

What Does It Mean To Be A People of Awe?

This at least seems to me the main problem... How can we contrive to be at once astonished at the world and yet at home in it? ...How can this world give us at once the fascination of a strange town and the comfort and honor of being our own town? - G.K. Chesterton

The path of awe seems well worn. It's a journey intended to bring us down to size. Pictures of our galaxy with a note that there are 100 billion more just like it. Videos of deep-sea creatures with bioluminescent bodies. Images of the northern lights that are utterly otherworldly. All of them



remind us that the universe is more vast than we can imagine. All of them leave us with a sense of wonder that overwhelms. We are brought to the edge of what we can wrap our minds around. It's like staring into an incomprehensible abyss. One can't help but feel humbled and small.

But religion has never wanted us to stop there. Hold tight it says. I know it's hard but trust us: the path doesn't end with a deep darkness that doesn't care. Just stand at the abyss a bit longer. Lean in just a little bit more. And when you do so, suddenly an invitation emerges from that awefull abyss. You look into the vast mystery and surprisingly, it stares back, as if to say, "Welcome home."

As physicists tell us, contemplation of the vast universe doesn't make them feel smaller, it makes them realize the larger story of which they are a part. We are stardust, as they say. From the vastness we came and to it we will return again. In other words, to be a people of awe is not so much about feeling small; it's about feeling connected. And not just connected to the stars, but also to each other.

Awe reduces our size in order to make room for something more than our personal needs, wants and worries. We see beyond ourselves. In looking up into the cosmos, we also look across it and we truly begin to see one another. And it's a huge gift, because while being center stage and center of the universe can feel powerful, it's also a very lonely place to stand.

So friends, don't just look up at the stars this month. Let that looking up also lead to you looking across. And in doing so, may you - like our friend G.K. Chesterton - not simply be astonished at the universe but also feel at home in it.

Soul Matters Themed Ministry Team





DECEMBER SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 AM

- Dec. 1st, 10:30am: 1st Sundays: Choose Your Own Service:
- <u>Upstairs: Fr. Vito Sarducci Uncensored: The Power, the Pain and, the Shame:</u> Following some brief comedy, Tom Esch (aka Fr. Vito) will talk about his life as a Catholic priest, including why he left, how his spirituality has changed and thoughts on why the clergy sexual abuse scandal has been so systemic. Guest Speaker Tom Esch, Worship Associate Linda Hayen, with music by the Alfreds and the MVUUF Mixed Choir.
- <u>Downstairs: The Awe of the Cosmos:</u> Rev. Laura leads a cosmic themed short chapel service followed by activities for making space themes decorations for our holiday tree. Music from Kaizen Hummer and Alan Phillips
- Conference Room: Holiday Cards to Incarcerated Folks Project; Fran Bohlke is leading this project to send holiday cards. Meet in the Conference Room. Participants may take a break from the project if they'd like to hear the guest speaker. Ages 12 and up.
- <u>Dec. 8th, I0:30am: The Power of Awe:</u> Ralph Waldo Emerson, a Unitarian minister and philosopher, said that the deepest truths must be known by intuition, not reason, and that experiences of awe in nature were among the best ways to trigger such intuitions. How can we harness the power of awe to experience life with new energy and inspiration and orient our actions towards the needs of those around us. Rev. Andrea Johnson with music by Lark Lewis, Elaine Lewellyn and the Women's Chorale.
- <u>Dec. 15th, 10:30am:</u> Holiday Music Sunday: No sermons, no readings, no meditations. Just the lovely sounds of music from MVUUF members and friends of all ages to soothe and lift you spirits. Led by Nicole Collins and Lark Lewis on piano.
- <u>Dec. 22nd, I0:30am: Into the Light:</u> We celebrate the returning light with this Winter Solstice celebration. Revs. Laura Thompson and Andrea Johnson with music from the Children's Choir, Lark Lewis and the Women's Chorale.
- <u>Dec. 24th, 5pm: Christmas Eve Service: Stories and Carols:</u> We'll share familiar stories and songs alongside the idea the "We Are All the Messiah". Revs. Andrea Johnson and Laura Thompson, Linda Hayen and Karen Moreno on piano. An offering will be taken for the Minister's Discretion Fund.
- **Dec.29th, 10:30am: BYO Sunday Service:** Bring a reading or a seasonal poem to share, a song to teach or sing or play. Staff has the day off, it's up to you to ring out the year!

Vol. 55, No. 4 Uni-Sun



Next MVUUF Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 11 at 7:00PM

All are welcome to attend. If there is a topic you would like to add to the Board agenda, please contact Nancy Buckman, Board Chair 2019-2020, at nancybmnuu@gmail.com

DECEMBER SUNDAY SHARING PARTNER

MVUUF Camp Unistar Scholarships



Camp UniStar is a place of natural beauty and serenity nestled on Star Island, surrounded by the clear waters of Cass Lake. Here amidst the Pine forests of northern Minnesota, Unitarian Universalists and like-minded friends gather to relax and regenerate. The dark, clear nights are perfect for star-gazing, while sunrises and sunsets invite meditation. Water activities abound and there are miles of trails through the quiet forest. Campers enjoy sailing, swimming, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, volleyball, horseshoes, crafts, card games, board games, conversing, or quietly reading on screen porches...all on an island with no roads or commercial enterprise.

Established in 1961, Camp UniStar is a non-profit, volunteer-managed camp for people of all ages. Families and individuals come seeking personal growth, community, and friendship as well as a deeper connection to nature. They leave with changed lives, new friends, and lifelong memories of a magical place.

During the season, camp offers 12 weeks with various programs – some for youth only, some for adults only, most for a combination of individuals to family groups. The season opens with a work week fixing up the camp, and two youth weeks for people entering 7th through 12th grades. In addition to staff, camp capacity each week is up to 70 campers, who are housed in sleeping rooms in the cabins and the upstairs of the main lodge, or in a tenting area beside the lake.

About Sunday Sharing:

Our offering plate is shared **50/50** each week with our Sunday Sharing Partner, (minus pledge checks). If you prefer for 100% of your gift to go to the Sunday Sharing Partner, Write "Charity Only" on your check or put cash in an envelope provided on the table in the lobby. If you prefer for your gift to go 100% to the Fellowship, write "MVUUF Only" on the check or put cash in an envelope with that written on it. Please contact the office or treasurer with any questions. Thanks!



At the Christmas Eve Service on December 24th at 5:00pm, there will be a special collection for the Minister's Discretionary Fund which goes to help local people in need throughout the year, in part through help with groceries or gas. Please give generously this season!



MUSICAL NOTES

NICOLE COLLINS

December, a month of holiday spirit, a sometimes joyful time and sometimes heavy time. Come, let music elevate your being and be in the community of song! We have some wonderful special music planned and played by our very talented congregants. The choirs have been busy rehearsing beloved favorites and new pieces and we can't wait for you to hear them. The children's choir is focusing on our hymns in foreign languages and they're eager to teach them to the congregation. Also, our wonderful accompanist has already displayed her piano and singing skills. She'll be debuting another talent of hers this month as well.



Music Sunday is December 15th! Contact Nicole at Music@Mnvalleyuu.org to submit your holiday or winter selections and Lark at Piano@Mnvalleyuu.org for accompanist needs.

The Chorale is changing rehearsal days and time to every Wednesday at 7:30, immediately after our mixed choir rehearsal starting in the new year. If you have the ability to read some music and blend in small ensembles, we have a place for you in a Soprano, Alto, and Tenor setting.

Our Mixed Choir has welcomed new tenor, Michael Sinner! His daughter is also in the children's choir.

In gratitude and community of song, Nicole Collins Music Director

Music@MNValleyuu.org

612-296-1622

The Music Committee is putting together a book of appreciation for Betty Olson's years of musical expertise as chair of the music committee and as flute soloist whenever she was needed.

A book of our memories and expressions of gratitude will be a special treasure for her. We want to have it ready before Christmas, so we have set a "due date" of Music Sunday, December 15th.

It is an opportunity for each of us to say thank you. Special pages are on a table across from the sanctuary. Janet Stevens, Music Committee Chair



CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAMS

REV. ANDREA JOHNSON

Religious Education in December



Our theme in December is Awe. It feels like a good idea in the midst of the hustle and bustle of parties, gifts, decor and celebrations to take some time out to reconnect to that which brings us awe. Perhaps its the goosebumps that arise from seeing love and justice put in action or the goosebumps that arise from looking up at the starry night or welcoming in new life as the Christmas story reminds us. For me, Awe helps me connect with the stars but also with my family, friends and church community. My wish for you this holiday season is that you take some time to notice the quiet flame of a candle burning and the warmth and connection to your family, friends and communities.

There is only one Religious Education Sunday in December and that is on December 8th. Pre-K-6th graders will head straight down to their religious education classes. The younger ones will learn about the awe of love in action and Rev. Laura will be with the 4th-6th graders as she teaches them how to be chalice lighters and our idea to create a junior worship associates program. OWL will also be held from 10:00amnoon this day. Please also join us for Music Sunday on December 15th and for a Solstice service on December 22nd. There will be a Christmas Eve Family Service on December 24th at 5:00 pm.



Vol. 55, No. 4 Uni-Sun



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Rev. Laura Thompson



Social Action will be meeting during the 1st week of December. If you are interested in our work or in joining the committee contact Rev. Thompson

In November, we received our Welcoming Congregations Renewal (LGBTQ) and we raised \$487 for MUUSJA.

SERVICE AUCTION COMMITTEE

The Auction committee is looking for some more members to help plan our spring auction. If this interests you please talk to Jean Danko, Barb Becker, Holly Bruce, Karen Olson, or Leslie Swenson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Kelley Hughes

Our Stewardship Team is again this year a bastion of creative and caring energies.

As Stewardship chair this year, I am pleased to introduce the core members of this team: Glenn Corliss, who has been involved with Endowment and Stewardship for years and whose idea of organizing "caucuses" is a major Stewardship strategy. Steve Danko, a 40+-year member who probably knows more about MVUUF than nearly anyone and who has held nearly every leadership position. Data-master Richard Duffin, whose technical and graphic skills inform and enhance our meetings and literature, and Co-chair Tom Walkington, whose vision builds upon those of our previous consultants and further catapults our mission into new and exciting actions toward community building.

Our meetings have been more-or-less structured brainstorming sessions, which materialize into action steps that then are accomplished between meetings. This energetic creative collaboration is downright inspiring.

I am also delighted to share that Jeanne Simpson has agreed to assist with Stewardship visuals, so expect to see her Did You Know posters soon. I am grateful to say also that Aesthetic Chair Karen Olson contributed the beautiful graphics for these posters.

The Stewardship mission this year is the same as our Board of Trustees' mission: Building Community.

A major strategy for Building Community is already underway this year: We are holding "caucuses," or gatherings for congregants who share common interests besides attending MVUUF. Last month, we held our first caucus for Snowbirds. We learned much from them, and these attendees further connected with each other – important for this group of people who spend their winters in the warmer southern United States!

Upcoming caucuses include South of the River, Music Sunday, and Board of Trustees. We have other caucus ideas also. If you have an idea for a caucus, please contact any Stewardship Team member or me. We want to hear your thoughts.

Kelley Hughes, Stewardship Chair 2019-2020

Cell: 952.451.6376

Email: <u>uukelley@hotmail.com</u>



A cause you can really get behind.

MVUUF Annual Toilet Paper and Diaper Drive

Donate diapers, toilet paper and menstrual hygiene products through MLK weekend

MVUUF Office Hours

Lead Minister -

Rev. Laura Thompson

minister@mnvalleyuu.org

(612) 216-4203

Tuesday/ Wednesday/ Thursday

9:00 am — 5:00 pm

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

Minister of Congregational Programs -

Rev. Andrea Johnson

programs@mnvalleyuu.org (612) 216-4224

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday 10:00am-3:30 pm

Sunday 9:00 am — 1:00 pm

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

Communications Manager and Membership

Coordinator

Kate Stomberg

office@mnvalleyuu.org

(952) 884-8956 (Fellowship Phone)

(612) 216-4113 (Direct Line)

Sunday - Wednesday 9:30 am —1:30 pm

RE & Youth Coordinator-

Sara Sweenev

REY@mnvalleyuu.org Sunday 9:00 am —1:00 pm

Music Director

Nicole Collins

music@mnvalleyuu.org

- Accompanist/Pianist -

Lark Lewis

piano@mnvalleyuu.org

Please call or email ahead to make sure we don't have another appointment when you come in.



Do you order from Amazon.com?

If so, they will contribute to MVUUF
for each order you place.

Go to Smile.Amazon.com to set it up.



CLASSES AND GROUPS

MEN'S GROUP (ALL GENDERS WELCOME)

Men's group will meet on Thursday Dec 12 at 6:15 in the fellowship hall. Our speaker will be Ryan Baumtrog, Ryan's subject will be Access to Affordable Housing in Minnesota. Ryan is well qualified to speak on this topic he is the Assistant Commissioner for Policy and Community Development at the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. The mission of the agency is to collaborate with individuals, communities and partners to create, preserve and finance affordable housing. All are invited regardless of gender. If you wish to come for dinner at 6:15 email John Peloquin John17780@charter.net by Tuesday Dec 10 with the phrase For Dinner; Dinner \$10 or less. If you only want to hear the speaker come by 7:00 and email me with the phrase Speaker Only. Questions contact John Peloguin John17780@charter.net



WOMEN'S GROUP



The MVUUF Women's Group will meet on Saturday, December 7 at the Fellowship. We will gather at 10:15 for beverages and conversation with the program beginning at 10:30. Our speaker will be Sally Sudo, a retired Minneapolis teacher whose family was forced into a concentration camp when she was 6 years old. The title of her presentation is 'Life in an American Concentration Camp: The Japanese American Experience **During WWII'.** A fitting topic for the anniversary of Pearl Harbor.

The January 4th program will feature our very own Tom Ehlinger: "The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame says of Pete Seeger: 'Unsinkable in his convictions, the formative folk singer Pete Seeger performed songs with passion and conscience. His influence on folk music is inestimable. Seeger's music and morals were a package deal.' Tom Ehlinger will talk about Seeger's life and share some of the songs Pete gave the world."

Attendees are encouraged to stay for lunch. A catered lunch is provided for \$7.00 per person or you can bring your own lunch. All women are encouraged to attend and visitors are very welcome. If you would like to attend and are not on the current Women's Group Contact List, please inform Nancy Buckman that you will attend by October 30 at nancybmnuu@gmail.com or at 952-736-9586. Our meetings are a great way to get better acquainted with others.

Vol. 55, No. 4 **Uni-Sun**



WE NEED YOU!

Here are two great opportunities for you to be engaged part of the MVUUF community:

Hospitality Teams: do you have a friendly smile, an ability to pass a microphone or basket or a killer banana bread recipe? Join a hospitality team! This is an excellent opportunity for new members/friends and for families! Teams rotate serving every 6 weeks. Sign-up on the communication board in the lobby or contact Kate.

Elder Friends: We have several beloved members at Friendship Village (senior living) who need rides and companionship to MVUUF services and events. If you would like to help, please sign-up on the clipboard on the communication board or contact Laura.

GENTLE YOGA Fran Bohlke



Gentle Yoga is held at MVUUF on Wednesdays at 5:00 pm and Saturdays at 9:00 am. The classes are 50 minutes, including poses and stretches designed to maintain and increase strength, flexibility, and balance. Attendees are encouraged to wear comfortable clothes and to bring a mat. Blocks and straps are provided. The cost is \$3 per class or \$40 for 15 classes. Instructor is Fran Bohlke who can be reached at bryawnte@msn.com or text 612-401-4653. .

WOMEN'S BOOK GROUP

Marilyn Burt

The Women's Book Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Fellowship, 10 am. We will meet in the Conference Room each month. Books to be read and discussed for the upcoming 2019 – 2020 season are:

December 10, 2019	Animal Farm by George Orwell			
January 14, 2020	The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah			
February 11, 2020	The Lido by Libby Page			
March 10, 2020	Stars Over Clear Lake by Loretta Ellsworth			
April 14, 2020	Commonwealth by Ann Patchett			
May 12, 2020	The Girl with Seven Names by Hyeonseo Lee			
June 9, 2020	Meeting to Select the reading list for the 2020 – 2021 church year			

We always have lively and interesting discussions. If you think some of these books sound interesting and you would like to come, please do so.



CLASSES AND GROUPS

CONTINUED

AMERICAN MAH JONGG

If you are interested in playing, or learning how to play, we have a small group meeting <u>every other</u> Wednesday in Social Hall at the Fellowship from 1-3 pm. Contact either Bobbie Gish or Nancy Buckman for more information.



BRIDGE GROUP



December bridge will be on Saturday, December 21 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, 952-937-5905 or bnehanson@comcast.net. Come join the fun!

BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING - "BUILDING COMMUNITY"

Come to any / all of our upcoming small, informal gatherings at the following times. These are opportunities to visit with and get to know others better and have some interesting conversations. **No need to RSVP**. Just come if you can and invite any others who might be interested. **All are welcome!**

First and third Tuesdays each month, 1 - 2:30 pm, at Richfield Panera (980 W. 78th, Richfield)

RELIGION ETHICS AND IDEAS

John Peloquin

Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays?

Religion Ethics and Ideas will meet on December 8 at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the fireside room. Our topic will be all **things Christmas**. Possible questions: Should Christmas be a government sanctioned Holiday? Should public schools' sanction or promote the singing of Christmas Carols? Is belief in Santa Clause a good thing? Is the tradition of gift giving a good thing? To whom should we give gifts and from whom should we expect gifts? Is Christmas a religious holiday or a cultural holiday? Would we be better off if we could magically make Christmas disappear? Should non-Christians take offense when wished a "Merry Christmas" as opposed to wished "Happy Holidays"? Was the pre conversion Ebenezer Scrooge an unwitting environmentalist 150 years ahead of his time? What is the "dead weight loss of Christmas"? All are welcome and invited to attend. Questions: contact John Peloquin

Vol. 55, No. 4 Uni-Sun



EVENING BOOK GROUP

Joyce McMartin

The leaves are turning colors and falling off the trees. Time to move inside and grab a good book. We hope you consider reading one of our group's selections, and then join us for a lively and informative discussion. Alternating fiction and nonfiction (mostly), our upcoming books are:

On December 19, 2019, City of Girls by Elizabeth Gilbert

On January 16, 2020, *Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster* by Adam Higginbotham

On February 20, 2020, The Cartel by Don Winslow

On March 19, 2020, *The Almost Nearly Perfect People: Behind the Myth of the Scandinavian Utopia* by Michael Booth

On April 16, 2020, Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams by Matthew Walker



The Evening Book Group meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year in the Fireside Room at 7 PM. 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.

AFTERNOON DISCUSSION GROUP

The discussion group that usually meets on the third Thursday of the month will not meet in December. No topic has been chosen for January at this time. Carmen Herzog, Jan Wolff



 $Photo: Dale\ Lewellyn\ of\ the\ MVUUF\ gardens$

MEDITATION



Group meditation continues each Wednesday at 4:00 pm. All are welcome. We generally begin with a short check-in, then a reading, followed by 25 minutes of silent meditation. Questions?

Contact Fran Bohlke bryawnte@msn.com



BOARD OFFICERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP			BOARD TRUSTEES		
Chair & Board Member	Nancy Buckman	(952) 736-9586 nancybmnuu@gmail.com	Trustee & Board Member	Max Chessler	(952) 388-1186 maxchessler@gmail.com
Chair-elect & Board Member	Doug Bruce	(952) 897-0970 dbrucejr@comcast.net	Trustee & Board Member	Judith Anderson	(952) 941-7047 andersonkj@earthlink.net
Secretary & Board Member	David Olson	(952) 888-6527 olson199@umn.edu	Trustee & Board Member	Tom Walkington	(612) 859-7939 tawalking@gmail.com
Treasurer	Dale Lewellyn	(952) 432-9459 treasurer@mnvalleyuu.org	Trustee & Board Member	Kelley Hughes	(952) 831-0032 uukelley@hotmail.com

BOARD WORKGROUPS				
Hanifl Property	Doug Bruce, Mark Clary, Steve Danko, Eva Mach			

	I .	
MVU Committee	UF STANDIN Chair(s)	G COMMITTEES Phone & Email
Adult Education and Enrichment	Rev. Andrea Johnson	Rev. Andrea Johnson programs@mnvalleyuu.org
Aesthetics	Karen Olson	(952) 888-6527 luvzcatz@comcast.net
Archives	Beverly Schmidt Kathy Eager	(952) 884-7262 gypsyleap@gmail.com (952) 888.8427 Kathy@darrelleager.com
Congregational Care	Maria Bavier	Care@mnvalleyuu.org mbavier@gmail.com (763) 228-9985
Committee on Shared Ministry	Eve Bergmann	(612) 597-7915 ebergmann11@aol.com
Endowment	Kat Janes	(952) 221-0975 krjanes@gmail.com
Finance	Steve Danko	(952) 884-9099 sdankojr@gmail.com
Membership	Dale Lewellyn Diane Bick	(952) 432-4259 dalelewellyn@gmail.com (952) 250-2559 dianeebick@gmail.com
Music	Janet Stevens	(952) 888-6577 jastevens1972@gmail.com
Nominating	Open	office@mnvalleyuu.org
Operations	Mark Clary	(952) 830-1971 mlfe@aol.com
Personnel	Tom Traub	(952) 435-5855 Tomtraub@charter.net
Religious Education	Rev. Andrea Johnson	Rev. Andrea Johnson programs@mnvalleyuu.org
Social Action	Rev. Laura Thompson	(612) 216-4203 minister@mnvalleyuu.org
Stewardship	Kelley Hughes	(952) 831-0032 uukelley@hotmail.com
Technology	Richard Duffin	(707) 696-6406 rwduffin@comcast.net

MVUUF Office Phone Number (952) 884-8956

10351 Zenith Ave South Bloomington, MN 55431

Lead Minister
Rev. Laura Thompson
minister@mnvalleyuu.org
(612) 216-4203

Minister of Congregational Programs

Rev. Andrea Johnson, programs@mnvalleyuu.org (612) 216-4224

Music Director

Nicole Collins, music@mnvalleyuu.org

RE and Youth CoordinatorSara Sweeney, <u>REY@mnvalleyuu.org</u>

Communications Manager and Membership Coordinator

Kate Stomberg ,office@mnvalleyuu.org (612) 216-4113

Accompanist

Lark Lewis, piano@mnvalleyuu.org

Custodian & Operations

Mark Clary, cust@mnvalleyuu.org

Internet

Home Page: www.mnvalleyuu.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/mnvalleyuu
Instagram: @mnvalleyuu

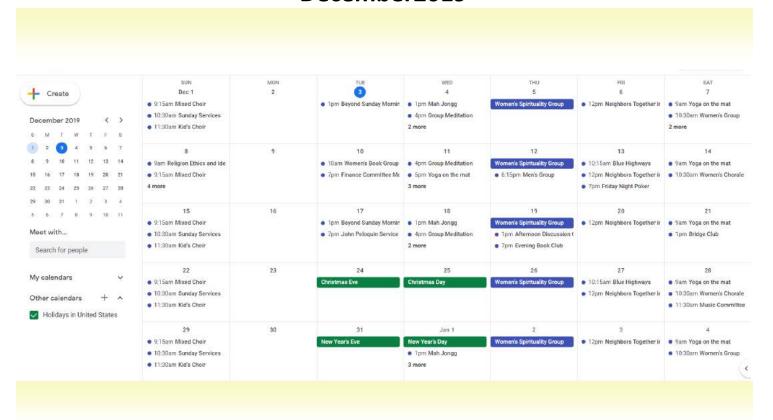
Uni-Sun Item Submission Information

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



December 2019



To View the MVUUF Calendar online, go to:

http://mnvalleyuu.org/calendar/