

BISMARCK-MANDAN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP & CHURCH



Sunday Services & Children's Programs: 10:30 AM

Fellowship & Refreshments: Following Service

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WEBSITE: bismanuu.org • EMAIL: office@bismanuu.org

The Beacon

*Our Monthly Newsletter Sharing Unitarian Universalist Values
in the Capital City Area*

Sunday, December 4, 2011

"TEAPOTS, UNICORNS & 'PASTAFARIANS': RELIGIOUS THEORY
FROM THE SKEPTICS' PERSPECTIVE"

Janell Cole

Facilitator: Janelle Masters

Over the past 60 years, skeptics have used quaint or amusing objects and parody to illustrate conventional religious belief and provoke discussion. This program will look at three examples.

Janell is a long-time member of the Fellowship and former Board President.

Sunday, January 1, 2012

SNEAK PEAK!

"IT'S THE NEW YEAR! OR IS IT?"

Probably every culture in the world celebrates the new year. Traditionally, though, different cultures celebrate different new year cycles. For some, the new year arrives with the coming of spring; for others, with the anticipation of winter. This service will be a celebration of the modern New Year's Day, as well as a reflection on New Year's traditions around the world and what they mean.

Sunday, December 11, 2011

"WHAT DOES THIS CHURCH MEAN TO ME?"

Program Committee & Special Guests

What does this church mean to me? To you? To us? At this special end-of-the-year service, your faithful program committee invites each of us to reflect on our shared community. How do we create community together? What impact does this community have on our daily lives? And why does it all matter? The service will include special music, a children's story, and a readers' theater presentation co-written by the members and friends of the Bismarck-Mandan Unitarian Universalist Fellowship & Church.

Annual Meeting: 12:30 PM—See details at right!

Sunday, December 18, 2011

Rev. Lyn Burton

Our consulting minister, Rev. Lyn Burton will be in Bismarck from Wed. Dec. 14 to Sun. Dec. 18. This will be Rev. Burton's last Sunday as our consulting minister.* Check out our [Website](#) or [Facebook](#) page for updates and more information.

*Join us for a Farewell Reception following service in honor of Rev. Burton's ministry—Details inside!

Sunday, December 25, 2011

"CELEBRATE THE WINTER HOLIDAYS"

The UU Holiday Team

10:30 AM: A brief intergenerational service to celebrate the Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, and Christmas with music, meditation and readings that comprise our UU traditions. Your relatives and friends are welcome.

11:00—1:00 PM: Open House: A time for fellowship and holiday refreshments. If you have extra holiday treats, feel free to bring those!

BISMARCK-MANDAN UU CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, December 11, 12:30 PM

Potluck Lunch begins at 11:45 AM

Please bring a dish to share
Coffee, Tea and Juice provided

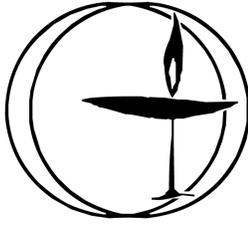
See inside for the agenda and Nominating
Committee Report

Please plan to attend!

Church Calendar

An asterisk (*) indicates related article

Thurs. Dec. 1	12:00 N	Program Committee Meeting
Sun. Dec. 4	11:45 AM	Social Justice Meeting
Sun. Dec. 11	12:30 N	* Bis-Man UU Annual Meeting
Dec. 14-18		Rev. Lyn Burton in Bismarck for the last time as our Consulting Minister
Fri. Dec. 16	12:00 N	Women's Lunch—Location TBA
Sun. Dec. 18	11:45-1:30	* Farewell Reception for Rev. Burton
Dec. 22-26		UU Office Closed



AGENDA

Congregational Annual Meeting
December 11, 2011 at 12:30 pm

Call to Order

Chalice Lighting & Opening Words

Credentials Report

Approval of Agenda

Secretary's Report

Treasurer's Report

Nominating Committee Report / Election

- Election of Board of Trustees
- Election of Nominating Committee

Presentation of 2012 Budget

Acknowledge Committee Reports

Recognition of Volunteers

Extinguish the Chalice and Closing Words

Budget Update

Your Board of Trustees has reviewed and refined a budget proposal for consideration at our annual meeting on December 11. The budget is intended to support us all in carrying out our vision and mission:

Vision: *We will be a vibrant, caring spiritual community for all who seek an inspirational and religious home.*

Mission: *We are fellowship of free minds, welcoming all, a beacon of enlightenment and sanctuary, and offering a call to build a better self, community and world.*

Please take time between now and December 11 to think about how you can help support our collective effort to live up to these goals. We depend on the financial gifts, joyfully shared by members and friends, to sustain a faithful presence in our lives and in the Bismarck-Mandan community.

Important Reminder:

We need to finish 2011 strong. Please try to complete any remaining financial commitments for 2011 as soon as you can.

The Numbers:

\$52,020.00—Pledge income projected

(The amount we were hoping to receive—projected amount approved during the 2010 Annual Meeting.)

\$41,730.00—Pledge commitments made

(The amount we received in pledged commitments—the budget was adjusted accordingly—and adjusted again.)

\$34,905.00—What we have to date

(The amount we have actually received in cash to date in 2011.)

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The following individuals are being nominated to serve as the congregation's Board of Directors.

COLLEEN REINKE – PRESIDENT

Colleen is currently on the Board and is moving from Vice President to President of the Board.

Colleen is a native of Bismarck. Following law school she spent 16 years in WI, and returned to ND in 2002. She has worked primarily as a lawyer and in the wildfire management field. Currently, Colleen is working on starting her own business.

TIM HATHAWAY – VICE PRESIDENT

Tim is currently on the Board and is moving from a Board position to the Vice President's position.

Tim is part of the Religious Education effort at the church and is currently the lead teacher in the older elementary classroom. Tim is the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse ND and has worked in Early Childhood Education for over 20 years as program director, trainer and consultant.

CAROL JEAN LARSEN – TREASURER

Carol Jean's term on the board is ending, and she will be moving into the Treasurer's position. Carol Jean describes herself as a full time volunteer for organizations she supports. She is currently the Chairman of the Membership Committee and has undertaken the task of facilitating sessions for people who are interested in learning more about our faith and perhaps joining the congregation. Carol Jean also facilitates adult religious education sessions and serves as a teacher in the program for our children.

KAREN VAN FOSSAN—SECRETARY

Karen is currently on the Board and serves as Board Secretary. Karen's position will remain the same. An activist and word artist, she has served on our RE, music, program, and social justice committees.

MARNIE PIEHL – BOARD MEMBER

Marnie recently began a new job as the Public Relations and Communications Manager for Bismarck State College. She is the mother of 3 active boys in our RE program, Owen, Ryder and Wyatt. Marnie was named to the ' Top 40 Under 40' list for Bismarck-Mandan 3 years ago. She currently serves on the congregation's Program Committee.

LISA OMLID – BOARD MEMBER

Lisa has a law degree, and lived most of her adult life in France. She returned to Bismarck a few years ago to be of assistance to her mother, Phyllis Omlid. Lisa has served on the congregation's Ministerial Committee, and is currently working with Steve Crane to record our weekly services for broadcast via the church web site.

MARY MITCHELL – BOARD MEMBER

Mary is an archeologist with Kadrmas, Lee & Jackson. She is a long-time member of the congregation, and is the mother of 2 adult children who grew up in our RE program. Mary has been a part of the Program Committee, and has been able to attend 2 Prairie Star District meetings.

Respectfully submitted, the 2011 Nominating Committee – Jean King, Diane Chielens, and Pat Conrad.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following individuals are nominated to serve as the Nominating Committee for 2012.

KAREN MORRISON

Karen, a longtime member of the congregation, a Speech-Language Pathologist for the Mandan Public Schools. She is the mother of 2 college age students who grew up in our RE program. Karen and her family have enjoyed attending Camp Uni-Star in northern Minnesota. She has served on the Nominating Committee in past years.

MIKE KNUDSON

Mike is recently retired from the US Department of Agriculture. He is the father of 2 adult children who grew up in our RE program. Mike is known around the church for his work on the Buildings and Grounds Committee. Mike and his wife Ann recently published a book on the World War I Veterans from Ransom County, and are currently working on a second book about the Native Americans from North Dakota who served in World War I.

PAT CONRAD

Pat is also recently retired from, but her career was in social work, most recently in the area of child support enforcement, Pat is the mother of 2 adult children, and is excited about the arrival of her first grandchild in October. Pat has served in many roles within the church, and is currently the chair of the Congregational Caring Committee. Pat served on the Nominating Committee for 2011, replacing Amanda Mack who moved to Alaska. Pat will be the carry-over member on this committee.

Farewell Reception for Our Consulting Minister, Rev. Lyn Burton

Sunday, December 18: 11:45 AM- 1:30 PM at the church

All are welcome and childcare will be provided.

Join us in the opportunity to celebrate Rev. Burton's ministry and say goodbye. Small finger food – sweet & savory and hot apple cider will be served.

An online scrapbook of our special memories with Rev. Burton will be created and posted for all with an internet connection to access. Please search your memories for personal experiences, anecdotes or inspirations you might have and would like to share during the reception on Dec. 18. If you prefer to share just with Lyn, there will be a basket for all cards and notes. If you will not be at the reception, please feel free to drop cards in the office for inclusion in the basket. If you have a story you would like to share and will not be able to attend, please email that to the church office (office@bismanuu.org) for inclusion in the online scrapbook. If you have any questions, please call Carol Jean Larsen: 241-9453 or Char McLaughlin: 471-9815.

MITTEN TREE

The Mitten Tree, created by former member Cynthia Tande many years ago, will be hung the first weekend in December. As you do your Christmas shopping, please consider picking up winter items for low income children in our community, items such as mittens, gloves, caps, or scarves. Then use the yarn ties, or the safety pins to hang your items on our tree. We will be donating our collection of winter items to BECEP right after the first of the year. Thanks.

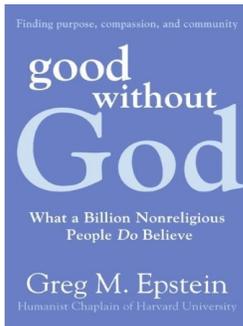
GREETING CARD COLLECTION

Thanks to all who have contributed to our collection of greeting cards. And, as promised last month, here is the purpose behind such a collection.

Many times someone lights a candle for a joy or a concern, and we think "we should send that person, or the person mentioned in the candle-lighting, a card to reflect the issue expressed." But then we go home to our busy lives and forget to carry through on our good intentions.

We hope to create a large collection of cards from which members and friends of the congregation can easily select a card appropriate to the situation and get it into the mail. Our beginning efforts are in a box in the office, with tabbed dividers indicating the different types of cards we already have. As our card collection grows, we will probably need a bigger box in a different location.

Check out what we have collected so far, and please continue donating those excess greeting cards that arrive in your mail.



Books for the Journey

Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe

by Greg Epstein

Book reviewed by: Christine Kujawa

In *Good Without God*, Epstein, a Humanist Chaplain at Harvard University, offers a detailed explanation of Humanism, its history and its positive impact in our society. Humanism is described as “a cohesive world

movement based on the creation of good lives and communities, without God.” Epstein illustrates that Humanism teaches us to lead ethical lives for the greater good of humanity. Humanists do this not because a god (or gods) tell them they should, but because through experience, reasoning and conclusions they know it is the right thing to do.

One of the things I really like about Epstein’s book is that while he provides logical arguments to disprove mainstream religious beliefs he is also respectful of these religions and their followers.

He acknowledges religions that are allies of Humanism (like Unitarian Universalism!) that embrace critical thinking and the need for debate. People can belong to a congregation where the focus is not on god but rather on offering friendship and support for one another as well as being a catalyst for open discussion and learning. This not only benefits individuals but the community as a whole.

This book is available for check-out in the Reading Room. The call number is **190 EPS**.

(This is the first of hopefully many reviews for the new column, “Books for the Journey.” Please consider reviewing a book from the Reading Room. The reviews will be informal and include a quick summary of the book and what you like (or dislike) about it. If you are interested, contact Christine Kujawa and Eric Stroshane.)



Christine Kujawa

UU Artwall Exhibit

Beginning this December is an exhibit of eight (out of many, many more) Paintings by Gordon Robinson (1911 – 1994) , Founding Father of the UU Congregation of Marin (California) in 1952 (same year as this UU Fellowship), Forester, Environmentalist, Artist and Father of Char McLaughlin.

Also running concurrently are three sculptures. First one is titled “EVERYMAN”, and is created by a resident of the Good Bird Home. The second is titled “SUNKA”, a wolf/dog created by a resident of the Charles Hall Home. The third is by Wayne Pruse, and is titled “WISDOM”. Wayne presented a program at our Fellowship on Nov. 13th. He is UTTC’s Art/Art Marketing Chair where he teaches drawing, painting, graphic design and sculpture. Wayne is also a freelance artist and is a major participant in Bismarck’s controversy regarding “Public Art”. Cool stuff. Stay tuned for reception and sale opportunities of these works and others coming early next year.

A BIG THANK YOU to BONNIE OLSON!

Wow! We had a great response to the request for help cleaning the church on a regular basis, thereby saving the congregation a great deal of money annually. Bonnie Olson has agreed to take over cleaning duties for us. Bonnie has already begun helping around the building. When our old vacuum cleaners exploded, Bonnie stepped forward again and donated one of her own vacuums to the church!

Please be sure to express your appreciation to Bonnie when you see her around the church!



Please Remember the Seth's in your thoughts and prayers as they celebrate the season with beloved family and friends and cope with their daughter, Sonali's brain cancer.

Reflections—Janis Cheney

Last month I reflected briefly on what our church, our faith community means to me. This month I am thinking more specifically about Sunday mornings. Why do I get up and go to church every Sunday I can? The short answer is 'Joy.'

When I am at church, I feel such a sense of energy and exuberance; of connection and compassion; of sharing and sustenance. Our Sunday morning experience grounds me in this journey as a spiritual being on a human path.

On Sunday mornings I often reflect on our 1st and 7th 'pillar' principles: *the inherent worth and dignity of every person* and *the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part*, and the remaining five principles (listed below) which are a profound and challenging guide for how we live with each other and in the world.

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

The practice and experience of coming together on Sunday to celebrate our being and our faith, share stories of our journey, sing, learn, grow and rejoice overwhelms me with its power and possibility!

It is a gift to be part of this community. It is my privilege and my responsibility to serve and support it.

Sunday Morning Announcements

In an effort to make time for all the wonderful aspects of our Sunday morning experience, your Program Committee has tried omitting most announcements out of the Order of Service. With that came an absence of community sharing.

Our goal is to find a balance between TIME and SHARING.

So...for the next month, please write your brief and clear church and community announcements on the sheets provided in the church foyer and give those to the Sunday morning facilitator. We will assess how this goes and tweak it again, if necessary.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we try to make the most of our brief time together on Sunday mornings!

Clarifying Fire: On Pursuing the Ministry...At Last—Karen Van Fossan

Here I sit in the North Dakota capitol, on a well-worn, faded, copperish-colored folding chair, crossing my legs, though I know it isn't good for me, trying to unclench my jaw because it seems that would be good for me.

Here, among more than 100 lobbyists, reporters, and government employees, I am one of a handful of people who is not being paid to sit in this, the largest of the legislature's hearing rooms. On my too-crossed lap, I hold copies of my legislative testimony – a full page of words on the risks of hydraulic fracturing, the need for the EPA, and one surprise.

My words, when at last I say them, will begin this way:

"My name is Karen Van Fossan. I am a seminary student at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, preparing to be an ordained minister, and I am also a long-time North Dakotan. I am here today as a matter of conscience and faith."

It's a bit like proposing marriage by writing it in the sky, I know.

But after these difficult years of discernment, my path feels clear at my feet.

The legislative session, even this one-week special session, tends to bring a clarifying fire to my life. According to an astrologer in Eugene, Oregon, I have very little fire in my astrological chart – mostly air and earth, I am. Poetry or reality, there's truth for me in this; I need to draw my fire from community. The legislative process, to one extent or another, has offered me a place to catch that fire: To the extent that it does, it does. To the extent that it doesn't, I believe in my bones that it should, that this should be a place where, together, we shape our community; and so it gives me fire in this way, too.

But it's not just press conferences, telephone calls, and email alerts that ignite this earnest fire; and it's not just speaking – if indeed I speak – before this bustling room of North Dakotans. I realize, when I'm in times like these, that being called to something is not just what I love to do.

Being called feels like...being called, I guess. It's the things I cannot keep myself from doing, the path I cannot keep myself from walking, the choices that give the path of my life momentum.

Waiting here, I feel myself sitting in the middle place, the place of overlapping. This is the place where ministers get to live, it seems to me – the place where despair meets hope, and sorrow finds dignity, and our age-old history unfolds in the life of this world.

But for now, I sit on this folding chair. Men in suits (and a woman or two) step to the mic to testify to the Joint Appropriations Committee. We haven't even *begun* to begin the hydraulic fracking debate. It's all flood relief and housing – fascinating stuff if presented another way.

As I pass in and out of listening, I make doodles and cartoons to mediate the love affair sparking deep within me, between anxiety and ennui. A suit without a face, I draw. A nondescript teen. A forest you can't see, for the trees.

I hypnotize myself with the giant red envelope, as it passes before the microphone – the envelope of amendments being the only touch of panache in this place. I marvel at the overhead lights, casting a greenish sheen over each blond head of hair.

This is the room where, years ago, I first opened my mouth – and heart – before a legislative committee.

We lost that one, too.

I shouldn't say "too." We haven't begun to lose this yet. We won't begin to lose it until I open my great big mouth and speak of prayer.

Paragraph three of my testimony:

"I have spent many days in the halls of the North Dakota legislature; I've heard morning prayers, afternoon prayers, and overheard discussions about the weekly prayer group. I'm not certain what you pray for when you pray. But I know too many folks in western North Dakota whose prayers are filled with desperation."

I'm sure you get my point:

Are we praying? For what? For whom?

But who am I to use the word "prayer" before these men? I am a smallish woman, often mistaken for young. Can I step before these men, plus the occasional woman, and use a word that is meant to see their souls – a word that will open my soul when I stand before them?

Suddenly, I remind myself of the women I've heard preach on such things:

Sister Maris Stella. Sister Kathleen. Reverend Lyn.

Suddenly, I draw a mighty courage through my feet.

Suddenly, I'm –
on.

I'm...on.

The room has fallen silent somehow. The only motion in all of this sprawling room is my voice.

Maybe it isn't my voice at all. Maybe it is my grandmother's voice, my grandfather's voice, an ancestor's voice –
Maybe it could be a voice of fire.

Board of Trustees and Officers

President, Janis Cheney
Vice President, Colleen Reinke
Secretary, Karen Van Fossan
Treasurer, Stephen Crane
Director, Tim Hathaway
Director, Carol Jean Larsen
Director, Beth Nodland

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Office Administrator

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Bis-Man UU Fellowship & Church

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[We are on Facebook!](#)

Check out our Website!

www.bismanuu.org



Rev. Lyn Burton, in Bismarck, Dec. 14-18

*Our Consulting Minister can be reached via
cell phone: 651-336-4439 or
email: uulyn2008@aol.com.*

She is also available for personal appointments during this; her last Bismarck visit.

Vision Statement

We will be a vibrant, caring, spiritual community for all who seek an inspirational and religious home.

Mission Statement

We are a fellowship of free minds, welcoming all, a beacon of enlightenment and sanctuary, and offering a call to build a better self, community and world.

Religious Education Mission Statement

The Bismarck-Mandan Unitarian Universalist Fellowship seeks to provide a path for spiritual inquiry for people of all ages.

Welcoming Congregation

We are a Unitarian Universalist Welcoming Congregation that seeks to be a spiritual home for people of free faith regardless of race, color, gender, affectional or sexual orientation, age, national origin, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability.

WINTER UU OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Thursday: 9:00–2:00 PM

Yuletide Blessing

The brightness of the Yule-fire for you,
the warmth of home and hearth for you,
the cheer and joy of your friends for you,
your family's love and peace for you,
hope and strength of the heart for you,
the Aesir and Vanir's blessings for you!

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