
NUUSLETTER

NORTHWOODS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

A Beacon of Light in the Northwoods

P.O. Box 253, Minocqua, WI 54548, <http://nuuf.com>

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Volume 5, Number 8

January 13,

2003 **Coming Sundays**

Taking the Pulpit

Sunday, 10 AM, January 26, Jerry Woolpy, "Business Ethics"

Sunday, 10 AM, February 9, Rev. Sydney Morris.

Sunday, 10 AM, February 23, Jerry Buerer, "My Credo"

Sunday, 10 AM, March 9, Rev. Sydney Morris.

Sunday, 10 AM, March 23, Eric Yonke, Professor of History, UW-Stevens Point

On alternate Sundays we meet at 10 AM for adult religious education. We discuss topics relating religious and ethical issues to current events and we consider things that contribute to the spirit and meaning of our group.

Note from the President

So much is going on with the Fellowship these days that it's hard to keep up with everything. Try to keep you calendar that is now being prepared monthly by Audrey Williams. They are at the Fellowship on the back table. Our newsletters try to keep everyone informed (thanks to Jerry Woolpy) of what is happening and of course we now have our website going thanks to Brad Toberman and Jerry. Of course, if you can come to our Sunday services you hear about things coming up too.

Our promotion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. observance is something long needed in the community. Members who are participating in bringing attention to the need for peace are also doing a very important job.

Besides our Sunday services we've had a fish fry, a Thanksgiving dinner, a special holiday program, a discussion on growth and now word of Friday night movies. And besides what we're doing we also have a meditation group meeting at the Fellowship on Thursday evenings and we are going to have a yoga group meeting on Thursdays during the day.

Things are going along very well. I especially thank all of the committees for working hard to get things taken care of.

The next board meeting will be on Tuesday, February 18 at 9:30 AM. We will be

discussing the Laramie Project and the possibility of undertaking the steps to become a "welcoming congregation". We are also considering whether we should make our Fellowship a "Green Sanctuary".

In the meantime the Board has designated me as the delegate for the Fellowship to this year's General Assembly in Boston. It's a great time to go to General Assembly and I hope some others join us in going to Boston.

CHALICE LIGHTERS

Three times a year (fall, winter, spring) the Central Midwest District's Growth and Support Committee reviews applications from individual congregations to determine which one best meets specific criteria for receiving a Chalice Lighter grant.

A "call" letter, which names the church and describes the project, is then sent to each Chalice Lighter. A self-addressed return envelope is enclosed for convenience. The letter also includes a thank you from the church that got the prior award.

Of the total amount donated for each call, 10% is withheld to partially support printing and postage costs. The Central Midwest District supports the remaining printing, postage and administrative costs. If the total money received is more than the grant amount requested, it is put into an interest-bearing account to be used for new church starts.

If you would like to review all the churches that have received grants, visit the Web site at www.cmwd-uua.org.

Please consider becoming a Chalice Lighter. The Chalice Lighter Program is designed to bring the values and beliefs of Unitarian Universalism to the wider community through congregational membership growth. To become a Chalice Lighter contact Terry Hoyt or call the Central Midwest District Office at 708-236-8031 or find an online application at www.cmwd-uua.org. Chalice Lighters donate a minimum of \$10 three times a year to support three congregations with a mission and a plan to grow. Terry Hoyt▪

Joys & Concerns

Melanie Cyra was a Lakeland Athlete of the Month for November. As post for the LUHS girls' basketball team, she is their high scorer and leading rebounder. She was the only T-Bird voted to the Lakeland Classic's all-tournament team. ▪

Irma Braunstein, for her fifty years of service and her work in support of the Eleanor Roosevelt Scholarship Fund, was chosen to receive the Named Gift Honoree pin by the American Association of University Women, Rhinelander-Northwood branch. ▪

Announcements

In addition to Microsoft Word format, this **NUUSLETTER** and back issues are now available in Adobe PDF. See end of NUUSLETTER for details.

Jerry Buerer's winter address is 503½ N. Third St., Wausau 54403. Phone, 715-843-6994, email is changed to jaybeedi@yahoo.com. His recent article in the New Orleans Magazine is at http://publications.neworleans.com/no_magazine/37.4.-ForumClose.html ▪

Central Midwest District Annual Meeting: April 4-6, at The Unitarian Church of

Evanston. ▪

Midwest UU Leadership School: Sessions July 16-23 or July 26-August 2, foster effective lay leadership to benefit congregations. Email Jan Steinmark, Registrar, mrsmosaic@aol.com ▪

Minister's Message

The life of a congregation is often described in terms of chapters, or eras. The latest of these might be described as the Era of the Big Gulp. When 10 people all came into the Fellowship at roughly the same time, it presented quite a challenge – a joyous one, but a challenge nonetheless. The impact of such a large percentage of people coming at once has been felt in a number of ways. Central to my training is to look at things systemically, and so I have watched this process with interest.

The new size of the congregation is coupled with an unusually high degree of sophistication about Unitarian Universalism. People have moved into leadership positions quickly on committees, the Board, in programs, through participating with thoughtfulness and sage advice. I think the Fellowship can be proud of this assimilation.

However, we suddenly live in a changed environment. The smallest size of congregation is described by congregational experts as a “Family,” characterized by a small group of people who are very close, in which everyone knows everything and everyone does everything together. Initially, its stability depends entirely upon the kind of arrangement where the “matriarchs and patriarchs” intuitively organize the congregation more like a family.

As a group grows to a certain level – and I suggest because of the confluence of numbers and of UU experience we have suddenly leapt toward that point – a small congregation moves to the next level. On it's way, it goes through two steps somewhat whimsically described as the cat and the collie. The cat pretty much goes it's own way, and the collie is very friendly -- but it barks at strangers. While retaining some of these “Family” characteristics, our congregation is moving right along.

The Big Gulp – perhaps better described as the Big Embrace – has occurred, and now the congregation is approaching and sometimes hovering right on the threshold between two types of congregations – “Family” and “Pastoral.” A pastoral model delegates more, and solidifies its committee structure. This creates awkwardnesses, of course: no longer a committee of the whole where every time everyone gets together everything gets discussed and decided, a more formal structure emerges. New people have new styles of leadership, and of organization. Channels of communication become vital, coordination more intentional.

Most importantly for us, being on the threshold means that sometimes it is just as valid to use the old model as the new. It's a judgment call, an aesthetic choice – an art form. As the congregation regularly experiences Sunday attendance between 50 and 100, these choices will be more obvious. But in this chapter of the book of congregational life, I think it is extremely important to come together and talk, mustering as much

consciousness as we can to the art form of our congregational life.

The workshop on "Growth" last Saturday was a step in the unfolding process of developing that consciousness. We included the concepts of vitality and success in our definition of growth and looked at four areas: growth in numbers (adult members, children, building); growth in deepening of the faith, maturing as UU's (through study of other religions and of our history, through programs, through personal sharing and living our values); growth as an organism, a living entity going through stages of development (ongoing decisions about structure and communication flows, coordination and informing the congregation); and growth in our social witness (as the Social Justice Committee develops a new approach). The design and content of the workshop will be available in my report.

The health and vitality of the congregation was palpable! I look forward to these thoughts and many others flowing into the Long Range Planning process, which that committee, chaired by Doris Eberlein, will be bringing to us in the spring. It is an honor and a pleasure to be with you all during this exciting time! Sydney ▪

From the Social Justice Committee

Joe Strauss & Audrey Williams

WAR PROTEST ADVERTISEMENTS

We are pleased to report that the cost of this project has been covered with \$12.80 left over to be put in the Social Justice Committee pool.

This was a substantial effort for a small group. We can take pride in that so many contributed. You all deserve a personal thank you from all of the rest of us but many of the contributions were in cash and can't be traced--so a BIG THANK YOU to all that helped!

We have all been reading about the surprise effect of the spontaneous expressions of Anti War Protest appearing all across the country. They are not confined to big cities and college campuses and have not been limited to major Peace Groups that would be expected to raise a cry. This indicates more of a dissent than had been expected and has, at least, given the pro-war leadership something to think about.

We have been a part of this. We should feel good about it and we should not stop here.

Hooray for the Northwoods UU's.

UUSC PROJECT UPDATES

We have recently been hearing about "our charitable wing" the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee because of the Box at Your Table fund drive.

If you would like to learn more about this wonderful organization, and the many works they constantly do in our name, you can visit their web site at WWW.UUSC.ORG. If you are interested you can sign up for their E-Mail Bulletin that you will then receive once or twice a month. It will describe their current activities and will include suggestions for contacting your representatives in Congress on those or other hot issues.

There is a cancellation of the Bulletin Receipts plan with every few issues you

receive so it will not become a nuisance to you. ▪

Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Board Meeting 11-19-02

Present: Ruth Erbs, Terry Hoyt, Alan VanRaalte, Sydney Morris, Joan Hauer, Patty Buehler

Minutes of last meeting: Alan Van Raalte moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Ruth Erbs seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Treasurer's report: 10-14-02--11-17-02 Expenses-2709.77

Revenue-6709.32

Bank balance-18358.96

Patty Buehler moved to approve the treasurer's report. Alan Van Raalte seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Endowment: The board agreed to refer the matter to the endowment committee with instructions to report back to the board with recommendations.¹

Minister's report: The minister's report was accepted. (Available upon request)

Committee reports: The board agreed to request that committees submit minutes of their meetings to the board president. Committees are reminded to keep their spending limited to the items listed in their budget requests or submit a new request to the board.

Building and Grounds committee: Alan Van Raalte reported the priorities of the committee are carpet cleaning, lights in parking lot, chair rail in sanctuary, and bookshelves for our library. The committee will investigate options for the lights to keep costs down. The committee will work with the membership committee on the bookshelves issue. The bookshelves may have to wait until the next fiscal year.

Social Justice Committee: The committee will meet on November 20. The committee is planning a Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.

Green Sanctuary: The board approved our congregation becoming a Green Sanctuary. The Green Sanctuary Program sponsored by the UUA "invites congregations to build awareness of environmental issues, encourage personal lifestyle changes, motivate community action on environmental issues, build a connection between spiritual practice and environmental consciousness, and challenge and work to heal environmental injustices.

UU Women's Heritage Society: The goal of this society is to increase the awareness of

¹ "The matter" refers to the issue of whether or not to establish an endowment fund and how to proceed to establish the fund. (Footnote added after minutes were approved.)

contributions by UU women. Alan Van Raalte moved we sponsor a sustaining member to the UU Women's Heritage Society, and to pay the \$75 fee out of our contingency fund. Joan Hauer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chalice Lighters: Terry Hoyt will write an article for the NUUSLETTER about the Chalice Lighters.

Next Meeting: January 9, 10:00 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Buehler ▪

NORTHWOODS UU FELLOWSHIP
2ND QTR FY02/03 ENDING 12/31/02

Ruth Erbs, Treasurer

	BUDGET	AMT TO DATE
REVENUE		
Pledging Units	35143	23992
Midyear Pledges	1000	420
Sunday Donations	1500	872
Interest	0	52
CODA DONATION	0	50
Trig's Donation	<u>0</u>	<u>74</u>
TOTAL	37643	25460
EXPENSES		
Ministry Salary & Disabil.	3800	1902
Ministry Housing	10800	5400
Ministry Prof Expense	3000	1500
Ministry Pension	2400	1200
Program	2000	528
Childrens R.E.	300	49
Adult R.E.	100	0
Music	<u>750</u>	<u>100</u>
SPIRITUAL GRWTH & LRNING	23150	10679
Dues	3600	3224
Publicity	650	520
Social Justice	1500	10
UU Service Comm	700	700
Meeting Fund	<u>500</u>	<u>0</u>
COMM PRES & DENOM SPPT	6950	4454
Newsletter	450	239
Membership	200	137
Hospitality	100	32
Social Activities	100	0
Finance	100	0
Office Supplies	<u>300</u>	<u>77</u>
MEMBERSHIP GRWTH & SPPT	1250	485
Bank Expense	0	22
Natural Gas	500	212
Electricity	400	196
Snow Plowing	310	175
Telephone	425	252
Insurance	515	518
Maintenance	270	55
Building & Grounds	1350	664
Memorial Garden	<u>500</u>	<u>70</u>
ORG GRWTH & DEV	4270	2164
CONTINGENCY	1373	75
BUILDING RESERVE	500	<u>0</u>
MINISTER DISCR FUND	<u>150</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	37643	17782

Small Church Conference Report Kenosha, November 2

Doris Eberlein

Rev Arthur Vaeni said that in small churches we covenant together to support each other with love and freedom. There is a personal intimacy with a community concern. To obtain our goals we need to be aware of process. Fulfillment of these goals affirms our humanity and bolsters our interdependency. Intimacy and informality can become a problem if we ignore formal structure and the group becomes exclusive. We must reach out to heal and recover antagonized members. The church gives form to the relationships of members gathered as equals regardless of life roles. Each of our members has the right to protect themselves from behavior not acceptable to the community and, without undermining the freedom to be, eliminate this behavior. Small churches need to establish, a continuity of members, long-term leadership, and ministry to gain stability. And, we must discover our gifts to each other and to the world.

CMD Children's Religious Education Director, Dori Davenport, said that religious education is our most important means of growth. Consider the perspective of a first time visitor. Note the timing of the service, grounds, parking lot, front door, inside first vision, welcome, pamphlets, children's reception, nursery care, teachers, what happens to late arrivals, seating, and overall accessibility. To grow churches need uniqueness, spirituality, holiness, religious identity, warmth and caring, consistent message of faith, hope, and love, as well as strong membership dynamics. Have visitor Sundays when members bring friends. Advertise programs and services. Have social coffee hours. Follow-up within the first week of a new visitor. Get new members involved and connected. Consider covenant groups based on interest areas. (Bob Hill, bhill@uua.org is available to advise on covenant groups.) ▪

Field's Children and Grandchildren Back from Mongolia

Dear family and friends:

We're back from Mongolia with Benjamin... At age 16 months, he isn't walking, yet, which isn't surprising for a toddler from an orphanage... The first couple of days with him were interesting. He tended to pound the floor with his head when he was unhappy and bit Corliss a few times. However, he has behaved himself for the past week or so. (We were told that these behaviors were not unusual for institutionalized toddlers.) Ben is thriving in his new environment. He took a couple of teetering steps on his own tonight...

We had an incredible trip to Mongolia. We spent most of our time there in Ulaan Baator, the capitol. The people are well-dressed and the women are beautiful. The city is in bad need of urban planning and an influx of foreign dollars for repairs. It also has air quality problems, with several coal-fired power plants in town.

As in China, the traffic is wild, but there seem to be few accidents. Dogs wander the streets at will. You see few of the traditional dells, the long-sleeved, knee-length coats. When you do, they tend to be on older people. The young women dress, even in mid-winter, in tight jeans and wear lots of make up.

(Another interesting aspect of Mongolia was all of the foreign language TV stations -- Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian, Indian, French, German, and BBC.)

We had to boil our water at the hotels in both Mongolia and China. (However, the breakfast buffets served at our Chinese hotels were spectacular.) The power also went out a few times one night at our hotel in Ulaan Baatar.

We made one trip to a traditional ger, what we in the U.S. call yurts... The head of the household was a woman with a son in his early twenties. Also present were a couple of young grandchildren (the man of the house was away tending to his sheep and horses). They were more than pleased to have us.

We brought some food as a gift, which the lady of the house prepared for us. We, the visitors, pretty much kept to ourselves, and the occupants kept to themselves. But there were a lot of smiles. The food was good. (A sun-dried curdled milk product, called aurl, was served as an appetizer. At first taste, it was slightly rancid; by the time I was done eating my brick it had acquired for me an appealing tang. The main meal was mutton steamed in dumplings.)...

The two grandchildren at one point came over to meet Ben. The lady of the ger gave Ben a handful of goat ankle bones, which are used for a variety of traditional games...

The country is well on the way to instituting capitalism...It is a very patriotic country, with national flags to be seen flying from many buildings and boats. Their television, as might be expected, is loaded with programs extolling patriotic themes. You don't see many Mao jackets; everyone dresses as well as any Westerner. The influence of American and European popular culture is everywhere.

Anyway, that's the quick synopsis of our trip... Love, Dave, Corliss, Sarah, and Ben ▪

NUU Views

Question: In the current issue of the World (page 30), UU Minister Rosemary Bray McNatt discusses why Martin Luther King Jr. considered but did not take up her liberal religion. She quotes King (1960), "There is one phase of liberalism that I hope to cherish always: its devotion to the search for truth...[But, King concludes]... Reason, devoid of purifying power of faith, can never free itself from distortions and rationalizations." But is there a place for faith in Unitarian Universalism and if so how does it inform the search for truth?

Answer from Wenda Sheard: Yes, I believe faith has a place in Unitarian Universalism. But wait: What is "faith"? Why did Martin Luther King Jr. say that faith has the power to "purify" reason? What is "reason"?

Please bear with me as I peek into some philosophy of science and delve into the nature of reason and faith. I want to convince you that at deep levels, reason is not solid and faith should not be squishy.

We can reason upside and down, but still not know the truth. As the famous philosopher of science, Karl Popper, taught us about scientific reason: "The empirical basis of objective science has nothing "absolute" about it. Science does not rest upon solid

bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were above a swamp. It is like a building erected on plies. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp, but not down to any natural or "given" base; and if we stop driving the piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being." K.R. Popper. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1968) p.111(German version 1934).

Faith, in a sense, is Karl Popper's swamp. The composition of the faith doesn't matter: what matters is the strength of the faith. Strong faith gives us a solid swamp in which to rest our piles of reason. Weak or nonexistent faith gives us only an ever-changing liquid swamp underneath our piles of reason. With weak or nonexistent faith, our bedrock is molten. If we ignore the fact that our reason rests on a foundation of faith, we leave our reason floating in a molten swamp, subject to movement by random currents.

How does faith inform our Unitarian Universalist search for truth? When we recognize the deep anchoring function of faith, we ground ourselves and our children. Unless we teach our Unitarian Universalist children the importance of faith, they will continue drift away from our congregations. An ungrounded search for truth is a recipe for drifting aimlessly with random currents. Both Karl Popper and Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized that faith purifies reason by giving reason a foundation and a purpose.

Let's encourage each other to recognize and strengthen the faith that underlies our reason.

Answer from Alan VanRaaltes: Given the range of beliefs of Unitarian Universalists, from theism to atheism and all points in between, it seems to me that faith is an integral part our religious tradition. Theists among us have faith that a supreme being or beings exist in spite of the lack of scientific evidence to support that belief. I think Atheists also must have faith. Despite the same lack of scientific evidence disproving the existence of a supreme being, they have faith that there is none.

An expression of faith might sound a bit incongruent, or even disingenuous, coming from an agnostic who, almost by definition, eschews faith and relies on scientific evidence on which to base opinions. However, as a Humanist I have faith in humanity in spite of the preponderance of empirical evidence that suggests that that faith is unwarranted. In fact, our first UU principle concerning the inherent worth and dignity of every person is an expression of faith in humanity.

Our fifth principle, the use of the democratic process, is an expression of faith that people with differing opinions and agendas can overcome those differences and work together to achieve a common goal. Likewise, it could be argued that our search for truth is an expression of faith that truth actually exists. On this point however, I do take some issue. I think that while facts exist, truth is largely a matter of perspective. But I guess even that is a statement of faith, faith that - at least until I discover evidence to the contrary - that conviction is correct.

Answer from Dick Fields: I see no conflict in believing in a divine being (faith) and being a Unitarian Universalist. Many UUs consider themselves Christians, Jews, Buddhist, humanists, agnostics, etc. and are welcome with in our denomination. Some of us are still searching for religious answers, to find our own truth, and others of us are

content in our beliefs.

What is the truth? It scares me when some one says his view of the truth is right and some one that believes differently is wrong. This is the reason for religious conflicts between people when both sides believes that their beliefs are the truth and are unwilling to let people who believe differently do so in peace. Missionaries are excellent example of this arrogant thinking. If a genie would grant me one wish, I would do away with all religious thought as I believe the world would be a much better and more peaceful place. That is the truth.

Answer from Jerry Buerer: Boy oh boy-there's material here for not just one sermon, but a whole series. Or enough topics for an adult education series. For instance, what do we mean by "faith?" What is truth? How does faith "purify," whatever is meant by that term?

Why not turn Dr. King's statement around a bit. How about this: Faith, devoid of the enlightening power of wisdom, all too often results in distortions of reality and frequently ends up leading to rationalizations regarding outdated and/or simplistic notions that simply don't stand the test of time nor the test of mind. How's that for a mouthful?

Since I'm on the road as I write this, I don't have access to my great big dictionary, but according to my small paperback one, there are several definitions of "faith." The first is simple: faith is "confidence and trust." My own definition of faith is "the belief in ideas or notions typically unverifiable by the senses." My definition possibly is more in keeping with Dr. King's. If so, it's a hard sell with most UU s. However, if we accept the "confidence and trust" definition, then I think it can be said that there is a place for faith in Unitarian Universalism: we have "faith," or "confidence and trust" in reason as a means of hopefully facilitating us in our search for truth.

Place Stamp Here

The question for the next NUUSLETTER is: Imagine what freedom must mean to those who seek it desperately, people in bondage from the action of governments. Why are the revolutionary principles of freedom upon which our country was founded so dear to us? Are they still "self-evident"? Are we willing to give them up in the name of security? True conservatives, libertarians, and liberals once agreed that the fundamental rights of each American were protected from the majority no matter what, and that they were entitled to be treated by their government as individuals and not as members of groups. But the USA Patriot Act, authored by the administration, passed last October before many members of congress had read it. This bill enhanced the power of the executive and abrogated much of the fundamental constitutional judicial review to which, until now, we have been entitled. In the name of security we can now be searched without warrant. The Attorney General can designate any group we belong to as "domestic terrorist" including political and war protest, and then he can deny us our fundamental rights. (See Wendy Kaminer, UU World, Jan/Feb 2002, page 21 ff.) Question: Is this consistent with UU principles and is it ok under the circumstances? Send answers to jerryw@earlham.edu by February 23rd

Getting the NUUSLETTER

In addition to the usual Microsoft Word format, the NUUSLETTER is now available in Adobe PDF format that is readable by any computer, Mac or PC. If you do not have an Adobe Reader you can download one free at

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

With this software the NUUSLETTER will be formatted as it is in Microsoft Word, but the Word program will not be required. Let me know if you want it sent to you in PDF format, jerryw@earlham.edu.

Previous NUUSLETTERS and the congregation directory are available at nuuf.com. Click on “Members Only.” The user name is NUUF. But you need to remember the secret password. If you have forgotten it, contact me. NUUSLETTERS are posted there on the day they are emailed so you could actually get them on our webpage in addition to or instead of having them emailed to you.

For those that do not have enough disk space for the Adobe Reader it is also possible to download a Microsoft Word Reader from the “Members Only” section of our webpage. This will allow you to read documents formatted in Word even though you don’t have the

Word program.

Those who are not members may receive the NUUSLETTER by email free of charge. Members are encouraged to receive the NUUSLETTER by email or they may have it posted by US mail. The subscription rate for nonmembers to get the NUUSLETTER by US Mail is \$12 per year. Notify jerryw@earlham.edu to receive the NUUSLETTER by email. We give special thanks to the 57 out of 88 subscribers who, by use of email, have helped to reduce our NUUSLETTER budget by more than \$500. ▪

Next NUUSLETTER Deadline, Sunday, February 23, 2003

NUUSLETTER
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