



High Plains News

July 2012

High Plains Church - Unitarian-Universalist

Vol 19, No 7

Columns

- Minister's Message 4
- President's Post 5
- CFO's Report 6

Features

- Board Minutes 5
- Survey Results 6
- Caring Corner 7

Flower Communion

The Flower communion service was created by Norbert Capek (1870-1942), who founded the Unitarian Church in Czechoslovakia. He introduced this special service to that church on June 4, 1923. The flower communion was brought to the United States in 1940 by Dr. Capek's wife, Maja. It was not until the war was over that Norbert Capek's death in a Nazi concentration camp was revealed. From this beginning the service has spread to many of our Unitarian Universalist congregations and has been adapted along the way.

Gardening as Spiritual – Bob Nemanich

Gardening is about mankind's deep emotional need to spiritually connect with life's essence, and yet human nature is about attempting to place a human hand on nature. But in the grand scheme of the universe, nature does not need mankind - we need nature.

Many of you have brought your garden's beauty to share as part of a spiritual uniqueness of your own. There had to have been a sensitivity, a genuine attachment to the essence of life, therefore you have brought us something quite sacred, your own love of life. So when you take a flower, do so with the knowledge that you are sharing a special unique spirituality, both yours and that of another.

The Spirituality of Growing Things – Dianne McRae

For me, gardening is more of an experience of silence than one that has to do with words. This is about all I could think of to speak about today.

Choosing what to grow is part of what I do, but letting the volunteers grow, may be more important. I do weed. But I'm delighted and amazed by using some of what appears as a grace. The chance opportunity that teaches me about what grows easily in this difficult climate and appreciation of the beauty of these gifts are some of the delights of this take on gardening. These gifts are only available if

we are willing to set aside some expectations.

Spiritual Practices - Kelly Miller

I find spiritual meaning in tending a garden.

Planting is in and of itself an act of faith. When I grab a package of seeds from the display at my local nursery, or order from a seed supplier, I trust, have faith, that the seeds will perform exactly as I expect. I have faith that the seeds are viable and will grow when I plant them. I have faith that the seeds will grow into the fruit or vegetable that is pictured on the front of the package. I hope that the soil is fertile enough to support plant growth. I hope that it will rain when I need it to and the sun will shine every day during the fruiting season and that it will be neither too hot nor too cool.

When I garden, I engage in a constant unwavering love affair with the very stuff of life – soil, plants, animals, the great unending cycle of life – birth, growth, maturity, death. I discover my own place in the whole scheme of things and I learn how to give and take so that everyone wins. I learn compassion – the ability to feel for others.

I become aware of what I am: a part of nature and not separate from it. And, more than anything else, I learn to love all of life in its vast and mysterious complexity and know that I am not – and never have been – alone.

Events Calendar July 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sunday Service 10:00 am - 11:30 am	2	3	4	5 Yoga Class 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Y.E.P. HS Youth Group 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	6 Stitchers/Hands 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm HiPS - HP Sisters 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm	7
8 Sunday Service 10:00 am - 11:30 am Fostering Hope Team 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	9	10	11 Compassionate Communication Practice 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	12 Yoga Class 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	13	14
15 Sunday Service 10:00 am - 11:30 am U&I Facilitators Meeting 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	16	17 Membership Team 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	18 Pastoral Care Team 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	19 Yoga Class 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Y.E.P. HS Youth Group 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	20 Stitchers/Hands 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Parent - Childcare U&I 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	21 Issues of Aging Group 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
22 Sunday Service 10:00 am - 11:30 am	23	24	25	26 Yoga Class 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	27	28
29 Sunday Service 10:00 am - 11:30 am	30	31				

Be sure to check the Events Tag on the website at www.hpcuu.org for additions and corrections to the calendar.

Upcoming Services

July 1: Church Youth - Some of the youth from the community want to share what they believe is essential to a worship and a church. They want to share love and help to spread it throughout our beloved community through a different kind of service. Please, come see what they have to offer!

July 8: - Come join us for fun and poems of childhood at the service. This is an intergenerational service and there will be opportunities for active participation, coloring, singing, and enjoying poems together. We will also be honoring Laura Worley for her service to HPCUU; it is her last day with us. So, pack up the kids and hop in the car. We'll all have some fun. Poems will take us far!

July 15: *Contemplation as Gazing and Grazing* -Tom Stella - All spiritual traditions teach that there is order in the midst of chaos, a wisdom of sorts that permeates and unites the heavens and the earth, eternity and time, the spiritual and the material. When we live our lives in harmony with this unitive truth we live contemplatively, for contemplation is not merely a form of meditative prayer but a way of being and acting that is the fruit of yielding to the order, the wisdom, the sacred presence that, in the words of Thomas Merton, "sleeps in our paper flesh like dynamite."

July 22: *Yes, It's a Choice* - Amanda Udis-Kessler - As Pride Day comes to Colorado Springs, let's not forget what really matters: love. And love is always and inevitably a choice. Come reflect with Amanda on what Pride Day can mean to all of us.

July 29: *Introverts* -Mark Fesgen



Minister's Message

by Rev Beatrice Hitchcock

To High Plains Church UU Members and Friends
June 21, 2012

Dear Ones,

I am writing to you now from UUA General Assembly – very near to you, relatively speaking – in Phoenix, Arizona. Soon I will return to Alaska to begin the process of packing and moving, and traveling to Colorado Springs to be with you.

I am delighted to be coming to serve you, a UU church that wants to be a religious congregation, a beloved community. I look forward to meeting you all, and getting to know you.

We are about to begin a two-year journey together. My job, as interim minister, is not to come in and change you or fix you. My job is to get to know you -- collectively, with loving care -- and to hold up a mirror so you can see yourselves as you are, and decide where to go from here.

I have been following the news about the wildfires near Colorado Springs and you are in my prayers. Jim and I lost a home to fire (not a wildfire) shortly after we were married, so I have an idea what some of you are facing.

Please feel free to contact me: 907 841-0738 or minister@hpcuu.org



President's Post

by Danielle Heimer

As I'm writing, Colorado Springs is contending with the Waldo Canyon Fire. Many within our community have been affected directly and evacuated and possibly lost their homes, and we are all feeling the anxiety and helplessness. There has been an outpouring of offers from members to share their homes and I'm grateful to the congregation for their support and unity in this difficult time. Our interim minister, Rev Beatrice Hitchcock, lost her home to fire in 1990 and has offered to provide pastoral support to any member who would like to reach out to her. The Mountain Desert District of the UUA has also offered to support us in whatever ways they can. High Plains has a tote for donations to Care and Share in the sanctuary, and food and personal care items can also be dropped off directly to the Care and Share warehouse, east of Powers on Constitution, if you'd like to help.

An important upcoming social action event at High Plains is PrideFest, July 22. If you'd like to volunteer at the shared booth we're hosting with All Souls, or help decorate the float, or march in the parade, or donate items please contact Kelly Miller at zanjann@gmail.com. This is a great opportunity to witness for justice and equality, so I hope to see a huge group of us standing on the side of love.

Thank you to all who attended the annual congregational meeting in June. Board members are available after the service on Sunday, via email and phone to any members of the congregation with questions, suggestions or comments.

Danielle Heimer,
President of the Board of Trustees



Dollars & Sense

by Jack W. McElroy

“Money has everything to do with religion, with the choices that we make about how to be in relationship with ourselves, our neighbors, and with the divine. Religion is about life, and life, it seems, has a whole lot to do with money.”

Lynn Ungar

For the fiscal year just ended the ability of High Plains Church to generate a sufficient inflow of cash has had its ups and downs. After eleven months, cash received from contributions and donations is nearly six thousand dollars below budget. However, one positive outcome for the year has been the nearly \$19,000 generated from fundraisers. In the year ahead the fundraising budget has been increased significantly from prior years. Please consider lending as much support to HPC fundraisers as you feel appropriate. Also, commissions from scrip sales will bring in over \$20,000 for the year. The potential for income from scrip sales is enormous. At the very least we should expect to increase last year's scrip income by 50% or more. If you are currently using scrip to make your grocery purchases, please continue to do so. If not, its time to get on board.

Financial Highlights:

At May 31, 2012, High Plains had a cash balance of \$42.4 thousand, a decrease of \$30.0 thousand from June 30, 2011. The May 31, 2012 cash balance included a negative \$2.2 thousand balance of unrestricted cash. The restricted cash on hand amounts are shown below.

Temporarily Restricted Cash at May 31, 2012 included the following:

Capital Fund Drive	37,437 (1)
Playground	2,118 (2)
Aesthetics	3,750 (3)
Music Director	<u>1,320 (4)</u>
Total Restricted	44,625

- 1) This fund is scheduled to remain as is until next January. At that time we are budgeted to begin utilizing \$3,083 per month from the fund toward the mortgage payments to the UUA.
- 2) The playground fund has been consumed in June with the completion of the project.
- 3) The project currently underway to sheetrock and repaint is expected to consume the balance of the aesthetics fund.
- 4) The music director fund will be closed July 1. From that point forward the music director's contract will be funded from unrestricted church operating funds.

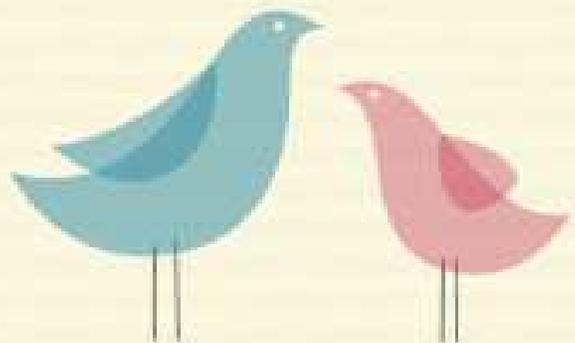
Donations and contributions for the eleven months ended May 31, 2012, excluding Temporarily Restricted Donations and Designated Collections, totaled \$177.2 thousand and were \$5.9 thousand below budget. Total Church Operations Revenue of \$197.0 thousand for the same period was under budget by \$3.6 thousand.

All questions regarding HPCUU financial issues may be directed to cfo@hpcuu.org

High Plains Stickers/Hands

All members and friend are invited for a casual hour or two of conversation, craft and coffeehouse beverages. Seriously, you don't have to knit or crochet to hang out (but be prepared for many of us to be playing with yarn or something similar). We meet at the Coffee and Tea Zone in the shopping center on the SW corner of Rockrimmon and Delmonico from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

Contact Carol Peterson - [ccpetersonco@gmail](mailto:ccpetersonco@gmail.com) or 687-4508



High Plains Church—Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees Minutes June 17, 2012

In attendance: Danielle Heimer, Gloria Carpenter, Jack McElroy, Al Sly, Michelle Bull

1. Check-in

2. Faith Formation transition:

For the summer program, three paid coordinators are in place:

- a. Heather Mitchell (K - 2nd)
- b. Claire Tucker (3rd - 5th)
- c. Jessica Laike (middle school)

Michelle is recruiting volunteers as assistants.

Going forward, the board needs to understand what the congregation wants for the FF program and the nature of the position of Faith Formation leader.

The Board will meet with Laura and the FF team to begin to plan the fall program.

3. Interim ministry progress:

- a. Beatrice plans to arrive in Colorado Springs no later than August 14, hopefully earlier.
- b. Danielle is helping coordinate the logistics of the move.
- c. In accordance with UUA guidelines on interim ministry that the Transition Team not include anyone who has served on the Team On Ministry (TOM), and Beatrice's support for these guidelines, Danielle moved and Al seconded the creation of a Faith Formation Task Force, the membership of this team being the members of the Team on Ministry (Carol Montgomery, Sue Neufeld, and Larry Sargent). The Task Force will not be responsible for FF programming or staffing, but rather for the support of the FF program, including drafting a charter for the most robust program that HPCUU can support at this time. The FF Task Force will report to the board. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. Transition Team membership – the board discussed potential membership for the Transition Team. The discussion will continue via email. Danielle would like to finalize the team and put it in touch with Beatrice by early July.

4. Finance Team report

- a. The budget proposed by the Board was passed at the Congregational Meeting on June 3.
- b. Jack reminded the Board that the budget includes several sources of funding that will not be available in future years: 1) the remaining capital fund, 2) the anonymous donation of the first year of mortgage payments to ASUUC, and 3) the reduced mortgage payments (interest only) granted by the UUA.
- c. For the fiscal year, donations and contributions are under budget by about \$8,000. Fortunately, the church council team expenses are also under budget by about \$9,000.
- d. The Finance Team plans to ask the UUA to extend the reduced mortgage payments beyond December 2012.
- e. Stewardship campaign pledges are up to about \$174,000.
- f. YTD losses for AMG are about \$6,000, due to season start-up maintenance costs.
- g. The Executive Team has established standard rental rates for the church building. Nicole is responsible for negotiating building rentals. The Publicity Team is working on ways to advertise the availability of the space.
- h. There are several small fundraisers in the works.
- i. Tentative auction date is Saturday November 3.

5. Closing words

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Bull, Board secretary

Preliminary Results from the Team on Ministry's Climate Survey

By Sue Neufeld and Amanda Udis-Kessler

With a desire to get a finger on the pulse of High Plains Church (UU) congregants and friends, the Team on Ministry, with the blessings of the Board of Trustees, set out to do a climate survey (interview project). With the expert help of Amanda Udis-Kessler, who is an institutional researcher at Colorado College, we were prepared to begin by the end of February 2012.

Amanda Udis-Kessler designed a contact script and set of seven open-ended interview questions, as well as the processes to invite interviewer participation.

Sue Neufeld created a master list of interviewees. Twenty-one church members were trained to do the interviews during a two-hour meeting on March 1, 2012. Interviews were carried out with individuals between March and May, and inputting of the responses began early in May. All completed interview information was sent directly to Amanda and findings will remain anonymous.

As of May 29, of 137 pledging units approached, 107 pledging unit interviews were completed (78% of approached units). A total of 170 individuals were interviewed of 222 approached. The remainder could not be reached or declined to be interviewed.

Amanda Udis-Kessler, with inputting assistance from Larry Sargent, had analyzed 47 interviews (just over 1/3 of all interviews) by the end of May. Those 47 interviews (just over a third of all interviews) are represented in the summary and comments below.

Please note that we use the language of "mentions" rather than saying that "x number of people mentioned a topic" because more than one comment may have come from the same person. Also, we have referred to "religious education" rather than "faith formation" because almost every comment specifically referred to "religious education."

In response to a question about priorities, there were 22 mentions of relationships and community, 19 mentions of healing and morale, 18 mentions of worship, 13 mentions of the next minister and the hiring process, 12 mentions of financial matters, 10 mentions of communication, 7 mentions each of growth and religious education, 6 mentions of leadership, 4 mentions each of continuity and identity, 3 mentions of issues surrounding the question of being a program church, and 2 mentions each of UU principles and spiritual growth.

In response to a question about church strengths, there were 30 mentions of the welcoming and caring nature of the community, 21 mentions of the music program, 18 mentions of positive aspects of the congregation/community as a whole, 12 mentions of religious education, 10 mentions of leadership, 8 mentions of the property/location, 7 mentions each of important core members, U&I groups, and worship, 3 mentions each of church determination to stay together, diversity, the possibility of laypeople replacing the minister, and programming, and 2 mentions each of financial support, participation, and principles and values.

In response to a question about vision, there were 17 mentions each of community outreach and religious education, 13 mentions of community, 12 mentions of the next minister, 11 mentions of membership growth, 6 mentions each of financial matters and getting a new building, 4 mentions each of continuity/stability and worship, 3 mentions each of a desire to keep the current building/property and youth involvement, and 2 mentions each of communication, leadership, and U&I groups. There were eight responses indicating a lack of specific vision for the church.

In response to a question about how the church could support the interviewee, there were 13 mentions of general communication, 12 mentions about a lack of need for support, 9 mentions of worship, 6 mentions of community, 5 mentions each of communication regarding the interim minister and U&I groups/small groups, 4 mentions each of feeling supported now, the need for a healthy process moving forward, music, and religious education, 3 mentions each of a need for the church to "be there" and for continuity, and 2 mentions each of avoiding burnout, requesting to contribute, the next minister, and a need for reconnection. In addition, 2 comments suggested that the interviewees were unsure about what they needed.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

In response to a question about how the interviewee could support the church, there were 32 mentions of financial support, 22 mentions of staying active and engaged, 14 mentions of volunteering, 10 mentions of supporting worship (generally from the pulpit or as a musician), 9 mentions of being there for others or of working on teams, 5 mentions each of supporting RE or taking on leadership roles (or supporting someone in leadership), 4 mentions of supporting U&I groups, 3 mentions of supporting the current process, and 2 mentions of inviting new people.

In response to a question about current concerns with the church, there were 8 mentions of worship, 6 mentions of dysfunctionality, 5 mentions of the facilities/location, 3 mentions of in-group leadership issues and personal issues, and 2 mentions each of financial matters, fellowship hour issues, and displeasure with Roger leaving. In addition, there were 13 comments suggesting that the interviewee had no concerns.

In response to a request for suggestions about how to address the concerns, there were 5 mentions of religious education, 4 mentions each of communication, growth, the need for volunteers, and worship, and 2 mentions each of diversity and the miniature golf course.

In response to an invitation to offer last thoughts, there were 14 general positive comments, 6 mentions of commitment to the church, 4 mentions of worship (2 negative, 2 positive), and 2 mentions of the facilities (1 negative, 1 positive).

At the time of this writing, work was continuing and final results should be completed mid-summer, ready to present to the Board of Trustees, the Interim Minister, and teams. The results will be made available to the congregation in some form as well.

Caring Corner

Please keep in your hearts ...

- The numerous families displaced by the Waldo Canyon Fire.
- Linda Densmore - who is suffering from a bad back that has kept her house bound.
- Tim Oliver & Dave Sproul - who have set out on a multi-hundred mile hike with llamas.
- Helene Fagerquist - who is grieving the loss of her husband Ulf.
- Bill Plapp and Family - who are grieving the loss of Shirley Plapp
- Fran Pilch - who has returned from Mongolia and is now grieving the loss of her sister.

The Caring Team is here for you ...

Whether you need a helping hand, an ear to listen, a ride to the doctor, meals delivered to your home, or other assistance, the Caring Team is here to help. Please let us be there for you, and please notify us of any of our members and friends who may need help. Contact team lead Team lead Meighan Powell at apixxie@gmail.com or 719-243-4786, or other members of the Caring Team: Phyllis Dunn, Michelle Bull, Jennifer Centric, or Candy Birgers1.

Make your Monthly Payments Electronically

If you don't already participate in the electronic funds transfer program for monthly pledge payments at church, please consider doing so. Under this program, you authorize the church to transfer funds for your pledge payment each month from your bank account to the church's account. High Plains has offered this payment option for seven years, and about a third of church members take advantage of it. The program is great for the church because it helps to make revenues constant and predictable, like many of our expenses. It's great for you because you don't have to remember to write a check every month—you just fill out a form one time, and the treasurer does the rest.

If you are interested in participating, or if you have questions, please talk to the church treasurer, Carol Peterson, or to Amy Plapp, the finance team member who oversees the program. Or, just look in the "finance procedures" binder on the church secretary's desk and find a blank form, fill it out, and give it to Carol or Amy or leave it in the treasurer's mailbox at church. The forms are entitled "Direct Answers to Questions about Electronic Contribution" and are located in one of the inside cover pockets of the notebook. Any time that you wish to change an existing payment amount or discontinue payments, use the same form.



HPCUU

1825 Dominion Way
Colorado Springs CO 80918

High Plains Church 719-260-1080
Unitarian Universalist

Member of Unitarian Universalist Association

Sunday Services at 10:00 AM

Come Join Us!

Inside:

- Minister's Message**
- President's Post**
- Board Minutes**
- Survey Results**

Send Comments to: editor@hpcuu.org
Send Articles to: newsletter@hpcuu.org

Please submit your articles for the August newsletter by July 25, 2012

See YOUR business advertised here!
Contact Nicole today at 260-1080 - office@hpcuu.org - \$10.00/issue



Deb Bartos

Art Lessons
Landscape and Garden Painting
for sale

www.yessy.com/debbiebartos
and for my work in progress
www.BartosArt.blogspot.com

Place your add here

**Looking to buy or sell a home?
Give me a call!**

Amy Lassen CDPE
Cell: 719-440-0013
Amy@TheLassenTeam.com
www.ColoradoRealEstatePage.com



   **KELLER WILLIAMS PARTNERS**

Your Colorado Springs Real Estate Agent

ReVISIONS by Jonathan

**Specializing in Creative Home Improvements
Where ideas Become Reality**

Do you need something in your world -
fixed, added, or removed?

Projects include: Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing,
Painting, Plastering, Dry walling, Tiling,
and many more...

Decks, Kitchens, Basements, Bathrooms, Windows,
etc.

Jonathan Herdt - Cell 338-1209