

# The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Established 1842

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION:

2017-2018 Operating Budget: \$990,636

Adult Members: 773

Church School Enrollment: 163

Contributing Households: 464

## CHURCH STAFF:

### SENIOR MINISTER

The Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Reverend Dena McPhetres

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Jean Johnson

### DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Beryl Aschenberg

### YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Deb Solis

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Lynne Jacoby

### COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Angelica Dudenhoefer (thru May 1, 2018)

### OFFICE COORDINATOR

Shari Wright (December—present)

Tracy Smith (thru November 15, 2017)

## MEMBER:

- Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)
- MidAmerica Region, UUA (MAR)
- Common Ground of Southeastern Wisconsin
- Southeastern Wisconsin Unitarian
- Universalist Council (SEWUUC)
- Interchange, Inc.
- Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee
- Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICA)

## CHURCH STAFF CONTINUED:

### LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alissa Rhode

### RESIDENT ARTIST

Jack Forbes Wilson

### CHOIR DIRECTOR

Tristan Strelitzer

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Lillian Schley

### NURSERY COORDINATOR

Lindsey Porter

### PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR

Mariah Groshek

### FACILITIES MANAGER

Tom Schroeder

### FACILITIES ASSISTANTS

Jim Spice/Andre Singley

### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE WORKER

Art Sims

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Building our Vision for the Future

*Create a compelling vision, one that takes people to a new place, and then translate that vision into a reality. - Warren Bennis*

This year was all about our Ends! I was so heartened to see 70+ of you at our BCBC Ends Reveal on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Good grief who could have ever guessed that the weather would act more like mid-January. Despite truly despicable forms of precipitation, you came to get a look at the Ends the Board of Trustees produced at its January retreat. This after 250 of you participated in our Visioning workshops in the Fall and provided us was tons of data points to examine and discern.

Here's one wordle we created to symbolize the congregation's wishes:



For a look at the full result of all our work this year, please see page 5 what your Board of Trustees heard clearly was that the focus areas of Outreach, Social Justice, and Community are priorities for this congregation. Through the lens of organizing things by *Within*, *Among*, and *Beyond*; those priorities came into focus. With the assistance of our consultant from Unity Consulting, the Ends were created.

These Ends are BIG and AUDACIOUS. They are supposed to be long term goals, to be evaluated (but not necessarily completed) in 3-5 years. In the coming year the church staff, along with their lay leadership teams, will operationalize the Ends and produce strategies for the Board to review. The Board will concentrate on figuring out the metrics of measurement for the Ends, so next year you can hear how we're doing on putting our dreams into action. We've created the "what we want to be" in our Ends; now we will work on the "how to do it" and "are we doing it?" pieces of this complex puzzle.

In a final pitch, as it takes a village to raise a child it requires a community to bring a vision to life. Please consider how you can join with your fellow First Church members to create our future with your gifts of time, talent, or treasure. Remember: the world is run by those who show up.

In Service,  
Julie Bock, Congregational President 2016-2018

# ENDS STATEMENTS 2018

We, the people of First Church, build community where we:

1. Value, develop, and celebrate the gifts that come from authentic connection across difference, emphasizing racial, ethnic, and generational difference.
  2. Recognize power differences and challenge injustice where it arises.
  3. Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice.
  4. Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.
  5. Promote Unitarian Universalism and our shared values in the world.
  6. Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation.
  7. Create communal experiences celebrating our interconnectedness.
  8. Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us.
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## VALUES

At the heart of First Church, we value:

WONDER

AUTHENTIC CONNECTION

LOVE

JUSTICE

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We gather together to:

Nurture the Spirit. Engage the Mind. Inspire Action.

# 2016-2017 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

## Overview

In its oversight of the financial condition of the church, the Finance Committee:

- Monitors financial performance to determine if it is in compliance with the budgeted performance;
- Analyzes financial data and develops alternatives and strategies when necessary;
- Prepares the budget for each new fiscal year;
- Serves as a resource for the various committees and the Board concerning financial matters.

The Finance Committee closely monitors the financial results of our church and keeps the Board of Trustees and the congregation informed of any significant developments. We generate projections to help forecast the financial condition of the church over the near and long term and to assist with the formation and maintenance of a balanced budget. We develop strategies to help improve the financial status of the church as needed, while trying to fulfill the diverse goals established for the church and meeting the needs of the various committees, groups and members of the congregation.

I would like to thank the committee members: Tom Briscoe (Treasurer), Al Jaberg, Gordon Mueller, Trent Muller, Ron Oshima and Laura White, and staff liaisons Jean Johnson for their many hours of hard work and valued input. Without their dedicated involvement, this committee could not accomplish its important responsibilities.

## Income and Expenses

### July 1, 2016 — June 30, 2017

The following page shows the budget and final income statement for the 2016-2017 church year. The first section shows the income while the second section shows the operating expenses for the year. Ideally, the income should balance the expenses to yield an Income Net of Operations of \$0 or a balanced budget. The Finance Committee projected a negative balance of -\$135,200 for the church year due to the continuing transition to new Senior Minister. Final numbers show that a negative balance of \$125,478 – nearly \$10,000 better than expected.

This year, as well as last year, both operating income and expenses came in below budget.

Income – total variance was -\$42,865:

Pledges and other contributions were down 5% (-\$13,721)

The art auction was canceled (-\$10,000)

The apartment income was up 78% (+\$12,505)

Expense – total variance was -\$52,586:

Human Resources expense were down 3% (-\$24,659)

Capital Maintenance was down 36% (-\$12,242)

Non-recurring expenses were down 48% (-18,336)

Extraordinary Income – unexpected and unusual income – saved the bottom line for the year. The improving economy provided an increase of \$31,036 in our investments and a very successful 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fundraiser generated an additional \$185,746. Including the extraordinary income, the year finished in the black by \$91,721. Note, however, the future will require increasing pledges to achieve a balanced budget.

## FUSM 2016-2017 INCOME & EXPENSE HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

	'16 - '17	'16 - '17	Variance	
ITEM	BUDGET	FINAL	Amount	%
<b>Contributions</b>				
Pledges	703,692	670,232	(33,460)	-5%
Other Contributions	34,000	29,739	(4,261)	-13%
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>737,692</b>	<b>699,971</b>	<b>(37,721)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Transfer from Fund Balance</b>	<b>33,977</b>	<b>26,735</b>	<b>(7,242)</b>	<b>-21%</b>
<b>Activity Income</b>				
Feast for Funds	25,000	27,416	2,416	10%
R E Fees	9,000	9,005	5	0%
Art Auction	10,000	-	(10,000)	-100%
Other Sources	10,100	7,757	(2,343)	-23%
<b>Total Activity Income</b>	<b>54,100</b>	<b>44,178</b>	<b>(9,922)</b>	<b>-18%</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>17,000</b>	<b>16,516</b>	<b>(484)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Apartment Income Net of Expenses</b>	<b>16,110</b>	<b>28,615</b>	<b>12,505</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$858,879</b>	<b>\$816,014</b>	<b>(\$42,865)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Human Resources</b>				
Salaries, Wages & Minister Housing Allowance	545,066	531,707	(13,359)	-2%
Professional Expenses	25,218	21,760	(3,458)	-14%
Insurance - Health	71,769	68,917	(2,852)	-4%
Retirement Savings - all staff	44,347	39,180	(5,167)	-12%
Payroll Taxes	26,754	25,023	(1,731)	-6%
Other	7,900	9,808	1,908	24%
<b>Total Human Resources</b>	<b>721,054</b>	<b>696,395</b>	<b>(24,659)</b>	<b>-3%</b>
<b>Budgeted Contributions</b>	<b>22,881</b>	<b>22,469</b>	<b>(413)</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b>Building Expenses</b>	<b>77,250</b>	<b>71,937</b>	<b>(5,313)</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Basic Operations</b>	<b>64,468</b>	<b>64,755</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>7,050</b>	<b>5,392</b>	<b>(1,658)</b>	<b>-24%</b>
<b>Committees</b>	<b>29,225</b>	<b>38,972</b>	<b>9,747</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Extra Operations</b>				
Capital Maintenance	33,977	21,735	(12,242)	-36%
Non-recurring Expenses	38,173	19,837	(18,336)	-48%
<b>Total Extra Operations</b>	<b>72,150</b>	<b>41,572</b>	<b>(30,578)</b>	<b>-42%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$994,078</b>	<b>\$941,492</b>	<b>-\$52,586</b>	<b>-5.29%</b>
<b>INCOME NET OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>-\$135,199</b>	<b>-\$125,478</b>	<b>\$9,721</b>	<b>-7%</b>
<b>Extraordinary Income</b>				
Gain/Loss on Investment	\$0	\$31,036		
175th Anniversary	\$0	\$185,746		
<b>EXTRAORDINARY INCOME</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$216,783</b>		
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-\$135,199</b>	<b>\$91,305</b>		

## Investment Report

Investments are made according to the First Church Investment Policy Statement which states:

- First Church should maintain an amount equal to the safety net (15% of total budgeted expenses) in cash and/or certificates of deposit with a maturity of less than or equal to one year.
- A second amount, equal to the safety net, should be invested in cash and/or certificates with a maturity of less than or equal to 3 years.
- Any additional cash and the Memorial Trust Fund may be invested in the UUA Common Endowment Fund or a mutual fund that has maintained a Morningstar rating of at least four stars for at least the prior three years that has a ratio of bonds and equity similar to the UUA Common Endowment Fund ratio of bonds to equity.

First Church currently has 3 CD's valued at \$308,339. This money satisfies the safety net of 15% of budgeted expenses as well as the additional 15% to mature in less than 3 years. The remaining funds in the General Fund as well as the Memorial Trust Fund are invested in the UU Common Endowment Fund which is managed to approximate 60% bonds and 40% equities.

The UUA Common Endowment Fund has a return on investment of 13.8% for the YTD and 4.6%/year for the last 3 years;-Landmark CU's of 1.14% fixed for 2 years, and Brewery CU of 1.35% for 2 years. Money Market rates at Associated Bank vary but are low, around 0.17%.

## Balance Sheet

**June 30, 2017**

The following page shows the assets and liabilities at the end of the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 church years.

The total assets have increased almost 12% during the church year for a total of \$1,032,307. The increase was primarily driven by increased dividends (\$31,036) and the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fundraiser (\$185,746).

The assets of the church are held in several types of funds:

1. Restricted Funds are established in accordance with the wishes of the donor.
  - Morter Fund – These funds are designated to sponsor seminars on individual responsibility
2. Memorial Trust Fund – This fund contains unspecified bequests. Money placed in the fund can be expended or borrowed against only by a super majority of the congregation. The Finance Committee manages it. A fixed percentage of the fund's assets provide quarterly income to the church's operations.
3. Designated Funds are created by the board for a specific purpose
  - Capital Maintenance Reserve – designated for capital improvements
4. Unrestricted Funds - This fund is the amount retained after payment of expenses or the allocation to designated funds. It increases during fiscal years in which there is an operating surplus and decreases during years in which there is an operating deficit. For fiscal security, the Board has adopted a policy of maintaining a balance in this fund that is equal to or greater than 15% of the operating expenses for the most recent fiscal year. If the balance drops below this 15% level, the restoration of the fund becomes a fiscal priority.



ASSETS				
			June 30, 2016	June 30, 2017
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>				
	Cash - BMO Harris		\$65,180	\$0
	Cash - Associated		\$24,665	\$17,980
	Scrip Business Savings - BMO Harris		\$2,075	\$0
	Scrip Business Savings - Associated		\$101	\$2,564
	Money Manager - BMO Harris		\$82,422	\$0
	Money Manager - Associated		\$100	\$105,209
	Apartment Working Capital		\$1,000	\$1,000
	Prepaid Expenses		\$3,620	\$4,845
	<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>\$179,164</b>	<b>\$131,599</b>
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>				
	Memorial Trust Fund - UUCEF		\$301,785	\$325,668
	Oikocredit USA		\$10,616	\$10,616
	CD-Brewery CU		\$102,794	\$103,717
	CD-Landmark CU		\$103,340	\$204,622
	General Fund - UUCEF		\$225,050	\$256,086
	<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>\$743,585</b>	<b>\$900,709</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>			<b>\$922,749</b>	<b>\$1,032,307</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>				
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>				
	Deferred Pledges		\$19,243	\$42,218
	Wish List		\$900	
	Apartment Security Deposit		\$4,474	\$3,486
	YRUU Account & Mission Trip Savings		\$6,815	\$7,569
	Prepaid RE Fees & Silent Retreat		\$2,673	\$7,922
	Payroll & Pension Deduction Payable		\$1,986	\$12,669
	Accounts Payable		\$22,165	\$5,939
	Sabbatical Accrual		\$20,000	\$20,000
	<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b>\$78,255</b>	<b>\$99,803</b>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>				
	Morter Fund - Donor Restricted		\$84,319	\$79,319
	Memorial Trust Fund		\$301,785	\$325,668
	<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>		<b>\$386,104</b>	<b>\$404,987</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>				
	Unrestricted Fund Balance		\$537,095	\$375,768
	Net Income		-\$160,785	\$91,305
	Capital Maintenance Fund		\$82,079	\$60,445
	<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>		<b>\$458,389</b>	<b>\$527,517</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>			<b>\$922,748</b>	<b>\$1,032,308</b>

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is charged with nominating members for the Standing Committees of the Board. These committees include: Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee, Personnel Committee and Finance Chair.

The members of Nominating Committee, in line with a request from the Board of Trustees two years ago, have continued to participate in Common Ground's training on how to conduct one-on-one relational meetings with members of the congregation. This year the six members of Nominating Committee conducted approximately 40 one-on-one meetings. We found this process to be very valuable in community building, uncovering talents and interests of members, and hearing their thoughts on lay leadership. In an unofficial process, we also shared names of members who were willing to be referred and whose interests we thought could be of service to the Membership Development Coordinator, Lynne Jacoby, and the Director of Administration, Jean Johnson, so they could take advantage of our findings as well. Nominating Committee considers these meetings helpful/essential for our work and intends to continue the practice.

In making recommendations for positions, Nominating Committee considers factors such as skills, demographics, and diversity needed in each committee.

Nominating Committee members this year in addition to myself were: Beth Bender, Jo Ann Bishop, Kathy Porter, Joe Schuller, Don Weimer, and Jean Johnson staff liaison. We offer deep gratitude to those many generous and talented members who have responded to the call of leadership.

Patricia Witt, chair

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee reviewed and updated the Personnel Policies this year. They also reviewed updated job descriptions and the benefits for the staff.

Thank you to Sarah Stehly, Amanda Panciera, and Cheryl Maranto for sharing their time and expertise.

Nancy Spransy, Chair

## THE LU KRUG GIFT ACCEPTANCE TEAM

The Lu Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT) was formed in September 2017 to make recommendations to the Board on the allocation and use of the generous \$850,000 bequest from former member Lu Krug. KGAT's members are: Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom, Director of Administration Jean Johnson, Elizabeth Lentini (chair), Holly Patzer, Lianna Bishop, David Becker and Gordon Mueller.

In March 2018 the Board approved KGAT's first recommendation, an overall allocation of the bequest among short-term, mid-term and long-term needs, as follows:

- 30% (\$255,000) for short-term needs (supporting our operating budgets and capital maintenance over the next seven years);
- 50% (\$425,000) for medium-term needs (funding visionary programmatic initiatives to implement our ends over the next 1 – 8 years); and
- 20% (\$170,000) for long-term needs (e.g., Memorial Trust Fund)

In March the Board also approved KGAT's recommendation to fund three initiatives for a one-year trial period from medium-term monies:

- Four choral scholars to support and uplift our choir and deepen our communal experience of inspiration and transformation in our worship services;
- A part-time social justice intern to support First Church social justice initiatives; and
- Equipment and technology to provide live streaming (and full video archives) of our Sunday services to broaden access to our services and promote Unitarian Universalism.

Going forward, KGAT will utilize a two-step application process offering at least two funding "rounds" (2018-19 and 2019-20). Full details will be available on our website and the Member's Table by May 30.

Members interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to work in collaboration with a staff member and an existing committee or task force working in the relevant subject matter area. What ideas do YOU have to make a difference at First Church?

# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES: June 4, 2017

## **I. Call to Order**

Congregation President Julie Bock called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. after a congregational quorum was achieved. Don Weimer lit the chalice. Maria Dorsey and Michelle Naples acted as Recording Secretary.

## **II. Approval of Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting**

Motion of approval by Kathy Porter. Seconded by Carolyn Manning. Motion passed.

## **III. Remarks from the President**

Julie remarked that the Board of Trustees traditionally holds the Annual Meeting in May per the bylaws; however, because of scheduling conflicts the Board took action to move the meeting to June.

The theme for this year is “We are on our way!” We have welcomed and settled a new Senior minister. We have joyfully celebrated the church’s 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have increased our visibility on social justice issues. Plans for the coming year include creating a vision to accompany our mission statement, creating new “ends” (goals) of how we want to move through the world, and continuing to work on social justice visibility. The congregation will be involved in the creation of the vision. The Board will work with a consultant over the summer to begin this work.

## **IV. Nominating Committee Report**

Jo Ann Bishop reported that the six members of the committee conducted 80 one-on-one relational meetings in the past year. There is a need for ongoing training as new members join committees.

Jo Ann thanked the retiring members (Gordie Mueller and Bronze Quinton).

Sharon DePue moved to approve the slate of nominees, including Mark Bishop, Omega Burckhardt, and Jeremy Koenen for three (3) year terms on the Board of Trustees. Connie Georgenson seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

In response to a comment by Rod DePue about the potential appearance of nepotism, Jo Ann described the process of how she recused herself from discussions about Mark Bishop’s nomination for the Board. She shared that Mark’s name had been on the list of potential members for years, and that the Committee tries to prepare a balanced slate of nominees on the basis of gender, skills, years of membership and other factors. Mark was unaware that he was being considered, was invited by someone else from the committee to serve as a Board member and was surprised when he received the call.

Bronze Quinton moved to approve the slate of nominees, including Beth Bender and Kathy Porter, for three (3) year terms on the Nominating Committee. Seconded by Bruce Wiggins. Passed unanimously.

The Committee Chairs for the three Board committees include: Holly Patzer for the Income Opportunity Committee; Al Jaberg and Noreen Gilbertson for the Finance Committee; and Nancy Spransy for the Personnel Committee.

Julie thanked the retiring members of the Board of Trustees (Don Weimer, Dale Skaggs, and Sally Lewis) for their service and introduced all the Board members.

## **V. Financial Condition Report**

Noreen Gilbertsen, Finance Committee co-chair, presented the financial condition report. She introduced the committee and welcomed the new members. The role of the Finance Committee is to monitor the current financials, analyze financial data and strategies, prepare the next year’s budget, and serve as a resource to the Board and Committees.

Last year (2015-16) was the second year of the transition. Net income was challenging as income was down and expenses were up. The balance sheet was also down.

Highlights from this year (2016-17) include establishment of a goal to achieve financial sustainability within seven (7) years. Gordie Mueller prepared a predictive model to monitor progress towards goal. Our investment policy was revised this year and includes 30 percent of budget in cash or CD’s. As of April 30, 2017, the balance sheet is up \$146,000 in large part due to the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The budget for next year (2017-18) includes an increase in income of 1 percent, assuming a pledge increase of 3 percent. However, income will increase if pledges come in higher. Expenses are expected to be down slightly. Overall net income is expected to increase by about eight percent.

Additional information is provided in the Annual Report.

## **VI. Stewardship Report**

Stewardship Council Chair Tim Greene presented the Stewardship Report. As of July 2016, Stewardship transitioned from a committee to a council to allow more people to be involved with a lesser time commitment. The Stewardship Council includes such fundraising activities as the Pledge Drive, Feast for Funds, and Heritage Society.

The 2017-18 estimated pledge forecast is \$718,826 as of June 4, 2017. This pledge forecast will impact the 2017-18 budget favorably.

Tim thanked all Council members, Pledge Team members, Heritage Society members, Feast for Funds members, and staff.

## **VII. 175th Re-Cap**

Pete Koneazny provided a review of the various activities in the past year to commemorate our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the initial gathering and official chartering of our church. We have received four plaques honoring our anniversary, including from the City, State, Unitarian Universalist West, and the Milwaukee Historical Society. Informative blog articles by Jim Marten about our history are available in printed form.

Dale Skaggs reported on the updated numbers of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign. 213 members and friends responded with joy and generosity in raising \$206,915.

Dale ended by thanking the members of the 175<sup>th</sup> fundraising team.

## **VIII. Remarks from Associate Minister**

Reverend Dena McPhetres provide an overview of activities in her focus areas during the past year, including addition of pastoral care providers, and initiation of a reception team, shawl ministry, and two new affinity groups. Due to declining population, new registrations for the Chalice Circle program have been put on hiatus. Reverend Dena will pull together small team in winter/spring to revision small group ministry.

The Social Justice Council focused on exploring ministry of accompaniment and social justice as spiritual development. The Immigration Action Group embarked on discernment process about whether to become sanctuary church, a process in which the congregation will be invited to participate.

Reverend Dena reiterated her love for the congregation and feelings of joy and privilege to serve with colleagues, and pride in the congregation for showing up and allowing to be transformed.

She asked the congregation to respond to a pledge that we will be with Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom in the year ahead, to which the congregation responded, "We will."

## **IX. Associate Minister's Sabbatical Plan**

Reverend Dena reported on her upcoming sabbatical during the time period August 1, 2017 through Jan 1, 2018. Her plan for her sabbatical includes: rest, reflection, and renewal. Her last day in the office will be July 28, 2017. There will be farewell and returning receptions.

The church has hired an Assistant Sabbatical Minister, Sara Goodman, at 15 hours per week to cover the essential parts of the work, including preaching one time per month starting August 6, meeting with the Social Justice Council, and providing pastoral care.

Reverends Dena and Jennifer shared parts of the covenant that they have been building with each other over the past year. Reverend Dena gave a stone heart to Reverend Jennifer as a symbolic gesture of entrusting the heart of congregation to Reverend Jennifer's care and the knowledge that she will be held by love and with love of the congregation in so doing.

## **X. Remarks from the Senior Minister**

Reverend Jennifer shared that it has been her honor and joy to spend this first year with us as Senior Minister, especially during our 175th Anniversary year. She has had four priorities during this first year. Worship has been one priority, with highlights including the Soul Matters theme worship, the new worship associates program, and an increase in attendance of 15 percent compared with last year. A second priority is staff teams; staff transitions have presented the opportunity to look at structure. A third priority is the Board of Trustees relationship. Next year we will dive deep into the ends. Stewardship is the final priority. We achieved our five percent pledge increase target and are well on our way to a sustainable future.

Reverend Jennifer will establish new priorities for next year.

## **XI. New Business (Comments from the Congregation)**

- Bruce Wiggins shared that about 25 percent of members have participated in at least one social justice activity this year. He reiterated that the Social Justice Council is working on exploring social justice as spiritual development and invites the congregation to participate in thinking about what this means. He recognized and thanked the participants in social justice committees and action groups.
- Janet Nortom remarked that First Church ought to be paying its full dues at all levels of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Julie responded that we are paying at a similar level to last year, but not at the requested level. We have not yet achieved the goal of full funding. Noreen added that our UUA contribution last year was \$32,880 (see page 6 of the Annual Report). The Board of Trustees makes the decision about what percent to share.
- Terry Wiggins asked about the resolution passed in 2013 to divest church finances from fossil fuels. Julie requested that the Finance Committee address this question in a future Chanticleer article. Noreen Gilbertsen responded that the Finance Committee is aware of the resolution. Other than CD's, we invest in UUA which has the same policy as our church.
- Omega Burckhardt encouraged that we hold as a high priority involvement in the Midwest Leadership School as an opportunity for leadership development of youth and adults of our congregation.
- Linda Mistele asked about specific plans to increase economic and racial/ethnic diversity, to include American Indians. Juliet Hills mentioned a potential contact that approached to speak at a future forum on behalf of her nation. Julie responded that staff is very involved in this work and developing plans. Our church is also participating in Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Multi-Culturalism (ARAOMC) education efforts.
- Dale Skaggs acknowledged the Board officers and the Treasurer, Tom Briscoe.

## **XII. Adjournment**

Kit Vernon moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Kathy Porter. Unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:48 p.m.

# 2017 - 2018 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**  
Julie Bock  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Michelle Naples  
**SECRETARY**  
Jeremy Koenen  
**TREASURER**  
Tom Briscoe

## BOARD MEMBERS

Mark Bishop  
Julie Bock  
Omega Burckhardt  
Maria Dorsey  
Jeremy Koenen  
Pete Koneazny  
Michelle Naples  
Holly Patzer

## COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

**AUDIO**  
Mike Paulson

**BOOK SALES**  
Amy Monahan

**BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**  
Chris Linder

**BUDDHIST STUDY GROUP:**  
**GATHERING WATERS SANGHA**  
Steve & Jeanne Lowry

**BUILDING & GROUNDS**  
Russ Drewry

**CHALICE CIRCLE STEERING COMMITTEE**  
John McNally

**CHANCEL CHOIR**  
Tristan Strelitzer

**CHILD CARE**  
Sonya Fitak

**CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
John Fitak

**CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED (TCG)**  
Sharon DePue

**CIRCLE SUPPERS**  
Sam Mueller

**COFFEE, CHRISTMAS**  
Tom Radoszewski

**COFFEE, SUNDAY**  
**9:00:** TBA  
**11:00:** TBA

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**  
Jeff Pearcy

**DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Bruce Wiggins

**FEAST FOR FUNDS**  
Sue Thaney

**FINANCE**  
Noreen Gilbertsen

**FFUUN: Forties & Fifties UU Network**  
Scot Henry  
Laura White

**FIRST FRIDAY FILMS**  
JoAnn Bachar

**FLOWERS**  
Shari Wright

**FORUM**  
Lorraine Jacobs

**GALLERY**  
Alisha Koneazny

**HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
Lisa Koneazny

**HISTORY/ARCHIVES**  
Linda Presto

**INCOME OPPORTUNITY**  
Holly Patzer

**IT TEAM**  
Allan Ries

**LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT**  
TBA

**MEMBERSHIP**  
Susan Borri

**MORTER LECTURE**  
Lorraine Jacobs

**NOMINATING**  
Patricia Witt

**PAGAN CELEBRATIONS**  
Kathleen Miezio  
Nick DaVia

**PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES**  
**COORDINATOR**  
Jane Peterson

**PASTORAL CARE PROVIDERS**  
**COORDINATOR**  
Heather Hansen

**PERSONNEL**  
Nancy Spransy

**PLEDGE DRIVE TEAM**  
Tony Panciera

**PULPIT GUEST COMMITTEE**  
Diane Duffey

**SCRIP SALES**  
Stewardship Council

**SPIRITUAL RETREAT COMMITTEE**  
Rollie Hanson  
Chris Aiken

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTIONS GROUP**

Diane Horne  
Candice Haight

**STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

Tony Panciera

**SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social)**

Barbara Collignon  
Jeanne Durnford

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS UNDER FORTY DOING ACTIVITIES (UUUFDA)**

Susie Seidelman  
Yalanda Ludtka

**USHERS**

**9:00:** Joe Bree  
David Bancroft  
**11:00:** Tom LeBel  
Terry Hansen

**UU PARENTING GROUP**

Stacey Thieme  
Brooke Worzella-Best

**UU+ STUDY GROUP**

Nancy Pajewski

**WOMANSPRIT**

Janet Nortrom

**WORSHIP ASSOCIATES**

Alexis Fielek

**YOUTH STEERING COMMITTEE**

Matthew Finco (adult)  
Kaetryn Koneazny (youth)

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL\***

Bruce Wiggins

**BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Kenyatta Yamel

**BLACK LIVES MATTER 2 WIUUs**

Mary Devitt

**EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY**

Terry Wiggins

**IMMIGRATION ISSUES**

Lorraine Jacobs  
Kitty Willkomm

**SHARE THE PLATE**

Bob Monahan  
Nancy Spransy

**OUTSIDE FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS****COMMON GROUND**

Jerry Fredrickson

**INTERCHANGE**

Bryna Goeckner  
Beth Bruch

**INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE**

Dianna Dentino

**MICAH (Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations)****Allied for Hope)**

Pete Koneazny  
Bob Monahan

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE**

TBA

**OTHER LEADERS****CHALICE CIRCLE FACILITATORS:**

Nancy Spransy, Coach  
Robert Szymanski  
Sue Trafton

**PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES:**

Anjum Alden  
Michele Burke  
Jim Carse  
Deb Monthei Manske  
Gordon Mueller  
Janet Nortrom  
Jane Peterson  
Laurie Petersen  
Kathy Rivera  
Jan Van Schaik

**We would also like to thank some of the people who, week in and week out, do so much for the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee:**

- Our Office Volunteers — for Chanticleer and Order of Service Assembly
- The MANY, MANY volunteers who make our Religious Education program possible
- Our dedicated and talented choir members
- Collection counters
- Shawl Ministry knitters

# 2017-2018 Sermon Schedule

## SUMMER

### MAY 28

"It's Not All Karma: Theodicy and Grace"  
The Rev. Dr. Adam Robersmith

### JUNE 4

"Communal Joy: Flower Communion"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### JUNE 11

"Getting to Joy"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

### JUNE 18

"Parenting the UU Way"  
The Rev. Joyce Palmer

### JUNE 25

"Surrendering to Joy"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

### JULY 2

"The Second Coming of Athena"  
Nick Hayes, member

### JULY 9

"Bread for the Journey"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

### JULY 16

"Do Not Toil in Vain: Spirituality at Work"  
Sarah Fowles, member

### JULY 23

"Sabbath As a Form of Resistance"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

### JULY 30

"What Science Tells Us About Lives That Are Also Religious"  
The Rev. Scott Gerard Prinster

### AUGUST 6

"Asking for Help"  
The Rev. Sara Goodman

### AUGUST 13

"Deeper Spirituality Through Illness and Pain"  
Denise Cawley, member

### AUGUST 20

"Our Principles Through a Lens: Inspiring Action with Photography"  
Jeff Percy, member

### AUGUST 27

"End of the Welcoming Church (Beginning of the Inviting Church)"  
The Rev. David Kraemer

### SEPTEMBER 3

"Raising the Roof"  
Misha Sanders, Seminarian

## 2017-2018 Church Year

### SEPTEMBER 10

"Welcome Home"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### SEPTEMBER 17

"Welcome: a Desire to Be in Relationship"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### SEPTEMBER 24

"Welcome a Change of Heart"  
The Rev. Sara Goodman

### OCTOBER 1

"Take Heart: Action with Heart; Sanctuary"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### OCTOBER 8

"Daring Greatly: the Courage to be Vulnerable"  
Rev. Sara Goodman

### OCTOBER 15

"What's in the Courage Bank? White Supremacy Teach In"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### OCTOBER 22

"Free to Forgive in a Criminally Unjust System?"  
the Rev. Karen Mooney

### OCTOBER 29

"Living Can Take Courage; So Can Dying"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### NOVEMBER 5

"Individual scarcity, Communal Abundance"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### NOVEMBER 12

"Expect the Unexpected"  
The Rev. Sara Goodman



# 2017-2018 Sermon Schedule

## NOVEMBER 19

"What is Enough?"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nortstrom

## NOVEMBER 26

"Stop, Look Listen"  
The Rev. Dr. Michael A. Schuler

## DECEMBER 3

"Hope is a Gateway Drug"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## DECEMBER 10

"Be Still and Be Quiet"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## DECEMBER 17

Holiday Pageant  
Beryl Aschenberg, DRE

## DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## DECEMBER 25

No Services

## DECEMBER 31

"Honor the Past, Hope for the Future"  
The Rev. Sara Goodman

## JANUARY 7

"Returning Home"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JANUARY 14

"Promise and Practice, Intention and Impact"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## JANUARY 21

"Intention is on the Road between Hope and Commitment"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## JANUARY 28

"Oh Ye of Little Faith?"  
The Rev. Tony Larsen

## FEBRUARY 4

"Joy and Woe Woven Fine"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## FEBRUARY 11

"Live the Questions Now"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## FEBRUARY 18

"Faith is Relational"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## FEBRUARY 25

"Faith in the Unfolding"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## MARCH 4

Annual Youth Service

## MARCH 11

"Individual Balance and Personal Practice"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## MARCH 18

"Balance in Community and the Web"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## MARCH 25

"Lessons From Weebles"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## APRIL 1

"Roll Away the Stone"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## APRIL 8

"Allowing the Soul to Emerge"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## APRIL 15

"I Could've Had a V-8! Aha Moments & Other Epiphanies"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## APRIL 22

"Life's Wholeness Calls Us"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## APRIL 29

"Who Do You Want to Become?"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## MAY 6

"Tradition and Innovation"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## MAY 13

"Born & Reborn Again: Creation Ongoing"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## MAY 20

"Learning and Living Religion"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
RE Sunday

## MAY 27

"We've Come This Far by Faith"  
The Rev. Darrick Jackson

# Wheel of Life

May 10, 2017—May 30, 2018

## New Members

### Fall 2017

Clare Blau  
Roger Blau  
Megan Burger  
Lynn Connolly  
Clare Costello  
Erica Haven  
Crysta Jarczyński  
Kate Lindsay  
Julia Oschwald  
Krisann Rehbein  
Joe Sexauer  
Molly Shiffler  
Todd Walker

### Winter 2018

Ian Dahlinghaus  
Doug Drenzek  
Lauren Eierman  
Jennifer Hannis  
Jeff Hansen  
Joan Hansen  
Leslie Harris  
Sue Hoaglund  
Chris Nolte  
Susan Nolte  
Marlowe Nortrom  
Carol Ogarchock  
Jerry Parent  
Kate Parent  
Debra Pyne  
Matthew Rochte  
Kathy Smith

Mary Ann Steger  
Adam Stephens  
Kim Stephens  
Jaime Lynn Tatera  
Jen Vargas-Tobon  
Evelyn Henschel

### Spring 2018

Altha Arden  
Tom Arden  
Andrew Boddyspargo  
Britton Domer  
Charlie Domer  
Shawn Halmar  
Barbara Kloman  
Eileen Teska  
Bob Teska  
Kaetryn Koneazny  
Ehlona Walker

## High School Seniors

Mallory Bree  
Vincent DeLeo  
Kaetryn Koneazny  
Amy Wesolowski  
Anke Ries-Buschhaus

## Dedications of Parents and Children

### November 2017

Katherine Rose Derby  
Child of Tracy Keller and Dennis Derby

## Heritage Society

Judy Anderson  
Paula Anderson  
Joann Bachar  
Christian Becker  
Jo Ann & Mark Bishop  
Rod Botts  
Cheri & Tom Briscoe  
Paul & Suzanne Carter  
Susan Comstock  
Steven Culver  
Jill Erickson  
James Ford  
Judith Ford

Jerry Frederickson  
Scot Henry  
Sally Heuer  
Liz Irwin Moore  
Nelson Kading  
Adele Kaferly  
Linda & Mike Katz  
Drew Kennedy  
Tina Keppel  
Lisa & Pete Koneazny  
Hank Kulesza  
Lynda Lambert  
Michael Lewis

Sally Lewis  
Loren Leys  
Chris Linder  
Kate Marrs  
Pat McFarland  
Robert Moore  
Ellyn & Mike Newman  
Janet & Marlowe Nortrom  
Mimi Notestein  
Barbara & Patrick Patterson  
Bob & Kathy Porter  
Tom Radoszewski  
Lisa & Michael Radtke

Kathy Rivera  
Max & Pat Scharmach  
Dale Skaggs  
Nancy Spransy  
Robert Szymanski  
Kit & Melinda Vernon  
Don Weimer  
Lois Wesener  
Bruce & Terry Wiggins  
Ted Wiley  
Bettie Zillman

### May 2018

Sophie Joan Drenzek  
Child of Douglas Arnold Drenzek  
and Jennifer Heather Hannis

Everett Easton Haven  
Child of Erica Lee Haven  
and Daniel Stuart Haven

Kennedy Eric Myron Graff  
Child of Eric and Chrystal Kaminski

Raelyn Willow Austrup  
Child of Gregory and Tammy Austrup

## Death and Memorial Services

Joy Krause  
Charles V Gottchalk  
Kathleen Lacey  
Tom Thaney  
Claude VanderVeen

## Weddings

Lianna Bishop and Eric Mathews  
Officiated by the Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

# Staff Reports

## MINISTRY

### SENIOR MINISTER

We are coming to the close of another vibrant and exciting year at First Church. Like last year, in this second year serving as your Senior Minister, I prioritized Worship, Staff, the Board of Trustees, and Stewardship. Here are a few highlights from the year:

#### THE KRUG BEQUEST

In July of 2017, First Church received an incredibly generous \$850,000 bequest from the estate of our dearly departed member Lu Krug. We are incredibly grateful for this bequest and Lu's enduring spirit of generosity—may she be an inspiration to us all! In accordance with the Board's bequest policy, in September, we formed a Lu Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT). The team has developed a process for allocating the bequest, ensuring a portion is set aside for long-term savings, another portion is used to support our operating and capital maintenance budgets, and a portion is reserved for realizing dream projects we would not be able to accomplish without such a bequest. These dream projects will help us get closer to achieving the congregation's Ends and can be proposed by any member or staff member of First Church. You can read more about the process in the KGAT report. If the Krug bequest and all it will do for First Church gets you thinking about including First Church in your estate planning, please be in touch with our Heritage Society, or attend one of their informational events next fall!

#### THE ENDS PROCESS

The Board of Trustees has also been hard at work this year developing First Church's Ends. Based on input from over 250 members, the Board developed eight Ends for our congregation's work together over the coming years. You can think of Ends as outcomes, or what will become real if our ministry together is successful. The Ends answer the question: "What difference will we make in peoples' lives?". The Means by which we achieve these Ends is ministry. Now our staff-led and member-led ministry teams will consider how our ministry could achieve these Ends. Our church consultant, Unity Consulting, which has led similar processes in the vast majority of large UU congregations, will return to us in June to lead the staff and the Board through the next steps of implementation and measurement.

### THE STAFF TEAM

This year in the staff team, we updated job descriptions, clarified roles and responsibilities, and connected the priorities of each of our positions to First Church's mission and Ends. We streamlined and clarified some administrative procedures and spent time building teams. As is usual in a transition, there was a fair amount of staff turnover this year, with 6 staff members departing, and five new staff members onboarding. We also worked together during Rev. Dena's well-earned and (very!) well-planned sabbatical, with the graceful support of Assistant Sabbatical Minister Rev. Sara Goodman. It was a pleasure to welcome Rev. Dena back in January.

#### BERYL ASCHENBERG'S DEPARTURE

The congregation's long-time Director of Religious Education Beryl Aschenberg shared the news of her departure in April of this year. Beryl has served our congregation with passion and commitment for 17 years, and she will be missed. First Church will hire an Interim Director of Religious Education to not only guide our religious education program but to lead the congregation in discernment of our core values in religious education, our dreams for the future.

### PUBLIC MINISTRY

This year has also included significant public ministry at First Church, beginning with a powerful silent vigil against white supremacy on August 20, 2017, following the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville. Vigils continued monthly while the weather permitted, and resumed in the spring. In November, the Board approved the Social Justice Council's recommendation to join in coalition with other Milwaukee area faith communities to support the New Sanctuary Movement, including by providing volunteer hours, donations, and financial contributions. Membership in the coalition signifies our commitment to continue working in solidarity for immigrant justice and keeps the door open to offering physical sanctuary at First Church in the future. First Church has since hosted a vigil for Voces de la Frontera, participated in other vigils, and hosted a meeting of clergy interested in forming a Milwaukee sanctuary coalition. In March, First Church members showed up in large numbers at the March 4 Our Lives against gun violence in Milwaukee. In April, First Church member and LGBTQ organizer Denise Cawley helped organizer a number of progressive clergy, myself included, to attend a Milwaukee Common Council meeting in support of banning conversion therapy in the City of Milwaukee. Four LGBTQ-affirming clergy were able to be a religious voice in the news

# Staff Reports

that day, both supporting the ban and affirming the inherent worth and dignity of LGBTQ people.

Yours, the Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## ASSOCIATE MINISTER

I feel blessed to serve this thriving congregation which continues to care for each other and does good in the world during these tumultuous times and through many transitions. I remain deeply grateful for my five-month sabbatical granted by our Board of Trustees and Senior Minister and graced with blessings by the congregation. The series of retreats and journeys from August through December filled me with rest, reflection and renewal. Upon re-entry to First Church, I heard that part-time Assistant Sabbatical Minister Rev. Sara Goodman served you well supporting the program areas of pastoral care and social justice while I was away. It seems that all went smoothly.

Updates on my four focus areas include:

### PASTORAL CARE

Eight **Pastoral Care Associates** offered their quiet listening presence to members who faced significant life events and difficult transitions, including illness, accidents, surgeries, the death of a loved one, separation and divorce, hospice, homebound elders and the stress of caregiving. Jane Peterson stepped up to serve as PCA Coordinator and Laurie Petersen, as Lead Trainer, supported the team with continuing education and their second annual retreat. Jennifer and I are deeply grateful to this staff-led team. It is only by working together that we are able to care for our community so well.

A team of over twenty church members served as **Pastoral Care Providers**, bringing meals and providing rides for short-term needs. Heather Hansen, with back-up from Stacy Koenen, served her third year coordinating the Providers. Members express great appreciation for the kindness of a warm meal upon return from the hospital, after the birth or adoption of a baby, during hospice care or difficult medical treatments.

The **Memorial Service Reception Team** served a second year providing simple yet elegant food and beverages for receptions in the Leenhouts Common Room after a memorial service, upon the family's request. This ministry both supports a grieving family at a vulnerable time and allows members to give back to the community.

The **Shawl Ministry** completed their first year of creating soft and beautiful shawls and lap robes to comfort members going through difficult times. So far, we've given 27 shawls. Although we cannot take away another's suffering, we can show our care through the gentle embrace of the shawl, which serves as a visible symbol of the love of our community, especially when the person is not able to attend services and activities here.

### SMALL GROUPS

We have eleven active **Affinity Groups** including Book Discussion, Gathering Waters Sangha, Chancel Choir, The Chronologically Gifted, FFUUN, Pagan Celebrations, SWANS, Unitarian Universalists Under Forty Doing Activities or UUUFDA, UU Par-enting, UU+ Study Group and WomanSpirit. These Member-Led Ministries gather around shared interests or demographics to find friends and deeper belonging. Affinity Groups are open to everyone to come and go as they wish.

The **Chalice Circle** Small Group Ministry program is evolving into a new form. Chalice Circles is a beloved program that served our congregation for over twenty years. These groups of 8 to 10 people covenanted to gather twice a month, engaging in conversations about topics of personal and spiritual significance. Many church members' lives were enriched and transformed by their experience in Chalice Circles, creating a community where you can be known and know others on a deeper level. However, due to declining enrollment over the past several years, we put new registrations for Chalice Circles on hiatus and the current three Circles will dissolve at the end of this church year.

Since my return from sabbatical, I convened a staff-led team of four members who have extensive experience in small group ministry to explore and design **Theme Circles**, an evolution in our small group ministry program that invites members and friends to gather in groups of six to eight with a trained facilitator and delve deeper into our monthly worship themes. Theme Circles include homework with suggestions for spiritual practice, questions for reflection, and multi-sensory resources, which can be done at your own convenience and at any level. Theme Circles will meet once a month from October - June, which may be an easier commitment for people to make within their busy lives.

I am abidingly grateful to all our members who devoted time and energy to design, facilitate and participate in Chalice Circles over the years. This ministry transformed individuals and our congregation as a whole into even more respectful listening and holding of each other's lives.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Social Justice Council is an umbrella organization of lay leaders who engage our congregation in Member-Led Ministries of service, learning, and action, addressing many compelling and urgent justice needs in our city and world while building relationships in the community. We give a big thanks to Bruce Wiggins, who served as SJC chairperson the last two years.

The Social Justice Council adopted a vision statement for their ministry over the next 3-5 years: "We envision a multi-generational community with strong core teams building visibility and participation in social justice." The SJC hired consultant Rev. Jonah Holm for an April workshop on leadership development, communications and engagement skills.

# Staff Reports

We have eleven different justice initiatives open to everyone to participate—you are welcome to join at any time at any level! The Social Justice Member-Led Ministry reports are included elsewhere in the Annual Report. A big thanks goes to Terry Wiggins, who chaired/co-chaired Earth Justice Ministry for five years!

Thanks to the Krug Bequest Team, I'll hire a part-time Social Justice intern from a nearby college/university to begin in September as our Social Justice Coordinator and Community Engagement Facilitator to help guide our program in ways that bring us closer to our vision.

## SUMMER SERVICES

Our doors are open with one worship service at 10:00 a.m. throughout the summer, which continues to be a vital ministry of our "year-round" church. I work closely with the Pulpit Guest staff-led team to plan and coordinate summer services. In addition, I provide one-to-one coaching for each member who leads a service. We held 13 summer services in 2017, including four clergy guests, four services from me, one from Assistant Sabbatical Minister Sara Goodman and four member-led services. Average adult attendance was 142 people, a gain of 11 people from the previous summer. The highest attendance was 174; lowest 107. Many guests search for a spiritual home during the summer. I am grateful that our members continue to provide a warm welcome with greeters, ushers, music, hospitality, Religious Education, child care and more.

After almost nine years at First Church, and a renewing sabbatical, I still feel a strong call to serve as your Associate Minister and look forward to the future with hope and trust.

Yours, Dena

## ADMINISTRATION

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Reporting to the Senior Minister, I am responsible for overall administrative functions of the church including financial management, human resources administration and facilities management. I manage these areas with a combination of talented staff, expert and dedicated volunteers, and contract services.

The administrative staff I lead supports all the programs of the church. This year the whole team especially supported the Board of Trustees Ends Statement process. The administration department also said farewell to four wonderful staff people, and heartily welcomed their replacements.

## STAFF TEAM

I focused considerable time on transitions in the administrative staff this year, which entailed evaluating vacated positions, adjusting job descriptions and duties, searching, hiring, and training, as well as providing continuity of services until the positions were filled.

After three years as Facilities Manager, Ed McGraw decided to permanently retire July 2017. Our search found another veteran manager of facilities, Tom Schroeder, who was looking for a smaller job in his "retirement." Tom is responsible for managing the complexities of our intensive building use, directing our friendly and capable Facilities Assistants Jim Spice and Andre Singley (who replaced outgoing Paul Moriarity) to assure we accommodate all program needs. I've helped Tom learn a lot about our church's many and various activities this year. With decades of large facilities management experience, Tom manages repairs and improvements of our facilities with the assistance of part-time Maintenance Worker Art Sims and the expertise of the talented Building and Grounds Staff-led Team, headed by Russ Drewry. Tom and the B&G have done a great job managing numerous projects this year including: remodeling admin office space into a new office, recovering and rebuilding the two leather-covered sanctuary doors, various repairs to the HVAC system, upgrading one apartment bathtub and surround, and updating room signage.

In October, Office Assistant Tracy Smith decided to return to private sector work. Before she left, Tracy did a detailed update of the administrative office procedures manual. Through a broad search with many candidates we found a wonderful new Office Coordinator Shari Wright. Shari has been learning the job this year which includes our regular publications *The Chanticleer*, orders of service and announcements. She also manages our database, forms and the facility scheduling calendar which is available via the member portal MyFirstChurch. These are just a few of the wide array of services Shari is learning as she supports church programs and members.

In fall, Communications Coordinator Angelica Dudenhoefer requested to adjust her hours to accommodate personal projects she was working on. Her position has always been part time and we modified some comm work flow to accommodate her reduced hours. Angelica's primary projects this year were a redesign of our website which went live in March and beginning to roll out our fresh, new First Church logo and visual brand which I developed with a pro bono branding expert mid-2016. As of this writing, Angelica just resigned from her position; stay tuned for further developments! And you can find more details about Angelica's work this year in her report elsewhere in this document.

Finally, as the church's administrator for 20 years, I have a

# Staff Reports

long and broad overview of church operations. I am a key person to provide newer staff a larger context for our work, both “historical” perspective and systems dynamics.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES & EXECUTIVE TEAM

As a member of the Executive Team of the Board of Trustees I attend monthly meetings of each body. My support of the Board includes providing operational perspectives to issues, institutional memory and continuity, and knowledge about First Church dynamics and norms. I appreciate Jennifer allowing me to partially step back from these responsibilities a portion of this year while my husband has been ill.

## COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD & STAFF-LED TEAMS

I work with two Committees of the Board: Finance and Nominating. You can find reports from these committees in this annual report. The Nominating Committee secured wonderful candidates for top leadership positions again this year. In addition, they’ve been conducting numerous relational meetings with church members to help them engage in church life and potentially bring them into leadership. I support the Finance Committee and the Treasurer with accurate monthly financial statements and leading the development of the annual budget. We are happy to welcome three new members to the committee this year and have been particularly focused on investments issues this year.

I am also a member of the Krug Gift Acceptance Team which is developing plans for use of Lu Krug’s generous gift per our unrestricted gift acceptance policy. It’s especially satisfying to assist this work which will increase the impact of programs we will develop to implement our newly-developed Ends Statements.

The Staff-led Teams I am responsible for are: the IT Team, Sunday collection counters (Shari works closely with them), Building and Grounds (as reported above, Tom leads them), and History/Archives.

The IT Team is comprised of expert and experienced members working in the information technology field who assist with various church projects. I “represent the client” at the table. Most of their work is done behind the scenes supporting the staff and our enterprise-level computing infrastructure. They also are tech support for staff, answering technical questions when they arise. This year the IT Team worked on networking for the new admin office space remodel, assisted a lot of staffing changes needs (new accounts, temporary rights to email, etc.), and procured a laptop for one staff person. We installed a new firewall/router and replaced a UPS. Also, per usual, executed annual upgrade of three computers per year.

## OTHER PROJECTS

This summer all staff revised our annual goals to be in alignment with our mission statement. Also, collaborating with our supervisors, we each re-structured our job descriptions to a new format which will be the foundation for annual evaluations. My job description was a large project which included soliciting samples from my colleagues at other UU churches because I had been working with one designed for the senior minister interim years. It was a great opportunity for Jennifer and I to more clearly focus the direction she sees my position heading. I was also responsible for collaboratively re-writing five job descriptions of staff in my department.

Other systems and services the admin staff developed this year include: web forms for announcement and Chanticleer submissions, giving donations via text, publicly posting which staff are on duty each Sunday, and providing staff the ability to text the Facilities Assistant on duty.

This has been another year filled with changes and transitions, and looking forward to a bright future for First Church. It is exciting to imagine together all the possibilities the next years hold for the church as we develop programs which will fulfill our new Ends Statements. Let’s move toward a shared vision for First Church with grace, holding each other with care.

Love to each of you on your journey,

Jean Johnson, Director of Administration

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*“Things change. We change. Our lives never stand still. There is always something new. We are always moving, from one thing to another, one age to another, one place to another, one school to another, one home to another, one challenge to another. We call these changes “transitions”.*

### ~First Church Kindergarten Graduation Ritual

This is the final report that I will submit to First Unitarian Society, having tendered my resignation to the Board of Trustees and Senior Minister, effective June 7. After seventeen years at First Church, parting feels somewhat poignant: this community has imprinted on my soul. I am a better person because of you; I’m certainly a better religious educator. I leave you knowing that First Church is made up of loving, resilient people who will move forward in the best of ways, continuing to serve our young people and lifting up the value of their faith formation.

# Staff Reports

## MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Here are the foundational statements for the Children's RE Ministry Team as I end my time with the congregation:

### Vision

Rooted in the church's mission, we envision a church community modeling and teaching children and youth to embrace a strong core of UU values, both influenced by the needs of our world, and influencing their way of being and acting in the wider world.

### Mission

The mission of the Children's Religious Education Ministry Team is to nurture spiritual growth by engaging and inspiring our children, youth, & volunteers. ~Rev. 2017

### 2017-18 Goal

"We will build relationships throughout the church."

### 2017-18 Church Year Highlights:

If we hope to raise children who will enjoy the blessings and benefits of belonging to a religious community, then some attention and effort needs to be given to nurturing in them the skills of being in community with people of all ages. This year we focused on bringing the generations together in a number of different ways.

- **Children Welcomed in Services-** This year we expanded our practice of having children and youth in the service by inviting their presence in the sanctuary on a weekly basis. Worship began most weeks with music, welcome and announcements, Chalice Lighting, and a **Time for all Ages**, after which young people would recess to their religious education classes. Once in their classrooms, teachers would use the first few moments to reflect upon the time in the service, thus tying in the message upstairs with the RE experience.
- **Whole Community Social Action-** programs that had previously taken place in RE classes on the lower level were brought upstairs to the whole congregation during coffee hours this year. Children and adults alike assembled "Good Neighbor Bags" of toiletry items to be given to people on the streets of Milwaukee; took part in a Giving Tree holiday celebration, collecting and wrapping gifts after services; created valentines for members of the congregation who could use a smile; wrote prayers of peace after missiles were launched at Syria.
- **Our 2018 Multigenerational Holiday Service-** an *On-The-Spot Pageant* included a delightful singalong of The Twelve Days of Christmas, let by teens in regalia of their own choosing. Ehlona Walker as the egg-laying French hen will be remembered by all in attendance for years to come.
- **Mystery Friends revival-** brought together 35 sets of multigenerational friendships in our community, led by

Jenny Schmidt and Laura Ehlers.

- **Share the Plate-** The children & youth selected **Project Q Youth Program** (a part of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center) as the Share the Plate recipient for May 2018.
- **High School Seniors Mallory Bree, Kaetryn Koneazny, and Amy Wesolowski** will speak their truth at the annual RE Sunday Services to be held on May 20, 2018. We send them forth with love and hope they have an enduring sense of First Church as a spiritual home they can return to at any time. (Please see "Wheel of Life" page for additional High School graduates)
- **Community Partnership with Jewish Museum Milwaukee-** brought an opportunity for 5-12<sup>th</sup> Graders to have a docent-led tour of the exhibit **Allied in the Fight: Jews, Blacks and the Struggle for Civil Rights** as part of our anti-racism curriculum **Black People Matter**.
- **Additional RE Staff Transitions-** Erin Wantoch departed from the position of RE Administrative Assistant in June 2017. Annalise Lozier, a recent YRUU graduate, filled in as our summer interim assistant until Lillian Schley joined the staff in late August 2017.

## Children and Youth RE Numbers!

**How many people does it take to run our Children and Youth RE program?** Nineteen Teachers, nine Youth/OWL Advisors, forty-eight Class Assistants, twenty committee members, and 2.2 FTE hours divided among five staff. For those of you who appreciate metrics, here is a look at RE registration and attendance:

2017 -18	2016 -17	2015 -16	Comparisons taken on averages through the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of April
163	207	163	Number of registered children and youth
78	93	78	Average attendance
48%	45%	48%	percentage of registered kids attending on average

# Staff Reports

## ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

In the summer of 2017, an intrepid group of spiritually inclined people gathered to consider a vision for developing the spiritual lives of the adults in our congregation. Ultimately the group developed this mission: "... to welcome and affirm members and friends of our congregation where they are in their spiritual journey, and to provide opportunities within the community to broaden and deepen their spiritual lives." Team members included Kristi Davis-Gutierrez, Lisa Gies, Diane Horne, and Anne Maedke.

While we didn't initially plan to offer any programming until the 2018-19 church year, we found ourselves in the position of offering several options this year:

- Ongoing **Yoga** classes
- **Everyday GRACE**, a full day workshop offered by the church friend, Becky Spice.
- **Sanctuary Reflections: Stillness, Awe, and Belonging**, a well-received monthly Service reflection which began in January. My hope is that this will continue after the 11:00 a.m. service each week beginning in September.

Our newly developed community partnership with the Jewish Museum Milwaukee created three separate Adult Education programs for our members and friends, including a three-part presentation on **Redlining; From Swastika to Jim Crow** film and discussion; and a **Passover Freedom Seder**.

My understanding is that Rev. Dena McPhetres will be the staff liaison to the next incarnation of this group. Plans have been developed for a comprehensive pathway for spiritual development for our UU community which will likely include:

- Continued opportunities for members to reflect on services together each week;
- Continued **Yoga classes** with our beloved, long time teacher Morgan Engels.
- **An Introduction to Spiritual Practices**
- **Deep Listening**
- **Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults**
- And possibly an opportunity for **Owning Your Religious Past**.

## LOOKING TO THE YEAR AHEAD

There is more change ahead. I believe that our strong and loving faith community is positioned well to create lifelong memories and commitment for people of all ages. Rev. Jennifer has begun advertising to hire a one year Interim Director of Religious Education for Children and Youth who will help the congregation navigate through this transition, guiding the RE program, and leading the congregation in discern-

ment of your core values for religious education, your dreams for the future, and the resources available to realize those dreams. Rev. Dena will continue the work I began this year with discernment in Adult RE and Spiritual Development programming. All will be well.

I am so grateful to the members of all our Religious Education ministry teams over the years. John Fitak will be handing the torch to Sarah Richards as chair of Children's RE for 2018-19. Please support her efforts, and the efforts of the Interim DRE, by stepping up your involvement: join the CRE team, volunteer to teach or assist, sign on as a Mystery Friend. Our children deserve the best, and you folk are indeed the best. Please know that I will carry you in my heart into my next congregation.

In faith, with love,  
Beryl Aschenberg, DRE, 2001-2018

## YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Youth Program Coordinator (YPC) reports directly to the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and is responsible for the planning and coordinating of programs for youth in eighth grade Our Whole Lives (OWL) and grades 9-12 by working with adult advisors, the Youth Steering Committee, staff, and parents. In addition, the YPC is responsible for coordinating the week-long Habitat for Humanity Mission Trip, managing communications between all adult volunteers for grades 9-12. Planning and scheduling all activities for grades 9-12, coordinating the annual Youth Service, and communicating with youth and parents.

As a part-time, 18 hour/week staff position, this has been my fourth year assuming these responsibilities and I must say that each year brings me more joy and satisfaction knowing that I can make such a positive difference in the lives of our youth at First Church.

### OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL: 8<sup>th</sup> grade)

Our Whole Lives is a lifespan sexuality education UUA curriculum. Currently, in the First Church RE program, OWL is focused on 8<sup>th</sup> grade youth. This past year, we conducted OWL classes on Sunday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. from September through May with 12 youth participants graduating. Thank you to our outstanding and dedicated team of OWL facilitators this past year: Jacqi Akert, John Fitak, Beth Monhollen and Katie Maedke-Hall. We are adding two new OWL facilitators to our team this summer, Lorinda Flores, and Katie Kegel.



# Staff Reports

## YOUNG RELIGIOUS UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS (YRUU: 9-12 grades)

Our ninth graders joined our tenth to twelfth grade youth in our YRUU Sunday morning classroom from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for heartfelt discussions chosen by the youth and led by both youth and youth advisors.

In July 2017, we sent ten youth and three adult advisors on our annual mission trip to work for Habitat for Humanity in Battle Creek, Michigan. Thank you to our 2017 Mission trip advisors: Russell Drewry, John Fitak, and Alisha Koneazny. In August 2018, we will be sending ten youth and three advisors (Don Weimer, John Fitak, and Alisha Koneazny) back to the Battle Creek Area Habitat for Humanity.

Our YRUU youth continue to be inspirational and dynamic. The annual Youth Service (March 4) "Change: Practice What You Preach" focused on how the youth feel about the environment, immigration and Black People Matter and challenged the congregation to do something in regards to these issues. That service raised \$714 for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin and \$1074 for our Mission Trip Fund. Additional Mission Trip fundraisers included a fall Harry Potter Extravaganza- D(UU)mbledore's Army Feast and Fun Evening (\$747) and the annual Mother's Day Gourmet Dessert Auction. Highlights of this year included:

- Three lock-in's with themes of *Harry Potter Feast* planning (October 2017), *Black People Matter* (January 2018) and an OWL/YRUU theme of *Community Building* (May 2018).
- In the Summer of 2018, we are inviting our grade 9-12 youth to join us for a lock-in in July.
- We offered for the second year, our four-part series for our graduating high school seniors called *Hearts on Fire* which provided them opportunities to reflect on topics of good & evil, the meaning of life & death, humanity & salvation and UU identity in developing their Credo Statements under the direction of our Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Religious Education and myself.

## YOUNG ADULTS (18-23 year-olds)

This year I worked with RE staff to clarify my job description and responsibilities and I found that my time was limited regarding young adult programming. I do hope that in the future I will be able to give more time towards developing this group. I was able to make contact with some UW-Milwaukee young adults interested in assuming leadership in this area to move this group forward.

## LEADERSHIP

The Youth Steering Committee (YSC) consists of adults and high school youth that oversee the senior high Religious Education program. Members are: Kaetryn Koneazny, Ehlona Walker, Celie Koneazny, Jonah Roth, Clarity Saigh, Anke Ries-Buschhaus, Sam Mulvey, Abby Aiken, Nicholas DaVia, Matthew Finco and Lisa Noble.

Youth are given the opportunity to take lead in planning and facilitating several class discussions and activities. Advisors found this a great way to empower youth in shaping their leadership skills and fostering a deeper commitment to Sunday-morning classes. Thank you to our caring, supportive YRUU advisor team: Bizzy Schultz., Don Weimer, Jessie Moffat and Nick DaVia. Youth continued past traditions including: an outstanding Youth Service, several lock-ins, the Gourmet Dessert Auction, and selling yummy bagels with the addition of a gluten free option of rice crispy treats on Sunday mornings.

We were able to send two youth to the Midwest Leadership School in Decorah, Iowa in July 2017: Celie Koneazny and Abby Aiken. Three youth, Jonah Roth, Clarity Saigh and Sam Mulvey will be attending MWLS in July 2018. In June 2018, one of our youth, Ehlona Walker will be attending General Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri serving a two-year position as a Junior Thrive Youth representative. Two of our youth, Celie Koneazny and Ehlona Walker attended two, four-hour leader training sessions for our second year of Black People Matter Curriculum in January. They then led two youth discussions on white privilege, white supremacy, anti-racism and anti-oppression topics for our youth group.

July 13-15, 2018 our church is hosting an OWL training for grades 7-9 and 10-12 and I am assuming the responsibility for this event registration and host.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

For me, professional development this past year included the following:

- Attendance at Multicultural Renaissance Module in April 2018
- Attendance at General Assembly in June 2018
- Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Multicultural Staff Team Member

Deb Solis

# Staff Reports

## MEMBERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

#### MEMBERSHIP TEAM

With a new Membership Coordinator and just two returning committee members some of the Membership Teams' tasks this year have been to define ourselves, our mission, and how to manage our many areas of purview. To that end the committee has;

- Established guidelines for 'Journey to Membership Coordinators' who support New Member classes and receptions.
- Drafted additional specific roles with the overall responsibilities of the Team with the goal of further structuring individual ownership, input and creative control of specific areas.
- Created a Membership Team part in the 'New Member Ceremony' increasing visibility of the different (and important) roles members play in this church.
- Established rotating and knowledgeable ongoing member coverage of the 'Membership Table' during coffee hour.
- Supported the 'Connections Team' roles (Ushering, Greeting and Coffee Host) by recruiting, hosting a group training, and covering one-to-one training for midyear recruits.
- Promoted a better understanding of the on-line Member Portal while seeking to increase its usage and usability by members. Team Members also directly uploaded member pictures (increasing the number of members with photos from 10 to 15%, with more ambitious plans unfolding).
- Assessed the presentation of the Membership Table, Visitor Table, and our literature; with some immediate adjustments and a plan to keep sharpening our awareness of how First Church presents to first-time guests.

In addition, the Team completed;

A project of interviews and portraits started last year with the presentation of 'First Church Reflections' in both the Common Room and in the Chanticleer. This presentation allowed us to share the stories of 12 long-term members at First Church, and we believe through these stories we are also telling the larger story of connection and commitment in our congregation.

A One to One training from Common Ground's Jerry

Fredrickson, giving us more tools and practice on how we might engage newcomers.

I'd like to add that none of this year's progress would have been possible without the clear insights and excellent management talent of the Membership Chair, Susan Borri - as well as the conscientious, creative and patient (towards their new MDC) goodwill of the entire team. Many thanks to Paula Anderson, Cheri Briscoe, Rod Botts, Jim Carse, Jane Cliff, Lynn Connolly, Dan Haislmaier, Terry Hansen, Lynda Lambert.

#### ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

While we have no record of visitors to the Church in this past year, we did respond to roughly 120 'Welcome' cards, hosted approximately 80 visitors in our weekly 'drop-in learn about us' Inquirers Series, and ushered 47 individuals through our Journey to Membership class.

A grateful thank you to the Inquirers Facilitators and Guest Speakers who make this important offering possible, and especially to Kathy Rivera who, seeing a need, volunteered to completely manage the scheduling of these busy 11 volunteers and 4 staff!

#### STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Ends its second year of Executive Council structure with reporting teams including; Feast for Funds, Heritage Society, Pledge and the Income Opportunity Team (IOT); and has taken a more defined form this year. This is especially apparent from the operational perspective, as each Team moved forward on specific focuses (reporting below), while also coordinating and supporting each other's major initiatives. Inter team support was especially present in determining Pledge Team strategies, publicity and presence for the IOT's informational sessions, and additional hands for Pledge Celebration Sunday and Pledge Clean-up.

The larger picture potential of the Council providing oversight and strategic thinking is still in development as we work towards more workable balance of volunteer (and staff) time and commitments, and a broader delegation of responsibilities.

In addition to thanking Team Chairs (noted below) who all served as Council Members, additional thanks goes to Tina Keppel and Stacy Koenen – and a very special thank you to Chair Tony Panciera.

#### FEAST FOR FUNDS

With a plethora of donated dinners, activities, services, vacation homes and contributions from local businesses, the opportunities for 'bidding' at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Feast for Funds Auction were wide in affordability and interests.

# Staff Reports

## INCOME OPPORTUNITY TEAM (IOT)

True to the origins of Feast for Funds the 'In-home Feastings etc.' items (bringing different members together for wining and dining or other fun activities) are clearly the most popular. Creative donors planned unique events, and fun-loving members bid high and often on these 'heart of the auction' items. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> year using an on-line platform also showed the potential of this tool to both increase the number of items we can offer, and broaden participation in our community. Leveraging this potential, while solving some of the kinks the on-line auction creates for our most popular category is a priority for next year.

F4F - by the Numbers

- 43 Items (not individually counting multiple items)
- 38 Donors (not individually counting Committee, Affinity, Board and Youth Group members who contributed via group donations, nor individually counting partners, kitchen help and 'Irish Slaves').
- 207 Individual Bidders
- 1028 Bids
- 134 Winners
- **\$25,650 Raised!**

Special thanks to co-chairs Tom and Sue Thaney, and committee members Ellen Krueger, Laurie Petersen, Jane Peterson... and to all the additional helping hands decorating, soliciting contributions, and writing fun 'Item Descriptions'.

## HERITAGE SOCIETY

Recognizes church members and friends who have included First Church in their wills and estate planning. Over the past few years, there has not been an identified group working on this. A work group has been established this year under the Stewardship Council and the following plans are underway:

- Identify members who have already identified First Church as a beneficiary in their wills or estate
- Recognize these members with identification on their First Church name tag and an appreciation event in spring 2019
- Sponsor a 3 part program in fall 2018 that will discuss spiritual, medical and legal end of life plans.
- Reach out to members one to one with opportunities to ask questions about this process and share with us what First Church means to them.

Planned giving allows for focused generosity after we are gone. We are pleased to provide information and support to members who are interested in this path.

I would like to thank Jill Erickson, Chris Lindner, Mike Neumann, Linda Presto and Melinda Vernon for their ideas and work in getting this group up and running. Submitted by Lisa Koneazny, Chair.

The IOT became a member team of the Stewardship Council effective September 2017. Our focus is ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of First Church by seeking out and assessing new income streams. We also provide congregational education around church finances and strategic support to the other Stewardship Council Teams.

In the 2017-18 church year, the IOT assisted the Pledge Team and Stewardship Council with data analysis regarding historical pledge results and strategies for this year's pledge drive. The IOT also hosted two information sessions on church finances called *"Our Financial Future 2018"*. The sessions focused on income streams and how they are utilized in operating the church. Approximately 60 people attended the sessions in total. Attendees were given opportunities to ask questions and discuss church income streams. Such discussion was helpful in assisting the IOT to continue its strategic path going forward. Submitted by Holly Patzer, Co-chair. Members: Don Weimer (Co-chair), Sally Lewis, Mark Bender and Laura Maker

## PLEDGE TEAM

The Team's goal this year was to increase pledge income by 5% from last year; or a pledge drive total of nearly \$735,000. As of this writing (4/30), we are anticipating the grand total falling short of that goal and are likely to stay nearly flat at \$700,000. Still, over half of our membership increased their pledges, and over 40% answered the team's call to increase from between 5 and 10%. The team will be digging deeper into understanding the outcomes, though we are already aware that life changes from a few major donors drove a few large decreases that account for evening out nearly half of the increases made elsewhere.

The oft said sentiment that 'We each give what we can in this community, and all gifts make a difference' feels particularly potent this year – as the impactful decreases by a few who have led in their giving for years, is being knit together by many who are stretching their commitments for next fiscal year.

Additional goals for the team included;

- Highlighting the need for our shared values in the world today .
- Understanding what we value at First Church across generations.
- Encouraging the practice of generosity and the culture of abundance.
- Transparency and familiarity regarding church finances, both expenses, and revenues.
- Highlighting the value that all gifts; time, talent and treasure, make to this community .

# Staff Reports

Some of the adjustments and activities we hoped furthered these goals included;

A 'Visiting Steward' training to connect what we love and value to our commitments to this community;

- Ensuring our Stewardship Reflections and Stewardship Meditation during services were inclusive and expressive of all age groups;
- Leadership events that were inclusive of both the lead donors and lead doers of this community;
- Pledge material that was clear, inspirational, informative and invited feedback on church involvement.

Huge gratitude to a very positive, insightful and generous Pledge Team of Tony Panciera (Chair), Diana Dentino, Fred Gutierrez, Jessie Moffat and Sue and Tom Thaney. Much Appreciation also to the additional Stewardship support from Visiting Stewards Dale Skaggs and Kit Vernon; as well as the Stewardship Council Members.

The Stewardship Council would like to remember Tom Thaney – who last year and right up until his death this past February, served as an unfailingly cheerful member of the Council, the Pledge Team, and as Co-chair, with his wife Sue, of our Feast for Funds Team. I shall not see a red balloon again - without remembering Tom - his smiling eyes and gentle, grinning, salesmanship - of Feast for Funds 'mystery wine bags'.

Lynne Jacoby  
Membership Development Coordinator

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## BOOK TOWER SALES

This year the Book Sales Tower has resurrected itself. Newer book-buying habits such as purchasing books online and using e-readers impacted sales at the Book Table. Several new procedures are in place as the Book Tower committee has tried to streamline the process of selling books and to offer titles, perhaps less available in the general market, that relate to First Church.

To simplify our process, we have gone from being staffed every coffee hour by a committee member who took cash and checks from book purchasers, a practice that became difficult to staff, to a self-pay procedure used during Sunday coffee hours. People can purchase books during Sunday coffee hours, as always. A slip with the price is in each book. Payment for the books is placed in the envelopes at the Tower with the slip and the payment envelope is placed in a box on the Member Services table. We have also discontinued the practice of selling consignment books, which had become unwieldy.

In an attempt to sell books that relate specifically to First Church, the Book Tower committee has adapted to the new Sunday Service themes by seeking recommendations from both of our ministers and our Director of Religious Education. We also select titles from the UUA Bookstore, now called InSpirit, that relate to the monthly theme. Books with topics that are timely for our church and for the larger Milwaukee community are also considered for sale at the Tower.

The Book Tower event of the 2017-2018 church year was, of course, the celebration of the arrival and signing of Reverend Jennifer's book in April!

Committee members: JoAnn Bachar, Kay Eller, Crysta Jarzynski, Barbra Lancelot, Nancy Pajewski, Kathy Smith, and Amy Monahan, Chair.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER TO WISCONSIN UUS COLLABORATIVE

BLM2WUU continued to organize and educate ourselves and others in the community around racial justice in 2017. In particular, we focused on:

- Supporting the efforts of each of our five individual UU congregations to understand white supremacy and to advocate for racial justice in their churches and in their communities.
- Presenting a workshop on White Fragility at Waukesha's United Unitarian Universalist Church.
- Continuing participation in and partnership with UBLAC

(Uplifting Black Liberation and Community), the Coalition to Close MSDF, Program the Parks, and the Racial Justice Convening group which grew out of the partnerships formed in presenting our April 2017 workshop with Chris Crass – Racial Justice: The Courage to Lead.

- Developing and submitting a proposal with Nurturing Diversity Partners, Inc. (Reggie Jackson and Fran Kaplan) to present 3 public talks and 3 “deeper dive” group explorations designed to deepen knowledge of our particular racial history and how it affects current circumstances and relationships. We will learn in June of 2018 whether the Wisconsin Humanities Council will fund the project.
- Submitting a successful application for funding from the UUA's Fund for Social Responsibility for \$5000 to continue our work. Funds will be applied as part of the match for the Humanities Council grant, if received, and for a project in partnership with Mothers for Justice United, in support of a community presentation to continue bringing awareness to the challenge of police violence and its aftermath.
- Applying funds for a technical grant from the UUA's Fund for Social Responsibility (intended to disseminate our collaborative model) to creating a website for BLM2WUU ([tiny.cc/blm2wuu](http://tiny.cc/blm2wuu)), and to funding production of a video by Program the Parks Youth Entrepreneurs of a their interview with members of the BLM2WUU Leadership Working Group.
- Attending and participating in organization activities in preparation for the Poor People's Campaign in Milwaukee, scheduled to begin in May of 2018.
- Presenting a screening of the film “The Blood is at the Doorstep” in partnership with Invisible Reality Ministries in Sherman Park. A panel discussion followed with Ms. Maria Hamilton, mother of Dontre Hamilton and founder of Mothers for Justice United; Ms. Brenda Wesley, mental health advocate and educator and the author of the play “Pieces: In My Own Voice” which depicts the lives of people living with a mental illness diagnoses; and Rev. Will Davis, pastor of Invisible Reality Ministries.
- Beginning a relationship with Wisconsin UU State Action Network – WUUSAN.
- Continuing work toward a more permanent structure of the collaborative, addressing mission, composition, roles, and funding.

Mary Devitt  
First Church Liaison and Organizer, Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

Black Lives Matter underwent a leadership change and attempted a change in group dynamics. Black Lives Matter had been known as a cabal organized by Mary Devitt who were energized by events such as the murder of Dontre Hamilton in Red Arrow Park. Using social media the cabal organized events in coordination with the Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UU's Collaborative. Mary stepped down and Kenyatta Yamel was named the chair. The cabal became a social action group.

Sharon DePue

## COMMON GROUND

Common Ground in a nutshell is simply a group of non-partisan, proactive, everyday citizens in Southeastern Wisconsin, dedicated to identifying pressing social problems facing our community and bringing about creative solutions.

As of this writing, it's hard to believe that Common Ground will soon be marking its Ten Year Anniversary in Milwaukee! We are looking forward to celebrating with over 1,000 members at the Italian Community Center on April 29. First Church has been a member for almost eight of those ten years. So this "annual" report is partially a summary of the annual report highlights of the past ten years.

Without the untiring efforts of Rod and Sharon De Pue, First Church would probably not be a member today. They created enthusiasm by holding many one to one relational meetings with First Church members and recruiting others to do the same.

So, what was the work that Common Ground did over those years?: Meeting and forming alliances with people in the neighborhoods, alder persons, the Mayor, businesses, schools, parents, and power-brokers; demonstrating in front of run-down foreclosed homes, the Buck's arena, and banks; showing up at City Hall for council and budget meetings and holding press conferences; traveling to Texas, California and even Germany to testify at bank- shareholder meetings.

So, what came of all of this?: Getting five of the world's largest banks to give \$31M to maintain and rehab foreclosed properties in Milwaukee, rehabbing 85 homes in the Sherman Park neighborhood, adding millions to the tax rolls, helping to make Milwaukee's after-school school tutoring program one of the best in the country, doubling the number of kids who got summer jobs, and addressing the healthcare crisis by creating our own healthcare coop with over 56,000 enrolled.

In this past year Common Ground held delegate assemblies on both the north and south sides to promote unity and listen to what people in the neighborhoods had to say. The south side had issues with safety and a lack of youth and family recreation facilities. The north side had issues with non-criminal revoca-

tion of parole, employment, and lead pipe lateral replacement. These issues will be addressed in upcoming campaigns.

So, was it worth it to join Common Ground? What do you think?

Your Common Ground Core Team: Lynn Connolly, Larry Krolikowski, Rod De Pue, Russ Langford, Mary Ann Fisher, Cathy Startt, Jerry Fredrickson, Mary Ann Steger

## EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY

Earth Justice Ministry (EJM) members participated in ongoing programs of the church, including:

Forums -- Earth Justice Ministry members played a key role in arranging for the following Sunday morning Forum programs:

1. December 10--"Climate Change and the Private Sector Response" --Matthew Rochte, Milwaukee Sustainability Roundtable (Bruce Wiggins, host)
- December 3 -- "Connecting Faith, Environmental Justice and Sustainability" -- Dr. Huda Alkaff, Wisconsin Green Muslims (Mark Mueller host)
- February 18 -- "Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council -- Laura Glaser (Mark Mueller hosted)
- March 18 -- "Impacts of Climate Change on Seasonal Transitions" -- Mark D. Schwartz, Phenoclimatologist, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee (Terry Hansen hosted)
- April 22 -- "Get the Lead Out: Neither bottled Water nor Flushing is the Answer" -- Brenda Coley & Kirsten Shead, Milwaukee Water Commons (Terry Wiggins, host)
2. Feast for Funds Dessert & Documentary events -- holding showings of 6 films: "From the Ashes", "Where to Invade Next," "Before the Flood," "Our Wisconsin," "Chasing Coral," and "Awake: A Dream from Standing Rock." Terry and Bruce Wiggins, Elizabeth Martorell, and Pat Parcell and Al Jaberg are the hosts.
3. First Friday Film -- hosted showing of "Chasing Ice."

In addition, we:

1. Organized a discussion course on Northwest Earth Institute's A Different Way: Living Simply in a Complex World
2. Hosted speakers: Guy McPherson, July 12, 2017, on "Abrupt Climate change", and Fr. John Dear, April 3, 2018, book talk on They Will Inherit the Earth: Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of Climate Change. Rev. Jennifer introduced Fr. Dear, and Reggie Jackson commented. Each event had about 150 audience members.
3. Launched "Are You Willing?" campaign in March with Water, Earth, Air and Fire in successive months. Each Sunday, a table was set up for coffee hours, and guests educated and inspired members of the congregation to take actions.
4. Updated the congregation on the Sustain Our Society program's solar panel production and cost savings, through the Chanticleer and announcements.

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

5. Scheduled another tour of Chiwaukee Prairie after last year's rain-out.
6. Communicated with First Church members, friends, and visitors by having copies of a (revised and reprinted) brochure in the Common Room, managed a Google Group which grew to 70 members, and wrote articles for each issue of the Chanticleer.
7. Held an organizational retreat and monthly meetings.

Committee Members: Terry Wiggins (chair, resigning from chairing), Elizabeth Martorell, Mark Mueller, Tree Moore, Bruce Wiggins, Tom Scannell, Pat Parcell, Megan Burger, Janet Nortrom, Kitty Wilkomm, Joe Kelly, Mary Devitt, Terry Hansen, Laura Herzog, Bryant Sommers.

## FIRST FRIDAY FILMS

First Friday Films showed seven thought-provoking documentaries this year. Screenings took place on the first Friday of the month, with snacks and childcare provided. There was no charge to attend, but optional donations were collected in a basket by the sign-in sheet. Each screening was followed by a Q&A and discussion. Attendance was generally between 15 and 25 people.

Films for our 2017/2018 season were:

- October: Milwaukee: A City Built on Water. Discussion leader: Larry Krolkowski of the Common Ground Watershed Action Group
- November: 13th. Discussion leader: Pete Koneazny of MI-CAH
- December: Made in L.A. Discussion leaders: Kitty Wilkomm and Lorraine Jacobs of the Immigration Issues Action group
- February: Iris. Discussion leader: Jennifer Kaufman of First Friday Films
- March: We are Superman: The Intersection of 31<sup>st</sup> & Troost. Discussion leader: Bruce Wiggins, SJC Chair and former city planner for Kansas City
- April: Chasing Ice. Discussion leader: Terry Wiggins of the Earth Justice Ministry
- May: Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America. Discussion leader: Cheri Briscoe, chair of the Milwaukee County Parks Advisory Commission.

Partway through the year, we discovered that we needed to acquire public performance rights for the films we screen, since they are being shown in a public venue. With the help of the Social Justice Council funds, we were able to acquire the screening rights for the remaining films of the season by contacting the filmmakers and distribution companies. Thank you to the Social Justice Council for supporting and helping fund this effort!

First Friday Films will go on hiatus next year.

By Beth Polluck

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS UNDER FORTY DOING ACTIVITIES (UUUFDA)

The purpose of UUUFDA is to provide fellowship for members and guests of First Church aged 40 and under. Over the past year, we've held over a dozen social events attended by anywhere from 10 to 50 participants at a time.

Our work is purely social in nature and designed to provide fun outlets for our membership. We've seen many new friendships form and we've welcomed many new members to the group this year. Of particular success was our "Bring Your Friends to Church and Brunch Day," an event designed to encourage our members to introduce new folks to church through the fellowship of UUUFDA. Several of these guest attendees are now attending First Church as guests, and we hope to encourage them to become members.

Susie Seidelman

## IMMIGRATION ISSUES ACTION GROUP

The Immigration Issues Action Group worked to increase awareness and understanding of problems facing Milwaukee area immigrants who may live in fear of arrest and deportation. Our weekly action list provided members opportunities to live our faith by "supporting immigrants regardless of their immigration status." (UU College of Social Justice)

2017-18 Group Actions:

- City Hall meeting urging Mayor Barrett not to support Milwaukee County Sheriff's changes in policy concerning deputies' cooperation with ICE
- MPS School Board meeting declaring schools' role as a sanctuary of safety and support for immigrant children
- Sale of lawn signs welcoming immigrants and refugees as neighbors
- Labor Day march in support of workers, immigrants
- Los Voces de la Frontera training to accompany undocumented immigrants to court appointments
- First Thursday monthly vigils outside ICE office- against deportation actions
- First Tuesday monthly Vigils at Ascension Lutheran Church-service supporting immigrants facing discrimination, deportation or separation from family members
- First Church Church hosted our first interfaith vigil
- Vigil after church services co-sponsored with Black Lives Matter to protest police killings and in support of DACA Dreamers
- First Friday film "Made in LA"
- City Hall Rotunda gathering to kick off immigrant/ refugee welcoming week and Holiday Folk Fair International
- Los Voces de la Frontera annual meeting in support of immigrant rights
- Sanctuary Sundays presentations participation
- Attendance at presentation of "ELLIS" Immigrants' stories

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

- Book Club discussion of Enrique's Journey, by Sonia Nazario, a Pulitzer Prize winner documenting a boy's harrowing journey from Honduras to the US to join his mother
- Plan to participate in May 1 Los Voces de la Frontera march in Waukesha to protest change in policy allowing deputies to work in conjunction with ICE.

Lorraine Jacobs and Kitty Willkomm, Co-Chairs

## INTERCHANGE FOOD PANTRY

Interchange Food Pantry served over 7,000 guests during 2017. The pantry, guided by representatives of seven area churches, worked with Hunger Task Force to add the 53233 zip code to its existing 53202, 53203 and 53211 service area towards the end of this year, setting it up to serve more of those in need. A new van was purchased for the pantry to allow for a dependable means to pick up food from Feeding America.

All of this work was possible in part due to financial support from the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee through the Christmas Eve offering, church pledge, and ongoing food and monetary donations from members. Most importantly, the pantry benefited from and is very grateful for an increase in volunteers able to support our mission.

Bryna Goeckner

## INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

The mission of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee is to uphold the dignity of every person and the solidarity of the human community. The Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee initiates and sponsors several programs, committees, activities and events throughout the year. The list below is far from exhaustive, but will provide a sample of some of Interfaith's initiatives offered this past year.

The highlights include Interfaith Earth Network, a subgroup of ICGM that meets monthly to foster conversations on relevant topics in our local community, ICGM's Amazing Faiths Dinner Dialogues that gives people of all faiths (and no faith) the opportunity to have a facilitated dialogue and dinner in private homes, the launch of ICGM's One Community Program, to address structural causes of our local areas severe racial and economic segregation, an ICGM event entitled Hope, Unity which was initiated following the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, VA., where five local faith leaders offered prayers, hope and unity, ICGM's sponsored a Women & Faith event featuring a panel of five women who discussed womanhood and faith, ICGM's participation in the

People of Faith United for Justice, a biennial advocacy day in Madison to protect the social safety net and other relevant issues, and ICGM sponsored the annual CROP Hunger Walk.

Two final ICGM highlighted events include, Interfaith's 47th Annual Luncheon in December 2017 featuring guest speaker Lecia Brooks, Outreach Director of the Southern Poverty Law Center who spoke on 'How faith communities can respond to rising visibility of hate and extremism in Wisconsin and across the nation. And finally, Interfaith's annual luncheon series held each Tuesday in March. The theme for this Spring luncheon series was, The Danger of Silence: Using Our Voices, Hands, Feet and Pocketbooks to Effect Change. Topics presented over the four week program included, The Fierce Urgency of Now, Human Trafficking: Sex & Labor, Homelessness, and Lead in Our Water. Presenters included local and statewide leaders on the various topics covered. As always, it covered relevant topics and was well attended.

Dianna Dentino

## IRMA MORTER LECTURE TEAM

The current lecture planning team, includes; Lorraine Jacobs, Lynda Lambert and Cheryl Maranto. We maintain the original bequest directives; planning annual lectures centered on the concept of "individual responsibility."

The Irma Morter Lecture Fund was established in 2000 through a bequest from this long time, active member. Ms. Morter loved learning, especially philosophy. Drawn to this church, she ultimately chose to make it her spiritual home. In 2009, after settlement of the estate and endowment, an initial planning committee organized two Morter Lectures, with related, supportive events of photography, music, workshops and discussions. These were held, April 25, 2010, with Zoe Weil and May 1, 2011, featuring Robert Shetterly.

The fund was re-examined in 2016 and two lectures have since been arranged. The first, October 2, 2016 in support of the Congregation's 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, featured Megan Marshall, lecturer, titled, "Fullness of Being: Margaret Fuller & Transcendental "Self-Dependence." The life and times of this passionate and adventurous Unitarian woman of the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century was reviewed. Margaret Fuller lived most of her life within the era of our church founding. This lecture was planned in partnership with the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Team Co-Chairs, Pete Koneazny and James Marten.

During the 2017-2018 church year the next Irma Morter Annual Lecture and workshop was held on Saturday, April 28, 2018, titled "Hurt People Hurt People: The Responsibility of Compassion." Featured speakers were; Arno Michaelis,



# Member-Led Ministries Reports

“reformed” skin head/white supremacy organizer and Pardeep Kaleka, a voice against hate crime subsequent to the 2012 shooting attack of his Sikh Temple. Through their shared need to understand the power of compassion, they co-authored “The Gift of Our Wounds: A Sikh and a Former White Supremacist Find Forgiveness after Hate” and established Serve2Unite through which they work to build inclusive, compassionate climates in school communities.

The Irma Morter Annual Lecture Team seeks to incorporate lectures to support and enhance established programming goals of First Church groups. All First Church staff and members are eligible to apply for Irma Morter Annual Lecture funds. Contact a member of the current team to apply for the 2018-2019 church year.

## MICAH

MICAH continued work on justice issues including: mass incarceration, voter suppression, unjust immigration policies, and education inequality.

The ROC Wisconsin Task Force worked statewide to:

1. Expand funds for Treatment Alternative and Diversion (TAD): drug treatment courts, family courts, mental health courts and other interventions which are proven more effective than incarceration in reducing recidivism and save taxpayers \$2 for every \$1 invested.
2. Pass Second Chance: bipartisan legislation to return most 17-year-olds to the juvenile justice system.
3. Reduce use of solitary confinement (also called segregation, administrative confinement, or restrictive housing) and eliminate entirely such isolation for mentally-ill prisoners and juveniles.
4. Realize parole release for eligible persons who can be released safely and obtain compassionate release for elderly and/or very ill prisoners who are no longer a danger to society.
5. Launch statewide “Race to Justice” campaign - a series of trainings, outreach campaigns, and forums designed to ensure that criminal justice reform is addressed by candidates running for state office.

The Education Task Force focused on identifying and bringing new and diverse members to the task force. Among their accomplishments were:

- Strengthened partnerships with
  1. Schools and Communities United
  2. Milwaukee City Council of PTAs
  3. Milwaukee Community Schools Partnership
  4. Milwaukee Succeeds
  5. Hopkins-Lloyd Community School
- Co-hosted a well-attended MPS School Board Candidate Forum in March 2017.
- Conducted a series of community listening sessions at MICAH congregations to elicit community feedback and increase engagement in public education in Milwaukee.

The Immigration Issues Task Force promoted MICAH membership for, and engagement with, Latino and other inner-city cultural groups that are underrepresented within MICAH. Over the past three years the task force:

- Developed partnerships with national, state, and local justice advocacy networks including the New Sanctuary Movement, WISDOM, Voces de la Frontera, Catholic Charities of Milwaukee, and We Are All Milwaukee Coalition.
- Lobbied the Wisconsin State Legislature to allow Wisconsin immigrants, with or without Social Security cards, to have a Wisconsin driver’s license or equivalent credential available to them as it is in Illinois and other states.
- Partnered with We Are All Milwaukee Coalition to establish and promote the Milwaukee Municipal ID, enabling Milwaukee residents to access local services requiring a government-issued photo ID.
- Represented MICAH at monthly Prayer Vigils held in local churches on behalf of deportees and their families.
- Engaged in monthly protests of the ongoing inhumane and unjust practices of the federal immigration enforcement authorities in Milwaukee and beyond.
- Headed the MICAH contingent in Milwaukee’s annual May Day March, our community’s united call on behalf of all immigrants and working families.
- Trained with Catholic Charities of Milwaukee to assist immigrants and immigrant families impacted by new federal policies on deportation in securing capable legal services.

Bob Monahan, Pete Koneazny

## NEW SANCTUARY MOVEMENT DISCERNMENT AND OUTCOMES

Following the guidance of the UUA web site and New Sanctuary Toolkit the “Sanctuary Discernment Team” was formed in April 2017 to begin assessing congregational readiness. Members included Pat Geenen, Birger Pahl, and Tree Moore with support from Diana Alstadt, Joe Sexauer and Kathy Rivera.

Our guiding definitions: **Sanctuary** —a form of solidarity with those who suffer. One manifestation is a physical place to safely house individuals facing imminent deportation. Another is advocacy coupled with supportive partnership within established programs or physical sanctuary providers. **Discernment**—a journey requiring careful examination of congregational readiness and appropriateness in response to the sanctuary call.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2017, various actions, experiences and supportive involvements were offered to build congregation awareness and understanding. Monthly “Sanctuary Sundays” were scheduled, led by local community advocates, offering education on legal aspects, workers/ labor impact, service organizations, immigration policies, and history.

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

In October 2017, we began a series Cottage Meetings involving small groups of concerned, interested First Church members. Eight total Cottage Meetings were held allowing 91 participants to voice their concerns, learn, listen to each other's ideas concerning immigration, and discuss the possibility of offering physical sanctuary at First Church.

Utilizing information gathered from UUA New Sanctuary movement materials, Sanctuary Sundays presentations, Cottage Meeting outcomes, and Sanctuary Discernment Team investigations regarding the feasibility of offering physical sanctuary at First Church, co-chairs Kitty Willkomm and Lorraine Jacobs created a report approved by the Sanctuary Discernment Team.

The report was then reviewed and approved by the Social Justice Council (Nov. 15, 2017) and First Church Board of Trustees (Nov. 28, 2017) which manifested a Resolution for Sanctuary at First Church.

*Be it resolved that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Milwaukee join in coalition with other Milwaukee area faith communities to support the new Sanctuary movement and that our support may include providing volunteer hours, donations and financial contributions. Membership in the coalition will keep the door open for a future decision to offer physical sanctuary within First Church and we will continue to stand together in support of justice for immigrants.*

## SHARE THE PLATE

Each month First Church shares 50% of all non-pledge cash in the offering plate with a worthy non-profit organization whose work in the wider community embodies our Unitarian Universalist values. Church members submit nominations for potential recipients. The Share the Plate Committee meets several times during the church year to review nominations and assign chosen recipients to specific calendar months.

In just over 7 years, January 2011 through February 2018, the First Church members gave a yearly average of \$23,343, distributing a total of \$163,404 to support worthy organizations and causes. Of the overall total, \$123,138 came from "normal" monthly/summer collections and went to 76 recipients, with an average contribution of \$1,620. An additional \$40,266 was distributed from Christmas Eve services, special one-time events, and disaster relief efforts. A complete list of past recipients can be found on the uumilwaukee website.

Our youth and children actively participate in the Share the Plate program by selecting organizations twice each year. The Youth Steering Committee chose Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin as our March recipient. The K5-12th grades select-

ed Project Q (a youth program of the MKE LGBT Community Center) for the month of May.

A heartfelt thank you from the Share the Plate team on behalf of all those served by your generous donations.

Bob Monahan on behalf of the Share the Plate Committee

## SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

Another church year has flowed smoothly between (most) services with timely and interesting Forum presentations. It is an exciting and rewarding experience as coordinator, bringing structure to the planning phase while individual group members carry out their scheduling and hosting responsibilities. I've not worked with a more independent, capable and responsible group of people. The Forum Group includes: Janet Nortrom, Juliet Hills, Jerry Fredrickson, Ben Campbell, Christian Becker, Mark Mueller, Jo Ann Bachar, Thallis Drake, Joan Schmidt. We welcome Ann Batiza, joining the group in April 2018.

We proudly continue a 40 year tradition offering excellent speakers in a wide range of topics. We manage a balance from; local initiatives, area politics, social and environmental justice to the cultural/creative arts. It's no wonder that I often hear at Coffee Hour, "What's the Forum today?" Just a sample of answers are: "Schooner Days: The Story of the Denis Sullivan," "Mental Illness and It's Effect on the Family," "Wisconsin Deserves Fair Maps," "The Guesthouse of Milwaukee," "The Iditarod-Alaska's Famous Dog Sled Race:", "Get the Lead Out: Bottled Water Is Not the Answer", "Gravitational Wave Theory," "The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee," "Weapons Beyond the Blade: Milwaukee Public Museum," "The Office of Sustainability: UW-Milwaukee," "Clean Open Government in Wisconsin: Where? When?" Each year the Forum Series has congregation members, not in the Forum Group, who offer topic/speaker ideas. If chosen they are guided in the tasks required for making the presentation happen. We appreciate their input and attention to providing Forums.

Our Forums create direct connections with local leaders, organizers, business people, non-profit directors, area specialists, professors, dedicated hobbyists and creative artists. We are grateful for their generosity of time and experience. We thank First Church members for their feed-back and regular attendance. Each Forum has an average of 30 attendees. That is respectable given the amount of choices and interests drawing everyone on Sunday mornings. Remember, Forums are free and open to the public, consider inviting friends to visit our church with you by attending a Forum.

Lorraine Jacobs, Group Coordinator

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## SWANS (SEASONED WOMEN ARE NATURALLY SOCIAL)

Many SWANS met for lunch after church on the first Sunday of the month. In the fall we met for a potluck at St John's on the Lake and heard Mary Leach Sumlin of Franciscan Peacemakers speak about their mission of helping women who had been trafficked start new lives. Her assistant sold jewelry, soaps and fragrant candles as part of their efforts to fundraise. Many SWANS purchased items to help support them.

On New Year's Day about 25 SWANS met at Thallis Drake's home for a potluck. They contributed over 60 various items to the Cathedral Center such as cleaning products, kitchen necessities and personal hygiene items. Some cosmetic items, purses and books were also donated. The Cathedral Center was grateful.

We also contributed generously to aid a church member with her health expenses.

We sponsored a Feast for Funds event featuring Jessica Michna portraying Eleanor Roosevelt in 1936 in a program entitled "Brother can you spare a dime?" About 18 people attended.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara Collignon, co-leader with Jeanne Durford

## UU+ STUDY GROUP

The UU+ Study Group thrived during its second year of helping members to deepen our understanding of Unitarian Universalism and to enrich our spiritual journeys through reading and discussion. This year's four chosen books were *Religion for Atheists* by Alain de Botton; *Jesus, Interrupted* and *The Triumph of Christianity* by Bart Ehrman; and *Zealot* by Reza Aslan. Fifteen people participated in one or more of our discussions.

From Nancy Pajewski and Chris Linder

## UU BOOK CLUB

The UU Book Club meets once per month from September through May to discuss the chosen book.

We read a variety of fiction and non-fiction. Some books deal with serious topics like racism and others are "lighter" and are read for entertainment. We try to find books that will inspire good discussions. For example, during this church year we read *Underground Railroad*, a fictional account of slavery by Colson Whitehead; *The Drifter*, a fictional story about a terrorist plot located in Milwaukee's Riverwest

neighborhood by Milwaukee native Nick Petri;; and *Maggie Murders*, an Agatha Christie-style murder mystery with a mystery within a mystery.

We meet once during the summer to choose books for the coming church year. Each participant may recommend a few books which he or she has read and likes. We vote to determine which books we will discuss.

At that time we also decide which book will be discussed each month and who will lead the discussion. Copies of the reading list are at the book table in the Common Room and are published in the Chanticleer.

This group is open to everyone. It is not a membership group, and everyone is welcome to attend any discussion. However, we do have a contact list and send out monthly reminders about the meetings. You are welcome to add your name to the list.

The contact person is Chris Linder, celinder@att.net

## WOMANSPIRIT

WomanSpirit at the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee is one of our connections to the National Unitarian Universalist Woman's Federation. We pay an annual membership fee that alerts us also to our Central Midwest District Women's Connection, who sponsor UU women's retreat in June and August, and the Mid-American Woman and Religion gathering who hold their retreats in February. Many of our members went to Evanston, Illinois to hear Holly Near this February and Janet Nortrom arranged for Janet Fitch, our member, filmmaker to film Holly as part of the ongoing film "The Most Dangerous Women." WomanSpirit hopes to share some of those highlights this summer or in the fall, 2018. Several of our members attended the fall woman's conference held at the DeKoven Center in Racine. One of our members, Kathleen Miezio, joined the UU Women's Connection board this year.

We reach out and welcome all women, practicing mutual support, personal; growth and spiritual enrichment. We give financial help when needed. We provided service hospitality on different levels, we gave household gifts and school supplies to Women in need at Sojourner Truth House and St. Benedicts. We again helped provide hospitality for a private reception for our Unitarian Universalist United Nations Director, Bruce Knotts, who enhanced our church and the Milwaukee Community the year before and this year we supported North Church when they hosted him as he shared his voice of Peace and Liberty to all.

We continue to collaborate with many women's groups, working on voting registration with the League of Women Voters, immigration, Black Lives Matter with our UU groups.

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

Working for equal pay and Title 9 with the American Association of University Women and helping award women in the Soroptimist International group, providing money and goods to girls and women in sex trafficking support groups helping to provide them to a new way of life. We continue to support women attending conferences, and the General Assembly who share their wisdom with our church members and the greater society.

Leadership and ideas are always welcome.  
With joy and determination, Janet Nortrom

**The congregation of The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee  
affirms and promotes the full participation of persons in our activities without regard to race, color, gender,  
physical or mental challenge, sexual identity or orientation, age, class, national origin, or ancestry.**

**Indeed, we are interested in actively promoting  
more diversity within our congregation.**