



# Stevens Point Unitarian Universalist *fellowship*

## A New Friend, New Possibilities

Maybe you've met Jim Coakley this past year when he's presented services on "Religious Humanism" (Oct.) or "Don't Throw Baby Jesus Out With The Bathwater" (Feb.). Perhaps this article will be your first introduction. Jim is a student at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. During the next year, he will be working with SPUUF as part of his education. Jim will be presenting regular services, facilitating a Wednesday night discussion once per month, and involved in an assortment of other areas.

We are really looking forward to Jim's involvement with our fellowship next year! Whether you've met him yet or not, we wanted to give you an opportunity to get to know him better through a newsletter interview. Enjoy!

*Tell us a little bit about yourself.*

I turned 50 on April 30. I live in Appleton. I am a Sales Planning Team Leader for Kimberly Clark.

*Tell me a bit about your religious life to this point.*

Like many, my religious life has been a long journey with many curves. It has changed as I've grown older. I grew up a fundamentalist Christian but my beliefs became less rigid in college; probably because I was exposed to more diverse points of view and because I had the time to think about religion and discuss it with others.

**(continued on page two)**

# Interview with Jim, continued

In my early 30s, I'd say I still had a rather elitist religious life until our 13 month old daughter became severely ill with lasting impact for the rest of her life. I suddenly became much more aware of and empathized with the less fortunate and those in crisis. She is 19 now and I have spent most of the intervening years very involved in my church with particular focus on children who fall outside "the norm". Eventually I became a lay minister and was trained in compassionate listening and worship leading.

*Why did you feel called to seminary? Has it changed your life?*

I was called to seminary for two reasons. My lay ministry experiences seemed to call me to professional ministry and the voluntary severance program at Kimberly Clark in 2009 woke me up to the fact that retirement might be an option sooner than I had thought if KC offers it again in the future. I wanted to be prepared to do something meaningful in the next phase of my professional life and seminary seemed the best way to get there.

My seminary experiences have given me a huge shot of energy and a renewed enthusiasm for life. Being back in school with its academic rigor makes me mentally and emotionally feel like I'm in my 20s again.

My particular program contains practical components alongside the course work and they have been very transformative. Last year I mentored youth at Harbor House 8 hours a week. This was a new program for them. They wanted an adult male to hang out with the kids, especially boys age 9+, to model good behavior. The assumption was that boys coming from abusive homes rarely see positive male behavior up close. I really bonded with the kids and I believe Harbor House felt it was a very successful program.

This year I am spending 8 hours a week working with the programs of my own congregation. I am an advisor for the Lawrence University Unitarian Universalist student group, I have preached a number of times, and have made several pastoral calls. All of these experiences make me more confident in my ministry and help me understand where my growth edges lie. I believe it has made me a more confident and effective person. Even my boss at work said one day, "I don't know what you are doing in those classes, but I can see a difference."

*Where are you going to seminary?*

I attend seminary at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. Because I am a part time student, I still live in Appleton and either take long distance classes or commute. I am just finishing the second year of a six year program.

*How does working with our Fellowship fit in with your goals and education?*

Since my ultimate goal is to be a called minister for one of the currently lay led Fellowships in NE Wisconsin, I feel your congregation is a great place to get started and see what that really means. Every time I have visited your Fellowship I feel so welcome and a strong sense of energy and enthusiasm. You've made me want to be a part of it. Since I have this opportunity to spend quality time with you over the next year and earn academic credit, I'm hoping I can help provide support to help your congregation reach your goals. In the mean time, I get to learn what it's really like and confirm my future goal is the right one.

**Welcome to our Fellowship, Jim! We all look forward to getting to know you better and working with you in the upcoming year!**

# New in Fall 2011: Wednesday Programs

Members of the strategic planning committee have been brainstorming ways in which to help our members connect outside of Sunday services, provide additional Religious Exploration avenues for both children and adults, and ways to invite more visitors to our Fellowship. One initiative resulting from strategic planning and brainstorming is Wednesday night programming beginning in the fall.

Wednesday night programs will vary from week to week. The idea is that they will be interactive, educational, and informal. Some ideas include discussing the service from the previous Sunday, reading and discussing short articles, watching and discussing movies, or getting involved hands-on with a service project or attending a community event together.

A small committee has begun work on planning Wednesday programs. If you are interested in getting involved with the planning and/or presentation of Wednesday programs, please contact

## What's Your Match?

Are you interested in getting more involved at SPUUF? Or how about trying something new within the fellowship? Committee work is a great way to get to know other members, bring your passion and talents to the fellowship, and learn something new. At SPUUF we have a lot of committees; how do you know which one is right for you? Here are some very brief descriptions of our committees. To find out more, check out a meeting, chat with members who have previously participated on a certain committee, or connect with a board member.

**Service** - responsible for the weekly services, including finding a guest speaker, planning the other components of the service (readings, Story for All Ages), and lining up music.

**Religious Exploration** - responsible for the religious education for the school age children. There are opportunities ranging from working with the chair(s) to select the lessons to assisting the RE leaders.

**Membership** - recruit new members, plan ceremonies, keep in touch with members

**Social Action** - identify issues and motivate members to become informed and/or take action

**Green Sanctuary** - coordinate services, plan activities, educate members, etc. on issues and topics related to the UU principle of respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

**Building and Grounds** - responsible for the maintenance and aesthetics of the SPUUF building

**Finance** - responsible for the long-term investments of SPUUF

**Welcoming Congregation** - maintain and promote SPUUF's status as a Welcoming Congregation



### Congratulations to Our New Leadership!

The following positions were elected at the annual meeting on May 1. The transition to the new governing board will be on July 1.

President - Rae Canfield

Vice President - Julia Weiser

Secretary - Jan Nitz

Treasurer - Carol Weston

Board Members At-Large - Bev Ross, Vince Heig, Jenny Howard

# Flower Communion

STEVENS POINT  
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The flower communion was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. This special service had become a symbolic ritual for UU churches around the world. Each person brings a flower of their choice. When you arrive place your flower in a large vase near the front entrance. The significance of the flower communion is that as no two flowers are alike, so no two people are alike, yet each has a contribution to make. At the end of the service each person goes to the vase and takes a flower other than the one that they had brought - thus symbolizing our shared celebration in community. This communion of sharing is essential to a free people of a free religion.

**May 15 is our last service of the year. Summer services, typically held monthly, will be announced soon. Please check [www.spuuf.org](http://www.spuuf.org) and your email for information about summer services.**

## UUA General Assembly

Unitarian Universalists will soon gather for the 50th annual General Assembly (GA) in Charlotte, NC, June 22-26, 2011. If you can't be there in person, bookmark <http://www.uua.org/ga/2011/index.shtml> as the nexus of GA coverage.

This web site will offer streaming video of selected parts of GA, including worship services and plenary sessions. *UU World* will provide coverage on their web site's blog, Facebook, and Twitter.



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](http://www.spuuf.org) for more information.

### Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

3116 Algoma St.  
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Stevens Point, WI 54481  
[www.spuuf.org](http://www.spuuf.org)



## The Uncommon Denomination