

The Open Door Newsletter

Summer 2013



CHEQUAMEGON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP VOTES TO BECOME A WELCOMING CONGREGATION!

On April 28th, 2013 during the Annual CUUF Business Meeting, our Fellowship made two decisive votes. The congregation voted unanimously to make a formal application to the UUA for recognition as an official Welcoming Congregation. And the congregation voted unanimously to add the following inclusivity statement to its bylaws:

“The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship welcomes people of any age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion or cultural background.”

This is a remarkable step forward. The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship is now the first and only religious community in Northern Wisconsin to formally adopt such a welcoming statement and to make clear its commitment to open the doors of our faith community to all people, especially those who have been marginalized by religion and by society at large.

These votes come after a months-long process inspired by David Saetre in September, 2012 when he challenged our Fellowship to create a “Welcoming Congregation.” In late fall, Mary Wichita and Kristin Quinlan initiated a discussion with the UU Board about whether to work towards receiving the official designation from the national Unitarian Universalist Association as a “Welcoming Congregation.”

At its November meeting, the CUUF Board voted unanimously to support “an initiative by members to begin the process of becoming certified by the UUA as a Welcoming Congregation.” The term “Welcoming Congregation” refers specifically to UU congregations that commit to a deeper understanding of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer and to specific actions to fully include them in our fellowship life.

Between November and April monthly articles appeared in The Open Door newsletter designed to deepen our understanding, and the fellowship was encouraged to attend the monthly PFLAG meetings held in Washburn. Very moving testimony on what it means to be visible and accepted as a gay or lesbian individual were part of UU services over the winter. Following the February 10 service, twenty five individuals returned the “Welcoming Congregation Survey” which was included in the program of service. All 25 confirmed support for efforts to communicate that we are a welcoming congregation,

(Continued on page 4, Welcoming Congregation)

WE ARE A WELCOMING CONGREGATION!

The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship welcomes people of any age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion or cultural background.

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Summer Announcements!



CUUF ANNUAL PICNIC: Sunday, June 30

—submitted by Jacki Rae-Ledin

On Doctors' orders, Patty is laying low to heal her knee so I am organizing this years' annual picnic. It will be held on June 30th starting at 11:00am at Long Lake Park off Wannebo Road north of Washburn. In case of rain, I will reserve the Washburn Library basement.

Please bring a potluck dish and your own table settings if you wish to use reuseables. I will have lemonade, water, and some paper ware available.

The park has a nice walking trail around the lake, a swimming beach, and is perfect for small watercraft. There is also plenty of space for yard games if you want to bring some. It is a fee area but I would be happy to arrange carpooling for anyone that needs it. I look forward to picnicking with you this SUMMER!!!



For questions or suggestions please contact me—
Jacki Rae-Ledin at 715-373-0347 or
<mailto:antiquegardeninn@hotmail.com>.

PFLAG Washburn Summer Picnic



PFLAG Washburn will host its Annual Corny Beach Picnic on Monday, July 22 from 7—10pm. For more details check out their website:
<http://pflagwashburn.org>.

Third Annual Bayfield Peninsula Pottery Tour: Saturday & Sunday, August 3 and 4

Bayfield Peninsula Potters celebrate three years of opening studio doors to the public for the 2013 Pottery Tour, hosted by Washburn-Bayfield-Cornucopia-Madeline Island-based clay artists Jill Lorenz, Pat Juett, Jonathan Wahlberg, Eli Wilson, Deena Schuppe, and Evan Hestekin. The tour will also feature guest artists from across the region.



This is a free, self-guided tour of the studios of Bayfield Peninsula's clay artists. We look forward to welcoming you to see our creative process and experience the year-round joy of using and giving pottery made by hand by local artists.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CUUF ANNUAL MEETING—APRIL 28, 2013

For those who missed this year's annual business meeting, here's a summary of what happened and the results of the four congregational votes:

Last year's meeting minutes and the treasurer's current report were approved. Although pledges were down slightly from last year, additional income from unpledged contributions has partially offset the decrease.

These volunteers were recognized for their exceptional contributions to the operation of the Fellowship;
Brenda Brouder, Previous Administrator
Jan Perkins, Departing Board Member
Marilyn Einspanier, Previous Newsletter Editor
Beth Reed, Erin Tenney and Deb Aaron, RE Teachers
AJ Galazen, Intern Minister
Kevin Stranberg, Strategic Planning Facilitator

Kristin Quinlan gave the Administrator's report, including a report from Brenda. The transition of Administrators is going smoothly and our new website at www.chepuamegonuuf.org has been upgraded. We added four new members this year bringing our total to 78.

Board activity was summarized by Ed Calhan. Ongoing board projects this year included a revised budget preparation process, our United Theological Seminary Intern, volunteer recruitment, strategic planning, a change in Administrator, the Welcoming Congregation process and UU District regionalization.

Reports were presented by the Caring, Hospitality, Newsletter, Publicity, Membership, Religious Education, Worship and Music committees.

The congregation voted unanimously to approve Cindy Van Horn's nomination to the CUUF board.

The congregation voted unanimously to make formal application to the UUA for recognition as an official Welcoming Congregation.

The congregation voted unanimously to add the following inclusivity statement to the bylaws;
"The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship welcomes people of any age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ability, religion or cultural background."

By a vote of 11 to 9 with one abstention, the congregation voted to add the following Mission statement to Article 2 of the bylaws, retaining the existing purpose statement.

"We are a welcoming spiritual community that nurtures lifelong journeys of mind and spirit in the liberal tradition."

The current purpose statement is:

"This fellowship exists to serve the human needs of its members and friends, to stimulate individual development of a positive and ethical philosophy of life, and to provide a common shelter for everyone's personal growth."

The status of our Strategic Planning process was reviewed. Most of the all-member surveys have been completed but the large volume of comments have not been reviewed, categorized and summarized. Once this is done the results will be shared with the fellowship. Research on the options for Facilities and Ministerial Services will continue. Northland College has said that they would like to continue their relationship with the CUUF and has proposed that it be formalized in a written Memorandum of Understanding.

—submitted by Ed Calhan, Board President

Editor's note: the full Annual Meeting minutes are included in this newsletter as an insert/attachment.



WELCOMING CONGREGATION, *continued from page 1*

and all 25 agreed that they had enough information at this time to approve ongoing action by the CUUF to apply for the UUA designation of Welcoming Congregation. Topics of high interest included How to Be a Good Ally, Gender Fluidity, Gender Identity, and Gender Nonconformity. Many of these issues reflect the changing landscape of our society as LGBTQ youth challenge the opinions and practices of the past.

So, what's next?

1. Over the summer we will make application to the UUA for recognition as an official welcoming congregation.
2. Forums and discussions will be set up for next fall and winter. Reverend Nancy Hansen and Diane Heapy who conducted a service in February have agreed to help in whatever way they can.
3. Ideas for additional services that address welcoming issues will be submitted to the worship committee for next year.
4. As the "Our Whole Lives" curriculum is implemented in the RE classes, issues of inclusivity and justice will be addressed.
5. Our communication tools (newsletter, website, publicity and order of service) will reflect our commitment to being a "welcoming congregation).

If you have ideas and want to help with this effort, please contact Mary Wichita at mary.wichita@yahoo.com or 715-765-4132.



Caring Corner

The CUUF recognized a number of graduates at our last service. Congratulations go out to,

- ◆ high school graduates Katin Liphart and Bjorn Mydels from Washburn High School, Filipe Oliveira from Ashland High School, and Aria Durward from Bayfield High School;
- ◆ college graduates Elise Niemeyer, Lincoln Cruz, and Nori Perrine from Northland College

We also congratulated George Busséy, but we have a correction to make: he graduated from massage therapy previously and is still in the middle of his nursing degree. We'll keep you posted!

Special congratulations and best wishes to Elise Niemeyer and Lincoln Cruz on their upcoming wedding - the day after their college graduation!!

Sincere condolences go out to Kent, Kathy, Erin and Sebastian Tenney on the passing of Kent's mother into the spirit world.

Welcome to new members on the caring committee Jan Wise and George Busséy.

Healing wishes go out to Patty Dufek. She recently injured her knee and is on strict orders to lay low and take it easy.

Please remember that you can still contact the caring committee during the summer months with needs and concerns by calling Jacki Rae-Ledin at 715-373-0347 or via e-mail at antiquegardeninn@hotmail.com.

I Say It Touches Us

—Rev. Dr. Marni Harmony

I say that it touches us that our blood is sea water and our tears are salt, that the seed of our bodies is scarcely different from the same cells in a seaweed, and that the stuff of our bones is like the coral.

I say that the tide rolls in on us, whether we like it or no, and the sands of time keep running their intended course.

I say we have to go down into the wave's trough to find ourselves, and then ride her swell until we can see beyond ourselves into our neighbor's eye.

I say that we shall never leave the harbor if we do not hoist the sail.

I say that we have got to walk the waves as well as solid ground.

I say that anyone who goes without consciousness of this will remain chained to a rusty anchor.

May the journey find us worthy.

Amen.

Our Whole Lives—a Lifespan Sexuality Education Curriculum

—submitted by Erin Tenney

Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive sexual health curriculum which was developed jointly by United Church of Christ and Unitarian Universalist faith communities. It is considered the premier sexual health curriculum in the United States, and is used by many non-faith communities as well. The curriculum covers all ages, from kindergarten to Adult, with lessons and facilitator guides for each developmental age. Why is it important to offer to this to our youth, and particularly the youth of our faith communities? Following is a passage from the introduction of *Sexuality and Our Faith* guidebook for facilitators:

"To offer sexuality education in a congregation is to acknowledge that human sexuality is simply too important, too beautiful, and too potentially dangerous to be ignored in a religious community. Sexuality education gives families and individuals of all ages the benefit of community support as they wrestle with sexuality issues and decisions. Although our society is saturated with images of sex, those images are often lacking in love and mutual respect. The education, worship, group activities, and advocacy encompassed in sexuality education can offer our children and youth a vision more consonant with our beliefs and values, and enhance intergenerational bonding and trust."

The Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has made a commitment to offer the OWL educational program to the youth through the Religious Education program. To facilitate this, the fellowship supported me, as a religious education teacher and current board member, to become a trainer for the middle and high school curriculum. I was deeply impressed by the high quality and relevance of the training, and the importance of this education for our youth. This summer the CUUF will send a second teacher for training: Christel Sketch. She will be attending a training on the curriculum for all ages, and so the fellowship will have the opportunity to expand over time. The volunteer teachers, the board of directors and many fellowship members have expressed their firm belief in teaching comprehensive sexual health, and are eager and proud to start classes in the fall.



If you have youth who are in 8-10th grade who would be interested in attending the session, please contact Erin Tenney at etenney@gmail.com. Youth may want to invite their friends to join and that is fine also. The curriculum consists of twenty-seven sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, and it has not yet been decided if these will be offered in a series of weekly sessions, or several weekend youth retreats. When we have an interested group of youth and parents, we will decide what works best.

Please pass the word and don't hesitate to contact me with any interested participants, questions or comments.



—submitted by Jacki Rae-Ledin

On April 30th I attended a workshop on a caregiving model called "Share the Care." It is a way to organize care for a person affected by a serious illness, injury, major surgery, Alzheimer's or other disease. When one or two people are feeling overwhelmed by the enormity of responsibilities related to a loved one's care, this is a way to create a support system. I learned about the basic steps in using the "Share the Care" model and am willing to help facilitate organizing a group for a fellowship member or family member should the need arise. Two other CUUF members (representing other organizations) and about 6 or 8 other Chequamegon Bay area residents also attended the training, giving each of us some local support. To learn more about this model you can check out the website: www.sharethecare.org or contact me and I'd be happy to talk with you about it.

Any Quilters Out There?

Patty Dufek is looking for fellow quilters with whom to share skills, ideas, and just get together to work on quilts. Granted, summer is not the time to stay indoors, but she's hoping to gather some interest for the fall. For more information you can call Patty at 715-682-9015 or e-mail her at pport57@charter.net



A Letter From the Editor

—Hans Veenendaal

Summer's caught me off my guard. I was not prepared for rain and green and flowers growing, blooming, fading faster than I can remember. I was not prepared for the end of school, for the sudden presence of my son at home during times of day when I'm usually by myself. I was not prepared for vacations, birthdays, summer activities, and a need to plan ahead when the last thing I really want to do is plan ahead. I was not prepared for this urge to drop everything and go outside, only to be stifled and frustrated by work, weather, chores, or even by the activities that I enjoy throughout the rest of the year.

I have been looking forward to summer for the past several months and now that it's here I find myself suspended in indecision. I want the flowers and vegetables to grow, the lake to warm up and to relish every moment of this season; I want every day to slow to a long, luxurious drift of time.



Hoping for another good crop . . .

Want, think, plan, work, need, move . . .

Stop. Close your eyes, Hans.

What do I hear?

The faint dripping of water from our eaves—it's just rained; a car passing; birds; the fan of the computer; some insect—probably another wayward bumblebee—buzzing against the window in another room; the breeze in the trees; the quiet breathing of the dog; an unexpected gurgle in my stomach; kids in the distance; some kind of clunk, clunk, clunk; the click of the keyboard as I try to type with my eyes closed.

What do I feel?

The couch beneath my legs and bottom, its side against my back; the slight warmth of the computer on my lap; the breeze lightly against my one bare foot and against the back of my neck; my ear suddenly itching; the warm weight of the sleeping dog on my other foot; another stomach gurgle.

What do I smell?

The unmistakable scent of sleeping dog; the wetness from outside; green (did you know that green has an aroma?); my shirt—I think I to wash it, but that's okay—it's a work-shirt, I'm home alone, and the dog doesn't mind.

Summer is here and I am here with it. There are things that need to be done, like this newsletter that I have been procrastinating on for far too long, but that's all for now. I'll see what comes next. I think I can let down my guard. I can let summer happen.

**CHEQUAMEGON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CALENDAR
SUMMER 2013**

- June 30** **Annual CUUF Picnic — Long Lake Park, 11 a.m.**
- July 22 PFLAG Washburn Annual Corny Beach Picnic — Cornucopia, 7—10 p.m.
- August 3 & 4 Third Annual Bayfield Peninsula Pottery Tour

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE WIDER UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY

July 28 - August 2 Poetry and Justice at Camp Star Trail
register at <http://www.psduua.org/Camps/CampStarTrail>

Risk

—Rev. Dr. Marni Harmony

If, on a starlit night, with the moon brilliantly shimmering,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the evening universe remains a part of life we shall not know. . . .

If, on a cloudy day, with grayness infusing all and rain dancing
rivers in the grass,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the stormy, threatening energy of the universe remains a part of
life we shall not know.

If, on a frosty morning, dreading the chilling air before the sunrise,
We stay inside and do not venture out,
the awesome cold, quiet stillness of the dawn universe remains a part of life we shall not know.

If, throughout these grace-given days of ours, surrounded as we are by green light and brown
death, hot pink joy and cold grey pain and miracles - always miracles -
If we stay inside ourselves and do not venture out,
then the Fullness of the universe shall be unknown to us
and our locked hearts will never feel the rush of worship.



CHEQUAMEGON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MISSION AND PURPOSE

**We are a welcoming spiritual community that nurtures lifelong journeys of mind and spirit
in the liberal tradition.**

**This fellowship exists to serve the human needs of its members and friends, to stimulate individual
development of a positive and ethical philosophy of life, and to provide a common shelter for
everyone's personal growth.**

-- Founded, February 22, 1998

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CHEQUAMEGON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

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