



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

January 2011

Sunday Services at 9:30 am and 11:30 am.

1015 N. Hyland Ave.
Ames, IA 50014
515-292-5960
www.uufames.org
uufa@uufames.org
Vol. 18, No. 01



From the Interim
Minister

Page 2

From the President

Page 3

Transition Team

Page 4

Religious
Education and
Youth

Page 9

Green Corner

Page 11

Copmmittees &
Groups News

Page 12

Stewardship

Page 14

For a current
calendar, see www.
uufames.org

2 *On the Backs of Our Mothers: Justice, Gender, Basketball, and Agriculture*

Linda Barnes

Sometimes amid our angst over social and environmental injustice we fail to appreciate all the progress that has been made by those that have come before us. This service will explore that very subject from a historical and very Iowan perspective.

9 *Spirituals*

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan & the Music Men

16 *Civil Rights in Music*

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan, Jim Coppoc

23 *Journeying Separately Together*

Rev. Steven Protzman, Guest Speaker

As Unitarian Universalists, theological diversity is one of our greatest strengths, yet it is often a point of division in our congregations and in our Association. This service will explore our third principle, which calls us to find a way to journey together in a covenant of mutual respect even as we each walk our separate and unique paths of spiritual discovery and growth.

30 *Dancing Into Faith: The In-between Times*

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs, Guest Speaker

Times of transition offer challenges and opportunities. Janne Eller-Isaacs, the Ministerial Settlement Representative for the Prairie Star District, will explore some of the challenges that face congregations in times of transition and will also lift up the opportunities that face the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames.

February 6 *Canvas Kickoff*

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

Iowa Meal Potluck

The Fellowship's fifth annual Iowa-grown brunch will be on Sunday, January 23. It's an opportunity for members, friends, and visitors to gather for delicious food and fine camaraderie with an environmentally-friendly focus. No reservations are needed. Simply join us in the food line when it opens about 15 minutes after the second service ends.

The UU Meals Planning Group, along with other interested people, will meet in January to create a menu that uses as much Iowa grown produce as feasible, including raspberry and cherry desserts with Picket Fence ice cream. And, as is customary with UUFA Sunday noon meals, the group will be recruiting cooks and other volunteers. The Coming of Age youth will also be helping, and the freewill donations for the meal will go to help the group with its Boston trip next summer.

If you want to be part of the planning, prepare food, or work at the meal, talk to a member of the planning group: Mary Brooks, Mary Darrow, David DenHaan, Peggy Earnshaw, Helen Gunderson, Janie Lohnes, Carolyn Myers, Shelli Pitner, Kay Puttock, or Faith Winchester. Thanks.

Charlotte's Web

Unitarian Universalists sometimes confuse Congregational Polity (governance by the congregation) with congregational ownership. The church is not owned by its members – it is owned by and is accountable to its mission, vision and values. Current members are temporary stewards of the gifts they have inherited as a religious community: gifts not only of property and money, but also a legacy of liberal religious ideals, values and principles. We are today's stewards of this legacy and are responsible for ensuring that this congregation will pass it on to future generations.

The upcoming stewardship campaign is an opportunity for every member and friend of the congregation to engage in self examination, to ask ourselves:

- * How does this congregation enrich, sustain, comfort, challenge and equip me to engage life more faithfully?
- * What difference does this religious community make in my life and in the larger community? And
- * How am I investing my physical, spiritual, intellectual and monetary gifts to ensure that this congregation will continue to live its vision of a just and sustainable world with people we've never met, in times we'll never see?

The church lives its mission through its people. Today's congregation is always called to provide for people we've never met and for times we shall never see. We are here to create the world we would like those who follow us to inherit. Those who came before us have bequeathed a precious and powerful legacy. It is our turn to say 'yes' to the call to fund the future.

The truth is that we don't provide the level of volunteer and program support that most UU congregations provide. The median UU congregation budget is currently \$1,222 per member (\$1,275 for large congregations). UUFA's total budget is less than \$1,000 per member. At the 50th percentile of USA UU congregations, we would raise \$65,000 more than our current budget – and would be more than able to fund all of the programs the Stewardship Committee has outlined for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

When congregants ask me how much they should give, I always tell them that I can't answer that question for them. Most people in the USA give over 2% of their income to charity every year. (Lower income people give a higher percentage of their income to charity than wealthy people do.) The most important thing is that you give whatever percentage of your income you need to in order to feel good about your financial support of this beloved community. I urge you to engage both your head and your heart in discerning your financial pledge for the 2011-2012 program year.

Make a pledge that is both generous and within your means. Make a pledge that makes you feel good. If everyone does this, the UUFA will have ample resources to attract the ministerial partner who will not only be your partner in serving your mission, but also walk with you as you live your future vision into reality.

Faithfully,
Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

Get Involved with UUSC's Haiti Volunteer Program

Through our Haiti Volunteer Program, UUSC is creating opportunities for volunteers to engage in service learning by rolling up their sleeves to assist Haitians who have been affected by the earthquake.

We are launching our volunteer program with medical trips to Haiti. These trips will focus on administering health care to Haitians in Port-au-Prince and the Central Plateau, in support of UUSC partners. In a variety of clinical settings, volunteers might administer vaccinations, conduct overall health checkups, and advise on the nutritional needs of patients, among other tasks typical to health care in a developing country.

If you are a medical professional or training to be a medical professional, please consider joining us in Haiti as a volunteer health-care provider. Visit our website for more information, including scheduled trip dates and an application form.

<http://www.uusc.org/haiti/volunteer>

http://www.uusc.org/haiti/volunteer/medical_trips

Greetings from the President

Happy New Year! 2011 will continue to be an exciting time in the life of the Fellowship. Soon we will begin accepting applications for those who wish to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee to seek our future settled minister. As well, we will continue work on a congregational vision statement, behavioral covenant, and various policies and procedures. We will also kick off our annual pledge campaign that will determine our commitment to our shared vision. This includes the depth of staff support we will have to assist volunteers and the programs we envision for ourselves and newcomers. We have already proven that we can successfully fund our endeavors for a common good. This is a pivotal time to show ourselves, and potential minister applicants, that we are committed to offering our best version of UUism to the Ames community.

In lieu of a New Year's resolution, I have become accustomed to picking a word or phrase to guide my year. Past years I have used words like "breathe," "simplicity," or "observe." I have yet to pick a word for myself for this year, but if I were to pick a guiding word for the Fellowship it would be "possibility." What is possible for us as a congregation? How do we offer possibilities to members and the broader community? What is your guiding word for the New Year? What is your guiding word for the Fellowship? The way I see it, the possibilities are endless!

Blessings,
Deb Kline

December Board Highlights:

Key decisions:

- * Andrew Hanft was approved as a new Board member, filling an open seat through June 30, 2011.
- * A Process Task Force was appointed to make recommendations to the Board regarding how to select who will serve on the Ministerial Search Committee to recruit a settled minister. Process Task Force members were selected from the Board, Transition Team and Nominating Committee and include Mark Witherspoon, Mary Richards and Rebecca Severin.
- * A Guidelines Task Force was appointed to write job descriptions for Board and Nominating Committee members, as well as guidelines for selecting Board and Nominating Committee members. Guidelines Task Force members include Board member, Bob Haug; Nominating Committee member, Mary Richards; and former Office Administrator, Brenda Witherspoon.

Upcoming Considerations:

- * As the Treasurer's job has become increasingly extensive and time consuming, the Board is looking into transferring many of these functions to office staff. This may include approving an increase in staff hours and the purchase of accounting software/internet support.
- * As Erv Klaas has been instrumental in initiating and facilitating the Green Sanctuary program and has indicated his intentions to step down from his oversight role, the Board is discussing how to ensure the program's success in moving forward. Green Sanctuary is currently included as a key component in the visioning process, and as such, it looks to be appropriate to have a Board appointed liaison fulfill the oversight role.

Executive Leadership Team Considerations:

- * Due to the recent break-in and stolen money (over \$200) from the AA group, the ELT and Staff are considering waiving one month's rental fee (\$114) as a gesture of good faith. Both the office and AA have strengthened their security measures to help prevent future losses.
- * Office Keys: One security measure due to the recent break-in is an added deadbolt lock on both the office door and the Office Administrator's door. As an added security measure, ELT is recommending a key policy to the Board for consideration. Only key people (pun intended) including staff and officers would have access to the office. All others would be asked to conduct office business during regular office hours.

Treat your fellowship well

A message from your Transition Team

Our anxiety is showing. As well it should be.

In times of transition, anxiety, unease, discomfort, fear and similar feelings are natural. We as a congregation understood that all these feelings would be part of the process as we transitioned from one minister to another.

What is not natural for our Fellowship, though, is that we're not doing a very good job in all areas of talking with each other and communicating how we're feeling. Some areas that need heartfelt but respectful discussion include Sunday service times, religious education, leadership and the Green Sanctuary movement.

This Fellowship has seen many changes in our more than 60 years of existence. And those changes have gotten us to where we are today – a healthy congregation undergoing some growing pains as we work through the process of figuring out who we are exactly, who we want to be exactly and moving forward toward those dreams. This is exactly what the transition process is all about – discovering our vision for the future so we can find the best fit when we call a settled minister to make that journey with us.

Unfortunately, we also have to deal with the real life of today, and that includes things such as floods that have ransacked our facilities and a governance structure that we've outgrown.

Fortunately, this congregation looks at life's realities as a glass that is half full instead of half empty. In fact, that outlook is imbedded in our most precious history lesson – when you only have \$50, put it into a building fund instead of dissolving the Fellowship.

We know it can be very hard sometimes, especially since communication is harder when you're trying to hear what more than 300 members have to say about the future of their beloved Fellowship.

And we also make mistakes.

But this is all of our Fellowship. And if we treat each other with the same loving kindness that we would treat ourselves, then we could wash away our transitional growing pains with understanding and love for one another. We can forgive those misunderstandings that can cause miscommunication. And we can talk about our vision for the future – and how we're going to accomplish that vision – with a vigor that spurs us into action.

So let's take stock: What have we accomplished in the last few months?

1. We have raised more than \$100,000 in just a few weeks to restore our beautiful facilities,
2. Two space task forces – one inside, one outside – have analyzed our needs and responded with recommendations that are either completed or are well on their way to completion,
3. We have completed everything that we can do in order to get our new parking lot done, and we only await the coming spring, when construction can begin,
4. We are the first congregation in Ames to use solar panels on our building,
5. We are on our way to completing our 12-step action plan to become a Green Sanctuary,
6. We have completed a vision workshop to chart our future, and a vision writing team is well on its way to writing the first draft of a vision statement that the congregation can analyze before sending it back for more revision,
7. In January, we will embark on choosing our Ministerial Selection Committee that will provide us with candidates for our next minister,
8. We are beginning the conversations – helped along by UUA moderator Gini Courter's experience – about how we can best govern ourselves while maintaining our shared ministry ideals so we can reach those dreams in the future,
9. We are discussing how to be a more welcoming congregation, including staffing concerns, religious education, Sunday morning service times and programs, and how to get done the things we need to get done on Sunday morning,
10. And we have continued some of our most precious traditions – winter solstice, water communion, harvest communion, meaningful memorial services and more.

The list could go on and on. As we need to go on and on. But we need to do it in a kind and loving way – as we did when there were only 50 of us.

So how do we go about doing that?

First, let's start by reading this column from the Transition Team. It's the Transition Team's job to help move the process along, working with the interim minister to ensure that we succeed during this interim period.

Second, talk to the UUFA Board and the Transition Team about your experiences during this time of transition, including your frustrations, your anxiety or fear about where your Fellowship is heading and about what you're proud of about this Fellowship.

Third, keep informed about what's going on. The UUFA Board, the Transition Team, your staff, your interim minister and all the other leaders of this Fellowship are trying our best to listen to you and make sure you know what's going on as decisions are made. Read these monthly newsletters and the Friday emails, listen to the Sunday morning announcements, and watch for a new message board in the Fireside Room in January.

And fourth, treat your Fellowship members well, with loving kindness, understanding that everyone is only doing what they think is best for the Fellowship.

This Fellowship is strong and healthy and has a bright future. And the journey – figuring out our future and who the minister is going to be who will share that bright future – is about as exciting a trip as we'll ever take.

Ministerial Settlement Representative to visit UUFA

The process to select our next settled minister is about to begin, and it all starts in January.

First, the UUFA Board is expected to approve at its January meeting the process that the congregation will use to select its Ministerial Selection Committee.

Second, after the Board approves the process, communication about that process will begin in earnest to ensure that every member of the Fellowship is aware of the process and how to get involved in the process.

Third, Prairie Star District's Ministerial Settlement Representative, Janne Eller-Isaacs, will visit the UUFA on January 30 to walk us through the ministerial selection process. Janne, who serves as co-minister with her husband, Rob, of Unity Church-Unitarian in St. Paul, MN, will be our guest speaker during Sunday morning services, where she will frame the issues that we need to know about the search process. She then will walk us through the whole process of selecting a new minister during afternoon sessions with the congregation and the Board.

Here's a tentative schedule for January 30:

9:30 and 11:30: Sunday morning services

12:30-1: Quick congregational lunch

1-2:15: Congregation meets with Janne Eller-Isaacs

2:15: Break

2:30-3:30: Board meets with Janne

Please put January 30 on your calendar as a day not to be missed at the Fellowship so you can understand the process our congregation will be going through during the next year as we choose our next settled minister.

Five Days of Fun, Learning, Fellowship, Spirituality PLUS air conditioned luxury

Come to Camp StarTrail (between Omaha and Lincoln) for another grand adventure/retreat for UUs of all ages. Past activities have included bead-making; dream analysis; painting; quilting; survival skills; Amazing Race; sock hop; talent show; barn dance, camp fire (with s'mores); challenge courses; OWL for adults; swimming, nature hikes; ad hoc writers' group, bridge games and lots more.

Hotel-style luxury. Camp StarTrail pampers the camper with four housing options—meals included: (a) hotel-style luxury with private baths; (b) college dorm-style rooms with bath down the hall; (c) rustic cabins with a shower house; and, for the purist, (d) actual honest-to-goodness camp-style camping with a short walk to the rest rooms.

Camp StarTrail—July 31 to August 5, 2011. Camping that fits your budget and your soul. Find out how we “pamper the camper” at www.psduua.org/campstartrail. Camp StarTrail is sponsored by Prairie Star District Unitarian Universalist.

Process Task Force recommendations to the UUFA Board on how to choose the Ministerial Search Committee

At its December meeting, the UUFA Board appointed Mary Richards, Rebecca Severin and Mark Witherspoon to a Process Task Force to make recommendations to the Board about how the process should proceed to select a UUFA Ministerial Search Committee.

The Process Task Force reviewed the UUA's Settlement Handbook, the UUFA bylaws, a process employed by a successful search team in a Minneapolis Unitarian congregation and one of its members had discussions with the District's Ministerial Settlement Representative. These recommendations come from this research and will be presented to the UUFA Board at its January meeting.

What sort of people do we want on the Search Committee?

1. Respected and trusted members of the congregation who will elicit the greatest support by the congregation overall.
2. Those who will consider the interests of the entire congregation, not just a special interest such as Religious Education, Social Justice, etc.
3. Individuals who possess one or more of these qualities:
 - a. visionary thinking;
 - b. ability to run a meeting well;
 - c. excellent communication skills;
 - d. detail oriented;
 - e. well organized;
 - f. logistics minded;
 - g. design skills;
 - h. project management skills.
4. Individuals who represent the entire spectrum of our congregation, including diversity in age, sexual orientation, gender, race, interests, skills, length of membership.
5. People who are team players.
6. Individuals ready to work long hours and who are willing to step back from other activities to devote themselves to this task. At least three out-of-town trips (possibly overnight) will be required. The Search Committee will be serving for about 15 months.
7. Persons who are not paid Fellowship staff members.
8. Persons pledged to conduct a search that is not discriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or any other discriminatory category.
9. Individuals committed to maintaining confidentiality and seeking consensus.
10. Individuals willing to set aside any preconceived notions about what a minister should be, in order to consider the widest possible range of ministerial choices.

Tasks required of the Search Committee:

(The Nominating Committee and the Board will ensure that the Search Committee includes one or more individual to undertake each of these tasks.)

1. Chair: This is the only position specified by UUFA bylaws. The Search Committee will choose one of its members to fill this position. Other possible responsibilities include convening meetings, being the primary point of contact with the UUFA Board, the UUA Transitions Office, the Ministerial Settlement Representative, and the District Executive.
2. Packets: The Search Committee will create a packet of information that seeks to accurately and attractively describe the Fellowship – our physical facilities, our congregation, our activities, our goals – and the community in which we exist. This packet will tell prospective candidates who we are. In turn, prospective candidates will send their personal packets to the Search Committee for review.
3. Scheduling: Pulpit dates for pre-candidates at area congregations must be scheduled, and transportation, housing and hospitality for pre-candidates must be arranged for the entire time each is in Iowa.
4. Candidate assessment: The Search Committee will choose an appropriate method of recording and comparing relevant information presented by the candidates and their references.

5. Communication: Although all the tasks listed are necessary to the Search Committee's successful operation, communication with the congregation and with prospective candidates will be key. Both must be kept informed of the committee's process and progress. To facilitate this task, detailed notes of each meeting should be kept. A very important part of communication with the congregation will be to determine what members of the congregation want, need and desire in a new minister. This information in turn will be part of the material shared with prospective candidates.

6. Finances: The Search Committee should create a budget and assign one of its members to manage the records of the Committee's expenses. Communication regarding Search Committee expenses with the Treasurer and anyone else with financial responsibility for Fellowship funds must be accomplished in such a way that the identities of ministers under consideration are not revealed. The Committee will have authority to discuss salary, benefits, etc. with the chosen ministerial candidate.

Process Recommendations:

1. The UUFA bylaws state that four members of the seven-member Search Committee shall be chosen by the congregation and three members shall be chosen by the UUFA Board. The four-member slate of candidates for membership on the Search Committee shall be selected by the Nominating Committee and voted on by the congregation. If any members of the Nominating Committee express interest in being on the Search Committee, they must recuse themselves from the selection process. Should a member of the Nominating Committee recuse himself or herself, the UUFA Board shall appoint one of its members to assume that position on the Nominating Committee for the purposes of selecting the Search Committee slate.

2. The process should be as transparent as possible, and to this end descriptions of the process, of the skill sets needed for committee tasks, and of the time commitments expected of committee members must be communicated to members of the congregation in a variety of ways. (See item 5 below for a list of possible communication methods.)

3. Nominations should be encouraged and opportunities to apply for a position on the Search Committee should be extended to all members of the Fellowship in as many forums and media as possible.

4. In order to minimize the possibility of friction within the Fellowship, we suggest that a slate of four nominees for the Search Committee be recommended for approval or disapproval, rather than opening the floor for nominations. Transparency, prior communication, and plenty of opportunity for congregation members to ask questions would be crucial to make this approach effective.

5. The target date for bringing a slate of delegates to a vote by the Congregation should be no later than March 2011. Other target dates suggested include:

a. Announcement of the process to the congregation: January 2011; publicity should be continuous from the announcement to the close of the application period. (See below.) Distribution of applications for Search Committee membership should begin as soon as possible. Recommended means of communication include the following:

1. mail out insert in the newsletter
2. include in Friday e-mail round-up
3. have a few copies of the UUA Settlement Handbook for loan
4. place an information table in Fireside Room
5. distribute flyers on seats on one or more Sunday mornings
6. include in orders of service notices
7. leaflet after service
8. announcements during service

b. Janne Eller-Isaacs, the District's Ministerial Settlement Representative, will speak during the Sunday service on January 30, 2011, and will walk congregation members through the ministerial selection process during an afternoon session at the Fellowship.

c. Applications for the team should be received by the Nominating Committee by February 15, 2011.

d. A seven-member slate should be chosen and published in time for consideration two weeks prior to the Congregational vote in March 2011.

Application for Membership on the Ministerial Search Committee

Completed application must be submitted by February 15, 2011. There are a word document and a pdf form of this application available on our website.

Start with your name, home/work/cell phone numbers, your email, and the year you joined the congregation.

Please provide a brief response (two to four sentences) to each of these questions.

A. Why do you want to be on this committee?

B. What special attributes, experiences, or other qualities do you bring to this search?

C. How would you describe the church's ministry over the last three years?

D. What church activities have you been involved in? (church committees, boards, programs, etc.) (NOTE: members of this committee are discouraged from participating in any other committees or board positions. If you are on any, you may be required to temporarily step down from them.)

E. This committee calls for a significant time commitment. How do you anticipate fitting the committee work into your existing church commitments, career and personal commitments, and responsibilities?

F. Describe any other leadership roles in which you've served (please include church, community, and professional experiences).

G. How would those you've worked with describe your working style from a collaborative perspective?

How would assess yourself in the following areas?

E = expert; A = accomplished; B = basic/familiar; N = no experience/unfamiliar

NOTE: If Expert or Accomplished, please elaborate on your experience.

___ 1. Project Management

___ 2. Communications (verbal, written, and multimedia)

___ 3. Creativity

___ 4. Organization

___ 5. Teamwork

___ 6. Consensus Building

___ 7. Visionary Thinking

___ 8. Graphic Design

___ 9. Meeting Management

___ 10. Time Management

___ 11. Financial Expertise

I have reviewed the Ministerial Search Committee descriptive materials and I understand that serving on the Committee requires a significant commitment of time and energy. I voluntarily submit my name for consideration to serve on the Committee.

Add your signature and date at the end of your application.

From the director of youth and children's ministries



Midlife Midwest

I have begun blogging. I find that writing/journaling is such a great way for me to ponder events and feelings. I have decided to do some of that online! To read all of my blog entries (I started this sometime in November) you can go to <http://mymidlifemidwest.blogspot.com> Or, you can read the one that I'll be using for my newsletter column each month. Here's the first installment for the UUFA Newsletter:

Small Town Benefits

Tonight I was out walking. Even with streetlights, there is minimal light pollution here in Ames. This makes for great stargazing, especially at this time of year. I was not planning to star gaze, but the air was crisp and clear, and the stars so bright that I could not help but notice the constellations. I paused in the alley behind my house, as far from the streetlight as possible. They were all there – the Big Dipper, Polaris, a couple planets and about a million more stars.

I like to think about the fact that I am made of the same material as the stars. That thought makes me so much more a part of not only the universe of constellations, stars, planets, meteorites and all things outer spacey, but also a part of the universe of humanity as well. It's hard to dislike others when I think that we are so similar – we're all star material. This reminds me of my favorite Neil deGrasse Tyson quotes. If you don't know who this person is – google him – everyone should know him.

“Recognize that the very molecules that make up your body, the atoms that construct the molecules, are traceable to the crucibles that were once the centers of high mass stars that exploded their chemically rich guts into the galaxy, enriching pristine gas clouds with the chemistry of life. So that we are all connected to each other biologically, to the earth chemically and to the rest of the universe atomically. That's kinda cool! That makes me smile and I actually feel quite large at the end of that. It's not that we are better than the universe, we are part of the universe. We are in the universe and the universe is in us.”

“The more I learn about the universe, the less convinced I am that there's any sort of benevolent force that has anything to do with it, at all.”

All the feelings of grandeur looking at the stars, all the feelings of something bigger and more connected than myself, I agree with Mr. deGrasse Tyson. These feelings do not have to come from something outside of us that we can not define or understand, they do not have to come from “God”. No, god is not the name for the universe. We are the universe – creating, changing, evolving. Our feelings of love, connection, hope, joy, fear – all chemical reactions of our star elements. The reason we all feel them is that we are all made from these same elements. We are the universe, how we treat each other, that is the god that we created, something outside of who we are.

See you on Sunday,
Lori Allen

Coming of Age

The time for the COA Winter Overnight Retreat is upon us! The students will begin the evening, Friday January 7, by attending the Ames Jewish Congregation Shabbat Service at 8 pm with their mentors. After the service, we will return to the UUFA for conversation, contemplation (of our personal credos), some group art, and finally the viewing of the movie “What is God” that we were not able to watch at the Y Camp last fall. Liberal doses of pizza, non-caffeinated beverages, and snacks will be sprinkled into these activities. I need 2-3 parents (mentors are welcome also) to volunteer to be overnight chaperones with me. We will get some sleep, but probably any adult chaperones should not plan to operate heavy machinery or use sharp tools the next morning! We also need 2-3 parents to provide breakfast for our group on Saturday, January 8. Here is the tentative schedule:

- 7:30 pm – Leave the UUFA for AJC -3721 Calhoun Avenue, Ames
- 8:00 pm – Shabbat Service/Chat with AJC people
- 9:30 pm – Return to UUFA
- 9:45 pm – Introduction of Credo Project
- 10:00 pm – Contemplation of Personal Credo Project
- 10:30 pm – Group Art Project and Pizza
- 11:30 pm – Sardines!

12:00 Midnight – Movie
 1:30 am – Quiet Conversations
 2:00 am – Lights Out!

The COA Forum will be held on Wednesday, January 19, at 6:30 pm – students and mentors – to discuss our visit to the Ames Jewish Congregation, Judaism and the ties between this faith tradition and Unitarian Universalism.

UUFA Families Asked to Give Input About Sunday Morning Religious Education

During the months of January and February, Lori Allen will be inviting families of children who are currently in the UUFA RE Sunday morning program or nursery care to get together for one hour to talk about the UUFA RE programming. What is working for your family? What is not? What is missing? What would you like to see more of? What needs to go away entirely? What about the content of the programs? And – anything else you'd like to bring up. Lori will be contacting families individually, but please try to attend the meeting(s) where there will be families with similar aged children as yours. Children are welcome to attend these meetings, as a matter of fact, we'd like their input as well. Some of the meetings will be held at Lori's home at 807 Hodge Avenue, and some will be held in the south RE room on the upper level of the UUFA:

Sundays (UUFA): 1-9 10:40AM Nursery/Preschool	Mondays (Lori's House) 1-10 6:30PM Nursery/Preschool	Other Dates: Saturday, 1-22 10:30AM UUFA All age children
1-16 10:40AM Elementary	1-17 10:40AM Elementary	Saturday, 1-29 6:30PM UUFA All age children
1-23 10:40AM Elementary	1-24 10:40AM Elementary	Sunday, 1-30 4:00PM Lori's House All age children
1-30 10:40AM Middle/High School	1-31 10:40AM Middle/High School	

Small Group Ministry

Rev. Charlotte Cowtan and Lori Allen will be meeting with the Small Group Ministry (SGM) Implementation Team in January to begin the work of creating a Small Group Ministry program for the UUFA. Will it be called Small Group Ministry? We don't know. Will it be like the Small Group Ministry at the UUFA that happened several years ago? Probably not. What we do know is that this group will meet as a SGM from January – April. During that time they will determine a covenant for future SGM teams to use, the content and format that SGM teams will use, and the parameters for meeting times, places, structure, etc. Here is the format the SGM Implementation Team will use, which will most likely be the format future SGM teams will use:

- Chalice Lighting/Opening Words
- Individual Sharing/Deep listening—no one responds
- Discussion after everyone has shared—respond in kind, feedback, follow-up
- Introduction of the session theme through music, readings, stories or other media.
- Discussion of session theme. Leader has questions to ask as discussion/reflection cues.
- Closing feedback on session
- A few minutes of silence
- Closing words, chalice extinguished

Watch for monthly updates on the team, including the full roster of who is on the implementation team, starting in next month's UUFA newsletter.

Space Use Task Force Update

In December, the Space Use Task Force got two bids from carpenters/contractors to do the work of repairing damage to walls, creating walls and storage, etc. Unfortunately the Library work was not started. We have asked craftsman/carpenter and UUFA friend Craig Mushel to do the work in our Library beginning ASAP. Hopefully the rest of the tasks will come in on time. As a reminder, here is the information from last month about the schedule for this project. Coming of Age students will be working as our “furniture movers” for at least part of this project – saving the UUFA the expense of hiring movers. Anyone who is interested in helping, please contact the office for dates when help will be needed and contact information for people leading this project.

January – The Library will be moved to what is now the Tower Room. Carpet will be replaced, walls will be repainted in a similar neutral color, and ceiling tiles will be replaced. Movers will be directed by Barb Abbott and Wes Shank as to placement of shelves and furniture. The Library Committee will re-shelf and re-organize the books and materials.

Late January/Early February – Artistic Concrete will grind off the residual glue on the concrete floor in the lower level. The concrete will be polished and sealed, providing a natural, waterproof, and easy care floor.

February – Construction of a permanent wall and storage will be built in the current youth room. These two rooms will become classrooms for our younger children (preschool – early elementary) who need to be brought to and retrieved from their classrooms by their parents. The proximity of the classrooms to the larger lobby provides an open and safe passage for parents and children. During this phase, storage will be built into the room that is now the library. This room will be used for mid to upper elementary classes. Seating will be flexible or adult size so this room can be used as a conference room of sorts. The piano from the current Tower Room will be put in this room. Choirs and instrumental groups can use these classrooms for rehearsal space and for instrument and music storage. Also in this phase, the administrative offices and minister’s office will be put back in order.

March or April – Classes will be moved from upstairs to downstairs. Middle school will begin meeting in the Beatrix Potter room on the upper level.

May through summer – The upper spaces will get a simple remodel that will create space for the high school youth group to be in the current Barton and Channing Rooms. The door that was created between these spaces and the kitchenette will be filled back in to make more storage space. What is currently the Emerson Room and the kitchenette will be converted to staff office space and that softer, cozier space for smaller groups. Hopefully, by fall 2011, all work will be completed.

Green Corner



In my report to the congregation last July on the General Assembly, I mentioned the work of the Unitarian-Universalist United Nations Office (UU-UNO) for social justice around the world. Here is an excerpt from a letter I received just before Christmas from Bruce Knotts, Executive Director of this small but effective office.

“Yesterday, thanks to your efforts, the UN General Assembly voted to include “sexual orientation” in its resolution against extra-judicial killing among its long list of vulnerable populations that deserve particular protection. UN pundits called the victory the result of “top-down pressure from the United States and bottom-up pressure from civil society.” In case you don’t recognize yourselves, you are the “bottom-up pressure from civil society” that won the day. The final vote in favor of including “sexual orientation” was 93 in favor, 55 opposed, 27 abstaining and 17 absent. Many of you copied me on the messages you sent to the White House. On December 13th, 2010, the UU-UNO, working together with GLAAD, the Metropolitan Community Church, Integrity and Union Theological Seminary, formed a coalition of 60 representatives of people of progressive values of faith and our allies. We call ourselves the UN Coalition of Faith. We all went out to our constituencies and called on you to write to the White House. You did and it made a difference. It encouraged the Obama Administration to do the right thing. It also put other nations on notice that civil society was watching and active. Caribbean countries that want North American tourists and developing nations that want North American investment took notice and switched their votes at the UN in favor of the inclusion of “sexual orientation” or they abstained. Thanks for a job well done. Feel your power and enjoy the holidays.”

I wish you all the very best for the holidays and may the new year bring enhanced peace, justice, compassion, equality and care for Mother Earth and all the life it supports. – Erv Klaas

Committee and Group News

CONSCIENTIOUS CRAFTERS

Next meeting: 12:30 pm, Tower Room, January 9. The second Sunday of the month is the regular meeting time for the UU Conscientious Crafters. January is a perfect time of year for working on projects that involve handling yarn and holding it on your lap. What could be cozier! Add to that the company of experienced or beginning enthusiastic crafters and you have the makings of a wonderful winter afternoon.

Sue Ravenscroft will be our hostess this month. The group will be checking in to see how the work on the silent auction projects is coming along. You can get your questions answered or paw through our stash of yarn. If you need ideas for charitable projects, this is the place. There has been talk of a fieldtrip, so more fun is on the horizon.

Visit the UUFA website for more information - and watch for photographs of our events and projects.

the little bUukshop

The little bUukshop will be open every other Sunday in January (2nd, 16th, and 30th) for you to shop between services. Come browse our new titles such as *Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, A Fatal Heresy and One of the Rarest Books in the World* by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone, or *God is Not One: the Eight Rival Religions That Run the World—and Why Their Differences Matter* by Stephen Prothero. Also just in is Ric Matsen's *Going Out Dancing*. The author, Ric Masten, has challenged and inspired audiences nationwide for decades with his unique mix of musical ministry and poetry. Best known as the author of the beloved hymn "Let It Be a Dance," Masten was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer in 1999. A pioneer of community ministry, Masten has been a Unitarian Universalist minister since 1971.



GOSPELS STUDY GROUP NAME CHANGE

For about a year or so, several of us have been gathering as the "Gospels Study Group." In January, we will be morphing into what we've decided to call the "Heretics and Spirituality Group." If you're interested in adding your voice and grow in your own spirituality, we'll start meeting on Wednesday, January 12, from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the Fellowship. Our first topic to be explored will be "Spirituality and the Undead." Look for more details to come. - Paul Nelson

HISTORICAL JESUS NAME CHANGE

After 11 years, the Historical Jesus Book Group has decided to change its name to better reflect our current focus of study. We will now be known as the Religions and Reason Study Group. We will continue to explore the historical roots of our religious beliefs but will also focus on the world's evolving secular and Christian views. Meetings are held 7:00 pm on the third Sunday of the month at the Northcrest Fireside Room. E-mail Marty Helland if you have questions - marhelland@aol.com.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

We meet at 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Sunday evenings in the Fellowship Hall. Sitting meditation is our main mode, with long-time member Faith Winchester leading sessions with gentle authority and grace, and other experienced members as needed, on a rotating basis. Melissa Blacketer collects emails for sparse alerts, such as rare cancellations (mjblacketer@gmail.com). - Submitted by Nancy Grudens-Schuck on behalf of the sangha.

SKADBERG SCIENCE CIRCLE

The Skadberg Science Circle was started 5-6 years ago, and we have enjoyed meeting at the home of Fritz and Susan Franzen from October through May. We meet from 7-9pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at Fritz and Susan's home at 1216 Scott Avenue. - Sam (and Fritz)

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP'S READING LIST FOR 2010-2011

Please join us for another night of book group fun! This group is an open group and you are free to join us for any or all of our meetings. We meet 7:00-9:00 pm at the Fellowship. Any questions: Barbi Greenlaw, 292-5317.

January 3 *Shadow of Sirius* or other poetry by W.S. Merwin

Mar 7 *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver

May 2 *The Plague of Doves* by Louise Erdrich

February 7 *Piano Teacher* by Janice Lee

April 4 *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova

June 6 TBA

Committee and Group News

UUFA CAMPUS GROUP

An energetic group of college students has organized to meet regularly this year. Current and future activities planned are: Water testing of nearby rivers and creeks; Increasing exposure to liberal religious thought on campus and connecting with other religious liberals; Recreational activities like camping, laser tag, bowling; Regional retreats and conferences; Involvement in other social justice work. Join us on Facebook (Unitarian Universalist Campus Group Ames, IA) to stay updated.

UUYOGA

UU Yoga will meet every Sunday afternoon in Fellowship Hall. We begin at 4:45. Enjoy 60 minutes of relaxation, stretching, and breathing. The group is about equally divided between men and women. For more information, contact Karen Bates at 231-9311 or batesandbrown@gmail.com.

New Member Classes

New member classes will be in February. Look for more information once dates are determined, in the next newsletter, weekly emails, and on our website. If you are interested in attending the new member classes, email Kitty (kafisher99@aol.com) or sign up at the visitors table on Sunday.

Fellowship Game Night

An event for ALL ages, family shapes, and individuals. For many years, the Fellowship had an event called "First Friday Family Fun Night." There were preschoolers engaged in games for young children or peering over the shoulders of older children and adults playing "Apples to Apples." There were infants watching the preschoolers, or making the rounds to welcoming arms. There were others assembling puzzles, playing electronic password (now THAT was lively!), or playing the latest popular game. And then there was the 80+ year-old woman who took on anyone who would play scrabble with her, and usually beat them! Eventually, even the youngest of the original participants grew up and the group faded out for a time. Some of us miss the fun and are assuming leadership of the activity with a new time (the SECOND Friday of each month) and, for now at least, the name above. It is a chance for people of all ages (starting with infants) to have fun and eat pizza with a minimum amount of organizing. In the past, we provided pizza by the slice for a nominal cost, and sometimes people brought veggies, dessert, drinks, etc. The first time we organizers will order the pizza and provide the side things; a donation for pizza will be appreciated. Everyone able will help with set-up and clean-up (which is kept minimal). **Please bring a game to share which you/your family enjoys!** Those who come may choose to organize things a bit differently, but this is how we're starting out. Please mark Friday, January 14, 2011, at 6:00 pm as our first gathering! For more information or to RSVP by 2:00 the day of the event (*this helps with the pizza count*), call Nancy Tepper (292-9767), Sara Orley (268-0579), or the Fellowship office (292-5960).

Contribution Statements for the 2010 Tax Year will be mailed in January 2011.



2011-2012 No Nonsense Fund Drive

Our fund drive for the year starting in July 2011 will be one of the most important annual drives we have ever had. This is the one that will prepare us for the minister we will call in May of 2012, and will have a significant effect on whether we attract the minister we want.

With guidance from our interim minister Charlotte Cowtan, we have identified three financial goals for next year that are above and beyond our current operating budget.

1. \$15,000 to fund the search itself. This is for printed packets to be sent to our initial candidates (“packets” are large loose-leaf notebooks with sophisticated surveys and lots of color pictures); for transportation, accommodations and other expenses of the finalist candidates; for the activities of candidating week (the final candidate visits and leads two services before the Fellowship votes); as well as the expenses of search committee members.

2. \$35,000 will provide increased staff support for the Treasurer, Membership Services, and Communications, and would also fund a part-time position to support Youth and Campus Ministry.

3. \$10,000 for interior and exterior maintenance. We cherish the spontaneity and willingness to pitch in that has always characterized our Fellowship, but the magnitude of some of the tasks has actually driven people away from the Fellowship.

Some people may wonder what staff and custodians have to do with getting a new minister. The answer is that prospective ministers will look at our general health and not just the amount of their prospective salaries (though it is important that we have struggled to get our salary levels up to UU guidelines) when making their decision to answer our call. If our volunteers are so exhausted from taking care of our building that they don't have time to seek a larger vision, we have failed in our mission.

The truth is that we don't provide the level of volunteer support that most UU congregations provide. The median UU congregation budget is \$1,222 per member (\$1,275 for large congregations). UUFA's total budget is less than \$1,000 per member. If we were budgeted at the 50th percentile of UU congregations, we would be raising \$65,000 more than we currently raise – and would be able to fund all of the programs that have been outlined above for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

I think it is fair to say that what we have always wanted in a minister is someone who helps us be the kind of congregation WE want to be. The kind of minister who can do that will come if they see we're already trying. I don't believe that we are trying hard enough now.

The following chart shows our current giving profile. See where you fall on the steps in the graph, and think about what it would take to “step it up.” If everyone moved to the center of the next step, the Fellowship would raise an additional \$130,000!!!

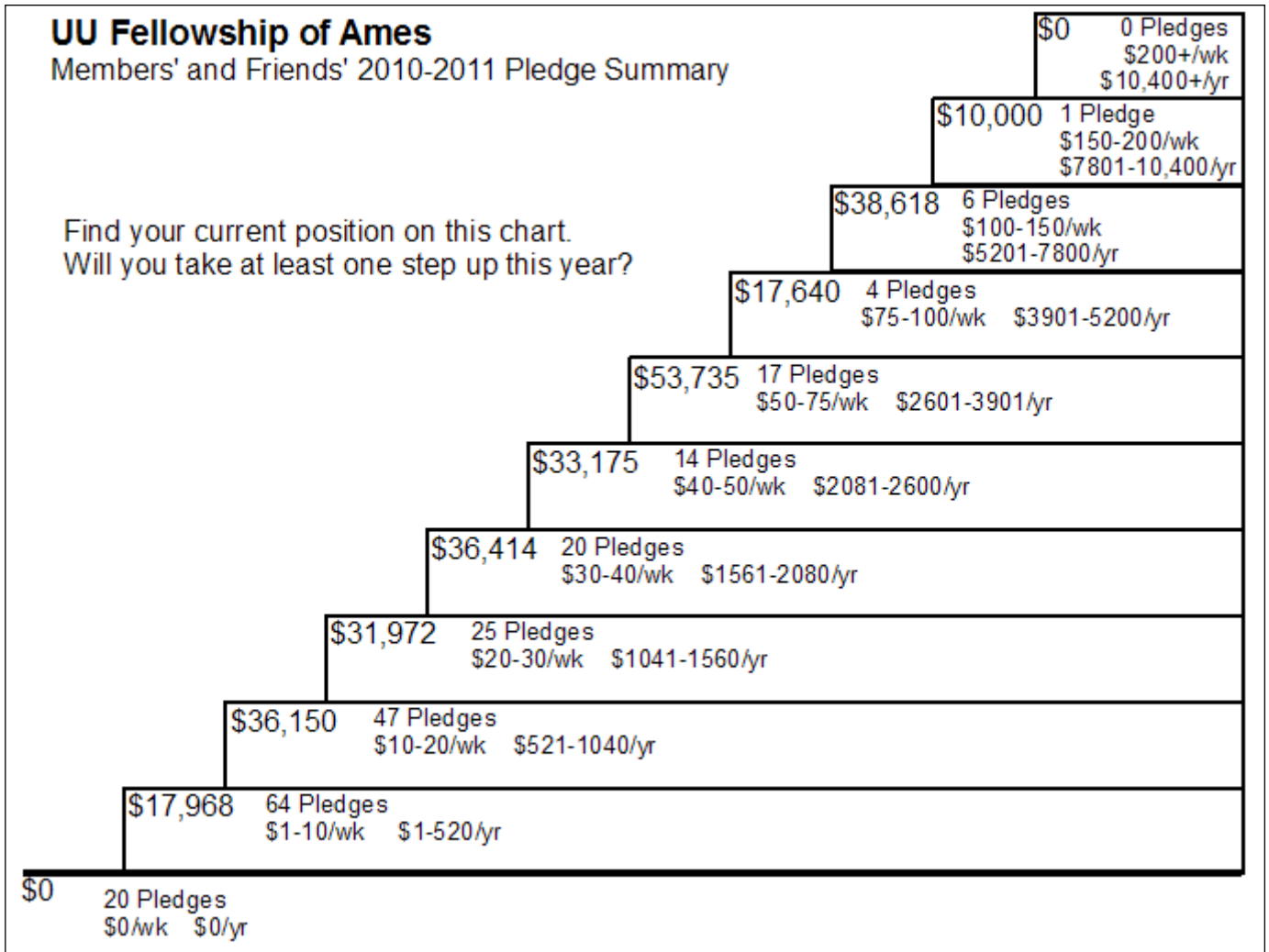
Now you know the basics, so here's the schedule.

The stewardship committee will be building toward a crescendo, extravaganza, hoopla, barn burner, and maybe even string beads for the Pledge Commitment Sunday on February 6. The drive will be wrapping up on February 27 followed by the Mardi Gras Party.



Save the date: The end of the 2011-2012 Pledge Drive comes during Mardi Gras, so we'll be celebrating with a Fellowship Party on Saturday, March 5.





50 Years of Camp UniStar!

All Camper Reunion and Celebration

Saturday, March 12, 2011

First Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont Ave S., Minneapolis
 History Displays and Happy Hour at 4:30pm
 Potluck Dinner at 6pm, Program at 7pm, Dance at 8pm

Camp UniStar is a Unitarian Universalist camp for families, individuals, and youth located on Star Island in Cass Lake, Minnesota. UniStar is owned by the Prairie Star District of the UUA. 2011 marks Camp UniStar's fiftieth year! Join in the celebration on March 12th, 2011.

Each summer, UniStar offers 13 weeks of awesome experiences, with about 65 people attending from Saturday to Saturday. In 2011 there will be Work Week (June 4-11), two Youth Weeks for 7th to 12th graders (June 11-18; June 18-25) and ten Family Weeks for families and adults of all ages (every week from June 25 through September 3). Each Family Week has a theme with a daily two hour morning program. Programs may include topics such a sailing, dance, yoga, science, religion, current events, nature, and crafts. Campers may choose to stay in the lodge or cabins, or tent right next to the lakeshore.

The lake encourages water activities (swimming, kayaking and sailing); the forest trails attract hikers; sunrises and sunsets invite meditation. Each year campers tell us they return for the peace, quiet, and serenity of this island retreat with no roads or commercial enterprises, as well as fun times with friends old and new. Star Island even has its own lake, Lake Windigo. Information about 2011 summer programs and the annual Camper Reunion party (newcomers are welcome!) is available at <http://www.campunistar.org>. Join us on March 12th and plan on a great week at Unistar in 2011!!

UU Retreat Center Receives First Grant!

Though the land is dormant under the snow, seeds for The Fields Retreat and Learning Center are continuing to grow. If you haven't already heard, plans are underway for a UU retreat center within an hour of the Minneapolis/ St. Paul area. We had a wonderful turnout at the fall open house held at the potential property site. Late in November we received news that we have received a grant from the UU Funding Panel! This grant will allow us to create print and video promotional material to share the excitement of our vision with congregations and potential donors. Jeff Sylvester of Blue Moon Productions, and a member of First Universalist in Minneapolis, will produce the video/DVD.

The end of October, Rev. Laurie Bushbaum was invited to lead the service at the UU Church of Minnetonka. She spoke about sacred places and shared the vision of having our own UU retreat center. Thank you to the UUCM for generously giving the Offering that morning to The Fields. And a congregation member was so moved by the idea of our own "sacred place" that she pledged \$25,000 during social hour. Asked to reflect on her gift she wrote:

"When Laurie Bushbaum talked about The Fields Retreat and Learning Center at the UUC of Minnetonka in October, it was the first I'd heard about the project. It immediately spoke to me about things I value... The solid business plan being developed impressed me and I decided that I must contribute to make sure the property is purchased and the dream is realized. The Fields can be a meaningful cooperative effort for UUs in the region, as well as a retreat destination for learning, enrichment and justice work. It can mean that UUs from different congregations meet together and strengthen their purpose. It can mean that kids experience a real barn, a flourishing garden and fields to roam. It can mean trails for groups and families to wander in the summer and ski in the winter. It can mean partnering with other organizations to share the healing power of the land with those less fortunate. And, it can mean that a portion of land is preserved to nourish the souls of those who come to it far into the future."

Please visit our website and follow along as seeds for The Fields continue to grow: www.TheFieldsMn.org.

You are also welcome to contact Rev. Laurie Bushbaum: RevLBushbaum@visi.com.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

Our Mission

We are a diverse community of caring individuals who come together to provide an environment that nurtures and educates our children, stimulates the study and practice of ethical and liberal religious ideals, supports the creative spirit in us all, and demonstrates concern for the environment and the broader community.

Interim Minister: the Rev. Charlotte Cowtanminister@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Director of Youth and Children's Ministries: Lori Allendycm@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Office Administrator: Lisa Harmison..... uufa@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Projects Coordinator: Diana Crosswaitprojects@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Nursery Coordinator: Anne Teppernursery@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Caring concerns caring@uufames.org – 515-292-5960

Officers of the Board

President	Deb Kline
Vice president	Steve Martens
Past president	Mark Witherspoon
Secretary	Jane Johnson
Treasurer	Fritz Keinert

Board Members

Andrew Hanft	through 2011
Bob Haug	through 2011
David DenHaan	through 2012
Carolyn Heising	through 2012
Kay Puttock	through 2012
Iris Brenner	youth representative

Next Board Meeting:
6:30 pm, Wednesday, January 12

The UUFA office is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday.