

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ROLLA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

On April 26, 1965, seventeen people met in a Rolla restaurant to organize the Rolla Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. At the next meeting they agreed that "the purpose of the Fellowship is to bring religious liberals into closer acquaintanceship and cooperation in the pursuit of truth regardless of its source." The Fellowship has no required creed or dogma; one becomes a member by being in sympathy with the statement of purpose and signing the membership book.

The group met in a series of rented locations before purchasing Fellowship House at 608 East 11th Street in the Fall of 1982. Aided by a low-interest loan and the generous help of many past members from across the country, the Fellowship was able to hold a mortgage-burning celebration in the Fall of 1988. Major redecoration was completed in 1991.

From its beginning the Fellowship has been a part of the thousand or so churches and fellowships that constitute the national Unitarian Universalist Association which has its roots in New England Congregationalism and 18th Century Universalism. The Rolla Fellowship has been an active participant in denominational affairs, providing board members and officers for the St. Louis Area UU Council and the Central Midwest District of the UUA.

The Fellowship has also played an active role in the Rolla community. It has provided meeting space for many organizations. It helped the Local Organization for Various Emergencies (L.O.V.E.) get started. And, it has provided contributions of people, time, and money to various organizations.

The Fellowship is lay led. The Sunday morning meetings provide a forum where members can join with featured speakers and discussion leaders to explore ethical, social, human, and religious values. Adopted in 1978, the following statement^{*}, used as a "closing circle" expresses some of the values of the Rolla Unitarian Universal-

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ist Fellowship - "As Unitarian Universalists we cherish: the importance of individual thinking, respect for the convictions of others, the warmth of caring, the perspective of humor, the dreams of the mystic and the methods of the scientist, a way of life that avoids harm and scorn, the quest for justice through peaceful methods, a religion that is broad and encompassing, personal yet universal."

* adapted from a statement from the UU Church of Palo Alto.

SKETCH OF THE ROLLA UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

