

**St. Cloud
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Fellowship**



June 2020

June President's Corner
by Ozzie Mayers

As we continue to face the real possibility that our Fellowship may not be able to assemble throughout the coming year, the Board is drafting a plan to begin holding Virtual Sunday Services through Zoom. We will consider such a plan at our next Board meeting, which will be on June 28th rather than the 21st since that is Father's Day. I must stress that these plans are in the preliminary stages; I welcome suggestions from you. We will take into consideration those among us who might not have access to a computer or laptop as well as those who might find using Zoom challenging. One possibility is to have such people team up with someone who does have the technology and who is familiar with using Zoom. These partners would have to meet together, keeping in mind the restrictions on safe distancing and would need to wear face masks. I will certainly keep the Fellowship informed as these plans firm up.

Because of the Coronavirus, the UUA is holding a virtual General Assembly, June 24-28; registration is \$150.00. If you are interested in attending the GA, you can apply for assistance with the registration fee by submitting your request to me as soon as possible. After you attend the GA, please submit to the Board or a relevant SCUUF Committee a brief summary of the most important aspects of the GA events in which you participated. Here is the site for registration: <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/registrants>. Let me know if you wish to attend as a Member Delegate; this allows you to attend the Business Meetings. I will forward the Member Delegate Credentials you will need to apply.

I am providing a link to information about the challenges of holding Church services during the pandemic by Dr. Michael Osterholm, an Infectious Disease Epidemiologist, Regents Professor, and Director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the U of Minnesota; you will need to paste this link to your browser: <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/newsdetail/osterholm-and-walz-talk-covid-19-and-churches-13993626>

Finally, while we usually do not publish a monthly newsletter over the summer months, the Board believes it would benefit us to have them over this summer since it may help us stay connected to one another. Jessica Beierman, our Newsletter Editor, has agreed to publish these Summer Newsletters and will notify you when news items are due.

Program Committee News

by Pam Peterson

While our congregation is closed due to Coronavirus, we wanted to present opportunities to you for ongoing engagement in Unitarian Universalism. The following UU congregations in MN are streaming their Sunday services. Some of our members have attended these services virtually, and we encourage you to check them out yourselves.

SERVICES AVAILABLE ONLINE:

Michael Servetus Unitarian Society in Fridley...Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

<http://www.msuu.org/>

Skip and I have participated in these services for about 6 weeks now and have found them very meaningful. The services include a Time for All Ages and music selections as well as reflections by their minister. There is often an opportunity for discussion in small groups (going to specific breakout rooms as a part of Zoom) following the service for those wanting to participate.

Other UU Fellowships having services online...

White Bear UU Church, 10 a.m. Sun. <http://www.wbuuc.org/>

First Universalist in Mpls., 10 a.m. Sun. <http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/>

First Unitarian Society, Mpls., 10:30 a.m. Sun. <http://firstunitarian.org/>

Unity Church-Unitarian in St. Paul, 10 a.m. Sun. <http://www.unityunitarian.org/>

ZOOM Meetings: Since you need to access Zoom to attend these services as well as meetings and events such as our Book Group, I would like to know who is able to use the Zoom app at this time. Please send me an e-mail at pamelda4@gmail.com to let me know if you are presently able to use Zoom. This will help us in our planning as we consider having possible Zoom group meetings. You need to download the Zoom app on the device you plan to use. If you plan to use a computer or smart device, you need to make sure you have a camera and microphone, and that they are turned on. Most laptops, tablets and smartphones have this built in. (Not all desktop computers do). Also, make sure that you have the volume turned up on your device.

Online UUF services from a UU minister who grew up in our Fellowship

by Jane Ellison

Here is some information about my daughter Allison's UU services online that members of the Fellowship may be interested in:

Some of you remember Allison Palm, who grew up in the St. Cloud Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and is currently the Minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Nashua New Hampshire. Glen and I have been enjoying attending her services each Sunday since they went online and SCUUF stopped programming. If anyone is interested in joining a service, they are available each Sunday at 9 Central Time (10 Eastern Time) and can be accessed at UUNashua.org. On their website homepage, there is a zoom link within the yellow section that is labelled: Our Next Service and then has the service title in bold. Although we at SCUUF do not have the advantages that UUNashua has (full time staff), we may also get some great ideas for creating online services for SCUUF moving forward. We have really

enjoyed how Allison uses many members of her congregation to bring wonderful words, songs, ways of connecting, to each program.

“Something NEW” - TOUCHSTONES Monthly UU Journal by Pam Peterson

This past month the SCUUF Board approved ordering “TOUCHSTONES” to be an addition to our newsletter.

It will come as an attachment. TOUCHSTONES is a monthly journal of Unitarian Universalism, which is

written by UU minister Kirk Loadman-Copeland, drawing from many sources. I have personally come across numerous UU groups using this resource. There is a monthly theme which is introduced and includes daily readings, family activities and discussion. The upcoming themes for the summer are as follows: July - Harmony, August - Creation. Each year there will be 12 new themes. I hope you will find parts of the monthly journal valuable to you.

Building Bridges - Letters of Solidarity by Charlotte Stephens

The Greater St. Cloud Faith Leaders group, where I represent SCUUF, sent a letter to each of the mosque locations in St. Cloud at the beginning of Ramadan. The letter said:

We extend to you our heartfelt greetings at the beginning of Ramadan. May this holy month dedicated to prayer, fasting and charity be a time of blessing, joy and togetherness for you and your families. We are thinking of you during this challenging time of the coronavirus, knowing that this Ramadan will be different and difficult; we are praying for your continued health, safety, and well-being. As your allies and friends, we are united with you in building bridges of peace, understanding and dialogue among our area's different cultures and faith traditions. May you know of our solidarity and prayers, during this holy month of Ramadan, and always.

The Faith Leaders group adapted to the pandemic restrictions by holding the May meeting via Zoom, and acknowledging that it's unlikely that we will be able to host public events this summer such as Dine and Dialogue and the annual picnic at Lake George. The group decided to write a letter of support for workers and families during this COVID-19 pandemic. The letter of solidarity was sent to the St. Cloud Times, and also was read at the May 11 public car rally for workers at Pilgrim's Pride plant in Cold Spring. The St. Cloud Times published the letter on Sunday May 24 and included 22 names of signers representing 11 denominations, including me representing UUF.

Below is one excerpt, and you can read the whole letter

at <https://www.sctimes.com/story/opinion/2020/05/23/letter-solidarity-amidst-covid-19/5232589002/>

"As faith leaders in the greater St. Cloud area, we believe that we all have a role to play in overcoming this pandemic together. We thank those workers who have been put at significant risk for the sake of others. We urge all employers to continue to put in place safeguards to keep their employees and

clients' safety as top priority. We invite all members of our community to continue to seek ways to show support, offer help and share hope."

SCUUF Book Club News

By Marcia Neely

The book club's two previous meetings have been conducted using ZOOM. We have another book club meeting scheduled for Saturday, August 8 at 10:00 and will discuss *Flight Behavior* by Barbara Kingsolver. This meeting will likely again be on-line, but we will wait until closer to that time to make a final decision.

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.

Meditation Schedule for May

by Lucinda Hudson

1) Online Meditation on June 6th, courtesy of Helen Manion

This meditation will deal with fear, worry and suffering and how mindfulness and awareness can help us through difficult times. Readings will include a poem by Mary Oliver and a short essay by Toni Bernhard.

2) Online Meditation on June 20th, courtesy of Malcolm Nazareth

Our time will include a recording of interfaith prayer and music in the context of COVID-19, as well as Unitarian Universalist readings and song recordings.

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--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.

Children's Religious Education

by Melissa Woods

The end of our year surely didn't look like normal, but I'm proud to say the children's religious education program is still thriving! We have connected almost every Sunday during our separation and even taught virtual lessons to the kids! Thank you to all the families who have joined in on our zoom calls. While we usually have a summer picnic at a splash pad park to announce in June's newsletter, this year the event is unlikely to happen. Depending on how the summer and the pandemic progress, there is a possibility we can still plan something. If you'd like to be on the mailing list to know if this event does get rescheduled, please email me at woods.melissa11@gmail.com.

A huge thank you goes out to all the teachers, parents, volunteers, and children who made this year very successful! We cannot wait to gather again (hopefully) in the fall and see your smiling faces!

Getting Outside and Staying Connected

from the Caring Committee

Now that spring and warmer weather have arrived, some of us are getting outside with another member for a walk on a trail or in a park, maintaining social distance and wearing a mask when needed. Other members are spending time gardening together or sitting at a distance for conversation on a patio or deck. We are adapting to doing things differently, and we need to be mindful, so we stay safe. If you want to share your ideas of other ways to stay connected with UU folks during the pandemic restrictions, contact Hanni Epp so we can include them in a future article.

Until we can all be together again, we encourage each of you to reach out and make telephone or electronic connections with others in the Fellowship. In the midst of COVID-19 we can continue to be a caring congregation. Please contact one of us (see list below) 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. Feel free to contact any member of the committee 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).

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.