



THE CHANTICLEER

First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.



CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES 3:30, 5:00, & 6:30 p.m.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 24

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

Cami Thomas, Religious Education Coordinator

3:30 & 5:00 p.m.

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

6:30 p.m.

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Jack Forbes Wilson, Resident Artist

The Chancel Choir

Join us for a simple, traditional multigenerational Christmas Eve service of carols, candlelight, and stories.

The whole family is welcome in all services. Childcare will also be available during the first two services.

A holiday reception will follow each service.

MONTHLY THEME:

What does it mean to be a people of
Mystery?

December 2018

SUNDAY SERVICES & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

DECEMBER 2

"Mystery: The Gift of Not Knowing"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Cami Thomas, Religious Education Coordinator

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Beth Monhollen, Worship Associate

Our Unitarian Universalist congregation is a place where reason and spirituality come together, where people of different beliefs hold shared values. We are people who are both searching and found. What is the relationship between the known and the unknown, doubt and faith, reason and mystery? How can we live together when one or the other end of the infinite eight circling the concrete and the intangible holds us? What gifts might that infinite relationship bring, slipping in the edges between the known and the unknown?

DECEMBER 9

"Standing Still During Change"

Michele Grove, Interim Religious Educator

Cami Thomas, Religious Education Coordinator

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Natalie Quinton, Worship Associate

When changes take place, we often respond by moving quickly past the change into a new space. This quick movement may alleviate initial anxieties but often produces more confusion in the long run. Michele Grove, a Unitarian Universalist interim religious educator, will explore differences between change and transition. What gifts come when the entire congregation stands still and reflects on the value of learning within the mission and vision of the congregation? You are invited to come and stay still for a short while we reflect on this question as a community.

(SUNDAYS, continued on page 11)

Words on the Wind

by The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

When the earth turns away from the sun and the land grows colder and darker, people huddle around fires and light candles, drawing towards one another. Different holidays celebrate human connection, hope, and mystery.

The growing darkness invites a turning in, a quiet time of introspection. The darkness creates a nestled cocoon, a place where striking a match catches the eye and asks: Who am I? Where are we? What is the meaning of this deep mystery?

As many people prepare for holidays, travel, and family, we are invited into the roots of our being. Where did we come from? How did it shape us? How are we choosing to shape ourselves?

There are also many people who will not be with those they love this season, by choice or circumstance. Regardless, when it seems the whole culture is jostling for connection, isolation can feel sharp. May you have the balm you need this season, honored in your choices and comforted in your circumstances.

The dark can be luminous, and it can be lonely. Mystery can feel like a wide-open expanse of wonder, and it can feel like frightening ambiguity. As a religious community, may we remember this time of year is different for everyone, despite cultural proclamations of sameness, and may we turn to those around us with curiosity, compassion, and love for their particular experiences and needs. May we be one another's shelter in the dark.

With love,
Jennifer

December's Theme: Mystery

by Michelle Naples
Congregation President 2018-19

A kind of mystery that we might find ourselves exploring here at First Church is of a different nature than the whodunnit variety where the truth can be uncovered by simply following the clues and exercising our deductive skills. In our faith tradition, we are open to the kind of mystery with a capital M where questions lead to more and bigger questions, and the mystery expands. I am learning to derive satisfaction and meaning from the seeking itself and knowing that I am on my journey in community together with others on theirs.

And then there's the business of church governance. The Board of Trustees continues to advance our efforts to define and develop a policy governance system. A primary focus so

far this fall has been reviewing staff interpretation of our eight Ends. We are also having important conversations about naming the sources of authority on whose behalf the Board governs. At the same time, we are considering the congregational survey results to understand what they tell us about where we are today. We will be sharing these results with you in the coming months. By the end of the church year, we plan to have several foundational elements in place for an effective system of governance that we will continue to grow into.

Wishing you and yours a wonderful and joyous end of the year!

Lu Krug Bequest Inspires Project Ideas

by Melina Vernon

Members and staff have submitted a total of nineteen requests for funding totaling over \$700,000. Members of the Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT) are extremely impressed by the creativity and passion demonstrated in the proposals. While only a portion of the proposed projects can be funded at this time, those not funded will have an opportunity for consideration during a second round of proposals in a year or two.

The team (Elizabeth Lentini, Chair; Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Jean Johnson, David Becker, Lianna Bishop, Gordon Mueller, Melinda Vernon) is now in the process of discerning which projects they will recommend to the board for funding, using criteria such as feasibility, and alignment with our Ends statements, mission, and values. Some proposers have been asked to submit additional information to aid in our decision-making. We anticipate making recommendations to the board for approval in February or March.



Dena's Digressions

One aspect of this month's theme of Mystery is the experience of feeling awe. We can go about our daily lives and wait to be awestruck, or we can open our awareness to the possibility of feeling awe at being alive and part of something so much bigger than ourselves. Lily Tomlin calls this practice "awe-robics" in her one-woman play, *Searching for Intelligent Signs in the Universe*.

On the way to the play we stopped to look at the stars. And as usual I felt in awe. And then I felt even deeper in awe at this capacity we have to be in awe about something. Then I became even more awestruck at the thought that I was, in some small way, a part of that which I was in awe about. And this feeling went on and on. My space chums got a word for it: "awe infinitum." 'Cause at the moment you are most in awe of all you don't understand, you're closer to understanding it all than at any other time. And I felt so good inside, my heart felt so full, I decided to set time aside each day to do "awe-robics."

~Lily Tomlin as "Trudy the Bag Lady"

The winter holidays are a mixed bag: stressful, sad, lonely, yet also magical with moments of love and forgiveness that are awe-inspiring. If you are looking for a moment of respite amidst the clamor of the season, please join us for our Blue Christmas Vespers service Wednesday, December 12, at 7:00 p.m. when we will gather in the beauty of our sanctuary for readings, candles, silence and music. It's a good place to be for anyone feeling out-of-sync with the forced cheerfulness of the holidays.

Yours,
Dena

Splinters from the Board

by Melina Vernon

At the Board of Trustees meeting on October 23, 2018, we continued to discuss aspects of policy governance and the specifics of how we will measure progress toward our Ends.

Mark Bender presented preliminary data from the congregational survey, which will serve as a baseline on how we are achieving those Ends. Additional data will be available in December, and we will decide how to share the results with the congregation.

Rev. Jennifer presented the staff's interpretation of Ends 5-8. A discussion ensued about the difficulty of collecting data and establishing appropriate metrics. The discussion will continue at our next meeting.

A retreat to work on a draft of board governance policies with consultant Laura Parks was scheduled for January 11-12.

Noreen Gilbertsen and Jean Johnson submitted the First Quarter Financial Report, which showed income and expenses as expected or better than anticipated for this point in the year, with a strong balance sheet.

Rev. Dena's report highlighted that six Theme Circles are up and running. The Social Justice Internship is going well in its initial stages. A new group of Pastoral Care Associates has been trained.

In her Senior Minister's report, Rev. Jennifer highlighted that nineteen applications have been submitted for funding through the Lu Krug legacy gift. Also, an anti-racism dialogue for First Church members and friends was held in September. Issues with streaming our Sunday services are being addressed. October worship attendance was up.

Michelle Naples presented a matrix looking at various types of expertise of value to the board as a tool for succession planning.

Minutes of recent Board meetings are posted on the First Church bulletin board in the central corridor and on the church website. Members of the Board of Trustees welcome your thoughts and concerns at any time. Our pictures are posted in the central corridor, and we wear yellow name tags. Contact information is also listed in the front of the directory of groups and on the last page of this Chanticleer.



SOCIAL JUSTICE NEWS

Becoming an Anti-Racist Congregation

by Paul Geenen

About a dozen members of our congregation participated in Reggie Jackson's seminar titled "Do Black Lives Matter?" held at Parklawn Assembly of God church, concluding on November 13. Mr. Jackson is the Head Griot of the Black Holocaust Museum. The purpose of this three-part lecture series was to educate the audience on aspects of African American history that are overlooked or understood incorrectly.

The three sessions covered the history of African American legal and political standings, the impact of multi-generational trauma, and the continued use of violence. Mr. Jackson drew from his lifelong studies to give his audience a nuanced account of the African American experience. His presentations on the "hangings," riots against African American communities, and police killings left the audience in silence.

Members from five Unitarian Universalist congregations in Southeast Wisconsin, including our own, met at in the auditorium of Ascension St. Joseph Hospital in the afternoons after the morning sessions. We broke into small groups, with members from all five congregations, to have a deeper dialogue on racial equity. We closed the final Saturday session with a group of a dozen First Church members.

Our First Church group ranked our congregation in the "Racial Justice in UU Congregations" rubric provided by the seminar leaders as a "Multiculturally Aware Congregation." This is the middle of the following three classifications, "Status Quo Congregation," "Multiculturally Aware Congregation," and "Anti-Racist Congregation." We discussed the fact that moving to the third category, "Anti-Racist Congregation," will generate conflict. After discussing possible actions, we could not see a clear path forward and felt we needed to involve more members of our congregation.

If you would like to share your thoughts on how we can become an Anti-Racist Congregation, contact Paul Geenen and request a copy of the "Racial Justice in UU Congregations" rubric to review.

News From SJ Intern

by Claire Keyes

During my first two and a half months at First Church, I attended a plethora of social justice events. Each event left me stirring for change and wanting to take action within our community. Following these significant experiences, I ask myself, "what's next?" I often struggled to answer this question, until I was introduced to the Action-Reflection model. Rather than simply attending an event and then moving on with life, the Action-Reflection model allows us to grow and develop because of the events we attend and the justice activities we do.

Reflection questions are simple yet effective at increasing our awareness and learning: What did I expect going into the event? What surprised me? What did I learn? In an effort to better employ this method here at First Church, I thought I would share some of the reflections I had on Armistice Day with you.

Armistice Day was an event organized by Veterans for Peace, a local organization working for peace throughout our world. I was surprised by the framework of the event, as I had never made the association between veterans and peace in the past. This event challenged my preconceived notions and showed me how the first-hand experiences veterans have with war and violence may influence them to be active agents working for peace in our society.

Through listening to the three speakers at the event, I increased my knowledge of Islamophobia and how our country's war efforts increase this, as well as seeing how our large military budget prevents us from addressing social issues, such as homelessness and hunger.

While this event broadened my perspective, it really reminded me of why working for justice and equity is so important and urgent. The issues that our UU values ask us to address impact so many members of our society in many ways.

In the words of JFK, I ask you to ask yourself, "If not us, who? If not now, when?"

In Solidarity,
Claire



A Sacred Cycle Our Gift To and From the Earth

by Tree Moore

Thanksgiving has just passed. Some of us are experiencing a season of generosity and gratitude or what I call a "sacred cycle," where true receiving naturally flows into gratefulness: a prayer of thanks, a warm smile, and an invitation to tea or a desire to return the gift at some future time.

Unfortunately, we know of too many examples where the sacred cycle does not flow or is incomplete. Folks are unable to receive for complicated reasons. A compliment is laughed off, or an offer to help is declined. On the contrary, an individual may be forever narcissistically taking. Paradoxically, in both cases, the result is the same—an incomplete cycle: a lonely life often full of stuff.

Similarly, a sacred cycle exists in relation to our planet. The Earth is rich and generous to us in her gifts and yet we are frequently indifferent in our response, taking such abundance and beauty for granted. How many of us were touched by the miracle of a snowy, white world the other morning?

Charles Eisenstein in his book, *Climate: A New Story*, makes a strong plea for us to express our gratitude by becoming engaged with a damaged piece of land, one that has been trashed, trampled, left bare, eroded or sprayed. Imagine finding a 15'x30' spot (close enough so you may visit it regularly ... it could even be your own yard). Start by simply observing the land. Then listen to what it might need before intervening. Consider researching what to plant. Consult staff at the Nature Conservancy. A bare earth might call for mulch or fertilizer. Our degraded earth will express its gratitude when cared for. A grateful host; a sacred cycle completed!

A Donation of Food and Socks for Guest House

by Nancy Pajewski

First Church will provide supper for the 86 men of the Guest House Shelter on Saturday, December 15. Our menu includes turkey casserole, sweet potatoes, and Christmas cookies. Also, we are collecting new and gently used socks for the men. Both dark dress socks and white athletic socks are appreciated.

Sign-up sheets to bring food are posted at the Social Justice Table or you can sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084BA4AD2DA6F49-guest4>. Socks can be dropped off at the Social Justice Table throughout December.

Many thanks on behalf of the recipients of your generosity.

Welcome Cindy Lorentzen, Communications Coordinator!

by Jean Johnson
Director of Administration

I'm pleased to welcome Cindy Lorentzen to the church staff as our new communications coordinator. Cindy is warm and personable, as well as very skilled. You may look forward to her helping us ensure our messaging is inclusive and accessible, using a variety of media.



A note from Cindy: I'm very excited to join the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee as the part-time communications coordinator, and I look forward to working with you! As a little background, I received my bachelor's degree in business and management from Alverno College and my master's degree in leadership studies from Marquette University. I have over 20 years of communications experience in the higher education and financial service industries. My husband and I live in Franklin, with Abby, our energetic English Setter dog.

Meet Jonah Roth!

by Andrea Cornwall

Jonah's involvement at First Church began when he was a baby in the nursery, and he's been in the Religious Education (RE) program since then. The Bible stories taught in his 3rd-4th grade RE class made him realize that he need not only *learn* from Christian teachings but that he could *question* them — a very UU perspective! He also feels blessed to be able to express himself at First Church through his passions for both music and writing.

Jonah believes that our UU values and principles go beyond church, and that "balancing social justice with a free, responsible search for truth and meaning" has immense value for him. He feels an extraordinary freedom to express his "real" self in the YRUU youth group, and he recognizes that bonding over shared feelings with other UU youth has been a unique opportunity.

Now a senior in high school, Jonah has become more engaged in RE and currently serves on the Youth Steering Committee (YSC) as one of two youth representatives for the Children's RE Team. Jonah will graduate from Milwaukee High School of the Arts this spring and is currently in the midst of the stressful college search and application process. He looks forward to what he hopes will be a transformative college experience, and would eventually like to pursue a graduate degree in nursing or psychology, as he continues to play the music that he loves.

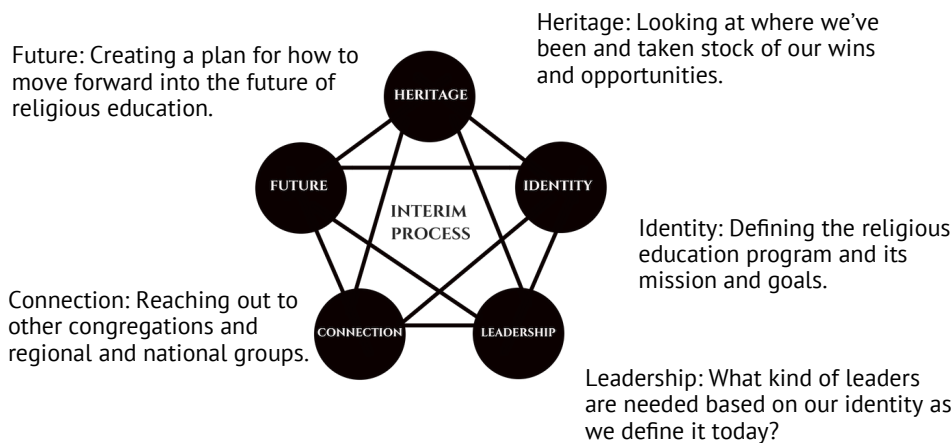


Participate in Change: Our Religious Education Program

by Cami Thomas
Interim Religious Education Coordinator

Since I joined the staff at First Church, I've often heard the term "transition fatigue." I understand that you have been through many transitions over the past ten years. As many of you have discussed at our Heritage and Transitions workshops, this is a normal part of life. Still, we have a natural human aversion to transition, based on not knowing what to expect during the process. I'd like to share with you what to expect in the process of transition here in Religious Education.

Within this process, there are five stages, typically beginning with our heritage and ending with the future. However, this is not a linear process. Any of these five stages can happen at any time and be entangled with each other.



You might wonder: how do we navigate this complexity? As your Interim Religious Education Coordinator, I am your guide through this process. I am working behind the scenes to collect stories and will use them to create a report of these five stages, with my assessment of where the program is and where it wants to go. There are also exciting Unitarian Universalist professional consultants joining us along the way to assist us with different stages, to explore the future and incorporate our congregation's Ends statements. For example, Interim Religious Educator, Michele Grove, came to guide us through honoring our religious education heritage. We have consultants coming soon to guide us through identity, leadership, and connection. Please see the sidebar on this page for the schedule, and please participate!

In addition to guiding you through the five stages, Children's RE Committee Chair Sarah Richards and I will be convening a transition committee to take on the work of searching for a new Director of Religious Education (DRE). That committee will contribute to the development of the DRE job description and the overall hiring process.

If you have any questions or want to learn more about the transition process, please contact Cami Thomas at camithomas@uumilwaukee.org.

Thank you for all your input and participation in this transition process!

RE Interim Consultant Dates

December 8

Christina Leone Tracy will conduct the workshop: "Models and Structures." Join us 2:00-5:00 p.m. There is no charge to register, please RSVP at www.eventbrite.com/e/re-vitalize-tickets-52674823816.

December 9

"Standing Still During Change"
Michelle Grove will be our Sunday Service Pulpit Guest, at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

February 23, 2019

Kim Sweeney will conduct the workshop: "Identity, Culture, and Frameworks." Join us 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

February 24, 2019

"Religious Education in the 21st Century"
Kim Sweeney will be our Sunday Service Pulpit Guest, at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Adults Comes to First Church

Do you want to understand your needs for sexuality and intimacy with a partner *and* be able to communicate them?

Do you want to understand more about sexual orientation and gender identity?

Do you want to learn how to have a safe and mutually pleasurable relationship?

Consider joining our two trained Adult/Young Adult Our Whole Lives (OWL) facilitators, Liz and Shannon, on Sunday, December 16, at the RE Table during Coffee Hour to ask questions and learn more about this new program for First Church arriving in the spring of 2019. Sexuality education is not just for eighth graders anymore!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

A Youth's Perspective

by Ehlona Walker

This past September, I had the opportunity to travel to Indianapolis, Indiana, to become chaplain-trained as a youth. I wasn't sure what to expect, as this was my first time participating in a multigenerational training. It was such a blessing to be able to attend this training.

Before I arrived, I was able to visit with friends whom I met at Midwest Leadership School two years ago and most recently at Summer Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. It was especially encouraging to see most local stores displaying a Pride flag! At the training, I was able to meet youth and adults from our UUA MidAmerica Region ready to provide chaplain training in the best way they possibly could. For three days, we breezed through many topics to include, when to breach confidentiality. We even had time to celebrate my birthday (with cake of course)!

Now I feel prepared to provide our youth at First Church pastoral care to the best of my ability, and I am very thankful for this opportunity.

Drop-In Yoga Classes for Holiday Stress Relief!

Yoga instructor Morgan Engels offers drop-in classes on Monday, December 17, at 5:30 - 7:00 p.m., and Wednesday, December 19, at 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. No need to register in advance. Cost is \$10 per person.

These yoga classes are suitable for all levels and can be modified for the participant's individual needs. The poses and stretches are designed to nourish the joints, ligaments, tendons, and fascia, and open and release areas in need of stretching.

All About Youth:

December 2018 YRUU Happenings

by Deb Solis
Youth Program Coordinator

YUULE Ball

The Youth Group had to postpone their planned November Mission Trip fundraiser YUULE Ball. It has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 19, 2019, and more details will be in the January *Chanticleer*. We are very excited because First Church member and master storyteller Paul Akert will be joining us in January as Professor Dumbledore!

College Finance Workshop

Sunday, December 2, current YRUU advisor, Mission Trip advisor, and economics expert Don Weimer is offering his annual session on Financing College for interested YRUU youth and their parents at 12:45 p.m. in the Reeb Room.

Holiday Pageant

Sunday, December 23, is our annual Holiday Pageant. Our YRUU youth will present in UU youth style their version of the holiday classic song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas"!

Community Mural

Sunday, December 23, during the Holiday Pageant Service, the youth group will present to the congregation the finished community mural that they have been working on with artist Tia Richardson this fall in Sunday morning youth-group sessions. This project is made possible through financial support from the Tom Thaney Fund for the Arts.

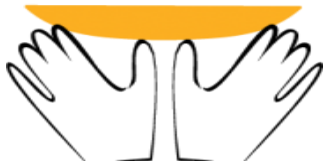
OWL

Our Whole Lives (OWL) for eighth-graders will not meet on Sunday, December 30.

Mission Trip

At this time, we have eight youth scheduled for an interview with our trip advisors, John Fitak, Don Weimer, and Alisha Koneazny, as possible participants for our 2019 Habitat for Humanity Mission Trip to Battle Creek, Michigan, July 29-August 3, 2019. They include Jonah Roth, Celie Koneazny, Ehlona Walker, Paul Lindroth, Leah Nyholm, Nyanna Krajewski, Austin Straub, and Lucy Pyne.





Share the Plate

by Dawn Blackmore

The Franciscan Peacemakers is our December Share the Plate recipient. The Franciscan Peacemakers is located in the Harambee neighborhood of Milwaukee, on West Burleigh Street. Their mission is to provide a path for a healthy, safe and productive life for women who are engaging in prostitution due to trauma, sex trafficking, or drug addiction. Since 1995 the Franciscan Peacemakers Street Ministry has conducted outreach in Milwaukee's central city and helped hundreds of men, women, and children on the street.

As stated on their website: "Our humble service is rooted in Franciscan Spirituality, incorporating a holistic healing approach emphasizing the human dignity of every person. The Street Ministry provides free lunches and personal-hygiene items to men, women, and children in the street. Many are homeless and many engage in prostitution. The Franciscan Peacemakers work to develop trust with the community and offer a safe place for those who want to leave prostitution and overcome drug addiction. The Clare Community Housing provides space for women in transition. Gifts for the Journey offers a supportive workplace for women. They learn skills in marketing, manufacturing, packaging, sales, and administration through the production of handmade lotions, soaps and candles."

Find out more about their programs and what you can do to help by visiting their website: www.franciscanpeacemakers.com.

Cash collected in the offering plate on Sundays will be shared 50/50 between Franciscan Peacemakers and First Church. To donate only to this organization, write a check directly to the Franciscan Peacemakers and we will mail it for you. Parents and guardians, please talk with your children how even small donations help.

PlayTime News

Artistic Activities in the Community
by First Church Members & Staff

Chancel Choir member Bill Sakalaucks will be performing in the Chant Claire Chamber Choir at two events, December 1 at 7:00 p.m., St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, and December 15 at 7:00 p.m., St. Sebastian Catholic Church. For more information: www.chantclaire.org.

Our choral scholars will be performing in the UW-Milwaukee Winter Choral Concert, "Sun, Moon, and Stars," on December 8 at 7:30 p.m., at the Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts. For tickets and information, visit www.uwm.edu/arts/event/sounds-of-the-season-choral-concert or call 414-229-4308.

Resident Artist Jack Forbes Wilson is performing in "The Twelve Dates of Christmas," November 15 through December 9, at Next Act Theatre. For tickets and info, go to <http://nextact.org> or call 414-278-0765.

Patricia Witt is singing in the Milwaukee Choristers Christmas Concert, 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 14, and Saturday, December 15, at the Sharon Lynn Wilson Center in Brookfield. Tickets available at www.milwaukeechoristers.org.

First Church member John Stano is performing at The Public Table on December 1; at the Burlington Coffee House, with Mark Dvorak, on December 14; and at Cafe Carpe, December 21, with Peter Mulvey and others.

Book Tower Stocks New Holiday Merchandise

by Nancy Pajeweski

Stop by the Book Tower in the Common Room as you plan your holiday gift giving. The Book Tower is full of new merchandise for the season. We have children's books based on many cultures and faith traditions; adult books, including poetry by Mary Oliver, focusing on new year opportunities; and UU merchandise such as mugs and tote bags.

The Book Tower operates in self-service mode. Payment must be made by check or exact cash amount. Instructions are posted at the Tower.

Finally, as you make room for new books, remember that the Used Book Sale will be held on the weekend of March 29 -31, 2019. More information will be coming. Due to space constraints, we cannot accept donated books before March.



Membership Musings: Holding, Not Knowing

by Lynne Jacoby
Membership Development Coordinator

As a New Englander, I have long understood that, like the region of the country I grew up in, I may be intellectually liberal (well, relatively) but, for all practical purposes, I am pretty darn conservative. What I wear, what color I'd choose to paint a house, how I express emotion (or don't express it); my gut reaction of what is "proper" in these kinds of areas is subdued, narrow, and long ago defined, I suspect, by that region's practical and stoic settlers.

So when it comes to Mystery with a capital M, I can feel my gut go, "Oh no, not that New Agey stuff!" I'd like to dismiss it altogether and write instead about "let's not keep our names a mystery to each other ... and wear our name tags in church!"

But I can't help thinking about the sermon that first made me feel like Unitarian Universalism might be a home for me. It was about how UUism as a denomination doesn't, officially, know. God, no God, afterlife, no afterlife. As individuals we can have beliefs, but as UUs, we don't pin our beliefs to captivity. We don't know.

That morning I thought, "Oh good, I should fit right in," but more important was what I felt. My shoulders relaxed, my breathing deepened, my spine uncurled and nestled firm and straight against the pew. I had no idea I'd been carrying as a burden not knowing what I believed, when I thought I should by then, until I was given the permission to let knowing go.

I'm likely still pretty far from embracing mystery; but I do appreciate how holding a stance of curiosity instead of knowing can open the mind and the heart. How it can free us from expectations we never consciously signed up for, and from opinions we inherited long before we could examine them.

But! I can also firmly believe there is no harm in helping each other out solving the little mysteries, like ... our names!

Calling All Elves to Help Spread Cheer!

Help us treat all our guests, visitors, members and staff to a festive spread on Christmas Eve! Consider contributing a plate of cookies, bars, or whatever savory or sweet is a holiday favorite in your own home. A sign-up sheet to bring Christmas Eve sweets will be at the Membership Table starting the first Sunday in December, or email Lynne Jacoby (see her contact info below).

We're also looking for two or three extraordinarily helpful elves to help organize the receptions. The job involves helping us decorate (day/time mutually determined), helping to pick up a few supplies, and "covering" (restocking the bounty and picking up a bit) at one of the three receptions. It's a fun service to our community, one that friends, partners, or a family with older kids could do as a team.

Ready to wear green leggings? Have further questions? Contact Lynne Jacoby by email, lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org, or call 414-273-5257, x. 205.

Feast for Funds Follow-Up

by Susan Thaney

Thank you, dzięki, gracias, shukriya, takk, efharistó, etc. to all the donors, bidders, browsers, and buyers who helped make this year's Feast for Funds a success! This year's participation raised \$21,500, bringing the gross total to \$180,000 since FFF's inception eight years ago.

Along with the funds will come feasting, friendship, fun experiences, and a strong sense of community. In-home gatherings remain the most popular, but intense bidding took place for many of the wide-ranging events and items, including the sought-after "Daily Bread" by baker Paul Kosidowski, and the coveted necklace by Erica Gottshalk. The Newport Resort condo in Door County, donated by Julie Bock and Matt Byrnes, garnered the most bids, and our Board President, Michelle Naples, earned the auction's #1 bidder award, placing 51 bids! Nancy Peterson, Noreen Gilbertsen, and Linda Presto were also high bidders, close contenders. One of the risks of a silent auction is the last-minute outbidding. Hopefully, there weren't too many disappointments. A spring survey will be used to gain input for next year's planning.

The committed FFF committee accomplished all of the "behind the scenes" tasks that made this fundraiser possible. Kudos to Roger Blau, Laurie Petersen, Jane Peterson, Linda Presto, and Tom Radoszewski, with additional appreciation to Clare Blau, Sally Heuer, Ellen Krueger, Cecile Langford, and Phil Martin who also played important roles.



GETTING TOGETHER

Stop in, meet new people and make new friends! Visitors are especially welcome.

If you have an idea for starting a new group, contact Rev. Dena McPhetres at 414-273-5257, ext. 202, or dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org.

Book Discussion Group

Second Sunday of the month
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

We gather once a month to discuss a chosen book. You can find our book list on the church bulletin board and website. We welcome all readers. For more information, contact Chris Linder.

The Chronologically Gifted

Last Sunday of the month
12:30 p.m. Potluck Lunch

We foster activities that allow members age 60 and older to live well, offering meaningful, creative, healthy engagement through the arts, education, relationship building, and fun! For more information, contact Sharon DePue.

UU+ Study Group

Second Tuesdays of the month
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

We gather to deepen our knowledge of Unitarian Universalism and to continue our spiritual journeys through reading and discussion. Contact Nancy Pajewski for more information.

Buddhist Study Group: Gathering Waters Sangha

First & Third Wednesdays
of the month
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

We explore Buddhist teachings and Ideas and practice meditation, followed by tea, cookies and fellowship. All are welcome! For more information, please call or email Steve or Jeanne Lowry.

Pagan Celebrations Group

Pagan rituals honor the natural cycle of the earth and celebrate the seasons. For more information, please contact Kathleen Miezio or Nick DaVia.

Unitarian Universalists Under Forty Doing Activities (UUUFDA)

First Sunday of the month
12:15 p.m. Potluck Brunch

UUUFDA encourages social camaraderie among the under-forty crowd at First Church, contributing to a strong, joyful and fun church community. Join us for our monthly brunch and other activities. For more information, contact Erik Islo or Angi Krueger at uuufda@gmail.com.

Chancel Choir

Every Thursday
7:15 – 9:00 p.m.

All singers high school age and up are invited to join our weekly choir rehearsals. Contact our Choral Director Tristan Strelitzer at tstrelitzer@gmail.com with your name and voice type.

SWANS Group (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social)

First Sunday of the month

Join us once a month as we go out for lunch after the second service, and other social events. Newcomers are welcome. For more information, contact Barbara Kloman or Camille Johnson.

UU Parenting Group

Second Sunday of the month
12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

We share helpful parenting resources, do fun family activities together, and discuss topics like positive discipline, creating healthy habits, and the unique challenges of raising UU children. For more information, contact Stacey Thieme or Brook Worzella.

WomanSpirit

We meet to empower women and join in spiritual quest through social justice, music, ritual, and friendships. For more information, contact Janet Nortrom.



DECEMBER 12 (WEDNESDAY)

ONE SERVICE - 7:00 p.m.

"Blue Christmas Vespers"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Christmas is not always merry, but it can always be holy. Come in out of the cold and dark, come to the gentle presence of music and candlelight, readings and silence. We offer solace tonight for those caring for loved ones, who have lost someone dear, or who is just feeling out of sync with the happiness of the holidays.

DECEMBER 16

"Mystery: The Pain of Not Knowing"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Julia Oschwald, Worship Associate

Although being a UU means coming together with people who want to ask questions, sometimes not knowing the answers can be anxiety-provoking. We have a variety of individual reactions to mystery, from fear to humility to control to relief to wonder. We need communal practices to increase our tolerance for ambiguity. Join us as we name the pain of ambiguity, and explore shared spiritual practices for managing tolerance to it.

DECEMBER 23

Multigenerational Holiday Pageant

Cami Thomas, Religious Education Coordinator

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Jack Forbes Wilson, Resident Artist

This holiday season embraces commemorations from many different cultures. This Sunday we honor our differences with festive reminders of Winter Solstice, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas. Let us delight in joy and learning together as an intergenerational congregation.

DECEMBER 30

ONE SERVICE - 10:00 a.m.

"Trucks, Freedom, and Religion"

Lynne Jacoby, Membership Development Coordinator

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Mark Richards, Worship Associate

Cami Thomas, Religious Education Coordinator

Free will is a concept that religions have been grappling with since Eve bit into an apple and led us out of blissful animal ignorance. How we use our freedom to live into rather than away from our knowledge of suffering in the world, and also our knowledge of joy, is a religious question. And it is as hard of a question today as it has ever been. Lynne Jacoby gives a perspective on how commitment to a liberal religious community can help. A story about a truck happens to be featured.

HOW TO REACH US

414.273.5257

office@uumilwaukee.org

www.uumilwaukee.org

1342 N. Astor St., Milwaukee, WI 53202

Administrative offices are staffed Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., but individual staff members have varying hours. Please contact them directly to set up an appointment, as staff members are rarely available for drop-in appointments.

SENIOR MINISTER

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

jennifer.nordstrom@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 201

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 202

MINISTER EMERITUS

The Rev. Andrew C. Kennedy, D.Min.

Staff

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

jean.johnson@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 203

Jean Johnson

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

camithomas@uumilwaukee.org ext. 204

Cami Thomas

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 205

Lynne Jacoby

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

cindy.lorentzen@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 215

Cindy Lorentzen

OFFICE COORDINATOR

shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 207

Shari Wright

R.E. ADMIN. ASSISTANT

re.admin@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 210

Lillian Schley

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

deb.solis@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 209

Deb Solis

FACILITIES MANAGER

tom.schroeder@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 206

Tom Schroeder

FACILITIES ASSISTANT

Jim Spice
Andre Singley

MAINTENANCE WORKER

Art Sims

LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

alissarhode@me.com

Alissa Rhode

CHORAL DIRECTOR

tstrelitzer@gmail.com

Tristan Strelitzer

RESIDENT ARTIST

jackforbeswilson@aol.com

Jack Forbes Wilson

Board of Trustees

Officers:

President:	Michelle Naples
Vice President:	Mark Bishop
Secretary:	Jeremy Koenen
Treasurer:	Tom Briscoe

Members:

Chris Aiken, Mark Bender, Omega Burckhardt, Maria Dorsey, Jane Peterson, Melinda Vernon



SUNDAY MORNING FORUMS

December 2

“Travel Through the Holy Land and Beyond”

Presenter: Barbara Ali, Author, World Traveler, Mom

One normally wouldn't expect Jerusalem, one of the holiest cities, to be described as vibrant, sexy, and innovative. Yet that is what author and travel blogger Barbara Ali discovered during an international bloggers conference hosted by the city in an effort to revitalize tourism. Using photos and stories, she shares what it was like to be a solo woman traveler in Jerusalem and Jordan, exploring holy sites and meeting Muslim women in their everyday lives. Host: Thallis Drake.

December 9

“Gerrymandering & the U.S. Supreme Court”

Fred Kessler: American Lawyer, Arbitrator, & Judge

State Representative Kessler (12th Assembly District, Western Milwaukee Co.) has been a member of the Wisconsin State assembly since 2004. A gerrymandering change to his district caused him to move his residence. After winning his election, Kessler joined an initiative to legally challenge the tradition of gerrymandering, eventually taking the case to the Supreme Court. On June 18, 2018, the court ruled that the plaintiffs didn't establish standing, leaving the existing ruling in effect, and sent it back for re-argument. The case remains open. We will learn more about that lawsuit as well as Kessler's experiences in the political system. Host: Chris Schmidt.

December 16

“Metro Daily Newspapers: An Insider's Viewpoint”

Presenter: Paul Hayes, Journalist

Weeks after Paul G. Hayes joined the afternoon daily, the *Milwaukee Journal*, in 1962, the Journal Company rescued the failing *Milwaukee Sentinel* from the Hearst Corporation to continue publishing it as a morning daily. Hayes retired April 1, 1995, the day the *Journal* and the *Sentinel* merged to form the morning *Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel*, leaving the community with only one daily for the first time since 1847. Today it is one of more than a hundred dailies owned by the Gannett Co. Paul will discuss the decline of metropolitan daily newspapers from the viewpoint of an insider. Host: Christian Becker.

December 24 & Dec. 31

No Forum due to the Holidays!

