

Unitarian

VOL. 82, APRIL 2007 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

From The Minister

Institutional strategic planning is either the most exciting or the most deadly boring process, depending upon your taste in such matters. For a person with my kind of curiosity about how we as human beings know what we know, and think what we think, and how we come together in communities to realize our hopes and values, it is a never ending fascination to reflect on the way congregations work, what they are for, and what makes them thrive. A group of thoughtful FUS lay leaders and members have been engaged in this conversation as the Strategic Planning Committee over the course of this program year, beginning with house parties last fall, to solicit input from a broad spectrum of our congregation. Elsewhere in this newsletter, you can learn more about their findings, and plans for discussion, this spring. The larger number of members and friends who participate in these dialogues, the more useful the outcome will finally be.

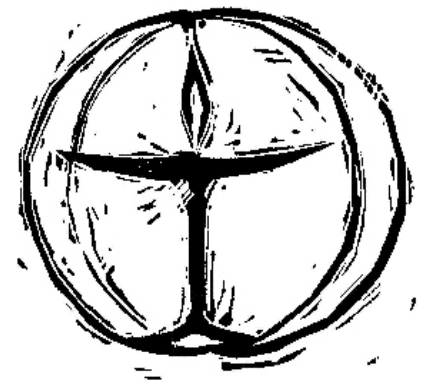
One of the issues that is constantly present in any discussion about the future or purpose of a community like FUS is the polarity between meeting the needs of our existing members, and reaching out into the larger community. I call it a polarity because it is one of those sets of alternatives, like inhaling and exhaling, that are both necessary, but that can't be blended into a single act. No institution can survive, or still less thrive, if it doesn't in the long run offer its members the resources and experiences they are looking for. We don't achieve the most basic purpose of our existence as a humanist society unless our own lives as part of this community are enriched and challenged and made more whole as a result of our participation here. Our children need to be nurtured and educated; the fabric of friendship needs to be woven; the hurting among us need to be cared for; we need to be strengthened in our moral discernment, and encouraged to make the way we live correspond to what we say we believe. If these things don't happen here, we have failed in the internal responsibilities of community. Moreover, if we don't pay our bills, keep the snow shoveled from our sidewalks, and offer our own employees a living wage, we fail in our responsibilities as an institutional citizen and neighbor. I take it that we are all agreed that we want this congregation to meet such obligations as responsibly and gracefully as it can.

At the same time, even if we attend to all these internal matters exquisitely well, our existence could still be utterly irrelevant to anyone outside our doors – and it seems to me that that, too, would constitute failure. I believe that we have two very basic obligations to those with whom we share the city of Minneapolis in particular,

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Order of Service announcements are appreciated by noon on Wed of each week. Please email your submission(s) to: info@firstunitariansociety.org

Newsletter submissions are due by the 10th of each month and should be sent to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org

Forum and Assembly Previews

Forums are at 9:30 AM in the Lower Assembly Hall

Assemblies are at 10:30 AM in the Upper Assembly Hall

■4/1/07 Forum: Strategic Planning Update Presenter: The FUS Strategic Planning Committee

The FUS Strategic Planning Committee has been at work for the last year and a half considering our mission, values and vision for the future as well as charting strategic objectives to get us there. Members of the committee will be on hand to present the results of their work to date and gather further input from members of the congregation. The committee presents its “final” product, the strategic plan, to the congregation at its annual meeting on May 9.

■4/8/07 FORUM:

Please join us for a provocative and thought-provoking program.



■4/15/07 FORUM: On the Ground in Darfur: Responding to Genocide Presenter: Minneapolis-based American Refugee Committee

Genocide in Darfur continues, while increasing numbers of people and governments around the world struggle to find ways to intervene effectively. This morning we will learn more about the crisis in Darfur, and about the humanitarian programs run by the Minneapolis-based American Refugee Committee. “The American Refugee Committee is a Minneapolis-based international nonprofit, nonsectarian organization that has provided humanitarian assistance and training to millions of beneficiaries over the last 27 years. ARC works with refugee communities in 10 countries around the world, helping people regain control of their lives. The people ARC serves have lost everything to events completely beyond their control. ARC provides shelter, clean water and sanitation, health care, skills training, microcredit education, protection and whatever support we can to let people begin again.” For more information please visit <http://www.arcrelief.org>. Please also visit www.uusc.org for information about “Drumbeat For Darfur,” the UUSC program to combat genocide in Darfur. The FUS Monthly Social Justice Collection - today also the Prairie Star District Conference Collection - will be for ARC’s efforts in Darfur.

◆ 4/1/07 ASSEMBLY: “When Trickster Goes Missing”

Speaker: Ministerial Intern, Karen Hering

In many cultures around the world, trickster is a mischief-making character who keeps the culture both lively and durable by exposing, challenging and disrupting the very things on which the culture is based. So where is trickster found in our contemporary culture? Join us for an April Fool’s Day search for trickster in our times.

◆4/8/07 ASSEMBLY: “Jesus NOT for Dummies” Speaker: Rev. Kendyl Gibbons

Jesus is once again in the news, with claims of his tomb, bones included, having been discovered. Easter morning seems an appropriate time to consider how we as skeptics could think about this person; who he might have been historically, how his identity and role evolved in the Christian church as we know it, and some of the many different ways in which his life, death and teachings have been understood over two thousand years. If the last time you thought about Jesus was in Protestant Sunday School, it’s time for an update.

◆4/15/07 ASSEMBLY: “Sources” Speaker: Rev. Kendyl Gibbons

We will gather this morning with folks from all over the Prairie Star District who have been attending the 2007 District Annual Meeting, hosted this weekend by FUS. The combined forces of the First Universalist Choir as well as FUS Chorus and the Orchestra will present a dynamic musical work based on the six sources of Unitarian Universalism as described in our UUA Purposes and Principles. Composing the lyrics for this cantata was one of Kendyl’s sabbatical projects. Be here to help welcome our guests from afar, enjoy the spring breakfast together, and experience the musical energy of our faith today.



Forum and Assembly Previews

■4/22/07 FORUM: FUS Green Sanctuary Action Plan Kickoff

Presenter: Pete Raynor and FUS Green Team

On this Earth Day, FUS member and Environmental Health professor Pete Raynor, and the FUS Green Team, will present the 12 projects we as a congregation, as a result of our recent voting, are now committed to doing. This is all part of a process, begun more than a year ago, and voted on at our last Annual Meeting, aimed at our eventual certification by the UUA as a "Green Sanctuary." The votes are in and now the real work begins. What are the implications for our building and grounds, us as a congregation, and ourselves as individuals?

■4/29/07 FORUM: Utopias, Dystopias, and the Future of Cities

Presenter: Frederick M Waltz

u-to-pi-a, *n.* Any condition, place, or situation of social or political perfection.

dys-to-pi-a, *n.* A place in which everything is unpleasant or bad. The opposite of utopia.

After a brief survey of fictional utopias and dystopias, and of attempts to create utopias on earth, this talk will focus on how our cities worldwide got to be the way they are now, and where they may be headed in the next century. Mr. Waltz retired in 1996 as a University of Minnesota professor of electrical engineering. He has received numerous honors throughout his career, including being named "Imager of the Year" by the International Machine Vision Association.

◆4/22/07 ASSEMBLY: "Empty Promises"

Speaker: Ministerial Intern Karen Hering
When our lives are filled to the brim, it can be difficult to remain open to change – whether in the form of new ideas or new habits, new friends or new possibilities for our lives. What possibilities and promises can be found in emptiness and why is it important but so difficult to protect empty space in our lives and to make room for these promises?

◆4/29/07 ASSEMBLY: "Color My World"

Speaker: Rev. Kendyl Gibbons
The 2006 auction sermon topic, as assigned by the winning bidders, Jean Toll and Gary Blegstad, is to say something about 'The Mark and Kendyl Gibbons Story,' who we are, how we got here, and why we do what we do. Since I'm the designated public speaker in the family, I'll give you my version of our shared journey; Mark is far more comfortable in private conversations. Our 34th wedding anniversary will occur in August, and we've long passed the point where we have been married for more than half our lives. Like all partners, we live in the paradox between marriage as a demanding vocation, and a thrilling joy ride; add ministry into the mix, and it's quite a trip.

If you are interested in participating in the dedication of children and families at this Assembly, speak to Kendyl or Jan Devor.



From The Minister, continued

and the earth in general. First, our Society needs to be of active service to those who are disenfranchised or suffering. There are many ways for this to happen, at a variety of levels, from serving soup to lobbying legislatures, but whether we are tutoring at-risk students or carrying protest banners, the members of FUS need to be about the business of making our neighborhoods as well as our nation better places to live for everyone. Both the historical heritage of the faith we affirm, and the values we teach one another and our children about what it means to live well, call upon us to engage in these efforts. The wisdom and comfort that this congregation tries to provide are intended to help make such work effective and sustainable for us. And if we intend to be of help and value to the needs of those around us, we must cultivate our awareness of what those needs are. Strategies addressed to the issues of twenty or thirty years ago may or may not achieve anything useful in the present day; we must pay attention to the present needs of the real people who are our neighbors, fellow citizens, and human sisters and brothers.

Finally, over and above addressing the obvious needs created by inequality and misfortune, I think we have another obligation beyond the four walls of our congregational community. While I am not a mindless proselytizer, who supposes that the whole world could, or even should, become humanist like me, I do believe that there are people hungry for the freedom, thoughtfulness, and liberal values that our community represents. I am entirely willing to accept and work within the limitations of whatever market share our religious approach really serves, but as long as there are significant numbers of people who don't know who we are or

what we stand for, I am convinced that we have work to do. So often participants in our newcomer orientation programs say to me, sometimes with tears in their eyes, "I didn't know there was a church like this; I thought there could never be a spiritual community for people like me." The kind of outreach that will help the people of this city and elsewhere to know our congregation, and to understand the religious option that we represent, is only partly about billboards and newspaper ads – though it includes these. More important is that we make our presence as a community felt through our actions; through the contributions that we make to our wider society. The way I see it, every person, no matter what their own religious convictions, is a potential evangelist for FUS – when they are in a conversation about faith with their friends, co-workers, relatives, etc., I want them to know enough about us to say, "You know, you sound like a Unitarian; you should check out that Society over on Mount Curve." I want everyone in this town to recognize, and respect, who we are and what we stand for; to be aware that the liberal humanist option is available. Not all of them will like it, and that's fine; they don't have to – but I want them to know. Until we have offered to everyone who might be nurtured by it, the hope and courage that we ourselves have found in the liberal religious tradition, I believe that one of our most significant and fundamental purposes as an organization is yet unfulfilled. As we plan for the future of our life and work together, I hope that we will take seriously not only the internal well-being of our current membership, but also the impact that we can and should have on the lives of those we have yet to meet.

Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister
612-377-6608, ext. 116
Minister@firstunitariansociety.org

Music News

Please mark April 15th on your calendars for the performance of "Sources." This work features text by Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons and music by Rev. Jason Shelton. As Kendyl told you in a previous newsletter, "Sources" is based on different spiritual traditions reflected through various styles of music. It is a tapestry of many styles, including rap, Gospel, Latin, and others. Your ears will be enticed through brilliant words and shifting rhythms and harmonies. The FUS Chorus and Orchestra will be joined by members of the First Universalist Chorus in what will be a joyous collaboration and reunion. We had the fun of working with the Universalist chorus two years ago and



vowed to work together again!

"Sources" will feature Deb Gilroy and Donald Barbee, two of our fine soloists in the FUS Chorus. You'll also hear loads of percussion and you may feel like dancing at various moments! Dr. Gabriela Díaz-Alatraste will conduct the performance. Don't miss this vital morning at FUS!

Barb Brooks, Music Director, 612-377-6608, ext. 106
chorus@firstunitariansociety.org

Dr. Gabriela Díaz-Alatraste, Associate Music Director
612-377-6608, ext. 106
orchestra@firstunitariansociety.org

From the Intern

A Standing Ovation

In many churches, at this time of year, the congregations are just finishing up their annual pledge campaign in which members are asked how much financial support they will contribute for the year ahead. It's an activity which I've noticed – in its own way – is not unlike the fund drives of public radio or public television, both for better and for worse.

On the down side, these fund drives inevitably and repeatedly bring up that pesky and sometimes thorny subject of money – specifically my money and how much of it I'm willing to share to support the cause at hand. On the positive side, fund drives often make up for their repeated financial requests by lifting up whatever it is that I value about that particular cause. In public television and radio, for instance, I've seen and heard some of the year's best programming during their fund drives. And in my church experience, during pledge drives, I've heard some of the best testimonials about what the congregation means to its members – how that church community has seen them through tough times, multiplied their good times and year after year offered them a profound sense of belonging. I love these stories. In fact, I just heard one at a UU church I was visiting last week that was so moving several hundred people who heard it spontaneously rose to their feet in applause, giving their fellow (rather embarrassed) member a 30-second standing ovation after he'd finished telling his story.

Here at FUS, I'm learning about a different pledge process that avoids some of the pitfalls of the annual fund drive. Thanks to the hard and continuous work of the FUS Stewardship Committee, the pledge process here unfolds over the course of the entire year, making individual contacts and for the most part without using the pulpit on Sundays. It's a wonderful thing to witness – how these individual contacts have led to a generous and reliable level of support for the Society's activities, programs, building, staff and outreach. I'm impressed by both the efforts of the Stewardship Committee and the response of the members, and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to learn about this process.

I will also admit, though (somewhat apologetically), that I miss hearing the Sunday morning testimonials that normally accompany an annual pledge drive. In my conversations with many of you, I've enjoyed hearing your stories about how you found FUS and how long you've been here and what it has meant in your life. So now, in these coming weeks as you prepare to vote on the FUS budget at the annual meeting in May, perhaps you will consider sharing your stories or testimonials with one another informally. Consider asking each other, at coffee hour or while waiting for a meeting to start, how you found this community and why you've stayed in it. Consider telling each other what difference FUS has made in

your life or what you would miss if you weren't part of this community.

These are stories worth lifting up, worth sharing with one another, and yes, every now and then, even worth applauding loudly and at embarrassing length. So this month, in the absence of an annual fund drive, here in the space of this column, I stand and applaud all of you whose participation and support have helped this vibrant community to make a difference for so many people. Bravo!

Karen Hering
Ministerial Intern
612-377-6608, ext. 107

The Alliance News

The Alliance is a dynamic group of dedicated members and friends of FUS. We form friendships, exchange ideas, give service and support to the Society, promote liberal religion, and encourage and inspire personal growth. Please know that The Alliance welcomes new members at any time. Annual dues are \$25. For more information, contact Angie O'Neill, Membership Recruitment Chair, at 612-722-0784.

- ▶ March 7th -- Margaret McCoy gave a wonderful talk to fill us in on the early years of The Alliance.
- ▶ April 4th – Peter Olin, Director, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, will be speaking on the “Latest Developments at the Arboretum.”
- ▶ May 2nd – Sarah Chevallier will speak on “Advances in Curing Alzheimer's.”



Arboretum Fountain

The schedule for these meetings is as follows:
10:45 AM - Lunch ticket sales
11:00 AM - Program begins
Noon - Lunch

Call Olive Sarkinen at 763-544-6168 if you are interested in joining us. Please know that we welcome visitors at any of our meetings!

New Alliance Members:

Allen, Bette, 612-721-5883

Riggs, Linda-Beth, 612-333-8565

Religious Education

Do you get *Newsweek*? An article in the March 12th issue called THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PROTERO made an impression on me. Without identifying Unitarian Universalism, Prothero gives justification for the religious education given here and at many UU churches. He claims that while Americans profess to be spiritual, they are not religiously literate. They do not know of what they speak half the time and when so much of the world turmoil is religiously motivated, this ignorance is a problem. His solution... to have more religion classes in public schools so that children will grow up with, "...enough religious knowledge to debate ethics positions using holy texts, to understand the Biblical references in political speeches, to question their own beliefs about God—and to encourage others to question theirs." He concedes that religion classes in the public school probably won't happen (Harvard even ignored religion when putting together its core curriculum!).

This void of religious information and thinking is exactly what we are countering here at the First Unitarian Society in our Religious Education Program! If you have children/youth enrolled in our program, they will get just what Portero is talking about--- information about this religion, world

religions and the Bible. They will grow up in an environment which encourages self-analysis, thinking about ethics and the way to live life, and questioning various concepts of religious thought. They are encouraged to learn, ponder and wonder and serve others all through their years at FUS. They then create a belief statement in their Coming of Age credos. The high school years bring more thinking and questioning, and they enjoy as Prothero states, "...one of the greatest privileges of the educated, which is to change our minds."

The Religious Education Program is really a valuable asset to your children and youth as they grow up. I will never forget my daughter asking me why so many youth were having a religious crisis their freshman year in college. "I have been learning and questioning my whole life!" she stated. Bingo! That's because she was raised UU!

Jan Devor
Director of Religious Education
612-377-6608, ext. 108
jan@firstunitariansociety.org

The Power of Unity Summer

"When you gain a little power, bring others up with you, or all of their assumptions from before will fit you."

This phrase was written by Caitlin Rolf, an intern who experienced the power of Unity Summer, a month-long summer internship and training program sponsored by First Unitarian Society and First Universalist Church. The program is open to all youth who have completed 9th and 10th grades. In addition to interning in social justice and social service organizations in south Minneapolis, youth meet together in Wednesday sessions to learn more about social justice. This program has changed lives.

BREAK THE BARRIERS AND UNLOCK
THE GATE.
LET'S ELIMINATE ALL -ISMS, THE CAUSE OF
HATE.

Parents should have received letters explaining the Unity Summer Program.

Check with Jan Devor with any questions, or ask one of the Unity Summer Committee members (Adele Hansen, Richard Seurer, Deb Snouffer or Helen Anthony). Remember that **applications are due April 1** and need to be accompanied by a letter of reference. Mail applications to Unity Summer Program, First Universalist Church, 3400 Dupont Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55408.

OPEN YOUR MIND TO ACCEPT
THEIR WORLD.
AND LEARN SOMETHING NEW OF
VALUE, REST ASSURED.

Religious Education

The Coming of Age class went on the **Urban Immersion** experience in March! They learned about the root causes of poverty, did social service in Minneapolis and processed the experience together. They did this with youth from the First Universalist Church. Thanks to Marge Thornton and George Greene for chaperoning this event!

Boston Trip. Almost as you read this newsletter, 16 of the senior high youth group and five chaperones will be about to go on the much anticipated Boston trip! We will be there April 5 through April 8. We will stay at the Pickett and Eliot house, a UUA bed and breakfast. We will tour the UUA, walk the freedom trail, do a "Duck" tour, meet another UU youth group from the church in Belmont, attend church in Concord, and see the North Bridge, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and Walden Pond. And we will meet with the UU ministers group at Harvard and they will do a service for us in the famous Emerson Chapel at Harvard! What a trip! Thanks to all who have contributed to our fundraising efforts. It's a big job to pay for this trip and we couldn't do it without very giving people and committees here at FUS! Thanks go to Linnea Asp who did a great amount of the planning for the trip as well as chaperoned, and to Scott Eller for his various contributions to the trip as well as being a chaperone. Marge Thornton and Pamela Wolfe, who have worked with the high school group for the entire year, completed the chaperone list. Our thanks to all of these adults for their adventuresome spirit!



UUA Headquarters

Our high school youth group is presenting the **worship service at the Prairie Star District annual meeting** on Saturday night, April 14!

Jan will be attending a Minnesota Council on Family Relations and Search Institute conference on **Spirituality and Families in a Changing Society** on April 11 from 8:30 until 3:30 in St. Paul. If anyone would like to go with her, just contact her at church.

On the afternoon of April 15 the Coming of Age class will be participating with youth from the Basilica and Temple Israel in a **Holocaust Remembrance Event** at Mt. Zion Temple in St. Paul. They will hear a survivor speak, and do group activities and thinking around the idea of courage

and following in the path of the righteous in their own religious traditions. Adults are welcome to attend even if you don't have children in the program.

The Coming of Age class and the high school youth group will participate in **Night On The Street** on April 20. They will sleep in boxes in the parking lot of Plymouth Congregational Church as a fund raiser for the homeless. I know that you will be generous when you are asked to sponsor a youth for this event.

The **UU Playgroup** is terrific fun for toddlers and pre-schoolers and their families! Come to the UU Playgroup here at the First Unitarian Society once a month! We have the Chalice Room filled with large motor equipment that delights the kids! Slides, riding cars, big balls, climbing structures, bikes and more! Or if the weather allows, we will make use of our outside playground. It is a casual hour and a half and you can come and go to suit your schedule. This is a great way for parents to connect and children to make friends here at the Society. Details: Saturday mornings, April 21 and May 19, 10:00-11:30 am., in the Chalice Room or outside playground, depending on weather. Free, no reservations necessary...just show up and have fun! Bring your own snacks. Sponsored by Religious Education.

Parents' Night Out: April 27, 6:00 - 9:30 PM. This is a great opportunity for parents to have a night out while quality child care is provided for their child(ren). The cost is \$7 per child, or \$12 per family, and all proceeds benefit the high school youth group. Be sure to sign-up one week in advance for this service.

The **RE Teacher Appreciation Bowling Evening** will be on April 27 in the evening. All of those that have taught this year should be receiving an invitation. See Jan if you don't! Childcare can be provided.

Chalice Lighters' Club for the new school year 07-08 will begin on Monday evening April 30 from 6:00 to 7:30. If you have a child that is in 3rd grade or above, please have them think about joining the Club! The second meeting will be on May 11 from 6:00 to 7:30. Contact Jan Devor if you would like to come!

Religious Education

Survey Results

On February 18th, the 6th and 7th grade RE students distributed surveys in the Assembly asking attendees about their past and present beliefs. This was part of the "Traditions with a Wink" curriculum in which the 6th and 7th graders learned about the variety of traditions from which UU beliefs are drawn.

Of the 114 respondents, only 9% grew up as Unitarian Universalists. Of those who did not grow up UU, 70% grew up following a Protestant religion, 18% Roman Catholic, 3% Jewish, 2% Muslim, and 7% grew up without an emphasis on any particular religion. Of those who answered the question about when they started questioning their religious background, 78% began questioning their beliefs before the age of 20, 19% started questioning them in their 20s, and 3% started questioning their beliefs at age 30 or older. Fewer than half of the respondents had tried other religions between the religion they grew up with and before exploring Unitarian Universalism. Among those who had were 9 who had tried Buddhism, 8 who had tried the Quaker faith, 3 who had tried the Mormon faith, and others who had tried various Christian faiths.

When attendees were asked when they had decided to become a UU, they answered in different ways. Twenty-four respondents had become UUs since 2000, 12 became UUs in the 1990s, 12 in the 1980s, 5 in the 1970s, 7 in the 1960s, 6 in the 1950s, and 7 respondents were visitors. Others answered the question by providing their age when they became UUs. Two became UUs as teenagers, 15 in their 20s, 11 in their 30s, 3 in their 40s, and 1 in his or her 60s. Others cited specific life events such as getting married, having children, or seeing their children reach a certain age as when they became Unitarian Universalists.

The survey also asked respondents to mark a category or categories that reflect their current beliefs. Of the 114 respondents, 71% consider themselves humanists, 35% are atheists, 34% define themselves as agnostic, 26% believe that God is nature, 17% subscribe to mysticism, 7% subscribe to paganism, 6% consider themselves ethical Christians, and 2% consider themselves Christians. Sixteen of the respondents listed other beliefs including evolution, God being part of the universal consciousness, transcendentalism, Taoism, and that God is a metaphor.

The 6th and 7th grade students developed an appreciation for the variety of backgrounds among First Unitarian Society attendees and the amalgam of beliefs that Unitarian Universalism allows room for. We appreciate the participation of all the respondents who took the time to fill out the survey!

Stewardship Corner



February and March have brought a very busy and happy period for your Stewardship Committee. You will recall our challenge to members that sought contributions of at least 50% of each 2006-2007 pledge by the end of December, 2006. It seemed a reasonable challenge, since every payment made within that time frame would provide an early tax benefit to the pledger while also giving a critical boost to the FUS budget in front of the year's biggest heating bills.

Well, this report is being written on March 6th, and the response we can put before you is very encouraging. When payments recorded as final parts of the 2005-2006 pledge year were linked to payments credited to 2006-2007, we saw that more than 80% of targeted pledging had been received -- not by the end of December, 2006 -- but by February 21, 2007.

There were, of course, members who had pledged but not contributed yet. But there were many others who had made payments that exceeded their pledges, and there were those who had contributed even though they had not pledged. In a few cases, these latter pledges were very substantial.

So...here's our advisory for April. You need to know that those who have been especially generous are getting cordial thank you letters from your Stewardship Committee. Thus, if you have not received one of those letters and wish you could, you should try quickly to close the gap between pledge and payment. Your Stewardship Committee would love to replace a pledge reminder letter with a congratulatory note!

Let's face it! We love writing praising correspondence and we suspect you enjoy receiving it. We know, too, that the FUS Board is thrilled when the budget balance is positive. So let's make it happen. The future here at FUS belongs to all of us. Together, we can target 100% commitment and make it happen! **LET'S DO!!**

With thanks from your Stewardship Committee: Susan Deveaux, Chair; Joyce Blomquist; Chris Bubser; Roger Clemence; Kay Dawson; Jim Lynskey; Bob Calgren, *ex officio*.

Membership News

SAVE THE DATES FOR NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION SESSIONS!

A two-part membership orientation to the First Unitarian Society will be held on Sunday, May 6 and 20, 2007 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM in the Dietrich Room. Our Spring New Member Ceremony will be held on Sunday, June 3rd.

This is an opportunity for new and prospective members to learn more about the society's history, philosophy, and purpose. Plus, it's a chance to meet other members and FUS staff and explore ways of getting involved in the life of the Society. You don't have to be a new member to attend; everyone is welcome!

To learn more about membership, please contact Jo Franco, Membership and Outreach Coordinator at membership@firstunitariansociety.org or by calling the FUS office at 612-377-6608, ext. 104.

SOUP LUNCHEON IS APRIL 22ND

Mark Gibbons and his crew of volunteers will be in the kitchen on Sunday, April 22 to provide us with another spectacular Soup Luncheon following the 10:30am service. Suggested donation is \$7. Hosted by and proceeds to benefit the Retreat to the Woods planning committee.

HAVE YOU ATTENDED AN EAT 'N' MEET LATELY?

There are only a few Wednesday nights left this program year to enjoy a home cooked meal (5:45 PM) and stimulating program (7:00 PM) at FUS. Eat 'N' Meets will start up again next fall. Vegetarian options are available at all meals.

Date	Menu	Program
April 4	Taco Bar	"A Good Humanist Practice: Grieving Well" w/Wendy Jerome
May 9	Free Meal!	Annual Congregational Meeting

MEMBER NEWS

Barb Lutz is recovering from foot surgery last month and should be up and about soon. Members can contact the office for Barb's contact information.

Please keep Bob Zack and his family in your thoughts as he recovers from a stroke. Bob and Ruth have moved in with their son and his family in Woodbury.

Lisa Friedman, the chair of our PSD Annual Meeting planning committee, has broken her wrist, and we wish her speedy healing.

Donald Skrivseth was hospitalized for a degenerative condition of cells in his leg. He may be receiving treatment for a while.

Joyce Alwin is undergoing rehabilitation for injuries resulting from a car crash.

Get well cards would be welcome by all!

MORE MEMBER NEWS:

Those who remember Matthew Johnson-Doyle, our intern minister in 2001-2002, will be pleased to know that he and his wife, Morgan, welcomed their daughter, Rosalie, last month on February 20th. Pictures can be seen in the FUS office.

Share the Joy of Community

Have some news you'd like to share with the FUS community? Contact Jo Franco at (612) 377-6608 ext. 104 or membership@firstunitariansociety.org and tell her your stories!

Jo Franco
Membership Coordinator
612-377-6608, ext. 104

Our old-time members will recall with fondness Walter Lief, who for many years created a holiday wonderland in the Chalice room for our R.E. children. Walter died in October, after an increasingly difficult series of health crises, having lived to be 93. He was an artist and poet, and together with his wife, Julia, who died in 2005, a proud member of FUS for decades. Their son, Edward, can be reached through the FUS office.

FUS Staff

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Sunday, 9:00 AM to Noon.

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Events & Announcements

Green Sanctuary Plan Kick Off & Earth Day Activities

With voting for the Green Sanctuary activities now complete, the Green Team will unveil the final plan on Earth Day, Sunday April 22. We thank the 100 members and friends who took the time to read through the tome of a ballot and vote. Two of our Action Plan items – the Bright Bulb project and Tree Planting -- will be looking for your participation on Earth Day. Oops, we gave them away.

9:30 AM FORUM: Green Sanctuary Plan Unveiling and Congregational Discussion. What's in the plan? Where do your interests fit? What's next? Join members of the Green Team steering committee for an open conversation about how to implement these great activities, and to begin a reflective conversation about what is our "Fair Share of the Earth." Pete Raynor, Gary Blegsted, Roger Clemence and others will be presenting.

10:30 AM ASSEMBLY: Karen Hering, Ministerial Intern, will lead Assembly today, during which we will take a moment for congregational recognition of the Green Sanctuary Plan with a small surprise for all.

11:30 AM SOCIAL HOUR: At Social Hour we'll embark on two of our Green Sanctuary activities, Tree Planting on the MidTown Greenway and the Bright Bulb Project – and more.

- Sign up for Tree Planting and lunch to take place Saturday, April 28. We'll be working in concert with the MidTown Greenway Coalition. (See below for details.)
- View the Green Sanctuary Action Plan and join a temporary task force for one of the activities!
- Bright Bulbs! Compact fluorescent bulbs will be for sale, and educational materials available for the asking. What about the mercury? How do you dispose of them? We'll have all the answers.
- Global Warming Education Posters: Read and admire two series of global warming posters produced by the UU EcoMinds last year, for use at congregations and in the EcoExperience building at the MN State Fair.

Green Sanctuary Action Item: Tree Planting!

*April 28, 9:00 – Noon, followed by picnic lunch.
Carpool from FUS at 8:30 AM sharp.*

We selected tree planting as a worship and service action in our Green Sanctuary plan because trees are so valuable in so many ways. Here is our first opportunity to fulfill our commitment.

On Saturday, April 28, you are encouraged to join other FUSers and members of the MidTown Greenway Coalition to plant trees along the final stretch of the Greenway bike and walking path, between Hiawatha and River Road. Come green thumbs, come brown thumbs! All are welcome, though younger kids will need to be supervised by parents.

Meet at FUS to carpool – cars pull out at 8:35 AM. Or bus or bike to the location. Wear sturdy shoes and your gardening clothes. We'll eat lunch together afterwards. If the weather is nice, bring a picnic lunch. If it's questionable, we'll gather at a local eatery. Return to FUS by 1:30 PM.

Please RSVP at Social Hour on April 22, or call Madalyn Cioci at 612-926-5249 so we can alert you if details change.

Prairie Star District Annual Meeting April 13-15, 2007

First Unitarian Society has the privilege and responsibility of hosting this spring's annual meeting of the Prairie Star District. The meeting will occur Friday night April 13th and all day Saturday at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Minneapolis; Sunday morning breakfast and service will be at First Unitarian Society.

As hosts, we need many people to volunteer their assistance to make the event successful (creating registration packets, greeting attendees, making breakfast, monitoring workshop rooms, helping with childcare, and helping staff the bookstore among other roles). Sign up to help during coffee hour soon, or contact Polly Peterson (peter089@umn.edu).

THEN, register online at www.psduua.org/Annual-Conference/Annual-Conference or pick up a registration form in the FUS office.

Join UUs from across eight states in hearing Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman, senior minister of the First Unitarian Church of Dallas and Dr. William Doherty of the University of Minnesota. Attend multigenerational workshops, dance, eat, meet new people. Talk with UUA staff members present as part of "Consultation Ministry to and with Youth." See you there!



Events & Announcements

Spring Breakfast - April 15th

This year's Spring Breakfast will take place on Sunday, April 15th, in conjunction with the Prairie Star District Annual Conference. Conference attendees will be joining us at FUS for breakfast, the Forum and the morning Assembly. Please come to enjoy a great breakfast (\$7 donation OR conference breakfast ticket) beginning at 8:30 AM in the Lower Assembly Hall. Stay to attend the Forum at 9:30 AM - featuring the American Refugee Committee, speaking about their extensive work in Darfur. NOTE that the Forum will take place in the Chalice Room on April 15th (to make room for our breakfast guests who will be eating in the Lower Auditorium).

The New Folk Collective Returns!

The New Folk Collective, one of the foremost promoters of singer/songwriters in the Twin Cities will return to FUS for its Spring season with three legends and one rising star. All concerts will be right here at 7:30 PM. Here is the exciting line-up:

- ▶ Saturday, April 14: Dave Francey
- ▶ Saturday, April 28: Claudia Schmidt

If you like the kind of music the Eclectics do, consider coming to these great concerts. Please visit www.newfolk.org or call 651-293-9021 for ticket information.

Ceremony for the Grieving

The loss of a loved one is a part of the life cycle, but our culture tends to leave no space for grieving or remembering those who have died. FUS will begin holding special, short services for those who are grieving, starting Sunday, April 8 (Easter Sunday). The services will be held from noon to about 12:20 the second Sunday of each month in the Dietrich Room next to the sanctuary. At each service, participants will light a candle in honor of their lost loved one, read and hear words of comfort and hope, and be in silent company with others who have suffered a loss. The other services this program year will be held Sunday, May 13 (Mother's Day) and Sunday, June 10. For more information or to volunteer to help, call Wendy Jerome at 612 377-7112.

Room Reservations

If you need to reserve a room for an event please go to the FUS web site and click on "Calendar" and check out the availability of the room. Then, please email me your request with room set up instructions in detail. Do not assume that I will remember what has been done in the past. (I sometimes do not remember what I wanted to get out of the refrigerator.) If details are not yet determined, indicate that the set-up details will follow and you may want to make a note to yourself to follow up. If you are scheduling something on weekends after 3:00 PM, please make a note if you will need a steward to be in the building so I can make sure the steward is scheduled.

My email address for room scheduling is rooms@firstunitariansociety.org. If you do not have access to email, please call the office and ask one of the staff or volunteers to fill in a room reservation request form.

Jennifer Kohl, Building & Events Coordinator

Women's Awareness Group

The April meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, April 9, at the home of Adele Hansen, 4101 Raleigh Avenue, St. Louis Park, MN 55416; Jan Sigmund is the co-host. FUS women are invited at 6:30 PM. for a potluck supper, followed by discussion of "Women in the Army" led by Barb Lutz. Please call Adele (952-927-6035) or Jan (651-646-2455) to RSVP and for directions.

Thank You Lunch Bunch

Many thanks to the members of the "Lunch Bunch" who voted that they give \$200 from their treasury to support the Rev. Carl Storm archive project. Carl Storm was a much beloved minister of FUS during the 1950s and 1960s. Members of this stalwart group are working hard to sort, copy, catalogue and properly conserve all the 400+ sermons of Carl's career that were sent to us by his widow, Jeanette, for safekeeping. To do this job correctly will take some money. So again, our appreciation goes to this group for their assistance.

The Archive Team -- Gretchen Clemence, Susy Sewell, Dorothy French, Ray and Lee Schreurs, and Barbara Belew

The First Unitarian is published once a month (except July). The deadline for submission of items is the 10th of the previous month. Items submitted may be edited to fit the space available. Submissions may be left in the "Newsletter" folder in the FUS office, or made by mail, fax (612-377-2151) or e-mail to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.



This newsletter is printed on post-consumer recycled paper with soy-based inks.

The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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April 2007

Sunday, April 1

9:00 AM - 10:15 AM ReFirement Group
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Children's Chorus Practice
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Advisory Committee
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM New Member Discovery Group
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Chorus and Orchestra Rehearsal

Wednesday, April 4

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM The Alliance Monthly Meeting
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Eat and Meet
7:15 PM - 9:15 PM Choir Practice

Thursday, April 5

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Constructing a Personal Worldview

Sunday, April 8

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Children's Chorus Practice
12:00 PM - 12:30 PM Ceremony of Grieving
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Orchestra Rehearsal
1:00 PM - 3:30 PM Gay Men's Prostate Cancer Group

Monday, April 9

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Bookstore Committee

Tuesday, April 10

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Caregivers Support

Wednesday, April 11

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Senior Discussion Group
7:15 PM - 9:15 PM Choir Practice
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Chorus and Orchestra Rehearsal

Thursday, April 12

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Prairie Star District Meeting
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Constructing a Personal Worldview

Friday, April 13

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Prairie Star District Board Meeting
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Social Justice
5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Social Commentary Through the
Arts DG

6:00 PM - 7:00 AM Youth Overnight

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Arts & Crafts Discovery Group

Saturday, April 14

9:30 AM - 12:00 PM Chorus and Orchestra Rehearsal
6:00 PM - 7:00 AM Youth Overnight
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM 6th & 7th Grade Social Night
7:30 PM - 11:00 PM New Folk Collective

Sunday, April 15

9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Prairie Star District Breakfast
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM Call UAH
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM Children's Chorus Practice
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM Soup Luncheon
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Prairie Star District Committee

Monday, April 16

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Foundation Board

Wednesday, April 18

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Membership Committee Meeting
7:15 PM - 9:15 PM Choir Practice

Thursday, April 19

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Stewardship Committee

Saturday, April 21

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM UU Play Group
7:30 PM - 11:00 PM New Folk Collective

Sunday, April 22

12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Orchestra Rehearsal

Wednesday, April 25

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM Regular Board of Trustees Meeting
7:15 PM - 9:15 PM Choir Practice

Friday, April 27

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Parents Night Out
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Arts & Crafts Discovery Group

Saturday, April 28

7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Beltane Festival

Sunday, April 29

11:30 AM - 3:00 PM Conversations with the Trustees
12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Orchestra Rehearsal



Check the calendar online at the FUS website. Click on "Calendar" on the left menu bar.