

yUUpper Newsletter

Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

"We affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person."

Sunday Mornings at 10:30 November 2017; Vol. 32, #11

BHK Building (700 Park Ave., Houghton). Enter on North Side, off Waterworks Drive

November's Theme: Fourth Principle: A Free and Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning

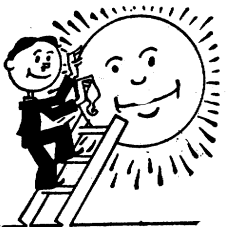
Sunday Schedule for November 2017

November 5 - "New Beginnings -- New Hope"
Economic injustice and poverty in our community is systemic. So how do we get beyond giving the poor money? In this service, Rev. Chris, Horst Schmidt, and special guest Terry Bazin will examine this question and show how one local organization is answering this call.

November 12: Forum. Nancy Reed, an audiologist in the Keweenaw for 30 years, will talk to us about hearing.

November 19: "Radical Candor." Management coach Kim Scott says that to succeed, managers must perform on two fronts: challenge employees to do their best, and show them that their manager cares about them. This is "Radical Candor" and Rev. Chris will examine the implications for UU churches and how we might implement such a culture. Potluck and Book Sale.

November 26 - "A Responsible Search for Truth and Meaning" Too often, Unitarian Universalists emphasize their free search for truth and meaning, but forget the responsible part. What does it mean for our quest to be *responsible*?



Don't be late for the November 5th service! *Standard Time* begins at 2am. **Fall Back** an hour.



"Do I Hear a Hundred Dollars?"

Auctioneer-in-training Will Cantrell, with assistant Jane Hiltunen, revs up the crowd at the annual KUUF fall money-raiser. The event earned over \$4,000 to help pay for music at services. Foto by Fink.

Minister's Musings:



Truth and Meaning: The Free and Responsible Type

In a sermon last month, I quoted some lyrics from country music singer Aaron Tippin:

"You've got to stand for something
or you'll fall for anything."

Sometimes people in our faith mistake the free and responsible search for truth and meaning for moral relativism—the idea that what is ethical is subjective to each person.

In other words, we need only feel something is right for it to be so. This is where so many

people come to believe that ours is a faith in which we accept everything, and a person can believe anything.

I don't subscribe to this view. Our fourth principle declares that the search for truth and meaning must be both free and responsible.

By free, we mean that people must be given the freedom to come to their own conclusions, which could sound like a bit of a slippery slope towards moral relativism.

However, without the freedom to arrive at our own conclusion, any beliefs will only receive a superficial and even fearful type of acceptance. A common belief is that people never truly learn something until they come to the conclusions on their own. And our fourth principle affirms this.

Unfettered freedom in our search for truth and meaning has caused much anguish over the years.

When our free search for truth tramples on the rights of others and actively violates other principles, it is irresponsible.

Responsibility balances out our free search for meaning. We must ask how we can responsibly apply the ideas we come to in our quest for truth while avoiding harm to others.

This is important because one needs both in order to enjoy a full understanding of our faith.

Unitarian Universalism embraces *Black Lives Matter* but not white nationalism because only one fulfills the requirements of both a free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

Anytime I examine some cherished piece of truth that I have reached through my free search for meaning, even ones that I hold dearly, I ask myself, "What responsibility does this cherished belief hold?"

Of course, I'll never be able to avoid all negative consequences of my beliefs; sometimes I'm blind to them, or they don't appear for decades in the future. That's why the free and responsible search for truth and meaning never ends. It's more of a journey than a short hike, and one that tests me constantly.

Where is your free and responsible search for truth and meaning taking you?

—Rev. Chris

Rev. Chris's Office Hours:

Wednesday and Thursday: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm;
Friday: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, and by appointment

Tea with the Minister:

Thursday: 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Friday: 9:00 am - 10:00 am

Rev. Chris's Blog: <http://www.radicalrev.com>

Email: crothbauer@uuma.org

Phone Numbers:

Office: (906) 482 5586

Mobile: (906) 275-8523

Home Page:

<http://www.keweenawuu.org/>

On Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/keweenawuu/>

Koffee Klatsch: Every 2nd Thursday and every 4th Friday; 10 AM; always at Roy's Bakery, on the Houghton waterfront just west of the Bridge.



Letters to the Editor

The editor encourages letters to the yUUpper Newsletter on UU or KUUF topics. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and available space.

Editor:

In support of the views of John Johnson in the October yUUpper newsletter I wish to add the following:

The writers of the US constitution recognized that if they chose an official national religion, the Colonies would not unite.

Thus "freedom of religion" was a protection for the State as well as freedom of practice for the Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Quakers and others who had been, literally, fighting (with arms!) to establish their religion as the one adopted by their Colony.

The point is that spelling out in detail the requirements of a covenant defeats its purpose. In that sense, I believe our Principles handle everything, plus more items omitted, of the items

listed in the recently distributed covenant document.

After reading the *UU World*, I understand that dissent has occurred at the national level, and a covenant was written to solve their problems. I see no reason why KUUF needs to adopt the same procedure. We are, after all, a faith group where power rests with the congregation, not the national organization.

In some manner, this “covenant” is a passive aggressive move to solve at a distance what may be a problem which needs to be solved by the individuals involved. This foists the problem/s, whatever it is/are, on the larger group. We don’t need that.

The Meyer-Briggs test teaches that persons with opposite work styles and personalities need to learn the style of others, and then each may adapt his or her style so the two can work as a team. Civility, compromise, and change are required.

What happens if one person or group refuses to change? Years ago I was told that members of congregations, including ministers, are like a marriage. Compromise and willingness to change must occur for it to work.

The meaning and intent of “covenant” needs consideration. If it comes to a vote, I intend to vote *no* on adopting this document. If it is adopted that will mean I am not only a minority, but, because this is a covenant, I am an outsider.

-Jan Dalquist

Board President Amlan Discusses Covenant Misunderstandings

Dear Fellowship,

In the last few weeks, we have, as a community, discussed the covenant document that the Board has been considering. Some members erroneously believe that the Board was going to adopt the proposed document on behalf of the Fellowship. This misconception was dispelled thanks to a note from Rev. Rothbauer.

The Board is working on a document for consideration and vote by the Fellowship at the Annual Meeting in June. The proposed covenant

may only be adopted if the Fellowship so votes, not simply an acceptance by the Board.

I have heard multiple critiques of the document from members. Many of you have correctly pointed out that it is too long. Other opinions swing between the constructive and the emotional. All are, of course, welcome, and are instructive to the Board.

To clarify, the covenant document is a template from UUA, one that the larger organization has found to be helpful. Instead of developing something from scratch, we had decided to use it as a launch pad, well aware that some modifications would be necessary. We are still looking forward to constructive feedback that will help shorten the document, diminish its authoritative voice, while still maintaining the sense of what the document hopes to achieve.

Which brings me to the question of whether we need a covenant at all. Aren’t the Seven Principles enough? Are we not capable individuals who can seek to learn through Fellowship?

The suggestion that a covenant document is not necessary for KUUF is worth examining.

As congregations grow and become diverse, people bring different assumptions and cultural mores to the table. In such situations, it is human to respond adversely to differences, especially when what we personally hold as true is challenged.

In the last few years, various incidents at KUUF have shed light on how we respond to differences. On more than one occasion I have noticed a gap between the intentions motivating our actions, and their perceived impact. This gap between intent and impact, when left unattended, can very quickly tear organizations apart. It creates hurt where none is meant, while allowing further entrenchment of deeply held beliefs.

Personally, my relationship with Rev. Rothbauer has gone through several iterations in the last year. While we both fundamentally agree on matters of principle, I have discovered that we often hold very different assumptions that have led us to significant discord. However, I believe we have both worked at further

exploring the source of our differences, and while we may not have reached a complete agreement on all matters, we have definitely begun understanding each other's position. This experience has been an opportunity to appreciate our First Principle.

As KUUF continues to grow as a Fellowship, I hope our attempts at developing an acceptable covenant document will present us with similar opportunities for spiritual growth.

Ultimately a covenant does not dictate how we behave, but rather describes the processes suitable for maintaining healthy relations.

For instance, when a disagreement urges a member to speak out, a covenant will recommend finding resolution by discussing the problem with the appropriate committee or officer.

Use of the written word, however, especially one shared with a larger audience, is less desirable because of the inaccuracy of language.

Tone, touch, and body language are critical forms of human interaction that can aid in reaching a resolution.

The Board is here to serve the congregation, and all Board members are willing to listen.

The covenant calls upon us to accept procedures that are necessary for the smooth functioning of our Fellowship. This will help us grow and invest in matters of social justice, and allow us to address difficult questions.

I look forward to your feedback on the next draft of the covenant, and possibly another draft beyond that, till we present a final document to the Fellowship at the Annual Meeting in 2018.

Amlan Mukherjee

Ph: (906) 370-5240



***Keweenaw Unitarian
Universalist
Fellowship
PO Box 276
Houghton, MI 49931***