

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KEWEENAW UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

In 1961 a group of committed people formed a Unitarian Fellowship in the Copper Country in order to have a religious education program for their children, as well as to have a presence in the community. However, as the children grew up, the group dwindled and ultimately was dissolved in late 1969.

Fast forward to 1984! Carol Hepokoski, a recent graduate of Starr King Theological Seminary who was currently serving a Unitarian Universalist fellowship in Minnesota, visited Houghton with her folk-singer husband. She offered to speak about Unitarian Universalism at an open meeting, to be held in the Michigan Technological University Faculty Lounge.

Radio announcements were heard by many former UU members and others who expressed interest. About 45 people attended the presentation, which resulted in a consensus to pursue the re-formation of a new Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in the Copper Country.

Rev. Hepokoski reported our interest to the Unitarian Universalist Association. They were sufficiently impressed to offer to subsidize quarterly visits by her to assist us in the formation of the new Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Between her visits, we met twice monthly with services conducted by members and other visiting speakers, in a room at the MTU Nursery School, holding Sunday School for the children in one corner of the room. It was cozy!

A year later, in September, 1985, we were formally accepted as a member congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association, with 41 charter members. The next step in our journey was an arrangement with Meadville Lombard Theological Seminary in Chicago, associated with the UUA, to occasionally have senior students come to conduct a service. This was the impetus for Meadville to formally establish a program of nine monthly visits with the same student traveling to Houghton once monthly during the school year. It was a serendipitous match, giving both the students and our congregation, a feeling for a more sustained ministry, and exposing us to the wide diversity of religious views shared in our denomination.

As we outgrew the MTU Nursery site, we moved to the newly built BHK Child Development Center, for which we helped to raise the funding, and where we have continued to meet.

The year 2004, was a watershed year for The Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist Church, when we called our first full-time minister. The Reverend Sydney Morris had served us part-time for 2 ½ years. Under her capable leadership, our group has grown to more than 80 members. The Religious Education program and other committees provide opportunities for growth, fellowship, and fun.

Rev. Morris leaves us in September for a ministry in Eugene Oregon. We enter into a transition year with gratitude and excitement

We invite you to join us in our worship and fellowship, as we joyfully continue the journey together!