

PRAIRIE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

August 8, 2004

Prelude - Dan Proud

Welcome - Kathy Converse

Chalice Lighting: Remembering our fifth UUA Principle "The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregation and in society at large."

Moment of Silent Meditation

Hymn #347- *Gather the Spirit**

Joys and Concerns

Hymn #123 - *Spirit of Life**

The Universe Bending Toward Justice

Kathy Converse and Sarah Lord

Offering

Introduction of Guests and Visitors

Prairie Announcements

Hymn #170 - *We Are a Gentle, Angry People**

Closing Words

Greet Your Neighbor

***stand as you are able**

Announcements

Send Registrations for Prairie Annual Retreat to Robin Proud. Extra registration forms are available. Don't miss this highly anticipated event! This year's dates are September 17-19.

Musicians are still welcome to participate in the August 15 program. See Doleta Chapru if interested.

GOVOTE Coalition is busy registering voters. Volunteers are needed to register voters or give out information every week this summer. Contact Dan Proud (661-0776) for more information.

Calendar

Saturday, August 14, 1:30p.m. Prairie Playreaders Organizational Potluck Lunch.

Sunday, August 15, 10:00a.m. "Peace Like a River, Joy Like a Fountain", a musicale featuring Prairie Musicians.

Sunday, August 15, 11:45a.m. Prairie Book Club meets to discuss *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi

Wednesday, August 18, 7:30p.m. Prairie Board Meeting

Sunday, August 22, 10:00a.m. "How Far Can Reach a Smile?" presented by Judy Skog.

Sunday, August 29, 10:00a.m. Intergenerational Game Day, led by Rick Ruecking and Erin Bosch.

Sunday, September 5. Labor Day picnic and boating at Wingra Park

Sunday, September 12, 10:00a.m.. Ingathering and Water Ceremony

The Social Witness Process

(A Review)

The social witness process has two different ways of putting important issues on the agenda of the UUA and its member congregations. The first is the process leading to Statements of Conscience, and the second is the process leading to Actions of Immediate Witness. The process leading to Statements of Conscience begins with the proposal by a congregation or group of congregations of a Study/Action Issue. Every year, a number of proposed Study/Action Issues are received by the Commission on Social Witness. The Commission reviews these issues and selects what they believe to be the best proposals to present to the congregations. Then, each year, there is a congregational poll, in which we rank which issues are most important to us. This tells the delegates to GA which issue to vote for on behalf of the congregation. At General Assembly, the various proposals for Study/Action Issues are debated and amended and ultimately voted upon. Then, the Commission on Social Witness (CSW), together with the original proponents of the Issue put together a resource guide on the issue which helps get congregations started in their study of and actions on the issue. After the first year of study and action on the issue, congregations report to the CSW what they've been doing, and the Commission compiles a progress report on the issue which is presented at GA. At this point, the Commission begins drafting a Statement of Conscience on this issue. During the year, the draft statement is sent out to congregations for review and amendment suggestions. (The Denominational Affairs committee at Prairie generally does this.) At General Assembly, the debate over the wording of the Statement of Conscience continues, and ultimately, the delegates vote on whether or not to adopt the Statement of Conscience. Once adopted, the Statement of Conscience becomes the official position of the UUA on the issue, and action on the issue should continue at both the UUA and the congregational level.

An Update on Study/Action Issues and Statements of Conscience

2001-2003: Economic Globalization

The Statement of Conscience was adopted at last year's GA, and continues to inform the actions of many congregations, as well as the UUA.

2002-2004: Civil Liberties

The Statement of Conscience was adopted at this year's GA, and a resource guide exists to help us continue our exploration of and actions on this issue.

2003-2005: Criminal Justice and Prison Reform

An update on our progress on this issue was presented at GA, and a resource guide exists to help us continue work on this issue. The Commission on Social Witness is currently drafting a Statement of Conscience on this issue.

2004-2006: Threat of Global Warming

This issue was selected at this year's GA as our new Study/Action Issue. There is a preliminary resource guide available to help us begin our work on this issue, as we think about it and decide how to act on it over the next two years.

All of the resource guides and more information can be found at the CSW's website: <http://www.uua.org/csw/>

The second process for naming issues that UU's ought to be aware of and addressing is the Action of Immediate Witness process. This is something that occurs entirely at GA, and is attended to address issues that are of such immediate concern that they cannot wait for the longer Statement of Conscience process. Groups can propose Actions of Immediate Witness, and if they can collect enough delegate signatures, then the issues are officially presented to delegates, who then vote on whether or not to adopt them. When these issues are adopted, they are not official UUA policy in the same way as Statements of Conscience, because the congregations haven't had the opportunity to comment on them or participate in the process. But, as they are voted on by the delegates of the GA, they do provide guidance to the UUA and congregations in general.

The Actions of Immediate Witness that were adopted by the 2004 General Assembly were:

1. The Alien Tort Claims Act and Accountability For Multinational Corporations
2. Electronic Voting
3. Iraq: Sovereignty, the United Nations, and Human Rights
4. Oppose Federal Marriage Amendment
5. Renew the Assault Weapons Ban

Details on these can also be found on the CSW website. There are also several copies available for your perusal on the back table.

Other useful websites:

UUA: www.uua.org

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee: www.uusc.org

Faithful Democracy Project: www.uua.org/news/2004/voting/index.html

UUA Washington Office for Advocacy: www.uua.org/uuawo

Beacon Press: www.beacon.org

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community: www.uujec.org

Diverse & Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries: www.druumm.org

Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Network: www.uuyan.org

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (This is the teen-age group.) www.uua.org/YRUU/

