



REACH

Our reach should exceed our grasp.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield

A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

September 2011

Services are held at Fellowship Hall, corner of West 2nd & Linden Streets in Northfield. Babysitting and children's religious education are provided.

August & September Services

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Sunday August 28 • 10 a.m. • “Communitas” • Rev. Kristin Maier • Our Sunday services resume with a sermon from our minister on the spirit of community and a celebration of the water communion. Bring a small container of water from your travels this summer (or your sprinkler or kitchen tap) and join us for an hour of reflection and celebration on this sacred substance that provides life for all in our human and planet-wide communities

Sunday September 4 • 10 a.m. • “Teacher, Teacher” • Lois Burnes •

As we prepare for the beginning of another school year, Lois Burnes, UUFN member, will recall her years as a student and a teacher. She will also challenge you to think about your favorite teachers and what made them special.

Sunday September 11 • 10 a.m. • “What Else Might We Defeat?” •

Rev. Kristin Maier • If the citizens of Northfield could defeat the Jesse James Gang in 1876, what might we defeat in our community today? Poverty? Racism? Homophobia? Hatred? Join us for our Sunday service and after as we head out to table on the streets of Northfield to sell our rainbow pins and raise awareness of this year's Rainbow Equality dinner and educational event. Also, during the service we will recognize the 10th anniversary of September 11th, 2001.

Sunday September 18 • 10 a.m. • Long Day's Journey into Unitarian

Universalism ” • Hortense MacLeod & Bert Fleming • What are your religious beliefs and how would you explain them to someone else? Continuing a popular UU tradition, two members of the congregation will share their credo statements. Hortense MacLeod and Burt Fleming are this year's guest speakers.

Sunday September 25 • 10 a.m. • “Autumnal Equinox Reflections” • Naomi

Tullo • Join us to honor the arrival of autumn and the changes in and around us with a guided meditation.

“Laying Down Roots for Gregarious Flowering”

by Kristin Maier

Bamboo has a reputation as the fastest growing woody plant on Earth. It is true that some species of bamboo can grow rapidly reaching up to a hundred feet in height. During the three to four months of bamboo's yearly growing season, some species can grow more than three feet in one twenty-four hour period.

Part of what is interesting about bamboo, however, is that such dramatic and rapid growth isn't really instantaneous. A new bamboo grove appears to grow very little in the first few years. One bamboo nursery in the US gets calls every year from customers who think their new bamboo plantings are failing to thrive, when the reality is exactly the opposite.

For the first few years, while growth of the individual stalks seems lackluster at best, much is happening below the surface. A vast network of underground rhizomes is being built that stores nutrients and sends out shoots so new larger bamboo stalks can grow. This network of roots and nodes literally takes years to develop before the colony of bamboo plants can realize the kind of meteoric growth they are known for.

Many have pointed out that the process of growth for a bamboo grove isn't so different from the process of growth for a religious community. If so, what growth is already taking place under the surface of our congregation? What systems of communication, what sources of sustenance, what networks for deeper connection are already underway? What groundwork for growth has yet to be planted in order to realize our potential?

To address these questions, our congregation will be convening an ad hoc “Think Tank for Growth” this year. It will be an open group of folks who come



together several times over the next year to identify concrete steps we can take to encourage growth. We will then collaborate with leadership, staff, and the membership to take those concrete actions that are feasible. If you would like to be part of this “Think Tank for Growth,” contact me or our board president, Bob Ciernia. The more the merrier.

Clearly, our congregation is and has been growing, some of it under the surface. Our religious education program is arguably stronger than it has ever been. There is excitement and creativity amongst the Sunday Services Committee that creates our Sunday worship services. And, there is a willingness by leadership and the whole congregation to open our doors and our hearts to those who are hungry for the kind of religious community we enjoy. Again and again I have seen a true generosity of heart and a desire to share with others what has been so life giving to each of you.

If congregations are sometimes like bamboo groves in how they grow, I hope that they are also like bamboo groves in how they sometimes flower. Flowering happens quite rarely among bamboo trees, sometimes not for many, many years. Sometimes though, when bamboo groves do flower every plant blossoms at once in a massive “gregarious flowering.” I don't think we have to wait years and years but I do hope that we get to experience that “gregarious flowering.” I hope that as a religious community we lay the framework that allows each and every one of us to live into and express our highest and finest qualities as people, all at once.



“Bending Towards Justice”

by Bob Ciernia

Welcome back from our summer hiatus! Whether our days turn out to be lazy, hazy, or crazy, most of us use our summer break to do a little extra catching up on things. One of the things I'd intended to do was catch up on a couple of back issues of the UU World magazine.

In one of those issues, I read the following

“Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the right. I do not pretend to understand



the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice. Things refuse to be mismanaged long.”

Most of us associate the words with Martin Luther King, Jr., but those lines were written a hundred years before by Theodore Parker: abolitionist, supporter of women's suffrage, radical religious thinker — and Unitarian minister. Born in 1810 and dying of tuberculosis just months before he was 50 in 1860, Parker was out front pointing the way to a world he believed would be better than the world in which he lived.

So, what do you think? Are we living in that “better world”? Asked whether the world is changing for the better, many people are likely to reply in the negative: not much, not really, not nearly enough. The problems we face appear overwhelming, and whatever chance we have at “successfully” addressing them is listed somewhere between remote and hopeless.

But look again: the change in our society in the last 150 years argues otherwise. During Parker's lifetime, the vast majority of blacks in this country were slaves; no woman cast a vote, let alone ran, for

office; and, if you were a “believer,” it was generally assumed you were a Christian believer.

The fact is, we have made progress. It's true that racism persists and minorities of all descriptions are not afforded the respect or equality that should be their right as human beings and American citizens. It's true that American women are not equal partners in the political, financial, or social life of this country. And it's also true that our religious pluralism is a thin veneer easily damaged when you scratch the surface.

Nonetheless, I can't help but think that Parker would be quite certain that the arc of the moral universe has bent towards justice. And I am equally sure that we can be as confident that the world 150 years from now will have continued that arc... as we work to make it so.

As we begin our new church year, I hope your summer, too, has given you renewed faith in this religious tradition of free thinking and acting in conscience. Welcome back

Sound System Update

With minimal financial outlay, improvements have been made this summer to the UUFN microphone system.

Bobbi Baker has agreed to make sure that both of our cordless microphones have good batteries in them. The main cause for dead batteries has been that a microphone is left “turned on” after a Sunday service.

David Miller has repaired a crack in one of our two P.A. speakers. This improvement is apt to minimize the horrendous noise that we previously had whenever anyone exhaled into either of our microphones.

Bill McGrath will make sure that the sound system is working at the beginning of each Sunday service.

Board Bits

by Marcia Jacobs

On July 26th the new board of the UUFN met at president, Bob Ciernia's home.

Contract for the Director of Religious Education, Nancy Huppert, was approved.

Lois Burnes was approved as head of the Safe Congregations Committee.

Various ideas for fund raisers were suggested.

Spruce-Up day is to be Aug. 6. It will include carpet cleaning, kitchen organization and cleaning, sign painting, etc.

How to use UUFN funds to support attendance at Prairie Star District Conference and other UUA conferences, seminars, meetings, and who would have preference was discussed.

Discussion on who should have access to information on financial records and pledges; need to know basis was discussed.

Discussion on changing by-laws i.e. choosing officers or the board and terms.

Creating a policy and criteria for determining names to be placed on the memorial banner was discussed.

Questions about improving accessibility to the building. This item led to discussion about future visions for the congregation: What do we want or need in a facility and how would it affect our membership? Board will look for a survey on this in the near future. The democratic process of visioning! Maybe a visioning retreat? Think about what you see as the future of UUFN and what you want to see happen.

Our next meeting is Sept. 7. If you have any questions or ideas feel free to approach any board member either in person, e-mail or by phone.



Mail Call

by Marcia Jacobs

The UU principles ask us to promote "the inherent worth and dignity of every person" and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations".

The members of UUFN have shown how they do this by supporting and contributing to causes and organizations right in our own Northfield area community.

As secretary of the congregation I have been assigned the duty of picking up the mail at the post office box. With my first pick-up, we received four thank yous for our acts of support. The first is from the Community Action Center for our monetary contribution to the Food Shelf. We visited there a while ago and had a tour escorted by Jim Blaha. Since then there has been a great remodeling project completed for the Food Shelf and the Clothes Closet. If you have not seen the renewed facilities, please visit and ask for a tour. Of course at the same time you could contribute again!

The second letter came from the Carleton College Gender and Sexuality Center for our contribution to their work with proceeds from our Rainbow Dinner. We continue to work with them and the St. Olaf Diversity Council with our Rainbow project, making rainbow lapel ribbons, and buttons. Please, support their efforts and UUFN's as we support the LGBT community.

The third act of generosity that we received thanks for was the flooring project that Lee Topp and others did at the Manger Inn. The Inn and it's supporters provide housing for people in our community that need a boost to obtain living quarters in our community. They could use volunteers for other projects and for support of their clients in other ways, also. Find out from Lee and others how you can help.

Last spring we had a visiting speaker, Charles Dayton, from the organization Interfaith Power and Light. The fourth thank you was from that organization for joining their efforts. Check out their website for more information.

I am sure that most of the individuals in our congregation support many organizations on their own. We thank you for all contributions of time, money and in-kind. We are an action oriented faith that tries to walk the talk. These are just four examples. Keep up the good works!

What's Up in RE

by Nancy Huppert

Sunday, August 28

K-4 Water Communion – Mississippi Going North

Teacher: Nancy Huppert **Nursery:** Will Marfleet

From the headwaters at Lake Itasca, the Mississippi River heads north before turning south on its journey to the Gulf of Mexico. In this story, a family travels by canoe to a place where deer come to drink and where the sky is still dark enough to see the aurora borealis. As we read, we will consider our connection to Minnesota's past, and its significance to our present and future.



“Aren't you glad there are still skies dark enough for seeing stars and northern lights, still places where creatures' voices fill the night, still wilderness where no roads go? Aren't you glad you know about the Mississippi going north?”

Youth Group: Attend worship service

Sunday, September 4

K-4 Everybody Is Important: A Kids Guide to Our Seven Principles

Teacher: Nancy Huppert **Nursery:** Olivia Paulsen

The seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism are promises that we make to each other and to ourselves that help us to be the best people we can be. The Principles are about how we should treat each other, what we love, and what we hope for ourselves and for all living things.

Youth Group: Heresy Apparent Kick-off

Sunday, September 11

K-4 Monarch and Milkweed

Teacher: Nancy Huppert **Nursery:** Theo Lucas

Our Third and Fourth Principles encourage us to search together to learn about the world and

discover what is true. Like the milkweed seed in this story, we nurture the spiritual growth of our children by fostering the individual gathering of many small experiences that contribute to a sense of place in the world and in our community.

“Rain comes, snow comes, rain comes again. Sun warms the earth. Earth warms the seed, and under the dirt, it opens. Roots reach down. A tip of green presses out and up, toward warmth and light. Milkweed's first spring leaf unfurls.”

Youth Group: Heresy Apparent

Sunday, September 18

K-4 Picture Book UU – Miss Rumphius

Teacher: Nancy Huppert **Nursery:** Nick Marfleet

A little girl sits on her grandfather's knee and tells him she wants to visit faraway places and live by the sea. But her grandfather also includes a third thing, “You must do something to make the world more beautiful.” This is the story of how she accomplishes the two things, and also, finally, the third. It is about the meaning of life and the cycles of generations.

“The Lupine Lady lives in a small house overlooking the sea. In between the rocks around her house grow blue and purple and rose-colored flowers. The Lupine Lady is little and old. But she has not always been that way.”

Youth Group: Attend worship service

Sunday, September 25

K-4 Picture Book UU – To Everything

Teacher: Marcia Jacobs **Nursery:** Claire Paulsen

The words of this timeless verse, drawn from the wisdom of Ecclesiastes and made famous in popular song, remind us that there is a time for everything. It is a joyous celebration of life and a springboard for discussion about the choices we make and the effects of our actions upon others.

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Youth Group: Heresy Apparent

New Ideas for the New Church Year!

by Suzannah Ciernia

The Sunday Service Committee had a great summer, meeting a few times, including a 'visioning retreat' where feedback, ideas, and great food were shared at Mairi Doerr's Dancing Winds Farm.

There was discussion about how to best create a 'sacred space' for members and visitors to enter into on a Sunday morning, as well as minor tweaking of the 'Order of Service'.

We considered these words (from a GA workshop on the topic) which articulate the challenge of what makes for a meaningful worship experience: "...calls people into deeper relationship with love and spirit, and reminds us of our connection to the mystery that surpasses all our understanding".

With this mission in mind, we are excited about the coming church year and how to integrate deeper spiritual experiences with thoughtful services, rich with the ideas that our 7 Principles embody.

So, what's new?

New church year start! To help us get out in front of individuals and families who may be searching for a church home in the fall, our first service is set for August 28 and this will be announced in local papers. We will

meet regularly each Sunday from then right through to end of May.

Themes will be incorporated into our calendar, similar to last year's 'Welcoming Congregation' series, where LGBT issues were addressed over the course of 2 months.

New room set-up will be tried out, alternating with the old set-up, so we can all get a feel for likes and dislikes. Feedback will be encouraged.

Community outreach will be an ongoing focus of our activities this year and starts with a bang - literally! UUFN will be on the streets during the annual hoopla of Northfield's 'Defeat of Jesse James Days' (DJJD) September 10-11 with a table on Division Street asking "So, what else might we defeat?" The answer: *discrimination*. At the table we will sell **Rainbow Ribbon pins** with our website printed on the back and a display card that carries a message about UUFN.

'Defeating Discrimination' made the perfect topic as it ties directly into the Unitarian Universalist Association's 'Standing on the Side of Love' campaign that encompasses LGBT rights, immigration, and more. This theme will be woven throughout several services in the coming year.

New ideas need some new energy! Please consider coming to help with crafting the pins Wednesday night - 8/24 - 7pm and/or signing up for a shift to sell them over DJJD weekend September 10-11 (sitting at a table in the shade). Contact Suzannah Ciernia 507-663-7876.



Congratulations!

UU Fellowship of Northfield's application to become recognized as a Welcoming Congregation has been approved! I'm thrilled to be able to congratulate you on taking this powerful step, doing collective work to educate yourselves on LGBT issues, and committing yourselves to vital ongoing work in this area. Thanks again for your patience—it is a priority for me to spend time thoroughly reading the materials that congregations send, and I'm grateful to have been able to hear about all the good work UUFN has done.

It's clear that this is an issue of great importance to you all, both recently and historically, and your dedication is remarkable! Your events are impressive, and your planned future educational opportunities and workshops sound fantastic as well. I'm particularly happy to see that you've engaged with Minnesota Two Spirits. I hope you'll consider celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day this October and/or taking steps to deepen your connection to groups like Minnesota Two Spirits (if you'd like more info/resources/ideas re: Indigenous Peoples Day, let me know).

I'm also pleased to see that UUFN has formed strong relationships with community groups such as Carleton College's Gender and Sexuality Center. These connections are such a fundamental way to increase your impact and give you opportunities to focus your energy in the ways that local queer and trans people need most.

UUFN is a real model of how we hope congregations will engage with this work. In fact, you all are such a great example that I would love to be able to lift your story up on our website as inspiration to other small congregations. Would you be interested in writing a short (300-800 words) piece on your Welcoming Congregation journey? I'd love to link to the articles in the Northfield News that you mentioned, also.

Regarding our conversation about Interweave, I don't have much to add to what we already discussed. The important thing is definitely honing in on what your goals are and what the most effective avenue for reaching them will be—it might not be an Interweave group. Feel free to reach out to the folks at Interweave, however, with any further

questions you might have. You can reach Interweave President Maryka Bhattacharyya at marykahb@yahoo.com.

I hope you'll see LGBT Ministries as a resource for you—please feel free to be in touch any time if I can be of service or support. And I'll be sure to let you know once I've gotten that sample inclusive guidelines resource developed. You can expect to receive two Welcoming Congregation posters in the mail shortly, and UUFN will be recognized on the UUA's website within the next week. Thanks again for your congregation's life-giving, essential work!

Warm regards,

Alex

*Alex Kapitan, Congregational Justice Administrator,
LGBT Ministries, Multicultural Growth & Witness
UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108
www.uua.org/lgbt or www.uua.org/multicultural*

Ideas Wanted

Do You Have a Wonderful Workshop Idea to Share at the PSD Annual Conference?

Prairie Star District is seeking workshop applications for the PSD Annual Conference 2012, "Lessons from War & Peace: Stories of Hope, Faith, and Courage," to be held April 13-15, in Bloomington, Minnesota. Workshops are sought that respond directly to this theme, or will foster leadership development, and/or will strengthen our UU community through multi-generational conversation. Information about the Conference and copies of the application are at <http://www.psduua.org/drupal/AnnualConference2012>. Deadline to apply is Monday, September 26, 2011.



Twenty adults, three kids and three dogs assembled at the Cannon River Wilderness County Park on Sunday morning for great food and the sharing of varied poetry.





**The Summer Clean-Up Day
was a great success.**

Thanks to all who pitched in!
Scott, Natalie, Marcia, Pat, Mike,
David, Vicki, Suzannah, Bob



Coffee Hour

Below is the list of those who have volunteered to set up, bring treats, and clean up for Social Hour. Thank you all! We are trying to simplify for the hosts this year so are asking that you provide just one sweet and one savory treat.

Feel free to exchange with someone else if another date works better for you and please let Bev Topp know about the changes at bevorleetopp@frontiernet.net or 612-702-6127

Thanks to everyone!

Sunday Social Hour Hosts

8/28 Bev & Lee Topp

9/4 Bill & Janet McGrath

9/11 Greg & Natalie
Marfleet

9/18 Klaus & Susan Huehn

9/25 Bill & Janet McGrath



Greeter List

Bill & Janet McGrath

Greeters are asked to serve for a month of Sundays. In the event there is a Sunday in your month that doesn't work, please just contact Bill McGrath at billmcgrath52@gmail.com (or 645-7660) and we will find a fill-in for you.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

To Another Great Year

by Bev Topp

One of the comments I have often heard from visitors, friends, and new members is how welcome they felt when they first visited UUFN. They were greeted by many in the service, they were invited down to coffee, and they felt a part of the group at coffee hour as many came up to learn more about them or just thank them for coming. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield is a friendly place!

Whether or not you will be a first time visitor, a return visitor, or a seeker who has decided this is the church you want to explore as a potential member, UUFN values your interest in our community and respects your search for a church home that fits. The members of UUFN have much in common with our visitors as we, too, continue our spiritual search and grow the resources of our church. Our members know that we have many kinds of theological diversity in our congregation and that such spiritual diversity is based on the differences in what we do—our practices. Our diversity is a blessing, and we encourage all to explore their own experience with religious practice, with meditation, with understanding what language of the spirit evokes in them.

We welcome our visitors to UUFN and we welcome our members back from the summer hiatus. And of course, we always welcome comments and ideas from everyone about what works well at UUFN and what can be added or changed to enrich our support for all.

Here's to another great UUFN year!



OUTSIDE THE BOX

NUMBERS THAT COUNT

brought to you by Bob Ciernia

Amount of federal money that went to National Public Radio in 2010: \$2,700,000

To Jerry Falwell's Liberty University: \$446,000,000

Chance that a teenage girl in America has a sexually transmitted infection: 1 in 4

Average age at which women consider themselves "old," according to a study by a British funeral planning company: 29

At which men do: 58

Chance that a Russian believes the sun revolves around the earth: 1 in 3

Chance that a U.S. high school biology teacher is an advocate of evolution: 1 in 4

Date on which U.S. student-loan debt is expected to reach \$1,000,000,000,000: 12/1/2011

Chance that an American who earned a bachelor's degree in 2008 will be paying off student loans in 2028: 1 in 3

Harper's, June and July 2011

Chance that an American believes the country is still in a recession or depression: 1 in 2

Estimated percentage change in chief executive pay at America's publicly traded corporations in 2010: +11

Factor by which the likelihood that a father will spank his child increases if the father is depressed: 4

Chance that an American adult has a criminal record: 1 in 4

Chance that a U.S. man who has been incarcerated will make it out of the bottom economic quintile within 20 years: 1 in 50

That a man who was never incarcerated will: 1 in 7

Percentage of applicants offered undergraduate admission to Harvard this year: 6.2

Percentage of applicants accepted for employment on McDonald's National Hiring Day in April: 6.2

Estimated percentage of Afghanistan's gross national product that comes from U.S. aid and other foreign sources: 97

Value of state tax breaks approved in May for a Bible-themed amusement park in Kentucky: \$43,000,000

Centimeters by which an electron falls short of being perfectly round: 0.000000000000000000000001

Harper's, August 2011



Where's Pat?

Gay Pride Parade, June 26, Minneapolis



The Wayside Pulpit

*Truth stood on one side and Ease
on the other: it has often been so.*

— Theodore Parker