



Earth Matters

- ☞ Greening our lives
- ☞ Keeping our planet
- ☞ Finding our place in a sustainable universe

THE FIRST Unitarian

VOL. 91, MARCH 2009 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

From the Minister

I have been enormously gratified to have visitors on three separate weeks since the beginning of 2009 volunteer their appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality they experienced. This is really a compliment to every member of the congregation, from the greeters who let visitors know that we are truly happy to see them, to the ushers who help them find a program and a seat, to the Sunday School teachers who create good experiences for the children, to the coffee servers who make it comfortable to hang around and share refreshments, as well as board members who staff the visitors' tea, bookstore volunteers, and membership committee members at the Ask Me table. When all of these tasks are done graciously, the structure is in place for visitors to have an experience of hospitality that makes them want to return.

Yet none of these pieces is the key, for the most important aspect of a first-time visit is whether ordinary people talk to you! It's just that simple. The greeters and ushers and staff have to be friendly, but if only the folks whose job it is to welcome you are willing to smile at you and invite you into conversation, you won't come away feeling that "they really want me here!" So let's continue our streak of successful hospitality—make sure that you take a chance, each Sunday morning, of saying "hello" to someone you don't know. After all, if that person were carrying a sign that said, "I'm really not sure if I belong here; I don't know what to do," you wouldn't leave them standing there befuddled, would you? It may help to think of some generic opening lines that are comfortable for you. "Have we met yet?" is reliable, and so is "Hi, can I get you some coffee/a program/help you find something?" Don't be afraid to communicate your own enthusiasm for FUS, and how it makes a difference to you; people who are checking us out want to know what brings us here, and why it matters. We don't have dogmas to peddle, but we do have stories to tell, and those stories can make all the difference to folks who are looking for their place in our community. Let's keep up the good work!

I am looking forward to working with Peter d'Ascoli to offer the March discussion series on Ending Poverty; we will meet on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00. See the longer announcement elsewhere in this newsletter for more details, and please sign up at the Ask Me table so that we know how many participants to expect.

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FUS Service Auction



March 14

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

Forum & Assembly Previews

Forums are at 9:30 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall.

◆3/1/09 FORUM: Old Time Favorites with a Bit of Irish

Leader: David and Marcy Leussler with Jerry Edwards
Come sing some songs you probably already know, and a few Irish tunes thrown in just for fun. Your Irish eyes will be smiling as you sing these songs. We will also do a lovely folk melody that is in our *Singing the Living Tradition*.

◆3/8/09 FORUM: Strategic Compassion: Unitarian Universalists Bringing Hope and Change

Leader: Chris Bremer, UUSC Regional Coordinator
The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee is our human rights organization. UUSC's focus areas are Civil Liberties, Economic Justice, Environmental Justice, and Rights in Humanitarian Crises. In each of these areas, UUSC works to advance human rights and social justice through strategic partnerships with local grass roots organizations in the U.S. and across the globe. UUSC programs create hope and change for oppressed people and provide educational opportunities for those seeking to bring about constructive and lasting change. Come and hear about some of the current work being done by UUSC.

Chris Bremer serves as UUSC Regional Coordinator (volunteer) for the northern half of the Prairie Star District of the UUA. Chris is an education researcher at the University of Minnesota and holds a PhD in Work, Community, and Family Education.

The FUS Social Action Committee organizes at least one Adult Education Forum per month.

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

◆3/1/09 ASSEMBLY: Music Sunday Featuring: FUS Chorus and Orchestra

The works of Stravinsky and Messiaen. Please join the FUS Chorus and Orchestra as we embark on a highly unusual morning of rarely heard masterpieces. We will address the notion of music as color and you will experience a truly interesting group of orchestral instruments! Prepare yourself to be amazed! The morning will feature: "The Symphony of Psalms" by Igor Stravinsky, "Les Offrandes Oubliées" by Olivier Messiaen and "St. Paul's Suite" by Gustav Holst.

◆3/8/09 ASSEMBLY: "Oxygen for the Spirit: Why Art Is Indispensable"

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

We are fortunate to enjoy an ever-changing variety of visual artwork in our foyer gallery, but this is more than incidental eye-candy. Authentic art, and the intelligent appreciation of it, is a spiritual practice, essential to our full humanity as individuals and as cultures. The current display in the gallery takes its theme from a new translation of traditional religious texts, and Georgette Sosin will join us in exploring the connections among art, truth, and faith. A special collection in support of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee will take place at this Assembly.

UUSC Membership Sunday March 8th!

FUS will collect new/renewing membership checks for the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Please **MAKE YOUR CHECK OUT TO UUSC** (not FUS, as we usually do for monthly social justice collections). Membership is \$40 for individuals, \$75 for couples, \$20 for seniors, and \$10 for youth. Donations of any size are also welcome. *Membership donations of \$100 or more are eligible to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock in Manhasset, N.Y.!* UUSC relies entirely on memberships and contributions, primarily from members of UU congregations. It receives no funds from the UUA and maintains its responsiveness and independence by not accepting U.S. government funds. Thank you in advance for your support of UUSC.

— FUS Social Action Committee

Forum & Assembly Previews

Forums are at 9:30 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall.

◆3/15/09 FORUM: **Book Chat:** *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*, by Jason DeParle

Discussion Host: Peter d'Ascoli

In this definitive work, two-time Pulitzer finalist Jason DeParle cuts between the mean streets of Milwaukee and the corridors of Washington to produce a masterpiece of literary journalism. At the heart of the story are three cousins whose different lives follow similar trajectories. DeParle traces their family history back six generations to slavery and weaves poor people, politicians, reformers, and rogues into a spellbinding epic. The book is available for purchase in the FUS bookstore. All are welcome, whether you've read the book or not.

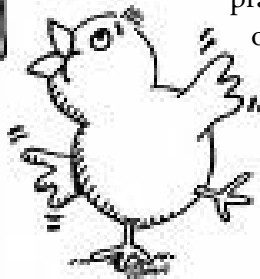
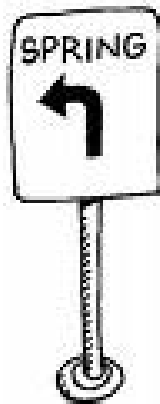
◆3/22/09 FORUM: **Spring Breakfast**

Lower Assembly Hall, Serving from 9:00-9:45 a.m. Tickets at the door
Adults: \$7, youth 18 & under: \$3

followed by

Sing-along Songs of the Season
Upper Assembly Hall
9:45-10:25 a.m. with the Eclectics.

hooray for
SPRING!



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

◆3/15/09 ASSEMBLY: "Celebration Sunday: Now More than Ever"

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

As we are all aware, financial challenges of the current economic situation have begun to have their effects on some of our members, and on the fiscal situation of our congregation as a whole. One might suppose that this is a moment to cut back, minimize risks, and hunker down to await better days. But in reality, this is a great time for the message of humanism to make itself heard. If the consequences of self-indulgence, ignorance, greed, and wishful thinking have not created the social structures we aspire to, perhaps other values can now be voiced. Let's focus on the many resources we do have, and how we can best position this Society for the opportunities presented by these critical times.

◆3/22/09 ASSEMBLY: "The Pageant of Spring"

Featuring: The Seasonal Celebrations Team

Today we pause to mark the vernal equinox and welcome the new season. We will take a closer look at this age-old practice of hailing the springtime and reflect on its value for us still today. With music, song, poetry, and prose we will express our own longings to be rejuvenated as the natural world springs back to life.

◆3/29/09 ASSEMBLY: "Earth Matters: Keeping Our Planet"

Speaker: The Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Our theme for the year calls us to engage three dimensions of the way in which earth matters: greening our lives, keeping our planet, and building a sustainable future. Keeping our planet is a collective endeavor that requires acknowledging the finite limits of the earth as an ecological system, including air, water, energy, waste, population, and the preservation of species. How can we become practitioners of and advocates for a new global ethic of awareness and respect toward that interdependent web upon which our own well-being so clearly depends? Is there a single issue that demands our undivided attention, or must we learn to think in several dimensions at the same time?

From the Minister

continued from page 1

A couple of personal notes:

By the time you read this, I will be on my way home from the first International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women, which is to be held in Houston, Texas. That event follows immediately the annual gathering of Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations, which takes place in Santa Barbara, California. Just before that, Mark and I will have a few days at our lovely—and warm!—time share in Palm Desert. It will be good to thaw out, to visit with my sister, and to see and learn from many of my senior colleagues, who are also good friends. The Women's Convocation is the first of its kind, so I really don't know what to expect, but I wouldn't want to miss it! I know that the Assemblies here will be in quite good hands, with a visit from Justin Schroeder from Unity Unitarian in St. Paul, and a very exciting Music Performance Sunday. I expect that it will be a good trip, but I will miss being here, and look forward to returning to the office and my regular schedule on March 2nd.

The other piece that I need to share with all of you is the sad news of my mother's deteriorating health. She has recently been hospitalized with an infection and other problems, including continuing aphasia and loss of mental function from several strokes. So far my father has been doing a heroic job as full-time caregiver, but we do not know what lies ahead. At some point I may need to drop everything and go to Maryland to be with them, possibly with very little warning. I appreciate so much everyone's concern and understanding, and I will keep you posted.

Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister

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Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Main phone number: 612-377-6608

*On leave until March 8

Trustee Tidbit

We are moving forward with the building and grounds proposals for the Chalice Room to enhance the safety and functionality of the Groveland entrance of the Chalice Room.

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 the "Newsletter" folder in the FUS office, or made by mail, fax (612-377-2151) or email to newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org.



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

From the Intern

At the end of this month is a very important day on my path to ministry. I'll be in Chicago to meet with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship Committee on March 27 or 28. That is the group that decides whether a person is ready to be a minister—to receive credentials and take part in the UUA's ministerial search process. Very few Unitarian Universalist ministers are ordained without the MFC's imprimatur.

The MFC is a prime example of the congregation's relationship with the UUA. The money that a congregation sends to Boston funds this along with other operations of the UUA, and it is the work of the MFC—a group of ministers and lay people appointed by the UUA board—that establishes standards for ministers in congregations and the community. The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association issues guidelines and a code of professional practice, but it's the MFC that develops the standards for ministerial credentialing, and congregations look for that MFC "seal of approval" when seeking ministers.

My meeting with the MFC will be roughly an hour long, but it will be intense. I'll deliver a 10-minute sermon on a topic of my choice so the members can get an idea of what my preaching is like. I'll speak on "Humanism in 21st-Century Unitarian Universalism," giving some thoughts on my theology, on religious pluralism within our denomination, and how we might live our religion in the 2000s. After that comes a period of questioning, open to anything about me and my preparation for ministry—from my knowledge of world religions to my personal life. At the end of the hour, the committee deliberates then lets me know the result.

All of this reminds me of a dissertation defense. I went through one of those, and that wasn't a great day; I got the doctorate after a lot of rewriting. I'm confident that my MFC meeting will be better. Assuming I make it through with a 1 or a 2 (there's a five-point scale, with 1 the best), I'll be eligible for ordination once my internship is complete and my master of divinity is in hand. Reaching that stage will in large part be thanks to FUS's efforts at taking this intern and helping him to become a minister.

Tim Barger, Ministerial Intern

online at: www.firstunitariansociety.org/newsletter/main.html

Service Auction

The annual FUS SERVICE AUCTION is Saturday, March 14. The theme for this year's auction is *It IS Easy Being Green!* It will be a fun-filled and exciting



evening, so don't miss out on a very Green event (just three days before St. Patrick's Day) and an opportunity to support some great Green causes. Reflecting the FUS theme, *Earth Matters*, the Service Auction will benefit projects that promote

sustainability both in our own community and globally.

- ♣ The Social Action Committee's 50% of net proceeds will be split between Avenues for Homeless Youth in north Minneapolis and Amazon Amigos in Peru.
- ♣ The Building & Grounds Committee's 25% of net proceeds will go toward improvements in our aging building that will make it more energy efficient, safer, and compliant with city codes.
- ♣ The Communications Enhancement Committee's 25% of net proceeds will be used for a critical upgrade to the FUS website that would permit each program area to have direct editorial control over the site, thereby being able to respond in a more timely fashion to updates, member needs, and requests. In addition, the upgrade would incorporate many web features being developed in anticipation of future needs, such as streaming audio and video of Sunday programs.
- ♣ The Bid-a-Need portion following the live auction will go toward acquiring new tables for dinners and events in the Lower Assembly Hall.

This year's event will feature all your favorites from the past: silent and live auction, a boutique, delicious hors d'oeuvres, wine, music, fun, friends, dessert, speedy credit card checkout, childcare, and Kurt Johnson auctioneer—all in shades of Green!

Questions:
Call Barb Weatherhead
Allan Callander

Stewardship

Well, folks: “Now is the time to come to the aid of their FUS.” First, though, thanks to those loyal members who came to the Bubser/Callander presentation of January 18th and offered increased pledges; and thanks to those who, in December, helped meet a donation target of nearly \$80,000 for that month. Despite a major shortfall in November, we reached the end of January only \$15,000 below where we should have been for the first seven months of the 2008–09 fiscal year. That’s the good news.

But we have a special problem to confront, and we need to find a broader base of support if we are going to resolve it. Many of you reading this message have responded so quickly to our requests for 2008–09 funding that you have actually paid your entire 2008–09 pledge in the first seven months of the current pledge year. That means that you can legitimately expect to go to July 1st with no more payments to FUS. That’s wonderful, but it raises a budgetary red flag! If you stop your cash flow altogether, and if others do not increase their payments to help FUS meet new monthly targets from February through June, we’ll end this budget year with a deficit of at least \$30,000. That’s a crisis that must not be allowed to occur!

You all need to know that the FUS Board has voted to delay certain previously budgeted payments until funds can be assured. The delays include staff IRA contributions, staff merit bonuses, and payments to the UUA. This action by the Board gives priority to the retention of monies for monthly payments of staff salaries from now through June. It’s a prudent step. But it must be seen as temporary, with full payment of each item as a target before the start of 2009–10. We have a superb staff here at FUS, with great programs and ministry, all deserving our full funding endorsement. We also know, as the host community for the 2010 General Assembly of the UUA, that we want, more than ever, to commit our proper UUA funding here in 2009.

So, here are the Challenges: (1) Please, if you are fully paid up for 2008–09, try to continue with some additional contributions in the upcoming months; or (2) if you have not fully paid your 2008–09 pledge, assure us you intend to do so; or better still (3) tell us you can even increase your payments during the final months of this fiscal year! And as you read our request, hear too our heartfelt thanks, and please smile!

Your Stewardship Committee

Music Notes

I want to encourage those “closet” singers to open the door and get some fresh air! One way to do this is to join the new FUS community chorus (We are still deciding on an exciting new name!). The time commitment is manageable as we meet twice a month for only an hour. This is great way to join the FUS community and have fun at the same time! (I think we have fun...). Please contact Barb Brooks for more information about this opportunity!



See you on Sundays!

Barbara Brooks, Music Director
Gabriela Diaz-Alatriste, Associate Music Director

Financial Update

Pledge revenue from
July 1—December 31 \$268,353

Expected pledge
revenue per budget \$ 282,463

Deficit - \$ 14,110

Pledge income continues to fall behind budget. We need everyone to step forward to help FUS end the year with a balanced budget.

Eat 'N Meet

Join us on these Wednesday evenings this spring at 5:45 p.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall for some yummy eats and fabulous company. Then at 7:00 p.m. move upstairs to the Dietrich Room for the evening's free program. Attend one, or attend them all. Bring a friend—or more! All are welcome!

Essential Facts:

- ☺ A vegetarian option is always served at each dinner.
- ☺ Suggested donation rates for Eat 'N Meet dinners are: adults \$7, children \$5, with a maximum of \$15 per family.
- ☺ Childcare is provided *free* on-site.
- ☺ The programs are *free* and open to all.
- ☺ Menu information will be available soon.

March 25

Program: Ending Poverty: a Minnesota Perspective

Leader: Minnesota Senator John Marty

April 1

Program: Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Art in the Gallery

Leader: Art in the Gallery Committee

April 8

Program: Art, Architecture, and Humanism: John Page's Arrangement in Blue and Black

Leader: Chris Bubser

April 15

Program: Everyone Counts in 2010: The Census Goals Worldwide

Leader: Bob McCaa

April 22

Program: Linden Hills Power and Light: Collecting Organics, Building Community

Leader: Madelyn Cioci

April 29

Program: Lessons from "Nanuq": A Trip to See the Polar Bears

Leaders: Joyce and Chuck Blomquist

May 6

Program: A View of Life from the Rez

Leader: Pamela Meade

May 13

Program: Annual Board Meeting



Membership

Sign up for your photo appointment!

The Photo Membership Directory is coming.

Photographers will be in the building March 24–29, March 31, and April 1–4.

You can sign yourself up for an appointment online.

The link is on the FUS home page in the center bottom. You can also sign

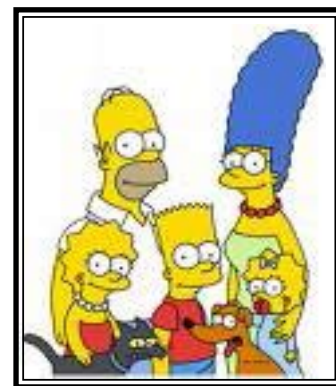
up during social hour after

service on Sunday via computer. You will receive a free

8 x 10 photograph of yourself, along with a directory when they are ready. No purchase is necessary; if you

wish to buy additional photos, a price list can be attained at the "Ask Me" table on Sunday mornings in

the Lower Assembly Hall.



New Member Sunday is March 8

We will be celebrating our newest members joining the society on March 8. Please join us downstairs after the service to meet and greet these folks.

March Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to the following folks!



Hossein Akhavi-Pour

Ken Barklind

Andy Berman

Willem Boss

Jacquie Friend

Kendyl Gibbons

Max Green

Walter Griffin

Kegan Hackett
Elizabeth Hutchinson

Dawn Kuzma

Skipp Lajoy

Jeff Langaard

Lily Nederveld

Levi Nichols

Morgan Nichols

John Nordquist

Dick Owen

Tina Riewe

Madeline Simon

Helen Sinning

Sue Tincher

Oscar Tix

Ned Watson

Teresa West, Membership Coordinator

Social Action News

The First Unitarian Society Focuses on Poverty—through adult education, direct service, and public policy.

Adult Education: Every Thursday evening in March the Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons and FUS member Peter d'Ascoli will lead a discussion based on the book *Ending Poverty in America: How to Restore the American Dream*. Get more information on the Social Action Committee (SAC) table during social hour on Sundays in the Lower Assembly Hall, *The Unitarian FLASH*, and elsewhere in this newsletter. Poverty will be the topic of the Book Chat on March 15 and the Eat 'N Meet discussion on March 25.

Direct Service: Thanks to the 17 people who attended the informational meeting after our service on January 18 to learn more about the Dignity Center in the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church. Follow-up visits to the Center were arranged for those who are considering volunteering. The Dignity Center focuses on providing the homeless and other disenfranchised citizens with skills necessary to become independent and self-sustaining members of the community. If you missed the meeting but want to know more, check out the SAC table or talk with Carol Koepp, 612-377-6608 ext. 103, sac@firstunitariansociety.org.

Thanks to Jean Toll and Gary Blegstad who organized the February 14 social, Have a Heart: Help the Hungry. The event raised money for local food shelves and has been added to the \$2,500 raised earlier by our congregation for these food shelves. All of the money will be donated in March, National Food Shelf Month. Other nonprofit organizations will match a percentage

of cash donations during this month. Reminder: Our collection box for local food shelves is always open.

Warm thank-you notes from the Minnesota Visiting Nurses Agency families for holiday gifts are on the SAC bulletin board. They are really fun to read.

Half of the proceeds from this year's Service Auction will go to direct service through our support of Avenues for Homeless Youth in north Minneapolis and Amazon Amigos in Peru.

Public Policy: This legislative session is filled with anxiety because of the poor economy. The needs are higher than ever. Because we are part of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness (DCEH) we will be kept up-to-date concerning legislation affecting citizens who are homeless or who are very low income and dealing with inadequate housing. FUS members and visitors are asked to check out the SAC "TAKE FIVE" table on specific weekends, where they will be encouraged to "take five minutes to use their voice to end homelessness." There will be letter writing, phoning, and emailing information. DCEH work will not be limited to ending homelessness. Homelessness is the vehicle being used to learn about the contributing factors leading to all poverty issues.

Homelessness is the vehicle being used to learn about the contributing factors leading to all poverty issues.



At least 18 FUS members were at the legislature on February 16 to speak with our representatives about issues important to the north side including youth violence, opportunities for ex-offenders, and economic development.

Carol Koepp, Social Justice Coordinator

FUS Library

Many exciting changes have recently occurred in the FUS library, and we are committed to making even more out of this important space during the next calendar year. If you haven't seen the newly painted walls, updated furniture, and more functional window coverings, please stop in during our regular hours: Sunday mornings from 9:00 a.m.–noon. See you soon!

The mission of the Library of the First Unitarian Society is to provide information as well as access to information that is related to and that enhances our Unitarian Universalist beliefs.

Our intentions are to:

- ⇒ Support the ongoing programs of the society
- ⇒ Provide a forum for the intentional exchange of information
- ⇒ Provide a forum for the intentional exchange of information
- ⇒ Act in accordance with our humanist principles

FUS Library Spring Book Sale



Sunday March 29
9:00 a.m.–1:30 p.m.
Dietrich Room

The time has come once again for the annual FUS library book sale! We UUs

love reading and we love exchanging information. Let's turn these interests into funds to support our library. We appreciate the donations we've already started to receive—if you've been meaning to drop off a box of books, now's the time to do it!

online at: www.firstunitariansociety.org/newsletter/main.html

FUS Gallery

The current exhibit of paintings in the FUS Gallery is by Minneapolis artist **Georgette Sosin**. It is called *Meditations on the Aramaic Lord's Prayer, Kaddish, and*



Other Work. This series of thought-provoking paintings was inspired by Neil Douglas-Klotz's translations of Aramaic prayers in his book *Prayers for the*

Cosmos. Georgette has had a long career as an artist and has exhibited in galleries and universities throughout the United States and France. There will be a gallery talk by the artist at 11:45 a.m. following the assembly on Sunday March 8 in the Heritage Room. *The show runs through March 15.*

Also in the Foyer Gallery this month you will see the work of **Delor Erickson**. Delor grew up in northeast Minneapolis, the son of Swedish immigrants. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles, and master's degree from the studio arts program at the University of Minnesota, he had a distinguished 40-year career as a graphic artist.



Throughout his career and into retirement Delor painted what he knew best; his family, farms like those of his Swedish immigrant relatives, and houses in his neighborhood. When he discovered palms, he found himself inspired by their abstract qualities, their unique shapes, wonderful colors, and dramatic angles. Sadly, Delor passed away suddenly last May, just after he agreed to do this show. We are especially pleased to present his work. *The show will be on view Sunday March 22 through Sunday May 3.*

Opportunities for You at FUS

Enhance Our Vision, Smell, and Taste: Sponsor Flowers and Refreshments

Having flowers in a Sunday service is more than an aesthetic touch, it honors tradition. There's not just the fixture of flowers in churches that many of us grew up in, there's also a tribute to Norbert Capek, the Czech Unitarian minister and victim of Dachau who started the flower celebration that takes place in many Unitarian Universalist congregations each spring.



You can sign up to sponsor flowers for the Upper Assembly Hall and the greeters' tables for many of the remaining dates this program year; forms are available in the office and the contribution is a minimum of \$75. Your sponsorship will be noted in the order of service along with words about who or what is honored or remembered by the flowers. After the service you can take the flowers with you, but we'll need the vase back eventually.

Having refreshments at the social hour after the assembly honors our appetite—a bit of sweetness before a meal, a little something to munch with coffee, maybe a treat that isn't available at home. The donations given at social hour help with the cost of the coffee, but they don't cover the cookies. That's where you come in: for \$35 you



can sponsor cookies on a Sunday, or for a bit more you can designate a special celebration that includes a decorated cake. There will be a sign recognizing the donor and the occasion. Here's your chance to sign up for spring birthdays, recognize graduations, and satisfy the congregational sweet tooth. Slots are available for the first, third, and fifth Sundays throughout the spring; second Sundays are when we have soup lunches, and the Alliance has generously underwritten fourth Sundays. Contact the office to sign up.

Strengthening Our Circle

The Caring Circles committee at FUS could use more of us as "stand-by" care-ers or pastoral support volunteers. Would you be willing occasionally—once or twice a year—to visit a member of the congregation who can't get to FUS activities? Would you like to be on our call list for providing an occasional hot dish for someone having to remain at home and who is in need of some assistance? Would you be willing to be called occasionally to provide transportation to FUS? We are eager to extend opportunities to assist fellow members, who may be challenged by troubling conditions in their life. We try to find opportunities geographically near to volunteer members. Please contact the office or Wendy Jerome at jerom013@gmail.com, if you would like to help.

Warm Hands

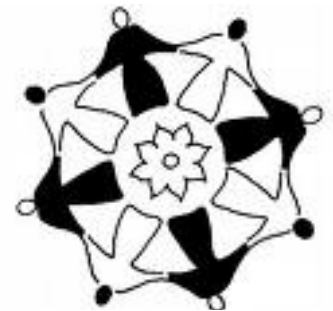
The International School in Minneapolis was the recipient of the donations collected for the Mitten Tree in December. Here is an excerpt from their letter of appreciation. "I couldn't believe when I saw how nice they were! The kids were so excited about it. The best part is that they not only helped my class, but all of the third grade students. Plus, we have a few left over for students to "borrow" for recess if they forget! I can't express enough how helpful this has been and how grateful we are! I want them to know how MANY kids they have helped. Thanks again for everything!"

Women's Awareness Group

The March meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held Monday, March 9 at Adele Hansen's house.

Please note the change of location. Gretchen Clemence is the cohost.

FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper followed by a discussion on poetry. Bring a favorite poem to share if you wish. Contact Adele or Gretchen to RSVP and for directions.



Opportunities for You at FUS

Spring Equinox Celebration

Sunday, March 22, 2009

Make it your “rite of spring” to welcome the new season with fellow FUSers for a morning of festivities. Bring the whole family—it’s an intergenerational affair.



Spring Equinox Breakfast
Lower Assembly Hall
Serving from 9:00-9:45 a.m.

Tickets at the door
Adults: \$7, youth 18 & under: \$3

Sing-along Songs of the Season
Upper Assembly Hall
9:45-10:25 a.m. with the Eclectics

Intergenerational Assembly 10:30 a.m.
The Pageant of Spring
Upper Assembly Hall

The Choral Readers Are Back!

Just in time to help celebrate the Spring Equinox at the Assembly on March 22. Come join us on Saturday mornings in March to rehearse poetry for this event. March 7, 14 and 21 at 10:00 a.m.–noon. Contact Audrey at akingstrom@comcast.net if you are interested or have questions.



Green Team: Earth Day Is Coming!

What are you doing?
Your FUS Green Team is meeting on March 23 to finish preparations for our FUS Earth Day celebration—please join us! We will meet at 7:00



p.m. in the Clara Barton Room. We meet the fourth Monday of every month and all are welcome. Also, check the bulletin board in the Lower Assembly Hall. Our Earth Day celebration will be on April 19. Plans so far include a repeat of the popular interactive “stations” format for Forum hour. This year look for a chance to take the Minnesota Energy Challenge or to make something yummy using a solar oven. Or maybe you’d like to just sip a cup of coffee and take in an episode of the fabulous *Planet Earth* series in the Chalice Room. Kids love *Planet Earth*—and whatever your age you’ll be sure to come out with new knowledge and a renewed wonder at the beauty and complexity of life on our “blue boat.”

Watch for other fun service and action events this spring, too. There will be opportunities to promote important legislation for environmental justice and to reduce auto emissions in Minnesota. The “Bright Bulb” project—selling CFL light bulbs—will make a return appearance, and we may have a tree planting opportunity on our own FUS lawns.

For more information, please contact Marcy Leussler or Madalyn Cioci.

Calling Gardeners and Backyard Composters!

The Green Team has heard some interest in starting to compost FUS food waste on-site in contained compost bins and also in having an FUS vegetable garden during the spring and summer months. These would be great ways to continue efforts to live a little more lightly on our small plot of ground.

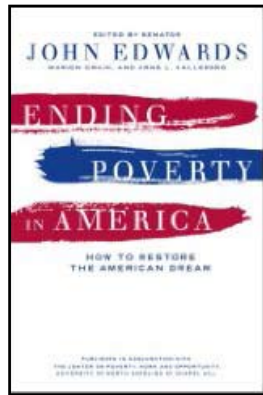
The Building and Grounds committee has given the initial go ahead for both of these possibilities, but they need a passionate organizer. An interested person or persons could take on one or both of these. If you are at all interested, please contact Madalyn Cioci at joemadalyn@earthlink.net to discuss next steps.

Opportunities for You at FUS

Adult Education

“I gave at the office.” Well, that is one response to answer larger community needs. But is that enough?

Is a handout really useful? How about a hand up? As a thoughtful, rational faith community, what is the best way to approach the issue of poverty? Lobby for tax credits? Provide child development programming? Encourage education?



Join the Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons and FUS member Peter d'Ascoli for a four-week discussion series about poverty on Thursday evenings (7:00–9:00 p.m.) in March (5, 12, 19, and 26) for a deeper understanding of what seem to be the most appropriate tactics. We will be reading sections of the book *Ending Poverty in America: How to Restore the American Dream*. Buy the book in the FUS Bookstore. Sign up for the Adult Education series at the “Ask Me” table in the Lower Assembly Hall following Sunday assemblies and mark your calendar for Thursdays in March.

The Alliance

“Health Care and Drug Prices in Minnesota” will be the topic at the next Alliance meeting Wednesday March 4 featuring Heidi Holste, Associate Director for Advocacy at MN AARP. Luncheon tickets for \$8 go on sale at 10:45 a.m. The program begins in the Dietrich Room at 11:00 a.m. followed by a lunch catered by the Wedge. The Alliance welcomes new members at any time. If you are interested in becoming a member, please call Joyce Blomquist or Gretchen Clemence for more information.



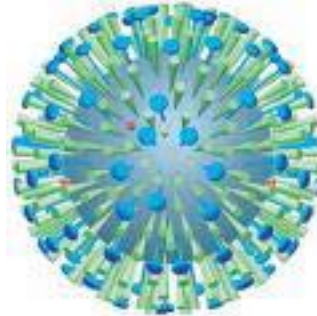
“Do a double-blind test. Give the new drug to rich patients and a placebo to the poor. No sense getting their hopes up. They couldn't afford it even if it works.”

Blomquist or Gretchen Clemence for more information.

Decide How Our Values Speak to Allocating Scarce Medical Resources

Dietrich Room, March 8, 11:45 a.m., right after our Assembly, come help us decide.

The State Department of Health asks us to tell them how we would make some life-and-death decisions. In the midst of an anticipated pandemic from a new strain of influenza A, who should get the very limited supply of medical equipment, supplies, and expertise? Bill Weir will lead our short session to try to arrive at our best judgment, to be reported to Minnesota Department of Health by March 13. To review the 75-page MDH report and, if you wish, make an individual



comment, go to www.ahc.umn.edu/mnpanflu. Bill will also have 10 copies to loan to those who care to review it in advance of our deliberations in the Dietrich Room. FUS Social Action Committee members will participate and, when we conclude

(by 12:30 p.m.), convene SAC's monthly meeting. Light refreshments will be served.

Book Chat

Calling all book lovers and movie buffs! Join us for an open discussion of a book or a movie on the third Sunday of the month at 9:30 a.m. Titles are available for purchase in the FUS bookstore.



Here's the lineup for the remainder of the year:

March 15

American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare,
by Jason DeParle

April 12

Challenging Nature: The Clash of Science and Spirituality at the New Frontiers of Life,
by Lee M. Silver

May 17

Movie chat: Title TBA

Regional UU Opportunities

The Education of Shelby Knox

Documentary and Intergenerational Discussion
Friday March 6, 7:00–9:30 p.m., First Universalist
Social Hall, 3400 Dupont Ave S. Minneapolis
A self-described “good southern Baptist girl,” 15-
year-old Shelby Knox of Lubbock, Texas, has pledged
abstinence until marriage. But she becomes an unlikely
advocate for comprehensive sex education when she
finds that Lubbock, where high schools teach abstinence
as the only safe sex, has some of the highest rates of teen
pregnancy and STDs in the state. Shelby profoundly
changes her political and spiritual views along the way.
Join an intergenerational discussion with youth and
parents and UUs from other metro congregations after
the film. Refreshments served. FREE event.

Register Now for 2009 Prairie Star District Conference

April 3-5 In Duluth

“Our Blue Boat Home: Living the Seventh Tradition” is
the theme of the 2009 Prairie Star District conference
of the Unitarian Universalist Association April 3–5
in Duluth. During the conference, we will explore
our stewardship of the environment (and all of our
resources!), hear from candidates for the presidency
of the UUA, and enjoy great fellowship with other
Unitarian Universalists. All information—including
facts about youth programming and child care—is
available at [www.psduua.org/AnnualConference/
AnnualConference](http://www.psduua.org/AnnualConference/AnnualConference). Join this fun and interesting two-
day meeting with Unitarian Universalists from our
district! Register now; early registration ends March 6!

Social Justice Pre-Conference Workshop:

“Successful Strategies for Environmental Justice”

Friday April 3, 1:30–4:30 p.m., UU Congregation of
Duluth, 145 W. Winona St., Duluth

Panel members will describe successful strategies
for educating and forming alliances for local energy
sustainability, nationwide environmental issues, and
worldwide activism for basic human rights. Breakout
sessions will connect participants with one another in
Prairie Star’s seven-state district to share experiences
and develop strategies for organizing to improve
environmental policy at all levels. Cost: \$5 in addition
to PSD Annual Conference registration fee OR \$10
if not attending the Annual Conference. For more
information visit [www.psduua.org/AnnualConference/
AnnualConference](http://www.psduua.org/AnnualConference/AnnualConference).

online at: www.firstunitariansociety.org/newsletter/main.html

AUW Women’s Retreat

Rejuvenate mind, body, and soul at the annual AUW
Women’s spring retreat, “Nurturing Our Spirit
Gardens,” being held March 27–29 at the Koinonia
Retreat Center near Annandale. All women are
welcome! This popular weekend offers spiritually
focused reflection and ritual, activities ranging from
yoga and labyrinth to crafts and
dancing, and time for walking in
the woods or relaxing in the lounge.
For more info and to register online
go to [www.firstuniv.org/auw/retreat.
html](http://www.firstuniv.org/auw/retreat.html) or pick up a brochure at the
“Ask Me” table.



Making Your Summer Plans?

Registration is now open for Camp StarTrail, our new
UU summer camp for all ages. Go to www.psduua.org
and click on Camps on the left tool bar.

Camp StarTrail will be held August 2–7 just off I-80,
between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. Join us for a
multigenerational camp that celebrates and explores
Unitarian Universalism, in the beautiful rolling
hills of the Platte River Valley. From the morning
celebration, to the workshops, to the evening Vespers
and campfires, there will be fun and good conversation.
If you’d prefer to sit in a rocking chair and read a good
book, you’ll enjoy the quiet of the woods, lake, and
sky. There’s a swimming pool, a small lake for canoes
and paddle boats, hiking trails, challenge courses
including high ropes, plenty of comfortable housing,
and excellent food.

*Our Theme Speaker is Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior
Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis.*

Her topic is “Toward Wisdom: How to Recognize
and Become a Spiritual Grown-Up, With or Without
God.” Rev. Mark Stringer, First Unitarian Church of
Des Moines, is our Chaplain and Vespers leader. Other
ministers who will be present include Rev. Jim Eller
of All Souls UU Church of Kansas City; Rev. Fritz
Hudson of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln; and Rev.
Ted Tollefson of UU Fellowship of River
Falls Wisconsin.

Costs will be reasonable. Tent and RV camping is
available. A variety of housing is available; most spaces are
air conditioned. For an affordable vacation this summer,
consider Camp StarTrail. You’ll be glad you did!



The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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March 2009

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



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.

March 1:
Music Sunday

March 5, 12, 19, 26:
Adult Education Ending Poverty Group

March 14:
Service Auction

March 24-29, March 31 and April 1-4:
Sittings for Photo Directory

March 25:
Eat 'N Meet

Board of Trustees

Barbara Weatherhead (Chair), Liaison to Nominations

Beth Gohdes (Vice-Chair), Liaison to Sunday Assemblies, Denominational Affairs

Ruth Agar (Secretary), Liaison to Alliance, Caring Circles, History, Discovery Groups

Bob Aderhold, Liaison to Membership, Finance, Personnel

Adele Hansen, Liaison to Social Action, Summer Assemblies, Bookstore/Library, Ministerial Relations

Dan Hunt, Liaison to Stewardship, RE, Greater Community

Elizabeth Hutchinson, Liaison to Youth/Adult Committee, Art in the Gallery, Emergency Preparedness

Bruce Nelson, Liaison to Building and Grounds, Special Events, Foundation

Tim Palmquist, Liaison to Music, Forum

Mary Ann Lundquist (Treasurer)