



Join the Garden Team!

We have plans for Spring clean-up (see dates below and join us if you can!) and then will need help planting colorful annuals in our Sign Garden in early June. You can also devote a day each week to help water or weed and/or you can help just with specific planting dates or learn more about caring for our established prairie.

We hope those of you that have participated with the Garden Team in the past will sign-up again this year! And, we welcome & sincerely hope NEW members who love the outdoors and want to help keep our grounds beautiful will volunteer to join us too!

We need help in a variety of ways: raking, pruning, planting, watering, and weeding are all ways you could pick to help.

Please talk to either Carol Spear or Mairi Doerr about your interest. It does not have to be a huge commitment of time. Whatever time you can offer, we will be most grateful!

There will be **two** upcoming "clean-up" dates in April for the Garden/Grounds Team members to kick-off the season:

Wed, April 16th, 9:30am - 2pm
(maybe order pizza?)

Fri, April 18th, 9:30am - 2pm
(to be either a "rain date" from 4/16 or a "prairie burn date" if it is safe to do so)

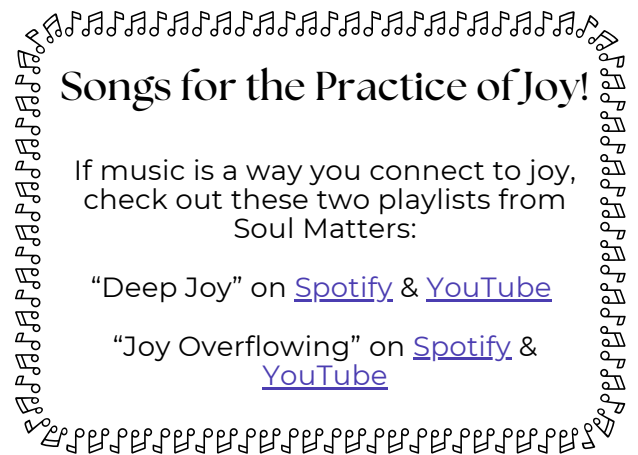
Thanks,
Carol & Mairi



UUFN's Care Team is going to offer occasional Friendship Bench sessions to provide a listening ear to anyone who could use one.

We will schedule occasional sessions and have two Care Team members available for those who choose to come sit on one of UUFN's outdoor benches for a confidential one-to-one talk. We aren't trained counselors but we do know how to listen. And we would love to sit with whomever comes by and see where the conversation goes.

Mairi Doerr and Brynda McCoy will offer the first session on **April 9 from 2-4 pm**. They will be at UUFN to see who might come by to sit and talk with one of them.



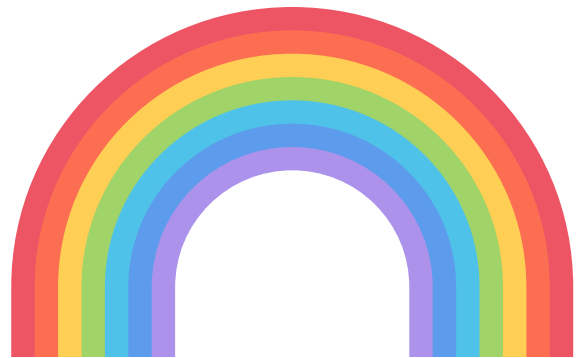
Songs for the Practice of Joy!

If music is a way you connect to joy, check out these two playlists from Soul Matters:

"Deep Joy" on [Spotify](#) & [YouTube](#)

"Joy Overflowing" on [Spotify](#) & [YouTube](#)

REjoicings! A Religious Education Update from Audrey



Hellooooo springtime!

In children's religious education this month, we will kick things off with our new theme of Joy on April 6th!

We'll explore the important spiritual practices of play, laughter, and being in community. Our March theme of Trust will carry into April a bit as we talk about how vital relationships are in creating and amplifying the joys of daily life. A few of our creative learning activities will include creating calm-down bottles to shake when we're feeling frustrated and need a smile, making cards for Point of Pride to celebrate trans joy, and lots of silly games!

Information for new families: Our religious education class runs every Sunday during the service for children in grades K-4th. We also have a staffed nursery for little ones. Feel free to reach out if you have any questions or want to learn more! Email our Religious Education Coordinator, Audrey McCann, at uufnre@uunorthfield.org.



Everything you wanted to know about UUFN's Stewardship Drive and more!

I'm new here. What's this about a Stewardship Drive?

UUFN is entirely supported by the time and monetary gifts of its members. Our fiscal year starts July 1 and so each spring we ask each of our members to make a monetary pledge that they plan to pay between July 1 2025-June 30 2026. After we make our pledges, the board puts together a proposed budget for the congregation to consider at our Annual meeting in May or June.

But I'm just starting to visit. Are you asking me to pledge?

We are so glad you are here, and no it is not time for you to pledge. Stewardship pledges are for members or those who are planning to join very soon. Just enjoy being here and no pressure to give money now or to join.

Is there a certain amount of money you are asking for?

No. The ability of UUFN members to give money varies tremendously depending on their circumstances. We have pledges of \$100 for the year and pledges well over \$10,000. We send a Fair Share Giving Guide to our members to aid them in their consideration but what someone decides to pledge is up to them.

What if I can't afford to give anything?

It's ok! We all do what we can in giving our time and treasure to UUFN and it works out.

Does this have anything to do with paying for the building construction?

No. Last year in our Widening the Circle campaign we raised the money to pay for the construction of the building addition. That money is held separately. We are asking for pledges to support the operation of our congregation including salaries, maintenance expenses and programming costs.

Are we having visits with visiting stewards again this year?

Yes! We have 11 who have volunteered to help this campaign by seeking conversations with congregants and bringing them their pledge form. These conversations are valuable in and of themselves because they provide an opportunity to talk about your engagement with UUFN and express your joys and concerns. For newer members it is an opportunity to learn about opportunities for involvement.

When does this campaign start?

We are kicking it off Sunday, April 13th! The visiting stewards will be reaching out beginning on that date.

What are the ways I can pay my pledge?

You can pay with checks in the offering basket or mailed to church. You could set up a regular monthly deduction from a bank account. You could pay by credit card through our website, though that costs us fees and so checks and monthly deductions are best.

When you fill out your pledge form, look on the back of it and it requests information on how you want to pay. For anyone who indicates they would like to do a monthly deduction, our Treasurer will get back to you and have you fill out a form with your bank account information so that she can set up the deduction.

I'm already paying with a monthly deduction. Can I change the amount this year?

Yes! Our Treasurer can simply change the amount of your monthly deduction to the new amount.

Should I say "yes" to a conversation with my visiting steward when they contact me?

Absolutely. The conversations are delightful and low key. And you can make your pledge confidentially.

How do I return my pledge form to UUFN?

We will have a slotted box at the back of the sanctuary and most of the pledge forms will come in through the box. But you can mail your pledge to UUFN's post office box and your visiting steward will give you the envelope, stamp and address label.

But don't mail any pledge or money to our street address. That is very unsecure.

What if I have more questions?

Ask your friendly Stewardship Committee!

Martha Easter-Wells
ewellsm@gmail.com

Bev Topp
bevorleetopp@icloud.com



April Share the Plate Recipient: Community Action Center



I (Rev. Sara) had a conversation with Scott Wopata, Executive Director of [Community Action Center](https://communityactioncenter.org) last month, and asked him how UUFN can best support them. As you can imagine, their work has become even more vital recently; they are overwhelmed with need. Scott said they desperately need help at their Faribault food shelf because they cannot keep up with everyone who comes through their doors. So this month's share-the-plate offers **two invitations**:



First, as we do every month, we will **take a collection** during our Sunday services. This month we will send our donations to CAC, literally feeding our neighbors as we live more fully into our stewardship theme of Nourishing Our Community.

Second, they need **volunteers in Faribault!** Their biggest need is for people to help stock shelves. If that is something you are able to do – note it requires lifting of up to 20 pounds repeatedly – you can sign up directly here:

<https://communityactioncenter.org/volunteer/>

For a first-timer, it is better to get acquainted with the workflow without having customers also coming in, so a 9:30 am Wednesday as a first experience is ideal.

After getting comfortable with the Wednesday morning stocker roll, the next most needed time and position would be for stockers on Thursdays on the 10:30 am shift. This time slot will also experience customers coming into the food shelf.

If those times don't work for you, they have a number of other shifts available. If you want to volunteer with others from UUFN and carpool, you can coordinate schedules [here](#).

I want to also mention that CAC needs ongoing support. Volunteering once is absolutely better than not at all. But if you can commit to once or more a week, or once or more a month, or whatever fits your schedule, that is especially helpful!

Our February Share the Plate offering raised \$794.24 for Rice County Neighbors United!



On Thursday, April 24th from 4:30 to 6:00 pm at UUFN, we'll meet for an **inaugural social justice council meeting**. If you want to attend but your work schedule goes later than 4:30, get there when you can. Finding a time to schedule this inaugural meeting was a little complicated, but going forward we'll try to find a time that works for most people's schedules.

This social justice council will be a time for people in our four social justice working groups (Green Team, Beyond Land Acknowledgment, Democracy Defenders, Name-to-be-determined group working on directly serving the community) to come together to share information and talk about justice work at UUFN as a whole.

For this first meeting, each working group will have ten minutes to update us on the work you're doing.

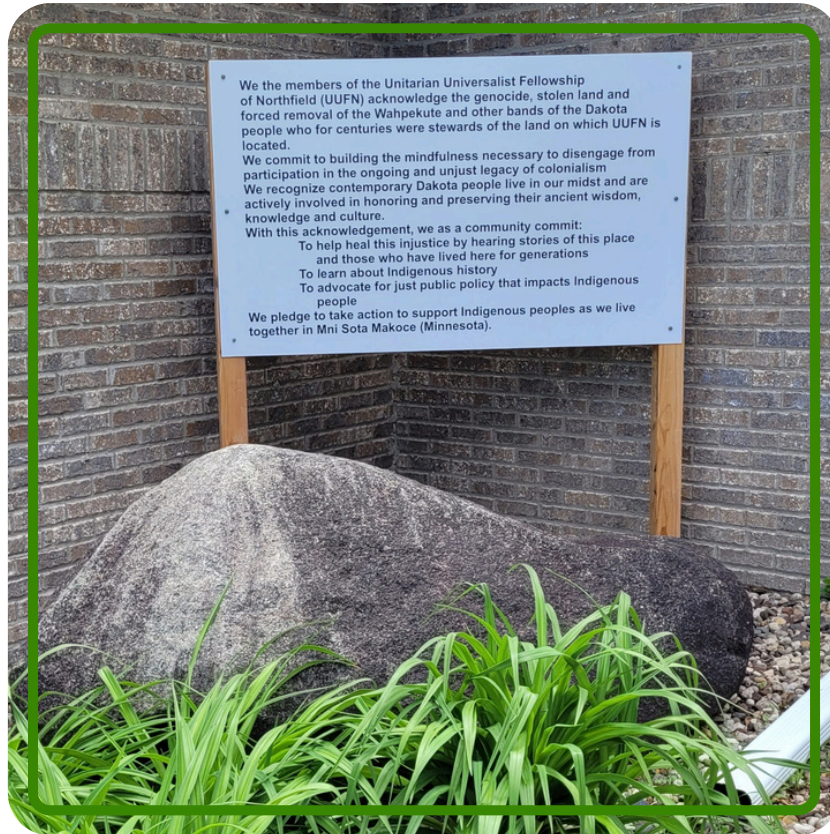
Each group will be asked to share:
A short purpose statement that describes the work you do
A summary of the good work you're doing as a team
(It's ok to brag about your group a little bit here -- let's celebrate each other!)

And then optionally, any of these:
Challenges you're facing
A question you'd like the big group to help your working group think through
If there's anything we / UUFN can do to support your work more
Anything else you want to share

Having someone who will share from each group designated ahead of time would be helpful.

A note about attending: my hope is at least one or two leaders from each working group will attend, but this meeting is very much open to everyone!

Beyond Land Acknowledgement



As you know, the UUFN Land Acknowledgment Statement was approved by the congregation at our annual meeting last June. Thank you for your support in UUFN's efforts to learn the true history, advocate for justice for the Indigenous and care for the land. This is an ongoing long-term commitment that follows the promises made in the Land Acknowledgement statement. The easiest place to read the Statement is in the front of our building. It is a part of who we are who we will continue to be.

At this point our working group is meeting monthly. We are finding our way forward now in the realm of Beyond Land Acknowledgment. We follow some organizations and websites that you may find interesting, including Honoring Dakota, Rise and Repair, Interfaith Power and Light and Repair Communities. You will occasionally hear from us regarding opportunities that involve learning about and supporting Indigenous people. In April there will be a group meeting of Northfield churches and organizations who have each created a land acknowledgement statement and who are also moving beyond land acknowledgement. We hope to join forces for events and activities in addition to sharing resources and knowledge. We recognize that there are suddenly a huge number of other issues for which the congregation will be involved in working for justice.

Here are three nearby museums that you might find interesting:

Hočokata Tí's at the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community.
The exhibit is called Mdewakanton: Dwellers of the Spirit Lake.

Goodhue County History Center in Red Wing has an exhibit called
Coming Home: Prairie Island Indian Community.

Treaty Site History Museum in St. Peter. 1851 Treaty of Traverse des Sioux

Janet McGrath for the Beyond Land Acknowledgement Working Group



Summary of March Board Meeting

Don Stager prepared the agenda and led this board meeting. Seth Anderson-Matz, UUFN Administrative Assistant, presented before the board how he could be of assistance to the board as we create church policies in different areas. The first policies to be created will be dealing with disruptive behavior and how committees request funds from our budget. Hopefully, a standard format can be created by doing these policies which can be used as we create other policies. Our by-laws need to be updated. Don Stager, current UUFN president, and John Owens, former UUFN president will meet to go over these. Afterwards, the by-laws will be reviewed by the board, and then submitted to the congregation for approval at our May meeting.

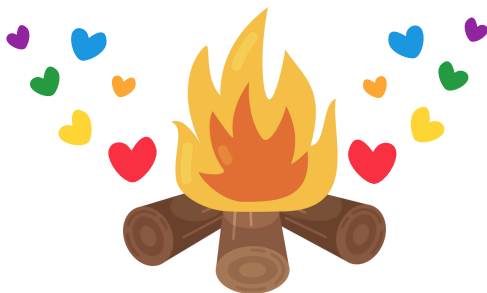
A budget will be created by the finance committee which will take into consideration the priorities set by the congregation at our February meeting. This will be done with a basic budget of our essential needs and a stretch budget including our goals and dreams.

The UUFN board voted unanimously to offer Rev. Sara a contract for next year. Her evaluation will follow soon. We also discussed how we view the future of the ministerial position in Northfield.

Campfire @ UUFN

The spring weather provides a great opportunity to gather around the UUFN fire circle. We will have a campfire on Thursday April 24, starting at 7:30.

Come enjoy the camaraderie, storytelling and s'mores.
Contact Don Stager at 507.321.3789 or at DWStager@yahoo.com with any questions.



April Greeters

April 6th:
Mary and Rollie D.

April 13th:
Auggie L. and Don S.

April 20th:
Janet M. and Sue C.

April 27th:
Lyn and John T.
