



THE FIRST Unitarian

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From the Minister

It is a new challenge for each generation of Unitarian Universalists to try to articulate what it is that we believe in common in some meaningful way, without letting that statement harden into a creed over time. Twenty five years ago, when I was rather new in ministry, the UUA went through a lengthy process that resulted in the adoption of the now-familiar seven principles and six sources statement in its organizational bylaws. Over the intervening decades, this formulation has proven useful and memorable. It was printed in *Singing the Living Tradition*, the new hymn book published in the early 1990s. Many congregations display posters of it, and many UU members carry wallet cards to help them remember and share its ideas. Most of us have our particular favorite lines, as well as phrases we might personally quibble with, but on the whole the Purposes and Principles, as they are often called, have served us well.

To help prevent the creeping credalism that can accompany such a statement when people grow fond of it, the UUA bylaws also specify that these sections are to be reviewed every fifteen years for possible amendment or revision. During the past year (we are a little behind schedule, but we're moving forward!) the UUA's Commission on Appraisal has been holding discussions, soliciting input, and working on drafting a new statement which will be considered by the General Assembly at its meeting next month in Salt Lake City. If it is approved, this statement will be sent out to congregations for study throughout the coming year, and a final vote on it will be taken at the 2010 General Assembly here in Minneapolis.

As one who has participated in the conversation, and submitted responses as the process has unfolded, I am disappointed in the resulting proposal. It is a weaker and less engaging statement of our shared identity as a religious community than the existing version. Stylistically, I find it wordy and sentimental, where the current Purposes and Principles are spare, dynamic, and direct. The proposed draft begins with the historical roots of Unitarianism and Universalism, rather than our present commitments, which has the effect of starting with denials instead of affirmations. It also makes our heritage of theism and the Biblical traditions more prominent than our long connection to the struggle for freedom, reason, tolerance and integrity in matters of belief. It relegates humanism to a "vital source," equivalent in influence to Eastern religions and earth-centered

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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 7th of each month and should be sent to: newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org



Summer Assembly Previews

Summer Assemblies are at 10:30 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall.

◆6/7/09 “Without A Crystal Ball”

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

As the end of this eventful FUS program year approaches, we have no way of knowing exactly what lies ahead, for our community or for the nation and the world. We do have some exciting aspirations for our future, and some useful assessments of where we are right now and what is possible for us in our current circumstances. We also have several new members to welcome into our congregation. What shall we look forward to for the year ahead? And how do we prepare ourselves, personally and collectively, for meeting challenges that we may have little opportunity to predict? *This last assembly of the program year will be held in the Upper Assembly Hall.*

◆6/14/09 “Our Life Changing Message”

Speaker: Gary Blegstad

In his 2004 book, *The Almost Church: Redefining Unitarian Universalism for a New Era*, church consultant and UU Michael Durall, in speaking about why our movement is not growing, states: “The power of the message is the prime ingredient.” In my experience, most UUs don’t believe we have a powerful, life-changing message, the bedrock principle on which large churches are built. I would like to respond to Durall’s statement.

◆6/21/09 “A Pilgrim’s Progress—400 Years of Unitarian Universalism”

Speaker: Barbara Wallace

This participatory Summer Assembly will celebrate 400 years of Unitarian Universalism through music and the spoken word.

◆6/28/09 “Assessing Human Nature: The Real Divide”

Speaker: Dana Reynolds, Summer Minister

Human nature is anything but uniform. Differing views of our nature create very differing ways of operating in the world. Compared to other religions of the day, Unitarians and Universalists began with a different view of human nature in the early days of our country. This difference is still important today.

◆7/5/09 “Remembering Winter Soldier 2: A First-Hand Report”

Speaker: Diane Ford Wood

Diane Ford Wood, granddaughter-in-law of Abe and Ida Kaufman, guarded “the box” at Winter Soldier 2 in March 2008 and heard every word of testimony from just a few feet away. Diane’s volunteer job involved securing the area directly in front of the dais where American veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan war bravely told their tales to an international media audience. Pro-war protestors, angered that veterans would “air America’s dirty laundry in public,” worked hard to invade and disrupt the proceedings, creating a tense, even dangerous atmosphere. While Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now* did a thorough job of reporting these events, most American media did not attend. Backed by a few veteran friends who were also there, Diane will tell what it was like from her perspective and what she believes to be the legacy and lessons of the event.

◆7/12/09 “Lessons Learned from Volunteer Work at the Dignity Center”

Speakers: Carol Koepp and Dignity Center Volunteers

At least six FUS members have made the commitment to be volunteers at the Dignity Center, serving homeless or near-homeless citizens and operated by Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. This morning they will share with us what they are learning about the issue of homelessness, about their clients and about themselves through this experience.

◆7/19/09 Community Service Sunday

Leaders: Jim Tincher and Eric Deiman

◆7/26/09 “The Heart of Unitarian Universalism”

Speaker: Dana Reynolds, Summer Minister

We have heard that Unitarian Universalism has its own message for the world. If we wish to be about transforming lives, we must get to the heart of the matter.



Summer Assembly Previews

Summer Assemblies are at 10:30 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall.

◆8/2/09 “Glass: One Man’s Journey”

Speaker: Robinson Scott

Internationally known glass artist Robinson Scott, a former FUS RE member during Robert Lehman’s ministry, will share with us some of his experiences with glass and how it gave meaning to his life as an artist. A video of the glass-blowing process will be shown and several original creations will be on display in the lower assembly hall during the morning only. Audience participation with a Q & A session will follow the presentation. For those too curious to wait, Robinson’s artwork can be found at: <http://www.robinsonscottglass.com/>. Enjoy!

◆8/9/09 “Out of this World”

Speaker: Phil Duran

More than 500 years ago, a group of Europeans stumbled onto what they saw as a “new world,” and life back home was never the same. Today, scientists are edging ever closer to more deeply exploring “new worlds,” both in and beyond our solar system, with potentially life-changing discoveries coming during our lifetimes. What spiritual questions do these possibilities, or even the quest itself, raise for UUs?

◆8/16/09 “Where Psychology, Mythology and Spirituality Meet”

Speaker: Dana Reynolds, Summer Minister

Is it in a playground? Is it on a stage? It might just be closer to home!

◆8/23/09 “What Have We Done Lately?”

Speaker: Tom Vellenga, Heartland Democracy

President Obama cannot “do it alone,” and the public trust is a fragile commodity. Why are conservatives still in power in many spheres of life? What can we do outside campaigns to build on recent successes? What is our role when progressives make mistakes? Tom Vellenga will make the case for identifying and communicating progressivism, outside elections, and offer strategies for winning over more hearts and minds to progressive principles.

◆8/30/09

“The Cremation Revolution”

Speakers: Anita Martinez, Diane Ford Wood, Linda D. Crouch

To allow ourselves to move toward a more conscious approach to end-of-life issues is incredibly empowering—even revolutionary. Most of us have not lived our lives under a rock. We’ve loved, celebrated, reveled in the gift of life, yet we tend to make decisions about end-of-life issues in our darkest moments. By taking the process of pre-planning into our own hands, we quietly become part of a fully conscious, global revolution that shuns denial-based thinking. This simple, revolutionary act lessens the chance of financial victimization and creates an amazing opportunity for a meaningful end-of-life experience.

◆9/6/09 “All My Relatives”

Speaker: Dana Reynolds, Summer Minister

This will be our Unitarian Universalist way of sharing our solidarity, as “two-legged” animals, with our “four-legged” kin, as Native peoples might say. Yes, you may bring your domesticated pets (not all pets are domesticated), under your control, to this service.



From the Minister

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traditions, which seems to me a grave misrepresentation of this movement's history as well as its current character.

The proposed statement is in fact too lengthy to be reprinted here; if you are interested in reading it, you can find it on line at: <http://www25.uua.org/coa/ArtIIReview/ProposedRevision.html> or copies are available at FUS from the Ask Me table or from the office. A poster displaying both the old and new statements, together with a petition to table or reject the proposed draft at General Assembly, will be in the Lower Assembly Hall during social hour. You can also find a copy of the rationale statement from the Commission on Appraisal, and several statements from prominent UU humanists about the proposal, there, or on line. Watch the FUS Flash for links to these sites.

While I applaud the wisdom of building this kind of required reconsideration into the UUA bylaws, I do not believe that change is therefore inevitably demanded. In fact, I would suggest that the existing Purposes and Principles statement has not yet outlived its usefulness, and could continue to serve us well for some time. In the 1980s, when the previous revision took place, as well as when it was amended in 1995, there was considerable energy around changes that were widely felt to be needed. The current redaction arises from no such general sense that the document is outdated. I am confident that the moment will arrive when the Purposes and Principles as we have known them no longer represent a living consensus about our faith, and a new statement will be formulated that rings with new truth. Until then, I prefer the positive, evocative language of the current document. I hope that we can appreciate the work of the Commission on Appraisal, and the many useful conversations they have initiated, without adopting the proposed revision.

And speaking of General Assembly, if you are interested in attending this year's gathering in Salt Lake City, from June 24–28, please let me or a member of the board know right away. It is important that we authorize delegates from FUS, so that we are sure all the votes to which we are entitled will be cast.

Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister

From the Intern

“Same life, new perspective.” That's the motto I've **S**taken. Those are words that I could have used at the end of my internship as an expression of the education I received as ministerial intern at FUS and the change in me as a result of your teaching me how to be a minister. But you know that some major changes have happened in my life over this past year, including my mother's death and a ministerial fellowship setback, giving me much more of a new perspective as I go forward in my life.

My perspective is now that of a person who has cancer and a spinal cord injury. In April I had an accident boarding a train when I was in Philadelphia on my way to New York for my graduation from The Humanist Institute, and the accident revealed a major health crisis. I used to joke about becoming a minister later in life that, congregations and health permitting, I could put in a twenty-year career. Now I can't joke about the health aspect—it has become a factor in my life. The positive aspect is that I have a type of blood cancer, plasma cytoma, that is highly treatable by radiation, and my spinal cord injury—on the thorax, which partially paralyzed me—was repaired surgically and it's very possible that I will walk again.

As this column is being written, I am in Magee Rehabilitation Hospital in Philadelphia. I have walked with the assistance of three people, and my strength is good. They're projecting I'll be here through the end of May, then I'll be an outpatient (from my new home, my fiancée Jewel Diljohn's house in Norristown, Pennsylvania). I'm learning more about the cancer, and the oncologists are pleased that my tests indicate a long future for me. (Much of that long future will have its financial aspects because I don't have health insurance.)

What is overwhelming for me is the outpouring of love and concern from you, the members of FUS. I've always been the person to give, ministering to others. When I had my accident, you put me in the center of your circle. That's a perspective I haven't been familiar with, and I'm so grateful to experience your care.



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From the Intern

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And maybe that's the final lesson of my internship, that the congregation serves me and each other much more than I can serve you, but we make it through together. Unfortunately, the time needed for my recovery means that I likely won't be back for Sunday May 31, which was supposed to be my final time to preach (subject slightly different than announced) and the last day of my internship. I'm pretty sure we'll be able to reschedule for some time over the next year.



Thanks so much for having me as your intern. I intend to see you again—in this life, with an ever-changing perspective.

Tim Barger, Ministerial Intern

6/7/09 FORUM: Sing-A-Long

Leader: Maureen Hunt

Join Maureen Hunt, Summer Assemblies Music Coordinator, leading easily accessible, fun songs for all ages. Bring your voice and your joy of music-making together. Let's rise up and sing some well-known favorites, summer camping songs, and a round or two! Maureen teaches elementary school music, early childhood music classes, and performs regularly with Common Chord, an a cappella singing group of fellow Music Together® teachers.



Stewardship

As you read this eleventh entry to the year's Stewardship stories, June will be just ahead, squinting from the near horizon. THAT MEANS WE WILL BE LOOKING WITH HOPE AT THE FINAL MONTH IN A CHALLENGING FISCAL YEAR.

There's no certainty where we will finish on June 30. But at this writing, we can again express optimism that we'll end up balanced between income and outgo. That's because responses to requests for extra help before the end of the fiscal year have been wonderfully encouraging, and because most pledges for the period are still being honored.

YET THE FINAL CHALLENGE STILL LIES AHEAD, AND A KEY FACTOR IN ACHIEVING THE HOPED-FOR BALANCE WILL BE RECEIVING MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS BEFORE THE START OF JULY!

Checks, stock transfers or cash contribution that reach FUS too late for entry in the current fiscal year are recorded as a part of the 2009-2010 year; and that situation will be frustrating. Ideally, monies should be made to come into the FUS office no later than Sunday, June 28, if they are to be a part of the current twelve-month fiscal period.

Over the past five months the FUS membership has responded, courageously and generously, to requests from many quarters for financial help. This effort has been more of a marathon than a sprint; but a bit of a sprint at this stage in the race will be the best way to take us to the victory we can anticipate for FUS in 2008-2009.

PLEASE PARTNER IN THIS FINAL PHASE OF FUS GIVING FOR 2008-2009!

And, as always, please accept thanks from your core Stewardship Committee,

Chris Bubser, Roger Clemence, Wendy Jerome, Betty Mast, Boyd Mast, Wendy Reynolds; special help too from Kay Dawson, Joyce Blomquist and Mary Ann Lundquist

Membership

FUS to Sponsor Booth at Pride Festival

The FUS Membership Committee along with the Social Action Committee is very excited to be sponsoring a booth at Pride this year. The Festival will be held June 27 and 28 at Loring Park. We are currently looking for volunteers to staff the booth in two-hour increments. Please stop by the Ask Me table in the Lower Assembly Hall to sign up for a shift. We are looking forward to outreaching to our neighbors to share our values and heritage of humanism.



June Birthdays

Happiest of birthday wishes to the following people with June Birthdays.

Susan Blubaum
Becca Brackett
Arlene Breckenridge
Priscilla Britzius
Chris Bubser
Eric Deiman
Arturo DiGirolamo
Leo Duroche
Miles Engrav
Dorothy Rae French
Steve Hansen
Jodi Horne
George Hutchinson
Greta Kulevsky
Lily Kulevsky
Peggy Leppik
Otto Link



Bob McCaa
Will Mork
Brenna Pileggi
Tracy Reid
Dianne Rowse
Carole Rydberg
Ray Schreurs
Herbert Sewell
Jan Sigmund
Deb Snouffer
Hilary Snouffer
Mandi Stebbins

Teresa West, Membership Coordinator

Music Notes

Before we embark on our summer activities and journeys I would like to thank the congregation for your continuous support of the music at FUS. As you are all aware, we have recently said good-bye to Dr. Gabriela Diaz-Alatraste as she accepted the conducting post for the OSIPN Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City. Although I am deeply proud of her, I am also saddened by the hole it leaves in our music program. I will do everything I can to keep our music program alive and vital. My goal is to maintain its excellence and not allow our current economic climate to harm it in any way.

I would like to thank ALL of you who participated in the music at FUS this year. Thank you for generously giving your time and talent to our society. What would we be and do without music?



Finally, thank you for the kind sweet comments you give me all year. Your love makes it all worthwhile!

Barbara Brooks, Music Director

Trustee Tidbit

The board thanks the four retiring board members for their service: Bob Aderhold, Ruth Agar, Tim Palmquist and Barbara Weatherhead.



The board invites all to the Ice Cream Social in the Lower Assembly Hall immediately following the service on June 7.

The First Unitarian is published once a month. The deadline for submission of items is the 7th of the previous month. Items submitted may be edited for style, content, and to fit the space available. Submissions may be left in Morgan's mailbox in the FUS office, or made by mail, fax (612-377-2151) or email (preferred) to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.



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

Social Action News

This completes one program year with a Social Justice Coordinator for FUS. It has been a busy year, thanks to the many, many members and friends who chose to act on their values and principles as a Unitarian, a Humanist and a member of this congregation in the greater community.

Through our social justice collections and soup lunches, we have earned and distributed nearly \$11,000. That is in addition to the \$10,200 Service Auction proceeds divided between Avenues For Homeless Youth and Amazon Amigos. The number of volunteers who have participated in the opportunities offered by the Social Action Committee are too many to count. For a complete rundown of SAC accomplishments and goals, please see the FUS annual report on our website.

What's up for the summer?

- ☞ Habitat for Humanity build: June 22–26 (details on SAC table, or contact Jerry Edwards at jeled@comcast.net).
- ☞ Dignity Center: Our volunteers will continue their work with the Center over the summer. There will be an ongoing collection of personal hygiene items for the Center (see guidelines on SAC table). Some activities on Community Service Sunday July 19 will be in support of the Center. If you would like to know more about joining the FUS volunteer team at the Dignity Center, see the SAC table, talk with one of the current volunteers and/or contact Carol Koepp at sac@firstunitariansociety.org.
- ☞ Avenues For Homeless Youth: We will also be collecting personal items for the youth serviced by Avenues (see guidelines on the SAC table).

What's up for the next program year?

The *SAC FLASH*—yes, members and friends who are particularly interested in knowing what's going on in our social justice program can choose to receive an online biweekly newsletter. This is still in the planning stage, but it is likely that the *SAC FLASH* will also include lists of social justice activities taking place in other UU congregations, in the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness and in other venues hosting events that are consistent with our UU values and principles.

See you all at the Summer Assemblies!

Carol Koepp, Social Justice Coordinator



**Downtown Congregations
To End Homelessness**

The Dignity Center Project

A small group of FUS members are currently volunteering at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church's Dignity Center, which serves homeless people and others on the edges of homelessness. This is one of the projects of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness. There are some very specific ways that we can all help this effort. The center gives out 40-50 sandwiches three days a week. They need more sandwich donors. Ruth Agar is already doing this regularly. We are currently collecting toiletry items and will keep doing that.

The Steeple People Store at Lyndale and Franklin, where Gretchen Clemence volunteers and others of us shop, gives vouchers to the Dignity Center for people to get household supplies and clothes. They are in particular need of pots and pans, dishes, silverware, utensils, and bath and bed linens. They also accept books and just about anything that has resale value. Their hours are Mondays noon–6:00 p.m., Tuesdays–Fridays 10:30–5:30 p.m., and Saturdays 10:00–5:30 p.m. When you take a few things in and see their selection, you will become a regular! The Steeple People Store is also a project of Hennepin Methodist and helps fund the Dignity Center. It is such a convenient location for those of us who are at FUS. *Remember that even though these projects are associated with HAUMC, they also belong to us as a downtown church and a neighboring congregation.*

If you have any questions or need more information you can contact the current volunteers: Wanda McCaa, Mibs Pearson, Wendy Reynolds, George Hutchinson and Ray Deveaux, who are all at the Dignity Center; Ruth Agar, who makes sandwiches, and Gretchen Clemence for Steeple People.

The Steeple People van is on the HAUMC parking lot on Sundays accepting donations for the store. Just swing by after our service and drop off your donations.

Wanda McCaa, FUS member

Religious Education

Sleepy summer? Not for our youth! Four of them, Gabe Aderhold, Lars Carlson, Annika Carlson, and Nicole Norquist, will be participating in the FUS Summer Social Justice Program. They will be working in social justice or action programs, meeting with mentors Kathy Gremillion, George Hutchinson, Wendy Jerome, and Richard Seurer, and earning a stipend for their efforts. The Summer Social Justice Program is a cooperative effort between Religious Education, the Social Action Committee, and this year is graced by a grant from the Pearson Foundation. We all owe a special thanks to Adele Hansen for coordinating all efforts!

One of the central themes we will explore is the difference between social action and social justice. I usually begin the summer orientation for this program with the story of the babies in the river (maybe you have heard it) to explain the difference between social action and social justice. It goes something like this:

There was a village that had a river running by it. One day the people in the village were in a panic when babies starting floating by in the river. All of the villagers ran to help the babies out of the water. Then in a few more days, more babies appeared in the stream and the villagers worked frantically to get the babies out of the river. By now the villagers were on the alert to watch for more babies in the water and they set up watch groups. Sure enough more babies came down the river. This time however, one of the leaders, instead of rushing to the river to retrieve babies, headed out of the village. All of the villagers shouted at him—didn't he want to help? Yes, he replied, but it is time to go up the river and find out why the babies are in the river in the first place.

Taking the babies out of the water is an example of social action. Finding and working on the root cause of the problem is the work of social justice.

Our teens will be talking about their work placement and discerning how their site fits into these categories. They will take an afternoon to do a workshop led by Deb Snouffer around social action/justice ideas. Hopefully, they will see that they can make a difference in either type of situation.

Robert Kennedy said,

Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills—against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence. Few have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

May it be so.

Jan Devor, Director of Religious Education



Opportunities for You at FUS



Midsummer Revels

Friday, June 19
6:30 p.m.–Twilight

Potluck Picnic Supper

Burgers, brats, non-alcoholic beverages and desserts will be provided. Bring a pasta, fruit or green salad to share—and your own wine or beer if desired. We'll provide the paper goods and flatware; bring your own eco-friendly picnic ware if you'd like.

Summer Solstice Reflections and Revels

- ☀ **Kids' Activities** – and childcare for the youngest on request
- ☀ **Swing Dance** – featuring the Universal Jazz Band from First Universalist Church
- ☀ **Campfire Circle** – savor the longest day with friends

We will be outside as weather permits. We encourage you to bring lawn chairs or blankets for your comfort.

Lower Assembly Hall, Patio and Lawn
\$5 adults / \$2 youth – advance tickets
\$7 adults / \$3 youth – at the door
Tickets on sale in the Lower Assembly Hall
at coffee hour on Sundays.

Volunteers needed!

- ☀ Set up & food service
- ☀ Grill burgers & brats
- ☀ Entertain with music and poetry
- ☀ Clean up
- ☀ Help with children's activity

Please sign up at the Ask Me table or
email Audrey at akingstrom@comcast.net.

The Alliance

“Anti-Intellectualism in America” will be the topic of Neala Schleuning, Ph. D., at the June 3 meeting of the Alliance. Luncheon tickets for \$8 go on sale at 10:45 a.m. The program begins at 11:00 a.m. Lunch from the Wedge is served at noon, followed by a short business meeting.

The annual meeting of the Alliance included election of new officers. Anne Shainline replaces Gretchen Clemence on the triumvirate. Lois Hultberg replaces Eileen Reagan as corresponding secretary, and Clara Asp replaces Angie O'Neill as membership committee chairperson.

Women's Awareness Group

The June meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, June 8 at the home of Barbara Wallace. Mibs Pearson is the cohost. FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper, followed by a lively discussion in an open forum. Please call Barbara or Mibs to RSVP and for directions.

FUS Staff

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Director of Religious Education: **Jan Devor**, ext. 108
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Music Director: **Barbara Brooks**, ext. 106
Chorus@firstunitariansociety.org

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Building Steward: **Cirilo Vail Hernandez**

Office Hours: Mon.–Fri. 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.;
Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

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The First Unitarian Society

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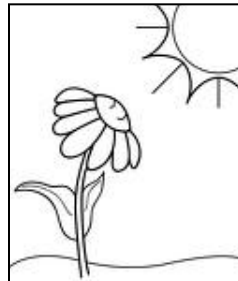
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June 2009

Mark your calendar and join us!
Details on these events,
and more, inside.



June 3: The Alliance meets

For an up-to-date listing of events at FUS, check the calendar online at the FUS website.

1. Go to www.firstunitariansociety.org
2. Click on "Calendar" on the left menu bar.

If you do not have access to the web, contact the FUS Office at 612-377-6608 for event information.

June 7: Ice Cream Social

June 19: Midsummer Revels

June 27-28: FUS at Pride Festival

June 28: Deadline for 2008-2009 budget payments

Board of Trustees

- Beth Gohdes (Chair)
- Adele Hansen
- Martha Hardesty
- Dan Hunt
- Elizabeth Hutchinson
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