion in-person visiting.



### Fall Plans for Adult Religious Education

Mary Worner, Program Coordinator announces that the Unitarian Church of Underwood is offering three choices for adult religious education this fall. They are:

#### ***"Sources,"* Spiritual Deeping for the UU Soul**



Wellspring Sources will begin the last weekend in September with an on-line retreat and then led by Dawn Jordan and Katy Olson will meet bi-weekly via Zoom throughout the year. Although the course is filled, if you are interested in participating, you will be on a waiting list. To do so, contact one of the co-facilitators, Dawn @ [ihc.dawn@gmail.com](mailto:ihc.dawn@gmail.com) or Katy @ [katyjolson@gmail.com](mailto:katyjolson@gmail.com).

#### **Soul Matters Writing Group with Ellen Eastby**

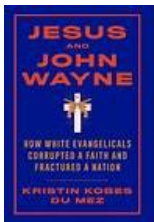
"Writing is a long-loved path to personal insight, spiritual discernment and self-expression. By bringing the practice of writing to the exploration of our monthly themes, we hope to provide participants not only with another channel of self-discovery, but also with the gift of being witnessed in a new and precious way." *"The Vision" ~ taken from Soul Matters Website*





This small group opportunity is a mix between a writer's group and our own UCU U Groups. Facilitated by Ellen Eastby, using a curriculum by Soul Matters Sharing Circle, this group will meet the third Tuesday of every month at 11 a.m. via Zoom for about 2 hours. Prior to the meeting a packet will be given to each participant. The packet contains the month's theme, a reading, and some prompts so they can prepare a piece for the meeting. The meeting is formatted to allow for time for participants to share their piece if they wish. After all the writings have been read participants may share how a piece spoke to them. Please note, this is not the place to critique or make suggestions as to how an individual could improve their writing skills. This group is about listening and relating. While this may appeal more to writers, it is not just for those who consider themselves writers. This is for anyone who wishes for deeper spiritual discernment through writing.

There is room for more participants. If this is of interest to you or if you would like more information, please contact Ellen Eastby at [ellen.eastby@ucofu.org](mailto:ellen.eastby@ucofu.org).



**Book Study:**

As soon as we can meet in person, John Minge will begin a study of the **book, *Jesus and John Wayne*** authored by Kristin Kobs Du Mez. Watch for more information.

*A word of gratitude is due each of the persons facilitating these offerings, especially since they volunteered without even being asked, to lead us in our spiritual growth. Mary Lynne Worner, Program Coordinator*

**UCU, Not Just a Beacon, but a Harbor of Refuge & Hope**



The Board of Directors continue contemplation of important questions that may lead to a revisit of the current mission statement to affirm “who is the Unitarian Church of Underwood and what does it do?” Some have indicated that UCU doesn’t have one identity – it is not known for one thing. But what if that is the thing that identifies UCU? The church is a lot of

things to a lot of people and therein, lies the width, range, beauty and reality of this church's existence and identity.

When members and friends are asked to describe UCU, words they use are: "warm," "welcoming," "accepting," "inclusive," "community." All words to me that call to mind a safe place, a "home," a "haven," a "harbor" of welcoming and acceptance, a place of belonging.

UCU has been referred to "as a beacon on the prairie." To me that beacon exists because a home harbor exists as the Unitarian Church of Underwood. A harbor of refuge, a harbor of rest, a harbor for refueling and restoring. A harbor open to many ships with crews and passengers on various journeys and destined with many purposes and passions, some who are seekers and some who are doers, all in need of relief, sustenance, care, and support. It is from within the harbor, that the beacon is built, lit, and glows outward.

This church as our harbor can accommodate all those anchoring here, some with a passion for environmental justice, social justice, a sanctuary for those in need, an empoweree of community programs, a sustainer for Shan schools, a truth center for adult and children's religious education, a haven for spiritual awakenings, a connector of others with similar interests and need for action; shining outwardly as a beacon beckoning others to safety and shelter, signaling we are here and our light can help light your way because you are not alone.

As I contemplate another home harbor, I recognize that UCU continues as a harbor for my returns. I am not bound by one harbor, but I will always know that UCU is a haven that harbors friends - travelers each on our own journey, each in our own search for common cause and meaning. *Mary Anderson, UCU Newsletter Editor*

## *Living Out Our UU Principles*

### **Treaty People Walk**



The UCU Board of Directors affirmed the electronic vote for *UCU to stand in solidarity with Northwoods UU Fellowship, UUA, MUUSJA and other social justice organizations to publicly support the protest of Line 3. We are acting as allies under their leadership for the Treaty People's Walk for Water and hope to build friendship between UCU and the native people.*

The Treaty People Walk for Water was a two-week walk that started Aug. 7 at Coffee Pot Landing near Itasca State Park. According to the [stopline3.org](https://stopline3.org) site, the group headed to the state Capitol to "tell President Biden to step in and direct the Army Corps to cancel this pipeline's permits."



On August 21, Katy Olson and Bonnie Graham delivered to the people on the walk over \$400 in UCU member and friend donations and a meal that included much welcomed fresh produce and pies. The produce was from Katy and Ron Rollers abundant gardens.



Mary Worner and Linda Quigstad-Berg had baked the pies. The challenge was that many folks were vegan and some needed gluten free food. They used fruit Linda had in her freezer. Many of the designs were inspired by Mary. Note one pie had waves, one had a river with plants growing on the banks, one had fish and one had ducks)! Not pictured is the gluten free pie with no crust - only fruit filling!! The pies were an especially well received treat by the hungry walkers.



The Walkers reached the St. Paul Capital destination Wednesday, Aug 25, and spent the afternoon in ceremony, solidarity, and action to stop Line 3. Follow them on the Facebook pages of the Treaty People Walk for Water.

MUUSJA organized UU congregations who were with the walkers every step of the way. Some UU's walked all or part of the trek. Others shopped, prepped, transported, served and cleaned up after meals as the number of walkers grew from about 15 to about 80, provided lodgings, and donated funds to pay for food and supplies (the link is [www.muusja.org/donate](http://www.muusja.org/donate) to offset \$1000 we've spent on food in support of the Walk for Water). Many, many thanks to everyone who has lent support to this astonishing endeavor.

MUUSJA provided meals from Itasca to Lake George. You know who you are -- deep pride and appreciation to everyone who showed up or supported behind the scenes!! **Northwoods UU Fellowship** and **Underwood UU Church** provided meals from Backus to Brainerd, and (with the Brainerd Congregational/UCC) offered overnight lodging. **Saint Cloud UU Fellowship** hosted the walkers with more incredible generosity from Saint Cloud to Big Lake. **UU Minnetonka, Pilgrim House Fellowship, Michael Servetus in Fridley, UU Church of Willmar, First Universalist Minneapolis, First Unitarian Society, and**

**Unity Unitarian** folks pitched in on the stretches from Big Lake to Saint Paul. The **Rochester and Duluth UU Congregations** showed up and held space in solidarity actions. Every single one, whether named here, are part of the Treaty People -- holding the treaties, ancient and current - - protecting the water, the wildlife, and our children's children. You can see more video and



Underwood & Northwoods UU's & friends hosted lunch at Brainerd UCC

photos on our Facebook page (some still to come!) and at RISE Coalition, Indigenous Environmental Network, and MN350.

[HERE IS THE LINK from the UU Ministry for Earth](#) and Side With Love who are hosting a LIVE FEED VIDEO Solidarity Event today for everyone who wants to be with the Treaty People but cannot get there in person!

[HERE IS THE LINK to what you can do from ANYWHERE...](#) we need EVERYONE to put people over profits, water over corporate wealth.

### Land Art Project

Now, in the months leading up to COP26 in November, Writers Rebel's Paint the Land project is teaming writers with visual artists to create landscape graffiti with a powerful ecological message. UCU's Social and Environmental Justice Interest Groups are accepting the challenge and plans are in the making to highlight an element of the climate in an urban or rural site of significance to create a land painting. The Land Art Project will be filmed, photographed, and disseminated on social media and through the Writers Rebel Site. The groups welcome your ideas. Contact Katy Olson@ [katy.olson@ucofu.org](mailto:katy.olson@ucofu.org) or Janell Miersch @ [Janell.miersch@ucofu.org](mailto:Janell.miersch@ucofu.org). For more details, see <https://www.resurgence.org/magazine/article5781-getting-word-out.html> or <https://writersrebel.com/act/>.

### Empowerment Grant Award Reports

As part of the \$10,000 given out in Empowerment Grant Awards this year, at Sunday service, August 22, two members of UCU described the awards they had sponsored.

### *Okini Project (One Spirit)*

**Marianne Bryan** became aware of the Pine Ridge reservation and its needs as shared through the Okini One Spirit website. This reservation is one of the poorest areas in the United States. On the website, people can share specific needs. The first she responded to was from a mother, Roberta. She and her four children were sleeping on the floor of her aunt's house and had just one blanket. She asked for air mattresses and sleeping bags. Marianne collected air mattresses and sleeping bags. She took them to Roberta who lives on the reservation south of Wounded Knee, SD. Marianne was struck by the trauma of the Wounded Knee massacre, and of the poverty of the area.

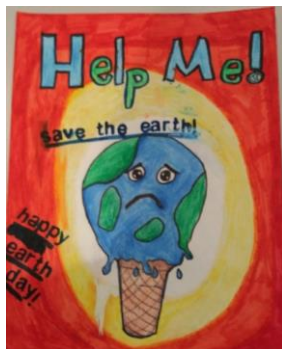


Since then, Marianne has been involved with other projects – including knitting lots of blankets, sweaters, caps; sending space heaters; and collecting and distributing children’s clothing. This past year, she, as an eligible UCU member applied for an Empowerment Grant and the Okini Project (One Spirit) was granted \$1000. Most of this money has been used to distribute COVID vaccinations.

Marianne keeps in mind Ghandi’s response to “What can I do to alleviate the poverty of the world?” He answered, “You can help one family.”

*Marianne Bryan s a relatively new member of UCU, serves on the Board of Directors, and as an accomplished pianist, provides and delights us with special music.*

### *Empowering Earth Day 2021*



Members of the Fergus Falls Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby gathered to discuss how we could commemorate Earth Day 2021. We chose a unique and meaningful celebration collaborating with the Friends of the Fergus Falls Public Library with two book discussions via Zoom. The adult book selection was *Eyewitness: Minnesota*



*Voices on Climate Change* which is a collection of stories, poetry

and art from Minnesotans reflecting on climate change. The youth book club read and discussed *Never Say Die* by Will Hobbs about a teenage boy in the Canadian Arctic facing white water, fierce weather and wild animals including a growler bear (part polar bear/ part grizzly).

In addition, an art contest was publicized for all ages with prizes of books, Friends of the FFPL lanyards and book bags, plus cash as prizes. We received 123 submissions mostly from grades 3-6 of Underwood School.



The UCU empowerment grant purchased 22 copies of *Eyewitness* and 32 copies of *Never Say Die*. The adult books were most given to the Viking Library system, and winners of the art contest. Twenty copies of the youth selection were given to the Fergus Falls Public Library's Book Bunch for students in 4th - 8th grade. Additional copies were donated to Kennedy Middle School and the Library.

Betsy Wells also received 25 Norway pine seedlings from West Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District which were given away to the students in Underwood School as part of this project.

The planning committee (Betsy Wells, Dee Johnson, Mary Waller, Beth Monke, Peggy Underwood, and Janell Miersch) greatly appreciate the empowerment grant for this special Earth Day 2021 project. Thank you UCU!!

*Janell Miersch has been active in the Citizen Climate Lobby for several years. She is also the UCU Liaison to Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light.*



## *Save the Dates!!*

### **OTTER TAIL RIVER NIBI WALK**

**Saturday, September 18 – Tuesday, September 21**



Deb Wallwork submitted the application for the grant of \$1,850 awarded for the Otter Tail River Walk. A Nibi Walk is an indigenous-led ceremonial walk. Every step is taken in prayer and gratitude for water, our life-giving force.

From Deb Wallwork: "We're only a few weeks away from the Otter Tail Nibi Walk. For four days, Saturday, September 18th through Tuesday, September 21st, 2021, we'll be walking a route, saying prayers for the water.

The walk will begin with ceremonies at 8 a.m., the morning of the 18th at the source of the Otter Tail at the park landing in Elbow Lake Village located on the White Earth reservation. We hope to gather a significant number of people there to support Sharon Day, the elder who is leading us. Every step is taken in prayer and gratitude for water, our life-giving force.

There is a GPS tracker, updated every ten minutes, which will be posted on the Honor the Otter Tail Facebook page so everyone can keep up with where the walkers are to join enroute.

Sunday morning, we hope to start south of Rochert, and Monday at Otter Tail Lake. Tuesday will be likely at Fergus. Please consult the GPS, though as the route may change. For more info, join our Facebook page, Honor the Otter Tail, or join our email list by sending a note to [debm@mac.com](mailto:debm@mac.com). Hope to see you there!!"

### "Sit with Me; Let's Have a Conversation"

With Sami Rahamim

Monday, September 27 @ 7 p.m. @ MN State



We all see the world and people around us through the distortions of our biases. This is especially true when we try to understand people, we don't know from cultures of which we are unfamiliar. Sometimes this lack of understanding leads to fear and hate. The Pelican Rapids Multicultural Committee, Otter Tail County Historical Society and the Unitarian Church of Underwood have collaborated on a speaker's series "Sit with me; let's have a conversation" meant to help us better understand the diverse peoples of our communities, whether that diversity is based in religion, skin color, language, or cultural beliefs.

On Monday, September 27 at 7 p.m. in room FFS 450 Lecture Hall at MN State Community College in Fergus Falls, join in conversation with Sami Rahamim who will speak on **Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era.**

Sami Rahamim works for the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas in all the JCRC's core functions and program areas: communications, Holocaust education, community security, media relations, government affairs, Israel engagement, and interfaith/intercommunal relations. His talk will provide historical context, fact-based descriptions of prevalent anti-Semitic myths, contemporary examples, and calls to action for addressing this hate.

## *We Are Part of the Larger UU*

**Note: The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and UU MidAmerica Region offer many resources, including virtual workshops. If interested, check out the [uua.org](http://uua.org) website for sessions, dates, and times.**

### **Beloved Conversations - fall 2021**

#### **REGISTER NOW!**

Register here: <https://www.meadville.edu/fahs-collaborative/beloved-conversations/within-phase/within-how-to-register/>

The Beloved Conversations Team is excited to announce that registration for our Fall 2021 Within courses is now open! Please join us for another term of community building, learning, and spiritual growth! You can find more information about all of our Beloved Conversations programming on our website at [www.meadville.edu/beloved](http://www.meadville.edu/beloved).

**Fall Term Within Begins:** September 21st, 2021

**Fall Term Within Ends:** Mid-December 2021



**Cost:** \$250 USD per person (lay folks and religious professionals)

If interested contact Ron Roller for potential church reimbursement of the attendance fee.

*Note: Several UCU members and friends participated already in the Beloved Conversations sessions and will be sharing soon their learnings. Watch for further announcements.*



**Listen to Recordings and notes of Conversations on re-opening for religious education programs facilitated by MidAmerica UUA:**

Here is the link:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kS3Fh2F-Bi8U\\_9jcrDKrHeJgpWd-mSXS?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kS3Fh2F-Bi8U_9jcrDKrHeJgpWd-mSXS?usp=sharing)

Follow the action of **Minnesota Unitarian Universal Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA)** at: <https://www.muusja.org/>. MUUSJA Executive Director Karen Wills will be presenting at UCU for an October Sunday service. She is very interested in sharing information and learning what the UCU Social Justice Interest Group is involved in doing. Also, note the actions of **Minnesota Interfaith Power and**

**Light** (MNIPL) at: <https://www.mnipl.org>. Through these and other organizations, there are many opportunities to be involved in your areas of interest and passion.

### **Unitarian Church of Underwood Board Minutes July 21, 2021**

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

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m.

The agenda was approved (John Salmen/Marianne Bryan).

The meeting minutes of June 16, 2021 were approved as written (John Salmen/Ron Roller).

The first 30 minutes were used to dialogue the question, "How much responsibility should the UCU take for people who haven't been vaccinated as we have in-person Sunday services?"

Round 1:

Mary Anderson – like what FMUU said in announcement, "In person attendance is an option for anyone vaccinated!"

Norm – variance now a concern, need to be nimble.

Mary W. Question our responsibility to the unvaccinated – 1) some may qualify and choose not – whether we agree or not; 2) some don't have access to vaccine or may have medical restraints.

John Salmen – some people have other restrictions, the unvaccinated can spread COVID.

Maybe non-vaccinated should be required (encouraged) to wear masks.



Amy Beckman – Even some vaccinated get the delta variance. Yet encourage vaccine. Best to error on the side of caution.

Marianne Bryan- UU St. Paul is continuing on-line for the rest of the summer. If fully vaccinated, no masks, unvaccinated wear masks.

Ron Roller – COVID isn't over. Pressure to reopen. We have obligation to keep people safe. Recommends continue on-line through Aug. It is not an emergency to reopen. Think instead about September.

Molly Delarbre – we are constantly transitioning and must change in accordance.

Bonnie Graham – it is important to meet in person – and we care for each other, and we have unvaccinated 6 year old's who can be compromised. When big crowds, everyone should still wear masks.

#### Round 2.

Mary Anderson – would not anticipate “big crowds” in attendance; we need to do something for the kids – they have been mostly overlooked for past year.

Norm Kolstad – this dialogue will help inform our later meeting decision.

Mary Worner – in consultation with MidAmerica Education coordinator: children outdoors with family events. Discourage in door close contact.

John Salmen – Whatever we decide – make sure Zoom continues.

Amy Beckman – how do we invite everyone in and keep everyone safe and comfortable.

Marianne Bryan – stay on Zoom – watch CDC on variance.

Molly Delarbre- our mental health is suffering, and we are doing the best we can.

Ron Roller – every congregation is having the same discussion. Propose that we have the August 15 service outside along with the picnic already planned.

Bonnie Graham – important to start seeing each other – sympathy and empathy, our children are vital and vulnerable. And, and, and....

There seems to be no right or wrong answers.

The Business meeting then resumed with the Treasurer's report from Ron Roller. UCU received \$1000 from the Siems family and a family friend. It will be designated as a special contribution with a later discussion on how to use in memory of Donn & Marlys. Larger amounts in collections were received in June. The balance remains mostly unchanged with collections to expenditures on target.

Administrator's report for July 2021. Bonnie submitted a written report that is included at the end of the minutes. She first reported that plans were in progress for in-person attendance beginning August 1, 15, and 28. At this point, Ron Roller interrupted because of his connection restraints and recommended that plans for a picnic at Phelps Mill on August 15 be expanded to include the worship service and that we postpone in-house gathering and reevaluate the conditions in 2-3 weeks as a precautionary measure. Presenters for that Sunday will be Bonnie Graham, Mary Worner, Molly Delarbre and possibly Katy Olson with their learnings from GA attendance. Mary Worner interjected her learnings from a call with Nancy Combs-Morgan from UU MidAmerica Region. 1) People are of all ages but not all able to get vaccinated; people

are of all abilities, some more compromised than others. 2) Susan Frederick Gray, UUA President says to value inclusiveness, follow the science, act slowly and be flexible, be humane and realistic in expectations of ourselves and others. 3) Focus on connections and relationships. We need to consider families and that there is still a pandemic.

Motion was made and carried to continue Zoom services except for the August 15<sup>th</sup> service and picnic at Phelps Mill (Ron Roller/Marianne Bryan) with the amendment that the service be at least recorded if not offered virtually (John Salmen/Marianne Bryan).

Bonnie continued with her report: 1) she has learned about three Leadership/Justice training opportunities; 2) she talked with Karen Wills, Director of MUUSJA about the work UCU is doing in social justice and board transitioning. MUUSJA has two main work areas they are offering on convening and capacity building; 3) she is learning about licensing for hybrid worship; 4) she contacted Park Region on broadband width to support online offerings. Motion made and carried that UCU obtains from Park Region the level of services needed to maximize our ability to upload and download for virtual delivery of program offerings (Mary Anderson/John Salmen; 5) Bonnie is working with Mary Worner, Program Coordinator on ideas for Children's Religious Education with intentions to involve parents in that planning.

When asked about web updates, Bonnie responded that Ellen Eastby has reassumed the website administration responsibilities.

Report on Potential Implementation to Board Practice Transformation – Mary Worner, Ron Roller, John Salmen suggest that we continue with the “powerful questions” as the opening dialogue for the next 3 months and then evaluate the process and progress. Board members will send suggested questions to Mary Worner. Mary will provide the Board with the list of questions to be considered.

Process for Mission Revision – no action yet but will plan process so any mission statement revision will be ready to present at the April 2022 annual meeting.

Records Committee Report – Norm Kolstad reported that work continues on the Google Suites Format.

No reports from Facilities, Safety, Membership or Stewardship Committees.

The Hybrid Worship Task Force met June 29<sup>th</sup> and proposed an alternate schedule for in-person/Zoom services. The Board took other action as described above.

Program Coordinator's Report – Mary Worner held the quarterly meeting of Program leaders on July 14. As stated above, she talked with Nancy Combs-Morgan of MidAmerica Region about Children's Religious Education and plan to hold family meetings outdoors with a picnic to hear from parents what they'd like.

Community Outreach Coordinator's Report – Amy Beckman reported that 180 had registered for the Poverty Institute with 122 in attendance. The Social Justice Interest Group is working on their mission and vision and fall planning. Suggestion was made to involve the children in some of the social justice activities.

There was no unfinished business.

There was no new business.

Next meeting August 18 @ 6 p.m. with the Officer Team meeting August 11 @ 6 p.m.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m. (John Salmen/Mary Anderson).

Notes:

August Agenda

*U group live meetings*

*Beloved Conversation Attendees Briefing*

September Agenda

*Social Justice "When Hate Comes to Town" revised proposal*

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Anderson

Board Secretary

#### **Administrator's report for July 2021**

3 Leadership / Justice training opportunities identified:

##### **1.Side with Love/UUA It Starts with Faith: Organizing School for Teams**

It Starts With Faith: Organizing School for Teams is a 9-week faith organizing training series designed to build faith-rooted organizing teams that are committed to dismantling white supremacy and taking action in with Side With Love's four intersectionality justice priorities (Climate Justice, LGBTQ+ & Gender Justice, Democracy & Voting Rights, Decriminalization). It is open to people of all experience levels and faith affiliation.

**"It Starts With Faith: Organizing School for Teams" applications are now open! [Submit your application by July 30.](#)**

Participants will learn foundational organizing skills to build and support teams in racial justice rooted work and take part in the upcoming [Side With Love Action Center](#)-a distributed organizing and leadership development program launching this fall.

**[Apply Today!](#)**

**Sessions will take place on Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30pm ET/3:30-5:30pm PT between Aug. 25 and Nov 3.**

Session 1: Orientation

Session 2: Faithful Social Justice: Telling your story

Session 3: Finding Your Role: Building power in faith organizing

Session 4: Building Organizing Infrastructure: Leadership Development and Identification

Session 5: Facing Conflict: Covenant & Transformation

Session 6: Building for a liberated future: Campaigns and program design

Session 7: Partnerships in a pandemic and recovery

Session 8: Growing your impact: Tools for evaluation and growth

Session 9: Meet the Moment: Tactics for Mobilizing Supporters and Contesting Power

[Apply Today!](#)

"It Starts With Faith: Organizing School 2021" will support 20-30 teams with the goal of aligning all of our faith organizing to build power and impact in 2022. **The teams will have access to organizing coaches and be invited to participate in national leadership roles in our upcoming Side With Love Action Center.** If you are looking for ways to advance racial justice through your congregation or social justice teams, this year's Organizing School is for you!

Learn from seasoned faith leaders, organizers and facilitators in "It Starts With Faith: Organizing School for Teams". [The application deadline is Friday, July 30.](#)

Join us to build power towards a world that affirms the worth and dignity of all.

In faith and solidarity,  
Nicole Pressley  
Field and Programs Director  
UUA Organizing Strategy Teams

## 2. Offered by MidAmerica UUA:

As many of you undoubtedly have returned or are preparing to return to in-person church (and understandably, others are waiting), we're pleased to invite you to **RE-UUp: Conversations on Re-opening for Religious Education Programs**. No matter what your plans or timetable for returning to in-person church may be, this conversation is for anyone invested in Unitarian Universalist Religious Education!

Please join Cameron Young and Nancy Combs-Morgan for **RE-UUp: Conversations on Re-opening for Religious Education Programs** on August 3, 7p ET / 6p CT (2 hours) and/or August 6, 1p ET / 12p CT (2 hours)!

[Register today!](#)

Questions? Please send an email to [sr@uua.org](mailto:sr@uua.org).

## 3. MUUSJA

Karen Wills, Director of MUUSJA would like to connect with what's happening at UCU. <https://www.muusja.org/>

She was interested to learn more about the Social Justice Interest Group, and the work of the Board in training.

She would like to sit in on a meeting and learn more about UCU's work, and see if she can connect people with others doing similar work, and connect our group so they are supported. MUUSJA has 2 main work areas now:

## **1. CONVENING**

bringing people together within, across and beyond congregations

MUUSJA exists because *together* UU's are smarter, louder, and stronger. Creating justice for the earth and its peoples requires self-exploration, relationship- building, perseverance, resources, knowledge, and skills. It can feel lonely, overwhelming, exhausting, sometimes even hopeless. From Bemidji to Winona, from fellowships of 10 to churches of 1000+, MUUSJA reminds us we are stronger together and we are not alone.

## **2. CAPACITY BUILDING**

honing skills and spiritual grounding for effective justice-making

MUUSJA supports UU's and community partners who engage with many different issues as faith calls us to local, regional, and national action. LGBTQ+ PRIDE, anti-racism and climate justice, tenant's rights and immigration witness, fighting hunger and homelessness, are active concerns. MUUSJA shares resources and strategies for effective advocacy, authentic partnerships, sustaining resilience and claiming the power within each of us.

Hybrid Worship work

\*Licensing - I am learning how the music licensing works and am exploring the various companies listed by the UUA as good options.

I am learning how the process works and will talk with the Service Leaders/Speakers/music people about the steps involved, and the timing involved.

\* Internet - the current service at the church would not be robust enough to stream video. I contacted Park Region phone and learned the top service they can provide is 25 mbps/3mbps. Thank you to the Board for voting to allow me to upgrade the Internet service to the maximum available from Park Region.

\*I met with folks at the Fargo church about how they are doing zoom/in-person services and shared their procedures with the tech group.

\*I will contact the Fergus Performing Arts center to find out about the equipment purchased and procedures they are using with their hybrid performances.

\*I propose we have the August Board meeting as a hybrid meeting.

\*I have been working on the procedures for in person Sunday services. Working with the Sunday Service Coordinating committee, the Speakers Committee, and music.

I'm drafting a new format for the Order of Service. The Sunday Service Coordinating Committee will review the draft Order of Service.

I'm drafting new information for the Speakers that would be necessary for them speaking in person. The information is slightly different than when speakers speak to us on Zoom. The Speakers Committee will review these documents.

Religious Education

I am working with Mary Worner on how to get the children's RE started.