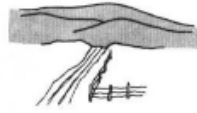


# *The First Forty Years*



*the History of the  
Unitarian-Universalist  
Fellowship  
of Manhattan, Kansas  
from 1957 to 1997*

*by  
Brock Dale*



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This book is in three parts. The first is an essay of our Fellowship's history, 1957 to 1997, written by Brock Dale, himself a member since 1957.

The second part is from our UU archives and was assembled by Brock. There is a cumulative list of members by year of joining; an alphabetical list of members to 1996; a year-by-year list of officers and committee chairs; and finally a list of the charter members and of the current officers and committee chairs. A few photographs from these years are scattered here and there in these pages.

The third part of this book is a kind of photographic essay intended to show what our life in the Fellowship is like now. We have tried to include as many photos as we could, many of them taken ourselves, some by others, in several different areas of the Fellowship's life: our programs and services, our rituals, our religious education program, our social life together, even our workdays where we pull weeds and do other chores.

We hope that this book can have the permanence of a book yet the flexibility of a periodical. That is why a comb binding has been used. This permits annual or periodical insertion of new pages updating the history. Please let us know of corrections, additions, or omissions.

We are indebted to Anne Cowan, Doreen Shanteau, Kathleen Oldfather and to the late Margaret Grayden for loaning us their Unitarian photograph collections. Were it not for these, we would have very, very few photographs from our first forty years of history.

Charley Kempthorne, *Editor*

October 1, 2002



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*to Bettie,*

*who had a finger in most of the events described herein.*



## Chapter 1

# Beginnings

According to those who were there at the time, Millie Katz started it all. She had two sons in the local schools, and believed that they needed a religious point of reference. There was also the immediate problem that children and young people were considered weird if they didn't go to a Sunday School somewhere. Millie had attended a Unitarian church during her college years, and had found their religious philosophy appealing. There was no Unitarian society in town. Why not organize one?

The idea appealed to others also, and in due course, letters were exchanged between Millie and the Fellowship Office of the American Unitarian Association. As a result, Mr. Munro Husbands, Fellowship Coordinator of the AUA, came to Manhattan in November, 1956, to discuss the possibility of forming a Unitarian Fellowship in Manhattan.

The initial meeting was held on the second floor of the Wareham Hotel. The minutes of that meeting, if indeed there were any, have been lost, so there is no certain record of the identities of those who attended, nor any details of what transpired. Surviving participants are certain, however, that Millie Katz, Jeune and Philip Kirmser and Cecil Miller were there. Gerald Miller and Helen Hostetter are believed to have been in attendance, and probably L. H. Koons as well. At the meeting, it was decided to hold a series of six meetings, and to decide then whether or not to proceed with formal organization.

There is no record of congregational meetings until February, but the first check written for the Unitarian Fellowship is dated December 2, 1956, and is signed by Abe Eisenstark. It is made out to the College Hill School. It pays for rental of

meeting space from November 17 to December 17, 1956. There is also mention somewhere of a talk by Mr. Husbands, so the first meeting must have taken place before he left town. According to Jeune Kirmser's history, written in 1965, the first meeting took place on November 15, 1957, and was attended by twenty people.

The earliest existing document is the minutes of a meeting of the Executive Committee on January 31, 1957. The members of the committee were: Jack Robinson, Chair and Program Chair; Jeune Kirmser, Secretary; L. H. Koons, Treasurer.



Jackie Seiden and Millie Katz also attended. The main business at hand was to establish procedures for the Treasurer, to agree on setting up a checking account, and to find someone to chair the religious education committee. It was decided to ask Cecil Miller to be RE Chairman as well as teacher of the older class.

A lengthy questionnaire was circulated by Jeune Kirmser after the pilot meetings to determine some of the attitudes and preferences of the members. The results indicated that of the nineteen respondents, fifteen would become members if a Fellowship should be formed.

Two indicated that they would not be members, and two were uncertain. All nineteen expected to participate, whether members or not. The total maximum contribution that could be expected came to seventy dollars per month. In response (nonexclusive) to a query about the type of service desired, thirteen checked off "sermons by visiting ministers," seven liked discussion groups "like the pilot meetings" and twelve wanted a study group. Sixteen wanted a Sunday School for the children. (But only three were willing to take primary responsibility for teaching a class.)

The issue of who constitute the charter membership of the Fellowship is clouded. All of the existing minutes, beginning January 31, 1957, characterize the group as "the Unitarian Fellowship," so one must infer that some sort of organization vote was taken prior to that date. As for the actual application to the AUA, a motion was passed on March 24 "to send an offering of ten dollars along with our application to become a member of the American Unitarian Association." Notification was received from the AUA on April 17 that the group had been accepted as the 211th Unitarian Fellowship in the United States. This letter of acceptance was read to the congregation on April 28. The list of Charter Members on page 50 includes all who were attending meetings up to and including that date.

The group was, in some respects, quite homogeneous. Faculty members at (then) Kansas State College and their families comprised the large majority of the membership. They were philosophers, physicists, biologists, writers: scholars of various descriptions, and for the most part, politically liberal. They did come from a wide diversity of religious backgrounds: Jews, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, and one Mormon. Nearly all had rebelled against the illogical aspects of some conventional religion. There were probably as many concepts of God as there were people, and they made of religion what was acceptable to them individually.



The denomination was in the process of deciding whether or not to merge with the Universalists. The Manhattan Fellowship voted ten to six in favor, on April 5, 1959. Mysteriously, there was another ballot on January 24, 1960. This also passed, but by a vote of nine to seven.

The Girl Scout Little House, on Sunset Avenue, just south of Sunset Cemetery, was chosen as a meeting place. It was rented to the group for five dollars per Sunday. Meetings were held twice monthly, on Sunday evenings. They were held in the evening because the Girl Scout house was used on Sunday morning by the Lutheran Church across the street. The format of the meetings was:

Music. Either a recording or piano music, usually by Phil Kirmser.





A reading.

A talk of current or scholarly interest.

Discussion.

The importance of music is attested to by the fact that one of the first recorded purchases was a record player (for \$30.00). The recorded music and the readings were furnished by volunteers, who shared favorite recordings and quotations. One can hardly speak of "typical" readings or musical selections, but a few specimens are listed here.

#### Music

Prokofiev: Piano Concerto No. 2 (Excerpt)  
Mendelssohn: Oh Rest in the Lord (Elijah)  
Bruch: Schelomo (Hebrew Rhapsody)

Hanson: Chorale and Hallelujah

Bach: Away Thou Wintry Earth (Chorale Prelude)

#### Readings

Emerson: Self-Reliance (Excerpt)

Valentine: The Age of Conformity

Wallace Stevens: Sunday Morning (Excerpts)

Kenneth Patchen: At the New Year

Ellery Channing: Religion is to Encourage Growth (Excerpt)



Topics and speakers for some early programs are listed below.

Earl Edgar, Philosopher: Some standards for making moral decisions.

Phil Young, Dept. Of English: Emerson as a Unitarian prophet.

Rev. Raymond Bragg, All Souls Unitarian Church, Kansas City: Our Unitarian heritage.

Abe Eisenstark, Biologist: Lives of a virus

Carl Hausman, Philosopher: The esthetics of religion.

Program topics were occasionally less unremittingly esoteric. For example, in 1959, John Isom discussed Archibald McLeish's *J.B.* and we read it at a later meeting. At another meeting we read the Don Juan in Hell sequence from Shaw's *Man and Superman*, and we occasionally read a sermon by A. Powell Davies. The play-readings were directed by Dodie Rosenberg, who was good at it. (She and her husband, Jim started the Manhattan Civic Theater.) Charles Stephen came for the first time on September 17, 1961. His topic was Church and State. Prayer in schools was a burning issue at the time.

The discussion often lasted more than an hour, and it was not unusual for the meeting to last until 10:00 or 10:30. This eventually prompted the executive committee to pass a resolution to the effect that lecture plus discussion should not last longer than an hour and a half. This rule was honored more in its violation than otherwise.



The Sunday school met on Sunday mornings, and the lack of a permanent meeting place became steadily more onerous. The older class, four boys, age nine to eleven, was meeting at the Kirmsers' house. The other class had no permanent meeting place. Finally, in September, 1958 Dr. S. Walton Cole offered two rooms in the educational building of the First Methodist Church. Dr. Cole spoke to the Unitarians once or twice, and he was supportive of the Fellowship in many other ways.

Once they had classroom space the Sunday School grew apace. The congregation, on the other hand, grew smaller and smaller. Much of the attrition was caused by people moving out of town. By 1963, only eight of the twenty-five charter members still lived in Manhattan. We tried meeting every Sunday instead of twice a month. This

produced, if anything, a negative result. We were near to throwing in the towel, when it was decided to try meeting in the morning instead of the evening. And this started things on the upturn. We survived, but it was close.





## Chapter 2

# *The Year of the Phoenix*

Based on the minutes of each meeting, the average Sunday attendance when the Fellowship was organized was about twenty people, and for the next few years, attendance averaged 20-25 per meeting. In 1962, a membership book was started, and twenty-six people signed it. In 1963-64, only twenty members signed. There were no new members. Two former members were temporarily out of state, and two had moved away permanently. On a given Sunday, ten or twelve members would typically be on hand. The situation was considered desperate, although the Sunday School was still lively, having grown to four classes.

This alarming state of affairs prompted suggestions to:

1. Meet weekly instead of biweekly.
2. Meet Sunday mornings instead of evenings.
3. Advertise.
4. Maintain more of a religious slant in programming.
5. Change the format of our services.
6. Abandon the whole idea.

The group slugged it through to the end of the fiscal year and voted to try meeting Sunday mornings instead of evenings. The Girl Scout house was not available Sunday mornings, so it was necessary to find new quarters. Brock Dale was delegated to look for a suitable meeting place.

After he had investigated a couple of dusty downtown second floors, someone told him that Crum's Beauty School had at one time made its classroom on Poyntz Avenue (Manhattan's main street) available to a religious group. Mr. Crum was contacted. Yes. Of course we could use it. No charge. Just be sure to leave the place clean. The Unitarians blinked a couple of times and decided

that this was, indeed, better than we were likely to do elsewhere. It was a light, airy room with lots of windows. There were about fifty seats, the classroom type with attached desk on the right-hand side and there was a blackboard at the front of the room. There was also, clearly visible through a door into the next room, a row of hairstyle mannequins that Barbara Marcus used to refer to as our choir.

Best of all, it was only about a block from the Methodist Church, where our Sunday School was meeting.

We owe the late Mr. Crum a great debt. We started meeting there every Sunday in the fall, and the results were spectacular. Attendance shot up to twenty-five to thirty per Sunday. Membership rose, over the course of a year, to thirty-eight. There was a new feeling of enthusiasm with the realization that we were not, after all, headed down the tubes.

There was one minor drawback to the new arrangement. The Sunday School in the Methodist Education Center now ran concurrently with the adult service. People with children had to be available to pick them up after the Sunday School. This time constraint put an end to the protracted discussions that had become a cherished tradition. (Ways have since been found to make some time for discussion.)

Many good things happened. The Program Committee included Abbie Siddall, Betty Blatt, and Barbara Marcus, a resourceful and enlightened trio. They decided that it would be fun to examine topics of interest in greater depth than was possible in one meeting. To this end they scheduled programs on the same or related subjects on successive Sundays. There were two meetings devoted to the active issues of the time: segregation and the cold war. (Vietnam was just beginning to be questioned.) There were two on UU philosophy, two on poverty and poverty legislation, two on

morality and three plays. *Murder in the Cathedral*, *Beckett* and *Curtmantle* were read and discussed on succeeding Sundays. These were all very well received.

There was also at least one program on local issues. The Kansas Legislature was debating a Sunday closing law. (In the end it did not pass.) A local merchant was invited to speak on the subject. He was more honest than many of the proponents who offered sociological and religious reasons for closing on Sunday. His approach was simple and to the point. If people were able to shop on weekends, they would go to big shopping centers in places like Topeka instead of shopping at home, and he would have to close down. The UU's listened politely, (and even, perhaps sympathetically), but a student who happened to be visiting that Sunday gave him a hard time, wondering aloud why he thought he deserved a captive market.

At Christmas time, Abbie Siddall made photostats of about a dozen Christmas carols, including several not-so-frequently heard ones, and she persuaded the musicians in the Fellowship to bring their instruments and play along with the carols. This turned out to be quite an orchestra. There were Abbie Siddall, Betty Blatt, and Brock Dale, violin; Dorothy Miller, viola; Carol Borg, Cello; Phil and Larry Kirmser, flute and perhaps Steve Katz, trumpet; and Ellie Edgar, Clarinet. Somebody even showed up with a sort of bongo drum. (A couple of pianists were available, but no piano. Between carols people were invited to present

original or favorite readings. This was the beginning of a tradition that lasted more than twenty years. Arrangements for small orchestra--four-part harmony--of a number of carols repose in our archives.) The supply of musicians finally ran low, and the Christmas bash took other forms.

In the spring, Leslie Marcus, a vertebrate paleontologist, organized a fossil hunt in the chalk hills of Gove County, Kansas. As many as could get away drove to WaKeeny, Kansas on Saturday, stopping near Salina along the way to look for fossil leaves in the sandstone hills. After spending the night in a little hotel in WaKeeny the group went to Castle Rock and other chalk outcrops to look for sharks teeth, fish vertebrae, and assorted pieces of fossil bone. Sunday afternoon, everybody drove home. We regarded this as sort of UU retreat, communing with nature firsthand. These fossil-hunts were held once or twice a year until 1968, when Leslie and Barbara left town.

All in all it was a banner year. It was in a sense our moment of truth. Our survival gave us a sense of identity and put us in a frame of mind to think seriously of acquiring a building of our own.



Crum's Beauty College today, 512 Poyntz. It was our home for a time, and was once a Kroger grocery store.





## Chapter 3

The question of a building fund was first raised at the April, 1960 annual meeting. A show of hands indicated that a majority of those present liked the idea. Bettie Dale, Al Borg and Phil Kirmser were appointed as a Building Committee. The following September they recommended that a fund be started with a goal of one thousand dollars for fiscal year 1960-61 (an amount approximately equal to our operating budget for that year). By January the fund contained nine hundred dollars, and a committee was appointed to look into available buildings.

The old Nazarene church at 700 Moro was for sale at \$5000, subsequently reduced to \$4400. Inspection revealed that some structural members on the roof had collapsed and repair was judged to be too expensive. (The building now houses the carpenters' union.) A house at 421 Kearney was for sale at \$11,000. This seemed like a terrible amount of money, and the suitability of the house was open to question. Ultimately, it was decided more cash on hand was needed if purchase of a building were seriously to be considered. Each year thereafter the budget contained a line for a building fund. By April 1965, it contained \$3743.51, and there was an uncommitted savings account of \$748.88. At the annual meeting in April, 1965 it was resolved that the next two years be spent in obtaining suitable meeting-place for the Fellowship, and a house-hunting committee was appointed.

The committee's work was cut short by the generosity of Miss Inez Alsop. Miss Alsop was a member of the faculty of the Department of History at KSU. She was invited to Fellowship meetings by Helen Hostetter, an old friend, who was a charter member. She attended one meeting in 1960, a few meetings in 1963, and signed the membership roll in January, 1964. She was an avowed atheist, and had no use for "all that religious claptrap." The Fellowship struck a responsive chord, however, and it came a to mean a great deal to her. When she died in 1989, she left about \$50,000 to the Fel-

lowship.)

Miss Alsop had lived frugally, and had invested wisely in rental property in Manhattan. She offered the Fellowship one of her rental houses for \$14,000. She further offered to contribute a thousand dollars toward the amount and to sell the house for \$5500 down, the rest to be financed at 3 percent interest. The house was suitable, and the housing committee looked no further.

It was clear that, even at these generous terms, more money was needed. Application was made to the Unitarian Universalist Association (UU) for an interest-free loan of \$1500, to be repaid at the rate of ten dollars per month. The application was approved, contingent on the Fellowship's agreement to a reverter clause in the mortgage document. This clause stated, in effect, that if the Fellowship defaulted on payments for more than twelve months, or ceased to be an active organization, the property would revert to the UU.

At first, many thought this clause unduly restric-



tive. Some thought it would make it difficult to sell the property; others had other ideas about what should happen to the property if the Fellowship folded. (There was already, in fact, a clause in the bylaws dealing with that possibility.) Late in June, the membership voted to look elsewhere for the money. By September, however, cooler heads prevailed. The UU had given its assurance that the clause could be removed when the \$1500 was paid off, and the clause began to look less and less forbidding, so in the end, the loan was gratefully accepted. The Fellowship took steps to incorporate itself and went through the final closing procedure late in the summer of 1965.

The building was a two-story apartment house with a full basement. There were two apartments on the first floor, each with a living room, kitchen, one bedroom and bath. And there was one large one upstairs, also with one bedroom. The basement had sometime been divided into two one-room apartments without kitchen or bath. Ray Weisenburger, a member who was on the



architecture faculty at KSU, drew plans for a variety of ways to allot the available space. The alternatives were hotly debated and the final decision was to meet in the basement, use the main floor for Sunday School, and to let caretakers use the second-floor apartment in exchange for custodial and other duties.

There was another long discussion concerning a name for the building. The choice was between a half-dozen proposed names, with no great show of enthusiasm for any particular one. A vote

disclosed that the two leaders were The Unitarian Fellowship House and The Unitarian Fellowship Center. A vote was taken to choose between these two, and Unitarian Fellowship Center won out.

The Sunday School began meeting in the building when the Fellowship reconvened in the fall of 1965, but much remained to be done before the meeting room could be used. The building code required two outside entrances to the basement; there were walls to be removed and new walls to be constructed; attention had to be given to decoration of the basement, and we needed chairs. Meetings continued to be held at Crum's Beauty School for the time being.

Ray Weisenburger designed the two entrances: outside stairways from ground level down to the basement. He also arranged for a crew to do the actual construction. The cost of the entrances was substantially less than the commercial bid. The original design called for roofs over the stairways to be added later, but they were never built. Some years later, removable plastic panels were installed to keep leaves and other debris out of the stairwells.

Rex and Martha Slack joined the Fellowship in 1965. Rex was also on the architecture faculty at KSU. He volunteered to design the interior of the meeting room. His design called for a suspended acoustic tile ceiling, bright colors on two walls, rough cedar paneling around the steel pipes supporting the upstairs floor, bright orange wall between the meeting room and the furnace and utility area. There was a foyer, an alcove for the



stereo, a coat closet, and a small serving area. Rex made some attractive light fixtures out of the same rough cedar used to cover the supports.

The interior work was done by the membership. Several members contributed nontrivial amounts of time, but the main burden of the work was carried by Phil Kirmser, Al Borg, Gerry Miller and Rex Slack.

The first meeting in the new building was held on March 5, 1966, and it was used regularly beginning April 3. The suspended ceiling remained to be installed (by the volunteer work crew) and there weren't enough chairs. Chairs were purchased by subscription as an extra-budgetary item. Other interior decorating remained to be done, but the meetings went on apace.

There were alarmingly large cracks in north and west walls of the basement. Our resident architects assured us that they were not immediately threatening, probably dating back to the 1951 flood, when most of the town was under water. With the Spring rain, however, came the discovery that, during exceptionally heavy rains, water leaked into the basement through these cracks, bringing with it untold thousands of earthworms, which proceeded to drown themselves on the flooded basement floor. (There was usually only a half-inch or so of water, but for an earthworm, that's enough.) This problem continued for several

years, until time and resources were available for repair.

Emil Gudmundsen, the District Executive for the Prairie Star District, visited in September 1965. This was the first of many visits, and one of the few times he delivered a sermon. He stated five goals toward which he believed UUs should work. These included an effort to reduce the conflict between generations (this was the Sixties), an effort to reduce the gap between ourselves and other religious groups, and a new definition of morality. He also met with the executive committee and helped iron out some problems. This and succeeding visits also helped us along the way to a sense of identity with the denomination.

Other problems arose. Al and Marianne Fletcher, who were sextons for the building, left Manhattan. They were replaced by John and Beverly Anderzohn. Shortly afterward, the Fellowship was informed that the State Board of Tax Appeals was not looking favorably on our request for tax-exempt status, because the sextons had duties that amounted to payment of rent, and that voided the exemption. Protests that this was a common practice with other institutions that had been granted exemptions were futile. In order to generate funds to pay the tax, we gave the Anderzohns the alternative of paying \$37.50 per month with certain housekeeping duties, or paying \$55.00 per month with no duties. Ultimately, the Anderzohns left and the Fellowship decided to abandon the idea of a live-in sexton, and to use the space for classrooms. By this time (March, 1967) there were fifty-three children in the RE Program.

We had our trial by water the next year. In the summer of 1968, Brock Dale went to the Fellowship Center one afternoon during the week on some errand. Upon arrival he found water running out under all the doors. He went inside. There was water standing in the basement. He waded across the basement and up the stairs, to find water cascading down the stairs from the second floor. Upstairs he found that the cold water connection to the wash basin had come loose. He turned off the water and got on the telephone.



People soon began appearing with brooms, mops, and fans, and in a day or so had most of the water cleaned up. The connection was closed off and the water turned back on. A week or so later the other connection to the wash basin came off, and we went through the whole scenario again. We closed the wash basin plumbing off completely and it was a long time before we had the courage to put it back into use. The main damage was to the hardwood floors on the first floor, which swelled and warped. After everything was dry, Charlie and Nancy Perkins had the damage covered up with wall-to-wall carpet. This had the additional salutary effect of reducing noise transmission though the floor.

And the town wasn't through with us yet. The following May, the fire marshal notified the Fellowship that if classes were to be held on the second floor, an outside stairway would have to be built. There was talk of going back to the sexton idea, but in the end one of our architects designed a stairway connecting to an upstairs window, and the job was contracted out to professionals, so by fall, we were legal again. Almost. In 1978 the fire marshal notified us that our two furnaces, one downstairs and one upstairs, would have to be encased in one-hour fire shields. We abandoned the upstairs furnace and started building a dry-wall box around the one downstairs. It took a long time, but we ultimately satisfied the inspector. We sold the building before the inspectors could think of anything else.

The membership increased, attendance increased and the enrollment in RE increased through the mid-Seventies. In the late Seventies a decline set



in. Twenty-seven children were enrolled in Sunday School in 1977-1978. Two were enrolled at the beginning of 1979-1980, and even they dropped out after the first couple of weeks. Attendance at the Sunday service dropped that year, and only 24 people signed the membership roll. Close inspection shows that things were not as bad as they appeared. Twelve of those who did not sign the membership book continued to be members, nonetheless, and signed the book in subsequent years. One member from previous years had died, four couples were divorced, and one or two had left town. The decline in RE came about partly because the children were growing up or moving away and were not being replaced. But the decline in attendance was real, and even the missing names in the membership book could be construed as a sign of declining interest.

Rev. Charles Stephen had a for some time been urging us to get out of the basement of 709 Bluemont, assuring us that our troglodytic existence had taken us as far as it was going to. The discouraging events of the year 1979-80 appeared to be an omen, and when David Hacker (editor, at that time, of *The Manhattan Mercury*) became Chairman the following year, he set about moving the meeting place to the first floor. (No need to worry about room for RE-- there wasn't any). By knocking out the wall that separated what had once been the living rooms of two apartments, a space was created that was light and airy, and large enough for fifty or sixty chairs. It was inconveniently long and narrow — fourteen by thirty-six feet. On the other hand, the columns that people were accustomed to peer around downstairs were absent, so the inconvenience was not severely disheartening. A few new members signed up that year, and attendance picked up. Other uses were found for the basement space. Over the next couple of years things improved, but it was time to move on.





## Chapter 4

# *The Move to Oak Grove*

By 1982 the time was ripe for the Fellowship to look for a new place. Not that the quarters at 709 Bluemont were filled to overflowing, but that we were somehow disenchanted with our somewhat makeshift quarters, and were now sure enough of ourselves to make a more substantial commitment. We had, after all, survived for nearly twenty-five years, we owned property free and clear and there was a core of dedicated members who could be counted on, come what may. (Interestingly the only charter members who were still members were Jerry Miller and Cecil and Dorothy Miller.)

One day in November, 1982, Bettie Dale spotted a big FOR SALE sign on the church building at the corner of Sixth and Poyntz. She notified Sam and Yvonne Lacy, and within a couple of days the UU's were looking at the building. It is an attractive property that would have served our purposes well, but within a couple of days of the UU's first inquiry into price, it was announced that it had been sold to the Free Methodist Church. This left the old Free Methodist building, an ugly but spacious red-brick building at the corner of Ninth and Poyntz for sale at about \$80,000. (The building had stained-glass windows that Rex Slack was accustomed to point out to his architecture students as a classic example of the bad use of good materials) There were conversations, hastily-convened meetings, and scribbled numbers on the backs of envelopes, and there was general inspection of the building by the membership on December 4. On December 5 at a congregational meeting held just before the regular Sunday service,

the Fellowship voted to try to purchase the building.

David Hacker was appointed to handle negotiations, and given power to sell our old meeting-place at 709 Bluemont. He quite soon had an offer that would net the organization \$45,000, and that was accepted at a congregational meeting on January 9. In the mean while, Bettie Dale had approached a few members, asking them to pledge a minimum of \$3,000 each to be paid over a three-year period. There were pledges amounting to \$28,000, and dickering on the price of the building began. In February, the real estate agent announced that he had another buyer and gave the UU's an impossibly short time in which to meet his price. In cash. The building was sold to a chiropractor, who subsequently remodeled it as a clinic.



We were heartsick. Nobody had expected that an empty church, and an ugly one at that, would sell so fast. But it did. We swallowed hard and started to look for another building. David Hacker and Anne Cowan were constituted as a committee to look for other quarters. After all, our old home was sold. There was no going back. And nobody wanted to go back. We had been seized by the notion of moving on. So the long search began. There were other church buildings for sale. During our negotiations for the Poyntz Avenue property, Alice Stockwell, realtor and occasional visitor at the Fellowship had shown us the little church at 6th and Osage (now the Back to God Revival Holiness Church). It was judged too small. We looked at the Church of the Nazarene at 1000 Fremont, now the Mennonite Church. It was large, had been destructively remodeled, was judged to be expensive to maintain, and the price was more than \$100,000. We looked at some sub-sub-standard structures including a portable classroom that School District 383 wanted to sell and the Women's Club building across the street from the East Campus of Manhattan High. It was a disheartening time.

Meanwhile, the Fellowship was losing its meeting place. Meetings were held in the old building through March 20. On March 27, we met with the Friends group, and the April and May meetings were held in the evening at the Jewish Center.

The solution sprang upon us unexpectedly in the spring of 1983. It was learned that the school board planned to sell the Oak Grove schoolhouse, just out of town on the Zeandale road, at auction. It was a small brick building, with two class-



rooms, an entrance hall, and a large room that had served as cafeteria and auditorium, with a stage at one end and a kitchen at the other, and it was in shambles. The ceiling was falling off in chunks, the floor tiles were mostly missing and concrete was disintegrating in spots. It was being used for storage of used building materials, rusty discarded plumbing fixtures, pipe, and piles of junk that defied description. Pretty discouraging. On the other hand, there were 2.6 acres of land, and it was a scenic location, on the side of a hill overlooking the Kaw River valley, and we had some money pledged that could be

used for remodeling.

There was substantial debate over real issues. What would be the effect of a meeting place that was out of town and across the river, which was the traditional geographic limit to urban growth? What about size? With only two classrooms, could we ever have an RE program? Was remodeling feasible? What was going to happen to the view across the valley after a few years? The final vote was in favor of buying the building.



The school board suggested that nobody was likely to bid more than \$30,000. David Hacker submitted a bid of that amount in the Fellowship's behalf. It was indeed the high bid and we found ourselves in possession of one used schoolhouse. (The next highest bid was \$19,000. Lower, but it was regarded as a bargain nonetheless. Besides, we needed that building. What would we have done without it?) Rex Slack was asked to design and supervise the remodeling. He offered to do it gratis, but it was decided that this was much too big a job to be undertaken on a volunteer basis, and that he should be paid an adequate fee.

Renovation started during mid-August. Anne Cowan was Building Committee Chair, and Rex Slack was architect in charge. R.M. Baril, General Contractors, was the contractor. When the Fellowship reconvened in September, construction was still very much under way, but meetings were held in the building, anyway, amid sawdust and construction materials. The work was completed in December, 1983. The final cost of the building, including the purchase price of \$30,000 and \$4000 interest, was \$89,000. Against this debt, our resources were \$45,000 realized from the old building, \$28,000 in pledges, and \$12,000 in CBS stock. This wasn't quite enough, and the pledges were to be paid over a five-year period. A \$20,000 loan was secured from the UU. The loan was paid off in FY 1988-1989.



The only serious instructions given the architect were that the renovated building should not look like a remodeled schoolhouse and that maybe a vaulted ceiling would be nice.

The congregation was delighted with Rex Slack's design. The multi-paned windows were replaced with single panes. The ceiling has the form of two cylindrical vaults, a small one on the left and a large one, spanning most of the sanctuary, on the

right, supported by semicircular trusses. A row of four stained-glass candelabra separates the two vaults. The entire sanctuary, including the ceiling is paneled with oak. The outside doors both have large stained-glass panels. Rex designed and personally created all of the stained glass, including the light fixtures. One classroom was finished as one room, and the other as two smaller rooms. There is also a nursery. These rooms are separated



from the sanctuary by a hallway, so the sanctuary is almost free from noise from the Sunday School. It was impractical to remove the stage. It is separated from the rest of the sanctuary by a maroon velvet curtain (donated by Miss Alsop). The stage area in front of the curtain and the risers at the front of the stage are carpeted, and there is a platform at the left of the stage on which our (now beloved) pulpit usually rests. The kitchen was not changed much, but doors were put on the pass-through between the kitchen and the sanctuary.

The building was formally dedicated at on December 8, 1985. Rev. Tom Walmsley, Ecumenical Christian Ministries minister from Emporia State University, spoke on renewal in life and structures, and James Hecht, an attorney from Woodstock, Ill., spoke on civil rights. An open house was held in the afternoon.

In the fourteen years (in 1997) since the building was acquired, a number of repairs and improvements have been undertaken. Grass was planted over part of the grounds that had been graveled for use as a parking lot. Rex Slack laid out a parking area behind the building, delineated by wooden posts made from railroad ties. The driveway and a small parking area alongside the driveway have been paved. Some of this work was paid for by a Chalice Lighters Grant from the Prairie Star District.

A small area up the hill from the building with a spectacular view of the valley has been landscaped and dedicated as a place to receive the ashes of deceased members. It is legally designated as a cemetery in perpetuity, so that it will remain a cemetery even if the land should change hands. There is a fund to provide for upkeep. To date, only the ashes of Charles Grayden have been placed there.

The roof was replaced in 1991, financed by a \$6,000 loan from the members. Termites were discovered and eliminated in 1987, and again in the late Nineties. The bricks have been spalling. Many have been refaced with painted concrete. This work was done by the membership, chiefly by Kerry Miller, but the problem remains, and a permanent solution is being sought. The furnace was replaced and air-conditioning added in 1996. This improvement was financed by a \$12,000 gift from Margaret Grayden.

There was a flurry of new members once we became settled in. The RE program started up again and there was a new enthusiasm and a new sense of who we are. This has persisted to the present. We have successfully negotiated the transition to a part-time minister, and members are even daring to think ahead, now and then, to the time when we will have to expand.

The remote location (about a mile from the Manhattan business district) of the building detracts from its desirability as a meeting place for other organizations. A gay church met there (on a week-night) for awhile and the gay community had a few parties there.

In recent years, particularly since Rev. David Grimm has been our part-time minister, various groups from the Fellowship have started to meet in our building.



*Left, Rex Slack, the architect of the original Fellowship building, sitting in the Inez Alsop Sanctuary. Note the stained glass lamp shades he designed and built. He designed the north stained glass doors also, as well as the panel in the south door that is shown on the cover.*







## Chapter 5

# Religious Education



The religious education program started in January, 1957, with two classes, one for children between three and seven years old and one for those more than nine years old. Margaret Richards taught the younger group and Cecil Miller, the older.

There were about 15 students in all. The younger group met at the Arthur Brayfield home and the older group at the home of Phil and Jeune Kirmser. Cecil Miller agreed to be RE Chairman with the promise that others would do the concomitant letter-writing and other paper work.

One of the Fellowship's reasons for being was to provide religious education for the children, but faced with the reality of seeing that the children were taught, the response was less than enthusiastic. In September, 1957, after the summer break, Millie Katz served for a time as RE Chair. She also agreed to teach the younger class for two months. In October, Jack Robinson resigned his office of Fellowship Chairman to teach the older class. In January, 1958, Verna Hildebrand had taken over

the younger class and there was no RE Chair. Mrs. Hildebrand suggested that perhaps, since there were only two classes, no chair was needed. After her tour was over, the mothers of the children in the younger class took turns teaching.

Finding teachers was not the only problem. There was a need for space, particularly for the younger class. In May, 1958 it was reported that no space was available on campus because meetings of nonstudent groups on campus were not allowed. College Hill School objected on the grounds of possible disorder or damage, Douglas Center simply refused permission, and the Jewish Center was ruled out because of time conflict. But Mrs. Katz, the Chair-elect, found four places available for rental. As it turned out, in the following September, when the Fellowship reconvened, she reported that the First Methodist Church had offered two rooms in their education center that would be available after 10:30 Sunday Mornings.

With meeting space assured, the younger class, which now numbered twelve, was divided into two groups, one to be taught by Mrs. Katz and one by Helen Habernigg. These two would meet the second and fourth Sundays of the month, from 11:15 A.M. to 12:15, and the older class would meet at the same time on the first and third Sundays and would be taught by Bernard Bray, a student at Kansas State College, who would be paid ten dollars per month for his effort. Other students later taught the class. Brock Dale took over this duty early in 1960.

Enrolment in the church school increased rapidly. The fall of 1959 brought a total of 26 pupils, and the following fall there were 31. The teaching staff included Betty Borg, Joan Edgar, Roma Eisenstark, Dorothy (Dodie) Rosenberg, Millie Katz, and Brock Dale. The Methodist Church made two more rooms available. Locating teachers continued to be a problem, although somehow, inexplicably, teachers did finally turn up every year.

The Sunday School pupils were a talented bunch. One year, early on they presented a Christmas



play, entitled "The Christmas Within Us." Another Christmas, there was a pantomime, directed by Rosalie Lang, depicting different religious celebrations. Still another, there was a trio, with Kerry Berland, violin, Larry Kirmser, flute, and Carol Borg, cello. On their first appearance, they were accompanied by Phil Kirmser, piano. Another time they played a Handel Trio Sonata without accompaniment. (There were other good musicians in the Senior class. Ellie Edgar and Steve Katz were first chair clarinet and trumpet, respectively, in the Manhattan High School orchestra.) In the seventies, we had another generation of high school musicians who formed a string quartet: Margaret and Elizabeth Grayden and Anil and Sunit Bhalla. Margaret, who was an accomplished violinist by this time, played the cello.

The first Christmas Sunday School parties were held in the Girl Scout House, where the Fellowship regularly met. Later, the Congregational Church offered the use of Pioneer Hall, the gracious meeting-room that had been the Congregationalists' main church building in the distant past. Robert Katz, husband of Millie, was elected honorary Santa Claus, though he was not a Unitarian, and retained this title until the Katzes left Manhattan. One year, there was a choir, conducted by Brock Dale. Jeune Kirmser and Phoebe Samelson were participants. There is no longer a record of the names of the other members. They sang a chorale (4 voices) and something less ambitious. (Jeune Kirmser remarked later on the folly of rehearsing fifteen hours for something that is over in three minutes.) Ultimately, these evening Christmas parties became a tradition. The adult congregation celebrated Christmas in the morning service, usually the last one before Christmas, with readings and carols. But the evening party was for the kids.

One Christmas, after the move to 709 Bluemont, There was a reading of *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, with tableaux illustrating various stanzas of the poem. When the line "While visions of sugar plums danced in their heads" was read, the spotlight blazed, revealing the Sugar-Plum Fairy, in full technicolor glory, descending the staircase — Yvonne Lacy in a pink tutu.



Another Christmas, someone brought a pinata for the children. A five year-old boy was given the first swing, the object being to destroy the pinata and release the goodies inside. He clutched the baseball bat, took a mighty swing — and missed! Everyone was crowded around, in eager anticipation. Nobody was standing quite in the path of the bat, but this was the last Mexican-style Christmas.

Data regarding curricula for the Sunday School in the first couple of years are lacking, but in 1958-59, it is reported that Beacon Press books were used, specifically *The Church Across the Street*, *From Long Ago and Many Lands*, and *The Joseph Story*. The RE classes collected money to send to Egypt for the preservation of ancient structures in danger of being inundated by water behind the Aswan Dam.

By September, 1961, four Sunday School rooms were needed. The Sunday School was meeting weekly, although the adult congregation met only twice monthly. The following year there were five classes: preschool, taught by Rosalie Lang, first and second grades, taught by Bettie Dale, fifth and sixth grades taught by Gen Leaf, junior high taught Al Borg, and senior high, taught by Brock Dale. No drop in RE enrolment is recorded for the years that the adult congregation declined, except that the high school class, a few at a time, graduated and went off into some other world.

When we moved to our building at 709 Bluemont, the adults met in the basement, and the RE had the entire second floor, consisting of four usable rooms. But by this time there were six RE classes, so the fifth-sixth grade and the junior-senior high school groups met at ten o'clock, while the others met at eleven. There were two commodious rooms on the second floor. Initially, these rooms served as quarters for our sextons, but when this arrangement proved untenable, the rooms became available for the Sunday School.

On March 5, 1961, the LRY (Liberal Religious Youth) groups from Lincoln, Nebraska and Kansas City visited the high school class. The visitors presented a discussion of the evils of censorship of nuclear information. The local group was a little surprised because it had not occurred to them that matters of this sort were any of their business. They were also somewhat taken aback that the

visitors evidently insisted on taking responsibility for their own programming. It was not until the early seventies that the LRY idea took hold in Manhattan.

The UU sexuality course was used very soon after it was released. There was a workshop in Kansas City and soon after, Lois and Al Hansen came down from Lincoln, Nebraska to do a training session for potential teachers. It was a scary thing at the time. It is a no-holds barred course in sexuality and we were exploring new territory. In some parts of the US, the course was branded pornography, and objectors made some trouble for the organizations that wanted to teach it. We asked parents of children who wanted the course to go through a shortened version themselves. Other members were invited to participate and many of them did.

In February, 1973 the training course was given in Wichita by Christy Tews and Jem Duffin from the Shawnee Mission church. The course was first taught to RE students by Anne Cowan and Don Kleier. Later, it was taught by several others, including Brock Dale, Yvonne Lacy, Larry Weaver, Berit Greechie, Sam Lacy, Margaret Grayden, Charlotte Poston and others. Several other churches have wanted their young people to have the course, so it has been taught to groups that include young people from the Congregational and Episcopal churches. It was taught once by Sam Lacy and Margaret Grayden for students at the University.

From early on, the RE used mostly Beacon Press literature. Anne Cowan was RE Librarian for the Prairie Star District for many years, so that we had ready access to a wide range of materials. These were used with ingenuity and originality. One year the Sunday School built Solomon's temple out of sugar cubes, using frosting for mortar. Another year, Berit Greechie's class built a miniature ecosystem in one of the fellowship's bathtubs. Martha Slack, who was in former days a professional photographer, made two short movies with her RE Classes. One was the story of Joseph and

his brothers, which portrayed Joseph as a child inured to hardships and poverty. The other was a pantomime of Til Eulenspiegel's Lustige Steiche, with Anne Lacy in the title role. It was shot partly amid the Gothic splendor of the KSU campus buildings, and partly in Martha's back yard, where there were the ruins of a stone barn that gave it a properly ancient, fairy-tale aspect. When it was shown to the congregation, accompanied by Richard Strauss's tone poem, the music seemed uncannily appropriate to the action, and the film was very well received.

The high school class read passages from the Old Testament (the Bible as literature), discussed problems associated with the high school and read plays. On one occasion they read Green Pastures for the congregation on Sunday morning, and once, in the late sixties, they made a tape, a sort of wry look at adolescent life as seen by adolescents, which they played for a Sunday morning service.

Not many year-to-year records of RE activity have survived, but in the Spring of 1973, RE Chairperson Anne Cowan requested that teachers submit reports for the year. These were duly stapled into the UU membership book and so have survived. These are the membership lists submitted.

Kindergarten and First grade - Doreen Shanteau, leader:

#### Regular members

Neera Bhalla, Karen Williams, Steve Hathaway.

#### Occasional Attendees

Gina Sedlacek, Bruce McGavin, Heather McGavin, Lisa Hankley, Karen Funsch.

Second and Third grade - Martha Slack, leader:

Anil Bhalla, Sunit Bhalla, Meredith Folland, Lesia Wilson, Karen Samelson, Cheryl Cowan, Danny Williams.

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth grades - Nate Folland, leader:

#### Regular members

Julie Cowan, Elizabeth Folland, Kellie Wilson, Rebecca Titus, Elizabeth Wilson, Margaret McGavin.

Junior High - Yvonne Lacy and Don Kleier, leaders:



Sylvia Beman has taught many years in the RE program.

Margaret Dale, Jimmy Slack, Jean-Marie Slack, Nat Siddall, Steve Hinrichs, Alfie Stein, Russ Tilghman, Scrappy Foerster

LRY - Berit Greechie and Ken Wilson, advisers:

Seven members. The membership list no longer exists, but members would probably have included Ann Swegle, Quent Dale and Aaron Hinrichs.

At the peak, according to one source, the total RE enrollment was 65 students, several of whom were children whose parents were not members of the fellowship,. There was a move to charge a fee for each child in RE, but there is no record that this was actually put into practice. In April, 1968 it was reported that Sunday School attendance was down from 51 to 44. In April, 1973, there were 29 regular members of the Sunday School classes, and 11 others who attended occasionally. At the end of FY 1976-77 the attendance was 20-24 per Sunday, and when meetings started in September, 1979, there were two students for a short time, then there were none. There was no RE program from that time until 1982, when the fellowship moved to its present quarters at Oak Grove Center.

There is no airtight explanation for the demise of RE. There were several divorces in the group at

about that time, and, inevitably, some children stayed with the parent who left town. There was also the normal attrition of people who left town for better jobs . Another thing that contributed was that the Sunday School simply grew out the top. The high school students graduated and there was nobody to replace them.

As soon as reconstruction of the facility at Oak Grove permitted, the RE program was resumed. The building had two classrooms. One of these was divided and one of the large restrooms was made into a tiny restroom and a nursery, giving a total of four rooms, counting the nursery, for RE. The Sunday School flourished. There were five pupils at the outset, and the following year there were fifteen. There was an attempt to organize a high school class early on, but interest flagged and a viable young people's group had to wait until some of our younger children grew up. The RE enrollment has remained fairly steady between 15 and 25 for the last ten years. The enrolment in the high school group has varied, but the group has persisted over the past several years. In 1992 there were seven students in the 12-16 year-old and ten in the 7-12 year-old group, and in 1995, there were two to eight members in the older group and 12-18 in the younger grades.

In 1997 the young people became interested in

YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists), which replaced the LRY in the early 1980s. These young people are beginning to perceive themselves as an entity, do their own programming, plan their own conferences. Some of our teenagers participated in a YRUU conference in Boone, Iowa in February 1997. Early in 1998, Christa Botbyl, one of the young people, was invited to Topeka to help plan a YRUU conference. The conference took place in April 1998 and several





of our young people attended.

The creative side of the RE students continues to be an important part of our curriculum in 1997. The students performed an original adaptation by Bernice Martin of *The Old Turtle*. In 1998, the students opened with a program celebrating the holidays. This included a play depicting Mary and Jesus as if appearing in modern times. It was written by students Amy Rintoul and Irene Beeman. Students are often called upon to furnish live music during meetings. They also occasionally conducted the formal part of the service preceding the lecture.

The membership and attendance at the Fellowship have been growing in the three years since David Grimm became our minister. The Sunday School has also started to grow, and it is expected that in 1998 there will be three classes instead of two.

As in earlier years, the Beacon Street RE curricula were used, augmented and modified according to the creative sensibilities of Martha Slack, Sylvia Beeman, Cathy Hedge, Larry Weaver, Pat Embers and others. The broad topics addressed include creation stories in other cultures, Old Testament stories, flood stories, social responsibility (Rosa Parks), why bad things happen, timeless themes, Native American religion, nature, and Buddhism.

In 1995 Charley Kempthorne instituted a film series for the young people. The recent focus has been on the UU principles. Each student has written and illustrated a book based on the principles.

The RE of the Sixties had its sugar-cube Solomon's Temple. That of the Nineties also has its tangible mementos. One is our chalice. Most UU churches have a large silver chalice in which a flame is ignited at the beginning of each service. Our group



In warm weather sometimes UU classes go to nearby Pillsbury Crossing to study nature and just to have fun wading, as class leader Sylvia Beeman and students Christa Botbyl and Sheila Embers are here.



The hallway to the RE rooms has been decorated with murals by the students. Later, due to remodeling changes, it was necessary to paint over it.

felt the need of a chalice and went so far as to obtain a price quotation. Sylvia Beeman, whose sculptures are much in demand, had a better idea. Let the children make a chalice. And, under her supervision, they did. They created a coil-built ceramic bowl, with human and animal figurines perched on the edge. The other memento is a mural on the walls of the hall between the chapel and the RE rooms. Almost all the Sunday School participated, The designs were worked out on paper, and then copied on the walls. They include a globe surrounded by children holding hands, lizards clinging to vines, and individual designs representing the personalities and dreams of our students.



## Chapter 6

# Social Action

From the beginning there were members who regarded the newly formed Fellowship as a launching pad for deeds of service to humanity. Others believed that its primary duty was to its members. It was agreed early on, perhaps as a result of whatever tension may have existed over this point, that service projects would originate with individuals and would be carried out by the whole group according to need.

In March, 1958 there was a request from the Las Vegas Unitarian Fellowship for Modern Library books for the May Flower School in Ikenne, Nigeria. Books were sent, and the names of some other titles requested were sent to the Universalist Church in Junction City, Kansas. A few months later, some used clothing was sent to the Unitarian Service Committee in Gallup, New Mexico for distribution to Native Americans. Jewelry from the Navajo and baskets from the Papago were sold by the Fellowship, and the Fellowship's 20% profit was forwarded to the tribes. (Buyers got a rare bargain. A Papago basket that sold then for a few dollars is now worth upwards of a hundred dollars)

Late in 1958, Jeune Kirmser received word from Norman Cousins, editor of *The Saturday Review* that a group of Polish women who had been used for medical experiments in the concentration camp at Ravensbruck was soon to arrive in the United States for medical and psychological treatment and that help was needed. Mrs. Kirmser wrote him that we would like to help, believing that we might leverage some help from the Menninger Foundation. This possibility was discussed by members of the Fellowship, but before any action at all could be taken a letter from Mr. Cousins arrived stating that two of the women were being sent to Manhattan and that the Fellowship would be responsible for their upkeep and treatment. The Fellowship replied immediately that it was a small organization and this degree of effort was

beyond its means. Some money was sent, but it was a disappointment not to be able to help more.

In 1958, the subject of prayer and other denominationally related practices in the schools became an issue. Haney Scott was appointed chairman of a committee to address this problem. There was a small Jewish community in Manhattan, and there were many others who objected to these practices. A joint committee was formed with members of the Jewish congregation. A set of resolutions was drawn up and circulated to various churches for comments and additions. Finally a meeting was held with Mr. Robinson, the Superintendent of Schools, and he was presented with the letter signed by several congregations in the community urging separation of religion from public education. The issue was, of course, settled by the Supreme Court, at least temporarily.

Another burning issue of the time was segregation. Segregation in the schools, segregation in public places, segregation in housing. In March, 1961 the Council of Human Relations was formed, and many of the Unitarians joined and served for many years afterward. (Initially, members were required to contribute one hundred dollars.)

One of the activities of the Council was to provide small scholarships to minority students.

The segregation in housing extended to foreign stu-



dents, particularly those with dark skins. In 1962, a group of Unitarians (about half the membership) volunteered to help foreign students find housing. The arrangement was that over a period of about three weeks at the beginning of each semester, the volunteers would take turns being on call for one complete day. When the need arose, the Dean of Students would get in touch with the volunteer on duty, who would then accompany the student on his/her rounds. This proved to be a very successful tactic. The volunteers took their duties seriously, and on more than one occasion provided temporary housing for a student whose search was not yet complete. Eventually the University tightened the code for student housing, and the good day came when the volunteers were all ready, but received no calls.

In 1963, the need for foreign student housing prompted Jeune Kirmser to launch an attempt by the Fellowship to organize an International House. After much searching, a suitable house was found. This involved a great deal of work, particularly on Jeune's part. More than one house was considered, negotiations were started on some, to be broken off when some flaw surfaced. Potential managers were interviewed. Legal matters were cleared up. Finally, a lease was drawn up and a live-in house manager was hired. All parties had signed the lease except the potential landlord, when he decided not to lease the house, after all. No other suitable house was in sight, and the project was regretfully abandoned.

The house on Bluemont Avenue was made available to many groups over the years. For a time during the Vietnam war, a draft counselor was given office space in the building. A gay counselor had an office there for a time. The Muslim students were allowed to hold weekend conferences there until one Sunday morning when some of the attendees were found still in their bedrolls an hour before meeting time. In the summer of 1969, Charles Hathaway organized evening gatherings for Junior High School students, with music and refreshments, held on alternate Friday evenings. These were well attended, drawing twenty to twenty-five young people on a given Friday.

In December 1981, Jim Converse organized a Friday night coffee shop. Entertainment was provided by local musicians and musical groups. This was a short-lived, but interesting experiment. On one occasion, for example, the entertainment was a local woman's chorus. The audience that night consisted mostly of radical feminists.

noon for African students who had brought ebony carvings leather goods and even untanned hides from Africa to sell.

The Fellowship has always been ready with small contributions. A philanthropy fund was set up to help one of our members who was in trouble because of severe illness in his family. After this situation was resolved, the fund was maintained, and if not needed was put into some other charity at the end of the year. Also, the same year, we collected \$145 for the James Reeb fund, memorializing the UU minister who was killed at Selma, Alabama in 1965, \$100 for the Manhattan Emergency Shelter, \$200 toward establishment of a halfway house to help in rehabilitation of convicts. Some of our members were deeply involved in this project.

In 1987, at Anne Cowan's suggestion, the Executive Committee declared the site of our building to be a nuclear-free zone as a gesture of opposition to the stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

During the Sandinista-Contra conflict in Central America, the Kansas Unit of the UUSC worked toward changing US policy in Nicaragua. In 1985 it requested members to contact senators and representatives, urging them to vote for renewal of the Boland Amendment, which prohibited United States military and paramilitary support in Central America. The Fellowship was actively involved. In 1986, Anne Cowan became Chair of the Kansas unit, and continued to emphasize Central American issues.

The Manhattan Alliance on Central America was formed in 1984. Several of our members belonged to this organization, including Anne Cowan, Sam Lacy, Charles and Nancy Perkins and Stan Cox. There was considerable activity: notes to congress-



The house was made available one Saturday after-



men, vigils and dissemination of literature. The Fellowship passed the following resolution in May, 1986:

*We, the members of the UU Fellowship of Manhattan, Kansas, believe in the ideas of Milton Eisenhower, expressed in his book, The Wine Is Bitter: the US and Latin America. We support his statement "It is hurtful in our own country, and devastatingly hurtful*

there. Charles and Nancy Perkins also visited Nicaragua under the same program. They returned with a less than optimistic view of the situation, and accepted speaking engagements to tell what they had seen. (The UUSC had a group in Central America at this time. It served as a credible presence in cases of overt acts of inhumanity.)



*throughout Latin America for us carelessly or maliciously to label 'Communist' internal efforts to achieve change for the masses of people." Therefore we oppose any US funding for the "Contra" forces trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government and support the Contadora process to settle the conflict peacefully. We call on the national government promptly to begin sincere negotiations, without conditions, with the government of Nicaragua, following the Contadora process.*

In the late 1980s word came that social programs in Nicaragua were falling apart because of the war. Several people went to Nicaragua to see for themselves. Jim Slattery, our Democratic congressman, went in January, 1987. A member of his party spoke to the Fellowship about what they had seen. Anne Cowan went in July, 1987 under the Witness for Peace program, a faith-based program that organized delegations to go into the war zones of Nicaragua in hope that the presence of many US citizens would increase the safety of people living

In September, 1987 the Kansas Unit of UUSC and the Manhattan Alliance for Central America, noting that they had many goals in common, co-sponsored a fund-raising banquet with Dr. Charles Clements, Director of Human Rights Education, UUSC, as speaker. Dr. Clements had spent a year as a doctor in El Salvador. The affair cleared about \$800, which was divided between MACA and the national organization of UUSC. Since they had a common cause, MACA and the Kansas unit of UUSC worked closely together.

In December 1987, the Humanitarian Aid Project of Kansas shipped a 45-foot container of medical supplies to Nicaragua. This project was cosponsored by the Kansas unit of UUSC, the Kansas Network on Central America, the Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship, and several other groups in Central Kansas. The value of the contents was in the neighborhood of \$250,000 and the cost of

shipping it to Nicaragua was \$6500.

Anne Cowan was much affected by what she had seen in Nicaragua, and in 1988, decided to go there and put her talents as a physical therapist to work. She was encouraged by Fellowship members to accept contributions toward her project. The Fellowship set up a fund to receive contributions, and about \$7,000 was received to support Anne and her special projects for a year. In order to legalize this pass-through of funds, the Fellowship appointed her as official missionary to Nicaragua. In September, she quit her job in Manhattan and went to Antigua, Guatemala for two months to learn Spanish. She returned to Manhattan for a few days and, about the first of November 1988, set out by car for Managua.

Once there, she spent her time teaching in the school of physical therapy and working with her students in several different clinics, studying and traveling the country by car to attend as many events as possible. When she became involved with child care centers, people in the Fellowship supported the ensuing special needs. She returned to the US in the Spring of 1989 with a case of hepatitis, and returned to Nicaragua in August. She came back to Manhattan for good in December 1990.

Anne described her experience there as the most gut-wrenching of her entire life. She wrote:

*This week I had to face war injuries and came up against feelings I was not prepared for . . . Carlos was injured by a Claymore mine. He is a very spastic paraplegic with complications. I acknowledged that the mine had come from the US and tried to apologize, but just started to cry.*

In September 1990 the UCSC presented the Fellowship with the Banner Society Award because it



contributed more than 3 per cent of its budget to the UUSC.

The Kansas unit of the UUSC disbanded in 1990. MACA changed its name and its task after the Nicaragua conflict was over. . It is now called the Manhattan Alliance for Peace and Justice, and its main efforts are directed toward goals closer to home. It continues to have very close ties to the Manhattan Fellowship.

During the Gulf War, some of our members participated in a weekly peace vigil in cooperation with other similarly-oriented groups. We also participated in draft counseling. The Fellowship elected Charles Perkins a draft counselor and he continues to present alternatives to military solutions at the local high school. There were at least two soldiers at Ft. Riley who were conscientious objectors even though they were in the army. The Fellowship gave them a platform and moral support. A CO Fund was established that at one time contained nearly six hundred dollars. Some of this was spent for pamphlets on war resistance for distribution to students, and some was given to the soldiers, at least one of whom spent some time in military prison.

The food bank in Manhattan, known locally as the "Bread Basket" distributes food to needy persons from a number of "pantries" located in various local churches. Each church distributes food on assigned days. The Fellowship has supported this operation since September, 1985 by donations of groceries and money. Sometimes the amount donated has come to more than \$1000 per year. In May, 1991, the Fellowship established a Saturday pantry. This operation was directed by Anne Cowan. It persisted until the summer of 1997, when our particular pantry, which was operated out of the central Bread Basket storage facility, was closed, presumably because the space was needed. The pantry was cited by the Prairie Star District. For many years the Fellowship has provided bell-ringers for the Salvation Army's annual Christmas solicitation.

The Fellowship has made its building available to a number of groups from time to time. It usually charges a small fee to help in maintenance. One of these groups is the local gay church, a branch of the Metropolitan Community Church in Kansas City. They have used the building from time to time. It has also been used by Native American drumming group.

The Fellowship was approached in the spring

of 1991 to inquire whether the Fellowship building might be utilized for an alternative school. Shawn Bunch, a member, would be director of the school, and Sarah Shields, the financial director. The proposition was warmly debated at the annual meeting, and finally was accepted. The school began operation the following fall. An agreement was reached that the Oak Grove School would pay gas, electricity and telephone bills for the Fellowship in lieu of rent, and would pay for cleaning expenses.

In 1997, the total social action budget is about \$100 per year. The Fellowship does contribute its fair share as defined by the recipients, to the UUA

and the Prairie Star District. In 1997, these items amounted to \$1,980 and \$468, respectively, and together constitute 9.8 per cent of our total budget.



## Chapter 7

# Getting Religion

In the early years of the Fellowship, the sense of connection to the UU denomination, and indeed, to anything that smacked of religion was, at best, tenuous. Members were willing to contribute to the Unitarian Service Committee, because its activities were clearly in line with the social philosophies of the members. But as to the mother church off in the distant land of Boston, it was not clear that it had any relevance to the activities of this little do-it-yourself group in Kansas. There just was not much feeling of a religion about the group. They were willing to consider religion as a philosophy, but not as a way of life. There were few members with past experience in Unitarian congregations. Helen Hostetter is believed to have been the only old-line Unitarian in the group, so there was not much sense of identification with the parent organization.

Early after being accepted as a Fellowship, letters were received requesting contributions to the AUA, the USC, and the Iowa Association (later the Prairie Star District). The Fellowship voted to let the members contribute individually as they saw fit and ignored the letters. Eventually, a letter was received informing the Fellowship that contributions to the AUA were required of all member societies and requesting a contribution of \$100. The Fellowship responded by sending \$25 to the AUA and a like amount to the Unitarian Service Committee. A short time later, a request for dues was received from the Iowa Association. Because no money was in the budget for such things, twenty-five dollars was raised by special offering. By the next year, these things were better understood, and dues were included in the budget.

There were some who hoped for a more spiritual center than the Fellowship afforded. Some moved onto the Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, or the Presbyterians, and some stuck around. Other UU churches in the area tried to make us feel at home in our new and unfamiliar endeavor. We had early visits from Dr. Bragg of the Kansas City church and from Rev. John Isom of the Wichita Unitarian Church. In October, 1961 Al Borg, his

daughter Carol and Brock Dale attended a District meeting at All Souls Church in Kansas City. They took in sessions on Fellowship Issues and Religious Education and met other Unitarians, and returned with a good report of their experiences.

We owe a great debt to ministers of local and nearby churches and to Unitarian ministers from surrounding cities, who contributed generously to our spiritual guidance Among these were:

Rev. Peter Raible, All Souls Unitarian Church,  
Lincoln, Nebraska

Rev. John Isom, First Unitarian, Wichita  
Kansas

Dr. Raymond Bragg, All Souls Unitarian,  
Kansas City

Rev. Ben Kjelsus, Universalist Church, Junction City, Kansas

Rev. Julian Johnson, First Congregational,  
Manhattan, Kansas

Rev. Warren Remple, Campus Minister,  
Manhattan, Kansas

Rev. Greta Crosby, First Unitarian, Wichita  
Kansas

Dr. S. Walton Cole, First Methodist Church,  
Manhattan, Kansas

Rev. David Stewart, Baptist Campus Minister,  
Manhattan, Kansas

Rev. David Fly, Episcopal Campus Minister,  
Manhattan, Kansas

Rev. John Swomley, St. Paul's Theological  
Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri



The Fellowship owes most of all to Rev. Charles Stephen, who succeeded Rev. Raible in Lincoln, Nebraska. Rev. Stephen, who retired in 1996, served as a sort of Minister in absentia to the group, coming to Manhattan two or three times a year throughout his whole ministry. He knew most of the members by name, dedicated many of our children, gave sermons that were pure poetry and that reminded us that a part of the truth that we seek is a spiritual truth. His importance to the Fellowship cannot be exaggerated.

The help from these ministers increased our awareness of ourselves as a religious group, but progress was slow. In 1966, for example, Rex Slack volunteered to construct a pulpit for us. The executive committee complained that a pulpit would be "too churchy," but the matter was brought up again the following year, and the project was approved. It is a very handsome piece, and it is still in use. (It cost twice the original estimate of seventy-five dollars. Rex bore thirty-five dollars of the overrun himself.)

Not every step was forward. In 1970-1971, Pat Weisenburger was Program Chairman. She persuaded us to buy some hymnals, and saw to it that each Sunday we sang at least one hymn. She also provided us with a handsome Order of Service each week, designed by her husband Ray, and reproduced by the Ozalid process, which gave dark purple lines on a gray background. They were works of art, and everyone liked them. Unfortunately, the hymn-singing didn't go over so well, and when Pat's term of office expired, both the hymn-singing and the artistic programs were abandoned.

Our reluctance to embrace attitudes that reminded us of the abandoned religious practices of our childhood prompted Charles Grayden to ask, on more than one occasion, "What's the difference between this and any other social club?"

This is not to say that we had no rituals. Our Sunday service, even without the customary hymns and responsive readings, had its own rituals that were, without anyone ever making much of them, important to us. We always had our readings, and we always had our five-minute musical interlude. When our amplifier showed signs of senility,

the executive committee discussed replacing it. Doris and Gene Grosh immediately offered us their tape recorder, which they (both engineers) declared "too complicated for us." In due course, Charles Grayden, who had an enormous library of classical music, made three 8-inch tapes of 5-minute selections. He and Jerry Miller also saw to turning the music on and off each Sunday. We continued to use Charlie's tapes after his death until the tape player wore out.

There were other rituals that weren't so obviously ritualistic. One such was the annual picnic. The first was held on May 27, 1957 at the home of Mel and Jackie Seiden. As far as anyone knows they have been held every spring since. For many years they were held at the Pottawatomie County State Lake, later at Warner Park, and lately at the home of Charley and June Kempthorne. A few times the picnic has been held on the Fellowship grounds at Oak Grove.



Another ritual that we regularly observe is the Easter Breakfast. For the first few years after the move to 709 Bluemont we had an Easter egg hunt for the children instead of a regular service. This was usually held at the home of some member who lived outside of town. In 1971 or 1972, we instituted the Easter brunch at the Fellowship, followed by an Easter egg hunt on the grounds or on the grounds of Bluemont School, across the street. The menu has always been the same: creamed eggs and fruit compote. (In recent years, the purity of our tradition has been compromised. Members have been granted permission to bring dishes OTHER than creamed eggs if they desire. And the recipe for creamed eggs has been altered, presumably in the interest of health. The latter-day recipe contains more milk and less butter and cream. The recipe given below is the ORIGINAL recipe.).

#### UU Creamed Eggs

- 9 quartered hard-boiled eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 3/4 lb. sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup cream
- 1/2 lb. butter
- 1/8 cup sherry or cognac
- 1/2 cup flour
- 2 T chopped chives

Saute the mushrooms in 1/4 lb. butter. Make a cream sauce using the remaining butter and the flour, milk, cream, and chives. Remove from the stove and add the sherry, eggs and mushrooms. Serve over rice. Serves 12.

#### UU Fruit Compote

- 2 10-oz. packages frozen, sweetened strawberries
- 2 or 3 bananas
- 2 small cans of Mandarin oranges, drained

Both of these recipes are attributed to the late Margaret Grayden.

We gradually softened up a bit. Beacon Street kept hammering at us, and Charles Stephen kept delivering his poetic sermons two or three times a year. Munro Husbands visited again and Emil Gudmundsen, District Executive, came and spoke on "Unity in Diversity: a Central Liberal Principle" in September, 1965. He returned from time to time over the next several years. He had faith that our organization, confused and perverse as we sometimes were, had a future worthy of his effort. All of these had their effects. In 1970, Emil Gudmundsen managed to have one week at Camp Unistar devoted to Fellowships, and provided some scholarships to people from various groups in the district. Bettie and Brock Dale were among these. They returned with a new enthusiasm and with new friends from several UU congregations and with a secure knowledge that there were others like us out there. They went to Unistar several times more, and Sam and Yvonne Lacy also attended a session a couple of years later.

About this time, interest in District Meetings began to develop. Anne Cowan, Nate Folland, Bettie and Brock Dale, Mike Schmidt, Berit Greechie and several others (including, on a couple of occasions, some of the LRY students) went to these meetings. In 1973, Don and Carol Kleier went to the General Assembly as our delegates, and in 1975, Nathan and Laura Folland attended. Gradually the Fellowship began to identify more strongly with the denomination, and even to have a hand in denominational affairs. Bettie Dale served two three-year terms on the District Board of Trustees.

Meetings of the Southern Cluster of the Prairie Star District have been held semiannually since 1971. These, interestingly enough, grew out of the fossil hunts that Leslie Marcus had led in the early years. In the Spring of 1970, Bettie Dale and Doris Grosh took it upon themselves to organize a Fellowship retreat somewhat closer to home than the chalk beds of western Kansas. They learned that the facilities of White Memorial Camp, on the Council Grove Reservoir could be rented. It turned out that no dates were available, so the first retreat was held at the Stockdale area on Tuttle Creek Reservoir on April 5. The next retreat was held the following fall at White Memorial Camp. In September, 1971, they organized another retreat. Some of the people from Lawrence and Kansas City who had been at the Fellowship Week

at Camp Unistar were notified, and they in turn invited the other congregations in the Southern Cluster of the district, so Bettie had to request an additional 36 spaces. A \$100 grant was obtained from the Prairie Star District, and speakers were engaged. The speakers were Prof. Alfred Schnur, from KSU, and Mr. Carol Wray, of the Kansas Board of Probation and Parole. They discussed the feasibility of our groups sponsoring parolees from the State Prison.

From that time forward, the meetings were always cluster-wide. This group included Kansas City, Overland Park, Lawrence, Manhattan and Wichita. (By this time the Universalist Church in Junction City was defunct.)

The meetings, which were held twice a year, were well attended. There were workshop sessions on Saturday afternoon devoted to selected subjects of interest, but time was allowed for socializing and walking in the woods. Saturday night there was always a bonfire with singing and impromptu entertainment. Sometimes there was folk dancing. Sunday morning there was a service, usually led by one of the ministers from the cluster.

In the eighties attendance at cluster meetings declined, and there were a couple of years when the meetings did not take place. In later years, they were concerned mostly with affairs of the UUSC. In the nineties, cluster meetings have been held irregularly. But they have served their purpose. They have helped us to know that we are not alone—that there are other like-minded people in the world --and not all that far away.

In the late seventies, the RE program disappeared, and attendance began to flag. Things looked a bit better in 1980 and 1981. But once we moved into the building at Oak Grove, things really began to pick up. There was an influx of new, enthusiastic people. RE was rejuvenated. Social concerns developed. The acoustics in the new building were excellent, and we discovered that **we like to sing!** We bought new UU hymnals, and a like number of books of words of well-known songs. The portion of the service devoted to ritual increased, with more and longer readings, and other rituals, e.g., a “Joys and Concerns” period and occasional responsive readings were adopted.

There was some thought that the Fellowship might be ready for a part-time minister. The idea

was talked about, mentioned from time to time in meetings of the Executive committee. In May 1988, a Small Societies Workshop, directed by Rev. Harry Green, District Executive, was hosted by the Manhattan Fellowship. The workshop was concerned with RE, Programming, Growth, Finance, Adult Education, Social Concerns, and more.

Manhattan Fellowship came away with a determination to define its goals. This was in a sense the first step toward acquisition of a minister, although a considerable road lay ahead.

A goal-setting committee was formed, with Nancy DuTeau as chair. Other members were Cathy Hedge, Florence Schwab, Nancy Perkins and Charley Kempthorne. The committee met with Rev. Green on Nov. 11, 1988, and met again on Nov. 20, with interested members of the congregation. The committee continued to meet through the winter, and presented a mission statement to the Fellowship in March, 1989. The statement was approved by the membership at the annual meeting in April.

This is the final version of the Mission Statement as of April, 1991, after several revisions:

*We are a Fellowship of individuals who meet in an informal, congenial and caring atmosphere to discuss ideas and to listen to music and poetry. We provide an alternative to the traditional church by offering spiritual experience without dogma, a place to translate our beliefs into meaningful actions. We encourage a scientific spirit of inquiry. We value our social action, our humanitarian goals our emphasis on individual conscience, our diverse programs and our nondenominational religious education*

*We offer our time, loyalty, talents, experience, ideas, money and humor to promote an atmosphere of acceptance and tolerance, to give continuity to our group and help preserve our Unitarian-Universalist heritage. We want to serve as a haven for independent thinkers, and a source of religious instruction on universal moral principles.*

The committee also conducted a survey of Fellowship needs, as perceived by the members, and based on this produced a long-range plan in May 1989. It is reproduced below.

Goals and proposed action to implement these goals:

1. To make the Fellowship more visible in the

- community.
- a. Improve Publicity.
- b. Establish a Social Action Committee.
- c. Establish a Membership Committee.
- d. Increase building use.
- 2. Sponsor social action.
  - a. Review Manhattan's needs.
  - b. Support recycling.
  - c. Support homeless shelter.
  - d. Support Breadbasket.
  - e. Support Anne Cowan.
- 3. Provide for spiritual and intellectual development of members.
  - a. Offer evening discussion groups
  - b. Utilize more UUA resources.
  - c. Provide time for discussions.
- 4. Offer opportunities for social fellowship.
  - a. Round Robin dinners.
  - b. Holiday dinners at houses.
  - c. Summer programs.
- 5. Support the religious education program.
  - a. Strengthen an older youth program.
  - b. Establish Appreciation Sunday.
  - c. Provide physical improvements.
- 6. Continue to provide diversity of programs and explore some new kinds of programming.
  - a. Tape programs or have transcripts.
  - b. Live music once/month or more.
- 7. Improve organization of tasks.
  - a. Provide sign-up sheets.

- b. Staff all committees.
- c. Define all tasks.
- 8. Strengthen support for members.
  - a. Start Caring Committee.
  - b. Provide social fellowship.
- 9. Make the fellowship more welcoming.
  - a. Written program for visitors.
  - b. Visitors' information packet.
  - c. UU orientation for new members.
  - d. Encourage bringing of friends.
  - e. Follow-up of visitors.
  - f. Mix old and new members socially.
  - g. Wear name tags.
- 10. Get a paid staff person.
  - a. Start saving money for staff.
  - b. Define our staff needs.
  - c. Investigate UUA help.
- 11. Address capital improvement needs.
  - a. Establish budget items.
  - b. Review needs.



Anil Bhalla, Elizabeth Folland and others at the White Memorial Camp.



c. Set improvement priorities.

Nancy DuTeau, chair of the Committee on Goals, was Fellowship Chair for the two years following the adoption of these goals. Under her leadership, a substantial fraction of their suggestions was put into practice. Susan Bock was employed as a part-time coordinator, beginning in January, 1990. She agreed to work 20 hours per month. When she left Manhattan in December, 1990, she was replaced by Cindi Thomas, and a year later by Sue Turner. These ladies took over the publication of the monthly newsletter. They have also established an orderly basis in scheduling and record keeping that has had a noticeable effect on the entire operation of the Fellowship.

At the end of the fiscal year following the adoption of these guidelines, Rev. Green visited the Fellowship for two weeks. He delivered sermons on May 6 and May 13, 1990. He also met with the Executive committee, the RE Committee, the Program Committee, attended a meeting on revision of the bylaws of the Fellowship and the establishment of an endowment fund and held a seminar on membership and growth. He also met with individual members of the Fellowship. Some of the comments in his report on these meetings:

Our Fellowship needs to develop a vision of a religious institution in order to reach out and attract as yet unknown UUs.

We need to provide Sunday morning programming and religious education that is responsive to a variety of perspectives.

Visitors who are called within seventy-two hours of their visit are more likely to return.

Committee chairs are encouraged to involve others so that new leadership develops.

We need to find ways to have fun together.

A largely unstated undercurrent of all the meetings, goal-settings and such was the need perceived by some of the members (and certainly by the UU District office) for professional leadership. But it didn't happen immediately. There was a significant minority to whom the idea of a minister was anathema, and there were more who were at best lukewarm to the idea. Still, the idea was not dead.

In October, 1992, word was received from the

Topeka UU Fellowship that they were considering the hiring of a minister and inquiring whether the Manhattan Fellowship was interested in sharing. The immediate reaction of the Executive committee was that they weren't interested in sharing on a regular basis, but might pay him for occasional visits. But at the November meeting of the Executive Committee, Dan Swenson suggested that this was a matter that should be discussed by the whole membership. It was agreed that a portion of the December 6 meeting of the Fellowship would be devoted to a discussion of this offer. The result was a determination to study the matter further. At its next meeting, the Manhattan board appointed a committee to meet with Topeka's ministerial committee. Members were Mike Oldfather (Chair), Nancy Perkins, Charlie Perkins, Cathy Hedge, and Charley Kempthorne.

Very early in the discussion it was agreed that, if the venture came to pass, Manhattan would receive (and pay for) one-fourth of the minister's time, while the remainder of the time and costs would be allocated to Topeka.

The first of several joint meetings of the Topeka and Manhattan committees took place in February 1993 in Topeka. Both before and after the meetings there were frequent conversations with Topeka members J.D. Townley, Bob Macdonald and Phil Roudebush, who formed the nucleus of their committee. It was clear that the first step was to take a survey of our members to get some notion of the members' personal and religious convictions and to assess the sentiment for hiring a minister.

At the May, 1993 annual meeting of the Fellowship, Cathy Hedge circulated a questionnaire dealing with attitudes toward the Fellowship, ministry, and religion in general. It is impossible to discern from the tabulated results how many respondents there were, but there appear to have been about twenty-five. Of these, twenty indicated that their chief interest in meetings was intellectual stimulation, nineteen that it was a sense of community, and only one each aesthetic values and worship. (There were other categories). On the question of the importance of various functions of a minister, the most important categories were Meaningful Sermons, Encouraging a Spirit of Fellowship, and Children's RE. Least important were Fund-raising and Activity in Denominational Affairs. On the question of support for a

minister, two were willing to double their pledges, ten were willing to increase their pledge to support a minister, and three indicated support but no pledge increase. Eight did not support the idea, some were concerned with the cost, some with a possibly negative impact on the character of the Fellowship.

Discussions continued into the fall of 1993. Prairie Star District Executive Harry Greene met with representatives of the two congregations in Omaha late in October. He indicated that the UUA would almost certainly provide support for a joint Topeka-Manhattan extension ministry. The UUA's National program would provide all the costs of hiring the minister and contribute \$12,000 over a three-year period. He also believed that the Prairie Star District's Chalice Lighters program would assist with approximately \$5,000. (Ultimately the latter program gave approximately \$7,000 to each congregation.) Rev. Greene came to Manhattan and Topeka in November 1993 and gave this information to both groups and promised to work vigorously in our behalf.

The first formal congregational program on the subject occurred on Sunday, December 5, 1993. We sang "Come Sing a Song With Me" and someone read Kenneth Patton's "This House" and Marge Piercy's "Councils" in a not-too subtle effort to put people in the right frame of mind to approach the somewhat divisive issue. After a spirited discussion of the merits of the idea, 33 members voted in a straw poll. There were 23 votes in favor of hiring a part-time minister, four opposed, and six undecided.

In the period preceding the formal vote, Mike Oldfather was busy. He approached individual members of the congregation, asked whether they would support a minister, and asked how much they would increase their pledge if, indeed we took one on. By the date of the final vote, he had received pledges for \$6,000 additional funds from a relatively small number of people. The Executive Committee had estimated earlier that an additional \$8,000 would be needed, so the goal appeared to be in sight.

The formal vote was scheduled for January 16, 1994. Larry Weaver agreed to chair the meeting. His format called for each member to speak once before anyone could speak a second time. Exceptions were granted for the ministerial committee members to provide specific information as requested. He also very tactfully encouraged respectful listening. It was a tense, but orderly meeting. At the end, a single vote was taken on the question of whether to join Topeka's effort

to engage an interim minister. Of the 38 members present, 30 voted yes, seven voted no, and one abstained. On the advice of UU staff members, it was decided later that Topeka would make the application itself, with the understanding the Manhattan Fellowship would be a 25 per cent participant for the three years of the program.

In May, 1994, the UUA informed us that a candidate had been identified. The Reverend David Grimm, who had been out of seminary (Union Theological Seminary, New York) for approximately four years would be in Kansas in June to visit with both the Topeka and Manhattan congregations. Copies of David's materials and letters from former parishioners in Eau Claire, Wisconsin were distributed to members of both groups, and David spoke by telephone from Sweden (where he was spending a sabbatical) with representatives from Manhattan and Topeka. He arrived in Kansas June 8 for meetings with us (Friday evening, June 10) and for extensive meetings with the Topeka group over several days. A number of us heard his Sunday presentation in Topeka and joined them in heartily endorsing his candidacy.

David arrived later that summer, making his first pulpit appearance Sunday, August 28, 1994. Since then, he has been with us for services almost every month, usually on the second Sunday. In addition he has attended most board meetings, sat in on countless committee meetings, provided counseling as needed, presided over weddings, memorial services and dedications and generally been available when needed. He has conducted a number of educational series for adults and worked closely with our children's programs. At the end of the three-year trial period both congregations voted enthusiastically to continue the arrangement.

We have persevered for forty years. A few of us have spent most of our lives as members of this Fellowship. We have slugged our way through a number of crises, and have emerged from each one, by and large, stronger than before. We have preserved diversity, an essential attribute of a Unitarian congregation; there is more variety in our membership than there was forty

years ago. We are not through with crises. We can see even now, dimly on the horizon, circumstances that will make it necessary to take on a full-time minister. And one day our beautiful building will be too small. Likely when these crises arrive, we will prevail. We always have.



The annual spring picnic about 1997, Unitarians doing what Unitarians do best--conversing. *From left, Brock Dale, Yvonne Lacy, Bettie Dale, Jim Quinlan, Cathy Hedge, Cecil Miller.*



## A cumulative list of members and first year of membership. (Year corresponds to beginning of fiscal year.)

Brayfield, Arthur	1956	la, Vijay	1966
Brayfield, Marie	1956	Borg, David	1966
Eisenstark, Abraham	1956	Ferlemann, Glenn	1966
Eisenstark, Roma	1956	Ferlemann, Mimi	1966
Hausman, Carl	1956	Folland, Laura	1966
Herrick, Mr.	1956	Folland, Nathan	1966
Herrick, Mrs.	1956	Hinrichs, Carl	1966
Hildebrand, John	1956	Hinrichs, Edith	1966
Hildebrand, Verna	1956	Lacy, Jr., Burritt S.	1966
Hisatsune, Kimi	1956	Sinclair, Christine	1966
Hostetter, Helen	1956	Sinclair, Bruce	1966
Katz, Mildred P	1956	Stevenson, Judy	1966
Kirmser, Jeune	1956	Stevenson, Michael	1966
Kirmser, Philip G.	1956	Townsend, Faye	1966
Koons, L.H.	1956	Christenson, Jackie	1967
Leaf, Boris	1956	Davis, Alan	1967
Leaf, Genevieve	1956	Lacy, Yvonne	1967
McCormick, Frank	1956	Melaragno, Helen	1967
McCormick, Margaret	1956	Miller, Jordan Y.	1967
Miller, Gerald	1956	Miller, Elaine	1967
Miller, Cecil	1956	Miller, Adrienne	1967
Mitchell, John	1956	Greechie, Berit	1968
Richards, Margaret	1956	Hathaway, Betty	1968
Robinson, Jack	1956	Hathaway, Charles E.	1968
Robinson, Bobbi	1956	Kahn, Edna	1968
Schipper, Geri	1956	Kodras, Alberta	1968
Seiden, Melvin	1956	Lacy, Michael	1968
Seiden, Jackie	1956	Lupri, Eugene	1968
Bray, Bernard	1957	Lupri, Anne	1968
Dale, E. Brock	1957	Seaman, Gregory	1968
Dale, Bettie M.	1957	Seaman, Anne	1968
Habernigg, Helen	1957	St. Clair, Mary Lou	1968
Hammett, Joy	1957	Williams, Robert	1968
Handsind, J.	1957	Williams, Margie	1968
Lienkaemper, Gertrude	1957	Wylie, Jan	1968
Mariner, James	1957	Wylie, Warren	1968
Mathias, Boyd	1957	Fancher, Nancy	1969
McCurdy, Bill	1957	Ferguson, Stephen	1969
Mitchell, Mila	1957	Ferguson, Constance	1969
Rosenberg, Dorothy	1957	Greene, Priscilla	1969
Rosenberg, James	1957	Greene, Roger	1969
Samelson, Franz	1957	Osborne, Linda	1969
Samelson, Phoebe	1957	Perkins, Charles	1969
Schuler, Ralph	1957	Perkins, Nancy	1969
Schuler, Donna	1957	Stromberg, Sheila	1969
Schwartz, Joseph	1957	Caffey, J. Patrick	1970
Scott, Mrs. R.H.	1957	Cowan, Anne	1970
Scott, R. Haney	1957	Cowan, Thaddeus M.	1970
Tew, John	1957	Davis, Jane	1970
Voight, T.	1957	Jewson, Diane	1970
Warner, J.	1957	Swegle, Martha	1970
Whipple, J.	1957	Swegle, William	1970
Borg, A. F.	1958	Foerster, Bernd	1971
Stein, Esther C.	1965	Foerster, Enell	1971
Stein, Robert	1965	Kleier, Carolynne	1971
Townsend, Robert	1965	Kleier, Donald	1971
Bhalla, Chander	1966	Mulhollan, Paige	1971



Above, one of architect Rex Slack's four stained glass lamp shades mounted in the Sanctuary named for long-time member (now deceased) and benefactor Inez Alsop. Her many contributions to the Fellowship included standing when she was well into her 90s and admonishing the congregation, "Deeds, not creeds!" lest we forget that Unitarians believe in social action but leave matters of theology and doctrine to each individual. Inez is commemorated with a brass plaque on the wall of the sanctuary, below.





Mulhollan, Mary Bess 1971  
 Wallace, Mary 1971  
 Whitaker, Regina 1971  
 Whitaker, ——— 1971  
 Banner, Chris 1973  
 Banner, Betty 1973  
 Caffey, Gloria 1973  
 Daly, Myrna 1973  
 Finney, Mary 1973  
 Flora, Jan 1973  
 Flora, Cornelia 1973  
 Hands, Roger 1973  
 Hands, Christine 1973  
 Haugen, Harvey 1973  
 Haugen, Doris 1973  
 Haugen, Harvey Q. 1973  
 Jenkins, Mike 1973  
 Jenkins, Johanna 1973  
 Jenkins, Johanna 1973  
 Jenkins, Mike 1973  
 Jenkins, Mike 1973  
 McAnoric, Peter 1973  
 Ossorio, Peter 1973  
 Ossorio, Jean 1973  
 Pearce, Mildred 1973  
 Pearce, Paul 1973  
 Schmidt, Michael 1973  
 Shanteau, Doreen 1973  
 Shanteau, James 1973  
 Weaver, Oliver L. 1973  
 Weaver, Anne 1973  
 Willard, Lloyd 1973  
 Willard, Gayle 1973  
 Granrose, Cheryl 1974  
 McGavin, Beverly 1974  
 Meriwether, Jane 1974  
 Meriwether, John 1974  
 Moore, Barbara 1974  
 Robbins, Claude 1974  
 Robbins, Sherrie 1974  
 Sedlacek, Margaret 1974  
 Uhlarik, John 1974  
 Uhlarik, Roseanne 1974  
 White, Barbara 1974  
 White, Chappel 1974  
 Briggs, Stephanie 1975  
 Carson, Neil 1975  
 Climenhaga, Anna 1975  
 Downey, Dorothy 1975  
 Downey, Ronald 1975  
 Hussein, Abe 1975  
 Hussein, Kathy 1975  
 Oliverson, Larry 1975  
 Quinlan, James 1975  
 Quinlan, Marian 1975  
 Dale, Debra 1976  
 Manney, Monta 1976  
 Manney, Tom 1976  
 Psilos, Paul 1976

Psilos, Marianne 1976  
 Raborn, Linda 1976  
 Wilson, Michael 1976  
 Gold, Jennifer 1977  
 Hacker, David 1977  
 Johnson, Patricia 1977  
 Hacker, Barbara 1978  
 Hall, Natalya 1978  
 Beeman, Sylvia 1979  
 Beeman, Richard 1979  
 Converse, James 1979  
 Harris, Charles 1979  
 Haun, Charles D. 1979  
 Miller, Holly 1979  
 Sherman, Jim 1979  
 McCutchen, Dennis 1980  
 Nelson, Sandy 1980  
 Parrish, James 1980  
 Roof, Steven 1980  
 Sherman, Vincent 1980  
 Silver, Edward 1980  
 Grayden, Elizabeth 1981  
 LaShelle, John 1981  
 Rust, Robert 1981  
 St. Clair, Arifa 1981  
 Llovd, Marilyn 1982  
 Mattinson, Jill 1982  
 Sheff, Sue 1982  
 Sheff, Richard 1982  
 Welty, Ward 1982  
 Welty, Jane 1982  
 Balmer, Angela 1983  
 Bhalla, Kamini 1983  
 Bruner, Angel 1983  
 Hatton, Steven 1983  
 Hinrichs, Aaron 1983  
 Johnson, R. Steven 1983  
 Kempthorne, June 1983  
 Kempthorne, Charley 1983  
 McCoy, Martha 1983  
 Miller, Tybel 1983  
 Pichle, Judy 1983  
 Pichle, John 1983  
 Cox, Katherine 1986  
 Deitch, David 1986  
 Liddell, Carol 1986  
 Marshall, Shirley 1986  
 Swenson, Daniel 1986  
 Swenson, Katherine 1986  
 Wallen, Betsy 1986  
 Bramel-Cox, Paula 1987  
 Chapil, Gene 1987  
 Cox, Thomas S. 1987  
 Dryz, Ann 1987  
 Mitchell, James 1987  
 Mitchell, Linda 1987  
 Van Delft, Charity 1987



Gwen Geiselman, shown here robust and smiling fresh from sledding with the kids on the long hill in front of the Fellowship, has been a member since 1993. She is a relative rarity in our Fellowship, a born Unitarian. "In fact," Gwen says, "my mother was a Unitarian, my grandmother, and maybe even my great-grandmother. My grandmother remembered when the Unitarians weren't allowed to join the Young Women's Christian Association in Bloomington, Illinois, where I grew up. They weren't considered Christians."



Larry Weaver, a member since 1973, often leads us in song. Here in this 1986 photo he is "just having fun playing the piano." Larry and his wife became Unitarians because, he says, they wanted some ethical instruction for their kids outside that they received at home. When in Alabama (Larry's home state), their son Jay, then 5, attended a nursery school. Prayers were said. Jay commented that "in Kansas nobody believes in God, but in Alabama everybody does." Jay, now 33, lives in Chicago where he is a Ph.D. candidate in Early Christian literature.

Walker, Betsy Grier	1987	Desertspring	1993
Bock, Susan	1988	Du Paig, Marguerite	1993
Hedge, Cathy	1988	Geiselman, Gwendolyn	1993
Hinds, Blaine	1988	Jacobs, Kevyn	1993
Hinds, Joan C.	1988	Mooney, Jennifer	1993
Schwab, Florence	1988	Parcel, Dan	1993
Wallen, Bud	1988	Sato	1993
Wingfield, Kristin	1988	Spangler	1993
Black, Bill	1989	Thumm, Uwe	1993
Draven, John	1989	Wynkoop	1993
DuTeau, Nancy	1989	Bassett, Derek	1994
Noble, John	1989	Bay, Bill R.	1994
Reese, Mary Beth	1989	Blanding, Sylvia	1994
Reese, John	1989	Cyr, Lea	1994
Vinton, Mary Ann	1989	Mastranardi, Michael	1994
Bunch, John	1990	McAvoy, Jennifer	1994
Bunch, Shawn	1990	Murphy-Hazett, Bridget	1994
Dietrich, Kate	1990	Murphy-Hazett, Dean	1994
Earle, Beverly	1990	Patterson, Robert C	1994
Embers, Ken	1990	Uffman, Bonnie	1994
Embers, Pat	1990	Welti, Ruth	1994
Hull, Mary C.	1990	Been-Redeker, Pamela	1995
Miller, Kerry	1990	Burk-Caffey, Karen	1995
Botbyl, Lyn	1991	Lanning, Barbara	1995
Dillman, Norm	1991	Long, Mardi	1995
Dillman, Phyllis	1991	Maddox, Karen	1995
Exdell, John	1991	Redeker, Don	1995
Garcia, J.K Russell	1991	Williams, Mark	1995
Hastings, Brad	1991	Darrow, Mark	1996
Hastings, Maria	1991	Johnson, A. L.	1996
Hinrichs, Steven	1991	Lambert, Mike	1996
McNall, Julie	1991	Martin, Bernice	1996
Turner, Susan	1991	Montgomery, Katherine	1996
Banner, Sara	1993	Paquette, Angie	1996
Berkow, Dan	1993	Penrod, Mike	1996
Bontrager, Helen	1993	Penrod-Simihoe, Judith	1996



Sam Lacy, shown with one of the home-made breads that he often brings to Fellowship potlucks, has been a UU member since 1966. He moved to Manhattan in 1958 with no religious background, got to know Brock and Bettie Dale, and decided to come to a meeting. Brock led a discussion of the thought of the famous 19th Century Transcendentalist and Unitarian, Theodore Parker. "At the end of the talk," Sam says, "he didn't say 'amen,' he just said 'Let's have coffee.' And I was sold on Unitarianism."



*Left, Edith Hinrichs, who was chair of the Fellowship for two years, 1984-1985. She was the first chairperson in the new building. "We were taking our first steps in Oak Grove," she says. "It was an exciting time."*

It was also a lot of work. At that time the chairperson was the convener as well. That meant in addition to all the administrative duties of the chair, including presiding over the monthly board meeting, the chair also had to convene the meetings on Sunday too. A few years later it was realized that this was too much to put on one person so the two tasks, convening and chairing the Fellowship, were divided.

Edith and her husband, Carl, became Unitarians in the 1960s partly because they felt their children "needed some structure," but also because they found the group to be very nurturing.

## An alphabetical list of members and their first year of membership.

Bacon, Mrs. John	1959	Bruner, Angel	1983	Dietrich, Kate	1990
Bacon, John	1959	Bunch, John	1990	Dietrich, Donald	1959
Balmer, Angela	1983	Bunch, Shawn	1990	Dietrich, Addie	1959
Banner, Sara	1993	Burk-Coffey, Karen	1995	Dillman, Phyllis	1991
Banner, Chris	1973	Caffey, J. Patrick	1970	Dillman, Norm	1991
Banner, Betty	1973	Caffey, Gloria	1973	Downey, Dorothy	1975
Bassett, Derek	1994	Cagle, Sally	1964	Downey, Ronald	1975
Bay, Bill R.	1994	Cagle, Gary	1964	Draven, John	1989
Beeman, Sylvia	1979	Carson, Neil	1975	Dryz, Ann	1987
Beeman, Richard	1979	Chadda, Roshan	1960	Du Paig, Marguerite	1993
Been-Redeker, Pamela	1995	Chapil, Gene	1987	DuTeau, Nancy	1989
Berkow, Dan	1993	Chapman, Harold	1964	Earle, Beverly	1990
Bhalla, Vijay	1966	Chapman, Sandra	1964	Edgar, Earl	1958
Bhalla, Chander	1966	Christenson, Jackie	1967	Edgar, Joan	1959
Bhalla, Kamini	1983	Climenthaga, Anna	1975	Eisenstark, Abraham	1956
Black, Bill	1989	Converse, James	1979	Eisenstark, Roma	1956
Blanding, Sylvia	1994	Cowan, Thaddeus M.	1970	Embers, Pat	1990
Blatt, Gerald L.	1960	Cowan, Anne	1970	Embers, Ken	1990
Blatt, Betty	1960	Cox, Thomas S.	1987	Exdell, John	1991
Bock, Susan	1988	Cox, Katherine	1986	Fancher, Nancy	1969
Bontrager, Helen	1993	Cyr, Lea	1994	Ferguson, Constance	1969
Borg, Betty	1958	Dale, Richard S.	1965	Ferguson, Stephen	1969
Borg, A. F.	1958	Dale, Debra	1976	Ferlemann, Mimi	1966
Borg, David	1966	Dale, E. Brock	1957	Ferlemann, Glenn	1966
Botbyl, Lyn	1991	Dale, Bettie M.	1957	Finney, Mary	1973
Boyer, William	1965	Daly, Myrna	1973	Fletcher, Maryanne	1960
Boyer, Barbara	1965	Darrow, Mark	1996	Fletcher, Allen	1960
Bramel-Cox, Paula	1987	Davis, Jane	1970	Flora, Cornelia	1973
Bray, Bernard	1957	Davis, Alan	1967	Flora, Jan	1973
Brayfield, Marie	1956	Deitch, David	1986	Foerster, Enell	1971
Brayfield, Arthur	1956	Desertspring	1993	Foerster, Bernd	1971
Briggs, Stephanie	1975			Folland, Nathan	1966

*Right, Marian Quinlan and June Kempthorne about 1997. They are standing in the old sanctuary in front of a work of fabric art by Fellowship member Harriet Jahnke. Marian, on the left, when asked why she became a Unitarian, said it was because of the people. June, right, she likes the secular nature of the Fellowship and the tolerance of different beliefs. And she is here because of the people, too. "We're like a big family," she adds.*





Frazier, Evelyn 1964  
 Frazier, Leslie 1964  
 Freisen, Lynn 1965  
 Gagnon, Claude 1959  
 Gagnon, Kay 1959  
 Garcia, J.K Russell 1991  
 Geiselman, Gwendolyn 1993  
 Goedecke, Virginia 1964  
 Gold, Jennifer 1977  
 Granrose, Cheryl 1976  
 Grayden, Margaret 1963  
 Grayden, Elizabeth 1981  
 Grayden, Charles 1963  
 Greechie, Berit 1968  
 Greene, Priscilla 1969  
 Greene, Roger 1969  
 Grosh, Eugene 1965  
 Grosh, Doris 1965  
 Habernigg, Helen 1957  
 Hacker, David 1977  
 Hacker, Barbara 1978  
 Haft, Ruby 1965  
 Hall, George 1960  
 Hall, Dora 1960  
 Hall, Natalya 1978  
 Hammett, Joy 1957  
 Hands, Christine 1973  
 Hands, Roger 1973  
 Handsind, J. 1957  
 Hannah, Elaine 1958  
 Harris, Charles 1979  
 Hastings, Brad 1991  
 Hastings, Maria 1991  
 Hathaway, Charles E. 1968  
 Hathaway, Betty 1968  
 Hatton, Steven 1983  
 Haugen, Harvey Q. 1973  
 Haugen, Doris 1973  
 Haun, Charles D. 1979  
 Hausman, Carl 1956  
 Hedge, Cathy 1988  
 Herrick, Mr. 1956  
 Herrick, Mrs. 1956  
 Hildebrand, Verna 1956  
 Hildebrand, John 1956  
 Hinds, Joan C. 1988  
 Hinds, Blaine 1988  
 Hinrichs, Aaron 1983  
 Hinrichs, Carl 1966  
 Hinrichs, Edith 1966  
 Hinrichs, Steven 1991  
 Hisatsune, Kimi 1956  
 Hobson, Arthur 1960  
 Hobson, Valerie 1960  
 Hodge, Judith 1959  
 Holland, David 1963  
 Hostetter, Helen 1956

Hull, Mary C. 1990  
 Hussein, Kathy 1975  
 Hussein, Abe 1975  
 Jacobs, Kevyn 1993  
 Jenkins, Mike 1973  
 Jenkins, Johanna 1973  
 Jenkins, Mike 1973  
 Jenkins, Johanna 1973  
 Jewson, Diane 1970  
 Johnson, Patricia 1977  
 Johnson, A. L. 1996  
 Johnson, R. Steven 1983  
 Kahn, Edna 1968  
 Katz, Mildred P 1956  
 Kempthorne, June 1983  
 Kempthorne, Charley 1983  
 Kirmser, Jeune 1956  
 Kirmser, Philip G. 1956  
 Kirmser, Sandra 1964  
 Kleier, Carolynne 1971  
 Kleier, Donald 1971  
 Kodras, Alberta 1968  
 Koons, L. H. 1956  
 Lacy, Yvonne 1967  
 Lacy, Michael 1968  
 Lacy, Jr., Burritt S. 1966  
 Lambert, Mike 1996  
 Lang, Laurence 1958  
 Lang, Rosalie 1958  
 Lanning, Barbara 1995  
 LaShelle, John 1981  
 Leaf, Genevieve 1956  
 Leaf, Boris 1956  
 Lee, Roxie 1959  
 Lee, Chris 1959  
 Liddell, Carol 1986  
 Lienkaemper, Gertrude 1957  
 Llovd, Marilyn 1982  
 Long, Mardi 1995  
 Lupri, Eugene 1968  
 Lupri, Anne 1968  
 Maddox, Karen 1995  
 Manney, Tom 1986  
 Manney, Monta 1986  
 Manuel, Leo 1960  
 Manuel, Betty 1960  
 Marcus, Barbara 1960  
 Marcus, Leslie 1960  
 Mariner, James 1957  
 Marshall, Shirley 1986  
 Martin, Bernice 1996  
 Mastranardi, Michael 1994  
 Mathias, Boyd 1957  
 Mattinson, Jill 1982  
 McAnoric, Peter 1973  
 McAvoy, Jennifer 1994  
 McCormick, Margaret 1956

McCormick, Frank 1956  
 McCoy, Martha 1983  
 McCurdy, Bill 1957  
 McCutchen 1980  
 McGavin, Beverly 1974  
 McNall, Julie 1991  
 Melaragno, Helen 1967  
 Meriwether, John 1974  
 Meriwether, Jane 1974  
 Miller, Elaine 1967  
 Miller, Adrienne 1967  
 Miller, Kerry 1990  
 Miller, Holly 1979  
 Miller, Jordan Y. 1967  
 Miller, Gerald 1956  
 Miller, Cecil 1956  
 Miller Dorothy 1960  
 Miller, Tybel 1983  
 Mitchell, Mila 1957  
 Mitchell, John 1956  
 Mitchell, James 1987  
 Mitchell, Linda 1987  
 Montgomery, Katherine 1996  
 Mooney, Jennifer 1993  
 Moore, Barbara 1974  
 Mulhollan, Mary Bess 1971  
 Mulhollan, Paige 1971  
 Murphy-Hazett, Bridget 1994  
 Murphy-Hazett, Dean 1994  
 Nelson, Joyce 1959  
 Nelson, Mrs. B. A. 1960  
 Nelson, Sandy 1980  
 Noble, John 1989  
 Oliverson, Larry 1975  
 Osborne, Linda 1969  
 Ossorio, Jean 1973



*Above, Sarah Banner, daughter of members Betty and Chris Banner, who grew up in this Fellowship. She now lives and teaches with the Peace Corps in an elementary school in Nicaragua.*

Ossorio, Peter 1973  
 Paquette, Angie 1996  
 Parcel, Dan 1993  
 Parker, James 1960  
 Parker, Harriet 1959  
 Parrish, James 1980  
 Patterson, Robert C 1994  
 Pearce, Mildred 1973  
 Pearce, Paul 1973  
 Penrod, Mike 1996  
 Penrod-Simihoe, Judith 1996  
 Perkins, Nancy 1969  
 Perkins, Charles 1969  
 Pichle, John 1983  
 Pichle, Judy 1983  
 Psilos, Paul 1976  
 Psilos, Marianne 1976  
 Quinlan, James 1975  
 Quinlan, Marian  
 Redeker, Don 1995  
 Reese, John 1989  
 Reese, Mary Beth 1989  
 Richards, Margaret 1956  
 Robbins, Sherrie 1974  
 Robbins, Claude 1974  
 Robinson, Bobbi 1956  
 Robinson, Jack 1956  
 Rohrer, Wayne C. 1960  
 Roof, Steven 1980  
 Rosenberg, Dorothy 1957  
 Rosenberg, James 1957  
 Rust, Robert 1981  
 Samelson, Phoebe 1957  
 Samelson, Franz 1957  
 Sato 1993  
 Schipper, Geri 1956  
 Schmidt, Michael 1973  
 Schuler, Ralph 1957  
 Schuler, Donna 1957  
 Schwab, Florence 1988  
 Schwartz, Joseph 1957  
 Scott, Mrs. R.H. 1957  
 Scott, R. Haney 1957  
 Seaman, Anne 1968  
 Seaman, Gregory 1968  
 Sedlacek, Margaret 1974  
 Seiden, Melvin 1956  
 Seiden, Jackie 1956  
 Shanteau, Doreen 1973  
 Shanteau, James 1973  
 Sheff, Sue 1982  
 Sheff, Richard 1982  
 Sherman, Jim 1979  
 Sherman, Vincent 1980  
 Siddall, William R. 1964  
 Siddall, Abigail 1963  
 Silver, Edward 1980

Sinclair, Bruce 1966  
 Sinclair, Christine 1966  
 Singh, Mr. 1961  
 Slack, Rex 1965  
 Slack, Martha 1965  
 Spangler 1993  
 St. Clair, Mary Lou 1968  
 St. Clair, Arifa 1981  
 Stein, Esther C. 1965  
 Stein, Robert 1965  
 Stevenson, Michael 1966  
 Stevenson, Judy 1966  
 Stromberg, Sheila 1969  
 Swegle, Martha 1970  
 Swegle, William 1970  
 Swenson, Katherine 1986  
 Swenson, Daniel 1986  
 Tew, John 1957  
 Thumm, Uve 1993  
 Warner, J 1957  
 Weaver, Anne 1973  
 Weaver, Oliver L. 1973  
 Weisenburger, Patricia 1964  
 Welti, Ruth 1994

Welty, Ward 1982  
 Welty, Jane 1982  
 Whipple, J. 1957  
 Whitaker, Regina 1971  
 Whitaker, ——— 1971  
 White, Barbara 1974  
 White, Chappel 1974  
 Willard, Lloyd 1973  
 Willard, Gayle 1973  
 Williams, Mark 1995  
 Williams, Margie 1968  
 Williams, Robert 1968  
 Wilson, Michael 1976  
 Welty, Ward 1982  
 Welty, Jane 1982  
 Whipple, J. 1957  
 Whitaker, Regina 1971  
 Whitaker, ——— 1971  
 White, Barbara 1974  
 White, Chappel 1974  
 Willard, Lloyd 1973  
 Willard, Gayle 1973  
 Williams, Mark 1995  
 Williams, Margie 1968



*Above*, Bernice Martin and Ann Johnson, both active members in the UU since 1996. Bernice has been chair and vice-chair of the Fellowship. The pair spend their summers in Maine.



Williams, Robert 1968  
 Wilson, Michael 1976  
 Wingfield, Kristin 1988  
 Wylie, Warren 1968  
 Wylie, Jan 1968  
 Wynkoop 1993  
 Yost, Miriam 1964  
 Yost, Nicholas 1964  
 Townsend, Robert 1965  
 Townsend, Faye 1966  
 Turner, Susan 1991  
 Uffman, Bonnie 1994  
 Uhlarik, John 1974  
 Uhlarik, Roseanne 1974  
 Van Delft, Charity 1987  
 Vinton, Mary Ann 1989  
 Voight, T. 1957  
 Walker, Betsy Grier 1987  
 Wallace, Mary 1971  
 Wallen, Betsy 1986  
 Wallen, Bud 1988  
 Wancura, Glenda 1963

*Right*, Charlie and Nancy Perkins, members since 1969, summer every year in Montana, where they spend a lot of time fly-fishing. They are ardent and long-time civil rights activists. Charlie

was a conscientious objector in World War II and still is a draft counselor.

After her husband passed away in 1981, Florence Schwab, *right*, looked for a church. She liked the Unitarians because they were a smaller group than the Methodist church she had been going to, more intimate, and "more intellectually stimulating." She likes the UU circle dinners and meeting creative and interesting people. Intensely interested in politics and world affairs, Florence is active in the local UN chapter.



*Left*, Angel and Nate Folland, longtime members, though they now live in Florida on, Nate says, "a street that disappears into a swamp, and our best friends are alligators." Nate says he was a UU at 15 as a boy in Minnesota, but he didn't know it. "When I went to church and they said things like the Apostle's Creed I had to say, 'I don't believe this.' Religion is important, and this is not a place to compromise." He attended Lutheran College in Morehead, Minnesota, and there took "his last chance to be an honest-to-God Christian...but it didn't work!" Yet it was many years before he joined a UU Fellowship--ours--in 1966. Nate is emeritus Professor of Physics at KSU and Angel is director of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Florida. They have found a local and active group of laid-back Unitarians in a Fellowship with a full-time minister.

## A list of officers and committee chairs 1957-1997

### 1957

Chair: Jack Robinson > John Hildebrand \*  
Secretary: Jeune Kirmser  
Program Chair: Mel Seiden\*

Vice Chair: none  
Treasurer: L. H. Koons  
R.E. Chair: None

Mr. Robinson resigned early in the year to take responsibility for the older Sunday School class. Mr Hildebrand was elected Chairman and Mr. Seiden Co-chairman for programs.

### 1958

Chair: Jeune Kirmser  
Secretary: Kimi Hisatsune  
Program Chair: Brock Dale

Vice Chair: Haney Scott  
Treasurer: John Hildebrand  
R.E. Chair: None

### 1959

Chair: Haney Scott  
Secretary: Betty Borg  
Program Chair: Bettie Dale

Vice Chair: Brock Dale  
Treasurer: Gerry Miller  
R.E. Chair: Millie Katz

### 1960

Chair: Al Borg  
Secretary: Roxie Lee\* > Harriet Parker  
Program Chair: Millie Katz and Jeune Kirmser

Vice Chair: Haney Scott\* > Bettie Dale  
Treasurer: Jerry Miller  
R.E. Chair: Betty Borg

### 1961

Chair: P. G. Kirmser  
Secretary: Phoebe Samelson  
Program Chair: Brock Dale

Vice Chair: George Hall  
Treasurer: Gerry Miller  
R.E. Chair: Leo Manuel

### 1962

Chair: Barbara Marcus  
Secretary: Wayne Rohrer  
Program Chair: Elaine Hannah

Vice Chair: Roshan Chadda  
Treasurer: Gerald Miller  
R.E. Chair: Bettie Dale

### 1963

Chair: Charles Grayden  
Secretary: Betty Blatt  
Program Chair: Leslie Marcus

Vice Chair: Gerald Miller  
Treasurer: Glenda Wancura  
R.E. Chair: Bettie Dale

### 1964

Chair: Charles Grayden  
Secretary: Gerald Miller  
Program Chair: Abbie Siddall

Vice Chair: Millie Katz  
Treasurer: Glenda Wancura  
R.E. Chair:

### 1965

Chair: Brock Dale  
Secretary: Mrs. Leslie Lokken  
Program Chair: Betty Borg and Evelyn Frazier

Vice Chair: P. G. Kirmser  
Treasurer: Elaine Hannah  
R.E. Chair: Phoebe Samelson and Pat Weisenburger

### 1966

Chair: Jeune Kirmser  
Secretary: Lynn Friesen  
Program Chair: Esther Stein, Gary Cagle and Cecil Miller

Vice Chair: Robert Townsend  
Treasurer: Betty Borg  
R.E. Chair: Phoebe Samelson and Pat Weisenburger



Above, Kerry Miller at the annual UU picnic several years ago. Kerry died tragically early in 2000, shortly after marrying and moving to Nova Scotia. Kerry, along with his mother and father, Dorothy and Cecil Miller, and his brother, Lauren, and two sisters, Basia and Tybel, were all active members of the Fellowship.



Cecil Miller, also a charter member, died in 1998 at the age of 90. Cecil, a professor of philosophy at KSU, had an especially inquiring mind, and was well known for the astute questions he never failed to ask of the speaker at the Sunday program. This photo was taken in 1977.

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1967

Chair: Cecil Miller  
Secretary: Jeune Kirmser  
Program Chair: William Boyer

Vice Chair: Erna Anve  
Treasurer: Sam Lacy  
R.E. Chair: Pat Weisenburger

1968

Chair: William Boyer\*  
Secretary: Jeune Kirmser  
Program Chair: Al Davis

Vice Chair: Chander Bhalla  
Treasurer: Sam Lacy  
R.E. Chair: Abbie Siddall and Margaret Grayden  
\*Mr. Boyer left Manhattan and Mr. Bhalla succeeded to the chair.

1969

Chair: Chander Bhalla  
Secretary: Yvonne Lacy  
Program Chair: Bettie Dale and Doris Grosh

Vice Chair: Sam Lacy  
Treasurer: Nathan Folland  
R.E. Chair: Abbie Siddall

1970

Chair: Bettie Dale  
Secretary: Anne Seaman  
Program Chair: Pat Weisenburger

Vice Chair: Gerald Miller  
Treasurer: Nathan Folland  
R.E. Chair: Martha Slack

1971

Chair: Bettie Dale  
Secretary: Ken Wilson  
Program Chair: Dorothy Miller

Vice Chair: Gerald Miller  
Treasurer: Thad Cowan  
R.E. Chair: Laura Folland and Berit Greechie

1972

Chair: Al Davis  
Secretary: Pat Caffey  
Program Chair: Nancy Perkins

Vice Chair: William Swegle  
Treasurer: Thad Cowan  
R.E. Chair: Anne Cowan

1973

Chair: Bettie Dale  
Secretary: Carolyn Kleier  
Program Chair: Jan and Cornelia Flora

Vice Chair: Jim Shanteau  
Treasurer: Bob Williams  
R.E. Chair: Larry Weaver

1974

Chair: Nathan Folland  
Secretary: Carl Willard  
Program Chair: Anne Weaver and Paul Psilos

Vice Chair: Anne Cowan  
Treasurer: Bob Stein  
R.E. Chair: Larry Weaver

1975

Chair: Pat Caffey  
Secretary: Margaret Sedlacek  
Program Chair: Enell Foerster and Phoebe Samelson

Vice Chair: Anne Cowan  
Treasurer: Bob Stein  
R.E. Chair: Martha Slack

1976

Chair: Abe Hussein  
Secretary: Roseanne Uhlarik  
Program Chair: Brock Dale

Vice Chair: Chris Banner  
Treasurer: Anne Middleton Weaver  
R.E. Chair: Bettie Dale

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1977

Chair: Anne Cowan  
Secretary: Stephanie Briggs  
Program Chair: Jan Flora

Vice Chair: Jim Shanteau  
Treasurer: Ron Downey  
R.E. Chair: Bettie Dale



Though a great many of the Fellowship members were and are associated with Kansas State University, others come from all walks of life: business people, contractors, writers (like the late David Hacker, above), government employees, Fort Riley personnel and their families, attorneys and public school teachers.



Helen Hostetter, a charter member of the Fellowship, was for many years a professor of journalism at KSU.

---

Chair: Anne Cowan

Vice Chair: Nate Folland and

Jim Quinlan

Secretary: Gayle Willard

Program Chair: Marianne Adams, David Hacker  
Grayden, Bettie Dale, Larry Weaver

Treasurer: Ron Downey

R.E.Chair: Margaret

#### 1979

Chair: Brock Dale

Secretary: Gayle Willard

Program Chair: Suzanne Converse  
and Cecil Miller

Vice Chair: Charlie Perkins

Treasurer: Sam Lacy

R.E.Chair: Natalya Hall

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#### 1980

Chair: David Hacker

Secretary: ?

Program Chair: ?

Vice Chair: ?

Treasurer: ?

R.E.Chair: None

#### 1981

Chair: David Hacker

Secretary: Cecil Miller

Program Chair: Sam Lacy, Charlie Perkins  
Anne Cowan and Ed Silver

Vice Chair: Roseanne Uhlarik

Treasurer: Nate Folland

R.E.Chair: None

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#### 1982

Chair: Sam Lacy

Secretary: Chander Bhalla, Jim Converse

Program Chair: Sylvia Beeman

Vice Chair: Brock Dale

Treasurer: Nate Folland

R.E.Chair: None

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#### 1983

Chair: Larry Weaver

Secretary: David Hacker

Program Chair: Sylvia Beeman

Vice Chair: Nancy Perkins

Treasurer: Rex Slack

R.E. Chair: Jane Welty

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#### 1984

Chair: Edith Hinrichs

Secretary: Becky Fender

Program Chair: Sam Lacy

Vice Chair: Larry Weaver

Treasurer: Bettie Dale

R..E. Chair: Sylvia Beeman

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#### 1985

Chair: Edith Hinrichs

Secretary: Betty Banner

Program Chair: Sam Lacy, Nate Folland  
Angel Bruner, Steve Johnson

Vice Chair: Larry Weaver

Treasurer: Bettie Dale

R.E.Chair: Charlotte Poston

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#### 1986

Chair: Brock Dale

Secretary: Tybel Miller

Program Chair: Sam Lacy, Dick Beeman  
Katherine Cox Gallagher

Vice Chair: Dave Deitch

Treasurer: Charley Kempthorne

R.E. Chair: Charlotte Poston

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#### 1987

Chair: Dave Deitch

Secretary: Betty Banner

Program Chair Sam Lacy

Vice Chair: Brock Dale

Treasurer: Anne Dryz

R.E. Chair: Cathy Hedge



Sylvia Beeman has been especially active in the Religious Education program for the children. Part-time artist and part-time social worker, she has also entertained the Fellowship a number of times as a story-teller.



Chloe and Irene Beeman. Their other sister, Naomi is now grown and living on her own in Chicago. Chloe is a sophomore at Manhattan High School and Irene is a student at the University of Kansas.



Nancy DuTeau, chairperson from 1989 to 1991.



1988

Chair: Brock Dale  
Vice Chair: Dorothy Miller  
Secretary: Sam Lacy  
Treasurer: Charles Harris  
Program Chair: Dan Swenson  
R.E. Chair: Cathy Hedge

1989

Chair: Nancy Duteau  
Vice Chair: Kerry Miller  
Secretary: Sam Lacy  
Treasurer: Stan Cox  
Program Chair: Charles Perkins  
R.E. Chair: Rotating Chair

1990

Chair: Nancy DuTeau  
Vice Chair: Dick Beeman  
Secretary: Dan Swenson  
Treasurer: Glenn Ferlemann  
Program Chair: Mary Beth Reese  
R.E. Chair: Larry Weaver/Sylvia Beeman

1991

Chair: Sam Lacy  
Vice Chair: Dick Beeman  
Secretary: Nancy Perkins and Bettie Dale  
Treasurer: Glen Ferlemann  
Program Chair: Sylvia Beeman  
R.E. Chair: Nancy DuTeau then Larry Weaver

1992

Chair: Beverley Earles  
Vice Chair: Dick Beeman  
Secretary: Nancy Perkins, Bettie Dale  
Treasurer: John Bunch  
Program Chair: Dan Swenson  
R.E. Chair: Bunch, Beeman, Stiefel, Weaver, Turner, Hinrichs

1993

Chair: Beverley Earles  
Vice Chair: John Bunch  
Secretary: Bettie Dale and Nancy Perkins  
Treasurer: Gwen Gieselmann  
Program Chair: Jim Mitchell  
R.E. Chair: Sylvia Beeman and Shawn Bunch

1994

Chair: Sylvia Beeman  
Vice Chair: John Bunch  
Secretary: Evelyn Frazier  
Treasurer: Dan Swenson, Gwen Gieselmann  
Program Chair: Kevyn Jacobs

June 1995/May 1996

Chair: Les Frazier  
Vice chair: Michael Oldfather  
Treasurer: Kathleen Oldfather  
Secretary: Sylvia Beeman  
Program chair: Dan Parcel  
RE chair: Cathy Hedge

June 1996/May 1997

Chair: Bernice Martin  
Vice chair: Michael Oldfather  
Treasurer: Kathleen Oldfather  
Secretary: Karen Burk-Caffey  
Program chair: Bob Patterson  
RE chair: Pat Embers

June 1997/May 1998

Chair: Bernice Martin  
Vice chair: Beverly Earles  
Treasurer: Larry Weaver  
Secretary: Evelyn Frazier  
Program chair: Bob Patterson  
RE chair: Pat Embers

June 1998/May 1999

Chair: Bob Patterson  
Vice chair: Michael Lambert  
Treasurer: Larry Weaver  
Secretary: Evelyn Frazier  
Program chair: Dan Swenson  
RE co-chairs: Cathy Hedge and Jennifer Bradford

June 1999/May 2000

Chair: Bob Patterson  
Vice chair: Kathleen Oldfather  
Treasurer: Dan Swenson  
Secretary: Marolyn Caldwell  
Program chair: Dick Beeman  
RE co-chairs: Cathy Hedge and Rene Miller

June 2000/May 2001

Chair: Kathleen Oldfather  
Vice chair: Tom Cohagan  
Treasurer: Dan Swenson  
Secretary: Marolyn Caldwell  
Program chair: Dick Beeman  
RE chair: Larry Weaver



John Bunch and Charley Kempthorne. John and his wife, Shawn, and their two sons were very active members until they moved to Atchison, Kansas, several years ago. Shawn helped organize and taught at the Oak Grove School when it was housed in our building. Charley Kempthorne joined the Fellowship with his wife, June, in 1983 because their two sons, then 8 and 4, complained that all the other kids at school went to church on Sunday morning instead of sitting around the living room reading newspapers.





*Left, Charter members (along with Millie Katz the only surviving ones) Phil and Jeune Kirmser in a recent photo. Jeune was raised as a Methodist. Phil was a Catholic until he was 12, when he decided he "had nothing to confess" and joined the Episcopalians because he wanted to sing in their choir. Millie Katz, the only other charter member still living, was the "driving force," according to Jeune, in their becoming Unitarians. They have two children, now grown, who grew up in the Fellowship. Phil is an emeritus professor at KSU; Jeune is retired from many years working as a writer of brochures for The Master Teacher. Since 1956, except when she was out of town, Jeune has attended, and kept watch on, every single meeting of the USD 383 School Board.*

### Charter members

Margaret Brayfield  
Arthur Brayfield  
Roma Eisenstark  
Abraham Eisenstark  
Carl Hausman  
Mr. Herrick  
Mrs Herrick  
John Hildebrand  
Verna Hildebrand  
Kimi Hisatsune  
Helen Hostetter  
Mildred P. Katz  
Jeune B. Kirmser  
Philip G Kirmser  
L.H. Koons

Genevieve Leaf  
Boris Leaf  
Frank McCormick  
Margaret McCormick  
Gerald Miller  
Cecil Miller  
John Mitchell  
Margaret Richards  
Bobbie Robinson  
Jack Robinson  
Geri Schipper  
Melvin Seiden  
Jackie Seiden

\*These are the members who were attending as of the charter date of April 28, 1957.



Brock Dale, the author, has been an active member of the UU Fellowship since 1957. He has served in nearly every capacity in the Fellowship during these years, most recently and presently as Historian. When we have one of our musical programs, Brock usually plays his violin. A native of Oklahoma, he is Emeritus Professor of Physics at Kansas State University, where he taught from 1957 to 1989. Since 1991 he and his wife, Bettie, have lived part of the year in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where they are members of the UU Fellowship there.

# Administration

## Current Executive Board Officers (June 2002/May 2003)

Chair: Pat Weisenberger.....	539-1811 <i>patw@ksu.edu</i>
Vice chair: Bernice Martin.....	587-9382
Secretary: Harriette Janke.....	539-0865 <i>ahjanke@ksu.edu</i>
Treasurer: Bob Hudgens.....	565-9797 <i>bhudgens@oznet.ksu.edu</i>
Religious Education: Cathy Hedge , co-chair.....	537-1101 <i>hedge@usd475.k12.ks.us</i>
Sylvia Beeman, co-chair.....	539-9369 <i>rbeeman@kscable.com</i>
Program: Michael Oldfather.....	537-3738 <i>mou812@ksu.edu</i>

## Committees and chairs

Building: Kathleen Oldfather  
Grounds: Shirley Hobrock  
Ministerial Relations: Jack Warren  
Publicity: Mike Lambert  
Social: Colina Stanton  
Membership and Welcoming: Barbara Hacker  
Music: Dick Beeman, chair  
Long Range Planning: Michael Oldfather  
Historians: Brock Dale and Charley Kempthorne  
Caring: Gwen Geiselman  
University Activities: Eric Banner  
Refreshment Coordinator: Shirley Hobrock  
Nominating: Doreen Shanteau

**Website:** *www.flinthills.com/~uufellow*

**Web Master:** *uumaster@iname.com*

**Listserv:** *ManhattanUUFellowship@yahoogroups.com*

**Coordinator--Newsletter, building scheduling, etc.:** Sue Turner, 539-3272; *uusue@aol.com*

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Rev. David Grimm has been our one-quarter time minister since 1994. He comes to Manhattan several times a month, is available for limited pastoral counseling, presents the program with a sermon the second Sunday each month and develops and conducts educational religious programs for adults.

David holds a BA in political science from Fordham University, and a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York. Prior to entering the ministry, David worked in hotel management at various Sheraton and Marriott properties in New York City, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Previous ministries include Mt. Kisco, NY; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Topeka, Kansas; as well as work as a chaplain at Luther Hospital in Wisconsin and a Religious Education Coordinator in New York.

David is married and has two children, Johann 15, and Hannah, 7. He and his wife, Pamela, live on a small farm near Burlingame, Kansas.



Reverend David E. Grimm

*Below, David with RE students.*



Sue Turner, *right*, works part-time as coordinator of the Fellowship. She gathers news and information for the monthly newsletter, which is distributed to friends and members; organizes the mailing list, the UU office and files, coordinates building use; handles clerical tasks for committees, members and the Executive Board.



*the  
Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship  
today  
in photographs*

# Programs



Our monthly newsletter *left*, mailed to all members and interested friends (including those thinking about becoming members), makes clear the variety of our programs. Typically, in order to satisfy a congregation of diverse viewpoints as to what a program should be, any given month's programs will consist of one conducted by a minister (our own or a visiting minister), a program or two featuring one of the arts, a program about some political or social issue presented often by a guest speaker from the community, or an informative program about something secular of broad interest, such as water rights in Western Kansas.



Usually, our quarter-time minister, Reverend David Grimm, presents one program a month. He also presents topics in religious studies programs one evening a month at the Fellowship and, starting this year, will be working with the children in RE. Often David's program will relate topical issues to the writings of early Unitarians like Ralph Waldo Emerson. David is famous for his ability to lead a fair, lively, and interesting discussion following his sermon.



Sometimes we have a visiting minister. Usually this minister is a Unitarian or of a similarly liberal faith. But not always: we have had programs presented by Baptists, Christian Fundamentalists, Muslims, Jews, and many others. At *left*, Rev. Eldon Epp, Chaplain at a local hospital and a Mennonite, presents a program. Visiting UU ministers have included Rev. Lisa Schwartz, *right*, from Topeka, Rev. Ron Knapp from Omaha, and of course, Rev. Charles Stephen from Lincoln.





Among the most popular of our programs are the "personal journeys," narratives of the spiritual development of other members of the congregation. The presenter at right is longtime member Brice Hobrock, who talked about his fundamentalist upbringing in Western Kansas and his gradual conversion to Unitarian-Universalism. Like Brice's talk, many of these personal religious journey talks are both humorous and inspiring.



Unitarians value ideas and discussion, and generally believe strongly that rational, honest, and open discussion of issues of any sort (religious, political, scientific, philosophical) can lead to changes in ideas and, thus, changes in behavior. In fact, one of the seven tenets of "What We Believe," printed on the back of each Sunday's program, is that "we strongly believe in and affirm...a free and responsible search for truth and meaning." Below, a current member and scientist, Dick Beeman, and a former member and scientist, Stan Cox, debate the merits of genetically-altered plants that become human food. The audience listens carefully and, of course, asks questions and contributes their own ideas.





It was a big step when Marolyn Caldwell joined our Fellowship a few years ago and began producing each Sunday a printed program all four pages of which are reproduced here. Before that we had an inadequately small and undetailed chalkboard, and often we had nothing at all.



Rev. Charles Stephen with his wife, Pat. Rev. Stephen, long-time pastor of the Lincoln, Nebraska, UU Church, has since 1961 come to Manhattan one or more times each year to address our group. For many years he was virtually our only contact with a real UU Minister. This photo was taken in 2001. Charles has since retired.



Fellowship members listen to a question by another member in the question period following the program. In the foreground, *left to right*, Bettie Dale, Dick Beeman, and Phoebe Samelson. Such question periods are much more than mere form but are really an integral part of our Fellowship life. Not infrequently, the interactive question period is the most interesting part of the program. It's not that the speaker is dull, but that the speaker's interaction with the members often raises incisive questions, and thus everyone's level of insight and interest.





# Coffee and talk

There's an old Unitarian-Universalist joke that says a UU died and went up toward Heaven. Half-way up he saw a sign that "Heaven this way," and another, "Talk about Heaven, that way."

And so he went that way.

The point is that UU's not only love to talk, but they believe in talk as a way of finding truth. That's why we have, like many Unitarian-Universalist congregations, a question period following nearly every program. However, the program, in whatever phase, ends faithfully on the stroke of noon (our single rigid theological principle!), but the talk can go on for much longer, informally, over coffee and refreshments. Here Dick Beeman and Bob Hudgens take a break from their chat following a program to smile for the camera.



Tom Cohagan and Michael Oldfather chat after a recent program. Tom was chair of the Fellowship in 2001/2002, and Michael has been active in several capacities, especially in spearheading fundraising for the recent large addition to our building.



An unidentified visitor chats with Rev. David Grimm after a program. For eight years (1994-2002) we shared David with the Topeka UU Fellowship, but now, though he is still quarter-time here, he has no other congregation, and he is devoting the other three-quarters of his time to writing.



# Music



Larry Weaver (*left*) leading us in song. Although Larry insists that we Unitarians are among the best singers around, some of the credit for sounding so well probably ought to go to architect and longtime member Rex Slack and his imaginative acoustical touch. Rex and his wife, Martha, moved away several years ago and now live in Muskogee, Oklahoma.



*Right*, Colina and Stewart Stanton sing along with the rest of the congregation. We regularly use two songbooks: the standard UU hymnal (*top, right*), and a book of folk songs, **Rise Up Singing**, at *left*.



When Marolyn Caldwell or Syble Kuder isn't accompanying us on the piano, Michael Oldfather, *right*, does so with his guitar. Michael also leads both of our choral groups, the men's and women's, *opposite page upper right*, and the men's group, *lower, right*. The songs we sing range from *Red River Valley* to traditional Christian hymns, though the words often have a Unitarian-Universalist twist to them.





# Passages



*Left*, while other members and friends look on, young Thomas Oldfather is led by his father and mother, and Cathy Hedge holds her infant son, Joey, to be dedicated as a UU by visiting minister Rev. Charles Stephen. Thomas and Joey are teenagers now (2002). One of the joys of our community is watching each other's children grow up.



Member Pat Embers leads a UU group in a ritual cleansing based on American Indian ceremonies to mark the adulthood of 18-year-old Irene Beeman, *left*. The ceremony was held outside the Fellowship building at Oak Grove in May, 2001. The group sat in a circle and listened to readings and reminiscences of Irene by others. It is common for UUs to devise ceremonies that fit their own beliefs and priorities.



Margaret Grayden, daughter of longtime members Margaret and Charles Grayden, was married several years ago in the Oak Grove building. There have been other marriages as well as re-dedication marriage ceremonies and some funerals, too, including the ones of both Charles and Margaret Grayden.





Plaque on the south wall of the former sanctuary, commemorating those deceased members.

The Memorial Garden is located on the hilltop above the Fellowship. It is a quiet place for contemplation with a panoramic view of the Kansas River valley below.



The grave and marker of Charles Grayden, one of the earliest members, and the first to be buried in the Garden. For many years, Charlie was in charge of the meditation music for each Sunday's program.



# *Breaking bread together*



Gwen Geiselman and Nancy Perkins do some kitchen work following one of our parties. This photo was taken in the old kitchen, which had its shortcomings. Our new kitchen is not only stylish but fully equipped.

The phrase, “breaking bread together,” with its religious and ritualistic connotations are not formalized in our Fellowship but nevertheless, eating together is something we Unitarian-Universalists do a lot.

Hardly a month goes by when there isn’t a picnic, a dinner or a party. One of the most popular activities is dinner in members’ homes, sometimes called “Circle Dinners.” A signup sheet is passed around and anyone interested can select whether they want to be a host or a guest. The Social Chairperson then divides the signers into small groups of eight or fewer, and also assigns a host for each group. The host calls each guest and asks the guest to bring something for the meal to be held at the host’s house.

These dinners are a wonderful way to get further acquainted with each other. They are usually held on a Saturday night. The next day at Fellowship the building rings with happy talk of the pleasant time the night before.



At a Unitarian-Universalist dinner in her honor, a delighted Dorothy Miller confronts her 80th birthday cake as Charlie Perkins looks on.



*Left to right, Marian Quinlan, Nate Folland, Franz Samelson, Phoebe Samelson, and Larry Weaver at an Easter brunch at the Fellowship. We do not have an Easter service as such, but instead gather for the fellowship of eating a special meal together.*



*Charlie Shrimplin, standing, center, Kevyn Jacobs, Shawn Bunch and Michael Mastanardi at UU picnic held at Tuttle Creek Canyon, probably about 1994. All of these members have since moved away.*

## *Interest groups*

Women's group meets the third Thursday evening of each month evening at the Fellowship or in a member's home to share fellowship and ideas. *Left to right,* Marolyn Caldwell, Sylvia Blanding, Maria Paukelis, Barbara Hacker, Gwen Geiselman, Bettie Dale, Margaret Grayden (now deceased), June Kempthorne, and Marian Quinlan.



The women's meetings are pot-lucks and informal discussions, though sometimes there is a specific topic and even, occasionally, an outside speaker. Discussions range from the UU Fellowship to politics and current events, and sometimes something personal comes up and members act as a support group. More recently, meetings are held in members' homes. Everyone brings a sandwich and the host provides a salad, drink and dessert. Usually from as few as four to as many as twenty-two come. All ages are welcome.





UU Men's group meets every other month. It is usually well attended. The men's protocol is a little more formal than the women's. The men sit in a circle and each contributes to the discussion, which is on specific topic. Refreshments are served and, after a couple of hours, everybody goes home.

A recent meeting was mostly a vigorous and friendly exchange of views about the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington just a few days before.



Les Frazier started and organized the Men's Group in 2001. The current facilitator is John Schmidt.



Carl Hinrichs, Chris Banner, Jack Warren and Charley Kempthorne (not pictured) meet in City Park on a weekday for lunch and a meeting of their unofficial "Steering Committee," which for the last several years has met monthly for lunch "for no good reason" according to one of the founders.



# Working Together

Once or twice a year a "Work Day" is organized to do some of housekeeping and small repair and maintenance tasks. Usually held on a Saturday morning and afternoon, volunteers weed flowerbeds, prune shrubs and trees, haul away debris and paint or do anything else the Fellowship can do for itself.



Sylvia Blanding (left) and Harriet Jahnke (right) tend to the flower beds.



Kathleen Oldfather, left, was the organizer of last year's (2001) workday. Shirley Hobrock was the organizer of this year's.

Michael Oldfather and Brice Hobrock stand for a picture after they have loaded a truck with prunings that Charley Kempthorne (not pictured) hauled away to his farm to dump in a field where it became a bird and wildlife habitat for the winter.



Left, Bob Hudgens rolls on the paint at a recent work day while June Kempthorne, right, cuts in with a brush. This workday was very effective in repainting all the children's RE rooms.



Mike Lambert hard at work, but still smiling.



Carl Hinrichs, Rita Ross, and Shirley Hobrock take a break from painting one of the three Religious Education (RE) rooms.



*Above, left, Groundbreaking for the new addition, Sunday, Dec. 9, 2001. Chairperson Tom Cohagan makes a few remarks while Prairie Star District Representative Liz Franklin and Reverend David Grimm look on, above left, and break the ground, above, right. Mike Wilson of Arch One, Topeka, was the architect for the \$450,000 addition and remodeling. Doug Marker of Marker Construction Company was the general contractor. The project was completed well ahead schedule. It's worth noting and of some comfort that one member of the framing crew was a Unitarian (and the editors' son), Rip Kempthorne. The new addition is to be dedicated on Oct. 20, 2002. (Photo courtesy of Doug Walter.)*



# *The Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan*

*481 Zeandale Road, Manhattan, Kansas*



Probably no church or fellowship in the area has so beautiful and ecologically various a site as ours. The woods are explored by enthusiastic RE students during or after a class, and the path up to the top of the hill and down the other side is walked by members and friends of all ages. Once a property of the school district, used first as a school and later for school district storage, our Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship is on a hillside tract of 2.6 acres.