

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Newsletter

November
2010

Message from the Fellowship Vice President

Dear Open Circle Friends,

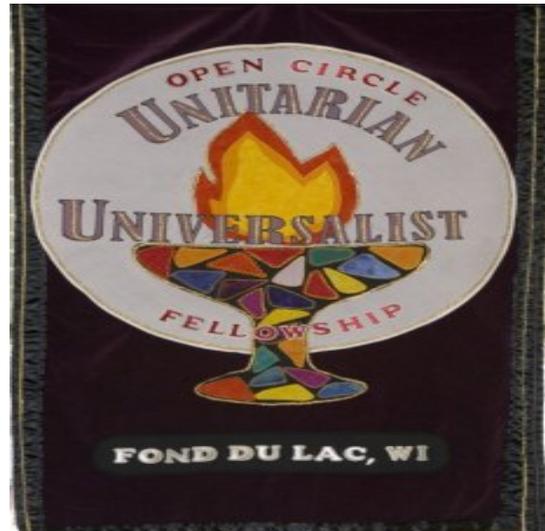
As I write this update from the OCUUF Board, I am looking out at trees graced by some of the last of the fall colors. By the time you read this note, those leaves will have fallen and the bare tree limbs will give us a clearer view to the sky. May we pay attention to these changes and embrace the quiet of this time.

It has been exciting to see many new faces at our Sunday morning services and programs! I would like to extend a special welcome to those who have begun attending Open Circle this past summer and this fall. If you have any questions about the Open Circle, or Unitarian Universalism, please don't hesitate to ask.

We've been spiritually enriched by our services and programs this past month. We've had the opportunity to reflect on the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly and explore Hmong culture. Scott Prinster led us in explorations of the importance of living life with a sense of abundance, while our student minister Christina Leone asked us to consider the masks we often wear. Christina not only led us in worship, but also met with our Religious Education and Service Planning committees. (And she also moved us into the 21st century by posting her sermon on You-Tube so our dedicated Religious Education teachers didn't have to miss it!)

After enjoying the harvest feast last Sunday, many of our children worked with several interested adults to plan a Samhain ritual that will be both fun and meaningful, reminding us of the spiritual roots of Halloween. Come and join in on this multigenerational service.

I look forward to our November services, which seem especially in tune with our year-long Sunday programming theme of sustainability. Dave Gerlach will ask us to consider 'The Simple Life'; Laura De Golier will talk about clean water issues in our local area, and



Christina Leone will speak on 'For Praying Out Loud'. On Thanksgiving Sunday, we plan a simple gathering involving sharing poems, readings, and thoughts on gratitude. Please join us as we support each other in our spiritual growth.

Our religious education program is off to a good start and continues to draw more children. We will also begin some programming for our older kids and youth this year. Ask Kris Evert or Jerry Danner if you'd like more information.

One key reason our Religious Education program has been so successful is the terrific, thoughtful and dedicated work of our part time Director of Religious Education (DRE) Monica Walk. Monica has served as Director of Religious Education for four years.

Monica recently gave notice to the Religious Education Committee and the Board that she will resign from this position at the end of June 2011. She indicated she is ready to go back to being a non-employee. She is willing to resign sooner if we want to make a transition to a new DRE before June. The Religious Education Committee, in consultation with the Board, will begin to discuss how to go about finding and hiring a new DRE.

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Get Involved with OCUUF!

Food for Thought Announcements

Food for Thought, an offshoot of the Open Circle Eco-Food group, is a monthly meeting open to anyone interested in learning more about how to eat ethically while enjoying delicious, healthful food grown in a way that sustains the earth and the farmers who provide it. This year's focus will be on Sustainable Agriculture and each month we will either discuss a previously assigned article or view a video on a related topic. Please watch the announcements for more information or e-mail Karen Lindberg-Schuppe at klindberg-schuppe@charter.net if you wish to be added to the distribution list.

The next meeting will be held on November 11 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. We will be showing a DVD called "Building Community" and have a discussion. The DVD is a documentary of the amazing story of how Cuba has gone from using oil-based pesticides and fertilizers to now using sustainable organic agricultural practices. Everyone in the fellowship is free to attend and is encouraged to bring an interested friend.

Religious Education

Be a teacher! We *need* adults to teach in the Religious Education program on the first and third Sundays of the month. Lessons are fully prepared and ready to go--if you can read, you can teach RE! Please contact RE Director Monica Walk at monicawalk@hotmail.com to talk about teaching and to get on the schedule.

Green Sanctuary Program

The OCUUF will begin our own Green Sanctuary Program (GSP) in October. For more details contact John McDowell at eastbrook06@gmail.com.

Men's Group Announcements

The OCUUF Men's Group will begin breakfast gatherings on the first Sunday of every month. *Where:* Ramada Inn. *When:* 8:00 a.m. Next meeting will be Nov 7. For more details contact John McDowell at eastbrook06@gmail.com.

Sunday Traditions Help

Hospitality: We need two people to sign up to bring treats each 1st and 3rd Sunday and one each 2nd and 4th. People really appreciate the treats, and we've been a bit short on people signing up, so please take a turn or two! Please sign up on the Bulletin Board in the Hospitality area by the Religious Education Board.

Greeters: We'd like to have someone greet newcomers each Sunday. See sign-up sheet by the Religious Education Board for details.

Song practice: Those interested in running through our songs or hymns on our first and third Sundays can show up at 9:45 am. No sign up necessary.

Open Circle Web Site Assistance Needed

As you know we have an Open Circle web site currently posted at <http://www.opencirclefellowship.org/>. We thank Monica Walk and Jon Mark Bolthouse for their work in creating and maintaining our original web site, and Natasha Malloy for her more recent efforts in making updates. While the site we have now provides a beautiful window for others to learn about Open Circle, we are finding it difficult to maintain, update and modify as we grow. We are, therefore, beginning the process of updating and revising the web site.

Our updated web site needs to continue to inform visitors about Open Circle, let members know what is happening, help build and support our fellowship, and provide resources for our Open Circle Community. The desired outcome of this effort is an updated web site that it is easy to maintain and update as well as being attractive and reflective of our fellowship.

The Board has approved establishing a new, small Web Committee to assist us. The task of the Web Committee will be to solicit and review business/design proposals for updates to our web site at a reasonable cost, to make recommendations to the Board for a vendor, and to interface with the selected vendor on behalf of the board as they implement an updated Open Circle web site. We are looking for several people to serve on the web site committee. Volunteers should have familiarity with web site development process and tools, web site design, and business proposals.

If interested, please contact Open Circle Board President Jeffrey Reed, at (920) 926-1664, or jreed@marianuniversity.edu <mailto:jreed@marianuniversity.edu>.

OCUUF OFFICE HOURS

Monday: 10:00 AM until 1:00 PM

Friday: 10:00 AM until 12:00 noon

If any member needs to schedule an activity that requires the use of the building, please contact Deb Dool by e-mail (OCUUF@tds.net) or speak with her personally.

Thank you,
Deb Doll

(continued from page 1... Message)

On behalf of the Board and Fellowship, I want to thank Monica for her amazing work with our children over the past four years. Monica's care and intelligence show in all of her work. She does a great job of recruiting and orienting teachers, creating a warm physical and emotional atmosphere in the rooms and among the children; putting together thoughtful lesson plans and making sure everything is ready for our teachers and kids; working to ensure the children's safety; and more. Many teachers have remarked on how easy and fun it is to teach because of Monica's efforts. I also know of a number of instances when parents have come to Fellowship because their kids wanted to go to RE. Thank you, Monica!

Last Sunday, about sixty of us (!) enjoyed a Harvest brunch hosted by the Eco-Food group. We not only feasted, but also thought about reasons for reducing our meat consumption by having "meatless Mondays". Health reasons, reducing pollution, and reducing reliance on oil are a few of the reasons. Thank you to the Eco Food group for hosting this fun and much-anticipated annual event.

The Eco-Food group is also hosting a "Food for Thought" series featuring videos that explore different aspects of our food choices and food systems. The next event, a showing of the video on Cuba's need to move away from petro-chemical centered food choices will be screened and discussed on Nov. 11 at 7 PM.

Our Green Sanctuary committee is beginning its work in earnest. This committee will lead us in efforts to be environmentally responsible as a congregation and as individuals as part of this Unitarian Universalist Association program. We will be hearing more from this committee soon. Feel free to talk to Jeanne or John McDowell if you have any questions.

In November, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee invites congregations and members to participate in the Guest at Your Table program, a program where members save money in "Guest at Your Table" paper "banks" for a special collection to support UUSC's work on global human rights issues. Watch for further information.

The Board has been busy. We are making a call for a small subcommittee of people familiar with website design to research options for re-designing

our website. See the announcement from Jeff Reed in this newsletter. We have also initiated a loan fund for members in need. We will be having a planning retreat with committee chairs in January. (We are contacting possible facilitators and are hoping to be able to have the retreat in mid-January depending on what dates work.)

The Board has also been discussing how to approach a Healthy Congregation process. Open Circle aims to be a beloved community where we live out our principles of love and honesty in interactions. In the Healthy Congregation process, we will discuss how we want to treat each other and how we want to communicate. The goal of the process is to come up with a shared statement of principles that will help us live out our values as a community, but the process itself will enrich and deepen our sense of beloved community. We will be creating a small committee to guide us in this process and you will be hearing more in the coming months. Feel free to speak to Paisley Harris or Jeff Reed if you have any questions.

While it may be quiet outside, it seems there is a lot going on at Open Circle! I want to end with a few words of thanks.

First, a big thank you to the Decor Committee for their work over the past few months painting, decorating and beautifying our Open Circle home. Thank you to Madonna Bowman, Deb Doll, Mindy Leitner, Lisette Aldrich, Linda Struye, and any and all others who've helped in these efforts.

Another big thank you to Linda Moore and Ellen Flood and everyone else who helped with our rummage sale. This sale earned at least \$650 towards our building fund (and that amount will probably qualify for the generous matching grant, doubling that amount).

Finally, I am grateful, as always, for the Open Circle community, a beloved community, open to transcendent mystery and wonder, working to make the world a better place.

In love,

Paisley

Paisley Harris
OCUUF Board Vice President



Food for Thought

2nd Thursdays of the month

Calendar of Topics



1. Sep. 9, 2010	Introduction and decisions for the year. Discuss mega farm video (Karen)
2. Oct. 14, 2010	What is sustainable agriculture? How does it differ from industrial agriculture? Is it naive to think sustainable agriculture can feed the world, as its critics contend? Article discussion (Jeanne) Note: This discussion will not address the dairy industry in any major way. The discussion of that topic will take place on December 9 th
3. Nov. 11, 2010	DVD – “The Power of Community”. Cuba and sustainable ag practices View DVD and discussion (Jeanne)
4. Dec. 9, 2010	Mega-dairies in Wisconsin What are the pros and cons of mega-dairies? Send appropriate documents via email. (Tom)
5. Jan. 13, 2011	King Corn – view selected segments of D VD Discussion (Karen)
6. Feb. 11, 2011	Use of pesticides and herbicides. – pros and cons How are organic fertilizers different? Can organic fertilizers be used broad scale? (Karen)
7. Mar. 10, 2011	Pharmacrops – power point presentation and discussion (Tom)
8. Apr. 14, 2011	Seeds, GMOs, and roundup ready crops (Karen)
9. May 12, 2011	Wrap up discussion. Potluck

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘thank you,’ that would suffice.”

~Meister Eckhart



November 2010 Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 5:45-6:45 PM UU Yoga with Jeanne McDowell 7:00 PM Padre Jesus Alberto Franco at Stayer Center Auditorium	2	3	4	5	6
7 8:00 AM Men's Group meeting at Ramada Inn 10:00 AM Service: Dave Gerlach – <i>Simple Life</i>	8 5:45-6:45 PM UU Yoga with Jeanne McDowell	9	10	11 6:00-8:00 PM Food for Thought meeting	12	13
14 10:00 AM Service: Laura DeGolier- <i>Clean Water</i>	15 5:45-6:45 PM UU Yoga with Jeanne McDowell	16	17	18	19	20
21 10:00 AM Service: <i>For Praying Out Loud</i>	22	23	24	25 Happy Thanks- giving!	26	27
28 10:00 AM Service: <i>Sharing, poems, readings, thoughts on gratitude</i>	29	30				

"Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die."

—Forrest Church, minister

Creative Corner

How I Ended Up a Unitarian Universalist... (very, very, very abbreviated)

By Stephanie Erickson

We all have our stories, our reasons for being drawn to Open Circle. For years I had felt disconnected from the world around me. I was perusing the newspaper section one day looking at the church section and noticed this place called Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. I thought *wow, that's a really long name* but noticed some words I liked: "open," "circle," and "fellowship."

I checked it out and casually attended a few services over the course of a few years. I didn't talk much. I came and listened to others talk. I didn't come back for a while because life just got in the way.

But, one day, I came back. I talked a little bit more, learned about the ideology of the unitarian universalism, and felt perhaps I had finally found a spiritual community I could sincerely feel a part of.

Brought up a Catholic, having read and respected Buddhist ideology, and finally finding a comfortable place in paganism because it allowed me to embrace where I had come from as well as where I was going, I settled quite comfortably into the UU church.

Since then, I've found like-minded people who love to explore their spiritual connection to the world around them and the world within. When others ask me about my religion, I tell them I belong to an open-minded church without dogma that follows a general ethical ideology and supports genuine and individualized spiritual growth. I'm grateful for this church and all the people who were brave enough to create this sacred space.

Blessed be!



November Sunday Services

11/7

Service Topic: Simple Life

Presented by: David Gerlach and facilitated by John Morris

11/14

Service Topic: Clean Water

Presented by: Laura DeGolia

11/21

Service Topic: For Praying Out Loud

Presented by: Christina Leone

As Unitarian Universalists, we sometimes struggle with traditional prayer language. We don't agree on many theological claims, so how are we to understand prayer? As Thanksgiving approaches, let's consider prayer from a UU perspective.

11/28

Service Topic: Sharing, poems, readings, thoughts on gratitude

All services are held at Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship located at 19 E Third St in Fond du Lac at 10:00 AM unless otherwise noted.

Padre Jesus Alberto Franco: We Reap What We Sow! Understanding the impact of U.S. involvement in Colombia

When: 7:00 pm November 1, 2010

Where: Stayer Center Auditorium

Father Jesús Alberto Franco is a renowned leader in the Colombian human rights movement. He is a Colombian missionary priest, as well as the executive secretary of the Colombian human rights NGO Inter-church Commission for Justice and Peace (Comision Intereclesial de Justicia y Paz). He has spent the last 3 years in his current role accompanying the resistance processes of Afro-Colombian, Indigenous and mixed race farmers, overseeing the operations of the commission, and coordinating and overseeing the work of the teams that accompany the processes of the community. He has been part of the commission for over 21 years and helped to support the NGO's founders in the creation of the commission. He was born and raised in Aranzazu, Caldas in Colombia. His work as a missionary brings him all over Colombia.

Padre Alberto has been a featured speaker for the World Council of Churches in front of the UN in NYC 2009, as well as a featured speaker at the 2009 School of the Americas Watch protest. In 207 and 2008, he lobbied in Brussels in front of the European Parliament and the European Commission. Also in 2008, he testified at the Alternative Network Against Impunity and Market Globalization in Spain, the Public Hearing of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes and a session for the Ethics Commission for Truth in France regarding exiled Colombians.

For his extensive human rights work, Padre Alberto has received multiple death threats, which to him illustrates that repressive powers are threatened by his work and symbolizes that he is doing something right. Although he has been receiving threats for years, starting in 2008 they began to intensify, popping up in pages all over the internet and in graffiti all around the capital. Those responsible for most of the threats are the people with business interests in the Curvarado and Jiguamiando River Basins. Despite all the danger he faces to defend the rights of the communities, death threats do not faze him. He stresses the importance of recognizing it is not just his personal safety that is being jeopardized through these threats, rather it is the Commission as a whole that is targeted.

For questions about the presentation, please contact John Morris at jmorris@marianuniversity.edu

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.

Open Circle Mission Statement

We come together as Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship open to experiencing transcendent mystery and wonder, honoring diversity and religious freedom. We come to pursue Unitarian Universalism's prophetic vision of peace, justice, compassion and sustainability and to create Beloved Community.

Open Circle Vision Statement

To be a transforming presence in the lives of individuals and the Fond du Lac community.

Contact Information

Open Circle Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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Email: OCUUF@tds.net

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

Membership Coordinator: Madonna Bowman
Religious Education: Kris Evert
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 December 2010 newsletter to Stephanie Erickson via email at erickson_steph@yahoo.com no later than November 20, 2010. Thanks in advance!