

## MINISTER'S COLUMN

REVEREND LAURA THOMPSON

### DECEMBER'S THEME: HOPE

The darkest time of the year is upon us. You would think we would all go into hiding or hibernation. But, that's not the case. In these dark, cold days we do not surrender to despair, but rather we turn to celebration as we remember and honor the return of the sun, the birth of a child, the miracle of light and the dawning of a new year. We do not surrender; we string lights across the darkness; we burn yule logs and menorahs; we light our voices in song and cheer; and we gather together with those we love to share food, gifts and age old stories. December is the epitome of hope. Hope is born in the darkness.

This year we have a lot to be hopeful for at MVUUF: we received a generous grant to invest in technology, membership and stewardship development; we hired our first membership Coordinator, Tristan Jones; we completed our first run of Beloved Conversations anti-racism curriculum; and the members of MVUUF will soon be voting to call a new settled minister! All of these things bring hope not only to MVUUF, but also to the larger communities we serve and even to the world at large.

The investments we make in ourselves bring hope to the world around us. This is because ours is a faith which values equality, democracy, justice and peace. We do this through the religious education we share with our children. We do this through our social justice programs. We do this through continually caring for and inspiring one another through worship, music, yoga, fellowship and friendship. May this holiday season bring you light and hope. And inspired by that which shines in the darkness, may we continue to bring hope to those around us by living out our values and doing the work we are called to do.

*In faith and joy,*  
Rev. Laura

## SUNDAY PROGRAMS

### — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3 —

**10:30am: *A New Hope, Part 1***; As we prepare to call a new minister it's a good time to ask ourselves, "What are our hopes for the future of MVUUF?" Come and hear what MVUUF members and children had to say when they were asked what they hope for in a minister and what their dreams are for the future of MVUUF. *With Rev. Laura Thompson and Worship Associate Janet Stevens.*

### — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 —

**9:00am: *Religion Ethics and Ideas: Bible Stories***; We will talk about Bible stories that we remember and made an impression on us. If there is a Bible story you would like to discuss bring it with you and bring a Bible if you have one. If you don't have a Bible Story don't worry, I have plenty of stories we can discuss. All are welcome. *Questions contact John Pelquin.*

**10:30am: *A New Hope, Part 2***; Rev. Laura responds to the hopes of the congregation and lays out her hopes and vision for the future of MVUUF. A special meeting of the congregation will immediately follow the service for members to vote on the matter of calling Rev. Laura Thompson as the next settled minister to MVUUF. All members are encouraged to attend this important event.

### — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 —

**10:30am: *Music Sunday***; This favorite bi-annual service features your favorite songs of the season being performed by the MVUUF choir, small groups, the youth choir, individuals, and families. This is a joyous service meant to delight members and friends of all ages.

### — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 —

**10:30am & 5pm: *Songs and Stories of Hope***; Folks of all ages are invited to join us for carols, songs, and stories of the season. The 10:30am service will be followed by a visit from Santa and a holiday cookie buffet (bring your favorites to share!). The 5pm service will conclude with a candlelight sing-a-long.

### — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 —

**10:30am: *Fire Communion: Letting Go, Moving Forward***; All ages are welcome to this interactive service where we will examine the things we need to let go of in order to move toward what is calling us to be happier, healthier, and in better relationship with the world around us.

Recordings of past Sunday programs are available for listening and download on the MVUUF website  
<http://www.mnvalleyuu.org/sermon-audio>



MVUUF is a liberal religious congregation guided by democratic principles whose mission is to engage members in a shared quest for spiritual and intellectual growth leading to lives of service, compassion, and justice.



## RESOURCES: EXPLORING HOPE

### WORD ROOTS —

From Old English/Frisian *hopa* meaning to wish for, to desire, to have confidence in the future.

The word despair comes from the Latin root *de* - without, and *sper* - hope.

### ARTICLES —

The Place Beyond Fear and Hope  
*Margaret Wheatley*

<http://berkana.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/BeyondHopeandFear.pdf>

Reflection: We've Hoped Our Way Into Our Current Crisis

*Miguel Clark Mallet*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/miguel-clark-mallet-weve-hoped-our-way-into-our-current-crisis/>

#### MVUUF Office Hours

##### — Minister —

**Rev. Laura Thompson**

minister@mnvalleyuu.org  
(651) 500-2864 (Confidential voice and text messages)

Mondays: Off

Tues-Thur: Office Days\*

Friday: Writing Day (Offsite)

Saturday-Sunday: By Appointment

\*office hours vary due to meetings and appointments throughout the day and evening

##### — Director of Religious Education —

**Jan Fitzgerald**

dre@mnvalleyuu.org  
(952) 884-8956 (Fellowship Phone)

Monday / Wednesday / Friday

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

##### — Office Administrator —

**Tristan Jones**

office@mnvalleyuu.org  
(952) 884-8956 (Fellowship Phone)

Monday thru Thursday

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Please call or email ahead to make sure we don't have another appointment when you come in. We are available other times and days by appointment.

### WISE WORDS —

Hope begins in the dark, it's a stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work!

*Anne Lamott*

You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep Spring from coming.

*Pablo Neruda*

Hope also has something to do with presence -- not a future good outcome, but the immediate experience of being met, held in communion, by something intimately at hand.

*Cynthia Bourgeault*

There is something compelling about the fact that Christmas comes, no matter what. The celebration of the birth of Jesus comes, no matter the season of your heart. The Prince of Peace, the baby that would bring a message of universal equality, compassion, forgiveness, and love is re-born again and again and again, no matter our state-of-mind or being...indeed, in spite of it. Perhaps that is the real miracle of the season, that hope and possibility cannot be denied.

*Cynthia Frado*

Look at the facts of the world. You see a continual and progressive triumph of the good. I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.

*Theodore Parker*

### BOOKS —

Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities

*Rebecca Solnit*

Darkness Before Dawn: Redefining the Journey Through Depression

*Tami Simon (Editor)*

### VIDEOS —

Whether You Believe You Can or Believe You Can't, You're Right!

*Kyle Maynard - Big Think*

<http://bigthink.com/videos/kyle-maynard-how-to-loosen-the-grip-of-fear-and-doubt>

The Hopeful Darkness of the Womb  
*Valarie Kaur at Watch Night Service 2016*

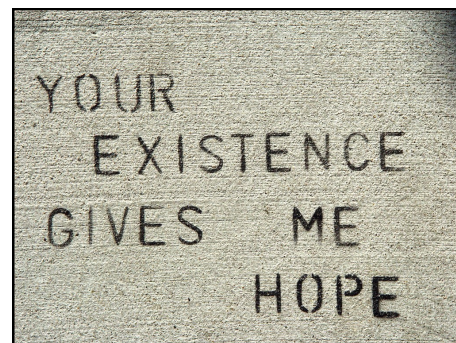
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=59&v=LCenwghelBs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=59&v=LCenwghelBs)

### MOVIES & TELEVISION —

*The Shawshank Redemption*

*Places in the Heart*

*Love Actually*





# NOTICE

## SPECIAL MEETING TO CALL LAURA THOMPSON AS OUR SETTLED MINISTER

**December 10, 2017, 11:30am**  
**Immediately following the church service**

The Board of Trustees is calling a **Special Meeting of the Members of MVUUF** for the purpose of voting to call Laura Thompson as our settled minister. Under our bylaws, we need a quorum of 50% of our membership in attendance for the vote. Childcare will be provided during the meeting, as will transportation for those members who need a ride home after the meeting.

If you are an MVUUF member and plan to attend the meeting, please let us know by completing our [RSVP signup here](#) (or by entering the URL address shown below into your Internet browser). We need to know by **Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at noon** if you will be able to attend.

[https://mnvalleyuu.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?  
u=d00386163bb126a09247e66f0&id=f3ae5d81c3&e=cd36148ed2](https://mnvalleyuu.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d00386163bb126a09247e66f0&id=f3ae5d81c3&e=cd36148ed2)



## NOTES FROM THE CHAIR ~ CALLING A MINISTER

November's theme was Gratitude. It is seasonally appropriate since we are conditioned to think about things we are grateful for with Thanksgiving coming at the end of the month. One of the things I, and hopefully all of you, add to that list is this fifty-one-year-old organization we belong to. We sign on to support it financially through our pledges and Sunday collections, our gifts of time and talent, or just our presence. MVUUF provides a space for like-minded people to work together on our common mission. We find support, friendships, food for thought and spirit, wonderful music, and religious education that helps our children grow into thoughtful and "awake" adults.

December's theme is Hope. This seems very appropriate this year as we are about to come together on December 10th for a special congregational meeting to call Rev. Laura Thompson as our settled minister. It feels like the end of a very long road—transitions more or less successful, soul searching, and hard work. I think that we are in a much better place because we had to go through what Rev. Laura calls the "goo" stage to see our way into the second half century of our existence.

It also feels like a new beginning—more work to be done, new friends to meet, new challenges and opportunities. Same direction—making the world a better place.

When I think of hope I am reminded of a quote from Vaclav Havel:

*"Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good."*

There is an awful lot of work to be done. Let's take that next step.

- Eva Mach, Chair ([emach@pro-tecdesign.com](mailto:emach@pro-tecdesign.com), 651-226-5949)



## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

### November Board Highlights

The Board finalized details related to the December 10<sup>th</sup> Congregational Meeting to call Laura Thompson as our settled minister. The Board confirmed that absentee ballots will not be allowed. Calling the minister is one of the most important actions in congregational life. Absentee ballots cannot be counted to achieve the 50% of membership quorum requirements called for in our by-laws. Our by-laws also require an 80% affirmative vote of the members present.

The Board appointed David Olson and Eva Mach to finalize the details of the settled minister contract.

The kick-off weekend for the 2018 Stewardship/Pledge Campaign will be Friday, March 16. The Stewardship Committee is working with Bill Clontz of UUA consulting. We will utilize the visiting stewards process introduced and tested a couple of years ago.

The Board discussed the need for updating our mission and vision. Our policies and procedures require that we refresh our long-range plan every 5 years. The long range plan needs to support our mission and vision. Our Next Steps weekend (June 2016) also called out a need for mission/vision refresh. The Board approved hiring Bill Clontz of UUA consulting to facilitate the process. The dates confirmed for this work are February 23-25<sup>th</sup>. The entire congregation will be invited to participate in this work. Details will follow. Save the date; notice will be sent to the entire congregation.

### Hanifl Foundation update:

Hired a new office administrator/membership coordinator. The funding for this position combines the MVUUF budgeted funds along with the Hanifl Grant and the Chalice Lighter award.

The Technology Committee purchased a state of the art hearing assistance system. With proper training this should improve the experience for our members and visitors. The goal is to have the system operational by early January. The committee is in process of upgrading our office phone system and the MVUUF website.

The Board also authorized the Treasurer to implement a new system to support on-line giving. This will bring us into the current century facilitating online pledge payments, Sunday collection, and credit card acceptance. (A recommendation from our stewardship consultant.)

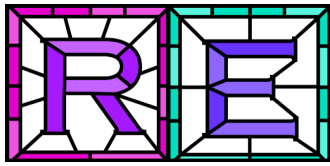
**Next Board Meeting Date: December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7:00PM**





## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CORNER

Jan Fitzgerald, DRE



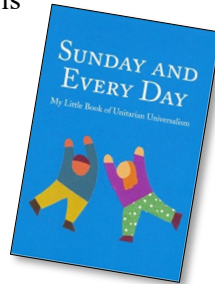
During the recent years, several groups of religious educators and others have been trying to build up the Family Faith Traditions or Full Week Faith. This is because many feel that the home is the most important place for children to learn about Unitarian Universalism. The parents are the best teachers. We see the children and youth for only a little time each church year and a Unitarian Universalist faith comes to life in the home. Rituals are a very good way to incorporate our faith into the everyday, whether it is as simple as lighting a chalice at home or talking about Unitarian Universalism in the car when running errands.

There are two books I recommend:

*Sunday and Every Day*, by Patricia Frevert. This book is for little children and is available at the UUA

bookstore. It contains our sources, children-friendly principles, songs, graces, and the story of the chalice;

*The Book of New Family Traditions revised*, by Meg Cox. This one is available on Amazon. This is not a Unitarian Universalist book, but instead contains some rich examples of easy rituals. There are rituals for Hanukkah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, Kwanzaa, and many other holidays, as well. Some are adapta-



tions of familiar rituals. For Hanukkah, one family collects money for charity and on charity night the family decides where the money will go. For a Christmas tradition the family gives craft kits on St. Nicholas Day so the children can make a gift for someone else. Some families have a Winter Solstice dinner where they eat a special dinner emphasizing “the food the sun grows” and then use luminaries and light sparklers and small fireworks. Some families celebrate Kwanzaa by playing a history game and have the children tape record interviews with their grandparents.

There are so many small ways to incorporate Unitarian Universalism in our rituals and in our everyday. It is a very busy time of year, but I suggest you give it a try and your children and youth will reap the benefits. Happy Holidays to you all.

## MUSICAL NOTES

Sonja Johnston, Minister of Music

Hard to believe we are writing the December Musical Notes!

We have exciting musical events coming in December. Our Orff instructor, Joan Schubert, will visit MVUUF on December 10th and will lead the youngsters in a rehearsal at 9:15. They will then play the prelude for that Sunday morning. Let's have a great turnout!!

We also have our annual Holiday Music Sunday. Everyone who wishes to perform is invited. Adults MUST keep your piece 3 minutes or under and youngsters 2 minutes or under. In the past we have always had a large number who wish to be a part of this special Sunday so we MUST limit the time for each song. A highlight will be a piece that will include both the adult and children's choir.

The responses to our music survey were very positive. Classical music was still the preferred music chosen by MVUUF members with folk/rock 2nd. People valued variety in music and we do have a lot of variety here with several excellent instrumentalists, 2 adult choirs – mixed and women's – plus the children's choir, Zenith Avenue, a small vocal group and several vocalists who also play accompanying instruments. There also were a few requests for more upbeat hymns and we do strive to keep our congregation happy! If you would like to be a part of the music, please let me know!

*Happy Holidays!*  
Sonja Johnston, Minister of Music





## Jerry Gilliand Bequest

Jerry Gilliand, whose contributions to the Fellowship never seem to end, has left the Fellowship a sizeable bequest. Barb Gilliand has agreed to let us use those funds in the following ways:

⇒\$7,000 to pay for street repairs

⇒\$4,000 to repair the bird holes in the siding in front of the building and the water damage on the side of the building

⇒\$11,000 toward new carpet for the basement

It is difficult to express how much this will help the Fellowship. Our gratitude to Jerry and to Barb is enormous. We have a beautiful facility, and Jerry did much to make that happen and to maintain it. It is very gratifying to be able to continue his legacy in this way.

Originally, the city told us to expect our cost for last summer's street repairs to be about \$31,000. Because the city's process does not allow them to assess us for more than their estimate of how much the repairs will increase our property value, they reduced that amount to \$8,000. We had already received a contribution of \$1,000 for the repairs. Therefore, we can completely pay for the repairs without a special fund drive or the need to finance them over 10 years. That is wonderful news.

Even though we badly need the repairs to the siding and downstairs carpet, we were not able to fund them in the budget for this year. Being able to proceed with these badly needed repairs is just great news.

Thanks again to Jerry and to Barb.

- Dale Lewellyn, treasurer

## ***Are you not receiving the Friday e-mails?***

*We just switched to new e-mail management software, and some folks are getting their MVUUF e-mails sent to their spam or promotions folders instead of their inbox. If you aren't receiving your Friday e-mails, check those folders first. If you are able to find them, move them to your inbox and you should get a prompt asking if you would like our e-mails to always go to your inbox. Select "yes" and you'll be good to go!*

*If you can't find the Friday e-mails or can't get them to go automatically to your inbox, please contact Tristan for help. He can be reached at [office@mnvalleyuuu.org](mailto:office@mnvalleyuuu.org).*



## MEMBERSHIP

I am currently looking for members to join the **Membership Committee!**

As I am settling in to my position as Membership Coordinator, I am hoping to get together a group of MVUUF members to help me better understand membership at MVUUF, as well as strategizing ways to get new people in our doors and new members engaged with our community.

If you are interested in joining the committee, please e-mail me at [office@mnvalleyuuu.org](mailto:office@mnvalleyuuu.org).

Thanks, and I hope you have an excellent winter solstice!

- *Tristan Jones, Membership Coordinator*



## STEWARDSHIP

### Did you know?

MVUUF's foundation for programming, staffing, and brick and mortar is an investment of about \$161,400 a year. Programming, staffing, and brick and mortar affect your Sunday morning experience plus your personal and spiritual growth. The foundation also affects the gifts of liberal religion that we give to the community.

All of that is possible because of your generous pledges. Thank you!

- *Jeanne Simpson, Chair*



## TREASURER

### Taxes and Pledges

The end of the year is approaching, and it's a good time to think about ways to use your MVUUF pledge to minimize your taxes.



First, keep in mind that Congress is in the process of changing our tax laws. It is unclear as of this writing what, if anything, will get passed, but most of the changes being considered will greatly reduce the number of people who itemize their deductions. If you don't itemize, you won't be able to deduct charitable contributions. Therefore, if you expect to itemize this year, you may want to consider completely fulfilling your 2017-18 pledge during calendar 2017 so that your contributions will be certain to be deductible.

Second, if you are 70½ or older and have retirement funds that require a minimum distributions, you may want to consider rolling the distribution over directly to MVUUF. See your tax consultant, but this will normally avoid including the distribution as taxable income.

Third, if you have securities that have appreciated since you bought them, you may want to donate them to MVUUF to fulfill your pledge and avoid paying taxes on the appreciation. Again, see your tax advisor, but you may be able to take a deduction for the full current market value of the security.

Please contact me if you plan to use the second or third of these options.

- *Dale Lewellyn, Treasurer*

## ENDOWMENT

### Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

The \$5,000 challenge has been more than met. The \$5,000 match has been contributed, and the October treasurer's report shows an endowment balance of \$31,191.

Gifts to the endowment, of course, are always welcome. Our biggest challenge now will be to put these funds towards good projects that further the mission and vision of MVUUF.

- *Don Park, for the Endowment Committee*





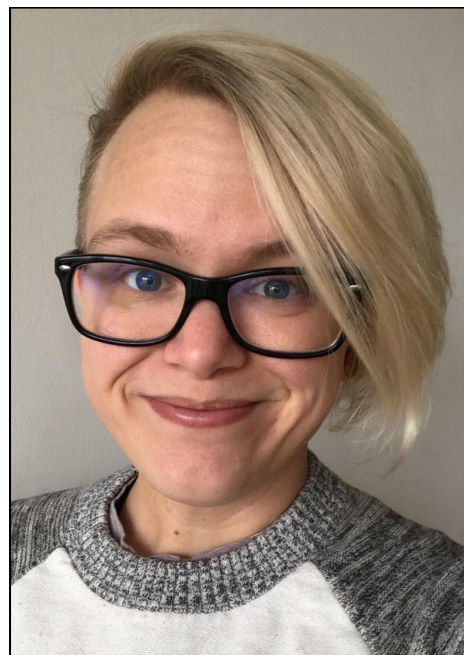


## WELCOME TO OUR NEW OFFICE MANAGER, TRISTAN JONES

Tristan Jones joined us as our new Office Manager and Membership Coordinator in November of 2017. Prior to moving to the Twin Cities in August, he lived in St. Louis, MO, where he worked as the Office Manager and Membership Coordinator of a local synagogue. While living in St. Louis, Tristan also received his MA from Washington University in St. Louis, where he studied Classics with a focus on Ancient Greek. He loves linguistics, talking theology, and helping facilitate the growth of congregations through membership engagement and communications.

When not working, Tristan enjoys exploring the outdoors, reading and writing, volunteering, and spending time with his fiancée. He is currently learning Japanese, trying to develop his (poor) knitting skills, and planning his wedding for May 2018!

You can reach Tristan via e-mail at [office@mnvalleyuuu.org](mailto:office@mnvalleyuuu.org) or by calling the office at [\(952\) 884-8956](tel:952-884-8956) during his office hours.



## Caroling and Pot Luck!



Come back to MVUUF  
on Sunday, December 17th  
for a family-friendly evening  
of caroling and food.

4:30 - gather at MVUUF, assemble food, practice carols

5:00 - sing for our neighbors on Zenith Avenue

5:30 / 5:45 - return to MVUUF for pot luck supper

Hoping to add: a craft or game for anyone who'd rather not go out and sing (volunteer needed)

\* \* *NOTE: if the temps are too cold, we'll sing indoors!*

Contact Karen Olson, 952-888-6527 or Leslie Swenson, 952-881-9602 with questions.





## CONGREGATIONAL CARE RESOURCE COMMITTEE

The Congregational Care NETWORK is comprised of all members and friends at MVUUF who reach out to each other in times of need, crisis, sadness, or celebration. The Congregational Care COMMITTEE is responsible for connecting members and friends of the Fellowship who have a need or a request at such times with members and friends who have volunteered to help fill those specific needs. We are a committee of seven, and we need your HELP! This is a full-congregational activity.

The Congregational Care Committee coordinates help with rides, food, child care, pet care, visits to shut-ins, and so much more. It also maintains a list of friends who offer short term help. We welcome you to join this important congregational function and encourage you to look for future sign-up opportunities. Call anyone on the committee if you have questions. We're confident you will find it gratifying.

The MVUUF Congregational Care Resource Network

Bobbie Gish	952-941-4417	<a href="mailto:bobbie002@comcast.net">bobbie002@comcast.net</a>
Carmen Herzog	952-831-7988	<a href="mailto:carmjlher@aol.com">carmjlher@aol.com</a>
Donna Kopnick	952-884-1431	<a href="mailto:lkopnick@comcast.net">lkopnick@comcast.net</a>
Becky McPeck	952-887-2148	<a href="mailto:rcreates@yahoo.com">rcreates@yahoo.com</a>
Betty Olson	952-831-3854	<a href="mailto:bolsonflute@comcast.net">bolsonflute@comcast.net</a>
Leslie Swenson	952-881-9602	<a href="mailto:kline012@umn.edu">kline012@umn.edu</a>
Jan Wolff	952-888-4283	<a href="mailto:junebug5391@comcast.net">junebug5391@comcast.net</a>
Ruth Keely	952-237-7136	<a href="mailto:rajpkely@gmail.com">rajpkely@gmail.com</a>



### UU Quotes

We, UUs, are respectful of the history out of which we have come and through which we have endured for more than four hundred years. But we are bound by no historic model. We continue to evolve by the light of our growing understanding of ourselves and our world. We feel obliged by the very urgency of religion to seek and experiment with more effective forms of teaching our members, young and old, with more compelling and inspiring arts of worship, with more energetic and adequate methods of public witness, and with more moving and sustaining sources of comfort and courage in the high adventure of living our lives in examined, loving and transforming ways.

*Jack Mendelsohn, UU Minister, Being a Liberal in an Illiberal Age*



## SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Megan Duffy Sananikone, Chair

### GET INVOLVED!

**The Next Social Action Committee Meeting - Monday Dec. 4th, 6:30pm, Fireside Room.**

The Social Action Committee meets the 1st Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 PM. All are welcome to attend the meetings!



## DECEMBER SUNDAY SHARING: CAMP UNISTAR

The December Sunday Sharing offering is for Camp UniStar Scholarships.



**Camp UniStar**

Camp UniStar is a rustic retreat for individuals, couples, and families with shared UU values. Reachable only by water, the camp is surrounded by the Chippewa National Forest and is on Star Island in Cass Lake, one of the largest lakes in northern Minnesota. The camp's waterfront offers a wide range of activities. The island's forest trails attract hikers. Sunrises and sunsets encourage meditation.

Each year UniStar campers return for the serenity and community, with no roads or commercial enterprise, and enjoy a week filled with thought-provoking programs, wonderful meals, and memorable experiences. In addition to staff, camp capacity each week is 70 campers, who are in cabins

and the upstairs of the main lodge, or in a tenting area beside the lake.

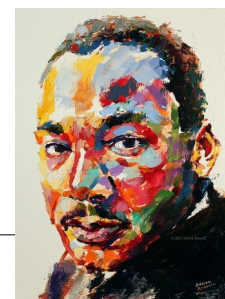
During the season, camp offers 12 weeks with various programs – some for youth only, some for adults only, most for individuals and family groups. The season opens with work week to prepare the camp for the summer. This is followed by two weeks for 7th to 12th grade youth.

In 2017 four MVUUF youth, Gena Coate, Calvin Nasset, Sophie Nasset, and Walter Van Dyke received scholarships to attend youth week.

The December Sunday offerings will be shared with Camp UniStar to provide scholarships for MVUUF youth campers in June 2018.

## MLK, JR. SERVICE DAY

This year we'll be planning a day of service again! Look for more details coming of the activities that will be planned for the entire family to participate in on Saturday with a Food Gathering on Sunday.



## BELOVED CONVERSATIONS UPDATE



As the Tuesday and Sunday adult education groups draw to a close this December, I am mindful of the distance we have traveled, and the miles we have to go, as we work to be the UUs we are called

to be. Over 20 new and long-term members became better acquainted, as well as doing anti-racism work as part of the curriculum developed at the UU Meadville Seminary. We started from what we know about racism from the 1850s locally and in greater Minnesota. Then, with our own stories, we moved to how our congregation operates. The sessions gave us opportunities to practice respectful listening skills. We also worked on identifying how we **feel** about discrimination vs. how we **think** about it, not an easy thing for many UUs to do. Writing in a journal about our personal responses extended the classroom learning further.

Rev. Danny Glover, pastor at Above Every Names, and Jill Clearman, development director at Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC), shared their perspectives on community

groups working with white liberal volunteers together on change. The next week, MVUUF Chair Eva Mach and Finance Chair Steve Danko responded to questions about how this fellowship operates.

At the same time, the MVUUF youth have also been spending time in small groups exploring racism and justice issues. Jan Fitzgerald, MVUUF Religious Education Director, selected two curriculums for 6-8 and 9-12 grade groups, introduced by parent volunteers and Wendy Gorman, Youth Coordinator. And, last spring, the Religion and Ethics discussion group spent a Sunday talking about "microaggressions."

One of the key commitments we made at our opening Beloved Conversations session with Rev. Ashley Horan was to be responsible for our own learning. Here are some books worth reading:

- ♦ *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, by Isabel Wilkerson
- ♦ *A Peculiar Imbalance: the Fall and Rise of Racial Equality in Early Minnesota*, by William Davis Green

- Diane Bick



## SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

CONT'D

### ANY INTEREST IN STARTING A FELLOWSHIP GARDEN?



Ten years ago, a member of our fellowship offered her yard for a community fellowship garden. Six members signed up and the garden is still going strong today, even though two members are no longer with the group.

When there are extra vegetables we take them to VEAP. We decide each winter what to plant, order seeds, and wait until the warm weather returns.

A member of our fellowship has offered her yard for another garden if there are members who are interested. The yard is in Bloomington, on Logan Ave. S., near Penn and 86th. Babitha and Syed Asif have generously offered their yard. It would be 4 areas in their yard. Currently it has ground cover on it, mostly creeping charlie. The ground would have to be worked and soil amended. It would really be a fun ground-breaking effort. This is a great time for families to work together on a project where the results are healthy eating and potentially helping others who need good food, too.

There will be an initial meeting for anyone interested in this project on December 3rd at 11:45 after church (location to be determined). If you are interested, but can't make this meeting there will be a second date of December 17th at 11:45. Those who are interested will take the lead from here and the garden will be what the members want. If 3-6 people sign up. I think it will be a "go."

Please respond to this via e-mail if you have an interest and which date for the meeting you prefer.

Questions: call Nan Corliss 952-835-6832 or e-mail: [ncorliss41@aol.com](mailto:ncorliss41@aol.com)

### REFUGEE FAMILY UPDATE

It has been almost a year since Ruqiyo, Abdo, Muna and Ali arrived as refugees in this country. How are they doing?

The Somali refugee family who came to this country from Egypt and who we co-sponsored through the Minnesota Council of Churches, will celebrate their first anniversary in the U.S.A. on February 6, 2018. They have experienced many "firsts" this past year and we hope they will visit MVUUF and share with us the many ways they have learned to adjust and begin life anew in a foreign land.

Karen and Nan enjoyed a dinner out with them all in October and found that they are doing well and making new friends, adjusting to new jobs, learning English, and going to school. Abdi, their friend from Somalia, years ago, who is their U.S. tie, helped them buy a car. Abdo and Ali both have permits and are learning to drive. The next time we see them it is my guess they will have a driver's license, and transportation independence will be a welcomed reality.

- Nan and Karen



### THIS OLD EARTH

As I write this, we are preparing for Thanksgiving; as you read this, we will be getting ready for the long countdown to Christmas and New Year.

It seems that these year-end holidays have changed drastically since the '40s and '50s of my youth, both personally and for our society, particularly its dominant subculture, Christendom. We were told stories of pious Puritans feasting with welcoming native Americans; and the pageantry of wise men divinely guid-

ed by a star to the birthing of the future King of Kings. Now, in this more cynical era, these stories are receding and have been replaced by the merchant's fourth quarter revenue orgy, featuring their new inventions such as Black Friday. Fortunately, if only for the sake of continuity, New Year's Eve remains an unapologetic secular party.

My hope is that Thanksgiving can become a reminder to give thanks for our existence on this beautiful and bountiful

planet; that Christmas can also remind us that the days will be getting longer now; and at New Year's Eve we resolve to take advantage of the longer days to protect and take better care of this old Earth. Happy Holidays!

- Ed Prell - <https://thisoldearth.com/>





## THANK YOU

My latest run as Newsletter Editor has come to an end. It's been the better part of four years, plus my earlier stint in the early 2000s.

I'd like to thank everyone for being forgiving and patient when I lost your emails and for tolerating my nagging you for your articles. You're in good hands with Tristan. Help him, as you have me, by submitting your material early and in final edited form. And thank you, Tristan, for taking this on.

Beginning with the JANUARY Uni-Sun (submissions due DECEMBER 20), Tristan, our new Office Manager, will be taking over Uni-Sun duties as they now fall under the wider communications umbrella which he will lead. This will definitely help make our "brand" more consistent, and also should provide for fewer gaps and missed opportunities for committees trying to get their message out. One stop shopping: Tristan.

Now, what shall I do the third week of every month??

- Jay Crashell, (former) MVUUF Newsletter Editor

**PS: One more item of business. If you've been sending your newsletter items to me at my personal email address, you'll want to stop doing that and start using the official address - [newsletter@mnvalleyuu.org](mailto:newsletter@mnvalleyuu.org).**



## VEAP

We just want to thank everyone who responded to our plea in the Uni-Sun by bringing huge amounts of brown paper bags to church. I also want to let everyone know that laundry detergent can be found in containers that are smaller than the large one gallon size. I was able to find ½ gallon containers at my local Dollar Tree, as well as at the grocery store. Please keep in mind the need for toilet paper and diapers, as well as cleaning supplies and feminine hygiene products.



Finally, we will be needing a team of 20-30 volunteers on Saturday, January 13th to separate large packages of paper products and then repackage them into smaller packages that will be distributed by the VEAP pantry. If you are interested in being a part of that team, contact Lorna Prell, Carmen Herzog, or the church office.

Thanks again for all your generous donations!

- Lorna Prell and Carmen Herzog

## UU Quotes

We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of another's burdens.

*Jane Addams, Unitarian and Founder of Hull House*

## YOGA

Yoga classes continue for the 3rd year at MVUUF. We meet on Wednesdays at 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays at 9 a.m.  
Wednesdays in December : 6, 13, 20 and 27

- Saturdays in December : 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- Wednesdays in January : 3, 10, 17, and 31 (no class on Jan. 24)
- Saturdays in January : 6, 13, 20, and 27
- Classes cost \$4 each, or 15 classes for \$50.

Just bring a mat and wear comfortable clothes. These are gentle yoga classes open to all.

Direct any questions to

Fran Bohlke, Yoga instructor — email : [bryawnte@msn.com](mailto:bryawnte@msn.com)

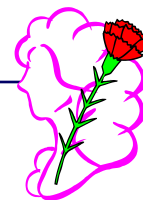






## WOMEN'S GROUP

Women's Group will meet Saturday, December 2, 2017 at 10:15 for coffee and socializing in the Social Hall.









Our speaker will be Ted Lentz, architect. Ted will talk to us about the State Capitol renovation.

We welcome all MVUUF women, whether members or non-members, to attend our monthly meetings. We meet the first Saturday of each month from October through May. Programs begin at 10:30. A catered lunch is offered after the meeting for \$7.00. Nancy Buckman will e-mail you and you can respond to her notice if you want lunch. Feel free to bring your own lunch

*Carmen Herzog and Eve Bergmann, co-chairs*

## EVENING BOOK GROUP

The holidays are rapidly approaching. The best remedy for stress and the cold weather is to find a warm fire and curl up with a book (or a Kindle). Need holiday gift suggestions? Feel free to use our reading list and join our lively (and informative) discussions. Alternating fiction and nonfiction, our upcoming choices are:

-  On December 19, 2017, *The Burgess Boys*, by Elizabeth Strout
-  On January 16, 2018, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, by Arlie Russell Hochschild
-  On February 20, 2018, *Everything I Never Told You*, by Celeste Ng
-  On March 20, 2018, *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*, by James Foreman, Jr.
-  On April 17, 2018, *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas
-  On May 15, 2018, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond



The Evening Book Group meets throughout the year on the third Tuesday of every month in the Fireside Room at 7PM. The only requirement is that you read, or attempt to read, the monthly selection. Feel free to come to any or all of the meetings. We welcome newcomers!

Questions? Call Joyce McMartin at 952-942-7143 or email at [joyceamcmartin@gmail.com](mailto:joyceamcmartin@gmail.com).

## BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING ~ "BUILDING COMMUNITY"

These small informal get-togethers are opportunities to get to know each other better and discuss a wide variety of topics. (We will try to have on the table where we are sitting a small sign that says "UU".)

- 1ST AND 3RD THURSDAYS each month, 1-2:30 pm at the Edina Panera, 3345 Hazelton Rd next to JoAnn Fabrics and across from Target. (December 7 only, January 4 & January 18)
- 4TH TUESDAY each month, 1-2:30 pm at Jojo's Rise and Wine, located on Nicollet Ave between Route 13 and Burnsville Pkwy in Burnsville. (No December date, January 23)

Come when and as often as you like. No need to RSVP. Invite others who might be interested. These are intended for all genders and ages.

Contact Nancy Buckman at [nancybmnuu@gmail.com](mailto:nancybmnuu@gmail.com) or 952-736-9586 if you have questions and/or if you would like an email reminder for each date.



## RELIGION, ETHICS, AND IDEAS

**Religion, Ethics, and Ideas will meet on Sunday, December 10 at 9:00 AM in the Fireside Room.**

Our topic will be **Bible Stories**. We will talk about Bible stories that we remember and which made an impression on us. If there is a Bible story you would like to discuss, bring it with you and bring a Bible if you have one. If you don't have a Bible story don't worry, I have plenty of stories we can discuss.

All are welcome and invited to attend.

- *Questions? contact John Peloquin.*



## THE KITCHEN

On most Sundays (September – May) right after service, there are hot beverages and snacks available downstairs. Come down to socialize and get to know each other.

Now, to have this available we do need your help. Volunteers (individuals, families and children) are needed to make coffee and plug in the teapot **and/or** take turns to bring some treats (which can be store bought or homemade) **and / or** stay after to help clean up and wash some dishes (mostly cups). There is a signup sheet downstairs by or on the snack table.



## BRIDGE GROUP

**December bridge will be on Saturday, December 16 at 1 p.m.**

The bridge group meets the third Saturday of every month from 1-3 p.m. We are always looking for new players! Beginner to expert, all are welcome.

If you are interested, please contact Barbara Hanson at 952-937-5905, or [bnehanson@comcast.net](mailto:bnehanson@comcast.net).

*Come join the fun!*

- *Barbara Hanson, Coordinator*



## MEN'S GROUP

**Men's group will meet on Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 6:30PM.**

Our speakers will be **Rev. Harlan Limpert**, a UU minister and former chief operating officer of the Unitarian Universalist Association and **Rebecca Thoman, MD**, both of whom are affiliated with the Minnesota Chapter of Compassion and Choices. They will speak on the topic of end of life options.

If you wish to come for dinner sign up in the basement and come at 6:30. If you only wish to hear the speaker, come at 7:00. All are invited regardless of gender.

- *Questions? Contact John Peloquin or Bill Mc martin.*



### Change of Address ?

Be sure to let Tristan Jones, Office Manager, know if any information regarding your address, phone, email, etc., has changed. You may reach Tristan either by calling (952) 884-8956 or emailing him at [office@mnvalleyuu.org](mailto:office@mnvalleyuu.org).



**BOARD OFFICERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP**

Chair & Board Member	Eva Mach	(651) 226-5949 emach@pro-tecdesign.com
Chair-elect & Board Member	Kelley Hughes	(952) 831-0032 uukelley@hotmail.com
Secretary & Board Member	David Olson	(952) 888-6527 olson199@umn.edu
Treasurer	Dale Lewellyn	(952) 432-9459 treasurer@mnvalleyuu.org

**BOARD WORKGROUPS**

Zimmer Property	Doug Bruce, Mark Clary, Steve Danko, Eva Mach
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**MVUUF STANDING COMMITTEES**

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**Website Coordinator**

Michael Baynton, webmaster@mnvalleyuu.org

**The Board of Trustees meets the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall. The meetings are open to all members of the Fellowship.**

**UNI-SUN Item Submission Information**

The submission deadline date for the UNI-SUN is the 20th of each month.

Submit articles to the Newsletter Editor via email to [newsletter@mnvalleyuu.org](mailto:newsletter@mnvalleyuu.org)

# MVUUF CALENDAR ~ DECEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 10:30am Sunday Service 12:15pm Beloved Convers	27	28 1pm Beyond Sunday Mo 6:30pm Beloved Convers	29 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	30 9:30am Women's Spiritu	Dec 1	2 10:15am Women's Group
3 10:30am Sunday Service 12:15pm Beloved Convers	4 6:30pm Social Action Co	5 6:30pm Beloved Convers	6 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7 9:30am Women's Spiritu 1pm Beyond Sunday Mo	8 10:15am Blue Highways 7pm Friday Night Poker	9
10 9am Religion, Ethics, an 10:30am Sunday Service 11:30am Special Congreg	11	12 7pm Finance Committee	13 5:30pm C.O.S.M. meetin 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 7pm Board of Trustees	14 9:30am Women's Spiritu 10:30am Women's Book 6:30pm Men's Group 6:30pm Social Action Co	15	16 1pm Bridge Club
17 10:30am Sunday Service 4:30pm Caroling and Pot	18	19 7pm Evening Book Club	20 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	21 9:30am Women's Spiritu	22 10:15am Blue Highways	23
24 10:30am Sunday Service	25	26	27 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	28 9:30am Women's Spiritu	29	30
31 10:30am Sunday Service	Jan 1 6:30pm Social Action Co	2	3 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 9:30am Women's Spiritu 1pm Beyond Sunday Mo	5	6


 10715 Zenith Avenue South  
 Bloomington, Minnesota 55431  
**We are a Welcoming Congregation**