

# St. Cloud UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship

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## May 2020

### 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](mailto: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.

*I heard this poem as a part of the April 26th service, and would like to share it with you...*

**LET US BEGIN AGAIN**

by Lois Van Leer

Having let go,  
Set our intentions,  
Named our curiosity,  
Committed our energies,  
And given ourselves over to lives of  
balance, purpose and meaning,  
Let us begin again  
In love.

## May President's Corner by Ozzie Mayers

At our March Board meeting, the Nominating Committee recommended to the Board that we keep leadership the same for next year. The Board researched this recommendation in regard to our Constitution and took into account our likely inability to have an Annual Meeting in May. Based on the feedback we received on the Constitution, the Board voted to keep leadership stable as we move into next year, unless individuals would like to step down from their positions. The Nominating Committee contacted current leaders and asked them whether or not they would continue in their positions next year. All leaders, with the exception of the Treasurer, have agreed to continue in their leadership position next year. Thanks to Joshua Meehl, who served as Treasurer this year; I also want to express my appreciation to all the leaders who have agreed to continue in their leadership positions next year. Such dedication deserves our gratitude, and I am hoping that others will express their appreciation to these leaders.

What follows are decisions that the Board made at our April Zoom meeting and is based on the information from the MN Dept of Health, the CDC, and Governor Walz's office. From the information that has come forth at this time, it appears that the Coronavirus may not reach its peak in MN until mid-July. Given that real possibility as well as the high number of vulnerable people in our congregation, the Board has decided on the following:

1. The Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for May 15th, is postponed until the Fall, unless the restrictions on large gatherings are still in place. One other option is that we might be able to hold a Zoom Annual meeting in the Fall, given that we will have had considerable practice with this on-line option by then as the Board approved applying for a Zoom license at a reduced rate, thanks to the Mid-America Regional Office. (More about this option below). We will continue to monitor the information about the spread of the virus and the option of large gatherings.
2. John and Linda Peck have postponed our Annual Picnic, originally scheduled for May 24th at their home and will notify us if, and when, it will be rescheduled.
3. Summer Programming has been cancelled, but the Board encourages on-line gatherings when possible. Some groups, such as the Meditation Group, the CRE, and the Book Discussion group have already been doing this.
4. The Board also recommends that the Fellowship Building continue to be closed for gatherings through June.
5. The Board Approved Applying for a Zoom License

*"The UUA has negotiated with Zoom to provide congregations with a Business Level license for a discounted price of \$110 per license. We are excited to announce that we have launched the registration page for this service. These will be sub-accounts of the UUA and must be paid annually. What do you get for this license?"*

- *Up to 300 Attendees (Pro Account limits to 100)*
  - *Meetings can be unlimited in length (Pro Account limits to 24 hours)*
  - *Custom Meeting ID*
  - *Breakout rooms*
  - *Polling*
- a. 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. Scheduling for such a meeting will be done as we would any other meeting through Jessica Beierman (see the Calendar Reminders section of the newsletter for details).

6. We will be asking for a volunteer to assume the Treasurer's position next year. See Lisa Bershok's request below. The Board also approved the request from the Budget & Finance Committee that the bookkeeping duties of the Treasurer be done by a separate person. We will be working with this Committee on this independent Contract.
7. The Board agreed that we should continue to seek volunteers for an Ad Hoc Committee to organize a 60th Anniversary in 2021 of the Fellowship formation in 1961. We suggest that the celebration be held in the Spring of 2021. Therefore, I am seeking volunteers for this Committee. Please let me know if you would be willing to be a part of it.
8. Lisa Bershok, our President-Elect, will be holding a Leadership Zoom meeting, originally scheduled for June 6<sup>th</sup>. She will notify next year's leaders about the date for this meeting.

### **Treasurer Position**

The SCUUF is seeking a volunteer for our treasurer position for program year 2020-2021. The position will start July 1st, 2020 and end June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 as this corresponds with our fiscal year. We will have a separate bookkeeper position. The duties of the treasurer will be as detailed below. Please contact Lisa Bershok at lpbershok@gmail.com or 303-518-3886 if you are interested in this volunteer opportunity.

- Collect Sunday offerings.
- Conduct all banking business, including paying bills, depositing payments, opening/renewing/cashing in CD's.
- Post deposits and payments to bookkeeper.
- Record all financial transactions and keep copies of all bills.
- Maintain log of pledgers and their payments: advise pledgers of progress in meeting pledges.
- Maintain log of rent payments.
- Review reports submitted by bookkeeper, validate, and distribute copies to Budget and Finance Committee, Board members, and Committee Chairs.
- Serve on SCUUF Board of Directors and on the Budget and Finance Committee.
- Obtain and submit any necessary tax forms, such as W-2s, W-4s, 1099s, as well as letters to donors documenting single gifts of \$250 or more.
- Provide year-to-date fiscal report for annual meeting.
- Perform other fiduciary duties as requested through SCUUF Board or Budget and Finance Committee.

“Depending on demand we may have plots available in our Community Garden this year. (There is no fee for UUF members.) If interested, contact Judy Foster at jfoster58@charter.net or 320-240-6362.”

## **We Get Through This Together – A Message from UUA President**

Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray - excerpted by Charlotte Stephens

*(NOTE: Since March 6th UUA President Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray has sent a weekly email message to UU congregations. Below are excerpts from April 23. Send an email to me at charlow@cloudnet.com to have weekly messages forwarded to you.)*

...This week marks the beginning of another holy season. Ramadan begins for Muslims across the world. In this time of physical distancing, collective grief, and economic hardship, the shared ritual of daily fasting from dawn to dusk is an act that invites compassion for those who experience hunger, charity and generosity to ensure others have enough, a deepened attention to spiritual practices, and a powerful experience of connection and community.

...This week also marks the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. What a time to remember how deeply interconnected our global world is. This isn't just about the spread of coronavirus; it's about how important global cooperation is for combatting pandemics and the climate crises; it's about the economy and how much our well-being and basic needs depend on others. On this Earth Day, may we remember we are knitted together and held by an inescapable social fabric.

This season elevates the values of interdependence, solidarity, and cooperation. Interestingly, Unitarian Universalism lives with an inherent tension between individualism and interdependence. The values of freedom, liberty, and the right of conscience are a core part of our principles as are the values of equity, responsibility, and interdependence. Ideally, this represents a middle path that celebrates the beauty of individuality and the power of beloved community...

Today, in our country, we see the stark tensions between these values on full display. We have people protesting stay at home orders in the name of liberty and public officials lifting them despite the risks to public health. On the other hand, we have one of the largest examples of global solidarity ever witnessed with people staying at home and doing everything in their power to help protect their neighbors, elders, those at higher risk, and everyone who must be out working in critical essential services.

...Everything about this pandemic shows us how interconnected we are – how much we need each other. This is a time for connection, for community, for cooperation and solidarity. During this season when our lives and world are so different than we imagined they would be just a few short months ago, may we lean in more to the rituals and practices that remind us of our interdependence. May we lean more fully into our relationships and our community. May we all find ways to give more generously, in whatever ways we are able, so that everyone in our communities, large and small, feel held and will have enough.

May we invite the practices that keep us connected, compassionate, and loving in these days. May loving community surround you and hold you.

Yours in love, Susan

## **SCUUF Book Club News**

By Marcia Neely

We are reading Bryan Stevenson's book called *Just Mercy* a compelling account of Stevenson's work to seek legal justice for those on death row and for incarcerated youth, women, the intellectually disabled, the poor, and those wrongly committed. The book has won numerous awards and was made into a movie with the same name. Via a ZOOM meeting, which Glen Palm will host, we will discuss the book starting at 10:00 on Saturday, May 16. If you are on the book club list, you will receive an invitation from Glen; if you are not on the list and wish to join us, contact Marcia Neely at [marciakgarden@gmail.com](mailto:marciakgarden@gmail.com).

## **Meditation Schedule for May**

by Lucinda Hudson

In May there will be online meditation readings available each Saturday, with the exception of May 16th. (This is to avoid a time conflict with the book group's online meeting on May 16th.) These meditations are offered with a low-tech approach that only involves e-mail. You can meditate for whatever amount of time you choose. Even a few minutes of meditation can be calming and grounding. 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.

On May 2nd, Elaine will be sharing a meditation reading for zazen practice. The rest of the May meditation schedule is still being worked out. On one Saturday in May there will be readings for an outdoor walking meditation, and you can practice this wherever you choose. There will also be a meditation on the art of solitude. After the meditation, anyone is welcome to share a comment or reflection. If you'd prefer to receive just the readings and not the responses, you can ask to be on the Bcc (Blank carbon copy) list. To receive the May meditation readings--or if you have any questions or would like to try just one or two of the meditations--please contact Lucinda at [lucindahudson9@gmail.com](mailto: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 in the present moment--aware and mindful of thoughts, words and actions. It can be used for growth and healing as with the loving kindness and self-compassion practices. Meditation can be used to build inner resources in a variety of ways.

## Children's Religious Education

by Melissa Woods

During this unusual time apart, the SCUUF children have been staying connected. Each Sunday we meet on a zoom call together and have distance lessons. Sometimes we just chat and ask questions to get to know each other better! It's been very rewarding for the kids to stay in touch and remember their UU friends.

This past month, Lois Head organized a very thoughtful initiative to send letters for the UU children. You should have all gotten her email sent to the membership list inviting you to send a card or letter to one of the children in our fellowship on a given day. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all who participated! The kids loved it! There is something magical about getting mail and finding out someone is thinking about you.

While the CRE meetings and events are all canceled currently, we look forward to when it is safe to gather again. Perhaps we will still be able to enjoy our annual summer picnic; we will keep everyone posted! If you would like to be added to the email list of those involved with CRE, please send a note to [woods.melissa11@gmail.com](mailto:woods.melissa11@gmail.com).

## Sharing for Our Future

from your Budget and Finance Committee

Did you miss our annual pledge drive this spring while Sunday services are suspended in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic? Our planned theme for this year's pledge drive, **Sharing for Our Future**, remains relevant, reflecting our commitment to the long-term vitality of this Fellowship as well as to building relationships of support and caring among ourselves.

Although the pledge drive isn't happening this spring, we don't want you to miss the chance to support the Fellowship as you have in the past.

- If you like to make one gift for the year at the time of the spring pledge drive, you can make your gift now.
- If you usually pay your pledge throughout the year, you can keep making payments now and in the coming weeks and months.
- If you put cash in the collection plate, you can give by using one of the options shown below.

While we're not passing the collection plate on Sundays, we invite you to use the mail to send a check, or switch to online donations. Thanks for your ongoing support of the Fellowship.

Checks can be mailed to:

SCUUF

P.O. Box 805

St. Cloud, MN 56302

There is now a **DONATE** button on the web site, <https://www.uufstcloud.org/>. We can use PayPal or credit cards to donate there. We are looking into other online donation systems too. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Treasurer Joshua Meehl at [joshua@meehl.org](mailto:joshua@meehl.org). Keep in mind that SCUUF is charged a percentage of each online contribution as a service fee.

## **Social Justice Committee** by Linda Peck

Here is how the Social Justice Committee's budget was distributed for 2020.

- \$25.00 for Pride Event
- \$100 for Dine and Dialogue
- \$34.00 for Pride Parade/Walk
- \$200.00 to Homeless Helping Homeless
- \$200.00 to Neighbors to Friends
- \$200 to Catholic Workers of Central MN
- \$150.00 to Mid-Mn Legal Aid
- \$100.00 to the Promise Neighborhood
- \$90.00 to Planned Parenthood.

*A special thank you to all members of the SJC for making this possible by using emails back and forth to arrive at consensus. Our thanks to Josh for getting the checks sent out very quickly- these organizations need this money NOW. The SJC has \$1.00 left in its budget - pretty good!*

## **The Caring Committee**

The Caring Committee members enjoyed connecting with Fellowship friends over the last few weeks. During these months when we're not meeting together in person, we encourage each of you to reach out and make telephone or electronic connections with others in the Fellowship. 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](http://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](mailto: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.*