



# REACH

The Newsletter of the  
**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield**  
A Welcoming Congregation

5785 Lonsdale Blvd E  
Mailing Address: PO Box 363  
Northfield, MN 55057

**Minister**  
Sara Smalley

**Director of Family Ministries**  
Diana McLean

**Administrative Assistant**  
Jennifer Whitson

**Nursery Teacher**  
Julie Bailey

**President**  
Paul Krause

**Past President**  
John Owens

**Treasurer**  
Katy Gillispie

**Secretary**  
Wyman Weinbeck

**Board Members-At-Large**  
Sue Coleman

Bill Jokela

Susan Sinning

Don Stager

**Sunday Services**  
Naomi Estes-Tullo

**Music**  
Bev Topp

**Membership**  
Don Stager

**Indoor Facilities Committee**  
Wyman Weinbeck

**Outdoor Facilities Committee**  
Matt Thieding  
Larry Vorwerk

## January 2023

### Theme: Finding Our Center

*We gather both in-person at UUFN and online for Sunday services. Please choose the one that works best for you. For those in the sanctuary, vaccinations are expected for all who are eligible. When Rice County is in the green level according to CovidActNow, masks are optional but welcomed. When Rice County is in level yellow, masks are required during the service. Links for the Sunday Zoom meeting will be sent each week through the UUFN-Announce email group. Contact [jwhitson@uunorthfield.org](mailto:jwhitson@uunorthfield.org) if you would like to begin receiving the weekly email.*

**Sunday, January 1st • 10:00 am**

**“Transforming Inner Darkness into Light” • Presented by Paul and Barbara Krause**

Join us for our Annual “Burning Bowl” service. This service is a voyage of self-discovery and awakening; a casting off all that must be cast off and a celebration of all that remains. The service will include both a virtual burning bowl ceremony and a real burning bowl in our beloved sanctuary. Either way, join us to experience the transformative nature of fire.

**Sunday, January 8th • 10:00 am**

**“Finding Your Center” • Rev. Sara Smalley**

Amid all of the twists and turns of life, what keeps us centered? Join Rev. Sara and worship associate Mairi Doerr as we reflect on the spiritual practices of both centering and decentering, and what something called a Möbius strip has to teach us about the spiritual journey.

**Sunday, January 15th • 10:00 am**

**“The Love Ethic Standing at the Center: The Lived Theology of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” • Rev. Diana McLean**

Rev. Dr. King wrote of “the love ethic standing at the center” of many religions. What did that mean for him, and what does it mean for us today? Join Rev. Diana McLean, our Director of Family Ministries, and worship associate Bob Spear as we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. weekend.

**Sunday, January 22nd • 10:00 am**

**“Bring Me Back to Center” • Presented by Sharon Snyder-Thieding**

Let us explore what steps we, as individuals, family members and citizens, can take toward restoring balance, harmony and peace to the world.

**Sunday, January 29th • 10:00 am**

**“Finding Our Center” • Rev. Sara Smalley**

“Universalists are often asked to tell where they stand,” Lewis Fisher wrote. “The only true answer to give to this question is that we do not stand at all, *we move*.” If we are always moving, how do we find our center? Join Rev. Sara and worship associate Mary Jane Lipinski for an update on the changes to the Seven Principles and an exploration of what is at the heart of our community and our faith.

by Rev. Sara Smalley

When we talk of finding our center, it's natural for calm and rest to be the first things that come to mind. Who would expect anything different? After all, the need for calm is everywhere we look. So, so many of us are tired. We're overworked, over-busy, overcommitted, overly scared. We are often so weighed down by responsibility and worry that it only takes one drop of something unexpected to tip us over. So, yes, we long for rest. Yes, we want to swirl to stop.

And yet, helping us find peace and calm is not the only work found on this path of finding our center.

As our faith reminds us, being a "centered person" often involves the opposite of keeping things calm. In order to move toward a balance of justice, we have to upset the current state of things. Oppressive systems need to be challenged and toppled. And to accomplish that, we need to sacrifice calm and comfort, including our own. We need to remember that achieving a balance of equality requires us to be purposefully off balance and out-of-step with our culture, or as Martin Luther King Jr. said, we need people who are maladjusted to the way things are.

Add all this up and suddenly "our center" appears to be a much richer place than is often recognized.

It's not simply a place of peace and calm; it's also a place of being pushed and launched. What you hear in this deep space within is not just the whisper of "Rest" and "Breathe," but also "Take a deep breath and jump!" We encounter an invitation there, not just relaxation. It's a still point, yes. But a still point upon which we pivot and turn to something new.

So as we try to make sense of "finding our center" this month, it's fine to pull up the image of the Buddha sitting peacefully under a tree, but we can't let that overshadow the image of a diver balancing way up there on her diving board, pausing to regain her composure and courage so she can leap and go "all in."

Maybe in the end, instead of only asking each other, "Are you centered these days?" we need to ask, "Where is your center sending you these days?" and "Where is your center calling you to go?"

*From this month's Soul Matters packet. Read more [here](#).*

With care,  
Sara

## New to UUFN? Welcome, and come find out more!

**What We're About** is a short overview of Unitarian Universalism and UUFN. Sessions run approximately half an hour and no sign up is necessary – just show up and learn more about our community! Sessions generally are in person at UUFN after Sunday morning services. Children are welcome to attend with their grownup(s).

Offered every other month on the first Sunday:

February 5th

April 2nd

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
*by Rev. Diana McLean*

## Family Ministry Musings: Entering the New Year

The beginning of a new year is a great time to do some evaluation of where we are and where we would like to be.

I'm not a fan of New Year's resolutions, which so often set us up for failure, because we almost inevitably "break" them sooner or later.

I prefer to think in terms of what I am releasing, and what I am inviting in. I might do this by journaling, or I might create a ritual around it.

You can use flash paper (which burns away quickly and completely, but requires responsible supervision) or dissolving paper (which you stir into water and is kid-safe) to write down what you want to release and then watch it physically disappear.

In the past I haven't done as much ritual around inviting new things into my life. Recently, a parent told me that she, her husband, and their two children did this kind of release and invite ritual at the winter solstice, and what they did for inviting things into their lives was to write them down, then fold the paper toward their bodies, and then put those folded papers under their pillows that night. I loved this idea and may do it myself!

As we move into January with our theme of "Finding Our Center," this pair of rituals is one kids and adults can use to help you decide what you want to center in your own life in the year ahead.

Blessings on your new year,  
Rev. Diana

## Important Vote on January 8, 2023

From Paul Krause and the UUFN Board of Directors

January 8, 2023 is an important date for UUFN. After the service that Sunday, we will hold a vote for possible acceptance of the proposed allocation of the Lindfors' Legacy Fund. After many hours of listening to members "Values and Vision" and more hours getting feedback about the proposed allocation, we are ready to move forward.

Every member of UUFN is eligible to vote on the proposal. You may vote in-person at the church, vote online via zoom, and, if you are unable to attend in-person or online, you may contact me with a proxy vote. I have already heard from three members in the latter group and have a recording of their preference.

In order to hold a vote, we will need at least 26 members to form a quorum, so please attend or contact me if at all possible.

Thank you to all the members who have participated in the process. It has been a great pleasure to hear your voices and record your preferences.

Paul Krause, Board President



## Announcing 30 Days of Love 2023! Martin Luther King Jr. Day to Valentine's Day

The Unitarian Universalist public advocacy campaign Side With Love is thrilled to announce 30 Days of Love 2023. Our annual month of spiritual nourishment, political grounding, and shared practices of faith and justice, 30 Days of Love will go from Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 16) through Valentine's Day (February 14).

This year's 30 Days of Love is a gift to our whole community: a love letter, a warm hug, a spiritual balm for all of the individuals, families, religious professionals, partners and communities that embody our values and work for justice and liberation year round. Each week will feature a spiritual theme overlapping with one of Side With Love's intersectional justice priorities, and we'll share an array of offerings to help nourish your spirit and give gratitude and affirmation.

WEEK 1 (January 16-22): Interdependence :: Democracy & Electoral Justice

WEEK 2 (January 23-29): Embodiment :: LGBTQIA+, Gender & Reproductive Justice

WEEK 3 (January 30 - February 5): Healing :: Decriminalization

WEEK 4 (February 6-12): Resilience :: Climate Justice

BONUS DAYS (February 13-14): Blessings :: Liberatory Intersections

Find out more information [here](#).



### January Share the Plate: ALIGHT

Alight is an open family of organizations that works closely with refugees, trafficked persons, and economic migrants, to co-design solutions that help them build full and fulfilling lives. When the organization finds people displaced from their homes, countries, or lives, the instinct may be to focus only on basic needs. And that is essential. But it's also not a life. A life is filled with joy, dignity, connection, and purpose. And that's what Alight aims to build.

Thank you for giving as you are willing and able.

### November Share the Plate: Veterans For Peace

UUFN contributed \$441 to Veterans for Peace.

## The Welcome Team has Openings!

Be one of the faces who welcomes people into our services. It is a very gratifying way of serving our congregation. If you would like to join this team, please let Brynda McCoy know. Feel free to call or email me, or speak to me at church. The more folks we have willing to do this, the less often each has to serve. January slots are filled, but February is wide open. So now is the time to step up and take your favorite Sunday.

## Beyond Welcome: Building Community at UUFN

*What does true community mean to you?* For this three-session conversation facilitated by Rev. Sara, we'll use the book *Beyond Welcome: Building Communities of Love* to inspire our reflections about the community of UUFN and how we can create a more radically welcoming culture here. Each chapter in the book is a short, heartfelt essay written by a Unitarian Universalist about their own lived experiences. The book includes questions designed to reflect on both one's personal experiences and congregational life.

We'll also talk about how the questions in the book relate to the 8th Principle and the Article 2 revision. (Knowing what those are is not a requirement to participate!)

There will be approximately 45 pages to read between each session, plus reflection prompts to answer. Book available to order from Amazon or other online sellers, or from the UUA bookstore here: <https://www.uuabookstore.org/Beyond-Welcome-P19172.aspx>

### ***Details:***

Every other Thursday

February 2, 16, March 2

7:00—8:30 pm

Zoom only: <https://zoom.us/j/97989832578>

No registration required and all are welcome.

## The Shared Pulpit: The Art and Craft of Writing a Sermon

What makes a sermon different from a lecture or speech? What goes into writing one? In this workshop, you'll explore the theory and practice that is the storied art of preaching, gradually crafting your own sermon.

Rev. Sara will be leading this transformational UU workshop over a course of eight sessions. You don't need experience writing or speaking in front of an audience. You only need to commit to doing the required writing between sessions and adhering to the group covenant so people can risk sharing as they find their authentic voice and truth.

Some sessions will be Zoom-only, and some will be in-person and will include time in the UUFN pulpit (with other participants cheering you on!). Course workbook, *The Shared Pulpit* by Erika Hewitt, is required. Let Sara know if you need to borrow a copy or if you have questions.

### ***Dates:***

Saturdays, 9:30 am to Noon

February 11, 25

March 18

April 8, 29

May 20

June 10, 17

Class size is limited and registration is required. Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/bctEtFLnCbhGAWTA8>