

The Open Door Newsletter

May 2023



The Fellowship Services for May

*Sunday services are generally held at 10 a.m. in the Alvord Theatre on the Northland College campus in Ashland, however, locations and times can vary. See individual service descriptions for information.
Find us on the web at www.chequamegonuuf.org*

May 7—All Music Service with guest musician Vincent Schueren— *The Life That's in Me*

Service Lay Reader: Ruth Oppedahl
In person at 10 a.m. in the Alvord Theatre and online on Zoom
—see below for Zoom link



The annual CUUF All-Music Service welcomes singer/songwriter and vocal group improver-leader, Vincent Schueren, as our guest musician. Vincent has dedicated himself to learning about music and education as a way to build community and encourage others to find their voices. Last summer, he started and directed “The Woodland Screechers”—a pop-up community choir that has performed at Pride events in Ashland and Ironwood, Mich. He has a deep respect for spiritual communities that recognize the unique gifts each of us shares. Liam Grady & Friends, Karyn Watters and Lee Stadnyk, Donn Christensen and the RE children and youth also will provide their musical talents, as well as insect poetry readers, Emma Haltar and Jenise Swartley.

May 21—Guest Speaker: Erica Hannickel—*The Artist, the Actor, the Historian, and the Promise of Flowers*

Service Lay Reader: Beth Lowthian—Musician: Joni Chapman
In person at 10 a.m. in the Alvord Theatre and online on Zoom
—see below for Zoom link



Through the centuries, flowers have inspired creativity, political action, courage, and hope in individuals and larger communities around the world. In 20th century North America, artist Frida Kahlo, historian John Hope Franklin, and actor Raymond Burr all used orchids to battle prejudice and heal themselves from personal trauma. When people create something beautiful by nurturing living things, staying busy with their hands, and freeing their mind for a moment by getting lost in the intricacies of nature, they also create a wellspring for long-lasting and powerful change of unjust societies. (Please see page 2 for more information.)

Zoom Access Information for Sunday Services on May 7 and May 21

Join Zoom Meeting by Video:

<https://zoom.us/j/91687042498?pwd=TGpQWWl6bk0vM2ZHMVA4U0wrbnYwQT09>

Meeting ID: 916 8704 2498—Passcode: CUUF

Or, join us by phone: 312-626-6799—Meeting ID: 916 8704 2498—Passcode: 324633

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

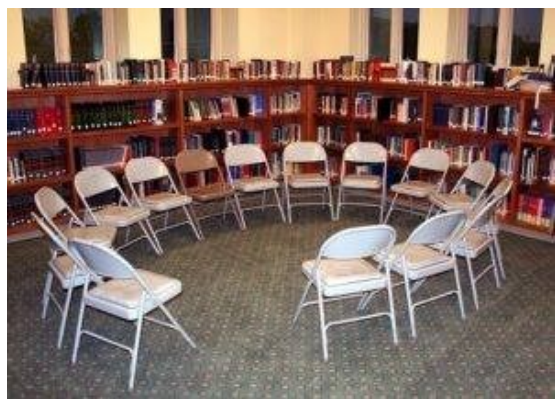
CUUF 2023 May Service and Gatherings Schedule

May 7	Sunday Service, 10 a.m.—Annual All-Music Service with guest musician Vincent Schueren (see page 1)
May 10	CUUF Board Meeting
May 14	UU Women's gathering (see article below)
May 17	CUUF Annual Meeting
May 21	Sunday Service, 10 a.m.—Annual Flower Service with guest speaker Erica Hannickel (see page 1)

* Please see tentative summer worship schedule below.

Vincent to lead a special spoons workshop before the service on May 7

Vincent Schueren of “Spoons for the People” will offer a Musical Spoons Workshop at 9 a.m. before the All-Music Service on May 7. Open to all ages and ability levels. Spoons also will be provided. During the service, there will be built-in opportunities for you to ‘click’ along to some of the musical activities. Pick up spoons in the hallway outside of the Alvord Theatre and then come to the Student Center (RE space) on the 2nd floor of the Ponzio Campus Center for instructions. Learn a new way to make music and have fun at the same time.



Attention UU Women

UU Women meets once a month and is open to anyone who identifies as a woman in a way that is meaningful to them. Our group is a circle that provides a healing space to share, to be inspired, to find your voice, and to listen to others. We welcome newcomers. This month we'll meet on Sunday, May 14, at 10 a.m. at the Washburn Library. Looking ahead, the following UU Women's gathering is tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 18.

If you have questions, please contact Jill at 715-292-9163 (text or voice).

Anniversary of Flower Communion to be recognized at service on May 21

This year (2023) is the 50th anniversary of the Flower Communion, which began in 1923 by Unitarian minister Norbert Capek of Prague, Czechoslovakia. We have adapted this ritual as our own. Please bring a flower (or several) to the service as we celebrate beauty, uniqueness, and community.

Summer Worship Schedule (Tentative)

During the summer, the fellowship meets once per month for outdoor services and an annual potluck picnic. All services are at 10 a.m. and last about 50 minutes.

Sunday, June 25: Collaboration with Tracey Snyder to introduce Qigong at Bayview Beach Pavilion (north of Washburn)

Sunday, July 16: New Child Dedication Ceremony at Memorial Park Picnic Pavilion (Washburn)

Sunday, August 13: All Poetry Service at Memorial Park Picnic Pavilion (Washburn)

From the Minister's Desk

Equal Parts Light and Dark

The Spring Equinox was more than a month ago, and although this year has had a slow spring thaw, the daylight is now noticeably longer. Some years, I didn't even stop to recognize this global experience: the two annual equinoxes are the only times both the northern hemisphere and the southern hemisphere share the same amount of sunlight and night. In the northern hemisphere, since the fall equinox, there has been more night than day, and this is when that balance shifts. For several years, I've used the spring equinox as a meditation on equality and the ways that inequality shapes our world.

The trap that one can fall into when talking about equality around the equinox is to associate light as good and dark as bad. This construct, even subconsciously, can reinforce racial stereotypes. It also reinforces fear of the night, when the nighttime can be a source of restoration. After all, it is the time of dreams. The night reminds us that at the edge of where our senses know and experience is where mystery begins.

The construct of light and darkness as good and evil has a particular history. It can be traced back to Babylonian, Zoroastrianism, and Manicheism beliefs and philosophies, which all looked to solve the problem of suffering by affirming that a co-dominant force (evil) existed in the world. These beliefs were especially prevalent and influential for the early Christian community. Ideas of heaven in the sky, full of light, and hell as 'down below' as dark and fiery also likely took hold from these dualistic beliefs. This either/or, good/evil framework rarely accounts for the gray areas of this thing we call life, yet as a belief, it has proved tenacious. People John Paul II even tried to dispel this by teaching that heaven and hell are not physical places at all; they're states of being. The impact of choices that hurt others is not about a future world of eternal damnation, but describes the consequences of living with injustice and moral anguish in this world now. Hell is the state of living in disconnection.

I take the spring equinox as a time to meditate on the dawn and the dusk. I take time to consider how I am capable of doing harm and being harmed. My deepest grief allows me to be a comfort for those grieving. This is a time of year when I think of the nature of grace, and how we can be loved and loving despite doing that which is unlovable. I think of the paradoxes of forgiveness; it is so much harder than holding onto anger. If hell is a state of being and is caused by disconnection, where can I eliminate hell right now for myself or another?

Roots and insects, bulbs and worms are beginning to awaken. Frogs are crawling out of their frosty mud homes. It is a very dynamic time, and perhaps you feel the push and pull, the thaw and freeze, that all of life on this part of earth is experiencing. May the sacred dark and the energized light of this time of year inspire you on your path to keep healing, and keep mending yourself and the world.

—A version of this article appeared in the Ashland Daily Press Worship Column on April 28, 2023.

Caring Committee Corner

Snow, snow, go away. Come again some other winter's day! The Caring Committee sends healing wishes to Mike Bailey. And, hearty congratulations to June Bavluka and Joe Fernandez for the recent opening of their new creative space, JJ Clay on the Bay, in Ashland. Are you or someone you know in the fellowship experiencing a joyful celebration or challenging life event? The Caring Committee may be able to help. Stacy is the point of contact for the committee. She can be reached at stacy@chequamegonuuf.org

Small Groups and Programs

Soul Matters Sharing Circles

The theme for May is *creativity*. While the online group is currently full, the in-person group is open to new attendees. Interested in joining? Please contact Stacy Craig to register.

Virtual CUUF and KUUF circle: Monday, May 8 at 6 p.m. CST/7 p.m. EST

CUUF in-person circle: Friday, May 19 from 10 - 11:30 a.m. in the Wheeler Chapel on the 4th floor of Wheeler Hall at Northland College.

Disability Justice Learning Group

During the next few months, anyone interested in the topic of Disability Justice is invited to do self-guided exploration such as reading books, listening to podcasts, or having conversations with one another. In October, there will be a Disability Justice forum to learn more about this topic and discuss how CUUF can be more accessible and welcoming to every-body. More details to come.

[W]hat is disability? Who are people with disabilities? And conversely, what does it mean to be nondisabled? When the US Supreme Court struggled to define obscenity in 1964, Justice Potter Stewart threw up his hands in frustration and wrote, "I know it when I see it." It's temptingly easy to do the same about disability. We generally assume that disability is a clearly defined category, unchanging and concrete. Closer inspection, however, reveals that disability is often elusive and changing. Not only do people with disabilities have a history, but the concept of disability has a history as well...Disability can be contextual, and its meanings have changed over time."

From *A Disability History of the United States* by Kim E. Nielsen, pp. xiv, xv.

UUA General Assembly is coming to Pittsburgh

General Assembly 2023 is coming to Pittsburgh, PA! Join us June 21-25, 2023, in-person or virtually to worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through democratic process.

General Assembly is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, where we conduct business of the Association, explore the theological underpinnings of our faith, and lean fully into our mission and principles.

This year's Ware Lecturer is Imani Perry, the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University and a faculty associate with Gender and Sexuality Studies and Jazz Studies. In the summer of 2023, she will join the faculty at Harvard University as a Radcliffe Professor. Perry is also a contributing writer for *The Atlantic* and the author of seven books. The Ware Lecture will take place on Saturday, June 24 at 7 p.m. ET and requires registration to view the live-stream or attend in-person.

Registration is open for virtual and in-person participation. Register early to secure the lowest rates. In-person registration includes access to events scheduled to take place in Pittsburgh, as well as everything available to virtual registrants. Full virtual registration includes access to the GA app, as well as on-demand programming, live webinars, and live-streamed events.

Volunteer opportunities and financial support are available. All details and information can be found on the UUA website at www.uua.org

Information for this article was obtained from the April 2023 issue of MidAmerica Messenger, as well as from the UUA website.



Annual Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 17

The fellowship's annual meeting is just a little more than three weeks away. It will be at 6:30 on Wednesday evening, May 17, and it will be online only. It will be the same Zoom link as our Sunday services.

The meeting is our opportunity to review the achievements and concerns of this year, elect new board members, set achievable priorities for next year, and approve the 2023-24 budget.

We will celebrate the joys of an engaged and growing Religious Education program, a vibrant and deeply caring minister, and a congregation that is active and involved in making this world and our corner of it a fairer, more sustainable and just place to live. We will share the concerns that we may be asking too much for a limited number of members and friends, and that we might lack the resources (both human and financial) to support programs that are core to our mission.

The fellowship needs all of us to participate in the democratic process of governance. Our bylaws require 20% of the membership be present for a quorum and we often have just barely that. With 90 members, this year we must have at least 18 members present.

A package of reports, board nominations and the budget for next year will be sent out ahead of the meeting. Please take time to review it and leave comments, suggestions or questions about the annual meeting on our Facebook page or at annualmeeting2023@chequamegonuuf.org Thank you.

Finance Report

There are two months left in our 2022-23 service/fiscal year. Our expenses to date are \$58,639 and donations are \$52,921. We have used \$6,500 from reserves to make up the difference. For the past six years, contributions have not quite covered expenses, but we have been fortunate to receive grants, special restricted donations, or forgiven loans to make up the difference.

To help meet expenses this summer, when donations typically dip, please review your pledge of financial support for 2022-23 and if circumstances permit, bring it up to date. As of April 1, we have received \$46,087 of the \$54,166 pledged. Many thanks to all who have made their pledge for the next service year beginning July 1. The total pledged is currently \$48,757 from 48 members and friends.

—Ed Calhan, Treasurer

Religious Education News

I have been busy with my new role as the Interim Director of Religious Education (DRE). We had a wonderful turnout for RE for the Easter egg hunt festivities. There were approximately 30 kids present for RE/OWL that day. We currently have approximately 35-40 kids regularly attending RE/OWL/nursery. We are growing!

We are halfway through our K-2 offering of OWL. We just completed our fifth out of eight sessions. It is going very well and we have had great attendance and participation, including adding two new families to the RE program due to offering OWL. Ayla Tucker and Kelsey Rothe will be getting trained online in May to assist with fall OWL for 4-6th grade and I'm looking forward to having their help with this offering. Erin Tenney has stepped back from her role with OWL at this time, but we are incredibly grateful for her contributions! I have reached out to families in the 4-6th grade and have heard back from almost all of the families that their children would attend a fall OWL offering. We have approximately 9-10 kids and we are tentatively planning to offer OWL before the service at 9 a.m.

Religious Education News continued on page 7

Stewardship Committee Report

Understanding Our Finances Through a Mission-Based Budget

A mission-based budget means we invest our people and financial resources in the matters most important to the fellowship. These currently include Religious Education (RE), pastoral care, and including more people through distance/online services and meetings through technology.

An especially pressing need in the next budget is to catch up with the phenomenal growth in children/youth participating in RE. The number has doubled in the last five years from 18 to 39. We expect that number to grow as we see new families participating in Our Whole Lives (OWL) and Bridge Builders—programs that cannot be found anywhere else in our region.

Maybe you've been involved in one of the small groups that Stacy has facilitated during the pandemic. Maybe you have received pastoral care from her through medical or other situations. Our fellowship board has just adopted the UUA (national) standards for compensation of staff who are employed halftime or more. These include health/disability/life insurance contributions, paid time off, bereavement/family/sick/sabbatical, and study leave. And, for the first time, CUUF is contributing to retirement funds. Through the whole process of transitioning to permanent employees, this has felt like the right thing to do.

Finally, many of us have appreciated the option of logging in and participating in a service via Zoom. You'll notice the improvements in sound, cameras, and the ability to interact better during the service. But, we still continue to experience equipment problems and we're hoping to acquire more of our own equipment this year.

The average monthly expenses to operate the fellowship is \$6,000/month—thank goodness we don't have a building to heat! You can rely on our Treasurer Ed Calhan to keep accurate financial records and monthly board budget reviews. So far, CUUF has received 48 pledges for a total of \$48,707. If we exclude two outliers, the average pledge amount is \$711/year or \$60/month.

For the next budget year starting July 1, we anticipate the needs listed above will be greater than the \$72,000 budget this year. A draft budget will be presented at the annual meeting on May 17.

Thanks for your pledges, gifts, and time. If you have not yet pledged, we ask you to consider what a meaningful gift is to you and make a pledge at <https://cuuf.breezechms.com/form/ae600565> or let us know by mail at CUUF, P.O. Box 641, Ashland, WI 54806. We look forward to sharing more with you as we work on the budget.

—Ruth Oppedahl, chair of the Stewardship Committee

A CUUF stewardship testimonial

As members of the Chequamegon Unitarian Universalist Fellowship since its founding, we feel that it is vitally important to support CUUF financially because we value the role that an accepting and liberal church plays in our community.

For Beth, who grew up in a Unitarian Universalist congregation in Ann Arbor, Mich., religious education is especially important. She knows that her awareness and respect for a variety of religious traditions are due to her growing up Unitarian.

In addition, CUUF played a significant role in our own children's spiritual development as they were dedicated as babies, attended UU and did the Coming of Age program.

Doug feels strongly that financial support of CUUF is critical to supporting our role in our area as a welcoming congregation and an option for spiritual development in community, with all of the support and challenge that offers each of us. He also recognizes that fundamentalist congregations nationally tend to be more robustly funded by members than liberal churches. We can aspire to better support our liberal faith by giving generously.

—Beth Reed and Doug Liphart



How to Remember CUUF in Your Will: Please consider joining others who have named CUUF as a beneficiary in their will, retirement or investment accounts. All you need is our EIN# 30-0248893 and our address: CUUF, P.O. Box 641, Ashland, WI 54806. All inquiries are confidential. For more information contact: Lois Albrecht 715-779-5630 bayfieldlois@gmail.com or Ruth Oppedahl 715-292-3872 ruth@oppedahl.com

Religious Education News (continued)

In honor of May being Teacher Appreciation Month, I want to acknowledge the incredible contributions of the RE volunteer teachers and helpers throughout the past year. We could not have done it without you! Thank you for your efforts in planning, prepping and facilitating the RE magic. Your talents and contributions do not go unnoticed. I know this year has brought challenges with change in leadership, but I am looking forward to a future filled with clarity and ease. We got this!

—Warmly, Ashley Smith

CUUF seeks communication review committee

CUUF is seeking a small group of volunteers to inventory and advise on our communications. Are we reaching out in the most effective ways so folks can find us? Are we communicating within our fellowship in ways that make you feel informed? If this sounds like something that you'd like to be involved in, please contact Ruth at 715-292-3872 or ruth@oppedahl.com

Greetings from Washburn Chequamegon Bay PFLAG. We have lots of news this month. One main event is International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on May 17. For a complete list of events, please visit our website at www.pflagwashburn.org Thank you.



Screen to Save seeks to increase colorectal cancer screening rates

The National Cancer Institute is sponsoring a program called Screen to Save that seeks to increase colorectal cancer screening rates among men and women ages 45-75 from racially and ethnically diverse communities and in rural areas. Increasing colorectal screening rates in the United States is a national priority and part of the 10 recommendations by the Blue Ribbon Panel for the Cancer Moonshot.

The National Cancer Institute is seeking participants for a research study on this cancer screening. The study requires about 30 minutes of your time and all participants will receive a \$25 gift card to Amazon or Walmart for their time. You must live in northern Wisconsin and be between the ages of 45-75.

To participate, contact Ashley Smith via email at aasmith28@wisc.edu or by phone at 608-262-6484.

Work, Play, Earth Day!

The Friends of Copper Falls State Park and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are sponsoring "Work, Play, Earth Day!" at Copper Falls State Park in Mellen on Saturday, May 6. They are seeking volunteers to help with light cleaning of nature cabins and concessions, raking, painting, picking up windfall, and planting trees (among other tasks). Orientation begins at 9 a.m. at the Picnic Pavilion in the park. Volunteers will receive free tree seedlings, a brat fry picnic lunch, and be included in a grand prize drawing. You'll also have the opportunity to see scenic waterfalls and wildflowers. For more information, please call 715-274-5123.

CHEQUAMEGON UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP MISSION STATEMENT

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

~ Founded, February 22, 1998 ~

Chequamegon Unitarian
Universalist Fellowship
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