

St. Cloud UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST Fellowship



March 2023

10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 5: Affirming the Human Right to Reproductive Health and Freedom – Morgan Muelken

Our denomination has a long history of support for Reproductive Justice which includes “commitment to building a world in which all people are able to make choices about their bodies, their health, and their families within safe, thriving communities.” Muelken, a Planned Parenthood Educator, will talk about the challenges and opportunities faced by Planned Parenthood as they provide reproductive health services and education in St. Cloud and beyond. What can we do to support their work?

Sunday services are presented in the Fellowship building and on Zoom.

In March, the presenters plan to be at the Fellowship building.

Visit www.uufstcloud.org for information to join on Zoom.

Coffee/tea will be served following the services.

10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 12: The Purpose of Pain – Rev. Shelley Dugan (Daylight Savings Time Begins)

When we hurt, we often ask “Why did this happen to me?” We don't usually want an answer; there is no answer that would satisfy. Later, when we've had time and experienced some healing, we discover we have gained something from our troubles. Pain does far more than tell us to take our hand off a hot stove. It is important for our individual and collective survival, spiritual growth, and our education. Together we will explore the purpose of pain, gain appreciation for this backward gift, and understand that if there was no pain, we would be in a world of hurt!

10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 19: Days of Wonder – Bill Vossler

Despite life-altering trials as he was growing up, Bill was saved by his Germans-from-the-Ukraine enclave of 1,288 people who lived “It takes a village.” Mentors affirmed his worth, accepted his eccentricities, and urged him to pursue his chosen directions in life—digging for fossils, building a baseball stadium, spending hours amidst the glories of nature, reading widely, and following wherever his never-ending curiosity took him. This has led to his so-far 44 years of professional writing. He will be reading excerpts from his latest book, his memoir, *Days of Wonder*.

10:30 a.m. Sunday, March 26: The Transient and Permanent in Unitarian Universalism – Meleah Houseknecht, UU seminarian

To contribute to SCUUF:

Send a check to SCUUF, PO Box 805,
St. Cloud, MN 56302, or

Make a contribution by debit/credit
card or PayPal by clicking on this link:

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

Over the course of our 200-or-so-year history as a denomination, what it means to be a Unitarian (or) Universalist has undergone considerable change. Transformation has not always been easy. Over the coming months we are faced with the opportunity to be a part of the sacred task of renewing our faith and our movement. What can the transcendentalist revolutionaries of early American Unitarianism teach us about what it means to be a living faith tradition today? What is it that holds us together in sacred covenant now and into the future, and what are the outward manifestations of our shared faith that are ready to be transformed for a new age?

President's Corner

By Pam Peterson

Greetings, Beloveds. It's so refreshing to see many at the Fellowship and on Zoom! What a great time many had at the Valentine's Waffle Brunch! Many thanks to the Membership Committee for sponsoring this event.

We have several events to look forward to. See information on these events on the bottom of page 4 and the top of page 5 related to the piano and cello concert (March 26), Peter Mayer concert (April 21), and CRP /AED training (April 1).

Our Annual Meeting will be held at the Fellowship on Friday, May 19th, 7-9 p.m. Please mark your calendar as we hold this important meeting to make plans for the following church year.

It is wonderful that visitors continue to come nearly every Sunday. We welcome them and look forward to them becoming a part of the Fellowship.

I continue to share information from the book *GROWING A BELOVED COMMUNITY* by Tom Owen-Towle. The 8th hallmark of a healthy congregation is "Spread Our Good News."

"Just do it! Start talking every day to someone about something that happens in your church. By doing it, you'll get better at it. The Unitarian Universalist community will be enriched and made stronger by your being a witness for our faith." — Sue Turner

Unitarian Universalism is "an historically viable and theologically genuine"(p. 57) substantive religious alternative. Our mission should not be to convert individuals, but rather to provide them with facts and feelings about Unitarian Universalism.

"Here's a short premier course on who we are and what we might become. As Unitarians, we hold that every living creature is inherently valuable and is to be treated as such. We also contend that the cosmos is unitary, that reality is indivisible and whole, that God/Goddess, the Infinite Spirit, is one. As Universalists, we allege that wisdom is discoverable in every era and corner of the universe; that the only salvation worth having is communal, not individual; and that all creatures are held in the eternal embrace of a loving deity." (p. 58)

We need to communicate how our faith has comforted or challenged us. "We need to boldly talk about the ways in which liberal religion influences our work life, our ethical commitments, and our family bonds."(pp. 58-59) If someone asks us what our Fellowship believes, we can tell him/her that congregations don't believe a certain way—individuals do. It's also a good idea to share heartfelt anecdotes rather than intellectual explanations. "Such is the task of all Unitarian Universalist witnesses whether from the pulpit or pew—to braid heart and mind in daring expression." (p. 61)

Our credo tells what we believe and includes both our spirit and our intellect. An exercise to clarify our credo would be to write a statement of our faith and share with others. "Unitarian Universalism constitutes a hopeful, though relentlessly realistic, message—upbeat news about human nature and life's possibilities. Our shining light needs to emerge from underneath the proverbial bushel. The world hankers for our life-affirming vision, rather than one beset with fear or judgment." (p. 62-63)

We are members of a Beloved Community that is ever-growing and evolving as we walk this path together.

Information about our Sunday programs

From the Program Committee

In March the presenters plan to be at the Fellowship building but weather and other circumstance can cause a change in plans. When that happens we will attempt to have that included in the weekend email announcement from Judy Foster.

The March 5 program presentation was initiated by an ad hoc group of members who met in December to discuss what SCUUF can do in the reproductive justice arena. The group wanted to learn more about what is already being done locally and thought a speaker from Planned Parenthood would have answers. For those who want to learn about the Unitarian Universalist Association's commitment to reproductive justice and reproductive rights, here are links to a few items on the UUA website:

[Reproductive Justice | Statement of Conscience | Social Witness Statements | UUA.org](#)
[UU History of Action Defending Reproductive Rights | UUA.org](#)
[Comparing Frameworks: What is Reproductive Health, Rights, and Justice? | UUA.org](#)

On March 19, those attending in person will have an opportunity to buy Bill Vossler's latest book, *Days of Wonder*, for the discounted price of \$15. He says that it's almost entirely new material that you didn't read in his St. Cloud Times column or elsewhere.

Looking ahead to May 14 we are considering a program that recognizes the importance of mothers, fathers, and other caregivers. Contact Wendy Schoen if you would like to participate with committee members and others in planning this program.

We are also requesting your ideas for summer programs and activities. During the summer months it has been our Fellowship tradition to take a break from weekly Sunday services and instead offer informal opportunities for members to stay connected with one another on any day of the week. If you have an idea for an activity, or maybe an experience you've been dreaming of sharing with other UUs, the program committee would like to hear from you now. Email ideas to: wenschoen@gmail.com

Guidelines for Oral Announcements

From the Communications Committee

The monthly newsletter is the primary tool for communicating with members and friends about SCUUF and other UU-related information and activities. Oral announcements during Sunday services and email messages can be used as a reminder or to call attention to a time-sensitive activity that is happening soon and/or before the next newsletter. An oral announcement relating to an article or activity in the newsletter should be very brief: Name and date of event, plus "For details see the current newsletter."

Oral announcements at our services are made by the president or designee. Members may submit short written announcements to the president who reads them at the beginning of the program. If committees want to highlight a community event that's related to their Fellowship work, their submitted announcement should make an explicit link between the work of their committee and the community event. If someone submits an announcement not related to UU, they will be asked to post it on the community bulletin board. The president may include this statement at the end of announcements: "This time for announcements is reserved for UU information and activities. Look for information about other community events on the Community bulletin board in the foyer."

Party Time with the Social Justice Committee – March 12 after the service

By Linda Peck

After the service on March 5, join others at a postcard writing party at the back of the Fellowship Hall. It will take less than 10 minutes to write a postcard message to President Biden. Postcards will be provided and will already be addressed to him. All you need to do is write a short note asking Biden to not allow fossil fuel development in the western arctic. Bring your coffee or tea if you wish.

Meditation at the UU Fellowship: Saturday, March 18 at 10:30 a.m.

By Lucinda Hudson

This will be a combination guided/silent meditation, focusing on the strength and stability of mountains. Masks will be optional. We'll have tea available after meditation for those who wish to stay and visit. If you would like any further information you can contact either Helen Manion (hmanion@yahoo.com) or Lucinda Hudson (lucindahudson9@gmail.com).

"Cheerful Conversations" March 21

By Brenda Graves

On zoom: Tuesday, March 21st, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. The topic for our discussion this month is "My Favorite Job and Why." If you would like to attend, email Brenda Graves for the zoom link. She is in the SCUUF directory. This event is sponsored by the Caring Committee.

Piano and cello concert to be held at the Fellowship, March 26 at 12:30 p.m.

By Richard Greenstreet

Amy Grinsteiner, an associate professor of music at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University will present a varied concert of piano music. She teaches studio and collaborative piano performance and is the current chair of the music department. She holds degrees from the University of Colorado, Boulder; the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY; the Royal Academy of Music, London, England; and a DMA from the University of Washington, Seattle. Dr. Grinsteiner will be joined by cellist Dr. Thomas Schönberg, a native of Sweden who received his DMA at the University of Hartford, Connecticut, and has studied and performed throughout Europe and the USA. Classical music by the piano/cello duet will include Bach and Mendelssohn.

Admission will be free, but a collection will be taken to fund the performers.

Mark Your calendars: SCUUF to sponsor and host the Peter Mayer concert – April 21 at 7:30 p.m.

By Doug Polley

To enrich our Outreach opportunities for the community, the St. Cloud Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is sponsoring a Family concert with the very talented Peter Mayer. Peter is a singer-songwriter of 25 years, writing songs for the Universe about interconnectedness and the human journey. Cost for the event will be \$20. Other details are not yet in place. For further information, contact Doug Polley whose contact information is in the SCUUF Directory.

CPR/AED training scheduled for Saturday April 1 from 9:00-12:30

There are still slots available for this important training. Contact Julie Peters if you are interested. Her email address and phone number can be found in the SCUUF Directory.

SCUUF book club to meet April 22 at 10:00 in the SCUUF sanctuary

By Judith Siminoe

The Book of Hope, a Survival Guide for Troubled Times by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams will be discussed. *In a world that seems so troubled, how do we hold on to hope?* asks Goodall.

Looking at the headlines—the worsening climate crisis, political upheaval, mass murders, wars—it can be hard to feel optimistic. And yet hope has never been more desperately needed. In this urgent book, Jane Goodall, the world's most famous living naturalist and Doug Abrams, internationally-best-selling author, explore—through intimate and thought-provoking dialogue—one of the most sought after and least understood elements of human nature: hope. In *The Book of Hope*, Goodall focuses on her “Four Reasons for Hope”: The Amazing Human Intellect, The Resilience of Nature, The Power of Young People, and The Indomitable Human Spirit.

The book chosen for the following read and discussion is *The Ministry For The Future*, a work of science fiction by Kim Stanley Robinson. The date for that discussion will be decided later.

MUUSJA workshop report on 8th Principle/Article II

By Judy Foster

The MN UU Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA) hosted a workshop Feb. 18 by Paula Cole Jones, who originated the 8th Principle and served on the Article II Review Commission. The workshop, entitled “Cultivating our Community of Communities,” was designed to help prepare UUs to live into their commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multiculturalism including to become informed delegates who can vote on the 8th Principle and Article II proposals during the 2023 General Assembly (online or in person).

How are we pledging to widen our circles? How are we living into that pledge? How are we rephrasing the UUA principles & covenant among congregations (Article II)? The workshop proposed that instead of thinking of our Fellowship as a “family” with a dominant culture based on documents, structure, and seven UU Principles, we shift to imagining it as a “community of communities,” a Beloved Community based on multiculturalism and eight Principles, including the commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression.

As stated in the proposed Article II revision, “We work to be diverse multicultural Beloved Communities where all people thrive. We covenant to dismantle racism and all forms of oppression within individuals and our institutions. We are accountable to each other for this work.”

Within the Beloved Community, we nurture our communities, whether they be our Board and committees, our task forces, our theological, social, or cultural communities, etc. Furthermore, we support these communities and our individual members as they interact with each other, overcoming their differences with the spirit of Love.

It is hoped that the Community of Communities + 8 Principles can be the source of spiritual awakening and revitalization of Unitarian Universalism.

Spring 2023 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 NAMES of adults, ADDRESS, PHONE (Home and Cell), EMAIL ADDRESS, and FIRST NAME 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 Friday April 14th 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.

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 in-person and 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 in-person and Zoom meetings. Please send an e-mail to calendar@uufstcloud.org if you have any questions.

Tom Hergert has agreed to be the contact for the Zoom license and will provide a tutorial for anyone needing to learn how to host a Zoom meeting. His contact information can be found in the UUF Directory.

WELCOMING CONGREGATION: We are a welcoming congregation that seeks to be a spiritual home for people of free faith. We value the full range of human diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, affectional/sexual orientation, age, national origin, socioeconomic status, and ability.

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3226 Maine Prairie Rd.
P.O. Box 805, St. Cloud, MN 56302
320-252-0020
www.uufstcloud.org