



# UUSBHC March Newsletter 2004



## MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Search Committee's focus is now turning to a crucial phase of the process: obtaining your insights about the vision you have for our church and its next permanent minister. The first step of this phase has already begun; by the time you read this, most of the annual fund drive pledge circle suppers will have occurred. At each supper, a member of the Committee was/will be present to listen to your views. With this preliminary input, a congregational survey will be developed by the Committee and distributed for the written input of all who are interested in our UU Society. Your voices, individually and collectively, are essential to the Committee; and we thank you for your effort to assist us.

Your Ministerial Search Committee: *Lynn Brant; Jan Gallagher; Pam Hays; Carolyn Hildebrandt; Esther Kieffer; Shanlee McNally; Judith Harrington, Chair*

## FROM THE MINISTER. . .

I looked out at the thermometer today and it was 10 degrees F. My wife, *Louise*, got a text message this morning from her sister's husband from Adelaide, South Australia (where we lived up until mid-January). He said it was 45 degrees Celsius. A quick calculation:  $45 \times 9/5 + 32 = 113$  F. Even for Adelaide, that's a bit too much.

No way around it: life in Iowa is different than life in Australia.

Regardless, there are some things that are the same, and are the same everywhere you go.

There has been much work in recent years in the study of congregations and one of the results has been the conclusion that no congregation is entirely healthy or entirely unhealthy. Nevertheless, we can foster trends toward health just as we can shun dynamics or try to change habits which are unhealthy. But what are the healthy trends?

Every church has a sense of mission. It is that it is not creeds, individual members or collective ethos, class, habit or tradition that binds a congregation together. Undergirding all that, is a dream. In an unhealthy church that dream is named by an elite few instead of the broad base.

Every congregation faces crises occasionally. They take many forms. But what matters is how we respond to the crises. In an unhealthy congregation the crisis causes members to withdraw, compete and blame one another. But in a healthy congregation, crisis unifies its members.

In a healthy congregation, the leaders recognize the importance of inviting constructive feedback, and suggestions. A team atmosphere and a sense of shared responsibility and cooperation result. In an unhealthy congregation, people become defensive and leaders are made to feel isolated.

In a healthy congregation conflict is seen not as destructive and to be avoided, but as inevitable, constructive, and as an opportunity for personal and organizational growth. Innovation and experimentation are low-risk and encouraged and not surrendered to tradition. Healthy congregations are more able to meet challenges and adapt to changes. They have a sense of who they are and where they are going.

I say this because at the outset of this ministry, there's one thing I want to make especially clear: I am not the minister here. I'm just the paid professional. We all are the ministers. Ministry depends on many people! This ministry depends on you! I can't be all things to all people. So I need your help, input and ideas to make this interim ministry work to the extent that this congregation is ready, pumped and primed for the new permanent minister. That's why I'm here. If we don't make the ministry work together, it might not be too harsh to say it is a waste of my time and your money.

I've noticed many things have changed since I left America almost seven years ago. One change is that federal law prohibits hospitals from sharing patient names and room numbers with clergy. If you or a family member are in the hospital and would like me to visit, you have to tell me where they are.

Our home phone is 226-5192 and our email is <markallstrom@yahoo.com>.

*Mark*

## MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS

It's hard to say at this point in time what my office hours will be, but I'm aiming for 10:00-1:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday. That means I am there for you. Please come and visit, sit and chat, and get to know me so I can get to know you. If you would like me to visit you, please let me know and I'll be on your door step.

*Rev. Allstrom*

## FROM THE ALLSTROMS

Thank you for the many expressions of caring and hospitality you've shown as we've been settling in our new home. We are very happy to be here and to be so warmly welcomed to our new community. We look forward to the months to come.

*Mark and Louise Allstrom*

## OPEN HOUSE

*Mark and Louise Allstrom* will offer an Open House from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 315 Wema Avenue, Evansdale. Please drop in and say "Hi".

[Ed. note – This newsletter may not reach everyone in time for this event, but is included on the chance it could reach some in time.]

## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Lately I have been thinking about volunteering. A few weeks ago a university student doing research about volunteerism interviewed me. One piece of information the student was trying to discern was the "why" of community involvement. Why do people feel the need to do unpaid "work" for an organization or to give money to a cause? Tonight I was at the United Way Annual Meeting where many community volunteers were recognized. The reason I most often heard tonight was a desire to "give back to their community – from which they have received so much". I heartily agree with that sentiment. I have often said that I get back much more than I give.

Why do we volunteer? Sometimes it's as simple and immediate as "this is something that needs to be done, and I can do it". Other times we need to spend more thought on our volunteer commitments. There are many causes worthy of our time and money in the world. How do we decide then which ones to support? Or maybe, we should start with an even more basic question, why do we volunteer or donate at all?

These are questions we all have to ask and answer for ourselves. For me, I volunteer and donate for what might be called selfish reasons. I do so for the personal satisfaction. I feel good about myself when I am doing something worthwhile. I just don't feel right when I am not doing something that helps to improve my community or world. Maybe it's my labor background. In a union if you are not contributing and helping your fellow worker, you're a freeloader (actually the term is not as polite).

From my experience, however, volunteering seems to be a more basic human quality. Sometimes people don't volunteer from the mistaken belief that they don't have much to offer. We all have something to offer. There is no better way to acquire the skills that make you a valuable volunteer than the "on-the-job" training you get when you say. . . "I'll help with that".

As we start this year's Stewardship Campaign, I ask you to consider your reasons for supporting our religious community, and volunteer both your time and your money. We need you here.

*Mica Lorenz*

## FOOD WAGON

Starting March 7<sup>th</sup>, we will be including a Food Wagon as a regular part of our Sunday Service. During the first hymn a child from our Sunday School will pull a wagon around the congregation in which people will be invited to place dry or canned foods which we will then deliver to a local food pantry to support those less fortunate than ourselves.

This will enlarge the contributions of the children in our services as well as remind us all of the responsibilities our UU Society has to the larger community of which we are a part.

So please bring a can of beans or box of pasta or whatever you can to the service on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you.

*Sunday Service Committee*

## CHILD DEDICATION

The Sunday Service Committee is offering a Child Dedication as part of the Mother's Day service on Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. If you would like your child or grandchild dedicated at that time, please contact Rev. Allstrom.

## CLASSES FOR NEW UUs

To help assimilate new members and newcomers, we are offering three group discussions as part of second hour. One discussion will cover Unitarian and Universalist history, one will cover the history of our congregation and one will cover how our congregation works. They will run on the fourth Sundays: March 28<sup>th</sup>, April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup>. It will be geared toward newcomers but all will be welcome.

## ORDERLY ARRIVAL

The Outreach Committee requests that people arriving early hang their coats at the back of the sanctuary so that late-comers have room to hang theirs in the entry.

We would also request that folks arrive a little earlier so that there is not such a large group arriving just minutes before the service begins. This will help us begin our services in a little more orderly fashion.

Additionally, we will be doing an Ingathering of New Members on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Those who are interested in officially joining our group should contact *Jan Gallagher*, or *Karen* or *John Miller*.

*The Outreach Committee*

## CELLOBRATION!

*UU Cello Ensemble and Friends*

Sunday, March 21, 2:00 p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County

Starring: *Jonathan Chenoweth* (Associate Professor of Cello, UNI, and Principal Cellist of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Orchestra), *Suzanne Bullard* (Cello Teacher, UNI Suzuki; Member of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony and Finalist in the 2004 UNI Concerto Competition), *Bryn Sumner* (member of the Northern Iowa Youth Orchestra), *Eve Harvey-Steveley* (member of the Northern Iowa Junior Orchestra), *Carolyn Hildebrandt* (Cellist, Pianist, Arranger, and Instigator) and *Julie Fischer* (Cellist and Raconteur).

With special guests: *Laura Walter*, voice; *Tim Purdum*, piano, voice, guitar, percussion; and *Brittany Flokstra*, percussion.

Featuring music for cello solo, duet, trio, quartet, quintet, and sextet from various styles and traditions, plus World Premieres of *The Cello Lesson* and *The Young Person's Guide to the Cello*, starring Jonathan "Don't-Try-This-At-Home" Chenoweth (Professional Stunt Cellist), assisted by *Christian Brandenburg* (Cello Technician and Mechanic) and *Julie Fischer* (Nurse Paramedic).

This concert is offered as a fundraiser for the Unitarian Universalist Society of Black Hawk County. Suggested donation: \$10.00 adults, \$5.00 children. For reservations and further information, please contact Carolyn Hildebrandt (319) 235-9285 or <Carolyn.Hildebrandt@uni.edu>.

## MARCH SERVICES

**March 7<sup>th</sup>** - "On Being Stupid": While UUs have traditionally recognized the need to approach spiritual and religious matters through reason as well as faith and the mind as well as the heart and soul, it strikes me that stupidity - so rife in the human experience - has something to offer as well.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>** - "Outback Revelations": In meeting people from very different walks in life we can learn a lot about ourselves. In this service I will relate a chance encounter I had with an Aboriginal in the Australian outback.

**March 21<sup>st</sup>** - "Dear Theo": A celebration of the life and contributions of Vincent van Gogh.

**March 28<sup>th</sup>** - "Humor": Maryann Caudill-LoGuidice, our Prairie Star District Resource Liaison

*The Rev. Mark Allstrom*

## COME DREAM A DREAM WITH ME

Hopefully many (if not most) of you will have either attended or are on your way to your Canvass Circle Supper. Canvass Circle Suppers will kick off this year's Stewardship Campaign instead of a more traditional "kick off" event. By using the intimacy and fellowship that the smaller group format of a Circle Supper offers, we hope to reach more of you with our "dream" and to bring our message to you on a more personal level. Circle Suppers will also allow for freer discussion with the Search Committee representative attending your dinner regarding your hopes and dreams for our new minister.

This year's Stewardship Campaign is a crucial one for our future, for we must demonstrate that we can successfully raise a budget that can support the calling of a new full-time minister. Without such commitment as a congregation, it will be very difficult to attract a new minister at the level of quality and experience that we seek.

While at your Canvass Circle Supper, we will be asking you to view a video or dvd about the goal of this year's Stewardship Campaign, and to leave your completed pledge card with your supper's host. If you are unable to turn your pledge card in at your circle supper, please send it to the church by March 13<sup>th</sup>. If you were not able to attend one of the Circle Suppers held during the weekend of February 27-29<sup>th</sup>, additional suppers are being offered during the first weekend of March. See the sign-up sheets posted in Fellowship Hall for details on date and location, or call *Mike Knapp* or *Mica Lorenz* (291-6509) for more details.

The Stewardship Campaign Committee would like to thank *Del and Christine Carpenter, Rita Lynn, Sue Hill, Kirby Sherman, John and Karen Miller, Norm and Karen Kitchen, Roger and Cindy Hahn, Carolyn Hildebrandt and Thos Sumner, Pam and Al Hays, Mike Knapp and Mica Lorenz, and Mary Kay Madsen* for hosting this year's Canvass Circle Suppers. We would also like to thank the Search Committee for their decision to have a representative present at each of the Canvass Circle Suppers to seek your input on the search process.

We hope that you will all take advantage of this year's Canvass Circle Suppers and that you enjoy the new video/dvd format that is being used to share our "dream" with you. We would also like to thank all of you in advance for giving your financial support to this Society. By ourselves we can only dream, together we can make a reality. Join us in making your pledge today.

*2004/2005 Stewardship Campaign Committee*

## PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES & VOTE 2004 ANNUAL MEETING

The Welcoming Congregation Committee will be proposing two By-Law changes in addition to a vote at the Annual Meeting. We will be asking the Congregation to vote on becoming an official UU Welcoming Congregation. Becoming a Welcoming Congregation means that we will be listed as such on the UUA web site. We can also indicate that designation in our promotional materials and we can display a poster proclaiming to all that we are indeed welcoming to all persons including Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender persons.

In addition to a vote, one of the requirements is that we adjust our By-Laws to include an affirmative nondiscrimination clause concerning membership, hiring practices, and the calling of religious professionals. The proposed additions to the By-Laws will be:

Under Article IV Membership, the first statement would read:

No test of creed, of faith, or national origin, of race or color, or gender, of sexual orientation, of physical ability, or other similar test shall be imposed as a condition of membership.

Under Article VI Ministry, the first statement would read:

Eligibility for Minister of the church shall not be restricted on the basis of age, national origin, race or color, gender, sexual orientation or physical challenge.

## HAVE A CALENDAR OR NEWSLETTER ITEM?

If you would like to host a meeting or event at the Society please mark it on the calendar in the Fellowship Hall. Put your name beside the item. Note the Calendar deadline for inclusion in the next newsletter.

*Mica Lorenz* <micalea@mchsi.com> is the contact person for both the online and newsletter calendars.

For building rentals (non-society events or for-profit events) contact *Karen Kitchen* <kkitchen@cfu.net>.

To submit articles for inclusion in the monthly newsletter contact *Gerry Chamberlin* <sgchamberlin@cfu.net> or place the item in the newsletter mail slot at church (above the copy machine) by the newsletter deadline.

## PRAIRIE STAR DISTRICT ANNUAL CONFERENCE GROWING SEASON APRIL 23–25, 2004

Here is an opportunity to meet UUs from eight states, and receive some great training. Our UU Society has put aside some leadership development money to help pay the registration fees for our members to attend conferences and training such as this. Please contact a member of the Board of Trustees if you are planning to attend this conference. Registration fees are \$110 before April 1<sup>st</sup> and \$125 each after that date. This includes your meals Saturday and Sunday breakfast.

*Kansas City Marriott Country Club Plaza  
4445 Main Street, Kansas City, Missouri*

The KC Marriott offers a special conference rate of \$109 plus tax. 1–4 per room. Reservations: 1-800-810-3708; ask for the Prairie Star District Conference Unitarian Universalist rate. Rooms and rates are guaranteed only until April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004.

A sample of the twenty-four workshops being offered are:

- Sharing Humanism with Reverence
- Growth=Change=Conflict—Oh Great!
- Is there a friendly face in the crowd?
- Building Community through Interfaith Understanding
- Moving from Regular Visitor to Committed Member
- Strengthening our Ties—Growing a Multigenerational Community of Faith
- Close Encounters of the UU kind
- Growing Leaders Growing Congregations
- And more...check out the web site for more information: [www.unitarian.org/pstar/conf](http://www.unitarian.org/pstar/conf)



## CONSCIOUS LIVING CORNER

I've always liked the sound of the word, simplicity, and its image of graceful elegance. As much as I value simplicity, I am a disorganized person who easily gets bogged down in clutter and fuss. I have gradually become aware that much of simplicity is in the mind. To me, it is in the habits of deliberate orderliness about material possessions, about buying and letting go carefully. The prioritizing of time and "thing" management must be the answer. Indeed, conscious living. For several years I have tried to express my thoughts in essays and poems. The words of a UU ancestor, W. H. Channing, are perhaps all that need to be said.

### *My Symphony*

To live content with small means; to seek  
elegance rather than luxury, and refinement  
rather than fashion;  
To be worthy, not respectable,  
and wealthy, not rich;  
talk gently, act frankly;  
to study hard, think quietly,  
to listen to stars and birds,  
to babes and sages with open heart;  
to bear all cheerfully,  
do all bravely,  
await occasions, hurry never.  
In a word, to let the spiritual,  
unbidden and unconscious,  
grow up through the common.  
This is to be my symphony.



*Betsy Brant*

## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sundays from 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

March 7<sup>th</sup>

**What is Quakerism?**—This is the second in a series of monthly discussion groups on Quaker beliefs. All are invited to share in the discussion.

**Conscious Living Circle**—A discussion group considering how we as individuals and as a congregation can deepen our commitment to live in harmony with the Earth.

March 14<sup>th</sup>

**Social Action Discussion**—UUs who have participated in the presidential selection process, including the Democratic County Convention on March 13<sup>th</sup>, will reflect on the challenges of citizen participation in a process that often seems distant, complex, and driven by money and the media.

**Theological Discussion Group**—Book TBA

March 21<sup>st</sup>

**Spring Equinox Celebration**—As the cycle of the seasons turns, we now celebrate the time when day and night are of equal length. Even though it's called the "first day of spring" it doesn't always seem so in Iowa, where cold weather can last well into April. However, it does mark a point at which the rebirth of nature is beginning, so we celebrate it with greenery and symbols of renewed life. It's also the marker that is used to date Easter; the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox. It's interesting how pagan traditions keep turning up in later religious observances!

**Conscious Living Circle**—A discussion group considering how we as individuals and as a congregation can deepen our commitment to live in harmony with the Earth.

March 28<sup>th</sup>

**Theological Discussion Group**—Book TBA

**New UUs!**—This will be the first in a series of sessions introducing Unitarian Universalism for new members and people who are thinking about joining us. It can also be a refresher course for some of us "old-timers".

## CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

March is a busy month for the children in Alternative Activities and Religious Education.

We have hired a new person to fill the other AA/RE positions. Her name is *Abigail Graves*. She is a student at UNI in special education. She will be working upstairs with the pre-school - 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Please introduce yourself as you pick up your children.

Just a reminder: an adult needs to be with any child in any of the classrooms including the Shane room (the playroom by the Fellowship Hall). After you pick up your child from their classroom they need to be with you. Thank you.

### March activities:

#### **First hour - Alternative Activities**

We will continue to explore Unitarian Universalism, by looking at the lives of famous UUs.

#### **Second Hour - Religious Education & Exploration**

We will be finishing up our session "We Are Many", which dealt with the study of different religions and ways of life. March 13<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> is Spring Break -- we don't plan formal lessons during that time as many families take time off, so it is more of a time to look at other things and have fun times together - like game days and craft days. On March 21<sup>st</sup> we will be holding a Spring Equinox ceremony upstairs with just the kids; the UU Youth group will be helping to plan and carry this out with *Chris Rediske*. Then March 28<sup>th</sup> we will start Session 4—Personal Power—where the children will be studying how to empower themselves.

## OUR UU YOUTH IN THE NEWS

The Youth have begun a new curriculum study on the subject of World Religions - led by *Brian Forster*. They are beginning with a focus on the origin of religion in general, then will exercise their leadership skills by helping facilitate sessions on Western Religions, specifically. Thanks, Brian, for leading the youth on that "journey".

Speaking of "leadership". . . several of our youth will be attending a "Leadership Development Conference" along with *Heather Flory* in Lincoln, Nebraska this month. We wish them well and are grateful for Heather's interest in the development of our youth.



# CHILI COOK-OFF 2004



We had a huge crowd;.....and.....the.....winners.....were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> – *Shanlee McNally* “Chili Blonco”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – *Julie Fischer* “Consoy-lation Chili”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – *Bob Robinson* “Regulation Navy Chili”

Of course the beautiful trophy goes to Shanlee. It will fit right in with her newly redecorated house. Thanks to all the other participants --- *Kamyar Enshayan, Jan Gallagher, Christine Carpenter, Carolyn Hildebrandt, Karen Kitchen, Tim Purdum, Florence Petrides, Leigh Zeitz, Mickey Karlin, and Trudy Eden.* Thanks also to all the eaters, and to College Square HyVee for furnishing the ice cream.

## \*\*\*\*\* 2004 \*\*\*\*\*

MARCH 7	10:00 A.M.	<b>“ON BEING STUPID”</b> – <u>The Rev. Mark Allstrom</u> <u>Alternative Activity for Children</u>
	11:00 A.M.	<b>Fellowship Time</b>
	11:30 A.M.	<b><u>R.E. for Youth / Adult Education</u></b>
MARCH 14	10:00 A.M.	<b>“OUTBACK REVELATIONS”</b> – <u>The Rev. Mark Allstrom</u> <u>Alternative Activity for Children</u>
	11:00 A.M.	<b>Fellowship Time</b>
	11:30 A.M.	<b><u>R.E. for Youth / Adult Education</u></b>
MARCH 21	10:00 A.M.	<b>“DEAR THEO”</b> – <u>The Rev. Mark Allstrom</u> <u>Alternative Activity for Children</u>
	11:00 A.M.	<b>Fellowship Time</b>
	11:30 A.M.	<b><u>R.E. for Youth / Adult Education</u></b>
MARCH 28	10:00 A.M.	<b>“HUMOR”</b> – <u>Maryann Caudill-LoGuidice</u> <u>Alternative Activity for Children</u>
	11:00 A.M.	<b>Fellowship Time</b>
	11:30 A.M.	<b><u>R.E. for Youth / Adult Education</u></b>



## WHITE FIELDS

I

In the winter time we go  
 Walking in the fields of snow;  
 Where there is no grass at all;  
 Where the top of every wall,  
 Every fence, and every tree,  
 Is as white as white can be.

II

Pointing out the way we came,  
 --Every one of them the same--  
 All across the fields there be  
 Prints in silver filigree;  
 And our mothers always know,  
 By the footprints in the snow,  
 Where it is the children go.

by *James Stephens*, from *Collected Poems* (Macmillan)



## WHY GOD CREATED CHILDREN (AND IN THE PROCESS GRANDCHILDREN)

To those of us who have children in our lives, whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students. . .here is something to make you chuckle.

Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His own children.

After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing he said was "DON'T!" Don't what?", Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit", God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey Eve. . .we have forbidden fruit!!!!!"

"No Way!"

"Yes way!"

"Do NOT eat the fruit!", said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!", God replied, wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants. A few minutes later God saw His children having an apple break and He was ticked!

"Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?", God asked. "Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?", said the Father.

"I don't know", said Eve. "She started it!", Adam said "Did not!"

"Did too!" "DID NOT!" Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed. BUT THERE IS REASSURANCE IN THE STORY! – If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT!

1. You spend the first two years of your children's life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next sixteen telling them to sit down and shut up.
2. Grandchildren are God's reward for not killing your own children.
3. Mothers of teens now know why some animals eat their young.
4. Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.
5. The main purpose of holding children's parties is to remind yourself that there are children more awful than your own.
6. We childproofed our homes, but they are still getting in.

ADVICE FOR THE DAY: Be nice to your kids. They will choose your nursing home one day.

And finally, if you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle:

"TAKE TWO ASPIRIN" AND "KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN"

