

**St. Cloud
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
Fellowship**



September 2020

10:30 a.m. Sunday, September 13: Water Ceremony 2020 - Adapting to Change

As we begin a new year together, we continue a tradition and also we acknowledge that much has changed since our last in-person Sunday Service on March 15. The sharing portion of the water ceremony provides the traditional opportunity for you to say something about water that is special to you. Or in recognition of our changed world, you may comment on the challenges and blessings you have found in the pandemic and events of the summer.

10:30 a.m. Sunday, September 27: Emotions and Spirituality...

Rev. Shelley Dugan

Emotions are a particular way of knowing. They carry insight and wisdom. However, emotions can get in the way. They can distort our thinking and make a mess. Emotions can be wonderful and yet feel terrible.

Emotions, religion and spirituality intersect—enriching or diminishing each other. Join us as we explore what science and spirituality have to say about emotions.

Program Committee News: Sunday Services via Zoom

The Program Committee is preparing for two services per month as we begin the new year using Zoom. A few days before each service you will receive an emailed invitation with instructions about how to connect with Zoom for that service. Many elements of a traditional service will be included but some will look different because we aren't together in the same space. Some of the differences are outlined below.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Send your announcements of UU-related activities to Ozzie by the day before the service to have them included.

CHALICE LIGHTING: The leader will light a candle or chalice, and we suggest that each of you light a candle (artificial or actual flame) at your home. If you have children at home, we encourage you to include them in this activity.

MUSIC: There will be a variety of music, and for some pieces you may want to sing along from wherever you are.

OFFERING: The collection for support of the Fellowship will not involve two children coming around to receive your gifts, but we will provide information about how you can continue your support.

PRESENTATION: Whoever is leading the presentation will be at their own choice of location. No one will be at the Fellowship building.

CLOSING: At the end the leader will extinguish their chalice or candle and remind you to extinguish yours.

For the September 13 Service we won't be combining waters which is symbolic of our shared faith coming from many sources and of our connection to each other. Instead, the leader will symbolically acknowledge that connection as you share your comments about water or adapting to change. Our next service on September 27 will be with UU minister, Rev. Shelley Dugan. Looking ahead to October, the Sunday Service dates via Zoom will be October 11 and 25.

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

HELP NEEDED FOR SERVICES

Our Program Committee has members who plan the services for the year.

We would appreciate volunteers to:

1. Join the committee
2. Plan one service for the year
3. Participate in a planned service
(For example, do a reading, do
Time for Children)

Contact Pam Peterson by texting
320-225-4448.

September President's Corner

by Ozzie Mayers

“In our time of grief, we light a flame
of sharing, the flame of ongoing life.

In this time when we search for
understanding and serenity in the
face of loss, we light this sign of our
quest for truth, meaning, and community.”

Christine Robinson

I begin my column with this Chalice Lighting in honor of Elaine Schrenk, who died on August 17th. Throughout these past weeks, Elaine remained clear about her pending death but also remained positive about getting through each day. Though others in the Fellowship knew Elaine for a much longer time than I, I can say that in the time I did get to know her and work closely with her on the Board, her kindness and generosity modeled our UU Principles. She will remain in my heart.

The Board passed the 2020-21 Budget submitted by the Budget & Finance Committee; Committee Chairs will be receiving copies of the budget. Our first “Trial” Zoom Service on August 16th went quite well with about 31 people attending. I want to express my appreciation to the Logistics’ Committee for organizing this first Trial: Lisa Bershok, Tom Hergert, Jim Hixson, Pam Peterson, Jane Ellison, and Greg Erickson. I was pleased to see that those who do not have the technology for Zoom were able to meet with others who do. The next Trial Zoom Service will be on Sunday, August 30th, 10:30 a.m. The Logistics Committee, using the feedback it received from the Polling immediately after the Zoom Trial, will be meeting again to continue to improve our Zoom Services.

Building upon our virtual Zoom Services experiences, the Board has agreed to set a **tentative** date for a virtual **Annual Meeting on October 4th**; I stress that this is a tentative date, given the uncertainties of the Covid-19 situation.

The Board also believes we should continue to organize a 61st Anniversary of the founding of the Fellowship. Again, these plans are subject to change as we progress through the coming year. The Board has generated a few initial suggestions: 1) plan a Summer 2021 date for an in-person event; 2) provide video interviews over the coming year of people with a history of being a Fellowship member; 3) throughout the coming year send out significant photos of past events over the past 61 years. **At this time, I’m inviting anyone who might want to be on an Ad Hoc Anniversary Planning Committee to send me your name. This celebration will be as good as those of us who are willing to shape it.**

The next Zoom Board Meeting is on Sunday, September 20th, 9:00 a.m.

In Gratitude and Joyousness: A Tribute to Elaine Schrenk

Elaine was a gifted and dedicated member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship who died peacefully at St. Cloud Hospital on August 17th, 2020. Only a few months ago she was diagnosed with lung cancer. In the midst of this great challenge, she continued living peacefully and gracefully, sharing her wisdom and serenity with other participants in the UU online meditation group.

After joining the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in 2015, Elaine contributed to the community in many different ways. She served on the Budget and Finance Committee and the Executive Board, including a year in the role of Treasurer. Elaine was always eager to learn new things and had a very strong creative side. She also gave thoughtful attention to detail. With her modest and rather reserved nature, Elaine didn't draw attention to herself or her accomplishments. She was true to herself in whatever she did.

Here are some reflections about Elaine, from those who had learned about her passing:
Although I am sad, my heart is content knowing that Elaine was SO happy to be a part of our UU Fellowship...such a gentle, insightful person...Elaine was caring and creative. One Sunday we discussed garden designing, and the next week she gave me a sketch she made of her garden, to show the walking paths and sculptures that she created...I gained appreciation for Elaine when she and I shared coffee service together and she thought we should serve deviled eggs, so we did! What a gentle, kind soul...She had a way of making me feel comfortable in her presence, as I am sure she did with so many others. She was a giving soul who will be missed...She was so humble. When at the Food Coop one day, I complimented her on how artistic she would always make the vegetable case look. She smiled an accomplished bashful smile. I will miss her...Her kindness and generosity modeled our UU Principles...She had a deep, abiding compassion for all humanity.

The forest held a special place in Elaine's heart. In a piece that she wrote for the meditation group, she shared that her "walk with zen" began as she explored the woods at the age of twelve. She wrote that "the deep resonance of the trees, the beauty of the whispering forest, took my attention like nothing else. I felt close to the Universe...Living in this continuum makes it logical to enter whatever phase of existence comes next, as it can only be expressed in gratitude and joyousness."

There may be a memorial service for Elaine at a later date. If you would like to send a sympathy card to Elaine's family, contact Charlotte Stephens for the address. Elaine's sister Carol said, "The Unitarian Fellowship meant the world to Elaine." In her obituary (<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sctimes/obituary.aspx?n=elaine-a-schrenk&pid=196676989>) the UU Fellowship was listed as one of the potential recipients of memorial gifts. Elaine was beloved by many and will be greatly missed at SCUUF.

White Supremacy Survey

Despite the pandemic restrictions, our Dismantling White Supremacy Team has been working. We have prepared a base line survey to get a sense of where we are as a congregation regarding this important issue, more important than ever since the murder of George Floyd not far away from us. The results of the survey will be shared at the Sept. 12 Leadership Retreat for SCUUF Board members and committee chairs. We will, of course, also report the results to all of you in the October Newsletter.

The deadline to receive the survey is Sept. 5, to allow us time to tabulate the results for the Leadership Retreat. If you are not in our Directory, you would not have received the link, but you can still participate. Contact Judy Foster, jfoster58@charter.net, and she will send the link to you.

For background on this endeavor, please note the following from our Long-Range Plan, approved in May 2019:

- 1. GOAL FOUR: INFUSE ALL ASPECTS OF FELLOWSHIP LIFE WITH A COMMITMENT TO DISMANTLE THE CULTURE OF WHITE SUPREMACY**
This social justice initiative is being championed by the UUA and embraced by members throughout the nation. The cultural phenomenon of white supremacy is so deeply ingrained in the culture of the United States, that only through thoughtful, considered, and dedicated action may we ever hope to dismantle it and craft an inclusive culture reflecting our nation's diversity.
 - Improve support for social/environmental justice programming and outreach, especially white supremacy and anti-racism work per the request of the UUA
 - Ask all committees to examine their goals and activities to explore ways to support this initiative.

The Dismantling White Supremacy Team was formed to oversee progress on this goal. You are welcome to contact any member of our team if you have questions.

Hanni Epp is chair of the team and has agreed to serve as our Racial Justice Liaison to the MN UU Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA).

We thank you for your participation in the survey.

Hanni Epp, Judy Foster, Jean Keller

Pride and Peace Gathering

From Judy Foster

As you know, St. Cloud Pride has been cancelled this year because of COVID-19, though there may be some virtual events. One of those virtual events is a Pride and Peace Gathering (instead of the Faith Community Pride and Peace March held last year) to be held at 4 p.m., September 16. Four of us from SCUUF have agreed to attend the event via Zoom: Winnette Crete, Ozzie Mayers, Jo Weis, and myself. Ozzie will say a few words about SCUUF and one of us will share a reading representative of our faith community. Other congregations will also be participating.

If any of you are interested in joining the meeting to support LGBTQ people, please let me know so that I can send you the Zoom link when it becomes available.

UU the Vote

From Judy Foster

Our SCUUF UU the Vote Team has been hard at work calling and emailing folks listed in our Directory about voter registration, absentee voting (including mail-in and drop-off), tracking your absentee ballot, early in-person voting, polling places, etc. If you have a question about when, how, or where to vote in the Nov. 3 general election, you are welcome to contact any member of our team: Mary Ness, Linda Peck, Linda Saupe, Charlotte Stephens, and myself. If you would like to join our team, please let me know.

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!

September Meditation Schedule (Online)

by Lucinda Hudson

Next month there will be an online meditation on September 5th, and this meditation will be dedicated to Elaine Schrenk. Readings will include several poems. One of them will be "The Peace of Wild Things" by Wendell Berry, a poem that Elaine loved.

For at least the next several months, only one meditation will be planned for each month.

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 News

by Marcia Neely

Next book selection for SCUUF Book Club: The book club has selected *The Bridge on the Drina* by Ivo Andric to read for our next meeting which is scheduled for Saturday, October 17 @ 10:00 a.m. We will likely meet on Zoom again. If you are interested in joining us and do not regularly get emails about the book club, contact Marcia Neely at marciakgarden@gmail.com.

Fall 2020 Directory Coming Soon - Are You In?

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 October 12th at 303-503-8964 or jebershok@gmail.com. At the end of October 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.

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.