



# The Chronicle

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APRIL 2013

MARQUETTE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

**D**id you hear we're closing our doors? If you did, that was an April Fool's joke! Our little beloved community is moving right along, healthy and strong. We're encouraging each other to grow spiritually. We have members and friends sharing their time and talents. I want to thank each of you who made pledges for the 2013-14 fiscal year (starting July 1, 2013) and thank gg gordon for running this year's pledge drive as our Stewardship Chair.

I also want to thank Michelle Harrison for being a very trustworthy, organized treasurer for the congregation and welcome gg back as her replacement - to work as a team with Shirley Zimmer, our bookkeeper. That means gg's giving up her Stewardship Chair responsibilities to devote time to finances and facilitate the OWL (Our Whole Lives) RE middle school program with Paul Gray next year. Thank you both for doing that and getting the updated training.

So, if Stewardship interests you, and you'd be willing to coordinate next year's pledge campaign with other members, any Board member would love to hear from you. If you'd like to serve on next year's MUUC Board in a 2-yr. governance position, as Board liaison to a couple of committees, and participate in thoughtful discussions...please contact a member of our Nominating Committee (Mili White at 226-5029 or Nell Gabell at 226-6017).

I've been asked to share some information regarding the probable UU change from 19 Districts to 5 Regions in the U.S. Our District personnel, District Board members, and a Transition Team spoke of it at our Central Midwest District Assembly last April, saying there would be an authorization vote at this year's District Assembly in Waukesha (near Milwaukee) on April 27. If it is passed by the delegates, "Regions" will replace our current Districts, effective July 1, 2013.

So who might we, from the **Central Midwest District**(the U.P., Wisconsin, Illinois, and most of Missouri), be joining? To the east: the **Heartland District**, which includes downstate Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and western Ohio. To the west: the **Prairie Star District** which includes Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Collectively, we are to be the **Mid-America Region** along with four other Regions. The six members of the Field Staff will continue to be full-time employees with administrative and tech support.

So why is this happening?

1. To take advantage of a wider use of UU personnel expertise
2. To strengthen collaborative partnerships
3. To offer cost savings with office and technology efficiencies
4. To foster growth among UU's
5. To utilize expertise in promoting UU awareness and presence

Want to learn more about Regionalization? At the Meeting House, on the table near the guestbook, we have handouts with maps of the United States depicting the changes as well as more info inside. You can also go to: [www.MidAmericauua.org](http://www.MidAmericauua.org) or [www.cmwd-uua.org](http://www.cmwd-uua.org). If you go to the latter, you can also see what speakers and workshops are being offered at the District Assembly this year

\*\* If you would like to be part of the probable final Central Midwest District Assembly and represent MUUC as a delegate at the end of the month, please contact Barb Michael at 273-1174 or [atmichael.barbara.102@gmail.com](mailto:atmichael.barbara.102@gmail.com) \*\*

As we enter this "mud-licious" month of April and Earth Day, you may want to ponder the following from Thich Nhat Hanh:

*"We have to walk in a way that we only print peace and serenity on the Earth.  
Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet."*

In shared ministry,

*Barbara Michael*  
MUUC Board President

### ***Prophetic Purpose***

That's the theme for this year's Central Midwest District Assembly being held in Waukesha (just west of Milwaukee) April 26-28. Dynamic keynote speakers include Dr. Nicole Kirk from the Meadville Lombard Seminary in Chicago and Rev. Nathan C. Walker, minister of First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia.

If you'd like to be inspired and informed at services, workshops, and informal discussions...if you'd like to help affect a positive change from "Districts" to "Regions" which could provide more extensive services and resources for MUUC, consider attending the District Assembly.

Interested in sharing a ride? Contact Barb Michael at 273-1174 or [michael.barbara.102@gmail.com](mailto:michael.barbara.102@gmail.com).



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

### **Alice McMahon is Retiring from the REC**

A dear friend and RE Committee member has decided to step down from her position. After ten plus years of service to our congregation we are encouraging participation in her send off. Personal flags will be made in honor of Alice McMahon's dedication and grace. Many of you hold a special place in your heart and it would be great to compile appreciative moments. A cloth book will be available and presented on the earth day service April 21<sup>st</sup>. seeds will also be passed to symbolize the many seeds of love, honor, respect, and peace that Alice has planted over the years.

### **The “Our Whole Lives” (OWL) program**

OWL is a human sexuality education program that is offered as a free community service by the Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation. This established curriculum is offered to all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the Marquette area. Since the last offering of the OWL program the curriculum has become out-dated. REC budgeted for an update to the curriculum and two of our UU members will be retrained. The official date for the parent orientation and OWL program is TBA but participation at a parent orientation meeting is required of all parents of OWL students. Attending an orientation can help you decide whether to enroll your child. We look forward to working with open minds.



### **Coming of Age Program**



Terri Rockwood will be providing the coming of age program this year. This program is being offered from September 2013 into June 2014. If you are a youth that will be in high school next year, we strongly encourage you to participate in this program. This is a Religious Exploration program that helps youth discern for themselves what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, individually and as part of the larger faith community. It involves individual activities, group activities, family participation, and working with a mentor. For more information you can contact Teri Rockwood.

### **UU T-shirt Design Project**

With all of the fun community service activities happening we thought it would be nice to have a way to identify us when out in the community. This past Sunday the school age members brainstormed T-shirt designs ideas and came up with some very clever images. The deadline for ideas is Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup>. Simply draw your ideas on any piece of paper and give to Tim, Molly Jo, or Laura.



### **Fleece Tie Blanket Project for Camp New Day**

The Religious Education committee and the Community Development committee are hoping to organize a Fleece Blanket gathering to make tie blankets for the children attending Camp New Day this July.

Camp New Day - UP is an ecumenical effort and offers a safe and loving camp environment for children with incarcerated parents. For many of these children, this is their first experience in the woods or in a camp setting. The camp is solely supported through donations and grants; the children attend free of charge. Several MUUC members have volunteered at the camp over the years and have seen the difference it has made in the lives of these children and teens.

Right now we need to gather funds to purchase fleece as well as donations of fleece. A blanket requires two pieces of fleece measuring 2 yards apiece. So if you have any fleece to donate or want to start shopping in anticipation of a fun intergenerational event, please contact Laura Nagle or Nancy Sullivan.



### **Heifer dinner**

The time has come for another awesome gathering for fundraising food fun! The money raised at the dinner goes directly to Heifer International, an organization that helps people in poverty all over the world, including the United States. When money gets donated to Heifer, the money gets used in giving people in need animals such as bees, goats, cows, chickens, water buffalo, and pigs. Groups of people in the gifted village learn how to train the animals so they can teach the rest of the village. Heifer helps people establish sustainable lives so they can be successful. Heifer is very important and helps a lot of people. We will set a date when times are available. Please contact Laura Nagle with any suggestions.

Laura Nagle, RE Coordinator

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### **Stewardship Season is Here!**

Thanks to all you who:

- Made a pledge to contribute financially to our congregation for this fiscal year which ends on June 30, 2013.
- Are honoring your pledges to the congregation by giving the amounts you have promised.
- Paid your pledge outright at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- Have been paying your pledge in increments steadily throughout the year.

Our Congregation has seen a large increase in the number of you who divide your pledges up into monthly amounts and make monthly gifts. That practice is very good for the congregation, because it gives us a steady stream of income to meet our steady stream of bills.

This shows that many of you - (1) have chosen to treat your support of the congregation as one of your regular monthly financial obligations; and (2) are giving in a mindful, deliberate way - you have made your pledge payments into a practice of financial discipline and spiritual commitment. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

You all now have or soon will have a pledge form for the next fiscal year which begins on July 1, 2013. We need to have your pledges for next year by April 15, 2013, so that the Board can formulate the budget for the upcoming year. You may bring them to the meeting house, mail them to g.g. gordon, or email g.g. with the amount of your pledge. You will then be given a written receipt for your pledge for your records.

## As you decide how much to pledge, these facts may help you:

For the current fiscal year, we have 17 pledges from couples. The average pledge from a couple is \$1900, or \$850 per person. This is the average; actual pledges from couples range from \$200 to over \$7000. We have 26 pledges from individuals. The average pledge from an individual is \$1200. So, on a per person basis, the individuals average \$250 more per year in gifts. Actual annual individual pledges range from \$60 to \$4800. If our total pledges are divided by the number of people making those pledges, the average pledge per person is about \$1100.

So, how much to pledge? Perhaps knowing the amounts others, on average, give may be helpful to you as you decide what to give. Another guideline you may find helpful is the percentage chart provided along with your pledge form. The chart will help you understand how much to pledge if you would like to pledge 1% of your annual income, or a 5% or a make a true tithe of 10%.

Many conservative Christians tithe, or give 10% to the church. One of the five pillars of Islam is that followers give 2.5% of their wealth away. I have met Christian tithers of fairly limited means, and have found them to possess a serenity about their deliberate choice to sacrifice other things to support their faith. I personally, at this point in my life, do not tithe to this congregation, though I do give to many charities combined more than 10% of my annual income. My pledge to this Congregation is about 6% of my take home income annually. Where do you and will you fall on this chart? Perhaps the chart will help you in the process of figuring out how much to give.

The serenity of tithers brings me to the most important guideline I can provide . . . at least this resonates with me:

Please pledge an amount that makes you feel good, the feels right in your head and your heart, that makes you feel like you are taking financial responsibility for this congregation at a level that represents the level of your commitment and love for our community, and that does not put you in a position of worrying about how you will pay your other bills.

I have mentioned several times the desirability for the congregation and for you of spacing your pledge out into monthly donations. We all know that this discipline makes paying any bills easier. That is why, if you are a homeowner, the bank prefers you to escrow your insurance and tax payments, by putting 1/12 into escrow every month, so that you are not faced with a large unpayable bill once a year. We probably all have experienced the reality that when we make any payment on a monthly basis, like a monthly deposit into a savings account for example, we pretty quickly become accustomed to the idea of not having that sum available.

After a while, we don't even think about it. It just is . . . It has become a regular part of our financial practice and discipline.

The congregation, like everyone, faces inflation and many of our routine expenses go up steadily over the years. For us to keep pace with inflation, we need our pledge income to grow accordingly. For us to grow and be able to provide more programs and fund more staff we must do more than keep pace with inflation.

To account for inflation, I automatically add \$60 to my pledge each year. That is just \$5 a month! It is a small increase which I hardly notice because I pay my pledge every month. Perhaps the addition of a fixed amount annually to your pledge would work for you.

No one wants any of our members to go into debt or financial distress as a result of pledging more than your budget will bear. We just ask that you make your financial support of the congregation a deliberate, mindful practice, and that you decide how much to pledge on the basis of your commitment to the future of the Marquette UU's. Your heads and your hearts will let you know when you have found the size of a pledge that is right for you.

g.g. gordon, Stewardship Chair



Dear Friends,

A fresh wind of change is in the air as the seasons turn again toward new life. The response to the question I posed to the congregation during the March 10 service – *where do you fall on the continuum of wanting more or less spiritual conversation and depth in our UU community?* – has been quite phenomenal, both that Sunday and since then in more private conversations. It seems that the physical embodiment of our “spirituality continuum,” along with some lively open dialogue and a few laughs, helped us comprehend the range and passion of perspectives on this issue. (I had people line up along a vaguely defined continuum reflecting a range between “secular” and “spirituality is a primary motivator and focus of my life.”) One person expressed it so: “I felt more energy in the group during that conversation than I’ve felt since I started coming to the UU.”



For those of you unable to attend that Sunday, the shape of the “bell curve” was consistent with surveys we’ve taken recently and in the past: the continuum or curve was significantly skewed toward the desire for “more spirituality.” What “more spirituality” means to those who desire it will be part of the focus of my next service on April 21 (“*Coming to Terms with our Spirituality; the Dialogue Continues*”). As we find our way to a deeper understanding of one another, I call on us all to rise to the spirit of our UU Principles, especially those affirming and supporting “the acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations,” and “the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.” There is room for anyone willing to be respectful at a true UU table.

Happy Spring!

Nancy Irish  
MUUC Celebrant/Coordinator



Newcomers meet Congregation leaders

## Survey Results are In!

The results of our Talents and Interest Survey have been collated for use by MUUC committees. We discovered a wonderful array of talents, gifts and interests of which we were unaware. Sunday, the collated results will be available for people to see.

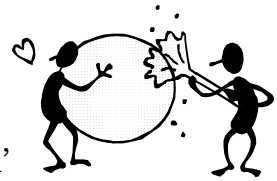
We are still adding data as new surveys are submitted. We also think people may want to add their names to various categories when they see some of the ideas from other people. If you would like to fill out a survey, please do. We hope to keep adding data periodically as newcomers start to join our circle of friends. Soon we hope to email the results to the Board, committee chairs and staff.

*Nancy Sullivan & the Community Development Committee*

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### Earth Day Sunday Clean-up

Earth Day is just around the corner and the UU congregation will be cleaning up Tourist Park! The exact time of our lunch n' clean will be announced closer to the date set. The park provides bags and we do the clean up, yay for team work! People will need to bring gloves, clothes to get dirty in, and a dish/item to pass (REC will be taking care of the main dish) If you have any comments or concerns please feel free to contact Laura Nagle.



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**Next Board Meeting:** 6:30 pm, Tuesday, April 18, 2013, MUUC Meeting House

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#### **MUUC Board of Trustees; e-mail addresses:**

Barbara Michael, President [michael.barbara.102@gmail.com](mailto:michael.barbara.102@gmail.com)  
gg gordon, Vice President [plumskiter@gmail.com](mailto:plumskiter@gmail.com)  
Sarah Redmond, Secretary [shelterbay2006@yahoo.com](mailto:shelterbay2006@yahoo.com)  
Teri Rockwood, [teri.rockwood@yahoo.com](mailto:teri.rockwood@yahoo.com)  
Cherokee Helms-Gleason, [cherk71@gmail.com](mailto:cherk71@gmail.com)

#### **Staff:**

Nancy Irish, Community Coordinator & Celebrant; Laura Nagle, Religious Education Coordinator

**Other Positions:** Tom & Nancy Sullivan, Building Use Coordinators; Sarah Johnson, Religious Education Chair; Tom Sullivan, Program Committee Chair; Michael Erdmann, Building Committee Chair; Nancy Sullivan, Community Development Committee Chair; gg gordon, Stewardship Chair; Teri Rockwood, Gary Stark, Paul Kiesling - Mediation Council; Gail Griffith, Social Action Chair; Dave Stensaas, Newsletter Coordinator; Vacant, Music Coordinator.

**Don't forget** to bring your Econo sales slips, used ink jet cartridges and used cell phones to the meeting house. We collect these items and get cash for the congregation in exchange!

## APRIL SERVICE AND FORUM SCHEDULE

<b>Date</b>	<b>Service (11 a.m.)</b>	<b>Forum (9:45 – 10:30a.m.)</b>
<b>Apr. 7</b>	“The Age of Aquarius: A Message of Hope in Uncertain Times.” Service Leader - Simone Chiodini	“Congregational Conversation about...MUUC Communications— Some Brainstorming.” Host: MUUC Board of Trustees (Sarah Redmond)
<b>Apr. 14</b>	“Do Unitarians Pray?” Service Leader - Sarah Redmond	“UU World Article.” Host: TBA
<b>Apr. 21</b>	“Coming To Terms With Our Spirituality: The Dialogue Continues.” Service Leader - Nancy Irish	“Week in Review.” Host - Tim VanderVeen
<b>Apr. 28</b>	“Forgiveness.” Service Leader - Nancy Sullivan	TBA

**MUUC is located at 1510 M-28 E, Harvey, MI; P.O. Box 687, Marquette, MI 49855**  
**Phone 906-249-9450                      www. MqtUU.org or visit us on Facebook**

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**To:**