



Creating community, deepening our spirit,
bringing our UU faith to action on behalf of women

Association of Universalist Women

Friday Get Connected

Every first Friday of the month from October until May we meet in the Church Library from 7-9 pm. This is an informal gathering to discuss thoughts, ideas, laugh together and have some fun. Light refreshments will be provided.

Next Meeting:

December 3- Cookie

Exchange and Discussion

How did you celebrate the holidays growing up? Many of us became UUs in our adult life; how do you celebrate the holidays now? What about the holidays brings you joy? Maybe there is some sorrow as well. For the cookie exchange, bring 4 dozen cookies and trade



December 2010: From the Editor

Kathy Urberg

The AUW Holiday Tea has been going on for 78 years now. Anything that has been around that long must have something going for it! Come and see for yourself on Saturday December 4th from 2 to 4 pm in the Social Hall. Whether you love the holidays or hate them, you can spend a relaxing and enjoyable afternoon with other church women and friends. Our intern Minister Ruth MacKenzie will present a short program. An email at Auw.firstuniv@gmail.com to let us know that you are coming would be great, but if you can't manage that, come anyway.

How is your knitting coming? Please keep the hats coming in. The homeless can use all we can produce. Barb Melom will be collecting hats at church until December 6. You can check out the website for the Hats for the Homeless at hats4thehomeless.blogspot.com.

Remember to pick up your poinsettias after the Holiday Tea or on the next Sunday, December 5th.

AUW Holiday Tea

All women are cordially invited to the Holiday Tea on Saturday, December 4 from 2 - 4 pm in the Social Hall. As last year, ten artistic women are decorating the tables, the food will be great and our wonderful intern minister Ruth McKenzie will be presenting a short program.

We are again collecting supplies for the women at Simpson

them for other cookies. Please bring a container of your own to carry your cookies home in.

January 7- Open Labyrinth Walk.

Start the New Year with other women and walk or dance on the Chartes Labyrinth that is etched on the floor of the Social Hall. We will meet in the Social Hall rather than the Library. Judith Grittner will co-host this event. Her phone number is 612-839-2280 if anyone has questions.

Shelter at the tea. They need monthly sanitary products, socks, and underwear in larger sizes as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste and small sizes of shampoo and lotion. We will have a basket for collecting them just inside the door.

Signup at the AUW table, the Hub, the AUW website or email auw.firstuniv@gmail.com to let us know you are coming.

Meet a Member: Barb Melom



community.

Shortly after she retired, Barb Melom saw an ad for a memorial service at Simpson Shelter for the homeless. The service was for the people who had died on the streets in the past year. She was moved by what was shared and by the discovery that there is a distinct sense of community among people who live on the streets. That night she also saw a bulletin asking for help serving meals at Simpson Shelter. She decided to look within her own community for volunteers and asked members of First Universalist Circle Suppers to help. One meal led to more meals and more volunteers from the wider First Universalist

Barb began learning about other things the homeless needed. She found that one of the most asked for items was clean socks. She led a sock drive at First Universalist that collected over 2,000 pairs of socks for Simpson Shelter. Barb also learned of the need for fresh produce at the shelter and began donating out of her own garden as well as taking the extra produce from a community garden. She has befriended Tracy Jones, who spends one or two nights a month at Simpson Shelter, and he calls her to let her know what is needed. She has also written letters to political figures advocating for help for the homeless. Two years ago Barb helped start Hats for the Homeless with Catherine Mandle. This has grown into another large project to provide

needed hats to people on the streets. Twice a year Barb volunteers with Project Homeless Connect.

Over the years Barb has learned that little things make a big difference. She looks to the AUW and First Universalist communities for help. She likes to build bridges for people to find ways to help. Most of all, Barb says it is wonderful to be part of such a giving community.

Social Justice Campaigns: Voting



Carol Johnson

On Monday, November 22, the Voting Rights working group participated in a press conference at the Minnesota State Capital to announce the release of a report: "[Facts About Ineligible Voting and Voter Fraud in Minnesota](#)," based on data from Minnesota County Attorneys regarding the 2008 election. The report was a joint collaboration with [Citizens for Election Integrity MN](#) (CEI) and AUW's statewide UU partner, [Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance](#) (MUUSJA).

Two AUW members were very involved in this project. Carol Johnson, initiator and co-author of the report, presented an overview of the safeguards in place in Minnesota to protect the integrity of our elections. Jennifer Jewell Thomas, a MUUSJA and CEI board member, Voting Rights co-chair and a contributor to the report, offered an executive summary: "**Voter fraud is not a problem in Minnesota and a photo identification requirement for voters is completely unnecessary.**"



Jennifer Jewel
Thomas

The report highlights the finding that, from over 1500 investigations statewide, there were only 26 convictions for voter fraud. All convictions and 77% of investigations were related to confusion over felon voting rights, which a photo ID could not prevent. The report recommends:

1. Do not implement a voter photo identification requirement in Minnesota.
2. Allow all non-incarcerated felons the right to vote. Until that is implemented, implement measures to inform felons when they can and cannot vote
3. Change the Minnesota statute regarding Deceptive Practices in Elections from a gross misdemeanor to a felony with the requirement to serve time, so that people who intentionally and illegally deny others the right to vote would lose their own right to vote.

This project was a good example of the power of community partnerships to increase the

influence of AUW's work. The report notes Johnson's and Thomas's membership in AUW, and AUW is recognized for generously contributed to the printing of the report.

More information about the report and the AUW/MUUSJA's voting rights work is on the MUUSJA site [Voting Rights page](#).

Social Justice Campaigns: Reproductive Choice

The last election has put into jeopardy a right we UUs tend to take for granted - the right to make decisions about our bodies and our families - the liberties those who claim to be Pro-Life would like to take from us! The liberties our UU Foremothers fought and marched and demonstrated for!! Those of us who remember the horror and desperation and loss of women's lives before Roe v. Wade say this is a time to: **Remember, Reconnect, Recommit!**

Plan to join us on Friday February 18 in the Social Hall from 6 - 9 pm for a light supper and an important program.

We will revisit one of the largest marches ever held in Washington DC through a 40-minute documentary film. It was in April of 2004 and many of you reading this were at the March for Women's Lives. We will continue revisiting the day through photos and anecdotes from men, women and children who were there! The evening will end with a panel about the imperative to recommit and information about contacting our legislators, both national and state in preparation for MN Pro-Choice Lobby day, scheduled for Wednesday, February 23.

If you have photos and/or stories about the march that you'd like to share, please contact Cathy Apostle at (952) 941- 0642, caquilt51@aol.com

If you'd like to join our Reproductive Rights/Sacred Choices working group, part of AUW and MUUSJA, please join us at our next meeting December 11 from 10 - 12 am in the Cummins Room.

Words to Ponder, brought to you by Jeni Klotz

The Sacredness of Time

Within the holy light that sweeps across the world, illuminating all that is dark, warming all that is cold, the sacred cycle of time unfolds through the moon's great revolutions, the turning seasons and flowing tides, birds rushing south and returning north

again. At the center of sacred time, the high purpose and meaning of all existence is revealed and concealed, a miracle and a mystery.

No words lie deep enough to explain or convey the holiness of time eternally cycling and spiraling through the vast universe. Within these unending cycles of change, of loss and newness that sacred time brings in its wake, each life unfolds in passages that bring to an end forever something that was and create something entirely new. Unplanned, unexpected, unpredictable- for the Spirit works through surprises - these transition times, these transformative years, weave each thread of experience into a pattern of shining completeness, fulfillment, peace. As a holy day imprints the bleak circle of a year with meaning, so great moments in every lifespan mark it indelibly with direction and divinity.

Adapted from a poem by Mary Ford-Grabowsky

AUW Calendar: December 2010 to January 2011

December

Women Who Read: No meeting this month.

3 Friday Get Connected: Cookie Exchange and discussion of holidays, 7 - 9 pm in the Church Library.

4 AUW Holiday Tea, 2 - 4 pm in the Social Hall.

11 Reproductive Rights/Sacred Choices working group, 10 - 12 am in the Cummins Room.

January

7 Friday Get Connected: Open Labyrinth Walk.

24 Women Who Read: The Elegance of the Hedgehog by Muriel Barbary. Hosts: Carol Gilbert and Liz Permar, 7340 Fremont Ave S, Richfield, 612-869-2756. All are welcome, but please let host know whether you are coming.

The newsletter editor is Kathy Urberg. Email her at auw.firstuniv@gmail.com with "newsletter" in the subject line.