



## **First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Values**

At the heart of First Church, we value:

Wonder  
Authentic connection  
Love  
Justice

## **First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Mission**

(We gather together to:)

Nurture the Spirit  
Engage the Mind  
Inspire Action

## **First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Ends**

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

*Interpretation:*

**Community is fundamental to being human. There is an un-met longing in our culture for belonging, to know and be known. In community, we come to know ourselves more deeply individually and learn to be a people, both in joy and in difficulty. Meaning making is incomplete when done as an individual, it becomes richer and more varied in concert with others, with attention to the whole of being. We give our time and energy to build trusting relationships based on our values, and do the work to create and keep covenant with one another and the Earth. Intentional community makes relational work explicit. Building community is the spiritual practice of the people.**

1. Value, develop, and celebrate the gifts that come from authentic connection across difference, emphasizing racial, ethnic, and generational difference.

*Interpretation:*

**Being in relationship with the diversity of humanity makes us more whole as a people. Difference is part of being human, and my humanity is diminished if I am not in relationship with difference. I am a beautiful particularity, but I am only one piece of the mosaic of humanity, and I desire to know the whole.**

**Human relationship is sacred when it reveals the holy mystery of another person's humanity in an I / thou relationship. Categories and patterns, while true, can obscure the beauty and magnitude of the**



**divine within. When we approach one another with humble curiosity, in relationships that honor the other person and their boundaries, we open ourselves to be transformed by understanding and empathy.**

**We understand and value the gifts of authentic relationships across difference, gifts of differing experiences, perspectives, talents, skills, and expertise that are born of different identities and lives. We are intentional about seeking such relationships, putting time, energy and resources into developing them. We do so with respect and a learning orientation, understanding that the relationship must serve everyone involved. Difference can bring discomfort, and even fear, when we face what we do not know or situations we do not understand. We lean into discomfort and celebrate the learnings and experiences that result from authentic connection. We cultivate gratitude for all the various gifts of authentic relationships across difference, the learnings of discomfort, and the joy of connection, and we express our appreciation interpersonally and communally.**

**Our congregation has broadly and repeatedly expressed its particular desire to connect more consistently and authentically across racial, ethnic, and generational difference. We want to realize our aspirations of a diverse and interconnected community, and know we must begin with building authentic connections across difference.**

**Milwaukee is the most segregated city in the country, and we live in the pain of the isolation and estrangement from the whole created by that reality. We grieve the horrific injustice of racism and white supremacy, and long for healing this deep wound in our city and our country.**

**We want to be part of the change we long to see. We realize we must work within and among ourselves, as well as beyond our walls, on issues of racism, white supremacy, and racial division. Developing the skills of authentic connection across racial and ethnic difference is the first movement towards change. We begin with listening, witnessing, and being in humble relationship with those most affected by racism and white supremacy.**

**Our congregation longs for connection across the generations arising from a desire for the wholeness of multigenerational community. Different generations bring different life experiences, perspectives, and gifts that together make us a whole human community. Our community will survive and thrive through learning from and investing in one another across generations, so we can carry our values into the future. It is through cross-generational relationship based in mutual respect that we learn each other's stories and craft the larger story of our life together. We begin by honoring one another's inherent worth and sacred mystery.**

**Proposed Measures:**

- **Congregational Survey**
- **Participation in anti-racism programs and multigenerational programs (measure of do we value the gifts)**
- **Connections across difference of race, ethnicity, and generation in all our programs (measure of do we develop the gifts)**
- **Partnerships (measure of do we develop the gifts):** quality, health, depth, participation. Asking our partners, "how do you experience your relationship with us?" Develop a partnership interview / survey.



- **Celebrate the gifts in worship** through storytelling, inviting partners in, celebrating successes, recognizing relationships

## 2. Recognize power differences and challenge injustice where it arises.

### *Interpretation:*

**We recognize what power is and how it works in both systemic and personal realms. We understand major patterns of power, like white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and capitalism, and how they intersect. We practice applying that knowledge interpersonally and communally. Members on both sides of power dynamics recognize their own power. Members on the privileged side of the power axis choose to move back and members on the oppressed side choose to move into power.**

**Because we are committed to the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, when we witness injustice, we challenge it with loving and grace-filled courage. We do this not out of righteousness, but because it is how we practice our faith. Living out our beliefs nourishes us spiritually, for which we are grateful. By practicing consistently and courageously, we move towards creating the beloved community and becoming the people we want to be.**

### Proposed Measures:

- **Congregational Survey**
- **Members will be able to describe how major patterns of power are at work** in their lives, relationships, our congregation and the world, and will do so with love and honesty
- **Members choose to make space and claim space**, respective to their social location, both in the congregation and with our partners
- Programs will deliberately include elements coming from folks on the oppressed side of the various power axes.
- **Our members challenge injustice in ways that respect and strengthen relationships**, noticing when harm has been done, seeking to alleviate harm, and reduce further harm
- **Our members participate in Anti-Racism Team programs** to practice and strengthen capacity

## 3. Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice.

### *Interpretation:*

**We recognize our resistance to following, and learn to follow as a spiritual practice of trust, risk-taking, and humility. It requires us to be in the moment, to release our control, and to trust the wisdom and experience of the leaders of people most affected by injustice. We build our skills and prepare spiritually and relationally to trust and follow their leadership. Followership takes different forms, and we use a variety of relevant skills to support and partner with the leaders of communities affected by injustice. We follow their coalescing energy, accompanying them in moving the Milwaukee community towards justice.**

### Proposed Measures:

- **Congregational survey**



- **Survey of our partners' experience of working with us** / ask for feedback on quality and depth of relationship; usefulness of partnership

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4. Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.

*Interpretation:*

**Community calls us to both know and be known, to give and receive, in the ebb and flow of life. We admit our fear of not being enough, and remember we *are* worthy of love and belonging. We recognize the fallacy of self-reliance, and realize it is human to need one another. Genuine generosity springs from our shared humanity rather than positions of strength and weakness. Trusting our vulnerability and resting in the truth of interdependence counteracts the shame of needing help, the arrogance of giving out of pride, and the isolation that stems from the pressure of self-reliance. When we surrender to this truth we can experience the grace and deep connection of both receiving and giving.**

**We give our time, talent and treasure to the congregation so the entire community can receive its gifts. By surrendering to the same truth of the ebb and flow of giving and receiving, we give generously when we can, and receive when it is our time to receive. In times of challenge as a community, we exercise the spiritual practice of maintaining community and choose to continue to trust the long arc of our heritage by supporting the health of the institution. We also adopt a mindset of abundance in our relationships with the Milwaukee community, and generously give and receive support in line with our belief that our congregation is interdependent with the world beyond our walls.**

Proposed Measures:

- **People will let each other know what's happening in their lives**, sharing stories of joy and challenge, giving and receiving, both publicly and privately.  
(Example: Worship Associates sharing their stories from the pulpit, and people learning it is okay to share their struggles.)
- **People will ask for and receive the pastoral support they need**, including by accessing the Pastoral Care Program.
- **The Congregational Survey**