

St. Cloud UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship



August 2020

August President's Corner
by Ozzie Mayers

By the time you receive this newsletter, Governor Walz Mask Mandate will have been issued. As I said in an earlier weekly message, wearing a Mask in public spaces upholds our first principle: **"The inherent worth and dignity of every person."**

At our last Board meeting, we welcomed Ralph Carr as our new Treasurer and Jim Hixson as our new Member-at-Large; in addition, Doug Polley has assumed the Chair position of the Budget & Finance Committee. I continue to admire our Fellowship members as they carry out our Mission and Vision. The Board ratified its action, previously approved by e-mail, authorizing the Social Justice Committee to donate \$500 from the Sponsorship Funds to the Homeless Helping Homeless Project in St. Cloud.

Some of you have been wondering if we would hold our annual PB&J gathering this summer, but the organizers have decided in consultation with the Board that the necessary restrictions because of the possible spread of Covid-19 is counter to the purpose of such a "relaxed" outdoors' event. So, PB&J will not be held this summer.

The Board's task was a discussion of beginning Virtual Zoom services. To this end, the Board established an Ad Hoc Program Logistics' Committee, led by Lisa Bershok and composed of representatives from the: 1) Technology Committee; 2) Building and Grounds' Committee; 3) the Program Committee; 4) the Music Committee and 5) myself as Board President. This Program Logistics Committee met through Zoom on Wednesday, July 22 and has made the following recommendations: **We will have "Trial Run" Services on Sunday, August 16th and Sunday, August 30th at 10:30 a.m.** Invitations to both of these services will be sent out with helpful guidelines on using Zoom. Details of these services will also be forthcoming after the Committee's next planning session on August 12th. We will begin with a simple format and gradually add to the sessions as we all become familiar with using this virtual process. We are still examining how to accommodate those few among us who may not have access to the appropriate technology; at this point, we are encouraging such members to team up with another member who would be willing to share access to Zoom.

The Widening the Circle of Concern report has arrived, and I have provided it to the Social Justice Committee; this report by the UUA provides ways UU Congregations might be able to address systemic White Supremacy. I will make it available more widely in the near future.

Program Committee News

by Pam Peterson

I would like to thank the Logistics Group (Lisa Bershok, Jane Ellison, Greg Anderson, Tom Hergert, Jim Hixson, Ozzie Mayers) for meeting recently to make plans as we look forward to holding Zoom Services.

We will have Practice Services on two Sunday mornings in August (August 16th and August 30th at 10:30 a.m.).

We are planning to use ZOOM for many of our upcoming services...

So, we need to hear from you if you

1. Don't have access to a computer or smart tablet, such as an iPad
2. Haven't used Zoom

By hearing from you soon, we can problem solve for a way you can access the service.

Contact Pam Peterson at pamelda4@gmail.com

For individuals using Zoom, it would be great if you attended one of the services listed so you get an idea of how it works.

Then we plan to start with two services in September..... September 13th and September 27th.

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

UU the Vote

by Judy Foster

You may have heard of the UUA's UU the Vote initiative for this year's elections. In Minnesota we have a primary election coming up on August 11 and of course the general election on November 3. We want to turn out UUs to advance our values.

The MN UU Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) is working on this initiative in MN, as well as Wisconsin and the Dakotas. At UUF we are supporting MUUSJA and partnering with the local League of Women Voters chapter. Five of our UUF members are also members of the LWV St. Cloud Area (LWVSCA). We have formed a team for Get Out the Vote efforts in our networks: Mary Ness, Linda Peck, Linda Saupe, Charlotte Stephens, and myself. If you would like to join our team, please let me know.

LWSCA is planning to create non-partisan yard signs to promote voting. Our UUF Board has approved us posting such signs on our property when they become available. We are also one of the signatures on a MUUSA grand application from the UU Funding Program to support our outreach.

In Minnesota you can vote by mail without an excuse. Aug. 10 is the deadline for the primary. November ballots can be mailed between Sept. 18 and Nov. 2. See the MN Secretary of State's website for complete information: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/>

Let's get out the vote!

August Meditation Schedule (Online)

by Lucinda Hudson

August 1 (Saturday)

Peace Meditation

This will include an invitation to meditate from Elaine Schrenk, along with selections from the Tao Te Ching (chosen by Liz Vaughan and Lucinda Hudson). The Tao Te Ching draws upon imagery from nature to offer inspiration for living with simplicity, balance, and peace.

August 15 (Saturday)

Water Meditation

The reflective and flowing nature of water will be a theme for this meditation, which will include a recorded "Healing Lake Meditation" by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

These meditations are offered with a low-tech approach that only involves e-mail. You can meditate for whatever amount of time you choose. Many members of the meditation group begin to meditate at 11 AM on Saturdays, but you can pick a different time if that time doesn't work well for you. The form is also flexible, and you can meditate while sitting or while walking--or while practicing any activity in a mindful way. After the meditation, anyone is welcome to share a comment or reflection. To receive meditation readings or 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 reminder

by Marcia Neely

Our next book club meeting is scheduled for Saturday, August 8 at 10:00 am and we will discuss *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver. This meeting will again be on ZOOM. Persons on the book club list will get an email during the prior week with the link to the ZOOM meeting.

If you are interested in being included in emails about the book club, (and don't currently get these emails), please inform Marcia Neely at marciakgarden@gmail.com.

Children's Religious Education

by Melissa Woods

CRE August Update: As the Covid-19 numbers continue to rise, the prospect of us gathering to enjoy a summer picnic together looks grim. I think all parents during this time know how well children social distance! Your CRE leaders miss you all so much and look forward to the day we can see your smiling faces again!

Thanks for Pledging and Contributing!

from your Budget and Finance Committee

Thank you to all those who have renewed their pledges and to those who continue to send contributions our way. In August, your Budget and Finance Committee will be attempting to draft a budget for this fiscal year which started July 1. It would be most helpful to hear now from everyone who is able to make a pledge, indicating the amount you expect to contribute between now and next June 30. Please send an email to our new Treasurer Ralph Carr (treasurer@uufstcloud.org) or mail to him at our Fellowship address below.

Your contributions sustain our continued operations including our book group, meditation and social justice activities during these trying times as well as pay our fixed expenses including utilities and insurance. For those who would like to contribute we recommend our web site (www.uufstcloud.org) where you will find a donate button (for credit cards or PayPal) or send your check to SCUUF Treasurer at P.O. Box 805, St. Cloud, MN 56302.

We want to offer a special thanks to Josh Meehl for all his work as Treasurer and for his excellent record keeping.

Staying Connected through the Summer

from the Caring Committee

This summer while we're not having events or activities due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the Caring Committee reminds us that we don't need to lose our connection with others from the Fellowship. From our homes we can reach out to another member by phone or email. Outdoors there are many options for being together with another person. You can meet for a walk, bike ride, or garden work. Sit together for conversation on a patio or deck, or meet in a park or have a picnic. To share your ideas of other ways to stay connected with SCUUF folks during the pandemic restrictions, contact Hanni Epp so we can include them in the September newsletter.

This summer we're doing things differently, but we can continue to be a caring congregation. Just be sure to follow the guidelines of keeping a safe distance and wearing a mask. Contact one of us or another friend if you need a phone call or assistance during this time. 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. The following committee members can be reached using the contact information in the UUF Directory:

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).

Working Together for Unity and Justice - August 16 Event Planned

by Charlotte Stephens

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the Greater St Cloud Faith Leaders group, where I represent the Fellowship, will not be having the annual August potluck picnic for members of faith communities this year. We had begun planning a different kind of event at Lake George when we learned that the city is not allowing events at their parks and other facilities. Wanting to keep the spotlight focused on combating racism and the need for change in our communities, we are now hoping to have a SERIES of events with the title or theme of "St Cloud Faith Communities Working Together for Unity and Justice."

The events, beginning on the afternoon of August 16, will be held at various congregation/faith communities' sites (on a rotating basis) with a second congregation/faith community serving as co-host each time. The August 16 event and another in the fall will be outdoors on site or in the parking lot, allowing for social distancing and mask-wearing, as well as the potential for those who prefer to remain in their vehicles in the parking lot to still hear the program. It's likely that each event will include

readings and prayers about unity and justice from various faith traditions as well as music or art, a get acquainted activity, and a call to action.

Fellowship members are invited to attend each event and we may have an opportunity to serve as co-host for a future event. For now, you can put this on your calendar for August 16 at 4:00pm. Look for details including location in the SCUUF Weekly Message on August 9.

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.