



REACH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTHFIELD



April 2026



Monthly Theme: Embracing Possibility

**April 5th | “A New World Finds a Way”
with Audrey McCann & UUFN Kids**

Just as the crocus pushes through the last of the snow, and Easter whispers of hope beyond despair, our children and youth invite us to witness the new world taking root. In this special service led by the youngest members of our community, we will explore the courage it takes to build a future we believe in. Join us as we celebrate rebirth, resilience, and the powerful truth that new worlds are not just dreamed of—they are built, together.

**April 12th | “Where No One Has Gone Before”
with Rev. Chad Snyder**

Bending the arc of the universe toward justice takes moral imagination -- an interdependence of past and present to envision a different and hopefully better future. From the bridge of the Starship Enterprise (and other fantastical imagined places across space and time), we will explore the ways moral imagination both expands and is confined by our own imaginings.

**April 19th | “Embracing Restoration: Viewed Through a Scientific
& Spiritual Lens”
with the UUFN Green Team & Green Crew**

What are the scientific issues in climate restoration? How can we actually solve problems, not just keep new ones from occurring? How will this affect how we interact with the natural world? A collaborative service between the MN Valley Chapter -- Izaak Walton League of America (or Green Crew) and UUFN Green Team will be addressing these issues. The Green Crew is a youth group involved in leadership activities to protect and restore our environment.

**April 26th | “Together We Are More”
with Audrey McCann & UUFN Members**

This service marks the culmination of our stewardship campaign, but our focus will be on the horizon, not the finish line. We gather to celebrate the sacred act of building a future we believe in—together. In a world that often measures success by what we achieve alone, we give thanks for the covenant that holds us: the shared commitment to care for one another, to show up, and to weave our hopes into something lasting. Come feel the strength of this beloved community and be reminded that the story we are writing—of mutual support, collective vision, and abundant possibility—is only just beginning. Because in all the ways that matter, we are more, together.



Rev. Sara's Sabbatical March 30 – June 1, 2026



As Rev. Sara is in her fifth year of ministry with us, she will be taking her first sabbatical beginning March 30th and ending June 1, 2026. UUFN will be well cared for during this time. Guest speakers and internal leaders are scheduled for Sunday services, support structures are in place for staff, and pastoral care protocols will be clarified.

We are especially glad and grateful that **Rev. Chad Snyder will be our Sabbatical Support Minister** during this time. He won't have a full ministerial job portfolio, but will be present for preaching, Board meetings and leadership support, and some small additional tasks.

To find out more about Rev. Sara's sabbatical, please see [A Guide to Rev. Sara's Sabbatical.](#)



The Care Team is Always Here



Reverend Sara is on a well deserved sabbatical for two months and will be back with us in June. In the meantime, the UUFN Care Team is here for anyone who would like support. Our mission statement:

The Care Team is entrusted with providing care and support for people needing help and encouragement during a stress-filled life transition. The Care Team provides support, so that no one in our beloved community travels life's difficult times alone.

Know that if you need a little help or just want someone to talk with, any of our Care Team members would be willing to arrange the help or set a time to talk.

We are: Mary Jane Lipinski, Martha Easter-Wells, Mairi Doerr, Larry Vorwerk, Christine Howard, Lyn Thwing and Brynda McCoy.



The **Care Team** will offer a conversation for people who would like to discuss their **lifelong spiritual journey**. What religious/spiritual beliefs did you hold earlier in your life, and how have these evolved over time? Which values have changed, and which have endured? Any defining moments in your spiritual journey? How do you nurture your spirituality today in our unsettled times? What gives you hope and courage?

We will meet at the UUFN on **Sat, April 18**, at 10 a.m. The conversation will be led by Mary Jane Lipinski.



For Men in our community



As men, we are conditioned to be self-reliant, tough things out in silence, and figure out life solo. We often develop unhealthy relationships to people, substances, our bodies and our health. We unconsciously take on and internalize oppressions that isolate us, force us to wear masks of inauthenticity, and to fear intimacy with both men and women. Yes, the Patriarchy comes down hard on our gender, too!

How can we break free of internalized oppression to reach our authentic selves, better support our loved ones, and listen more deeply to our bodies, our hearts, our spirit and to others? Doing this alone is not just difficult; it's impossible. We are busy with our lives, but is it worthwhile for men to gather in sincerity and in covenant to work through our issues together with loving support? If so, let us begin together to change ourselves and our worlds.

UUFN is forming a Men's Group! If you identify as male, you are invited to attend! We are in the early stages of formation, and do not have a meeting time/day set as of this writing. We do plan twice-monthly meetings of 90 minutes. Email John Owens at **john.owens552@gmail.com** with any questions.

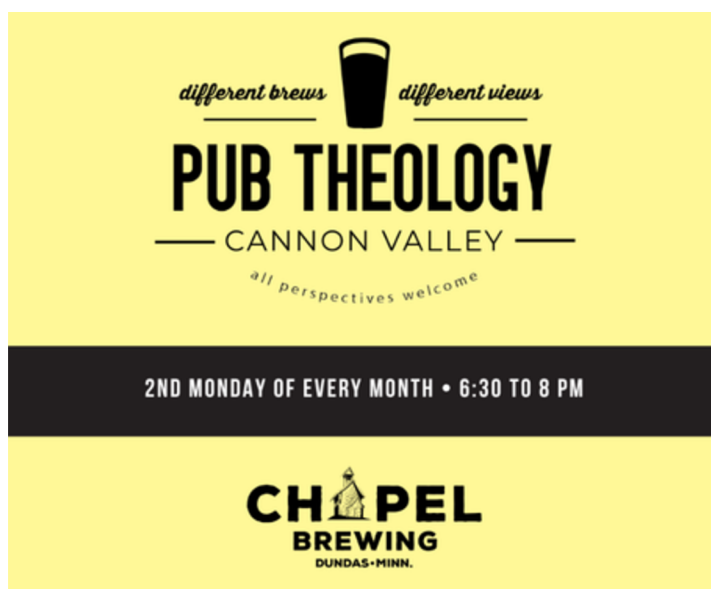
April Share the Plate

SHARING OUR ROOTS

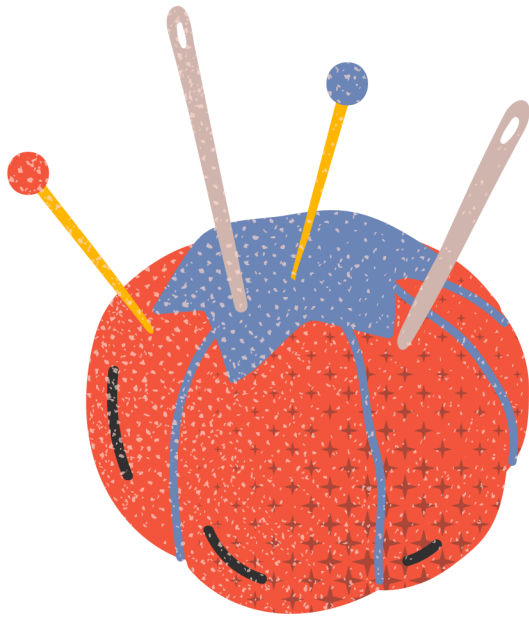
Immigrant, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and emerging farmers and community gardeners work together to produce nourishing food and restore ecosystem health.

Sharing Our Roots manages seven community gardens and 163 acres of farm and natural lands in Northfield and Faribault. It works with largely immigrant and refugee farmers and gardeners to advance a resilient agriculture system that demonstrates the power to heal our lands, nourish our communities, and prepare emerging farmers for success.

Over the last several months, Sharing Our Roots has supported over 100 families affected by the ICE surge with more than \$72,000 in mutual aid for rent, utilities and food costs. That work is ongoing as we help our friends and neighbors recover and as they plant their fields and gardens in the hope of a more just, equitable and compassionate future.



Pub Theology is paused in April and May during Rev. Sara's sabbatical. We'll resume on Monday, June 8th with a new co-host. We'll meet the second Monday of every month throughout the summer on the deck (weather permitting) at Chapel Brewing starting at 6:30pm.



Have fabric or clothing cluttering your closet? Maybe it even has a stain or two?

Bring it to the **April 19** service to share with the Green Crew presenting that day. They are hosting a session in the cities where people from the community will come in and cut and remix the old clothes and make them into new and improved pieces. These new stylish items will then be presented in a fashion show to raise awareness about the harmful nature of the fast fashion industry.

Playground Fellowship Continues!

Connect with other UUFN families with children at a casual drop-in play date on Saturday mornings. We'll generally meet on the third Saturday of the month from 10am to noon.

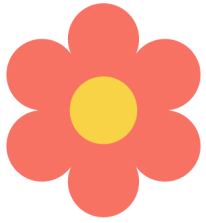
April 18 - location TBD

Please contact Laura Gerber if you're interested in hosting a play fellowship at your home during the winter months.

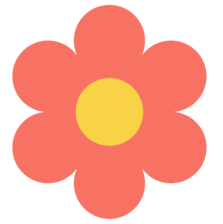
Please RSVP here if you plan to attend the April event:

<https://forms.gle/7Q99cqE6CtW3Q7Ap8>

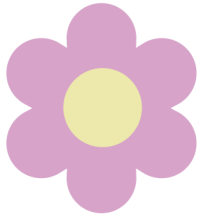




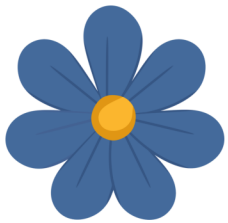
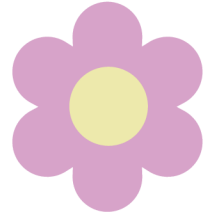
What does it mean to find beauty in the midst of struggle?



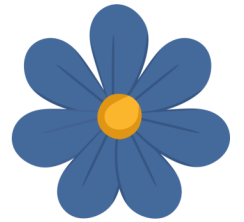
This May, UUFN is invited to a special service at Carleton's Skinner Chapel: **"Beauty in Community: a Unitarian Universalist-inspired flower communion tradition."**



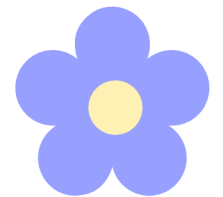
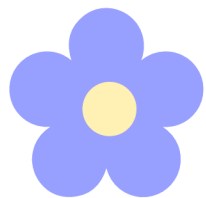
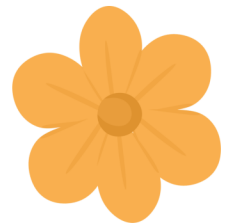
On **May 3rd at 5:00pm**, UUFN member Holly Kelchner and two of her Meadville Lombard colleagues will host a service that expands on the beloved tradition practiced here at our fellowship. This is a wonderful opportunity to share this ritual with the wider community through special music and powerful stories of resistance and hope.



Holly is especially excited to share personal insights and melodies she gathered during her visit to the Unitarian Church of Prague last fall. These international threads of our faith offer a beautiful perspective on our shared history and values, and Holly looks forward to sharing these stories with her home congregation.



Please mark your calendars now, bring a flower, and join Holly and her colleagues for this evening's celebration of beauty in Community.





THANKS TO ALL
who joined us for UUFN's 60th
Anniversary Party!



You can find a collage of photos from the 60th anniversary party on the next page!

Congratulations to our prize winners!

Lisa Ebert: Wooden, UUA Chalice bookmark:

Lisa correctly guessed 30 members of UUFN in 2003, the year members and friends began renting the Arts Guild's third floor in downtown Northfield. This was the first quasi permanent space for services after years of meeting in homes.

Kaisee Murphy: Enamel UUA lapel pin:

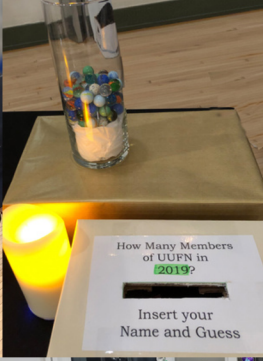
Kaisee correctly guessed 82 members of UUFN in 2019, the year members and friends purchased and moved into our permanent fellowship home on Hwy 19. (Kaisee is married to Taylor Wesseln, our music director.)

Winners of UUFN Mugs

Mark Seaburg
Kimesha Winn
Taylor Wesseln
Carol Spear
Sharon Snyder-Thieding

Winners of Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guides

Mary Jane Lipinski
Sue Coleman
Charlie Knieff





MEETS WEEKLY in the SANCTUARY
TUESDAYS 6-7:30 PM

QUESTIONS? EMAIL TAYLOR WESSELN AT [MUSIC@UUNORTHFIELD.ORG](mailto:music@uunorthfield.org)

The UUFN Choir meets weekly on **Tuesday nights** from **6:00-7:30 PM** under the direction of Taylor Wessel, UUFN Music Director. These rehearsals will include exploring your voice as an instrument, expanding your musical ear, singing a wide variety of genres, and making music with some stellar UUFN-ers.

The choir will sing a featured anthem on the third Sunday service of every month, while also leading hymns from within the fellowship. No audition is required to join! All voices are welcome!!

Please email Taylor Wessel at music@uunorthfield.org for any additional information or general questions.



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
OF NORTHFIELD

Minister:

Rev. Sara Smalley
(507) 200-8394
revsara@uunorthfield.org

Administrator:

Seth Anderson-Matz
info@uunorthfield.org

**Director of Children and Family
Ministries:**

Audrey McCann
uufnre@uunorthfield.org

Music Director:

Taylor Wesseln
music@uunorthfield.org

Nursery Teacher:

Julie Bailey

Board Members:

Mairi Doerr (Co-Chair)
Lisa Ebert
Bob Spear
Don Stager (Treasurer)
John Thwing (Co-Chair)
Kimesha Winn

April Greeters:

4/5 Lois Burnes & Mary Beth
Anderson
4/12 Susie & Wyman Weinbeck
4/19 Kim Reis & Carol Spear
4/26 Claire & Jim Rafferty

Your life is sacred and important.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call or text 988

Sexual Assault Support: Call 800.656.HOPE or text
"HOPE" to 64673

Domestic Violence Hotline: Call 1.800.799.SAFE or text
"START" to 88788

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Helpline: call 1-
800-662-HELP (4357)

LGBTQ Youth and Young Adult Crisis Line: Call 1-866-
488-7386 or text "START" to 678-678