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Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist *fellowship*

President's Message

A Happy Solstice to you all.

A lot has happened at the Fellowship in the past few months. The services have been uniformly excellent. One highlight for me was the "refugee camp" intergenerational program; I learned a lot from the displays and activities. Thanks to all who researched and worked on this presentation and many of the others. During this holiday season I am hoping to practice moving from anger to peace as the speaker encouraged us last week. Thanks to Jeff Adams as Music coordinator we have heard some wonderful music on Sunday mornings.

We have written a usage policy for outside groups to use our building. The document will be ready for distribution soon. The event must be co-sponsored by the Fellowship or have a Fellowship member involved. The activities must conform to our principles. The costs involved are to cover the utility usage charge.

Speaking of utilities, the bill for November was \$211. I imagine December's bill will be much higher. We are losing heat through the ceiling as evidenced by the presence of large icicles. Our next major job may be adding some more insulation.

Thanks to Shannon Chronister and the crew we had a thorough cleaning of the building on December 7. It didn't take long so I hope everyone will do a shift before the winter is over. We need volunteers to shovel the snow from the walkways around the building. Call or email Carol (345 1735) if you are able to help out after a storm. If you can bring a shovel and help out, please do so.

The Green Sanctuary committee has been meeting to plan activities and to help the Fellowship engage in sustainable activities. We will try to use environmentally friendly cleaning and paper products.

We have had lots of visitors for our services. I think the average attendance is over 30 and at least a quarter of people there are visitors, some of them repeaters. We have 4 new members. One of them, Alphonso Cantu, has volunteered to chair the Membership committee so if you can help out, let him know. We may need volunteers to help some of our ailing members with rides, meals, and cards.

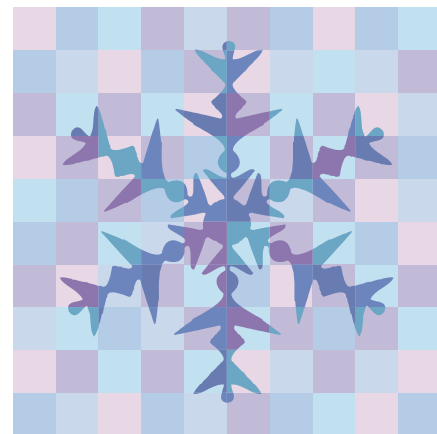
I hope you have all finished your quilt squares. Mine is finally done! Jan Nitz, another new member, will be piecing them together to make a lovely wall hanging.

Healing thoughts go out to Peg Harthun and Jean Rumsey. We hope they are feeling better soon and able to join us again.

We delivered the gifts, food, and grocery gift card to the family we sponsored in the Holiday Basket program. Thanks to Mary Arnold for coordinating this effort again this year and for delivering the bags of gifts. Thanks to all who purchased toys, mittens and hats, and small items for the family members, to those who helped wrap, to those who made food and monetary contributions. It was truly an all Fellowship project this year! big thanks to all those people who decorated the building for the holidays. That was much appreciated and made the space very festive

A special thanks to all the SPUUF Board members – to Carol Weston and Clara Cleve for their work on the programs, to Carol and Mary Arnold for sending out the weekly service notices and decorating the building for the winter holidays, to Rae Canfield for the great job she does at recording the meetings, to Ron Chapman for keeping track of all our funds- outgoing and incoming, to Kelly Mortenson and Dorothy Ginnett for organizing the great RE program, to everyone that I neglected here.

Sincerely, Julia Weiser



Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow....

I love the winter weather, and the snow makes it great for outdoor fun; BUT the Fellowship now has a small sidewalk that needs to be shoveled with each winter snow fall. My family has been taking on the responsibility so far, and it would be wonderful if a few more people would want to help. We could develop a snow shoveling tag team. Through emails or quick phone calls, we could let each other know who would be willing to run over to the Fellowship after each snow fall. It only takes about 20 minutes to clear the walks (of course this does depend on the amount of snow.)

If you are able to help in any way, please contact me so that we can organize the snow shoveling.

Carol Weston
cweston@charter.net
715-345-1735



Sunday Volunteering at SPUUF

You've seen the gigantic white board in the front room during coffee hour—lists of tasks and blank spaces just waiting for you to write your name on them. You're interested in volunteering for one of these tasks but don't have a clue as to what you'd be signing up for! In order to make it a little less intimidating, here is a list of Sunday volunteer opportunities and the responsibilities that go with them.

Opener

- Pick up the building key from the office the week before your volunteer date.
- Arrive by 9:15 a.m.
- Return building key to the office.
- Turn the lights on
- Check the thermostats are at 68 degrees.
- Do a walk through of the building and note any problems
- Bring coffeepot and coffee cups to the front reception room

Snack

- Bring a snack to share during coffee hour. Yup, that's it!

Greeter

- Arrive by 9:45 a.m.
- Work with the Program Coordinator to hand out order of services and to welcome guests as they arrive

Closing Tasks -2 or 3 volunteers per week

Kitchen

- Clean the kitchen/wash dishes
- Wipe down the reception room table
- Wipe off the kitchen/dining room tables

Weekly closing/cleaning tasks

- Walk through all the rooms and check for litter
- Empty waste baskets (bathroom, reception, and kitchen) and take to the back dumpster
- Vacuum the reception room and youth room
- Check toilet paper, paper towels, and soap in the bathrooms; replenish if needed



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Community Celebration

Monday, January 19 7:00—8:30 p.m. Stevens Point Area Senior High Auditorium

Celebrate the significance of the day by joining us for an innovative forum featuring keynote speaker Dr. Jeremi Suri, SPASH Concert Choir, hip hop group Rymz Suhreal and original music by composer Will Louis—Brux.

What does it mean to be a “Welcoming Congregation”?

By Shannon Chronister

If you are like me, you may ask yourself why it would be necessary to become an official “welcoming congregation”.

“Aren’t we already a welcoming congregation?” I asked myself. “I felt welcome the first time I visited. UUs are friendly people!”

But a welcoming congregation does not just mean that we are friendly to the new faces that walk through the door. A welcoming congregation is a term specifically used by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to refer to a fellowship or church that has educated its members on gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues and is therefore prepared to be truly welcoming to members of the GLBT community because of the process we followed to become an official welcoming congregation.

The UUA describes the welcoming congregation program as “a completely volunteer program for congregations that see a need to become more inclusive towards bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people. It consists of a series of workshops developed by the UUA. The goal of the workshops is to reduce prejudice by increasing understanding and acceptance among people of different sexual orientations.” According to a book called “100 Questions Non-Members Ask about Unitarian Universalism” by John Sias, there are over 270 UU congregations that have voted themselves to be a welcoming congregation.

The UUA recognizes that there are UU congregations of various sizes and that following a welcoming congregation program is not a one-size-fits-all program. For a fellowship of SPUUF’s size, becoming a welcoming congregation would entail four workshops during the course of a year focusing on GLBT issues. These workshops would not necessarily be the focus of four different services—they can also be offered as workshops outside of Sunday morning services. Becoming a welcoming congregation would also mean implementing a non-discrimination clause (we already do this) and reaching out the GLBT community. This year-long education process would result in the SPUUF membership taking a vote on whether or not to officially become a welcoming congregation.

Why single out bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender people? The Rev. Douglas Morgan Strong probably states it best in the Welcoming Congregation manual: “For centuries, the church has been a leading force against sexual minorities. It is not surprising that gay people are reluctant to reach out to the very institution that oppresses them. Yet, gay, lesbian, [transgender], and bisexual people have no less need for warmth, caring, and affirmation than anyone else who calls the liberal church their religious home. In fact, as a subculture in society gay, lesbian, [transgender], and bisexual people may need our support more than the general population.”

There are several benefits to our fellowship if we pursue welcoming congregation status. First, it will give us an opportunity to be a more well-educated and diverse fellowship. Members will not be forced to participate in any of the services or workshops so it really will be an additional educational bonus for those members who are interested in learning more. Second, it will be an opportunity for us to reach out to the GLBT community in Central Wisconsin and to educate the greater community that we are a safe place.



On January 25, Julie Schneider, an academic advisor at UW-Stevens Point and the advisor to the student Gay/Straight Alliance, will be presenting. Following her presentation, members of the ad hoc Welcoming Congregation Committee will provide more information to the Fellowship about pursuing welcoming congregation status. An official membership vote will occur on Jan 25th to decide whether or not we should pursue becoming a Welcoming Congregation. This is NOT a vote to actually become a Welcoming Congregation at this time; that vote will occur at the end of the process.

Your input is welcome and we look forward to your questions!

Welcoming Congregation Committee: Carol Weston, Clara Cleve, Jan Nitz, Mary Arnold, Michele Bjella, Shannon Chronister

To learn more, visit <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/welcomingcongregation/index.shtml>

Upcoming Services

This is a list of the upcoming Sunday morning services at the Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Please visit www.spuuf.org for a calendar of services.

January

January 11
"Communities Moving Toward Sustainability"
Presented by Lynn Markham

January 18
MLK Intergenerational Service

January 25
UWSP Faculty/Staff
Gay/Straight Alliance
Presented by Julie Schneider

Fellowship Beautification Days

Thank you to everyone who helped clean the fellowship in December and January. Our next "Fellowship Beautification Day" (a.k.a. building-wide cleaning) will be following the service on Sunday, February 1. If you are able, please consider giving 30 minutes or an hour to help out.

We will be having Fellowship Beautification Days on the first Sunday of every month, so please mark your calendars!

February

February 1
"The Importance of Religious Education"
Presented by Andrew Kerr

February 8
Topic TBA
Presented by Rev. Scott Prinster

February 15
Music Sunday
Intergenerational Service

February 22
Ken Waldman
Singer/

STEVENS POINT
UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
FELLOWSHIP



Services are held at the Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, located at 3116 Algoma Street, Stevens Point, 54481. Services begin at 10:00 a.m.

Child care and Religious Exploration classes for children are available.

Visit www.spuuf.org for more information.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

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The Uncommon Denomination