

UU News

November/December 2010

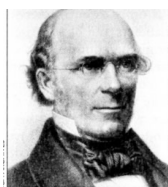
Historic Bethania Lutheran Church * 113 N Mill Street (across from the Vesterheim Museum)
Decorah, Iowa 52101 www.neiuuf.org

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter

Otter Dreaming, Fellowship Coordinator: 563-387-6050

FAMOUS UU

Theodore Parker, radical theologian, activist
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OBITUARY

Founding member Al Bergan leaves us
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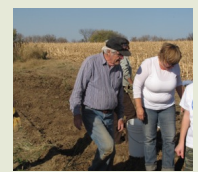
PHOTOS

From recent gatherings
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POTATO HARVEST

Helping feed those in need
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Vision for ministry

NEIUUF looks at PSD program for small congregations, seminary students

Prairie Star District (PSD) is offering NEIUUF the opportunity to be involved in the program *Vision for Ministry* which matches senior Unitarian Universalist Seminary (UTS) students with small UU congregations who don't currently have ministers. PSD sees this program serving two purposes:

- ❖ The student will gain practical experience in ministry through a yearlong, ongoing relationship with a congregation, and
- ❖ The congregation will experience a yearlong relationship with a senior seminary student and as a result, may, over a couple of years, begin to explore the idea of moving toward professional ministry (an option – not a requirement).

The student would spend six weekends with our fellowship during the 2011-12 church year, leading a Sunday service plus time to do be involved with other activities such as meeting with the board or committees, leading an adult education program, etc. Schedule and activities would be mutually agreed upon by student and our fellowship.

The student would be recommended by Rev. Dr. Kendyl Gibbons, Senior Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, who serves as the liaison to UU students at UTS. The student will probably have completed an internship and his/her Clinical Pastoral Education or, at a minimum, be in candidate status, completed a field study placement

'Sometimes I get scared.'

The frightening exhilaration of the new

By Sue Peterson

Sometimes I get scared. Sometimes I'm afraid of new situations. How much work will it be – physically or emotionally? Will it be harder than I thought or planned? Will I make a fool of myself once again? What will I learn? Will I be able to help? What will add new meaning and depth to my life and what will just add to the HAVE to do list? How can I tell the difference? Is



Sue Peterson
NEIUUF Board President

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Vision for ministry

Program for small congregations gets a look at NEIUUF

VISION continued from page 1

through UTS, and have had a preaching class.

Three NEIUUF members would be asked to work with the student minister through the year, as a listening presence and to help him/her get acquainted with how things are done in our fellowship. PSD predicts that both the student minister and the congregation will find this to be an experience with lots of learning, but there is no expectation of evaluation of student minister or of congregation.

A UU minister currently serving a smaller congregation would be asked to serve as volunteer mentor for the student. PSD expects the mentor minister and student minister to meet via telephone and perhaps one visit, but the mentor minister probably not visiting in person, so there would not be expense money needed for the mentor minister. If there were concerns, Prairie Star District Executive Nancy Heege would expect to hear about those and to work on them.

The program will cost about \$3,000 to cover the six weekend visits to the Decorah at \$500 per visit – allowing \$250 for an honorarium for a weekend which would include leading a Sunday service and another activity, and \$250 for expenses such as housing and mileage. We will be expected to apply for a Chalice Lighters Growth Fund Grant for \$1,000 for one year. **We will need to add \$1,500 to our 2011-12 budget.** The District will contribute \$500 per year from the Funding Panel grant. The Chalice Lighters Grants Committee has money in a Growth Fund and is enthusiastic about this program. The application for a grant for one year could be sent to them as soon as our congregation decides if

we want to participate. We could expect an answer back within a couple of weeks.

This program is new. This year the UU Fellowship of LaCrosse WI is working with student Mary Bohman. Nancy Heege reports that the Board and Committee Chairs were delighted to meet Mary and have her start working with them. Her experience has been with large UU congregations with several staff members; LaCrosse has just one part time administrator, so for her to have experience with a small congregation will be valuable for her in that regard. The congregation in LaCrosse has had a long history of inviting one UU minister to preach each month – different ministers each month, and some they invite back year after year. In Mary’s case, she is doing one workshop each time she comes, which will enhance the experience of the fellowship’s members.

Our Board discussed this option at the November meeting and feels it is worth further discussion. We hope to bring more information and thoughts to you in the next several months. Please feel free to talk with board members if you have questions or concerns. ■



UU Middle School class helps families whose homes destroyed by fire

Here's a photo of the UU kids selling pumpkins to benefit two local families whose homes were destroyed by fire this fall. According to Beth Wahlberg, "Our middle school group wanted to do something for the families. Both families have students at Decorah Middle School. Thanks to NEIUUF members and others who bought pumpkins, we were

UU students turn pumpkins into gold--to help others.

UU Founding Member Al Bergan dies



NEIUUF founding member Reuben Allard (Al) Bergan died on Sept. 18 in Decorah. He was 98.

Al was born to Martinus and Louise Nelson Bergan on the family farm near Harmony, Minnesota. He graduated from high school in Decorah in 1929, from Luther College in 1934 and Texas Tech in engineering in 1951. Al married Ferne White of Centerville, Iowa in 1938. They lived in California, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma. Al moved to Decorah after his wife's death in 1999. Together they were members of the Unitarian Universalist Church, English Speaking union, Planned Parenthood and the League of Women Voters. As a researcher and engineer, Al was awarded six U.S. patents related to oil exploration and extraction inventions.

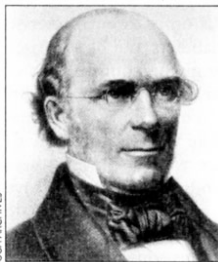
Before he died, Al left the NEIUUF a generous donation as seed money to acquire a permanent space for the Fellowship. A great thinker, compelling wit and warm human being, Al Bergan will be greatly missed by this congregation. ■

UU News

JOHN K. HALL
SUE PETERSON
ELLEN MACDONALD photographer



Got an item for the newsletter? Send to:
chimrock@mabtel.coop



PROFILE: FAMOUS UU

Theodore Parker *Radical theologian*

Theodore Parker was perhaps the most influential American Unitarian minister who ever lived. He was one of the greatest American preachers; the leader with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller, of the Transcendentalist movement; and a major antislavery leader and theorist of democracy. His example inspired generations of radical activists, yet in 2010, the bicentennial of his birth and sesquicentennial of his death, has passed with little fanfare.

Born in Lexington, Mass., Parker was a largely self-taught prodigy who by age 25 could read 20 languages. Ordained and settled in 1837 at the Unitarian parish in Roxbury, Mass. (now Theodore Parker Church), he soon gained a reputation as a powerful pulpit orator. In 1841 he issued one of the great Transcendentalist manifestos, "A Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity," in which he denied that the Bible had any miraculous authority, and declared it full of myths. He would elaborate this idea and its implications in many writings, becoming in the process the leading radical theologian in America. Evangelicals and some Unitarians denounced Parker as an infidel, but generations later, liberal religionists came to see him as a prophet.

Today his name is hardly known, but we remember Parker without realizing it. For instance, everyone seems to know two statements of his without knowing they came from him.

One is the definition of democracy as a "government of the people, by the people, for the people." Abraham Lincoln used this definition in his Gettysburg Address, but he adapted a definition that Parker often used, that democracy was "government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people."

Everyone also knows the assertion that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." That phrase crops up all over, and most people think they are quoting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King who used these words, but was paraphrasing Parker, who in his book *Ten Sermons of Religion* wrote:

I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one, my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.

One of his major concerns was how to read the Bible. He fought those who quoted biblical texts to justify slavery and oppose women's rights. He challenged belief in miraculous authority and factual accuracy of the Bible as a form of idolatry and an obstacle to the development of the soul. ■

--excerpted from *UU World*, Fall 2010

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

The frightening exhilaration of the new

THE NEW continued from page 1

this really how I want to focus my energies? What are my priorities?

I think the last question is sometimes the hardest for me. Even though I'm an introvert, being aware of how important community is to my life helps in this decision. It's part of why I choose to be a part of NEIUUF. It is in community that we can share our joys and sorrows – both big and small, where we become a part of the bigger picture, where our individual actions can join with others to create a greater influence.

As I have been thinking about changes in my life, I also have been thinking about possible changes for our fellowship. One of the articles in this newsletter is about a new program by Prairie Star District which offers us the opportunity to have a student minister work with our congregation next year. It's an intriguing idea. It would also be a change. How do we decide?

The board has started looking at the program and the pros and cons. We think the opportunity is worthy of further discussion – as a board and as a congregation.

Some of the pros and cons we see:

Pros:

- ❖ We might be of service to a future UU minister, the PSD, and other UUs.
- ❖ It might be good for our fellowship to have a taste of having a minister again, even if it would be only six Sundays.
- ❖ It would be helpful to Sue Otte to have six Sundays planned by someone else.
- ❖ The student would give us new perspectives and ideas.
- ❖ A new challenge might be good for us.
- ❖ The student might bring in new programs such as an adult education class.

❖ Working with the student and with PSD would provide new connections and be a learning experience for us.

Cons:

- ❖ Would we spending our limited budget most effectively? (an outside speaker if we need to pay traveling expenses is about \$300 vs \$250 for a student but local speakers would be less.)
 - ❖ Would we like the student?!
 - ❖ We might need to change the times of some meetings.
 - ❖ We might need to spend as much time mentoring the student as the time saved planning Sunday services.
 - ❖ Additional work: writing the Chalice Lighter Growth Fund. and for three people who might work closely with the student.
 - ❖ It will change the status quo.
- Some of the questions that are neither pros nor cons but good challenges:

❖ Is this where we want to focus our energies?

- ❖ Will it enhance our fellowship?
- ❖ How much change do we want?

How do we decide? If the process continues, the board feels it is important that the majority of people involved at NEIUUF feel like it's an important endeavor and worth the time and energy it might take.

I don't think there will be a right or wrong decision but I think that even the decision process could be exciting and challenging – and maybe tiring and more than what we want to take on right now. I hope we learn from each step of the process – no matter the final results. I hope as a fellowship, we will have many thoughtful, meaningful and community building discussions about this opportunity and about our purpose as a group working together in community. ■

Erik Erickson, former UU, dies in November

Erik Erickson, former UU member, died this month. A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m., Saturday, November 20, at the Congregational Church, 209 W. Broadway Street, Decorah. An account has also been set up at Fidelity Bank & Trust, 801 Mechanic Street, as a memorial fund and to help with funeral expenses. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated.

Maryann LoGuidice no longer PSD liaison

Maryann LoGuidice is no longer the Prairie Star District's Resource Liaison for the NEIUUF congregation. The announcement was made by Prairie Star District Executive Nancy Hegge.

"The coordinator of the Resource Liaison Team and I will be looking for someone else to serve in this capacity and will let you know as this develops," Hegge said. "I have appreciated Maryann's good work over the past seven years."



UU Potato Harvest

Wahlbergs' and Bill Jurs' efforts support local food pantries--with the help of the NEIUUF volunteers



Tater Success A BIG THANKS to everyone who helped with the tater planting, growing, and harvesting! (And to Eric Nordschow with Windridge Implements for his fabulous Tater Digger!) Bill Jurs informed me that his taters have gone to the First Lutheran food pantry who accepted them all gladly. The Wahlberg taters will go to other area pantries so that we can spread the joy. This is a fun UU activity and we look forward to growing more next year. Tom Wahlberg informed me that he raised a sizable amount of funds selling home grown pumpkins. Tom is donating the proceeds to the food pantries who can buy about \$7 of food with every \$1 donation! Great work, all! ---Carolyn Corbin

Below are the 2010-2011 Circles with contact information.

Malvina Reynolds (Program/Project dates-Nov 28, and Feb 6)

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Buckminster “Bucky” Fuller (Program/Project dates-Nov 7 and April 17)

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Jenna Haug	382-5282	joredbarn@gmail.com

Margaret Fuller (Program/Project dates-Jan 30 and March 27)

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Mona Quinn	382-2974	jessieq6@yahoo.com

Whitney Young Jr. (Program/Project dates-Jan 16 and March 13)

<u>Bill Pardee & Cathy Rawitt, facilitators</u>	382-4946	billpardee@yahoo.com
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Mark & Jenny Bishop	507-886-6606	niagara@harmonytel.net

Thomas Starr King (Program/Project dates-Dec 5 and Feb 27)

<u>Mike & Shirley Vermace, facilitators</u>	382-4319	svermace@gmail.com
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Robert and Julie Fischer	382-5695	fisrob@gmail.com , piscatrix@gmail.com



Photos from recent services

NOV.-DEC. SERVICES

NOV. 14:
Art of papermaking with Kate
Martinson at Luther College.

NOV. 21:
Harvest Brunch

NOV. 28:
Circle Sunday with Malvina
Reynolds Circle.

DEC 5: Circle Sunday with
Thomas Starr King Circle at
Decorah Senior Center.

DEC. 12:
Richard Simon Hanson will speak
about the traditions and
development of Christmas from
the early centuries of what we
used to call A.D.

DEC. 19:
Winter Solstice/Holiday Festival.

DEC. 26:
Christmas Leftovers Brunch.



UU Youth Programs meet

Wednesday Youth Programs Middle School (5th-8th graders) 4-5 p.m.
and High School (9th-12th) 7-8 p.m. at the Randd Building, behind
Medicap Pharmacy on Montgomery. Questions? Call Beth Wahlberg
382-3798.

*I do not pretend to understand the moral universe; the arc is a long one,
my eye reaches but little ways; I cannot calculate the curve and complete
the figure by the experience of sight; I can divine it by conscience. And
from what I see I am sure it bends towards justice.*

--Theodore Parker, UU theologian and Transcendentalist

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