



# REACH

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTHFIELD



July 2026



## Summer Worship @ UUFN!

**July 5th | “Our Sacred Honor: A Declaration of Interdependence”  
with Rev. Sara Smalley**

The Declaration of Independence starts with an affirmation of the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and ends with these words: “we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.” How do we make sense of these soaring promises of equality and unity within the context of the current state of our country, our Unitarian Universalist values, and the needs of our own hearts and spirits? Join Rev. Sara on the 250th anniversary weekend of the signing of the Declaration of Independence as we grapple with these issues together.

**July 12th | “Get Ur Freak On: A Queer Theology of Refusal”  
with Seth Anderson-Matz**

Join queer & trans theologian (and UUFN administrator!) Seth Anderson-Matz as we explore the religious and theological power of queer life to radically reject systems of harm and to boldly embody alternative ways of being.

**July 19th | “Hand in Hand with Spirit: Adventuring into the Garden”  
with Ellen Saul**

Have you ever stood at the gate to an abandoned garden? It’s hard to imagine what it can become, and all too easy to imagine the pain of bringing it back to life. When life turns upside down, how do we connect with Spirit to find the courage to go through that gate? How do we learn what has to change to bring new life inside, and grow the fruits to share on the outside? Ellen Saul shares some of her experience with gardens and life, and offers a very small practice to use with your inner garden.

**July 26th | “Tee Shirt Sunday”  
with Mary Davidson**

Would you like to get to know the members of the fellowship better? Let’s try something a little different on July 26: TEE SHIRT SUNDAY! Everyone wear a tee shirt (or layer more than one) from an organization you support or that shows a value or issue that's important to you.

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# Save the Date: Your Ideas and Input Needed! Visioning and Planning for Sunday Services at UUFN

**Monday, August 3rd  
6:30 to 8:30 pm at UUFN**

What are the most meaningful parts of the Sunday morning worship experience for you? What would you like more of on Sunday mornings? We'll gather at UUFN to talk about Sunday services in general, and then share ideas about the themes for 2026-27. Whether you've been a worship associate, given a sermon, want to get more involved, or simply want to know more about the worship life of this community, you are warmly invited to attend.  
Facilitated by Rev. Sara and Taylor Wesseln.

## 2026-27 **Soul Matters** Themes

September: Beginnings  
October: Courage  
November: Healing  
December: Awe  
January: Thresholds  
February: Commitment  
March: Balance  
April: Emergence  
May: Play  
June: Horizons



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## Coffee with the Minister

**Wednesdays, July 15, 22, and 29  
10:00 to 11:30 am  
HideAway Coffeehouse  
(outside weather permitting)**

Join Rev. Sara and other UUFNers for our summer tradition of gathering for coffee and conversation. Stop by to chat about UUFN, the state of the world, what's going on in your life – wherever the conversation leads us. We'll meet at HideAway Coffeehouse, 421 Division Street.

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# Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly Summary from Lisa Ebert, Board Member and GA delegate

From June 14 - 21 hundreds of UUA members, delegates, and clergy gathered virtually for the 2026 UUA General Assembly. Mary Davidson and I represented UUFN at GA as delegates along with Rev. Sara. Since it was an entirely virtual event, we didn't need to travel, but we did meet at UUFN to watch the main business sessions together on Monday and Tuesday.

While meeting virtually limited the ability to meet and socialize with other UUs, it was still inspiring to see the diversity and competency of those leading the UUA in a variety of roles, as well as see and hear from a variety of members who are doing good work all over the country.



No major issues or policies were considered this year, but we did discuss and vote on a number of issues. At the end of business, delegates:

- Adopted the **Business Resolution** directing the UUA Board of Trustees to establish a task force to review Ministerial Fellowship Committee policies and rules as they relate to interim and developmental ministers, and to recommend updates that reflect the unique circumstances of transitional ministry.
  - Did not adopt the **Bylaw Amendment** on authority to suspend or place a minister's search on hold.
  - Affirmed the **Action of Immediate Witness** opposing rollbacks to environmental protections, public lands rules, and the endangerment finding.
  - Passed two Responsive Resolutions regarding youth and emerging adults that thanked the UUA for its commitment to youth and emerging adults, while also called for expanded resources to support programming and inclusion at all levels of leadership.
  - Passed the Responsive Resolution "Reaffirming Our Commitment to Immigrant Justice and Relationally Grounded Organizing", reaffirming the Association's commitment to relationally grounded organizing and solidarity work.
  - Passed the Responsive Resolution on SWANA region concerns, asking the Commission on Appraisal to respond to UUs affected by crises in the Southwest Asia and North Africa region.
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# UUA General Assembly Summary (cont'd.) from Lisa Ebert, board member and GA delegate

Perhaps the biggest highlight for me came on Tuesday afternoon when UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt honored Minnesota UUs with the President's Award for Volunteer Service to the UUA.

The award recognizes extraordinary service to the UUA by volunteers, and is usually presented to an individual or a small group. But this year President Betancourt decided to honor all UU congregations in Minnesota for the way we have “powerfully and faithfully manifested the faith’s values . . . . And continue to offer ministry and support in these destabilizing times.”



This means that UUFN, and all our members, are recipients of this award!

UUFN was also represented as part the slideshow that accompanied President Betancourt’s presentation, thanks to photos submitted by Holly Kelchner. UUFN members in the photos included Holly, along with Bill Jokela, and Mary Jane Lipinski (the back of Rev. Sara’s head is also in one of them).

For more information about the award, you can read the UUA World article [here!](#)



The 2026 President's Annual Award for Volunteer Service to the UUA was awarded to the Unitarian Universalists of Minnesota for our activism, community care, and resistance in the face of Metro Surge.

**[Watch the official announcement that UUA President, Rev. Dr. Sofía Bentancourt gave at this years General Assembly.](#)**

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## ♥ A Message from the Care Team ♥

The Summer Solstice has passed, and as we welcome the bounty of Summer, let us remember the daily bounty and blessings found in our UUFN community. No matter the dark clouds of political division and turmoil, may we be guided by the gentle advice of the Dalai Lama: "Be kind whenever possible. It's always possible." The Care Team provides support so no one in our community travels life's difficult times alone. If you could use a little extra support at this time in your life, contact Martha Easter Wells (563-343-8578) or Mary Jane Lipinski (715-897-1019).

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### .....> Space Use Update <.....

You'll notice some changes downstairs this summer. None of these will be big changes, but they will help us to have more flexibility in how we use our space.

We envision the meeting room with the TV in it to be a multi-use space: small group gatherings, board and committee meetings, and potentially another religious exploration space for youth in the future.

For now, feel free to move the round table to the side in that room if you have a small group and want to use the couch and a few chairs, or set up a big circle of folding chairs for a larger group. Please return the furniture to its original set up after your meeting.

We will also be improving the organization in the nursery and religious exploration room. Our goal is to make these spaces feel cheerful and welcoming for children, staff, and volunteers.

If you have questions, please contact Rev. Sara. It's wonderful to have additional space downstairs after our building addition!

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**UUFN Men's Group** will meet twice in June at UUFN downstairs,  
on **July 9th** and **July 22nd**.

All male-gendered are welcome to attend. Come between 6:30 and 7 PM for social time. Chalice lighting is at 7 until 8:30. Curious? Come and check it out! Questions? Call John Owens at 507.581.1118.



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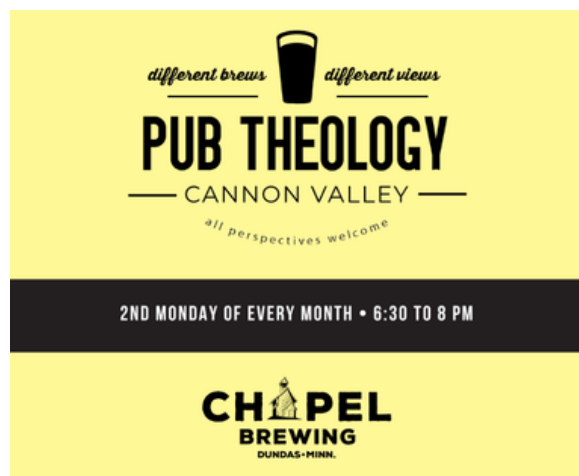
## July Share the Plate

THE



Northfield  
Union of Youth

Our Share the Plate recipient for July is the Northfield Union of Youth. Through programs such as The Key and their new resource center called The Lock, Northfield Union of Youth provides safe transitional housing and food security for youth in our community, as well as support for youth dealing with mental health or substance use challenges. They offer youth a chance to heal, to gain life skills, and to be a part of a supportive community. Our donations help them change lives!



**Pub Theology is back!** Join us on **Monday, July 13th** and the second Monday of every month from **6:30 to 8 pm** on the deck at **Chapel Brewing** in Dundas.

These gatherings are open to everyone - theists, atheists, agnostics, and others, churched and unchurchd - so come alone or bring a friend.

You'll be able to share your own wrestlings and thoughts while learning something new along the way, and perhaps try a new craft beer or kombucha flavor you haven't tried yet. Chapel also has some new hard-seltzer-based cocktail options, as well as a number of non-alcoholic options.

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**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](mailto:music@uunorthfield.org) for any additional information or general questions.

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UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP  
OF NORTHFIELD

**Minister:**

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

**Administrator:**

Seth Anderson-Matz  
info@uunorthfield.org

**Music Director:**

Taylor Wesseln  
music@uunorthfield.org

**Nursery Teacher:**

Julie Bailey

**Board Members:**

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

**July Greeters:**

**July 5:** Larry and Nita  
**July 12:** Carol and Susie  
**July 19:** Lee and Bev  
**July 26:** Jen and Tim

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**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