

Standing
on the
side of LOVE
— and reason.

THE FIRST Unitarian

VOL. 92, MARCH 2010 • THE FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS

From the Minister

Spring into Action! It won't be very long now before the last remnants of winter's ice and snow add themselves to Minnesota's lakes, and the better weather arrives. What can you do to keep your spirits energized in the meantime? Plan to attend the FUS Service Auction on March 13!

This annual fund raising, and fun raising, event is a great evening even if you don't win a weekend sailing trip to the Apostle Islands—and you might! You will discover many hidden talents out there in the FUS community; everything from baby sitting to knitting lessons, computer assistance to wine tasting. And if you watch the bidding, you'll learn which of our members are willing to compete for someone to watch their children, or the chance to taste a few new vintages. And of course, you may find a bargain opportunity for someone to walk "your" dog, or wrap "your" presents.



The evening begins with registration and the Silent Auction, during which you can wander through tables with many lovely handmade items and delicious treats, as well as sports and theater tickets, gift certificates, and unique works of art. To sustain you while you contemplate, there will be wine, punch, and hot appetizers carried through the crowd on trays. If you set your heart on a particular item, be sure to check back every once in a while to see if someone has overbid you! There will also be a fun Boutique table, where you can buy small items directly.

At certain times, the bidding will close on a particular table, and then our team of outstanding volunteers will determine the winners and start allocating the items and the charges. But the fun is just getting started, because then the Oral Auction begins, with our distinguished auctioneer, Colonel Kurt Johnson. He'll have games and wise cracks, along with the ability to make sure that everybody gets to participate and have a good time. There will be dinners, tea parties, weekend cabins, and many other wonderful experiences to share, and of course the annual opportunity to decide one of next year's sermon topics. We will also end the process by supporting some special needs for the Society.

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

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Service Auction

Saturday, March 13

Another exciting evening of wonderful auction opportunities and delicious nibbles for great causes!

**Buy your tickets in
the Lower Assembly
Hall after service
NOW!**

Order of Service
announcements are
due 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](mailto:newsletter@firstunitariansociety.org)

Forum and Assembly Previews

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

■3/7/10 FORUM: “The World of UUs”

Presenter: Sherry A. Wells

Every other year brings a meeting of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists; in 2007 it was in Germany and Sherry A. Wells was there. Sherry expects we will be surprised when we learn how widespread and significant the influence of the UU religion is around the world. Sherry is a member of two affiliate groups of the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists—the UU-United Nations Office and the UU Esperanto Network. We are fortunate to have Sherry visiting us from her home in Michigan. After this morning’s service, Sherry would delight in teaching a bit of Esperanto to anyone interested over lunch.

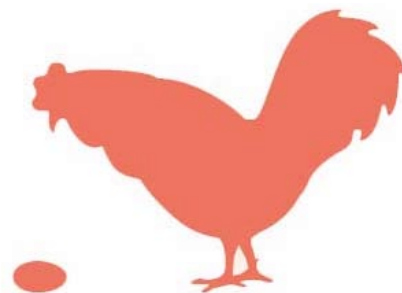


Assemblies are at 10:30 a.m. in the Upper Assembly Hall.

◆3/7/10 ASSEMBLY: “Tomorrow and Tomorrow”

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Shakespeare’s plays have sometimes been called the “scripture” of humanism, and they offer some interesting and paradoxical ideas about the role of fate, or destiny, in our lives. How does the Guthrie’s new staging of *Macbeth* bring alive again for our time the challenges of ambition, duty, and human nature? Have the politics of power changed over five centuries?



■3/14/10 FORUM: “Annual Update on Avenues for Homeless Youth and its Host Home Program for GLBT Youth”

Facilitator: Avenues for Homeless Youth staff

The mission of Avenues for Homeless Youth is to provide emergency shelter, short term housing and support services for homeless youth in a safe and nurturing environment. Through such service, Avenues seeks to help youth achieve their personal goals and make a positive transition into young adulthood. Among the services they provide is a unique host home program for GLBT homeless youth.

FUS supported Avenues last year with a portion of our Service Auction proceeds and with collections of personal care items. This Sunday we will be taking a social justice collection for Avenues.



◆3/14/10 ASSEMBLY: “The Thought of Bach”

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

Next Saturday at 10:30, FUS will host a segment of the American Guild of Organist’s 2010 Minneapolis organ crawl. Musicians from all over the Twin Cities will assemble to hear our remarkable instrument perform works by one of the consummate organ composers, J.S. Bach. Thirty years ago, a philosopher and scientist, Douglas Hofstadter, used the structure of Bach’s music, along with the artwork of M.C. Escher, to explore some of the mathematical principles of both human and artificial intelligence. How have his insights been verified or challenged during the past decades? What is it that makes music and art enduring?

At this Assembly, we will also receive a special collection in support of work with homeless youth.

Forum and Assembly Previews

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

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

■3/21/10 FORUM: “Spring Equinox Celebration and Breakfast”



Join us for the Spring Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. in the Lower Assembly Hall and the Sing-along at 9:45 a.m.

◆3/21/10 ASSEMBLY: “The Pageant of Spring” Speakers: Seasonal Celebrations Team



Today we pause to mark the vernal equinox. As we welcome the arrival of spring, we'll explore the power of love, creativity, and renewal in our lives with an intergenerational celebration including music, poetry, and reflections.

■3/28/10 FORUM: Movie Chat

Movie Chat

Discussion Host: Claire Dulgar of Peace North

We invite you to join us for a discussion of the film *A Single Woman* (free screening at FUS at 7:00 p.m. on March 24 following the Eat 'n Meet). *A Single Woman* is a distinct, lively portrait of Jeannette Rankin (the first American woman elected to Congress; also a suffragist, peace activist and reformer) that takes us from her childhood in 1880s Montana, to her last television interview in 1972. Discussion host will be special guest Claire Dulgar of Peace North.

◆3/28/10 ASSEMBLY: “The More Ample Mind: Growing Into Humanism, Part One”

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons

This Society exists because it is not enough to arrive at a position of having rejected traditional religious dogmas. If we are not continually growing in wisdom, compassion, and responsibility throughout our lives, then humanism is a mirage; a lifeless and powerless faith stance. Only if it summons us always to greater human dignity and a more fully human life does it deserve our loyalty, and offer sustenance to others and to our children. This four-part sermon series will consider three qualities of spiritual maturity, and how we might pursue them in practice. This morning, the capacity to tolerate intensity and ambiguity in our lives without becoming rigid or overwhelmed. This assembly will be followed by a sermon discussion.



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.

From the Minister

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Each year our check out technology improves, so it doesn't take long to pay your bill—if you choose to use a credit card, all you have to do is sign—and collect then and there any items you bought. If it isn't possible to be there, you can always send someone to bid for you, and don't forget that if you bring two guests from outside FUS, your own admission is free! So spring into action, and join us for an exciting, festive evening to support our FUS programs both here and in the community and around the world. See you there!

Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister

Trustee Tidbit

Electricity and natural gas is a large piece of our budget—\$39,000 this fiscal year (ending June 30). Earlier this year we discovered that our heat distribution system has been running very inefficiently for some time. We had



some ideas for correcting this problem, but there was no room in the budget to pay for it. To solve the problem, the Board adopted an innovative resolution to allow the results of energy savings efforts to pay for the efforts needed to produce those savings. Subsequently, a contractor was retained to correct the inefficiencies, and will be paid out of a share of the savings realized. The contractor, Ken Duvio, has already made many corrections. You can track how our progress—charts, updated monthly, will be posted on the Social Action board in the lower assembly hall. Tips will also be posted on how you can help.

Stewardship

Well folks, we've made it past the middle mark of the 2009–2010 year here at FUS; and the view from our window, as we look at the rest of this pledge period, is basically positive. December was a fine month for pledging, so we can thank all of you who have kept us on track!

You'll also want to know that your Board of Trustees has been able to hold the line on expenditures, honoring an anticipated pledge budget resource of \$392,000 for the current year. That's good; but that pledge target has been set at a level that's more than \$30,000 below the pledge amount we raised in 2008–2009. That's well below the target we would like to see for 2010–2011.



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The Trustees need to bring the membership a new budget proposal for the fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2010. The proposal must be ready for the Annual Congregational Meeting in May. That means we'll all need to be thinking ahead, by early March, to tell the Board what we think we can commit for 2010–2011. And we should try to put our probable pledge on a new pledge form before the middle of March. (Forms can be found in the FUS office or they can be sent to you in the mail.)

Your Stewardship Committee is optimistic. We think that many members can commit to an increase of five percent in 2010–2011 beyond the current level of 2009–2010 pledging. Can you support that prediction? Please say yes! We know you'll want to, and we know the Trustees will cheer you when you do!

Your Stewards,
Chris Bubser, Roger Clemence, Wendy Jerome, Boyd and Betty Mast, Kerry Noyes

Membership

Welcome our Newest Members!

We had nine people become members here on February 7. Their biographies are posted in the Lower Assembly Hall. I have pulled out something to share about each of them.

Rose and Greg Lewis: Greg loves his career as a freelance musician and teacher. Rose had a brief career as a public school band director, and is now also freelancing as a musician and teacher. They and their two Siberian Huskies make their home in northwest Minneapolis.

Kristin Nerem: One of the most significant recent events of her life involved finding her biological family and meeting her birth mother on her 54th birthday. Kristi's work experiences have included being a teacher at St. Olaf, a unit coordinator in the emergency room at Minneapolis Children's Hospital, and a fiction supervisor at a Barnes and Noble.

Jenny Nilsson: Jenny works as a freelance training consultant specializing in online and web-based training. She reads voraciously: anything non-fiction, sci-fi, or written by Edith Wharton.

Joyce Riedesel: She has been a UCC church secretary, political campaign manager, worked in a neighborhood organization, and raised money for public television. She became a Unitarian in 1971 in Lincoln, NE.

James and Cyndi Sweet: Cyndi's parents were born and raised in Minnesota, married at Unity Church-Unitarian. FUS is James's third church where he has served as part of the sound crew.

Kevin Watson: Kevin serves as the Communications Coordinator at First Universalist Church of Minneapolis. He serves on the board of Rainbow Rumpus, an online web-magazine for youth of LGBTQ parents and their friends.

Dale Handeen: Dale was dedicated in the liberal tradition as an infant in the UU Church of Willmar. Her undergraduate studies at Macalester College were in art and philosophy, and she is a graduate of the 13th class of the Humanist Institute.

Find FUS on Facebook!

Come find the FUS community on Facebook. Share your thoughts and feedback from the service or other FUS activities and post items of interest for other UUs. Once you are logged into Facebook, search on "First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis" and friend us!



Visit our facebook page.

Visitor Orientation on March 21

Interested in finding out more about FUS and Unitarian Universalism? Join us for a two-hour session at noon on March 21. Please let me know if you are coming, as we will provide a light lunch.

We welcome new visitors weekly. Meet us after service for Minister's Tea in the Upper Assembly Hall. The minister, a board member and the membership director are available to meet you and answer any questions, regardless if this is your first visit or your twentieth. You can also stop by the Ask Me table downstairs after service any week to learn more about us.

Spring Breakfast on March 21



Celebrate the Equinox with us starting with breakfast and carrying through the service. Please join us!

Happy March Birthdays!

Hossein Akhavi-Pour	Skip LaJoy
Ken Barklind	Jeff Langaard
Andy Berman	Levi Nichols
Roxie Bozicevich	Morgan Nichols
Jacquie Friend	John Nordquist
Kendyl Gibbons	Dick Owen
Max Green	Paul Redfield
Walter Griffin	Tina Riewe
Jessie Halter	Shelley Shreffler
Elizabeth Hutchinson	Madeline Simon
Jerry Johnson	Sue Tincer
Dawn Kuzma	Oscar Tix

Teresa West, Membership Coordinator

From the Intern

I am in my fourth year of seminary. An interesting exercise that I have been asked to do several times now is to write my own credo statement: a short, concise statement of personal belief. I share the most recent version with you this month.

Credo

What I believe is an ever-evolving process. To be fully human is to grow and learn and change. This is fundamental to why I am a Unitarian Universalist and I hope it will remain a primary principle that influences how I engage the world and the way I think. What I believe guides my behavior and therefore it behooves me to be clear about my beliefs and conscious of the way they evolve. There is great integrity in this process made conscious because it is too easy to succumb to daily routines and numbing busyness that robs one of the psychic space needed to reflect on the meaning of one's actions, one's life.

The universe is a mysterious and wild place. It fills me with awe and leads to questions that are ambiguous and difficult to answer. It is critical to grapple with these questions in community, and community, with all its blessings and challenges, helps me expand my perspective. It is helpful to live the questions together.

I value human experience, reason, intuition, love, and creativity. We humans must take responsibility for our lives and for the world that is our home. Suffering is a part of human existence and we humans must stand up for those who are in pain. As far as I can tell there is no great god being in the sky directing our existence, yet, I've known the power of love; I've experienced the healing power of relationship; I've witnessed how the crucible of earthly existence can bring about transformation that can only be described as inexplicable, sacred, or holy. The universe is ever in process; I believe there is a potential in love energy that binds the universe together and prods us towards goodness. Love is not an end, but a means towards building an ever-expanding beloved community. Music, singing, art, dance, poetry, science, relationships... all sparks of creativity can be pathways to transcendence and expressions of universal love. Tending to all our relationships with utmost care is the key to life and love.

Life on earth is precious and a blessing. There is wisdom and truth to be found in the rhythms and cycles of nature and all existence is deeply interwoven. Recognizing our interconnectedness is a vital lesson for the 21st century. Human life is finite and therefore we must live each day to the fullest, with authenticity, and with compassion for others and the planet, so as to leave a legacy of creativity and service that benefits the greater good and helps the world survive for future generations.

Since Unitarian Universalism is a non-creedal religion it is up to each individual to engage in a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning." If you would like to explore your own beliefs and write a credo statement, consider taking Kendyl's "Constructing Your Own Worldview" class that is offered March 18–May 20.

Mary Bohman, Ministerial Intern

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Religious Education

I am asked quite often when children should begin Sunday School. I always answer that children should begin when they are very little—as babies. Babies benefit from community, just like their parents who benefit from getting to know other parents with babies. But for sure I recommend that people bring children to church by preschool age. I am always in awe of our preschool program when I walk in several times on a Sunday morning. Amanda Harrington has created this wonderful world where our preschoolers bond with each other and learn that the church is a fun and safe place to be. Amanda gave me a copy of a story that the group created which I will share with you here. It was done after they were shown a picture of Martin Luther King Jr., and learned that he was a special man who helped others. They were then asked to create their own story about someone who helped people.

Sara was a pretty girl with brown hair and brown eyes. She made a church with many rooms inside. Sara allowed other people to go inside the church. The people could use the church rooms to sleep and do art like coloring and painting. Sara danced for the people to make them happy. She also shared supplies so people could make art such as: paper, glue, glitter, and stickers. Sara shared food too including peaches, bananas, pears, grapes and apples. The people in church smiled because they were happy and they danced all the time. They began sharing what they had with others.

Now, I think my point is made. Why wouldn't you want your child to be in such a happy place learning about sharing and helping others? FUS, Amanda, and the preschool program are gifts we give to our little ones!

Jan Devor, Director of Religious Education

Mystery Friends Program and Social Action

The Mystery Friends Program was a great hit with 31 children and adults participating. The party to meet the Mystery pairs will be on March 7 at 11:45 a.m. in the Dietrich Room. The pairs will search for each other by bringing matching food items that they will then donate to a local food shelf. The project for the party will be making sandwiches for the Dignity Center. This has always been such a win/win program for children and adults, and now we are adding these social action components to the program! All I can say is—WOW!

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

Music Notes

“B4 Bach’s Birthday” Bash 2010

By Michael Barone

The Twin Cities Chapter of the American Guild of Organists will present an ecumenical sequence of five free organ concerts in Minneapolis. Celebrate the coming of spring with music by Johann Sebastian Bach, one of the greatest Baroque composers, on the day before his 325th birthday!



Building on the success of a similar event last year in St. Paul, the AGO is moving the action across the river to Minneapolis to showcase the remarkable pipe organs in five different churches, including Episcopal, Unitarian, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Lutheran.

The concert will take place on Saturday, March 20th, 2010, thus “B4 Bach’s Birthday” Bash. (He was born on 3/21/1685.). The five Saturday organ concerts are free.

The First Unitarian Society’s concert will be held at 10:30 a.m. and will feature Dee Ann Crossley and Helen Garvey Jensen. The schedule is posted on the Twin Cities Guild of Organists website at: www.tcago.org.

Let’s celebrate Bach on our wonderful instruments with great performers!

Barbara Brooks, Music Director

Social Action

Recently, a friend sent an article to me about how exhausting, yet rewarding it is to work with refugees and other immigrants. There is a line in the article that really sticks with me: “It’s like a paradox—you give until it hurts a little bit. You give until it hurts and then you find there’s no hurt left, only love.”

There is no shortage of suffering in the world; sometimes it’s hard to decide where and how to help. For me, “giving until there’s no hurt left” implies that you are giving to a place or cause you truly believe in and identify with. Giving, in that case, is like giving to yourself. It’s a win-win situation.

Members of FUS demonstrate regularly that they are generous in their giving due to, in part, because they believe in the causes they are presented with, such as: The Currie Avenue Project, area food shelves, and programs that work on ending homelessness and reducing poverty.



Speaking of giving, the Social Action Committee has chosen three recipients for our portion of proceeds from the Service Auction this year. We have chosen them because we feel the values of these programs help advance the values we all believe in.

1. **The Dignity Center at Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church.** The Dignity Center provides a mentoring service to homeless citizens and those in deep poverty. The need for their services has expanded greatly during this recession. Much of the money we will give to them will go to buy bus passes so their clients can keep their appointments for housing, job interviews and to receive medical help.
2. **The FUS Summer Youth Social Justice Internship Program.** FUS youth who have finished 9th grade volunteer at a non-profit agency of their choosing in their neighborhood and are matched with a trained adult mentor from our congregation. The Internship Committee contacts the agency to establish a relationship before the youth begins volunteering. The youth and mentor meet periodically during the summer to discuss their experience and other relevant issues. At the end of the summer participants submit their hours with a report. They receive payment for their internship time.
3. **Amazon Amigos** which provides mini-water treatment plants in Peru to produce potable water for small villages. Currently, the ability to create clean, potable water from the river is limited to boiling it which involves burning rainforest trees as the villagers do not have other energy sources. This is the second year FUS will be sending support to Amazon Amigos.

Hope to see you at the Service Auction on Saturday, March 13, where we can have a good time together and support programs that advance the values we believe in.

Carol Koepp, Social Justice Coordinator

Announcements

Sign Up for Heritage Suppers April 25 at 5:00 p.m.

These are a great way for both long time members and those new to the faith to find out more about our heritage and explore how it applies to their life. Several stories are explored together and there is time for pondering deeper questions about the subject matter after each story. Soup dinner and dessert are woven into the time together. The stories covered are different than the ones in October and don't depend on your attendance at the first one. Sign up at the Ask Me table in the Lower Assembly Hall throughout the month of March. We will contact you at a later date with the host and address.

Women's Awareness Group

The March meeting of the Women's Awareness Group will be held on Monday, March 8, at the home of Adele Hansen. Lynn Borden is the cohost. FUS women are invited to join us at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck supper followed by a discussion of civility as discussed in books by P.M. Forni. Please call Adele or Lynn to RSVP and for directions.

Art in the Gallery

The current exhibit of acrylics by Mary Guzowski continues until March 14. From March 21 through April 18 the gallery exhibit will be watercolors by Jim Robin. Jim is a Minneapolis landscape architect.

Thanks!

The High School Group wishes to thank Richard Seuer for all his efforts in organizing the wonderful Cake Auction that was held on February 14. Many wonderful cakes made their way to Valentines and a lot of wonderful money made it's way to the trip fund for the senior high group. Thanks to all for the fun event—we couldn't have done it without a lot of bakers and buyers!

Cinnamon Roll Sunday—March 28th

The irresistible aroma of hot, fresh cinnamon rolls will be wafting through FUS on Sunday, March 28. Satisfy your taste buds in the Lower Assembly Hall during social hour and take some home for the freezer to enjoy later. The Alliance will donate the proceeds of Cinnamon Roll Sunday to the Senior High group to support their trip to Boston.

The Alliance

"History and Historical Homes of Lowry Hill (FUS neighborhood)" will be the topic by Bob Glancy at the Wednesday, March 3 meeting of the Alliance. The talk begins at 11:00 a.m. with opportunity for questions and then lunch from the Wedge at noon followed by a short business meeting. Luncheon tickets for \$8 go on sale at 10:45 a.m.

A Movie with Friends

Join us for a screening of *A Single Woman* in the Dietrich Room at 7:00 p.m. following the Eat 'n Meet dinner on March 24. Then discuss the film at the Forum at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, March 28, with special guest Claire Dular of Peace North. *A Single Woman* is a distinct, lively portrait of Jeannette Rankin (the first American woman elected to Congress; also a suffragist, peace activist and reformer). Deliciously political, occasionally chilling, ironic and idiosyncratic, *A Single Woman* illuminates the role of the individual in the American legislative process with a whimsical amalgamation of storytelling, high-powered discourse and communion.

Spring Equinox Celebration Sunday, March 21

Bring the whole family for a festive vernal equinox celebration as we welcome the arrival of spring and explore the power of love, creativity, and renewal in our lives with, music, poetry, and reflections.

Spring Equinox Breakfast

Serving from 9:00-9:45 a.m.

Lower Assembly Hall

Tickets at the door

Adults: \$7, youth 18 & under: \$3
(\$20 family maximum)

Sing-along Songs of the Season

9:45-10:25 a.m.

Upper Assembly Hall

Intergenerational Assembly

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



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— and reason.

The First Unitarian Society

OF MINNEAPOLIS

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March 2010



March 13 Service Auction

March 20
B4 Bach's Birthday Bash

March 21
Spring Breakfast and
Equinox Celebration

March 24
Movie with Friends

March 28
Cinnamon Roll Sunday

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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.