



UU REVUE

Winter 2015-16

*Just Say
Know*

*Orvis Ross
His Musical Legacy*

*A Window into
Stephanie*

*Our Members ...
Our Community*

Dr. Wilson Adolphus Allen, a UU

First Unitarian Universalist Church

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Photo by Ron Chrisope

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UU Revue

The *UU Revue* is produced quarterly by the First Unitarian Universalist Communications Committee.

Articles in *UU Revue* focus on the positive work done by First UU members and friends, demonstrating our congregation's commitment to the Seven Principles.

Much of the volunteering by our members is behind the scenes and, unless you are closely involved with these efforts, you may not be aware of the time and dedication, the challenges, or the joy experienced by those involved – not to mention the impact on those who benefit from their work.

By telling the stories of our wonderful members, we hope to inspire others to volunteer, become active, and find the reward of working with the church.

Our Mission

To create a compassionate, welcoming community that nurtures spiritual growth and practices justice

Cover Art by Karin Lindsay

*In our next Issue: Rev. Peter Morales, President, Unitarian Universalist Association
(Rev. Morales will be our special guest in April 2016)*



Our Members ... Our Community

Contributing to the Community Food Response

By Kathy Brutinel



Bill Thompson delivers coolers to Bethel Lutheran.

Ella VanLaningham always refers to Community Food Response (CFR) as a win-win-win situation. Win #1: Leftover food from restaurants, stores, and hospitals that would normally go to waste is diverted to a better use than landfill. Win #2: People who need food are able to access healthy prepared meals at no cost. Win #3: It builds inter-generational connections in our church; it's something that adults and youth can do together. "It's altogether awesome," according to Ella.

Other UUs appear to agree. Since its origin in 1993, three UUs have served as president of its Board of Directors: Glenn VanLaningham (twice), Sandy Ramage, and David Kallmes; seven more have served on its Board: Anne Black-Sinak, Diane Closson, Jeremy Coylewright, Kay Eberman, Misty Hathaway, Jeanne Hoecker, and Cathy Stroebe. Many other UUs have served as openers, drivers, sorters, distributors, and closers, as well as financial contributors.

Community Food Response began in Rochester in 1993. Joe Powers, owner of the Canadian Honker,

had seen how much food was wasted after he catered a weekend wedding or big event and he was always looking for ways to serve our community. He began by partnering with Bethel Lutheran Church to provide the facility, recruiting other restaurants and businesses to donate food, and rounding up volunteers to make it happen.

When Ella retired in 1995, she already knew she wanted to be a part of CFR. She had been in San Francisco several years before, where she learned that her hotel gave away their unused food so that people could be fed. She thought she might start something like that when she retired, but by then CFR was already up and running. Ella decided she wanted to do more than just volunteer her own time—she wanted to get our whole congregation involved.

Ella's husband Glenn, who also retired in 1995, agreed. While employed, Glenn had overseen the creation of Meals on Wheels, a program that delivers meals to senior citizens in their homes. It was a short step for him to become involved in a program that provides meals for families with members of all ages. He began by volunteering as a driver with Ella and by 2003 he was president of CFR.

Over the last 22 years, processes, procedures, and facilities have evolved, but the basic operation has remained the same: food is gathered, sorted, and distributed by volunteers at Bethel

"Anything that brings us together — inspiring us to open our hearts, hands, or minds, to forget our differences for a moment and remember we are one — is a sacrament."

Forrest Church, Unitarian Universalist Minister



Ella VanLaningham

Lutheran Church each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Churches and service groups agree to staff the same 1-2 days each month (e.g. 1st Monday or 2nd Wednesday and Friday). When Ella got involved, she took on the additional challenge posed by signing our church up for the 5th Monday, Wednesday, or Friday. Since the number of times each month and the days of the week are less consistent, it takes more effort to line up volunteers.

“Scheduling used to involve lots of time on the telephone—filling spots and then refilling them if someone’s schedule changed. Now, with SignUp Genius, it’s a breeze,” says Ella. “People can add themselves to the schedule and then go back and cancel if they need to and other people can see the open spots. I only have a couple last-minute calls to make.”

On the 5th Friday of October I joined the crew of UU volunteers at Bethel Lutheran Church so I could see the operation in action. When I arrived about 1 p.m., the drivers were on their way to restaurants, hospitals, grocery stores, and cafeterias to pick up excess prepared food that the donors had stored in containers under conditions approved by the Health Department. The drivers load chilled food into CFR-provided Coleman coolers and items not requiring refrigeration into boxes and bring them back to the church.

Once the boxes and coolers are winched down to the CFR kitchen in the basement of the church, the sorters get to work. From 1:30-4 p.m., they sort the amazing variety of food—everything from gourmet desserts from Daube’s Bakery to packaged sushi to containers of cooked oatmeal, rice, or broccoli. Large bags of soup are apportioned into smaller containers and large bags of chicken nuggets or cheesy wieners are divided into smaller plastic bags. Items are divided into categories and placed on trays. Those requiring refrigeration are rolled into a walk-in refrigerator.

This part of the process reminded me of the preparations for the Clara Barton rummage sale. When items arrive, people leap into action. Between deliveries, there is down time for relaxation and socializing. “I do this because it’s fun,” says Marilyn Harstad. “You’re working with really great people and at the same time helping people.”

The amount of food that came in on that Friday was astonishing. According to CFR statistics 175,196 pounds were rescued in 2014 alone. As Don Hanson mentioned, “I can’t imagine that before CFR all this food just got thrown away. What a terrible waste.” Don says he enjoys volunteering “because

Packaged Up and Ready to Go



it makes me feel good and at the end I usually get a donut.”

For many years this work was done entirely by volunteers. In the summer of 2014 CFR hired a part-time site coordinator, Kari Dunn. Her presence has brought consistency to the processes, so both volunteers and clients know what to expect. She solves any problems that come up, but actually spends most of her time in the walk-in cooler (with mittens on!), analyzing the amount and types of food being rescued that day. She is responsible for deciding how best to match whatever food comes in with the number of clients who are likely to show up. Her goal is to provide ample food for every member of a family for dinner that night, as well as something for the next day’s breakfast and lunch.

Each client registers for CFR’s services so the organization will have a computerized record of the family’s size, ages, allergies, and food preferences. The only purpose of having this information is to facilitate the check-in process, so appropriate food can be collected for each family. CFR has no limit on the number of times a client can pick up food each month and there is no test of financial means. If people show up, they get food—period.



Maggie Nolte muscles a full cart of trays into the walk-in refrigerator.

An average of 75 families receives food each day the service is open.

At 4 p.m. the first shift, the “openers” who receive and sort the food, leave and the second shift, the “closers” who pack and distribute the food, arrive. Kari briefs them on the food that has come in that day and the type and quantity of food each family can receive.

Anne Black-Sinak often serves as the “certified” closer. She received her certification by taking special training on the computer system and the rules of confidentiality. She checks in clients and labels their bags, based on the demographic and preference information in the computer, and hands the bags to a distributor. “I really like this job,” says Anne. “I get to know some of the clients and I get to hear so many thank you’s. Some clients—every time they come through they tell me how glad they are that we are here.”

After receiving a bag the distributor walks from tray to tray and packs the appropriate food, depend-



Don Hanson washes and disinfects the coolers.



Ruth Rothschild pours soup into individual containers – carefully!

ing on the needs and preferences of the client. As trays are depleted, they are replaced by others from the walk-in refrigerator or freezer. The bags are then returned to the client to take home.

When all the clients are served, the day winds down. Left-over food is frozen; the coolers and trays and tables and floor are sanitized and made ready for their next day of service. Seventy-five families are home eating nutritious meals.

Our congregation's president, David Kallmes, has been on the CFR board of directors since 2007 and served as its president in 2012-2013. He was drawn in by its mission, *rescuing food for the hungry of Rochester*, and has been impressed by way the board consistently keeps the client experience and food safety as its focus. He also has learned about the challenge of sustaining a small, grass-roots organization with minimal fundraising capacity, but David exudes optimism about the organization's future: "CFR is the only miracle I've ever seen. The volunteers show up every week, 52 weeks a year. It's absolutely stunning."

How can you help?

Volunteer

With the exception of a part-time site coordinator, all the labor for this program is volunteered. About 20-25 people are needed each day that food is distributed, so the more volunteers the better! The current greatest need is for drivers. From about 1-3:30 p.m., these volunteers gather food from donor sites on a pre-defined route and bring it back to Bethel Lutheran Church. Drivers provide their own transportation—so need a vehicle with cargo space—and must be able to lift full coolers that weigh up to 40 pounds.

Drivers arrange their own team of 2 or are assigned a helper to assist with pickup. If you are age 55 or over you can get mileage reimbursement and supplemental liability insurance. For more information about volunteering, contact Ella VanLaningham.

Donate

CFR has a budget of about \$40,000/year. The single largest regular expense (about \$18,000) is the containers and bags used for the distribution of food. Since all income comes from donations and grants, contributions are always welcome.

Checks should be made payable to Community Food Response and mailed to Community Food Response, c/o Bethel Lutheran Church, 810 3rd Avenue SE, Rochester, MN 55904.

Kathy Brutinel is an English major who finally figured out she should have studied accounting instead but, nonetheless, loves to play with words.

Orvis Ross

His Musical Legacy

By Margo Stich



Photo from book "A Composer's Gifts," by Barb Clagett

Orvis Ross was a performer, teacher, director, composer and conductor, and longtime music director of our church. He was born in Pipestone, Minnesota, on December 14, 1894. His childhood years were spent growing up in Blue Earth. He went on to study and live in New York.

After service in the Army during World War I, Ross established a music store and school in Mankato. While in Mankato he also formed and played in an early dance band which went by the name "Orvis and His Orioles."

He left there to study at the American Conservatory in Chicago. Thereafter, he spent two years teaching and serving as head of the piano department at Hamline University in St. Paul. He also served as chapel organist there.

In the fall of 1935, at the age of 40, he came to Rochester to play the organ and piano at the Chateau Theater. There he played for the silent movies and performed between acts of Broadway plays that were staged there. His involvement in the community quickly expanded.

Ross went on to take the position as musical director and organist at the Presbyterian Church. In the fall of 1946 he joined the First Universalist Church of Rochester as both organist and choir director. He remained for just over 30 years. In

addition, he directed the Rochester Symphony Orchestra in the 1930s and '40s.

From 1965 to 1975 he and longtime music teacher Mary Ellen Malkasian performed an annual concert at the Rochester Art Center. Often it was original compositions, by Ross himself, which they presented. Ross was well known for setting works of poetry to music.

When Ross first came to Rochester he could not stand the music of Bach. For years he carried on a running argument with a local friend regarding



*Chateau Theatre, 1936,
Courtesy of the Olmsted County History Center*

Bach's work. However Ross eventually came to change his mind. With the formulation of a dream to perform all of Bach's 212 cantatas, Ross organized a Bach Society. He became an authority on Bach, eventually accumulating 47 volumes of his works.

Ross also organized a local Gilbert and Sullivan Society. However, according to research Connie Schuelka did for a program she presented before joining our church staff, Ross never did come to like the work of Beethoven or Handel's *Messiah*.

Ross never married or had children of his own. Nonetheless, he loved children, often writing special pieces for them. He instilled a love for music in many children, helping them to gain musical skills. One mother went so far as to call him a "Pied Piper" to children, as she observed that many of them, including her own, stayed in touch with Ross through their college years.

His cantata/opera *The Crescent Moon* was a musical composition set to the words of the Hindu poet Rabindranath Tagore. The work presented seven pictures of a child's life and was dedicated to his mother, Rose Ross. It was first performed in 1940 by the Rochester Choral Society at Mayo Civic Auditorium. A highlight of his career was when the work was performed by the Syracuse Symphony in New York, in January 1964, with Ross himself directing. He later rewrote the piece for a smaller chorale and "more intimate" instrumental ensemble.

In 1950 Ross composed a piece intended to honor Alicia Clagett, an accomplished musician, mother of six, wife of a Mayo physician, and member of our church. In his own humble, appreciative nature he credited Alicia as being his inspiration as he was "in awe of, and inspired by 'the grace' with which she met the demands of the 'competing disciplines.'" The piece was titled *Lullaby for the Littlest Clagett*.

Lullaby for the Littlest Clagett, written for Alicia at the birth of her youngest child (a son now 65-years old), is based on the cello solo in Saint Saens' *The Swan*. Alicia was a cellist who played in the Rochester Symphony for years and also in



Orvis Ross scored the "Crescent Moon," based on child-poems of the Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore, for chorus and orchestra, soloists and children's choirs. A portion is shown above.

string quartets and ensembles at our UU church. Within the piece there is the gorgeous solo line of the swan suddenly interrupted by a wailing baby...over and over again!

Other pieces and songs Ross wrote include *Caprice for Solo Violin*, *You Are the Evening Cloud*, *Sudden Snow*, *The Lamb*, *Summer Evening*, *Passacaglia*, and *St. Francis Prayer and Sonata*.

Over the decades his works gained international recognition. Relationships which formed included Ross becoming a good friend of Australian composer Percy Grainger. They shared much musically including performing together in Minneapolis where they presented Grainger's famous two-piano arrangement of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*.

Due to failing health, in his early 80s he flew to California where his two sisters, two nephews and a niece "by marriage" lived. His stiffening knees and the "crazies" he felt being "cooped up" in a West Coast home, resulted in his return to Rochester.

Orvis Ross died on January 29, 1979, of a heart illness, at the age of 84. He was in St Marys Hospital at the time, though he had spent the previous months living at Samaritan Manor. He still had 6 piano students at the time of his death. Indeed, his death brought the end of an



*Conducting
"Crescent Moon"
1954
Orvis Ross,
Ted Brunson,
Fern McKnight,
Rosemary Needham,
Chuck Stroebe,
Mary Jo Pappas
(sixth person unknown)*

era for many Rochester musicians and area residents.

Samaritan's staff had been gracious to allow him to keep teaching there while he was a resident. His health actually improved upon his return from California, likely in part due to "feeling needed" here in Rochester. In a piece written by journalist Pauline Walle, published in her "Footnotes" column just after his death, she reflects on the unique "cozy digs" he established at Samaritan for himself, surrounded by his piano, typewriter, paintings, FM set with earphones, hanging plants and boxes of goodies left regularly by his students. He quickly became the "resident musician" of the Manor. In addition, he was still in demand as a conductor.

Following Orvis's death Alice Delano, a former Rochester resident, UU church member, talented pianist, and teacher, wrote "he is remembered with affection and gratitude by many for ... his sharp tongue and 'barbed wit.' Reading his complicated harmonies was not easy; but no one denied that it was interesting and rewarding. Knowing him in his prime was an education, too, in many ways other than music."

Delano goes on to speak of him as a very vocal advocate of liberal causes, known to write literate and thought-provoking letters to the editor which he submitted to the local newspaper. In her column, Walle recalled a letter Ross had submitted regarding his thoughts on the proposed "crazy-quilt mapping" of Elton Hills Drive. He suggested he would "just pocket a ball of twine to find his way back to the 'prosaic safety of the city streets.'"

Ross was an avid reader. He clipped news items and other writings from magazines and newspapers, often sending these to friends he thought would appreciate them. He also gained a unique reputation for "composing" a "hostess gift" when invited as a dinner guest. These took the form of an original song or composition, presented before his departure at the end of the evening.

Many recall his "generous and sharing" nature and the beautiful gardens and indoor plants he maintained in the SE Rochester home where he lived with his mother until her death at the age of 93. Hand-written notes, on file from past congregants, note that he could grow things no one else could. These included Japanese quince and

apricot trees developed to survive cold climates. He often appeared at the doors of friends and neighbors with gifts of flowers – and the brighter the better – or house plants.

Besides being an avid gardener he was also known as a gourmet cook, as noted in his obituary that appeared in the *Post-Bulletin*. He became known for his sense of humor and his love for poetry.

During his tenure at KROC radio, Harley Flathers recalls an interview with Orvis in 1970. At that time Ross stated “just call me Orv.” Indeed many recall this “personal” side of Ross’s nature. Ross was also known for giving recognition to others.

On the other hand Ross could be outspokenly critical. Such is evident in a letter he wrote, on October 26, 1972, to a UU congregant involved on the committee researching the purchase of an organ for our church. Apparently Ross had recently attended an organ recital at Zumbro Lutheran Church, finding himself “nearly blasted off my seat by the insanely loud ‘electronic’ sounds emanating from some killer Infernal Machine with ear-shattering high frequencies.”

Ross ended this letter expressing his personal excitement over the thought that our church would find a more suitable organ and “at long last” have one of its own. In addition, he expressed hopes of personally playing the instrument given the “promised benefit” of knee therapy he was commencing.

The dedication of a new piano in our church, on December 21, 1976, at a time when Merrill Davis served as Music Director, was made in Orvis’s honor. Erv Miller read the dedication plaque: “...to commemorate his over 30 years as Organist-Choirmaster of this parish.”

During his life Ross wrote complicated harmonies...interesting and rewarding. While a student in New York, he had lived in the home of Henry Miller, the author and playwright. For years after moving on from there, Ross often received manuscripts from Miller to edit. In 1978 Miller

spoke of Ross in this way: “Here was, or still is, a self educated man, cultured to his fingertips, yet living in the sticks all his life.”

Rochester is privileged to have had this special person as part of its community, and for us here at the First Unitarian Universalist Church it is an honor to have him as part of our heritage.



1946

On March 20 our guest musician, Barbara Clagett, will be performing music from our long-time music director, Orvis Ross. Orvis was the music director here from the late 1940s until the early 1970s and was also an important figure on the Rochester music scene. He was a well-respected choral director, organist, pianist, composer, and teacher. He was also an authority on Bach and founded the Rochester Bach Society. Barb Clagett grew up in our church. She and Orvis had a shared birthday. Each year, Orvis composed a piece of music as a special gift on their shared day. Please come and enjoy getting better acquainted with the music of Orvis Ross, a most interesting figure in the history of our church and our community.

Freelance journalist Margo Stich currently contributes bi-weekly to the 507 section of the Post-Bulletin newspaper following fourteen years on the team of Rochester Women Magazine. She has been a First UU member since the 80s.

A Window into Stephanie

By Robin Taylor

Stephanie Podulke had no idea she was almost touching her future when she created her first “stained glass” windows as a child, painting with watercolors on the frosty windowpanes of her North Minneapolis bedroom.

Her mom taught her how to open the windows just a crack so the moist air would make a fresh canvas of white frost, and little “Stevie” would dip her brush into the paint and “stain” the glass. Who knew that she would be an award-winning stained glass artist one day?

When she was a young girl, the urge to create beautiful things propelled Stephanie to teach herself to draw by copying the lines in the Sunday comic strips. “I also learned a lot about coloring from those ‘Paint by Number’ things,” she admits sheepishly.

Finding Her Path

Years later, when Stephanie won a full scholarship to the University of Minnesota, she told her mother that she was going to study art. “She absolutely refused to let me, and my mother always got her way. So I studied education.”



Stephanie at her studio (photo by Angie Joyce)



Stephanie Podulke (photo by Angie Joyce)

In the meantime, her relationship with the tall, handsome Navy man, whom she met when she was 16 years old, continued to deepen. Stephanie married Mike Podulke when she was a 21-year-old college student, and he was all of 22.

The newlyweds moved to New Hampshire after graduation. Mike worked at a satellite tracking station, and Stephanie taught high school for three years. “Mike desperately wanted to learn stained glass, but all the shops out East were union, and the jobs were very specialized,” says Stephanie. “Mike wanted to know everything about everything.”

The couple moved to Italy, where Mike worked as tech support for Control Data. Living near Venice enabled him to study hot glass. Mike and Stephanie travelled all over Europe visiting famous windows and stained glass shops. When Control Data sent them to Holland, Stephanie studied painting in The Hague, furthering her understanding of color and design.

The Podulkes moved back to Minneapolis in 1972 and opened a small studio in their basement called The Stained Glass Cellar.

“We had a real partnership,” says Stephanie. “Mike did all the lead work and was in charge of the installations. He was a good colorist, and knew how to work with the subtle shadings in a piece of glass.” But Stephanie designed every piece of stained glass they ever made.

In 1976, the Podulkes bought a house and adjacent shop on Center Street, and opened Rochester Stained Glass. Word of their skills and artistry eventually got out, and the Podulkes began receiving commissions for homes, businesses and churches.

Stephanie developed a reputation for putting little jokes or surprises in her installations—some of which may have gone over the heads of their purchasers. (Ask her how she changed a famous Latin phrase on one custom order!)

Joining the UU Church

A serendipitous invitation got Mike and Stephanie to join the UU church. Daughters Laurel and Heather attended a cooperative nursery that used the RE classrooms at First UU during the week. The church secretary invited the Podulkes to have a show there. Although Stephanie was raised Lutheran, and Mike was unchurched, Stephanie told Mike she thought they should attend a service, just to be polite. “So we went on Sunday . . . and I was IN. I thought it was a great place!”

Mike loved to do big, outrageous events, so the Fellowship Committee was a perfect fit for him. The Podulkes staged Halloween parties, camp outs, Christmas tree bonfires, and of course, the Boar’s Head Feast. Mike instituted the Maypole celebration, and was the first auctioneer for the service auction that now bears his name. They taught Sunday School, made treasured friendships at the church, and enjoyed each other’s support as they raised their families together.

“Kids need roots and wings, and our church gives them that,” says Stephanie. “Both of my kids are healers, and I think the UU congregation gave them permission and encouragement to become who they are.”

For Stephanie, spirituality means “an openness to the mystery of life and a curiosity about the energy and forces that aren’t visible in daily living.”

“I feel our church has helped me to be spiritually free from dogma, and the guilt and heaviness that goes with traditional religion. It has replaced that with the possibilities of human potential and social change.” She has continued to seek understanding about energy and other invisible forces



The tallest window the Podulkes ever made was the memorial to 9/11, installed at the Mayo Civic Center. Measuring 30 feet high by 7 feet wide, the window is surrounded by copper sheeting with a star-shaped hole punched for each of the 3,021 victims of the terrorist attack (photo by Robin Taylor).



The window at Charter House, made by the Podulkes in 1985, remains one of Stephanie's favorites, because of the technical challenges. "I told Mike afterwards, 'If we never make another window, I'm satisfied.'" (photo by Robin Taylor)

by studying Reiki, meditation, and native traditions.

Healing with Art

One of the immeasurable discoveries the Podulkes made early on was the healing power of art. When Rochester 16-year-old David Brom murdered his parents and siblings in 1988, the Podulkes were sickened. They offered to go to the children's school and make a stained glass window with the students. The act of working together to create something beautiful and permanent following such a tragic and senseless loss seemed to be healing for the children. "It was a way for us to heal as well," says Stephanie.

After that, they made it something of a tradition to go into schools and make a window when a child died. "Healing isn't always a medical response," explains Stephanie. "It's an energy response."

When Elizabeth Katzmann was the DRE, one of the church youth died. Her parents took their daughter's ashes to Colorado and sprinkled them in a stream. Elizabeth suggested creating a stained glass window depicting the stream, and Stephanie found a perfect slice of agate to build the design around. "It had a sparkling center, and looked to me like a soul," she says. Parents and youth came to the shop and foiled and assembled the pieces, and Mike installed the window upstairs in the Children's Chapel.

A year after 9/11, as the country was still recovering from the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, Mike told Stephanie, "This community needs to heal." That realization led to their most ambitious

project yet. The city donated a window at the Mayo Civic Center (over 30 feet tall), and the County donated the space to build it, at the fairgrounds.

Four hundred people came over four weekends to work on foiling and wrapping the elements of Stephanie's 11-panel design. The ghostly Twin Towers are depicted hovering above Central Park, swathed in a rainbow ribbon that Stephanie used to symbolize the spiritual connection between the community and the victims.

The public was invited to donate clear glass for the towers, so they are filled with sparkling crystals, antique dishes, and even the bases of some wine glasses donated by a recovering alcoholic. Creating the artwork together gave people a chance to do something positive with the powerful emotions they experienced after the attack.

Detail of "The Pool of Minnesota Dreams" window in the children's section of the Rochester Public Library is the most playful window Stephanie ever made.



Serving the Public

"One day [30 years ago], UU church members Peter Adams and Phil Wheeler walked into our kitchen and changed our lives," says Stephanie. "They told us the county had just created a new district, and 'we'd like Mike to run for County Commissioner.' He ran and was always re-elected, for almost 25 years. Mike felt that he was a strong voice for disenfranchised people, and he was fearless doing it. I just admired him so much for that."

When Mike died unexpectedly at age 68 in 2011, his loss came as a shock to everyone. Stephanie lost not only her husband, but her business and creative partner. "We had 50 years together," she says. "Mike always counted from when I was 16."

Almost immediately after Mike's death, Stephanie was asked to run for his seat on the County Board of Commissioners. She realized she had a deep understanding of county issues, and wanted to complete Mike's agenda as a public servant. She handily won the special election to replace him, and has been reelected once since then.



In order to catch up on the mounting stained glass orders, Stephanie had to practice and refine some building skills. One day, as she was despairing about the work to be done single-handedly, her friend Mike Bush introduced her to his Uncle Denny, who had some experience in stained glass. Stephanie heard her husband Mike's voice saying, "What do I have to do to get your attention?" She promptly asked Denny if he would like to work again. He turned out to be very skilled at working with lead, and helped out for the next year and a half.

Then her daughter Laurel married a man "who just took to the craft!" Darin Podulke-Smith has been like an apprentice to Stephanie, and is now creating phenomenal designs on his own.



Tiffany-inspired lamps made by Mike and Stephanie Podulke flank a table beneath an early window hanging they created. Balls of blown glass float in the air on nearly invisible threads. (photo by Robin Taylor)

Stephanie waited for a long time before she dated again. She now has a new partner, Jim Frost, who is a woodworker and an electrical engineer—and a talented musician, among other things. In addition to their shared love of music and travel, Jim is building frames for Stephanie, and helping with installations.

As she reflects on her personal journey, she says, "I think everyone is trying to make their way through life, find meaning for themselves, and leave the world a better and more beautiful place."

Stephanie Podulke to Create Stained Glass Window for 150th Anniversary Celebration

"I will be grateful to have the opportunity to make a window for our church," says Stephanie. "I've had a design in my head for several years, featuring a chalice in the center, and energy winding around a rose window with symbols from 8-10 of the world's religions." The window will be installed the first week of April, in the big picture window in the cloakroom. Stephanie will cut the glass, and invite church members to come and help her wrap foil and solder pieces together in February 2016, so it will literally be an all-church project.

Robin Taylor is a former journalist who loves writing about interesting people and places. She has been a member of First UU since 1992.

Just Say Know

Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education

Lifespan Education Sexuality Curriculum (UUA)

Honest, accurate information about sexuality changes lives. It dismantles stereotypes and assumptions, builds self-acceptance and self-esteem, fosters healthy relationships, improves decision making, and has the potential to save lives. For these reasons and more, we are proud to offer Our Whole Lives, a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula for use in secular settings and faith communities.

Our Whole Lives helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. With a holistic approach, Our Whole Lives provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.



Curriculum Guides, UUA

A Perspective on O.W.L.

by Erika Beetcher

Despite my disbelief that my child was growing up before my eyes, the time had come. In 2012, our oldest child was a fifth grader in a Rochester, Minnesota, public elementary school and was fast approaching the dates to include sexual education in the classroom.

Being a Unitarian Universalist, I could not resist an inquiry via email to his teacher regarding whether the text used and discussions to follow would include gender-neutral language. As you can imagine, I was not reassured when she responded with a request to explain what I meant by gender-neutral language... She confirmed that, although not intended for this purpose, the assigned text happened to be written for use in both the “boy” and “girl” discussion groups - and thus by default was gender neutral. It provided the basic information on biology, so to speak, but the depth and breadth of sexuality were certainly not explored.

Fast-forward to our son’s seventh grade experience with the Junior High O.W.L. (Our Whole

Lives) sexual education program offered by our First UU church. O.W.L. is described by the UUA as lifespan sexuality education curricula designed to provide clear messages about four core values:

- Self-worth
- Sexual health
- Responsibility
- Justice and inclusivity

It uses a holistic health approach and provides, “accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.” Six curricula have been published for grades K-1 through grades 10-12, as well as curricula for young adults and adults. The guides were produced through a collaborative effort of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries.

Most importantly, the youth seemed to love the learning. Our son described the classes as light-hearted but respectful of boundaries. The facilitators encouraged questions without consequences and welcomed different perspectives. Just now I asked our son about his recollection of

the workshops, and he grinned while saying, “We all had to work through some uncomfortableness but, because of that, we joked a lot and became great friends.” Soon, our daughter will start her journey with Grades 7-9 O.W.L. and we anticipate another positive experience.

Just this past summer, our DRE Ryan Shriver was recruiting individuals to join him on a road trip to Pilgrim Point in Alexandria, Minnesota. The mission at hand was to educate a few of us to be trained as O.W.L. facilitators in the Adult/Young Adult curriculum. Sam Olson and I took the bait.

Over three days, we enjoyed lessons and small group discussions—along with a few games—focused on sexuality. I must tell you that I was pleasantly surprised to learn quite a few new things (and new vocabulary!) despite my role as Nurse Practitioner working in women’s health. Honestly, I thought I was rather savvy with sexual health but was quickly humbled by the gaps in what I knew. As many of you have realized on life’s road—there is knowledge, and then there is wisdom. I certainly became a bit wiser during these days.

Our facilitators were Reverend T. Michael Rock and Laura Anne Haave. This worthy duo served us well with their plethora of sexual fun facts, statistics, facilitator tips, and unique experiences. They prompted us to share our perspectives and learn from one another. At times the conversations became quite personal and even emotional for some. We increased our awareness of sensitive topics and terminologies. Overall, it was a memorable experience, and luckily, we three roadies all earned our certifications as facilitators.

Sexual health will always be an area of infinite perspectives and experiences. It is under consideration now whether we will start a new O.W.L. class at our church to include the Young Adult/Adult curricula. If this comes to be, we have trained and able facilitators at the ready! I invite you to consider learning more and perhaps being involved in O.W.L. classes yourself or through your youth. We must know that at the adult level, we continue learning from our own experiences and from each other. Don’t you wish you had had access to something like O.W.L. in your youth? Imagine the possibilities...!

An Our Whole Lives Trainer’s Perspective on the Program

by Ryan Shriver, Director of Religious Education

My ministry in *Our Whole Lives* began in October 2010, as host of and participant in a facilitator training weekend held at the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester for the middle school and high school *Our Whole Lives* curricula. Newly minted as the Director of Religious Education, I was almost immediately tasked with the final preparations of planning this weekend-long training—which provided no small amount of frustration added to the rigors of an already stressful, new situation.

Once the weekend was underway, however, my frustrations and apprehensions melted away. It was also here that I met the fantastic training duo of Rev. T. Michael Rock and Laura Anne Haave, whom I affectionately refer to now as my *Our Whole Lives* dad and mom. This one training weekend was more than just extremely informative; it was transformational. I learned about a fantastic program



Illustration by Michael Dunn, 2007



orientation, which all too often has driven them to agonizing and gut-wrenching choices that end in heartbreak, or worse, life-threatening depression and desperation. When I part from the newly minted facilitators on these training weekends, I thank them all for being heroes and life savers to those young adults who are struggling. To those kids, they are all heroes.

The “O.W.L.” Effect

By Autumn Harff

I attended the JR High O.W.L. class in seventh grade with Ryan Shriver and Jennifer Harveland as facilitators. My two best friends from church were in the class, as well as a few youth I didn’t know well but had seen around church and in R.E. class. To be completely honest, the first few weeks we met it was really awkward because none of us really knew each other, and talking about sex with strangers isn’t exactly easy. As the class progressed, we all found things that we could connect with, making it easier to talk in the group.

When we started learning about things like how sex worked and the parts of the body, we had to make a poster with slang terms we had heard before to refer to something sexual, like a girl’s breasts for example. Later, we were challenged to make a 3-D model of the opposite gender’s private parts. We girls had the great honor (sarcastic) of making a 3-D model of a penis with all the anatomical parts. That was...fun (again, sarcastic). But as we went through the class, it got easier to talk about these things, and we understood more about sex and the pros and cons of it than most kids in our grade. We did some fun things that didn’t involve learning about sex, like playing ‘Wink’ for the duration of one class.

that two wonderful religious denominations—the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Church of Christ—created in order to provide comprehensive, up-to-date, and accurate information about sexuality that strives to help people become whole and healthy sexual beings.

Since that magical weekend five years ago, I have gone on to become a facilitator for the Young Adult/Adult program, and I have been twice chosen by both the UUA and the UCC to become a trainer of facilitators for both the Middle School/High School curricula, as well as the Young Adult/Adult curricula, which has expanded my ministry from beyond the walls of our congregation and has taken me to Syracuse, New York; Lawrence, Kansas; Des Moines, Iowa; Madison, Wisconsin; and Springfield, Illinois, where I have now trained approximately 75 new facilitators of this amazing program. In the first half of 2016, I already have three more trainings on my calendar, to my great joy.

With the shame, misinformation, vitriol, and fear that some in our society have toward informing our children and youth about the facts of one of the most important aspects of their identity and being, I feel humbled to have been called on this path. In recent years, teens have been left wondering what is wrong with them when they don’t conform to societal expectations of sexual identity and



OWL Junior High Class, 2014



By the end of our class, we had become pretty close, and we were all able to make jokes no one else understood (although inappropriate). It was a good experience. Not only did we learn about how sex works, but we also learned about different sexual orientations and healthy relationships.

The class was important to all of us. Everyone knew and understood much more reliable and correct information regarding sex and sexual-related health, rather than sketchy info from friends and school peers. It covered so much more than our school's sex education units. It helped us better understand sexual orientation and STI's (sexually transmitted infections). We also had a question box, where we could write a question on an index card and put it in the box for the facilitators to look at and to find the answers without the embarrassment of asking out loud in front of the entire class. Everyone had to fill out a card so that no one would know who was asking the question, and if we had a personal issue we needed to talk to them about, we could put our names and that info on the card to let them know who to talk to. The facilitators would help to the best of their ability and made sure never to bring it up in front of others or embarrass you about it when meeting with you.

I think the relationships unit really helped us all. A few of us used the information we had learned in our later relationships. I started dating my first boyfriend about one year after I took the class and know that what we learned and went over helped me to be more outspoken about the things I was and was not okay with. I could tell him I wasn't okay with kissing yet without being worried about him breaking up with me, because

if he truly wanted to be with me then he would accept both me and the fact that I just wasn't ready.

In a school sex education class with 30 other students, most of whom are either complete strangers or people who don't take the class seriously, it's hard to ask the questions you want answered. By comparison, in the small, close environment of the O.W.L. class, that was easier to do. We did have a question box in school, but you only had to put a paper in if you had a question, and not many people used it. O.W.L. was more fun for two main reasons; first, it wasn't a required school health unit we had to suffer through, and second, we had some fun days that let us loosen up a bit rather than sit and listen to videos and the facilitators lecturing.

Sometimes I wish I could spread the "O.W.L." Effect to the people who really needed it. I wish more people could have had this experience because the friends who've been through O.W.L. are more at ease about sex and less inclined to be pressured especially by misinformation because we're armed with the facts and empowered to act responsibly and demand the respect we deserve.

Autumn Harff is the daughter of Nathan Harff & Ramona Barr. She is a 14 yr. old freshman at Mayo High School and attended the Jr. High O.W.L. class several years ago. She has attended the Young Artists, Youth Authors (Y.A.Y.A.) conference for the past 6 years.

Erika Beetcher is a Family Nurse Practitioner. A long-time member of the church, currently on the Board.

Ryan Shriver is our Director of Religious Education. He oversees the curriculum and programming for children and youth and trains the adult volunteers.

Dr. Wilson Adolphus Allen, a UU (Unique Universalist): 1834-1934

By Sue Wheeler

Just from this photo, it's evident that Dr. W. A. Allen was unique. He was a distinguished homeopathic physician and by all accounts an esteemed member of the community of Rochester and Grace Universalist Church.

He and his wife Flora Huston Allen moved from Plainview to Rochester in 1872 and became "zealous members" of the Universalist Church. A small obituary in *The Universalist*, Volume 25, states that Flora "for the past fifty years was an active and faithful member." Church records show that she served on the Committee on Benevolence, which, according to the 1876 amended Articles of Covenant of Grace Universalist Church, had the following duties: "to reach and help the needy" and to "endeavor to find employment for those who are seeking it." In 1890 both Allens joined the Committee on the Sick, the duties of which were to visit the sick, to "provide watchers when needed," and "to do all in their power to make the sick comfortable."

By 1894 Dr. Allen had been appointed one of four Deacons of the church who were charged to manage the church's finances, assist at Communion, and "investigate ... all applications for membership and all cases of difficulty between the members." The Allens hosted a "Leap Year" reception at their home, and they were in the receiving lines of many Universalist social events according to newspaper articles during those years. Dr. Allen was elected and served as a trustee from 1906 to 1911 and again from 1915 to 1920.

At the annual meeting in 1920 a motion was carried that "a vote of thanks be extended to



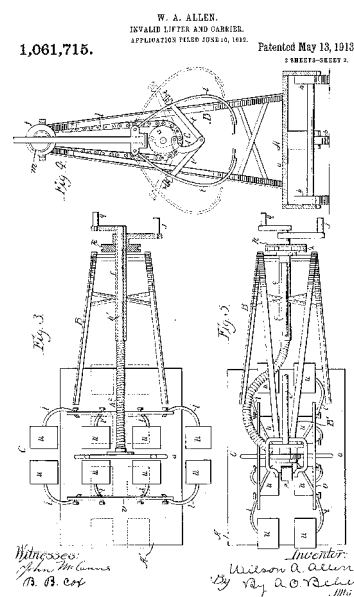
*Dr. Wilson Allen (lying in bed) with his younger brother, Benjamin.
"Rochester Physician, still active, will take holiday on 100th birthday"
(May, 1934, Rochester Post)*

Dr. W. A. Allen for his many years of service as trustee and that he be elected trustee Emeritus ..." He was 86 years old. At the March 1934 meeting of the trustees, "it was suggested that [the Rev.] Mr. Gleason write a greeting to Dr. Allen for the board to commemorate his 100th birth anniversary on March 6."

He was also an inventor. In May 1913, Dr. Allen was granted patent number US 1061715 for the Invalid Lifter and Carrier.

Dr. Allen described the purpose of the invention in his application for a patent: "it is the purpose of this my present invention, to provide safe and gentle means for handling invalids, whereby the dangers of contagion are minimized, the unnecessary suffering of

Drawing accompanying patent application





The congregation around 1915, Dr. Allen is in the front row looking dapper as usual.

the patient may be avoided, and much of the weariness of the nurses or attendants may be unknown.” According to *History of Olmsted County Minnesota* published in 1910, “It should be a source of much comfort and gratification to Dr. Allen to know that he has been instrumental in the relief of so many sufferers.” You can find more information on this patient lifter if you Google it!

W. A. Allen was also a popular and respected doctor. “Dr. Allen stands among the leading physicians of Rochester, and is having a large practice,” according to the *History of Winona and Olmsted Counties*, 1883. “Dr. W. W. Mayo was a popular local surgeon with an active practice and a notable number of successful operations to his credit. But he would often consult with Dr. Allen and defer to his superior diagnostic skills” (*Old College Street: The Historic Heart of Rochester, Minnesota* by Ken Allsen).

About 20 years after he moved to Rochester, he decided to open a hospital, Riverside Hospital on Line Street (6th Street SE) in southeast Rochester. Did Rochester actually need another hospital in 1892? According to H. B. Clapesattle in *The Doctors Mayo*, Dr. Allen was unwilling to call the Mayos into consultation or refer cases to them, and because of that Dr. Allen did not have privileges at St. Marys Hospital. Clapesattle says, “He was human enough to be jealous.” So he started his own hospital.

He and Dr. Charles Granger opened it in November of 1892, and the *Rochester Post* hailed the opening with this headline: “Rochester Adds to her Reputation of Being the Mecca of the Northwest for Sufferers from Bodily Infirmities.” The two doctors oversaw the transformation of a house into the small hospital: “the west room has been converted into an operating room, containing a modern operating table, and the walls and floor of the room are so arranged that the room can be flushed after each operation,” according to the *Rochester Post* article.

Then, abruptly in 1895, the newspaper announced, “Owing to the removal of Dr. W. A. Allen from the city, it has been decided to close Riverside Hospital.” Dr. Allen reportedly had moved to St. Paul. This must have been a problem because, in that same year, he had been elected the twenty-fifth mayor of Rochester. He announced to the *Rochester Post* that he “will visit the city one day a week, probably Saturdays, and will retain the mayoralty of the city.”



Dr. Allen as a young man (no date available)

In 1915, when Dr. Allen was 81 years old, *Minnesota: Special Limited Edition* wrote of him: “With all of zeal and self-abnegation he has devoted himself to the alleviation of human suffering and distress, and he has not been denied due temporal rewards for his many years of earnest and effective service. His many friends and patrons will not permit his retirement from practice....” Indeed, he was still seeing patients until a few days before he died in May 1934 at age 100.

Dr. Allen was a Unique Universalist, important in the history of Rochester and our Church.

Facts about Dr. Allen

- His favorite sport was fishing. He “never thought well of commercialized sport.”
- He was an avid motorist. According to the *Post-Bulletin*, he bought his first car in 1907 (a three-seated Ford for \$1,600), he never had a chauffeur, and never had an accident.
- In his nineties he could write the Lord’s Prayer on a space the size of a dollar and the writing was perfectly legible. Why? To prove that he could do it.
- He was rejected for military service during the Civil War because his health was so poor at age 30.
- The Mayo brothers were honorary pall bearers at his funeral.
- Both Wilson and Flora Allen are buried at Oakwood Cemetery.

Most of the later biographical sketches and information about Dr. Allen do not mention this move, and instead maintain that he lived in Rochester continuously from 1872 until his death in 1934. In fact, according to the 1915 *Minnesota: A Special Limited Edition*, while he was mayor “his administration [was] noted for wise and effective municipal policies.”

After that “dustup” in the Rochester medical community, Dr. Allen seemed to settle down, satisfied with his own, very successful one-man practice at 229 ½ South Broadway (now Hilton Garden Inn).

When he was in his nineties, he was interviewed frequently on his birthday, and in 1934 he was featured in *Ripley’s Believe It or Not*, as the oldest active practicing physician in the United States. In a March 7, 1927, article in the *Post-Bulletin*, he claimed to have no secrets for long life, but he did offer some hints: “I eat about what I want, and I do not eat heavily. I have never smoked much except during my college days, and I have never taken a swallow of whiskey. I believe in prohibition, but I think we could have a better prohibition than we have now.”



Sue Wheeler has been a church member since 1983, is a member of the History Committee, and loves to dig through all the church archives.

Gifts from the Past ... Legacy for the Future

Save the Dates



Sunday, January 31, 2016 – Breakfast of Champions

Members of the Disabilities Task Group have planned a Sunday service entitled Breakfast of Champions, offering a brief history of how people with disabilities received services during the past 150 years. They will honor two members of our church for their contributions and will look at our history of becoming a Certified Accessible and Inclusive Congregation (and they will serve a breakfast between services!).



February 2016 – Stained-Glass Window

Church member Stephanie Podulke, co-founder of Rochester Stained Glass, will design and help us (members and friends of all ages) create a stained-glass window that will be a permanent addition to our church building in commemoration of our 150th Anniversary. Watch for tables in the Commons filled with the tools you will need to help build this beautiful piece of art.

Saturday, February 20, 2016 – A Healing Service--A Time to Heal

We all have pain in our lives. We all have the ability to heal ourselves. This ceremony's intention is to help one begin the process of healing, by acknowledging the pain and surrendering it. With the tools of meditation and the gifts of healing energy from the energy healing practitioners (Reiki and Healing Touch), the pain can be transformed so the healing can begin.



Sunday, February 21, 2016 – Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Our Organ

In honor of its 35th birthday, our choir and organist will be "pulling out all the stops" to demonstrate the beauty of our magnificent organ. Built by the Hendrickson Organ Co. of St. Peter, Minnesota, the organ was designed by Merrill N. (Jeff) Davis III, our music director from the early 1970s to 1984. The tracker organ, funded by a major gift from Mary Kahler Hench, contains 16 stops on 3 keyboards and pedal board.

Sunday, March 6, 2016 – Founders' Day Service

March 1866 was the month of our church's "firsts": first officers elected, first pastor invited, first building planned. Let's recall and revive the spirit of our founders, as we honor the long-tenured "pillars" among membership today.



Sunday, March 20, 2016 – Sunday Service Featuring the music of Orvis Ross

Our guest musician, Barbara Claggett, will be performing the music of Orvis Ross, our music director from the late 1940s until the early 1970s. He was a well-respected choral director, organist, pianist, composer, and teacher. Barb Claggett grew up in our church, and she and Orvis shared a birthday. This service is a chance to get better acquainted with a most interesting figure in the history of our church and community.

Saturday evening, April 9, 2016 – 150th Anniversary Celebration Banquet

The 150th Anniversary Banquet for all members and friends of the church will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Banquet Room. Join us as we will celebrate together our 150 years as a church and as part of the Rochester community. Watch for more details and ticket sales in March.



Sunday Services, April 10, 2016 – Gifts from the Past, Legacy for the Future

Don't miss the culmination of our 150th Anniversary Celebration of the life of the First Unitarian Universalist Church. We welcome to our congregation a very special guest speaker the Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President. We will also dedicate the newly created stained-glass window and listen to the premiere performance of a commissioned musical composition to commemorate our Sesquicentennial. And of course everyone is invited to a celebratory reception between services.

Dates are subject to change

The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism

We covenant to **affirm** and **promote** ...

The inherent **worth** and **dignity** of every person

Justice, equity and **compassion**
in human relations

Acceptance of one another and encouragement
to **spiritual growth** in our congregations

A free and responsible search for **truth** and **meaning**

The right of **conscience** and the use of the
democratic process within our congregations
and in society at large

The goal of **world community** with
peace, liberty, and justice for all

Respect for the interdependent web of **all**
existence of which we are a part



First Unitarian Universalist Church

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