



# Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames

February 2011

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

1015 N. Hyland Ave.  
Ames, IA 50014  
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uufames.org

## **6** *A Generous Spirit*

**Rev. Charlotte Cowtan**

Special Music: Fellowship Trio

This Sunday is the kick-off to our 2011-2012 'No Nonsense' pledge drive. Please study the materials mailed to your homes (or access the documents on our website) in advance of this Sunday. You will be asked to turn in your completed pledge cards during the service.

## **13** *Love in Action*

**Emma's Revolution and Rev. Charlotte Cowtan**

"The powers that be can control the media but it's hard to stop a good song... Pat's songs will be sung well into the 22nd century." -Pete Seeger on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered"

Emma's Revolution is the duo of award-winning, activist musicians, Pat Humphries & Sandy O, who write songs that become traditions. Their song, "If I Give Your Name" won Grand Prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and their music has been featured on NPR's "All Things Considered" and Pacifica's "Democracy Now!". "Peace, Salaam, Shalom" is sung around the world and has been called the "anthem of the anti-war movement." "Keep On Moving Forward" opened the NGO Forum at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, becoming the unofficial theme of the Conference.

Pat and Sandy will address this Sunday's theme 'Love - In Action' through their inspiring music.

## **20** *Synergistic Satisfiers*

**Rev. Charlotte Cowtan**

The Fellowship Auction item 'Sermon on the topic of your choice' was won by Fritz Franzen. He asked me to speak about the work of Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef (The Barefoot Economist) who came to the realization that conventional economics has nothing to say to people living in poverty. He developed an economic model that focuses on basic human needs. Max-Neef's model speaks deeply to Unitarian Universalists. He 'says the economy is a subsystem of a larger finite system, the biosphere, hence permanent growth is impossible. And the fundamental value to sustain a new economy should be that no economic interest, under no circumstance, can be above the reverence of life.'

## **27** *Youth Sunday - Dreams*

**Fellowship Youth**

**Soup Lunch**

The high school youth will be planning and facilitating the Sunday morning services on February 27. Their theme is "Dreams." You can count on there being great youth musicians, speakers and writers. Don't miss out on the youths' perspectives and wisdom on the topic of dreaming.

## Charlotte's Web

UU Theologian James Luther Adams used to say that passing the offering plate is one of the most sacred rituals of our Unitarian Universalist tradition. We fought for – and died for – the right to support the religion of our own choice. This is a right that even today many people have not been granted.

Once we took responsibility for the support of our own congregations, we began asking members to let the leadership know how much money they would contribute in the coming year so that realistic budgets could be set. Most of the New England churches did this by renting pews. The wealthiest members rented the 'best pews,' and like today's season tickets had the option of renewing their rental annually. Friends and visitors who did not have reserved seats were seated in whatever unrented pews remained.

In the latter half of the 19th century some radical ministers (primarily in the frontier Unitarian and Universalist congregations of the Midwest) discontinued pew rentals and opened all seats to all worshipers. Members were asked to make a financial pledge to support the congregation based on their ability to pay. This radical change in how congregations were funded was prompted by our belief in the innate worth and dignity of each person and our insistence on the use of the democratic process in our congregations. Every voting member contributed to the common wealth according to their means, and had an equal voice in deciding how the pledges would be spent in the coming year.

We continue this tradition in our annual pledge drive. Members and friends are asked to let the congregation know their best estimate of the amount of money they will give to the common wealth in the coming year so that plans can be made, and members can decide how the money will be spent. I know that some members don't like the idea of making a pledge, but contribute generously without pledging. Some have told me that it reminds them of religious traditions they have left behind. I ask you to reconsider this position. Pledges can always be adjusted during the year, but a budget must be based on our best estimate of expected income.

There are some fixed expenses that are incurred by the simple act of signing the membership book (\$81 per year in District and Association dues in addition to the cost of newsletters, directories, and other specific direct costs of membership). In all of our congregations, non-members are welcome to participate in all aspects of church life except voting and holding elected office (and in some congregations, chairing a committee). I simply don't understand why anyone would expect a congregation to assume the direct financial costs of membership at pledging members' expense. I am even more baffled by non-pledging members who expect to participate in the decision making of an organization they choose not to support. Membership in the UUFA, according to our bylaws "is open to any person of fourteen years of age or more who is in sympathy with its activities and willing to contribute to its financial support."

2011-2012 will be a pivotal year for UUFA as you search for the minister who will accompany you on your journey for many years to come. Your future quite literally hangs in the balance of the coming year's budget. Please consider your commitment to this congregation and pledge as generously as you can to the future of this beloved community.

Faithfully,  
Rev. Charlotte Cowtan  
Interim Minister

### **Soup Lunch**

The Fellowship's next Sunday noontime meal is a soup lunch on February 27. Experience the camaraderie and enjoy the excellent food following the second service. Our January 23 Iowa-grown meal was a great success, and the Meals Planning Group gives a heartfelt thanks to those folks who provided food and worked at the event. For further information regarding the meals, check out: [www.gunderfriend.com/uufa](http://www.gunderfriend.com/uufa) or contact Helen Gunderson at [gf@gunderfriend.com](mailto:gf@gunderfriend.com) or 232-9416.

## Changing Our Culture of Belief

Belief systems change over time. We adopt ways of thinking when we are young that adequately serve us at the time. As we grow, our thoughts and ideas grow along with us. We let go of limiting beliefs that held the illusion of keeping us safe, but rather would hold us back if we continued to cling to them. At pivotal points along the way, we embrace new ways of being and acting that reflect a broader perspective.

Just as individuals carry their own belief systems, community groups, like our Fellowship body, create a belief culture. The Fellowship is at a pivotal point of growth and has the opportunity to embrace new ways of being. Together, I see some limiting beliefs we have to shed in order to allow our congregation to better serve itself.

Limiting Belief #1 = “We can’t afford it.” Former decisions based on this belief are coming back to haunt us. Recently, the sump pump in the first floor furnace room backed up. Rather than a new problem, come to find out, this has been a problem for years. In fact, as I hear told, it was an intentional decision not to fix the sump pump to code because it was too expensive. Instead, we have been getting by on letting the water in the pit fill and siphoning it manually on a weekly basis into the former kitchen sink with a makeshift hose.

Limiting Belief #2 = “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” In the above example, Rich VanValin, and the Building and Grounds chairpersons before him, have made sure the pit siphoning has occurred. However, Rich has been out of town for two weeks and guess what? Due to some form of miscommunication, the siphoning didn’t happen. Fortunately, the furnace inspectors happened to come and noticed the deep water in the pit. If the water had been an inch higher, we would have lost the entire furnace! So why do we need to change the way we’ve always done things? Because we can’t afford NOT to.

Our limiting beliefs have led to shoestring budgets, makeshift solutions to cut corners, getting by on the minimum, all things that may have served us well in the past when we were small and struggling to survive. In fact, they have served us well enough to get us to where we are today. It is amazing how far we have come with this frugal, creative, can-do attitude of our founders. Perhaps that is why it is difficult to see that we have outgrown them. When something has gotten us this far, it is difficult to conceive that what served us well once is now holding us hostage.

We are at that pivotal moment. We are shaping our future beyond the struggle to survive. We can make that shift from survive mode to thrive mode. We have already proven “we CAN afford it” when we see the need. The stellar flood recovery fully funded in no time at all proves this. What we can’t afford is business as usual. Business as usual has stripped many of our volunteer positions into solo endeavors, and even nonexistence.

We can’t afford NOT to fund hired manpower to supplement the burnout tasks that are too burdensome, time consuming or undesirable. Imagine all we could do if our energies were freed up from trying to recruit people to tend to the tasks no one wants to do! Collectively we CAN afford to have them done for us. We CAN afford to have the Fellowship work for us!

It’s all a matter of priority. How important is it to have things organized and running smoothly? How important is it to have fresh and energized volunteers doing meaningful work? How important is the Fellowship in your life? How important is it that the Fellowship thrives into the future?

The no-nonsense pledge drive is asking us to reset our giving to reflect our priorities. I’m asking us to additionally reset our beliefs. Honor the survival beliefs that have gotten us this far, but realize they no longer generate the desired effects. Let them go with thanks, praise and gratitude for getting us to this point. Embrace new beliefs of thrive that will better serve us now and into the future. I, for one, am ready to realize “Operation Thrive Mode.” It’s long overdue and we deserve it!

Blessings,  
Deb Kline  
UUFA Board President

## January Board Highlights:

### Key decisions:

- The Board approved the recommendations by the Process Task Force, as listed in the January newsletter, for selecting members to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee.
- Mark your calendars for the following congregational meetings:
  - Sunday, January 30th** = Janne Eller-Isaacs Workshop 1:00 – 2:15 pm. All you want to know about the ministerial search process.
  - Sunday, March 27th** = Special Congregational Meeting, between services. 20% quorum needed to vote on the slate members for the Ministerial Search Committee.
  - Sunday, May 15th** = Annual Congregational Meeting, after single service. Agenda TBA and will include, but is not limited to the annual budget.

### Upcoming Considerations:

- The Board is looking at staff positions requested by various Fellowship groups as gathered by the Personnel Committee (see report below). All of the positions requested are currently needed. Best-case scenario is that the upcoming pledge drive will enable all to be fully funded.
- The Board will be discussing the service time recommendations from the Transition Team as a result of the completed surveys. The least objectionable service times were 9:15 am and 11:00 am. The Board will consider implementing these new service times beginning in the fall of 2011.
- The Board will vote on the Office Key Policy recommended by Staff and the ELT. As such, only Staff and Board Officers would have key access to the office.

## Staffing Considerations for the 2011-2012 fiscal year

**Recommendation** made in consultation with Lori Allen and Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

### Youth Advisor:

- 6 hours/week, 9 months/year
  1. 2 hours on Sunday
  2. 2 hours on Wednesday evening
  3. 2 hour of planning, meeting with Lori, meeting with YAC

Cost: For 6 hours, ballpark of \$2,700 (hours and FICA included) – based on \$10.50/hr. Note: At the annual meeting last year this position was proposed, had strong support from the congregation but was not funded.

**Recommendation** made in consultation with Lori Allen and Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

### Campus Ministry

- 6 hours/week, 9 months/year
  4. 2 hours on Sunday
  5. 2 hours on Wednesday evening
  6. 2 hour of planning, meeting with Lori, meeting with YAC

Cost: For 6 hours, ballpark of \$2,700 (hours and FICA included) – based on \$10.50/hr.

**Recommendation** made in consultation with Lori Allen and Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

### Nursery Coordinator : eliminate position

Rationale: If a youth advisor is hired, Lori would like to increase her oversight of the nursery program. She feels that she can increase parental involvement and establish relationships that will help the toddlers move into the RE program.

The proposal is for the nursery to be staffed by several child care providers. These child care providers (preferably 3 individuals – college age or older) would schedule themselves into the nursery for early or late service times (no coverage between services). Teen child care workers would also be used. Lori will schedule child care for other UUFA events as needed (nursery/child care budget).

**Recommendation** made in consultation with the Music Committee and Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

### Music Coordinator

- The Music Committee is revising the job description of this position but is not asking for an increase in hours. We will continue to employ a choir director and accompanist unless these positions are rolled into the music coordinator's job (wages would be rolled into the salary along with the added responsibilities).

**Recommendation** for additional office support made in consultation with Rev. Charlotte Cowtan; Kitty Fisher and Cindy Scholten from the Membership Committee; Chris White from the Communication Committee; Fritz Keinert, Treasurer; Doug Marek from the Finance Committee

**Office Administration Staff**

- Communication
  1. The office staff could easily send out non paid advertising and routine press releases. The time involvement would be minimal (2 hours/month).
  2. The office staff is already responsible for monitoring the Web Site and additional time could be added for updating web content (staff updated, board updates, RE support, etc.). The amount of time would need to be determined later.
- Membership
  1. The office staff has already assumed many clerical and support activities for the membership committee (transfer visitor log to the database, maintain membership count and directory, order supplies).
  2. Assist with scheduling new member classes and provide information packets and pledge materials.
  3. Help track membership pledging and activities for Membership committee and follow-up with members (depending on the nature of the issue).
  4. Volunteer coordination.
  5. Data entry of members' talents and interests.
- Finance
  1. Assume bookkeeping responsibilities:
    - write checks (Treasurer would sign them);
    - provide reports requested by the treasurer;
    - enter and track financial data.

Cost scenarios:

1. At 30 hours for office administrator and 17.5 hours for projects coordinator (as originally envisioned), ballpark \$24,000 + \$13,750 = \$37,750, not counting health insurance.
2. At 35 hours for office administrator and 20 hours for projects coordinator, ballpark \$27,750 + \$15,500 = \$43,250, not counting health insurance.
3. At 35 hours for congregational administrator and 20 hours for projects coordinator, ballpark \$33,250 + \$15,500 = \$48,750, not counting health insurance. (congregational administrator UUA job title and includes increased responsibilities, including bookkeeping).

**Recommendation** made in consultation with the Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

**Sunday Morning Custodial Help**

- 5 hours on Sunday morning for 9 months, 3 hours/wk for 3 months
- arrive one hour before services and make sure the building is unlocked and ready for the congregation (things are picked-up, the kitchen is clean, put on a pot of coffee, check paper towels, check garbage, start setting up chairs, call if volunteers don't show)
- help with many misc. tasks as needed
- wash coffee cups and clean up the kitchen
- make sure chairs get put away and the building is left in good shape, lock up or arrange of this to be done.

Cost: ballpark \$2,700

**Recommendation** made in consultation with the Rev. Charlotte Cowtan

**Custodial Service:**

- would eliminate the need for oversight (just call the company with problems)
- they provide cleaning supplies
- there is a high turnover in this position and we would not be left with the problem of hiring
- we would not be left with the responsibility of volunteers cleaning between custodians
- they would handle payroll taxes
- we could request a specific cleaning schedule

Cost: For 8 hours of service, ballpark \$8,300

Cost: For 8 hours of continued in-house custodian, ballpark \$4,700

-Submitted by Cheryl Lawson on behalf of the Personnel Committee

## Transition Times

Transitions in families create challenges and opportunities. I remember that when I took on more administrative responsibilities at work I had to be on campus until 5 or after more regularly. Stress on me and on my family increased as I tried to keep the change in one part of my life from having an impact on another part of my life. But, it wasn't possible. We had long enjoyed regular family dinners, but now dinner couldn't be on the table at 5:30 even a couple times a week any more. The transition led to a need to interrogate that practice: why was I making myself crazy trying to have dinner ready so early anyway? It was a habit we had fallen into, but there were probably other ways to handle Taekwondo schedules and other evening activities and still accomplish our goal of enjoying regular family dinners.

Our transition time at the Fellowship is leading to similar challenges and opportunities. Change increases stress in many ways, but it also offers us the chance to articulate our goals and then ask questions to see if the ways we have been doing things are helping us accomplish those goals. One way to act intentionally is to make sure our practices and habits still make sense given the changes we have experienced. For example, transitioning after the flood had congregation members clarifying our goals for religious education for children and for adults. A space team was then asked: how can we best use our space? Creative answers to that question now have us excited about a new library in the Tower Room and a new look and new uses for the lower level coming soon.

The smaller crisis of an office break-in and stolen cash, has prompted another transition moment. New locks have been installed on the office; with new locks come new keys. Now is a good time to make conscious decisions and act intentionally. To do this the question at hand isn't simply "who gets a key?" but rather, "why might people need a key to the office?" What is office space used for? Are we making the best use of that space for our community? Are there ways to make materials and equipment accessible to members and volunteers that won't require access to a space that requires some measure of security?

Questions like these are being wrestled with by the board as they develop and vote on a key policy. As always, the minister, board members as well as members of the transition team (Mark Witherspoon, Kitty Fisher, David Brenner, Mary Richards, Charlotte Mann, Sam Wormley and me, Amy Slagell) are happy to have your input about these and related issues. The board meets on February 9 with the key policy issue on the agenda as an action item.

- Submitted by Amy Slagell on behalf of the Transition Team

### **News briefs from the Transition Team**

Please remember that applications for the **Ministerial Search Committee are due February 15**. Please see the January newsletter or our website for all the information you need to know about what a committee member's job entails, what are the talents needed on the committee, how the committee will be selected and how to apply. If you have any other questions, please email UUFA Board or Transition Team members or Interim Minister Charlotte Cowtan.

**The Congregational Hearing on Vision Statement Draft** is scheduled for February 20, 1:00-2:00 pm, in Fellowship Hall. The team plans to complete a first draft in time for the UUFA Board to see it at its February Board meeting.

### **Committee Council Meeting Scheduled**

The UUFA Committee Council will meet at 7:00 pm, Wednesday, February 16, in the Fireside Room to discuss what's going on in the Fellowship during these transitional times and to take part in a Healthy Congregations workshop.

The Committee Council is composed of the chairs of all the Fellowship committees and task forces. UUFA Vice President Steve Martens will preside at the meeting. The agenda calls for discussion about Fellowship concerns and issues during the first hour of the meeting. The second hour will be a workshop led by interim minister Rev. Charlotte Cowtan on how healthy congregations work together to create and achieve a vision for their future.

## Questions about the Pledge Drive and the Direction of the Fellowship

As everyone reading this probably knows, we are in transition to get ready for the new minister we will call. The Stewardship Committee is responsible for raising the money to make that transition. The most controversial request is for “increased staff support for the treasurer, membership services, communications, and youth and campus ministry.” It’s controversial because it is about our identity as well as how we’re willing to spend our money.

Through most of the past thirteen years, our recent minister, the Rev. Brian Eslinger, touted the “Fellowship Model” as the ideal of organizing. I believe that the efficient volunteers around him sheltered him from what it took to keep things going. We liked hearing his affirmation of our laid back style even as we bemoaned how difficult it was becoming to get routine tasks done or how many new members were dropping out after a few months. By the end of his time with us, Brian realized what difficulties we were facing and warned that we needed a new structure. Now we are trying to find out what that will look like.

One of the attractive things about the “Fellowship Model” was that it was relatively cheap. In every area we got high quality talent without paying anything for it. It was so common that it was hard not to take it for granted. We assumed that enough capable people would step forward to do what needed to be done. In many respects this is still happening, but it doesn’t happen automatically. As we grow in size it becomes harder to connect people with what would lead to their spiritual growth. Instead we accept their willingness to shovel the sidewalks or wash the dishes until they have no time left for discussion groups or meditation. If they’re assertive, they may just avoid those activities they don’t want to do. If we don’t have a way to know their preferences, we may assume they just don’t like us any more. The trouble with having our main connector be working committees is that they are mostly task oriented. Or sometimes they turn into discussion groups about the work we need to do. Whatever our intentions, we find ourselves treating people as a means to an end. Many of us would like to be of use, but the work needs to be appropriate to our time and talents. We are individuals, not replaceable parts. And when we get worn out sometimes we just stop working.

One of the great concepts in the Sociology of Religion is that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” To many of us that describes our Fellowship at its best, the “Fellowship Spirit.” Some of us fear that an invasive organization will destroy the spontaneity and the imagination that is the hallmark of this organic Fellowship. This is a valid fear, but we believe that the right kind of support staff will enable volunteers rather than create hierarchy.

There is no longer anyone in the Fellowship who knows everyone and is aware of everything that is going on. Good support staff members can act as reference librarians. If you can’t find the answer to your question, whether it’s how to locate people to make coffee on Sunday mornings or where to find the architects’ model for the building, the office staff should be able to give you the information or connect you with the appropriate people to help you.

We don’t believe the office should be control central, but it should be information central. And we think it’s necessary. That’s why we support the recommendations of the Personnel Committee, which has been working for years to figure out how we can improve communication and nurture each other. It’s not as cheap as letting volunteers do it all, but losing members by burning them out turns out to be a more expensive option in terms of our values as well as our money.

~ Submitted by Susan Franzen on behalf of the Stewardship Committee



**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.**



## **From the director of youth and children's ministries**



### **Sacred Spaces**

The idea of sacred space has been coming to me in various incarnations lately. Our small group ministry implementation team had a session on sacred space where we each described a sacred space that we remembered. Each of us described a place that was sacred because of the people and experiences that had happened in that space, not necessarily because of the space itself. One person recalled a childhood home and adjoining land that was full of childhood explorations with siblings and friends. Two recalled a parent's or grandparent's home where families gathered and shared meals, celebrations and activities like letter boxing. One person recalled a place that no longer exists. That is the physical building does not exist, but the memories and feelings are easily recalled.

I also was aware of the feeling of being in a sacred space when I attended the Coming of Age talent show in January. The space, Fellowship Hall, was the same as it physically is most Sundays. Chairs were set in rows facing the dais. What set this time apart was the people who offered their talents to be shared with the audience members. I could not help but think, especially when family members performed together, about the sacredness of the space that was being created. Will this building be what they remember when they recall their duet with their father, sharing an original poem or song, playing whatever instrument you were competent on with friends? Probably. At least the will say, "Remember when we were in that talent show at the UUFA?" But what will really be remembered will be the connection to the people who shared the stage with them and the people who applauded their creative and artistic offerings.

I am glad that we have created this sacred space. It is good to know that people feel they have a place where they can come to make and share memories. Isn't this what we are here for? To create a community where we can all share a bit of ourselves, hopefully making the world a better place in the process? I don't think we always have to be performing altruistic feats to feel that what we are doing is worth while. When we engage in activities that make us feel good about ourselves, that let us express ourselves in ways that are different from our everyday activities, we can't help but share those feelings with people who share our space. When we do good for ourselves, we do good for all. I came across the mission statement of a UU church when I was doing a Google search one day. It is short and simple: "This church is a community of love beyond belief, transforming ourselves, the community in which we live, and the world." Not only is this a church mission statement, it could be the "how to" guide for creating, growing, and sharing sacred space.

See you on Sunday,

Lori Allen

### **Coming of Age**

February 16 the COA students and mentors will meet for the Buddhism forum in Fellowship Hall. We will have a visitor from the UUFA Mindfulness and Meditation Group leading us in a meditation exercise. Namaste.

### **UUFA Families Asked to Give Input About Sunday Morning Religious Education**

Several families have stayed after their children's religious education classes or come to the meetings at Lori's house to share thoughts and ideas about the UUFA youth and children's programming. I am finding that there are many things families like about our programming – the lessons about UUism and other religions, the wisdom stories, stories that identify and affirm the wonders of diversity, and the opportunities for children and youth to create community with peers who have similar values. At this time, middle and high school families have not had input. There will be a more complete report on this project in the March newsletter.

### **Youth Service**

The high school youth will be planning and facilitating the Sunday morning services on February 27. Their theme is "dreams." You can count on there being great youth musicians, speakers and writers. Don't miss out on the youths' perspectives and wisdom on the topic of dreaming.

## Secret Friends

Our annual Secret Friends event is back after a year's hiatus. Secret Friends is an event facilitated by UUFA volunteers and the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries. Children in Kindergarten through Grade 6 are paired with secret youth or adult friends. There are opportunities to share letters, drawings, cards, poems, and perhaps a little trinket or two. Then, on March 4, the friends are invited to a party where the identity of their friend will be revealed. This year, friends will recognize each other by the items they've been asked to bring for the MICA Food Pantry. The March 4 party is scheduled for 5:30 – 7:00 pm. Supper, photos, and a friendship activity will fill our time together. Here is the schedule of events:

February 6 and 13 – Sign up to be a Secret Friend

February 20 and 27 – Leave a message at the UUFA for your Secret Friend

March 4 – 5:30 – 7:00 pm, Secret Friend Supper and Party

## Space Use Task Force Update

Work is progressing, albeit slowly, on the UUFA renovations. In January the old Tower Room was painted, ceiling tiles replaced, and new carpet installed. On January 19 the Coming of Age Youth and Mentors moved shelving, tables, furniture and books into the "new" library. Currently the Library Committee is busy getting the books sorted out and re-shelved. Thanks to Barb Abbott and Wes Shank for directing our COA volunteers.

February – Artistic Concrete will grind off the residual glue on the concrete floor in the lower level. At the time of this submission, the date for this to start is February 7. The office will be closed during the 4-7 days that this process will take. Watch your emails for specific information as it comes to us.

February – Changes have been made to some of the construction plans for this project. The changes in classroom locations will be the same as published last month, but the scope of the construction has been changed. Instead of permanent storage and walls being built, we are keeping the folding wall in place and will be purchasing portable school grade furniture for storage and programming. The cost for these changes does not affect the overall budget, but the flexibility in use of spaces and movement of furniture will be greatly enhanced.

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

May – Summer 2011 The upper spaces will get a simple remodel that will create space for the high school youth group, the religious education office and adult meeting spaces. The door that was created between the kitchenette and classroom will be re-hung. The bathroom will be upgraded to make the space compliant with ADA specifications. Hopefully, by fall 2011, all work will be completed.

## Small Group Ministry

The implementation team for Small Group Ministry has assembled and met. Faith Winchester, Fred Vallier, Barb Abbott, Liz Gull, and Donna Lutz, as well as Lori and Charlotte, make up this group. The group is meeting as future small groups will meet and they are determining things like group size, UUFA group's covenant, where to meet, and curriculum content for the group. In February their small group discussion topics are: Learning From Failure and Worship. They will also be talking about how to identify, educate and support small group ministry leaders. Watch for monthly updates on the team.

## Green Sanctuary Discussion Course

The Green Sanctuary Committee will be offering a Northwest Earth Institute course entitled, "Reconnecting With Earth". We will meet once a week for 1 hour, probably starting at 7 pm (the exact date and time will be arranged with those who sign up for the course) for six weeks. The course materials are available on line from the NWEI and cost \$15. There will be a sign-up sheet and a sample of the course materials on display in the fireside room on Sundays. If you want more information or wish to sign up talk to Fritz Franzen or e-mail him at [hfranzen@iatate.edu](mailto:hfranzen@iatate.edu).

## Dearest Rev. Lajós Lőrinczi and Tordátfalva Congregation,

Happy New Year and warm greetings from Ames, Iowa! Let me express our heartfelt thanks to all of you for helping us in our time of need! Your generous \$500 donation to repair our flooded building has touched us deeply. We know you put great thought and value into using your financial resources, and also know you have many hardships yourselves. That makes your gift all the more meaningful to us. This contribution was an example to our members that our partnership with you is of mutual support and deep caring. Your actions also inspired our members to give most generously and thanks to everyone, we met our goal and will be able to fix everything!

So many of us, including me, have fond memories of visiting you, your beautiful church and village. We experienced true hospitality and enjoyed the time we spent together in worship, and eating and playing together with music and games and song. It is our wish to see you again as soon as possible. Then we can embrace our dear friends and thank you in person, for coming to our aid. We are delighted that we will continue to work together to keep Unitarian Universalism alive and thriving in the world.

Thank you again, to our beloved Tordátfalva friends! We are blessed to be in partnership with you.

With Sincere Gratitude and Appreciation,

Deb Kline

UUFA President

### UUFA Transylvania Night 2011

Enjoy an evening of Transylvanian fellowship, food, music, and dancing. Learn more about our partner church friends in the village of Tordátfalva, Romania. Proceeds will benefit both the UUFA Partner Church Program and our Coming of Age Boston-bound youth.

6:00 to 8:30 pm, Saturday, March 26, 2011, at the Fellowship

Reservations: Please make a reservation for the dinner. Meat and Vegetarian entrees will be available.

Tickets: Suggested donation of \$25 adult; \$10 child; \$50 family

(You are welcome to give more or less. We don't want the donation price to deter anyone from coming.)

Childcare will be available with a reservation. Tickets will be sold between services starting in late February and in the UUFA office.

## Membership Classes to be held in February

Membership and Information Seeker classes are scheduled for February at UUFA. People considering membership in the Fellowship are asked to attend both Parts 1 and 2. Childcare will be available with advance reservation.

Part 1, Exploring Membership, is for both information seekers and people considering membership. There is a choice of two dates: Saturday, February 19, from 1:30 - 4:00 pm OR Tuesday, February 22, from 7-9:30 pm.

Part 2, Pathway to Membership, is for those who are considering membership, and it goes into more detail about becoming a member of the Fellowship. The date is Saturday, February 26, from 1:30 - 4:00 pm. Topics covered will include our own personal religious journeys, UU theology, UU roots in Jewish and Christian traditions, the education of our children, our commitment to social justice and the environment, and ways to become involved in our congregation.

New Members will sign the membership book on Sunday, March 6, during a service. To register please sign up at the Sunday Visitor Table or contact Kitty Fisher, Membership Chair, at [kafisher99@aol.com](mailto:kafisher99@aol.com) or the UUFA Office at [uufa@uufames.org](http://uufa@uufames.org) or 515-292-5960. Please indicate if childcare is needed.

## Endowment Distribution Funds Available for UUFA Projects

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames (UUFA) has an Endowment fund, which is set aside to nurture our congregation today and into the future. One provision of the Endowment policy is that a portion of the annual revenue (interest and/or dividends) from the investments can be distributed to worthy needs of the UUFA, such as programming, equipment, and maintenance. In the past, Endowment revenue has been used to refinish the wood floor in the Fellowship Hall and to purchase some of our hymnals, our coffee maker, and our lawn mower. The Endowment Acquisitions and Disbursements Committee does not distribute funds every year, but this year we are requesting proposals from UUFA committees and we plan to distribute ~\$1,500 to fund one or more proposals.

If your committee would like to request funds, please fill out the Endowment Distribution Request form and return it to the UUFA office by Sunday, February 27, 2011. Forms are available on the UUFA Website <http://www.uufames.org/committees/endowment-acquisitions-disbursements-committee>, from the UUFA office or by contacting Bonnie Bowen (292-6923; [bsbowen@iastate.edu](mailto:bsbowen@iastate.edu)). The Endowment Committee will meet and reach a decision in March. If your project is funded, we will request a description of how much money was spent.

The African Muse: Paintings by Norma H. Wolff

The Gallery in the Round at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames is featuring the work of Norma Wolff through February 24. An anthropologist with a background in African art and indigenous religions, Wolff draws upon her experience doing research in West Africa since 1965 to develop her paintings.

According to Wolff, "it is not possible to separate my anthropological interests from my art. From my first trip to Nigeria in the mid-1960s, I have loved the colors and dynamics of everyday and ritual African life which provides endless varieties of subject matter for the artist." Her earliest paintings from the 1960s particularly reflect her interest in the Nigerian people. While she continues to portray people in her art, her more recent work tends toward abstractions that often reflect her exposure to the African worldview. In her Spirit Series, ancestors, deities, nature spirits and forces, witches, sorcerers, and sacred forests, emerge.

There will be a reception and gallery talk on Friday, February 4, 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Norma Wolff is a member of the Creative Artists' Studios of Ames, 130 S. Sheldon, where she can be visited in her studio.

## Coming of Age/Boston-bound update

To help foster our sense of community and build relationships with our youth, the Coming of Age program has been involved in numerous fundraisers since September. We have raised \$5255 towards our \$20,000 goal. All proceeds from the fundraisers help defray the cost per family for sending each child to Boston. Some of the upcoming events are:

1. Monthly bake sales between services
2. Transylvanian dinner
3. UU t-shirt/sweatshirt sale
4. Moon Cookie cafe in the spring
5. 4th Sunday soup lunch

Your support nurturing spiritual growth in our youth is much appreciated.

~ The COA/Boston-bound families

## Committee and Group News

### ARCHIVES ALIVE

With the re-organization going on at the Fellowship, we had a great opportunity to make our archives more accessible. With two new members, Wes Shank and Sue Crull, we have fresh enthusiasm for discovering and sharing the secrets of the Fellowship. If you are interested in joining us please contact Susan Franzen at 515-292-2610.

### CONSCIENTIOUS CRAFTERS

Next meeting: 12:30 pm, February 13, in the Fireside Room. Our monthly gathering of crafters welcomes knitters, crocheters, tatters, darners, felters, embroiderers and ply-ers of other needlecrafts. Whatever needle art holds your interest this winter, you're invited to bring your project on the second Sunday of each month to join us for fellowship and support. We have people who are experts and who can offer assistance. We have beginners who are looking for support and encouragement. We have lots of yarn and lots of project ideas if you want to use your skills for charitable purposes.

Silent auction buyers ordered three baby caps, three scarves, and seven sweaters from our group, so we will be checking to be sure all those orders are being (or have been) filled. Also we want to encourage those college groupers to join us again. Visit the UUFA website for more information - and watch for photos of our events and projects. All are welcome.

### DUSTIN BERGER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Thanks again to the youth and parents/mentors who helped move the library into the tower room recently. We're not ready for business yet... but it will be soon! Stop by and check on our progress. We'll get our check-out/in system figured out and then we'll be good to go.

- Barb Abbott, library committee chair

### WILD ROSE ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCE

Spring 2011 Information:

Come dance to all the Hot Oldies from 1650 to the present including the elegant dances from the Jane Austen Era to ceilidh dances. All dances are taught and called. All are welcome. No partner or experience necessary. Live Music by Cecil's Harp. Musicians are welcome to sit in & play with the band.

When? 2:30 to 4:30 pm, 1st & 3rd Sundays

Where? At the UUFA Fellowship Hall

Spring 2011 Dates: 2/6 & 2/20, 3/6 & 3/20, 4/3 & 4/17, 5/15 & 5/29, 6/5.

More Information? Linda Lieberman 292-8590 Barbi Greenlaw 292-5317 brgreenlaw@msn.com; lindasuzan@aol.com

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

Our next Book Group will meet February 7 at 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room for a discussion of the book *The Piano Teacher* by Janice Lee. *The Piano Teacher* is a New York Times bestseller and was a New York Times Editor's Choice. It was a Book Sense Pick, chosen to be part of Barnes and Noble's "Discover New Writers" program and was the January "Borders Recommends" fiction pick.

It tells the story of English piano teacher Claire's involvement in a complex web of lies, love, politics and war in 1950's Hong Kong. Come and talk about this acclaimed first novel.

This group is an open group and you are free to join us for any or all of our meetings.

Future Discussion Books:

March 7 *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver

April 4 *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova

May 2 *The Plague of Doves* by Louise Erdrich

June 6 *Rebecca's Tale* by Sally Beauman

- Barbi Greenlaw, 292-5317

## Social Responsibility

MICA's "Living with HIV" program has consistently received strong support from the UUFA and its members. This year, they have proposed an idea to help their clients get through these economic hard times: "We currently have a need for client sponsors. Many of our clients are in need of basic necessities--food, gas, nutritional supplements, housing items, help with medical bills, etc. As funding is low, we are in great need of help from the community to ensure our clients are able to get their needs met. It is our hope to develop a network of client sponsors who are willing to be called upon in times of need when resources for MICA clients are not available elsewhere." If you are interested in being a client sponsor, contact MICA, 515-956-3312, and ask for Janelle or Carly.

## Thank you:

Please extend a note of thanks to **Paul Ferrone** for his musical service to the Fellowship. Paul has resigned as Music Director and we thank him for his good work. Also, thanks to the Emergency Flood Recovery Fund raising Team of **Rev. Charlotte Cowtan, Susan Franzen, Deb Kline, and Suzanne Zilber** for all their hard work behind the scenes to manage the fundraising process. Thanks to **Linda Oppedal** for updating the Hazel Hammer chalice logo. It made its debut in the January newsletter and will be making its appearance in other places soon. Thanks to **Ralph Gandy, Joel Geske, Forrest Laws, and Craig Mushel** for shoveling the sidewalks the last few weeks. Thanks to the **Coming of Age and high school youth and mentors** for moving the books and bookcases into the library.

"I'd like to thank the group who came to Green Hills and sang Christmas Carols. I was going to write a note but wasn't quite sure who should receive it. Recently I've heard many nice comments from others (not UU's) about the group. So THANK YOU!" ~ Bobbie Warman

[If there is someone in the Fellowship who did something nice for you, please send a brief note to the office by Monday, February 14, to include in the next newsletter. Thank you!]

## The UUFA seeks a new Coordinator of Music

Ideal applicants are creative, energetic, and familiar with a wide variety of music styles, including: classical, folk, global, urban and contemporary. The music ministry of this congregation includes working closely with the service presenters in developing meaningful and appropriate music for services. Additionally, the Coordinator will facilitate musical contributions from within the congregation and create connections with local music communities. The Coordinator will embrace the UU principles of inclusion and diversity, integrating them into the musical life of the congregation ([www.uufames.org/content/uu-faith](http://www.uufames.org/content/uu-faith)). Desired candidates will have a degree in music or relevant hands-on experience and interest in contributing musically to services and events. Applicants with diverse backgrounds are encouraged to apply.

## Moon Cookie Cafe: 3 ISU English Professors, Singer-Songwriters Play Benefit in Ames

Deb Marquart, Jenn McClung Coppoc & Elizabeth Zimmerman teach in the English Department at Iowa State. They write and perform original music and are excited to finally perform a night of acoustic music together on Saturday, February 19, at 6:30 pm at the MOONCOOKIE CAFÉ, a temporal coffee house at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ames.

Non-student tickets \$8/students \$5 available family maximum \$20, available at the door or in advance at Photosynthesis, 317 Main Street, Ames. Doors open at 6:30 pm; show begins at 7:30 pm. Coffee, cookies, and Italian Sodas will be served from 6-7 pm and during intermission. All proceeds go to middle school youth Coming of Age fundraiser.

Poet and author Deb Marquart found eloquent expression through jazz-poetry rhythm & blues project, The Bone People, with whom she released two CDs. Whether it's through her fiction, poetry or stripping a classic rock song to its essentials – Deb transfixes her audiences with lyrical grace. Poet and colleague Jenn McClung Coppoc knows that it takes more than good lyrics to make a great song. Her haunting guitar and beautiful vocals mesmerize audiences. Ames native, Elizabeth Zimmerman, writes original music inspired by art, film, nature and people. Her musical styles range from folk to jazz to soul and blues.

Come hear three outstanding musicians in one of Ames' best acoustic venues - 1015 N Hyland Ave, Ames. Tickets available at door. Doors open at 6:30 pm; show begins at 7:30 pm.

# Prairie Star District Annual Conference 2011

If you were inspired by attending General Assembly last summer, or just wish you had, perhaps you like to get a taste of a large and exciting UU gathering when Prairie Star District holds its Annual Conference in Des Moines, April 8-10, 2011!

This year, presenters were invited to create workshops along the theme, "It Matters What You Believe," from a beloved reading in our hymnal by UU religious educator Sophia Lyon Fahs. It is no wonder that the 24 fabulous workshops offered will include such compelling topics as "Shared Ministry: Leading With Spirituality," "Engaging Our Interdependent Web," and "Compassionate Communication: Living Our UU 'Creating Peace' Statement of Conscience."

The Friday evening Opening Celebration will feature Rev. Brian Eslinger speaking on "Telling Our Stories." Rev. Kendyl Gibbons will present the Judy Lecture: "Spiritual Maturity as the Goal of Faith Development" on Saturday morning.

The conference is intentionally multigenerational, and there will be activities to engage your children as well as opportunities for families to be together. There will also be a Youth Conference offered concurrently. Youth will have their own activities and a group service project, but will be able to sign up for any of the workshops in the "C" slot.

For more information on the conference and to register, please visit the PSD website at <http://www.psduua.org/drupal/events/AnnualConference2011>.

The District Office can provide a hardcopy of conference information if necessary. Phone 612-870-4823 to make a request.

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## 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 Cowtan .....minister@uufames.org – 515-292-5960  
**Director of Youth and Children's Ministries:** Lori Allen .....dycm@uufames.org – 515-292-5960  
**Office Administrator:** Lisa Harmison..... uufa@uufames.org – 515-292-5960  
**Projects Coordinator:** Diana Crosswait .....projects@uufames.org – 515-292-5960  
**Nursery Coordinator:** Anne Tepper .....nursery@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
Open	through 2012
Kay Puttock	through 2012
Iris Brenner	youth representative

**Next Board Meeting:**  
**6:30 pm, Wednesday, February 6**

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