



UU REVUE

Fall 2017

**Installation of Rev.
Luke Stevens-Royer**

**Chalice Circles,
Reflect and Connect**

First UU's Biggest Fundraiser

**Melissa Eggler,
Artisan of the Three R's**

Jumpstarter Projects Update



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Church Mission

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

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.

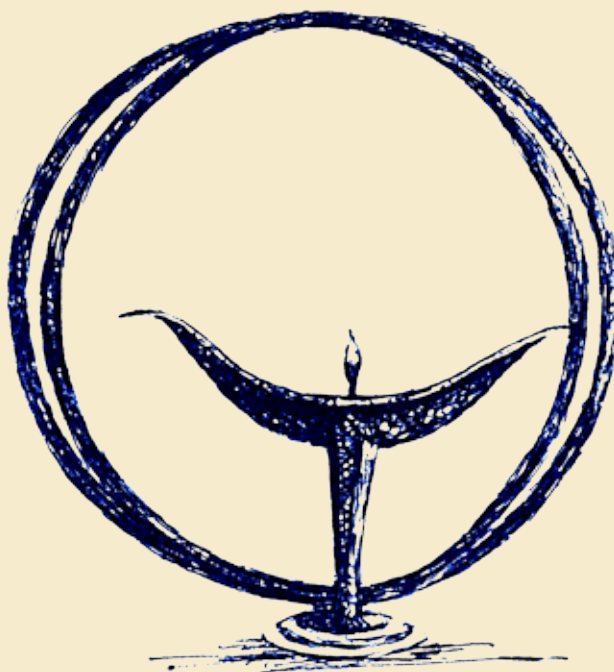
The Congregation of the
First Unitarian Universalist Church

of Rochester, Minnesota,
invites you to celebrate with us
the installation of our minister

The Reverend Luke Stevens-Royer

Sunday, October 15, 2017
4:30 p.m.

Reception following the service



Life has in it a re-creating force. Our destinies are in our own hands.
What though lovest, though becomest."

-Rev. Eliza Tupper Wilkes, Minister
First Universalist Church, Rochester, 1869-1873

Chalice Circles: Reflect and Connect

By Anne Owen Shea

Do you ever feel like your life is speeding by without you paying attention or connecting with other people? Instead, you may focus on a busy work schedule, family obligations, and what seems like a never-ending to-do list.

Joining a Chalice Circle is a good way to find time to reflect more on your life and better connect with other members of the church. Participants in Chalice Circles are given time to “deeply listen” and to do the contemplation that is so often lost within our busy daily lives.

Every year in September, First Unitarian Universalist Church members have the opportunity to sign up for a Chalice Circle. These groups meet from October to May for two hours a month and provide members with a chance to reflect, bond with fellow UUs, and reaffirm their spiritual values.

Chalice Circles offer a unique opportunity to connect with other congregants outside of formal church services. Bri Berg mentions that as a new member of the church three years ago she saw Chalice Circles as “a good opportunity to develop my newfound ‘UU-ness’ and gain insights and personal perspectives from other UUs.” Jen O’Connor came to Chalice Circles shortly after she was introduced to the First Unitarian Universalist Church. She mentions

that, “A friend introduced me to the church, and she was in a Chalice Circle. She got permission for me to join for the last few months of the year. I liked it so much that I continued to join a Chalice Circle for the next couple of years.” Jen says that through joining she has “gotten to know people I may have never met... and this is a way in which I have really been able to connect with the church and the church community.”

*In Chalice Circles
we look within ourselves and find
stories drawn from the wellsprings of
our own lives. We bring forth stories of
individual victories and defeats, personal fears
and disappointments, private insights and
concerns. As each person speaks,
others listen. Everyone speaks.
Everyone is heard.*

Melissa Egger, Coordinator of Congregational Life, also became involved with Chalice Circles as a new member of the church in 2009. She explains that she “was very interested in getting to know members of the church in this way [since she] was new to this church, this faith, and the community.” For

many members, smaller church gatherings such as Chalice Circles provide a more intimate setting to become acquainted with the First Unitarian Universalist Church and its members.

So, what are Chalice Circles? They are small religious gatherings of six to eight individuals who meet once a month at the church, in members’ homes, or occasionally in public spaces to discuss a variety of topics related to being a Unitarian Universalist. While the topics of the meetings vary, the meetings are often organized in the same way. According to Ron Chrisope, a

member of a men's Chalice Circle, "the meetings start with a lighting of the chalice, in our case flipping the switch on the bottom of the candle, and a reading. We have a period where each person is given an opportunity to tell 'what is on our hearts' – what has happened to us or to our lives in the recent past. Sometimes this can be emotional. We then start the topic by going around the circle and each person reads one of the short (one or two sentences) readings provided and ones that that person has brought because they believe it is relevant. We then drift into discussion. The general rule is that a person says what they want or need to say with no interruption, especially during the opening period. At the end of the meeting, the chalice is extinguished and the meeting concludes."

The meetings often center around readings about a particular topic, including traditional spiritual topics like God, spirituality, and the afterlife. Melissa mentions that "I think that a favorite of our groups has been the topic of 'Our Spiritual Journey,' where members share the spiritual journey experiences that have led them to resonate as Unitarian Universalists." The groups also explore topics like classism, death, and happiness.

However, Chalice Circles do not just explore serious topics. For Bri, humor was one of her favorite topics: "We all shared memorable experiences and stories that reflected our personalities and varying senses of humor, and one member noticed that each one of us had at some point broken into a funny voice impersonation! It was a nice, lighthearted way to get to know each other better." Melissa mentions how one of her Chalice Circles chose music as a topic and "shared beloved tunes that were important during specific parts of our lives. It was very interesting when there was a topic that we felt was challenging to discuss or very thought provoking, that [the discussion] became so deep we would go over our two-hour time together!"



Ron says that often the topic is just the starting point for the conversations that happen: "Many times, however, we get sidetracked and only explore a single facet of the topic or what it isn't rather than what it is." It's clear from conversations with Chalice Circle members that they determine the direction they want the discussion to take.

In order to provide members with a feeling of safety and security within the circles, members of Chalice Circles are expected to commit to a covenant. Melissa explains that this covenant, "is an agreement that we all abide by, and it helps to create a safe space for listening and sharing. Along with this we discuss the practice of 'deep listening.' This is a challenging practice for many. Deep listening means that you do just that. Listen. There is no 'affirmation' (saying 'Oh, I know how you feel' or 'Oh, I'm so sorry that happened'), no head nodding, no writing down things people say, no cross talk, no nothing while the member of the group is speaking."

Melissa describes this type of listening as "very difficult." It is challenging because deep listening is very different from the type of listening we do in our daily lives.

However, several members mention that this type of listening is one of the most important aspects of Chalice Circles. Bri says that it is "refreshing to be immersed in an environment in which everyone is encouraged to be present and simply listen to others' sharing without offering feedback or judgment of any sort." Bri also says the process of deep listening can feel "unnatural" at first and that it took time to develop. However, with Chalice Circles, she says she became a "much more engaged listener and began to feel comfortable and free sharing thoughts and feelings that, under standard circumstances, would be prone to questions, comments, and potential judgment."

Jen mentions other benefits of the deep listening. She says, “I strongly encourage people to participate [in Chalice Circles]. It’s such a wonderful way to really get to know other people as well as to challenge our own thinking.”

For the members of Chalice Circles, the most valuable part of being involved seems to be the open conversation that develops with members of their groups. Jen mentions that “I had a group one year that meshed really well. People were very open and trusting. People have really gone through so much. We don’t always see that when we make small talk at coffee hour. It’s really helped me to remember that there’s more to a person than what we see on the outside.”

Due to the nature of these meetings and the way they are organized, members are able to share in a way that is very different than in other social gatherings. Ron mentions that “Probably the most important thing to me about the Chalice Circle is the trust that we have in each other. We know that what is said in circle, stays in the circle. I have had the most honest and open discussions that I have had in my life in this group.”

Particularly, in difficult times, many members of Chalice Circles value the opportunity to openly share and learn from the members of their groups. For example, Melissa says, “During times in my life when I have faced challenges, specific things that members of my groups have shared come back to me to help me. This is especially true when raising my boys in the Unitarian Universalist faith, dealing with changing friendships or exploring different faith questions. I feel that the bonds I have made with members of my groups have helped guide me on my path through my spiritual journey.”

Some people comment on how being a member of a Chalice Circle has made them a better listener and thinker and deepened their connection with First Unitarian Universalist Church. As Melissa notes, “I cannot even begin to describe the valuable things I’ve realized and learned from these people through our time together.”

Books in our Library



Heart to Heart:
Fourteen Gatherings
for Reflection and
Sharing by Christine
Robinson and Alicia
Hawkins. Skinner
House, 2009.



Soul to Soul:
Fourteen Gatherings
for Reflection and
Sharing by Christine
Robinson and Alicia
Hawkins. Skinner
House, 2011.



Listening Hearts:
Fourteen Gatherings
for Reflection and
Sharing by Christine
Robinson and Alicia
Hawkins. Skinner
House, 2015.

Anne Owen Shea is an English teaching poet who enjoys running really slowly and belting out 1980s karaoke.

7th Annual Mike Podulke Service Auction to Be Held Nov. 11

First UU's Biggest Fundraiser Sparks Creativity & Fellowship Among Members

By Robin Taylor



Getting ready for the live auction, circa 2005.

First UU member Stephanie Podulke remembers the very first service auction held at the church almost 30 years ago—a casual little affair designated to benefit the Youth Group. It has since blossomed into an inspired and beloved tradition that last year raised \$21,000 for the church and \$4,700 for the Catholic Charities Refugee Program, in addition to bringing joy, camaraderie, and new connections to many members.

Stephanie and her late husband, Mike Podulke, were Fellowship Chairs back in 1988 when they came up with the idea for the first one. “The youth needed money for one of their Cons,” she recalls. They had some baked goods and a few handmade items, and some of the kids offered babysitting and other services. “Mike auctioned it all off, and it was hysterically funny.”

Anyone who ever saw Mike Podulke in action as our church

auctioneer knows why the annual service auction now bears his name. First of all, he cut quite a picture: “Mike always wore his cowboy boots, a black cowboy hat with feathers, a vest, and a ruffled shirt,” says Stephanie. And second, his signature wit and repartee had the audience howling with laughter.

“Who will save this wretched child from a mispent youth and give her a proper job?” he would call, auctioning off a teen’s offer to babysit. If the bid was too low, he would name somebody in the congregation and say, “Are you going to let so-and-so outbid you?” He got people competing against each other, and if the bidding got high enough, he would try to talk the seller into offering the item twice. He was also famous for selling more seats to a dinner than the host had specified.



Mike working his magic in 2005.

Kim Edson recalls the first auction she participated in where

Mike sold her “Dinner for Four” to eight happy bidders. She couldn’t tell Mike she only owned four place settings, so she then had to schedule two separate events. “And do you know what it is like finding a date that works for everyone?” she laments.

Years ago, when the county passed an ordinance to allow people to have chicken coops in city limits and raise up to three hens, Kirk and Jo Payne donated a dozen beautiful brown eggs for the auction. Mike dubbed them “FLUCKERS: First Legal Urban ChickEn Eggs in Rochester,” and prompted a bidding war that drove the price up to \$25 for the carton.

“Mike was very serious about the auction,” says Stephanie. “He would study the bill ahead of time so he knew what jokes to make. And he always lost his voice the next day.” The success of that very first auction for the youth led to the idea that an auction could generate money for the whole church. In February of 1989, Mike and Stephanie organized a service auction with the goal of raising \$2,500, which they surpassed by several hundred dollars.

“Mike always used to start with a few set pieces, and something offered by the youth,” remembers Jerry Katzmann, who helped organize the December 1990 auction with Ken Johnson, Ron Chrisope, and Mike. His wit and charm quickly turned the auction into such a success that the Finance Committee came to depend on it as the church’s biggest fundraiser.

Eventually the Silent Auction was added to the Live Auction, and donated goods were displayed on a couple of tables in the Sanctuary. This concept became so popular that now the Commons is packed with rows of tables covered



Guests enjoy a proper English Tea auctioned by Phyllis and Bob Beery.

with gourmet baskets, homemade quilts or crafts, or unique items, such as a signed baseball or an antique dish.

Last year, a rare Richard Nixon plate found a single bidder in Ann Marie Jahn, whose father loves Nixon. “My brother and I always send him Nixon memorabilia,” she says. It would have been a fabulous deal for \$4, but Ann Marie’s



Tables laden with Silent Auction offerings.



A hammock beckons at the MacLaughlins' lakeside cabin, a perennial favorite Auction item.

husband, Simon Fermor, sheepishly admitted that he dropped the plate and broke it before it could be gifted.

Several years ago, the concept of "Set Price" items was introduced as a third category at the auction. "The Finance Committee felt there was a need to offer some events that did not require competing bids," explains Linda Thompson, chair of Finance.

This introduced a whole new array of social activities that people could purchase: Artist Betty Devine once offered a class on jewelry making. Pat Siljeborg taught how to make pop-up cards. Angie Joyce has shared her travel photos (with treats made by Kim Edson to match the destination). Rachel and Lyndon Froud once offered an "Adult Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup Party," that promised an assortment of cupcakes to "finish our culinary trip back to childhood" for only \$20/

person, including a detour to adulthood for grownup beverages. Such a bargain!

"We were seeing those Set Price events fill up within the first 15 minutes of the Silent Auction," says Linda—latecomers never had a chance. In 2015 the Finance Committee created a drawing system where people write their bidding number on a slip of paper and put it in a jar next to the event description. Numbers are drawn until the event is sold out.

"We also started offering a few raffle items for which the tickets are \$15 and under," says Linda. "Winners have walked away with long weekends at cabins or condos, tablets, and gift certificates."

"The auction is what I miss most about First UU," says Julia Gallagher, who keeps up her membership despite her move to New York City four years ago. "We would schedule our social life for the whole year with auction events, and it gave us a chance to meet people I would never have gotten to know otherwise. Playing Celebrity at Laurel Podulke's sparked lifelong friendships!"



This Mystery Dinner hosted by Janine van Ree and Jan van Deursen required the winning bidders to come in costume.

"If someone wants to get to know our congregation, there just isn't enough time to get into depth at coffee hour," agrees Jo Payne, who still keeps a collection of auction bills. Her favorite event she ever offered was dinner at their home and a chance to watch the Perseid Meteor Shower. "We dragged out every sleeping bag we owned and lay down on the (nearby) golf course and watched for meteors. The novelty of it was just a blast, and we had a raucous good time!"



A Kentucky Derby inspired dinner hosted by Lyn and Steve Smith, complete with hats and mint juleps.

The auction gives church members an opportunity to demonstrate their unique knowledge, like the Fen* Tour (*a mounded groundwater wetland) that retired Olmsted County Planner Phil Wheeler used to offer, or the Oakwood Cemetery Breakfast that history buffs Joyce Wood and the late Jan Karlson used to host.

"The auction gave me a chance to show off my cooking skills," admits Julia Gallagher, who with her late husband, Chris Shomonta, used to offer an Italian dinner that quickly gained a reputation as a "must bid."

Dinners have become extremely popular, especially since former minister Rev. Dillman Baker Sorrells convinced Mike to auction them by the plate, rather than the whole table. The

Katzmanns and Mullen-Schultzes once offered an All Potato Dinner where every course featured some form of potato, from the vodka and the Potato Samosa appetizers to the Sweet Potato Pecan Pie and Sweet Potato Cheesecake. Bidding soared to over \$100 a plate when Elizabeth stood up and said, "It's only potatoes, people!" But of course she, Pam, and Jerry worked for two days to prepare a gourmet five-course meal with a choice of four entrees. "I think the church made 10 cents for every dollar we spent on that meal," says Elizabeth, "but everything was sooooo good." And George Thompson, whose love of potatoes inspired the meal, surprised them by printing up hilarious menus and cookbooks of the recipes. "It was an amazing night for many reasons," says Elizabeth.

Other dinners have reflected the countries that congregants have just visited. Some find their inspiration in other themes, like a movie or a time period, such as "The Church Basement Ladies Supper," which drew its Jello-laden recipes and Bible quiz activities from Lutheran churches of the '50s.

The auction sparks bodacious creativity, with church members trying to outdo their own offerings from year to year. Bill and Linda Thompson, who have been hosting a Wine Tasting event for years with Jim and Julie Gilkinson, once hosted a tasting that featured only wines named for celebrities. (Paul Newman Red Blend was the winner at that event.) Another year, they went to the



Mr. & Mrs. Potato Head served as center pieces for the Katzmann-Mullen-Schultz All-Potato Dinner.

trouble of making three dozen bottles of their own Shiraz, which they labeled B&L +Jx2 Australian Shiraz. "Our Shiraz was voted one of the favorites that year," says Linda.



The Wheeler den, bereft of walls, after four lucky bidders won the chance to demolish them.

In 1998 Phil and Sue Wheeler began a remodeling project with a Tom Sawyer-like offer of a "Den Gutting and Dinner for Four: Do you have pent-up hostilities & frustrations? Unleash the dark side of your personality in a safe and supportive environment--the Wheelers' den!"

Helmets, dust masks, and crow bars provided free of charge. Not for softies." Sue still can't believe people paid \$35 each to help them knock down their walls.

Anita DeAngelis says her favorite purchase was a Boundary Waters Canoe Area trip offered by former member Jeff Snyder that she never would have bid on if her husband hadn't been interested. "It got us out of our comfort zone," she said. And that was before the forest fire! (The four campers found themselves in the middle of the Pagami Creek Fire in the BWCA and had to be evacuated in the middle of the night.) "We were never in any kind of danger--Jeff took care of us," says Anita.



Jeff Snyder hosted BWCA canoe trips for many years. He is pictured here with his wife, Karen, and Randy McKeeman (left) and Anita DeAngelis (far right).

Like all matters that deal with money, not everyone has fuzzy feelings for the auction. There are those who feel that prices go too high, especially for the dinners, which can be out of reach for some people. "I just know to budget for it and blow the wad in November," insists Jo Payne.

"Because so much of the church social life is based on events that were purchased the year before, I fear it excludes new members," worries Anita DeAngelis. However, for the last couple of years, events that didn't sell out have been offered throughout the year for late buyers, so there is often another chance to participate.

No purchase is necessary to enjoy the auction itself. You can come, enjoy a little wine and cheese, and simply sit back and watch the show. Everyone who was in attendance will remember the year that the Arborcidal Maniacs brought a chainsaw to the Sanctuary and powered it up to advertise their tree-trimming service, making everyone jump in their seats. And nobody will ever forget how Kathe Yoss once tried to give a testimonial for "Two Men in Tool Belts," a handyman service offered by Andy Schram and the late Steve Rolstad—but every sentence she offered made it sound like there was more to their work than home repair. The more flustered she became,

the more fun Mike had purposely misinterpreting her words of praise.

Professional auctioneer John Kruesel, who has done the job since Mike passed away, may not be quite as funny, but he works fast and raises the bids in a flash. And for the last five years, the auction bill has included a chance for congregants to donate to a charity as well, purchasing items for organizations aligned with our mission, such as Migrant Health Service or the Catholic Charities Refugee Program.

"I think the auction is the coolest thing," says Jo Payne. "If you've ever come to a Saturday night and thought, 'I wish we had something special to do,' this is a way to fill up your social calendar. There has never been an event where you didn't have good food, good fellowship, and a good time."



For many years, Robin Taylor and Joe Lobl have hosted a hike at Whitewater State Park, followed by wine tasting at Whitewater Wines, courtesy of Nathan Harff and Ramona Barr.

Auction Strategy for First-Timers

1. Be sure to add a date to any event you offer BEFORE you put it on the auction bill. (Trying to find a time that works for everyone is like herding cats and could take months.)
2. When you receive the auction bill, read it carefully and highlight the events you are interested in, taking note of dates. (Some events might be offered on the same day.)
3. Check those dates against your family calendar. Be aware of vacations, school holidays, and other important events that might conflict.
4. Prioritize your choices and determine your budget for the evening.
5. Consider making a list of any holiday or baby gifts you need to purchase, in case you see the perfect present for someone.
6. Come early to peruse the Silent Auction so you can get a good sightline on the things you want.
5. Remember the auction is both a FUNdraiser and a FUNraiser. Try to bid up your fellow UUs AND be sure to have fun.

First Unitarian Universalist Church
7th Annual Mike Podulke

Service Auction

Saturday, November 11, 2017

Silent Auction 5:30-7 p.m.

Fixed Price Entries 5:30-6:15

Live Auction 7:15 p.m.

Robin Taylor has been a member of First UU since 1992, and always sends a designated buyer to the auction if she can't be there herself.

Melissa Eggler

Artisan of the Three R's

By Pat Calvert

Rochester UUs know Melissa Eggler as their high energy Coordinator of Congregational Life. Perhaps not as many are familiar with her mission as a craft artist: to rescue, repurpose, and reuse old materials and objects.

Melissa traces her interest back to a memory in her maternal grandmother's house in Rock Island, Illinois. She was fascinated by the crocheted doilies on the arms and back of the davenport. When asked why she was parading around with one on top of her head, she answered, "I'm getting married!" It might have been her first venture in repurposing. She also remembers



trips up a spiral staircase leading to an attic studio, excursions made fragrant by the lavender oil her grandmother used to clean paint brushes. It was here that Melissa learned to paint—roses in particular.



What Melissa does NOT remember, however, is a time she didn't make something out of what was close at hand: assemblages from stones and sticks collected in the back yard, doll blankets from snippets of fabric, drawings on scraps of paper. It was a childhood rich in sensory experience and the beginning of what became a lifelong passion: what can be imagined by the human mind, then made real by human hands. Long before she enrolled in formal art classes, Melissa was drawn to what she calls the *intentionality* of a craft: what it is used for, where it comes from, who makes it.

Melissa lived in Heidelberg, Germany, for three years after she graduated from Moline Senior High in 1991. She took art classes sponsored by Heidelberg University, and calls herself "very lucky" to have traveled throughout Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Czechoslovakia. Prague, her favorite European city, crystallized her regard for a culture that venerated what was old, a further influence on her development as a craft artist.

“Everything I make contains something in it that has been recycled, reused, or rescued,” she says. When asked if she considers using castoffs to be a kind of moral imperative, she exclaimed without a moment’s hesitation: “Absolutely!”

She explains that—for her—the art of repurposing has “a spiritual dimension.” She calls it an honor to give fresh meaning to what once belonged to someone else. Again, the word intentionality comes into play: she intends to pay homage to what someone—frequently an unknown someone—has used, perhaps even cherished.



If one adopts a mission to rescue and repurpose, where does one shop? Where better than Goodwill, the Salvation Army, yard sales, and rummage sales—and what does Melissa keep an eye out for when she’s on an expedition? Usable fabric in worn jeans, shirts, sweaters, sheets, and especially any lace or crochet decoration on old table cloths, dish towels, or pillow cases. Discarded costume jewelry—beads, bracelets, broaches—don’t escape her glance, nor do buttons and buckles. In other words, anything that can be reclaimed and repurposed for future use in a wall hanging, mandala, or tote bag is fair game.

In addition, Melissa confesses—gratefully—that she has “a gift for being gifted.” One of her greatest delights is being given a box of buttons, old jewelry, broken tiles, or lace, ribbons, yarn, feathers, fur.



When fellow artist and longtime UU member Karin Lindsay prepared for a move to Charter House, she gifted Melissa several crocheted tablecloths. UU member and stained glass artist Stephanie Podulke gifted a box of hoops that couldn’t be used in her own craft because the metal wouldn’t bond with solder. When Melissa crafts a piece of work out of such materials, often she gifts it forward to someone else.





Where to display such an assortment of well-used, reclaimed objects and items leads to certain challenges—where to store them, for starters. Melissa quotes husband Eric’s wry observation of their home: “Looks like a 100-year-old woman lives here!” Not true—a young one who just happens to like old stuff!

One of Melissa’s simplest and most charming creations is a luminaria fashioned from an old Mason jar. She bands it with a piece of lace or crochet work; at suppertime, when the candle inside is lit, patterned shadows are cast across the table and thrown on nearby walls.

Melissa long ago dedicated herself to making something each day that she’d never made before: learning a new crochet stitch or trying a new recipe, for example. “My hands always need something to do,” she says, which could explain why four of the quilts that currently brighten the walls of our sanctuary are ones she designed and made.



Repurposing old stuff is one thing—but how about reusing what’s *really* old? UUs who are stargazers are familiar with The Pleiades, a constellation that Melissa is especially fond of because her favorite poet, Emily Dickinson, referred to it several times; *pleiad1* can be seen on Melissa’s license plates and serves as her email address.



While Melissa tirelessly pursues her own crafts, she is an equally ambitious advocate for other regional artists. In 2011, she organized the first annual Handcrafted Bazaar at the First UU Church of Rochester, inviting regional artists to contribute. The 2016 bazaar was a standing room only event in our Commons and Hearth Room, with space for 35 booths where soap makers, glass etchers, woodworkers and others displayed their work. Her goal is, over time, to offer a venue for hundreds of local handcraft artists to gain public recognition.

In July 2017, when UU church member Sheila Kiscaden, an Olmsted County Fair board member, contacted Melissa about organizing a display for local artisans at the fairgrounds, she jumped at the chance to organize local crafters and give them another opportunity



to show their works. About 20 craft artists displayed their works and did demos, while 10 performance artists—singers and interpretative dancers—engaged the crowd.

Melissa and husband Eric (a past member of the UU Board), began attending the First Unitarian Universalist church in 2009 and joined in 2010. Fifteen-year-old Ethan recently graduated from the COA (Coming of Age) program, and 12-year-old Aidan just finished the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program.

Prior to becoming the Coordinator of Congregational Life, Melissa was active in Adult Religious Education, lent her expertise to the Clara Barton Guild rummage sale, brought the famous Boar's Head Feast roaring back to life, and was a member of the church's 150th anniversary celebration team. Every August, Melissa and Eric host a "Summer Fling" party in their backyard, a go-to event for Rochester UUs, at which many

of Melissa's rescued crocheted table cloths are put to use.

Melissa says the first of the seven covenants of the UU church, *the inherent worth and dignity of every person*, is particularly important to her. Observers of her crafts will notice the recurring use of a circle. It represents unity and inclusion, and for Melissa it also suggests an embrace. Travel alert here: hugs ahead the next several miles.

Patricia Calvert is the author of many books, a life-long humanist, and longtime member of First UU.

Jumpstarter Projects Update— Where Are We Now?

By Sue Wheeler

The First Unitarian Universalist Church building was completed in 1968—almost 50 years ago. As you know, especially if you are 50 or older, some parts deteriorate and need fixing, and due to science and technology, some parts can be improved or enhanced.

The very successful Jumpstarter Campaign was begun in the 2015-2016 church year specifically to pay for necessary church maintenance and improvement projects. The goal was set at \$150,000, and church members generously surpassed that goal. A team consisting of representatives from the Board, Communications, Property, and Finance identified a number of areas that needed updates. (See the Fall 2016 *UU Revue*.) Below is the original to-do list.

1. Sanctuary heating and cooling system
2. Sanctuary audio and projection systems
3. Church management software
4. Roof repair
5. Roof replacement fund
6. Handrail replacement on stairs from parking lot
7. Concrete flatwork
8. Accessibility solutions for sanctuary stage, courtyard, rest rooms, and kitchen
9. Parking lot repair fund
10. Plans for LED lighting, energy efficient windows and walls, and kitchen expansion/remodel

Here is how we are actually using the Jumpstarter Funds.

Replacing the Furnaces and Handrails and Conditioning the Air

During the fall of 2015 we installed two new, energy-efficient furnaces at a final cost of \$8,770, providing comfortable heating and cooling for many years to come. During the summer of 2016 the Property Committee worked with Custom Iron to repair the rusted and corroded handrails on the stairs leading from the lower parking lot. At a cost of \$3,025, the new and improved handrails are not only safe, but also beautiful. This summer \$3,000 of Jumpstarter funds paid for an air conditioner in the office of the Director of Religious Education, which meant Joyce Rood could work in comfort during the hot and humid weather.

The #@*&#?# Roof

Anyone who has attended First UU for any length of time knows our church's flat roof is a continuing problem that needs repair just about every year. As far back as the 1971 annual report, property chair Milton Anderson referred to the need to repair the 3-year-old roof. The next year a new chair, Don Layton, reported "Considerable annoyance and damage was done by melting ice. We are assured that the original roofer will accomplish the repairs this season at no expense to us. We are prepared to make a civil action against him if he reneges." In 1996 property co-chair Peter Edl's annual report stated, "The condition of the roof has been a nagging problem and one that seems at times intractable. Leaks show themselves with dismaying regularity." And just last winter for a couple of weeks, sextons used four plastic kitchen bowls to catch water dripping through the roof into

the sanctuary. That worked but was unsightly, and although we still have those bowls, they are not a permanent solution. The roofing company made repairs as quickly as possible to prevent structural damage, and the company continues to perform annual roof inspections to prevent more costly repairs and maximize the life of the roof. We've spent approximately \$3,000 per year in 2015 and 2016, and about \$4,200 to date in 2017 for immediate and long-term repairs (\$10,200 so far).


Ever the optimist, current property chair George Huston predicts that if we continue to be pro-active in keeping the roof in good condition, we can expect to get another 10 to 15 years out of the existing roof.

Audio-Visual System-- Are We in the 21st Century, Already?

Rob Harveland, church A-V Guru, answered that question decisively: This new system is easier to use, projects sound more efficiently, and is many times more versatile than our previous system, at a total cost of approximately \$76,000, including two large monitors that haven't yet been installed.



Drop-down screen in the sanctuary



The Jumpstarter Campaign is still active, so please consider participating in the Campaign if you have not previously. Help us fund future Building and Grounds projects and improvements. Contact Connie Schuelka to contribute, administration@uurochmn.org.

According to Rob "the system is simplified a ton." It is digitally controlled. The feedback and the sound output are both automatically controlled by a computer, so the audio tech doesn't have to make judgments or adjustments. Rob has created a ten-page guide, and after a 15-30 minute explanation of how things work, he says any person in the church can operate the system. Audio tech Roxanne Schlasner testifies, "It is not difficult to learn. Just like any of the hospitality jobs, the more you do it the easier it gets." Right now there are 9 trained audio techs, and they welcome more volunteers.

With the new system, Rob explains, "we have changed from using loud speakers to a digitally controlled linear array." So what does that mean? With loud speakers the volume goes everywhere in the room. With the digitally controlled linear

array, the sound can be directed, and in the case of the sanctuary, it is directed to where people's ears are—approximately 4-6 feet high. This directed sound results in less echo and reverberation and reduces reflection off the walls; in other words, it improves sound quality for the congregation. In addition, "we have the capability to add up to 8 stage mics for singers and groups" so they don't have to bring their own sound equipment, explains Bill Thompson, another audio tech. "We've always had audiotaping capability, but this system includes videotaping which we are just now working to perfect."

The versatility of the new system is most likely what congregants will notice. If you've been to a church



*Bill Thompson and Kathy Brutinel
perfecting the art of the sound system*

service in the past six months, you've probably noticed the big screen that magically appears from the ceiling. Because the system has multiple sources of projection, worship leaders can include photos, videos, and Internet material to enhance worship for the congregation on Sunday morning. Speakers have been installed in the Hearth Room and the Nursery with separate volume controls, and the Commons has nine new speakers mounted on the ceiling that project in different directions. This fall in time for Rev. Stevens-Royer's installation, a 70-inch monitor will be mounted on the north wall of the Commons so people there can both see and hear the service. A smaller monitor in the Hearth Room will also be available. Church happenings and announcement will play on the monitors when services are not going on.

Soon the monitor in the Commons will have presentation capability so organizers can offer forums, films, presentations, armchair traveling, and family movie nights without having to set up an LCD projector and the unwieldy screen. Think of the possibilities!

Church Management Software, a Work in Progress

A year ago tech-savvy church members and staff set out to select a Church Management Software package that would best fit the needs of our church now and in the future. They narrowed the field from twelve to three, and finally chose ACS Technologies' web-based Realm Software. The monthly license fee is based on our church's average Sunday attendance and is now part of the annual budget. However, \$4,500 of Jumpstarter funds were used for data conversion and a three-month temporary office worker to free up staff time for the conversion, according to Congregational Co-Administrator, Connie Schuelka,

Why are we making this change? Since technology took over all of our lives back in the 20th century, church staff has used individual systems to keep up with church members and friends, Religious Education records, church activities and committees, financial records, membership, rentals, visitors, and more. This system works, but since each element is housed in a different place on church computers and the Internet, with different ways to access them, all the information is "kind of clunky to handle," says Rob Harveland, one of our tech-savvy members. Church management software provides an integrated system for all that information, and our staff can customize it to fit whatever works best to streamline operations and coordinate efforts



DRE, Joyce Rood, working with the new software

Our new minister, Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, is familiar with the ACS software since his previous church has used it for several years. “It is not only pragmatic and administrative, but it becomes an online directory, helps congregants stay informed about what’s happening, and connects them to service and volunteer opportunities in the life of the church.”

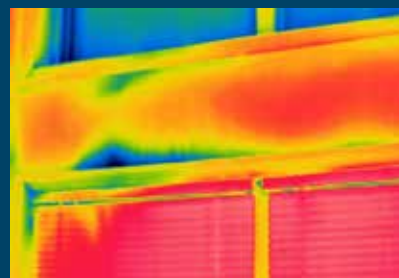
During this past spring and summer Congregational Co-Administrator Jody Tharp has been working on understanding and implementing the software. In August she began the process of introducing it to the rest of the staff. For the better part of this year, they will be working on customizing it to make their jobs more efficient and effective, and to find the best ways to help our church members connect with one another. “At its best,” says Rev. Luke, “it will keep track of all the church details and free staff and lay leaders to focus on the deeper work in ministry.”

Without Lines, the Parking Lot is Chaos

Every few years the parking lot needs an update, and 2017 is one of those years. The Property Committee worked with our regular asphalt contractor to do the usual “Three Rs”: repair, reseal, and restripe. A few safety and accessibility projects were added also. The asphalt contractors will stripe ALL the stair edges from the lower parking lot to the front door, the lower parking

Jumpstarter Funds will last longer if church members and friends pitch in to help with some of the projects. Here is one example.

Thermal Leaks—We Can All Help!



Property Committee members have discovered that the weather stripping in the church window sashes has deteriorated over time, causing significant thermal leaks. They have successfully experimented with replacement weather stripping and the best and most efficient replacement process, so now all they need is our help. As Property Chair George Huston says, “It’s a big job! There are over 50 windows in the church, but if we have lots of volunteers, we can get it done quickly AND cheaply.”

Watch for an opportunity to volunteer and step right up!

lot to the Memorial Garden and Courtyard, and the upper parking lot to the Commons. The stair edge strip material has a rough texture and should last several years, depending on how often they get scraped by snow shovels.

Parking lot before and after



Long-time Property Committee member Darrel Waters looked into requirements for accessible parking spaces. As a result, stripes and signs designating 3 handicapped and 3 limited-mobility spaces in the upper parking lot are now compliant with code. These changes have been approved by the church's Disability Committee.

The cost of repairs, improvements, and a city permit is approximately \$4,500.

What's Next?

The remaining items on the to-do list are in various stages of progress. Mud jacking the concrete slabs that have settled; providing additional accessibility to the church, sanctuary, chancel, kitchen, and restrooms; and making the building more energy efficient are all part of current and future Property Committee discussion, investigation, and work.

Keeping our church building up to date and in good working order is the responsibility of all church members and friends, and we can help in many ways, whether we contribute to the Jumpstarter fund, show up on property work days, serve on the Property Committee or as a sexton, clean up after ourselves and others, or volunteer to do whatever is needed. We especially thank all those in our church community who have taken the lead on these successful Jumpstarter-funded projects.



Windows in the Hearth Room, as well as others, are in need of repair to make them more energy efficient.

Sue Wheeler has been a church member since 1983 and is working diligently to embrace all the church's new-fangled improvements.

A Very UU Summer



Genny and Fritz farewell



Pride Fest booth

Fellowship Game Night



Chalice Campers off for an excursion



2017 Chalice Campers

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



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