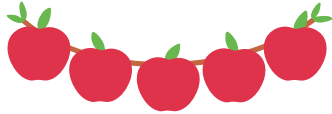




REACH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF NORTHFIELD



September 2026



This Month's Theme: Beginnings

September 6th | Outdoor Service @ Sechler Park (Note Location Change)
Bring a poem, prose, or short reflection to share

Continuing our tradition of having service outdoors the first Sunday of September, we'll meet at Sechler Park instead of UUFN. The theme for September is "Beginnings" and we would love to hear from members and friends. You're invited to bring your prose or poetry or any creation on this theme (or another!) to share during the service.

Sechler Park is located at 1200 Armstrong Road, about two miles from UUFN. We have the shelter reserved, which has restrooms and is accessible for those with limited mobility. There's a playground and lots of open space for enjoying the park after the service. Bring your own beverages and lunch if you'd like to enjoy a picnic after the service!

Directions to Sechler Park from UUFN:

Go east on MN-19 E 0.7 mile

Turn right onto Armstrong Rd and go 0.8 mile

Turn left onto Sechler Park Rd (look for the sign for Sechler Park)

Follow the road about half a mile until you see the picnic shelter parking lot on your right

September 13th | Water Ingathering
with Rev. Sara Smalley

Join us for our fall ingathering service as we launch the 2026-27 church year. Bring a small container of water from a place that holds meaning for you – or if you forget, we'll have vials of water at UUFN.

During the service we will gather our waters together in an act of community building. This is a multigenerational service and a meaningful ritual for both long time members and newcomers.

September 20th | Joy in the Morning
with Rev. Sara Smalley

We gather on Sunday mornings to find hope and healing, to know joy, and to be challenged and changed. But why do we light a chalice each week? Why do we include an offering? And why does Rev. Sara talk for 20 minutes, and what makes that a sermon? In other words: What does it mean to worship as a Unitarian Universalist? Together we will explore our order of service and find new meaning in the ways we worship together.

Stay after the service for our Sign Up Sunday, where leaders of various committees and teams will be available to welcome you to get more involved at UUFN.

September 27th | Start with the Little Things
Rev. Kristin Maier, Minister Emerita of UUFN

Where can we find the seeds of our biggest dreams, our widest hopes? What little things among us might unlock a terrain of hope and landscapes of healing? Rev. Kristin Maier, minister emerita, will explore the role of little things through story and sermon.

Our 2026-27 Themes!



About Our Monthly Themes This Year

Whether you've used a Soul Matters packet to reflect on the month's theme before or not, you'll get to experience this rich source of inspiration in new ways this year.

First, instead of Sacred Circles groups, we'll have **a new take on Circle Suppers**. At these gatherings, a small group of approximately eight people will meet to share a meal and conversation once a month for three months this winter, with a second sign up in the spring for new groups. (See "Soup Suppers and Circle Suppers: Building community one meal at a time" for additional information)

In addition to simply enjoying each other's company at Circle Suppers, there will be **optional reflection questions on the month's theme**. These questions will offer a way to connect more deeply with the month's theme and with each other.

Whether you join a Circle Supper group or not, **look for an idea for a spiritual exercise in the weekly e-news every Friday**. These are offered as a way to experience the way the monthly theme is showing up in your own life. We'll also be sharing ideas for music, podcasts, videos, and more in the weekly e-news.

Finally, we are planning on having **conversation circles after Sunday services** approximately once a month. We experimented with these this summer, and they were *wonderful*. These drop-in gatherings will be a way for those who want to talk more about the ideas presented in the service to gather for conversation during coffee hour.

Some inspiration for September's theme of Beginnings:

Beloved Is Where We Begin

If you would enter
into the wilderness,
do not begin
without a blessing.

Do not leave
without hearing
who you are:
Beloved,
named by the One
who has traveled this path
before you.

Do not go
without letting it echo
in your ears,
and if you find
it is hard
to let it into your heart,
do not despair.
That is what
this journey is for.

I cannot promise
this blessing will free you
from danger,
from fear,
from hunger
or thirst,
from the scorching
of sun
or the fall
of the night.

But I can tell you
that on this path
there will be help.

I can tell you
that on this way
there will be rest.

I can tell you
that you will know
the strange graces
that come to our aid
only on a road
such as this,
that fly to meet us
bearing comfort
and strength,
that come alongside us
for no other cause
than to lean themselves
toward our ear
and with their
curious insistence
whisper our name:

Beloved.
Beloved.
Beloved.

—Jan Richardson
from *Circle of Grace*

For more inspiration on the month's theme including a
music playlist, quotes, podcast, book and movie
recommendations, and more, [click here](#).



Stay after the service on **September 20th** to find out more about ways to get connected at UUFN. Sign up to join a committee, add your name to our volunteer list for Sunday mornings, and register for fall programming.

Soup Suppers & Circle Suppers: Building Community One Meal at a Time

Soup Suppers are back this year! Our first one will be **Friday, October 16th** at UUFN. All are invited to attend. More information will be coming soon, so for now just save the date.



We will also have our own take on the UU tradition of Circle Suppers this year. Circle Suppers are a chance to get to know a small group of other UUFNers over a shared meal. Each supper has a host who provides a space (either in their home or at UUFN) and a main dish; other attendees bring sides and dessert. Some hosts cook a complicated meal, some order pizza for delivery. Either way, conversation and connection ensue.

Circle Suppers will meet with the same group for three months – November, December, and January – and then we'll have another round of groups in the spring. Groups will have the option of talking about the month's theme with some provided reflection questions, but the conversation can flow wherever the group wishes.

Registration for the fall/winter round of Circle Suppers will start in late September. Reach out to [**Rev. Sara**](#) with any questions.



Religious Exploration News



Welcome to our new Director of Children and Family Ministries,
Will Esty!



Hi, I'm Will Esty (he/they)! I'm a recent seminary graduate from Meadville Lombard Theological School pursuing fellowship through the UUA. I was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin as a cradle UU, and studied theater at the University of Evansville in Southern Indiana. I have a deep love of games, storytelling, and a respect for the arts as a tool to facilitate learning. This past summer I was guest preaching at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice, Florida, so I'm excited to be returning to a more sensible temperature. I'm excited about working with this congregation and about continuing to nurture a congregation-wide appreciation for life-long learning and family engagement. Looking forward to meeting you all!

In faith, Will

Information about September dates for Religious Exploration for children

September 6th our service is at Sechler Park, complete with a playground and green space for outdoor games. Feel free to bring games, lunch, and beverages for your family if you want to stay after the service to enjoy the park.

September 13th we'll mark the start of the 2026-27 church year with our annual multigenerational Water Ingathering service.

Our religious exploration class for children ages five and up starts Sunday, **September 20th**. At the start of that service, children will start in the sanctuary before the congregation sings them down to their class after our Time for All Ages.

September 27th children will begin downstairs for a regular class.



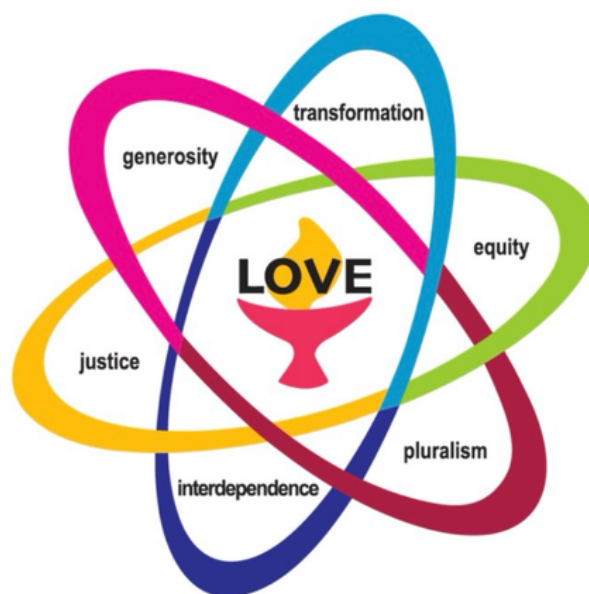
Join us for Pub Theology on **Monday, September 14th** and the second Monday of every month from **6:30 to 8 pm** on the deck at **Chapel Brewing** in Dundas.

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

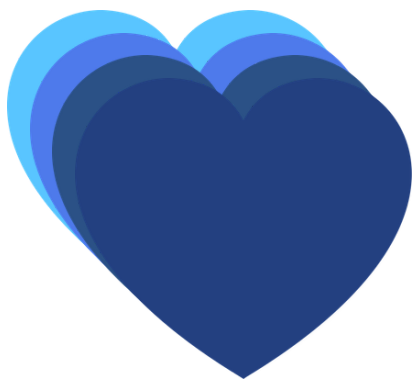
You'll be able to share your own wrestlings and thoughts while learning something new along the way, and perhaps try a new craft beer or kombucha flavor you haven't tried yet. Chapel also has some new hard-seltzer-based cocktail options, as well as a number of non-alcoholic options.

Journeying Together: UU and You

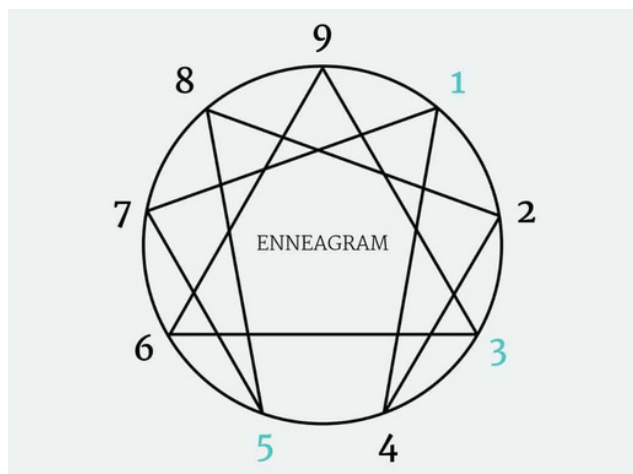
Save the dates!
Wednesdays 7-8:30 pm
October 28,
November 4, 11, 18



Do you want to connect with others as you learn more about Unitarian Universalism? Join us for four sessions of learning, reflection, and connection later this fall. This class is especially helpful for newcomers but is designed for anyone who wants to deepen their understanding of Unitarian Universalism as well as their own beliefs. The sessions are designed to build on one another, but attendance at all four is not required so come to as many as your schedule allows.



September **Men's Group** meetings are on Thursday, 9/10 and Wednesday, 9/23. All men are welcome. 6:30 to 7 is social time. 7 to 8:30 PM is for our meeting. We meet downstairs at UUFN



September 22 is our first meeting of the season for the **Enneagram Study Group**. If you are interested in learning more about this group, please contact John Owens at john.owens552@gmail.com. We meet twice a month at St. Johns Lutheran Church in Northfield from 4 to 5:30 PM. This is for both learning about the Enneagram as a path of spiritual and personal growth and freedom, and for sharing our experiences and new awareness through our Enneagram journey.

♥ A Message from the Care Team ♥

Autumn is just around the corner and St. Olaf and Carleton students will soon be back in Northfield. The Care Team warmly welcomes students, who may be interested in attending our Sunday services, by offering rides to the UUFN and back to their college after the service. Martha Easter-Wells has been coordinating rides, and you are invited to contact her if you are willing to be a driver. For more information contact Martha: ewellsm@gmail.com

Holly's Path to Ministry



Holly leading songs with Singing Resistance - Northfield at a spontaneous protest at Bridge Square in February

Holly Kelchner, UUFN member, has started a two-year part-time internship with Rev. Diana McLean at Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Bloomington. This internship is part of her seminary program at Meadville Lombard Theological School (Chicago), which incorporates contextual learning into its model, where students gain experience in a congregation during the second and third years of the three-year program. This internship is made possible by a UUA grant that fully funds the congregation to support her formation.

All UU seminarians who might eventually seek ordination in our denomination are required to have a congregational sponsor. UUFN was Holly's congregational sponsor when she started seminary last year. This Statement of Sponsorship affirmed that we recognize "that the person seeking fellowship [Holly] is actively committed to Unitarian Universalism and the institutions which uphold our faith tradition." In this way, UUFN was the start of Holly's ministerial journey, and now she is taking the next step as a ministerial intern at Minnesota Valley.

While her capacity at UUFN has decreased, she continues to carry the flame of inspiration and love with all those in Northfield who have been part of this ongoing journey. We wish Holly the very best as she begins this next phase of her journey towards becoming a UU minister!

Cannon Valley Friends Meeting

Invites all to the

UN International Day of Peace

People's Peace Picnic

Sunday, September 20

12 noon - 2pm

Bridge Square

Bring your picnic, chair, friends and family.

Join us in

Song with Singing Resistance-Northfield

Dance with Dances of Universal Peace

Art with all of us chalking our visions for peace





JOIN THE UUFN CHOIR!

ALL voices are welcome



MEETS WEEKLY in the SANCTUARY

TUESDAYS 6-7:30 PM

sings during the service on the 3rd Sunday of every month*

*depending on additional special service requests

QUESTIONS? EMAIL TAYLOR WESSELN AT MUSIC@UUNORTHFIELD.ORG

"Music in the soul can be heard by the universe." —Lao Tz
COME SING WITH US!



The UUFN Choir meets weekly on **Tuesday nights** from **6:00-7:30 PM** under the direction of Taylor Wesseln, 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 Wesseln 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

Music Director:

Taylor Wesseln
music@uunorthfield.org

**Director of Children and Family
Ministries:**

Will Esty
uufnre@uunorthfield.org

Board Members:

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

September Greeters:

Sept 6 Steph and Mairi

Sept 13: Nita and Larry

Sept 20: Gail and Reid

Sept 27: Lois and Sue

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