

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Newsletter

August
2010

Message from the Fellowship President

To the OCUUF Community,

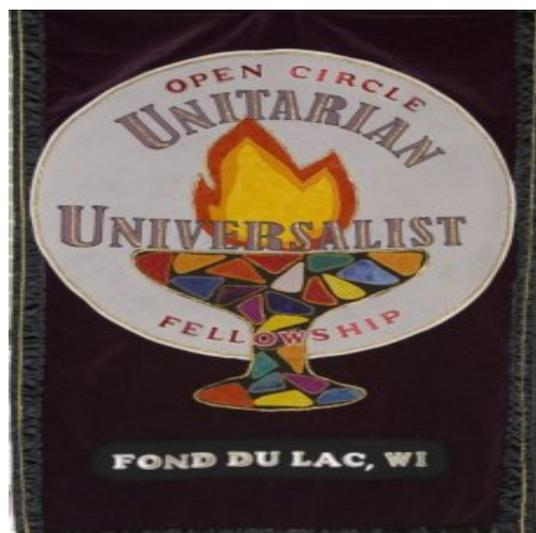
Greetings! This is the first issue of our new Open Circle Newsletter. Many thanks to Stephanie and Tammy and others for taking on this project. We hope that you find it helpful.

Leadership Development is a priority for our fellowship. We have allocated money for participation in activities such as District Assembly, General Assembly (GA), and MidWest Leadership School (MWLS).

I'm just back from UUA MidWest Leadership School at Beloit College. It was an exciting week of learning activities. We provided training for 36 lay leaders from across the Midwest – from Kentucky to Kansas. They participated in exercises and presentations on small group work, leadership, personal development, worship, and much more. Tammy Prus and Brad Seibel seemed to have gained a great deal from the experience. I'm sure they will be happy to share their experience and perspective. Serving on staff for my second year was very rewarding.

Paisley and Audrey represented us at General Assembly in Minneapolis. That, too, was a very rewarding experience. They reported attending a number of excellent workshops. You can learn more about GA from the UUA web site. We look forward to hearing more from them about what they learned.

We bade farewell to Erin Gingrich, our 2009-10 student minister, and we look forward to meeting our new 2010-11 student minister – Christina Leone. She is currently serving as an intern in Annapolis, Maryland, but will be back at Meadville Lombard this fall.



On the board front, we are reviewing acquisition of new software to manage our church records – membership, finances, distribution lists, and so forth. Our new board members (Tracy Gravelle, Secretary, Ruth Lane, Treasurer, and Jerry Danner, Member-at-Large) are getting into the swing of things on the board, and have participated in their second meeting. We recently thanked Lisette Aldrich, former Secretary, Terry Keuler, former Treasurer, and Linda Struye, former Member-at-Large, for their service and excellent contributions to the board.

According to our outgoing treasurer, Terry Keuler, our year-end financial status was excellent, and pledges for the coming year were consistent with the approved budget. We thank everyone for your support of Open Circle.

This summer has seen some innovative new Sunday programming. This includes a drumming circle and a meeting on pagan spirituality. Many thanks to members of the Service Planning Committee for their hard work.

Best wishes,
Jeffrey Reed, Board President

Welcome to the OCUUF Monthly Newsletter!

By Stephanie Erickson

In an effort to increase communication within the fellowship, Tammy Prus and I have taken on a new project! We are going to create a monthly newsletter for OCUUF. We're excited about this project. Both of us have a love for the written word and enjoy writing ourselves.

However, this newsletter isn't just about our writing, it is also about yours. With your help, we can have a forum for posting information each month within these pages. All we need from you is simply information about what is happening in committees, but we'd also like to see some of the creative energy both Tammy and I believe are contained within each and every one of you.

We are both hoping to see this newsletter grow and evolve and get better and better over time. Initially, there will be a little less information as we all get used to the idea. That's okay. Over time though we hope to see committees posting their happenings, events, and just plain, old good news regarding committee achievements. We'd love to see inter-generational involvement in the Creative Corner. Written works and scanned pictures, sent electronically, that are of a spiritual nature focusing on the UU principles are welcome, and we will do our best to fit them into the newsletter.

Please feel free to send an email with questions to erickson_steph@yahoo.com. You can also ask either Tammy or I when you see us too.

We look forward to working with all of you on this endeavor!



*Stephanie Erickson
Co-Editor*



*Tammy Prus
Co-Editor*

Get Involved with OCUUF!

Need Highway Clean Up Members

If you are new to Open Circle, you might not be aware of our Adopt a Highway events. We clean up County Trunk UU and Highway 23. County UU is cleaned up in April and October while Highway 23 is cleaned up in April, July, and October. Both stretches of highway are 2 miles long. We supply green vests and plenty of recyclable bags. If we can get enough volunteers, each highway can be completed in about 1 hour. Our next clean up will occur in October. The minimum age is 11 years old, or the child must be in sixth grade. Our list of volunteers is notified of the next clean up date and no one is, of course, required to be present when the event occurs. But, the more members that we have, the more likely it will be that we have enough volunteers. If you have any questions or would like to be put on the list, please contact Mike Hayes at myk542000@yahoo.com

Church Music

Starting in September, we will practice the service hymns prior to the service so people who wish to practice need to be there 15 minutes early. We will also be doing sign-ups for special music for 1st and 3rd Sundays. Choir practices will be at 9 AM for the occasional larger group TBA. Any questions? Ask Lisette.

Congratulations, Deb!

Open Circle is excited to welcome Deb Doll as our new part-time, administrative assistant. Holly Frize is also continuing to assist us with administrative tasks. Deb is replacing Natasha Malloy, who has started a full-time job. Deb brings to the Fellowship many years of office experience, great communication skills, and warm-hearted enthusiasm. Deb states, "I am very excited to be the new part-time administrative assistant. I look forward to working with people in the fellowship, as we are all in this together. Stephen Covey wrote, 'We are not human beings on a spiritual journey; we are spiritual beings on a human journey.'"

UUA Midwest Leadership School

By Tammy Prus

From July 18, to July 24, 2010, I participated in the Unitarian Universalist Association Midwest Leadership School (MWLS) in Beloit, Wisconsin. It was a week full of leadership training and group activities.

Since the UUA Youth Leadership School was also taking place, we had opportunities to work together to create worship services for the week. While MWLS provided leadership training, it also became a safe, supportive community where I met many new friends.

I also took some free time to explore the Beloit College campus and the beautiful Rock River. Personally, I learned about my own leadership style. I also used MWLS as a way for me to step out of my comfort zone and challenge myself.

Thank you, Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, for giving me the opportunity to experience the UUA Midwest Leadership School. Blessed Be!

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<http://www.uua.org/mwls>

Beloit campus architecture and prairie plants



Community loom



Report from UUA General Assembly

By Paisley Harris

Audrey Linn and I attended this year's General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (GA) in Minneapolis in June. GA is the annual, nationwide gathering of UUA ministers and members. At the assembly, UU's transact the Association of Congregations annual business, worship together, attend workshops, gather resources, and enjoy UU-centered entertainment.

UUA Social Justice Actions

In Association business, the UUA adopted the Peacemaking Statement of Conscience, which urges UU's to create peace from the personal to the international levels. This next year, congregations are urged to implement the Statement of Conscience. The

Association also adopted a number of Actions of Immediate Witness, including one calling for ecological and economic justice in response to the cleanup of the Gulf Oil Spill and another calling for reform to the Clean Energy Bill. (By the way, GA followed sustainable practices by using very thorough efforts to recycle, lower waste, and minimize energy.)

The Association's Study and Action Issue for the next four years is immigration as a moral issue. Congregations are encouraged to study the issue over the next few years.

The Congregational Study and Action Issue statement suggests a number of possible topics of study, discussion, and possible action. The UUA will

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provide some resources that Congregations could use. Here are some links for further information:

Summary of UUA General Assembly Social Justice Actions

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/index.shtml>

The Creating Peace Statement of Conscience

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/socialjustice/statements/13394.shtml>

Congregational Study and Action Issue 2010-2014: Immigration as a Moral Issue

<http://www.uua.org/socialjustice/issuesprocess/currentissues/152647.shtml>

Workshops, Worship, and More

Audrey and I attended a wide variety of helpful workshops and informational sessions. These sessions focused on many aspects of our fellowship life including: leadership, theology, worship, serving families, and social action. I especially enjoyed two presentations on UU theology by Rebecca Parker, the President of the Starr King School, one of two UUA seminaries in the United States.

I learned a great deal from two workshops focused on social action. One workshop dealt with ideas for implementing the Peacemaking statement of conscience, and the other related to the UUA's Standing up for Love campaign. This is a public advocacy campaign that recognizes the importance of love in many religious traditions and, in the words of campaign organizers, "seeks to harness love's power to stop oppression." The campaign has encouraged a variety of actions nationwide in favor of full equality, including anti-racist actions, actions in favor of immigration reform, and actions in favor of marriage equality. The panelists shared inspiring stories of how they used the campaign's resources to do this in their communities. I brought back some resources on the campaign, and I know a number of other Open Circle members are quite excited about it too. This may provide a focus for the Diversity Committee's work in the coming year.

We attended one of the group worship services called Synergy: A Bridging Worship, which centered on the bridging ritual celebrating the transition of UU high school graduates to young adulthood. We also enjoyed a concert by UU singer-songwriter Peter Mayer and a performance called "Upper Midwestern Modest: A Pretty Good Revue" (a Prairie-Home Companion-style revue put on by members of the First Unitarian Society of Madison.)

It was invigorating to be with that many UU's, and we both came back with new ideas and fresh perspectives to share. We'll share some of our insights with the Open Circle in a presentation/service on Sept 26.

Dr. Chuck Baynton to speak on Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

The following information might be of interest to OCUUF because several members of the fellowship had participated in the initial creation of the Peace Cranes...

1,000 Peace Cranes: A Project of Remembrance, Vision, and Action brings a presentation by Dr. Chuck Baynton to the Windhover Center for the Arts on Thursday, August 5 at 7 p.m. Baynton's talk on "The Path to Abolition of Nuclear Weapons" highlights the danger of nuclear proliferation and what can be done to curb it. A reception will follow. The event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Baynton is a retired physician and social activist. He is a member of the Institute of World Affairs at UW Milwaukee, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and is also a board member of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice.

The 1,000 Peace Crane Project began in August 2009 as a local, grassroots effort to create awareness of nuclear weaponry and encourage action to reduce the risk of nuclear attack. Workshops to learn about this issue, and display sites for the 1,000+ origami peace cranes made during the workshops were part of the project. Making one thousand origami cranes has become an international symbol of world peace through the story of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who contracted leukemia as a result of radiation from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

The cranes were made by various community groups, including students, Friendship Corner, and service clubs and have been on display throughout Fond du Lac. They can be seen in Studio 51 at Windhover Center now through August 10.

For more information, contact Ellen Swan at ellen_swan@hotmail.com or 920.904.4436.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thousand_origami_cranes

August 2010 Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 AM Service topic "Play" by Audrey Linn	2	3	4	5 7:00 PM Closing Celebration of 1000 Cranes Project Windhover Art Center (see article pg 4)	6	7
8 10:00 AM Service topic "Humor" by Sylvia Reed 11AM-6PM Zoopolis Garden Tour	9	10 All Day Wisconsin Dells Water Park Trip	11	12 6:30 PM OCUUF Board Meeting at the Fellowship 6:30-8:00 PM Park Night	13	14 Dinners for Eight
15 10:00 AM Service topic "Environmental Stewardship" by John Morris	16	17	18	19	20 Dinners for Eight	21
22 10:00 AM Service topic "2012 – Coming of Age" by Sylvia Reed	23	24	25	26 6:30-8:00 PM Park Night	27	28
29 10:00 AM Fellowship Potluck	30	31				

Financials

"According to our outgoing treasurer, Terry Keuler, our year-end financial status was excellent, and pledges for the coming year were consistent with the approved budget. We thank everyone for your support of Open Circle."

-Jeff Reed, *Board President*



Creative Corner

Sacred Walk of the Labyrinth

By Stephanie Erickson (Ever Green)

"The beginning is the end," the snake says.
"The trick is the beginning won't become the end
Till the entire labyrinth is traveled.
Only then does the end reveal itself."

Each twist and turn explored and felt
Each time trapped and a new path found.
Sometimes only to trod the path over and over
Until paths spring into being.

Each experience lived and understood
And finally the Goddess shows her true face.

The face is yours and you know
The sacred walk of the labyrinth.
And the end becomes another beginning.

Please submit your own original, creative works.

In the next newsletter, I'd like to include a section called defining Spirituality "UU-style"! Please submit a brief example or definition of Spirituality according to YOU. There is no age limitation, but please tell me if you'd like to have your name placed with your definition or would prefer to remain anonymous. Send submissions to erickson_steph@yahoo.com.



<http://www.yesandspace.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/too-busy-to-be-creative.jpg>

August Sunday Services

8/1

Play

Presented by Audrey Linn

8/8

Humor

Presented by Sylvia Reed

8/15

Environmental Stewardship

Presented by John Morris

8/22

2012-Coming of Age

Presented by Sylvia Reed

8/30

Community Potluck

In the true spirit of fellowship, come join other members of OCUUF in a meal. Please bring a dish to pass, as well as your own dishes (and utensils) to eat with. Hope to see you there!



Banner, Sylvia Reed/Photo, Conrad Brimhall

Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles

- ② The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- ② Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
- ② Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- ② A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- ② The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- ② The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- ② Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Contact Information

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

19 E Third St
Fond du Lac WI 54935.
Phone: (920) 924-8598
Email: OCUUF@tds.org

Board Members:

Jeffrey G. Reed - President
jreed@marianuniversity.edu
Paisley Harris - Vice President
paisley.harris@uwc.edu
Tracy Gravelle - Secretary
Ruth Lane - Treasurer
Jerry Danner – Member-at-Large

Committees and Chairs of committees

Membership Coordinator: Madonna Bowman
Religious Education: Kim Hughes
Service Planning: Sylvia Reed
Hospitality: Susanne Dennis
Building Maintenance: John McDowell
EcoFood Group: Jeanne McDowell
Men's Group: John McDowell
Green Sanctuary: John McDowell
Library Committee: Linda Moore
Décor Committee: Madonna Bowman
Diversity: Paisley Harris

Next newsletter deadline:

Please send submissions for the September 2010 newsletter to Stephanie Erickson via email at erickson_steph@yahoo.com no later than August 20, 2010. Thanks in advance!