

St. Cloud UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship



April 2021

All services are online at this time. Please visit www.uufstcloud.org for the Zoom information to join

10:00 (10:15) a.m. Sunday, April 4: (Easter) Informal Discussion

UUC Willmar invites SCUUF to join them. Joys & Concerns will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the meeting about 10:15.

10:30 a.m. Sunday, April 11: Lessons for the Long Haul - Rev. Ashley Horan, Organizing Strategy Director, Unitarian Universalist Association

A global pandemic, nationwide uprisings for racial justice, a contentious national election, an attempted coup--these are just a few of the factors that have shaped our shared struggles for justice since 2020. In spite of the challenges, however, UUs across the country have engaged in deeply powerful faith-based organizing both locally and nationally, and are working hard to keep the momentum going. What lessons can Unitarian Universalists glean from this past, wildly unprecedented year, and how are we called to show up going forward?

9:00 a.m. Sunday, April 18: Coffee Talk

As COVID continues to keep us apart, please join our informal conversation on Zoom. We can share joys and concerns, upcoming plans for spring/summer, and the usual chit chat we would enjoy during coffee time after our service. *Provide your own coffee.*

10:00 (10:15) a.m. Sunday, April 18: Nature as a Solution to Climate Change - Jessica Blair and Sachi Graber, Minnesota/Dakota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

UUC Willmar invites SCUUF to join their service. Joys & Concerns will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the formal meeting about 10:15. Earth's climate is changing, and for future generations to survive it, humans today need to dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions. But an often overlooked solution is affordable, efficient, and all around us. Nature itself can provide one third of the solution to reaching the goals of the Paris Climate Accord. The presenters will share how their organization is working to deploy nature to protect people and the planet.

10:30 a.m. Sunday, April 25: Skin in the Game – R. James Addington

Race and racism: a ubiquitous presence in US life from the earliest days. Can we extract race and racism from our common life? If we can, what might we gain? Who will benefit the most? Who really has "skin in the game?" Increasingly, we hear the term "systemic racism." What is meant by this term and how does it operate? What about other systemic oppressions – are they not also important to address? Is it even useful to distinguish types of oppression? And then, there is the menacing challenge of global climate change – intertwined with other ecological issues. Where do we begin and what must we do?

To contribute to SCUUF:

- 1) send a check to SCUUF, PO Box 805, St. Cloud, MN 56302, or
- 2) Make a contribution by debit/credit card or PayPal by clicking on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/Donate-SCUUF>

April President's Corner

by Ozzie Mayers

The Ad Hoc Anniversary Planning Committee has been working diligently to make preparations for our Anniversary Celebration in the Fall; we owe special thanks to Lois Head, who is chairing the Committee and who is organizing a slide presentation of Past Presidents as well as significant events in the history of the Fellowship. The Committee has designated these 3 Sundays in the Fall for the Celebration: October 10th, November 7th, and December 5. More information will be forthcoming.

The Building Options Committee is continuing to gather information about the possible purchase of the building on East St. Germain. While the Letter of Intent has been signed, there is no binding Purchase Agreement. The Committee is seeking consultation about the cost of renovations. The Board suggests that the Building Options Committee consider organizing a Congregational meeting for the Fellowship if the Committee wants the Fellowship to consider this option. The Board also suggests that the Building Options Committee organize a time for Fellowship members to visit the building. I stress that no decisions have been made at this point, and no actions will be taken without consulting with the Fellowship at large.

The Board discussed the proposal to add an 8th Principle which has been distributed to UU Congregations by the UUA. Here is the proposal:

"We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and Promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our Institution."

The Board has authorized the Social Justice Committee to explore the possibility of adding this principle to our current list of Principles. Board members expressed appreciation and support for the commitments stated within the proposed Principle but did have questions about how this Principle fits in with the current 7 Principles of the UUA; the Board also questions the process of adding another Principle by moving from the local to the national UUA.

The next Board meeting will be held on Sunday, April 18th, 9:00 a.m. Finally, please see an announcement following the President's Corner about this year's Annual Meeting.

Mark Your Calendar: Annual Meeting

The Board has agreed that our Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom on **Friday, May 7th, starting at 6:00 p.m.** The Zoom link will be provided to the Fellowship. The Board reminds the Fellowship that all are invited to this meeting but only Members are eligible to vote.

Let us pause to remember the victims of those who were shot to death and another who at the time of this writing is hospitalized in Atlanta, Georgia: Soon Chung Park (74), Suncha Kim (69), Yong Ae Yue (63), Hyun Jung Grant (51), Xiaojie Tan (49), Delaina Ashley Yaun (33), Daoyou Feng (44), Paul Andre Michels (54). And, let us also remember the victims shot in Boulder, Colorado: Denny Stong (20), Neven Stanisic (21), Rikki Olds (25), Tralona Bartkowiak (49), Suzanne Fountain (59), Teri Leiker (51), Officer Eric Talley (50), Kevin Mahaney (61), Lynn Murray (62), Jody Waters (65).

**"Let us overcome violence by
Gentleness;
Let us overcome evil by good."
Dhammapada**

Are You Considering Becoming a Member?

by Lisa Bershok, *President-Elect*

We know COVID has impacted many things in the last year. We want to acknowledge our meeting virtually may have made it difficult for you to officially become a member if you have been considering doing so.

To officially become a member, you would meet with a representative of our membership committee, sign our membership book, and make a pledge to the Fellowship (financial or in-kind). We have the ability to have you meet masked and in a socially distanced manner with a membership representative at the Fellowship.

While you can do this at any time, we want to make you aware of upcoming membership votes that you may want to participate in. Per our Fellowship Constitution, you must have become a member 30 days prior to the congregational vote. To vote at the Annual Meeting on May 7, you need to be a member by April 7. In addition, the Building Options ad hoc committee has identified a building for purchase that may be a good fit for our Fellowship to relocate to as a new home. It is likely we will have a congregational vote later in May to make a decision on whether to move forward with purchasing the new building.

For more information on this, please see the President's Corner in this newsletter. If you have been considering becoming a member, and would like to do so now, please contact Marge Bates and set up a time to sign the membership book and make your pledge. That would need to be by April 7 to vote at the Annual Meeting and by April 15 to have a vote on a new location for our Fellowship.

Marge can be reached at 320-267-3590 or margbates@gmail.com

Spring Directory Coming Soon - Are You In?

by Joel Bershok

The Communications Committee is preparing to provide an updated Fellowship Directory to be used by members and friends wanting to contact others within the Fellowship. We need your help for the directory to be as accurate and complete as possible. We hope to include all who have been involved in recent months and/or made a pledge of financial support for the current year. We will use information from previous versions plus additions and changes that we are aware of. The directory listing for each household includes NAME of adults, ADDRESS, PHONE (Home and Cell), EMAIL ADDRESS, and FIRST NAMES of children in high school or younger who attend Fellowship programs or activities. If you have new information or if you want to opt out, contact Joel Bershok by Monday April 19th at 303-503-8964 or jebershok@gmail.com. At the end of April the directory will be sent by email to those who are listed in it, and it will serve as the calling list in the event that we need to call everyone regarding a cancelled Sunday service or other change in schedule.

A new version of the UU Directory will be coming out at the end of April! Please send any updates to Joel Bershok at jebershok@gmail.com. Please see the current newsletter for more information

If you love social media, the Communications Committee could use your help.

Twitter? Instagram? Contact Judy Foster (jfoster58@charter.net) if you are interested.

Looking Ahead to Summer!!

by Charlotte Stephens and Pam Peterson, Program Committee Co-chairs

Now that spring is here, we can see summer coming. We don't know yet what will be possible for SCUUF activities within COVID guidelines but we would like to hear your ideas for summer activities and programs. As in past years and as is common in UU congregations, we won't have weekly Sunday Services during the summer months. The Program Committee will work within the COVID guidelines to develop a schedule of the activities you suggest.

This spring we'll continue offering two Sunday services per month via Zoom. In addition we're continuing to collaborate with Unitarian Universalist Church of Willmar so that each congregation will provide 2 Sunday Services per month for April and May. Coffee Talk will take place on April 18 at 9:00 am so that those who wish to switch over to the Willmar Service can do so after Coffee Talk.

Would you like to join the program committee this spring and help with planning for summer and fall? We've already received some ideas for fall program topics and presenters. As always, our committee welcomes your comments about programming and your ideas for future topics and presenters. Contact us using the email addresses on the last page of the newsletter.

Your April TOUCHSTONES Journal was sent as an attachment with this newsletter distribution

Anti-Racism Work Group

by Judy Foster

Our faithful leader, Hanni Epp, is recovering from surgery on her hand, so I am reporting for the group. Hanni continues to participate in our meetings as she heals. We thank her for her work.

Currently, we are consulting with the Board regarding how they can support us as we move forward. We are examining several different models of organizational change to see which one might be most applicable to SCUUF. Jean Keller continues to facilitate discussions of *My Grandmother's Hands*.

Something new that I brought back from the UUA New Day Rising Conference was the idea of an 8th UUA Principle. This is currently under discussion by the Board. See <https://www.8thprincipleuu.org/>

I am currently enrolled in the Beloved Conversations course. Thanks so much to SCUUF for financial support. We are just in Lesson One now and I will have more to report on this as it moves along, including a final report, as requested by the Board. See <https://www.meadville.edu/fahs-collaborative/fahs-curriculum-catalogue/beloved-conversations/>

Thanks to the Book Discussion group for offering an opportunity to read and discuss James Addington's *Tragic Investment*: <https://www.rjamesaddington.com/> At the end of his book, Addington proposes some possible anti-racism actions that people can take. I will share these ideas with our Work Group for further discussion.

Addington will join us this month for a Sunday service, providing an opportunity for us to learn more about his ideas.

Thanks to everyone for committing yourselves and SCUUF to dismantling white supremacy as individuals and as a congregation.

CRE Spring Hike and Other Plans

by Melissa Woods

We held another successful outdoor gathering at Quarry Park March 28th for a spring hike. It was wonderful to enjoy nature together and support Stearns County conservation efforts. We are planning another CRE gathering at Quarry Park to walk the rest of the paths on Sunday, April 25th at 1 pm. If the weather is not decent that day, we will move the hike to a Sunday in May. If you'd like to be added to the email list to be reminded of CRE events, please email woods.melissa11@gmail.com.

CRE is planning for in-person lessons to resume in the fall assuming the congregation begins to meet again. We will likely have an early August meeting to regroup and start lesson planning. I've gotten wind of a special celebration already being planned for the 60th anniversary that the children will be involved in. We also look forward to hosting a splash pad picnic this summer like we have in the past. Thank you to all the families who continue to be involved in CRE and support SCUUF!

April Meditation (Online)

April 3, 2021: Meditation inspired by *My Grandmother's Hands*

This meditation will draw from the healing perspective and resources offered in the book *My Grandmother's Hands*, by Resmaa Menakem. This book presents a new way of practicing anti-racism, incorporating body awareness and mindfulness.

As many of you know, Jean Keller and Dani Jakubowski have been guiding a wonderful series of online meetings about *My Grandmother's Hands*.

Within the next month or two, there will be some changes in the meditation format. During this past year, meditation readings have been shared with a low-tech approach that only involves e-mail. As the weather gets warmer, we will be trying outdoor walking meditation instead. If you would like further information, please contact Lucinda at lucindahudson9@gmail.com or 320-224-5440.

Meditation is the practice of focusing one's attention with intention and is used in many ways. For example, it can be used to be more aware in the present moment—more mindful of thoughts, words and actions. It can be used for growth and healing, as with loving kindness and self-compassion practices. Meditation can help build inner resources in a variety of ways.

SCUUF Book Club News

by Marcia Neely

Our book club will read Elizabeth Strout's Pulitzer prize winning novel *Olive Kitteridge* and discuss it on Saturday, May 22 at 10:00.

Thanks to Judith Siminoe who has volunteered to lead our book club following the May meeting.

The Caring Committee

The Caring Committee has been formed for the times in each of our lives when we need help from another person. The members of the Caring Committee are available to help members and friends of the St. Cloud UU Fellowship in a variety of ways. Feel free to contact any member of the committee:

Linda Saupe (Chairperson), Marge Bates, Hanni Epp, Doug Polley, Chris Smith, Charlotte Stephens, and Ron Syme.

For anyone with emergency needs, a wide range of services is available from agencies and organizations in the community. These can be accessed by calling 211 (or 800-543-7709).

Calendar Reminders

AVOID ZOOM CONFLICTS: We encourage you to use the Zoom licenses for video conferencing, but please follow the standard reservation process to ensure the Zoom “meeting room” (license) is available at the time you would like to make use of it and to allow others to see planned meetings on the calendar.

Please check the online calendar on our website for scheduled Zoom meetings at www.uufstcloud.org/calendar. A meeting event/room reservation button to submit a form for reservation requests can be found below the calendar on the website. This same button can be used to schedule any Zoom meetings. Please reach out to Jessica Beierman at calendar@uufstcloud.org if you have any questions.

Tom Hergert and Jim Hixson have agreed to be the contacts for the Zoom License and will provide a tutorial for anyone needing to learn how to host a Zoom Meeting. Their contact information can be found in the new UUF Directory.