



THE

CHANTICLEER

First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.

May 2020

Words on the Wind

by The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

What does it mean to be a people of thresholds? Our May monthly theme, Thresholds, recognizes that this is a season of transitions and doorways. Typically in May worship, we have child dedications and a Religious Education service that recognizes the thresholds our children and families cross at this time of year. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, M.Div, and Deb Solis are creating an online worship service to connect us and honor these transitions. It is still hard not to be together in person for these important ceremonies that mark time.

Marking time looks different during this season of coronavirus. For folks working from home, one day can blur into the next. Humans have a need to mark time, however, as evidenced by people across time and culture holding seasonal ceremonies, weekly Sabbaths, and daily routines. It is worth taking time to mark time. If you haven't done so already, develop a daily routine that includes spiritual practice, work, human connection, and rest. Find a way to mark the weeks as well, whether with regular Sunday worship, a Monday night puzzle, or a walk at noon on Wednesdays. Adjust your seasonal ceremonies to coronavirus time, but make sure to find a way to hold them. This will be the year the Memorial Day barbecue is in your own backyard, prom is in the living room with John Krazinski, or the birthday party takes place on Zoom. Still, find a way to celebrate the season and mark the time—including honoring the loss of not getting to do so in the way you expected.

(Words on the Wind, continued on page 2)

MONTHLY THEME

What does it mean to be a people of

THRESHOLDS?

SUNDAY SERVICE & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

TWO SERVICES AT 9:00 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.

LIVE ON YOUTUBE

MAY 3

“Threshold Wisdom”

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education

Dale Skaggs, Worship Associate

The word “threshold,” our theme for May, comes from the strip of wood in a doorway, that was originally designed to hold the straw floor of a house (the “thresh”) inside the house. Today, when we consider thresholds, we think about all the ways doorways hold meaning: doorways to our homes, our hearts, and new realities. This spring, we have crossed the threshold and traveled into the new world of living with COVID-19. How can the wisdom of doorways help us navigate the changes in our lives? Join us for this service where we explore cross-cultural practices for navigating thresholds, and how they can help us cope with change.

MAY 10

“Doorways of Life”

Rev. Dena McPhetres

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education

Beth Monhollen, Worship Associate

Mother's Day Sunday

(and possibly an online Child Dedication ceremony!)

Our bodies are thresholds, our skin both barrier and porous to what is within and what is without. Everyone enters this world by crossing a threshold and mothers are that doorway of life. There are thresholds for pain and joy that you think you can't cross and then you do. Join us for Mother's Day Sunday as we reflect on the doorways of life.

(Sunday Services continued on page 10)

We are living in a very particular time, but we are still living. While the memories we make today are not the ones we expected, these moments will stand out in our long-term memory because they are so unusual and intense. This season is itself a threshold, even as it contains all the other thresholds. It is the season we are learning more about ourselves, our relationships, and our community. It is the season we are learning more about our society and how it works. It is a season of change and transition, the season we grow into the person we will be after this. Notice this threshold. Do your best to shape yourself into who you want to become as you cross it.

With love,
Jennifer

May's Theme: Thresholds

by Mark Bishop,
Congregation President 2019-20

I hope this finds you and your families well in these challenging times. Even given our current "virtual" church community, it is comforting to know that we are part of something very special. As my term as President ends this month, this is my last President's message. I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to serve this extraordinary Congregation and will always cherish working with many of you over the past three years as a Trustee.

Thresholds, this month's theme, can be viewed as a metaphor for where we are today with the COVID-19 pandemic. We are facing uncertainty as to when things may return to some sense of normalcy whether that is our world, our local community, our church, or our families. We stand, somewhat frozen, at the "doorstep" knowing we cannot go back to what we know and are familiar with, and await what we be the new normal when we take that step outside.

Given that we cannot physically cross the threshold into our beloved and beautiful Sanctuary, the Board continues to plan for a virtual Annual Meeting on May 17. It is critical that we have enough participation of the Congregation as there are several important items requiring congregational votes including the election of three new Trustees, two new Nominating Committee members, and Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson's ordination. Look for more information as details become available.

I look forward to when we can gather again together, in person, to worship, celebrate, grieve, or care for each.

Stay safe

Splinters from the Board

by Mark Miller
Board of Trustees

Our First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Board of Trustees meeting on March 24 began with the approval of the "consent agenda," which included only the February meeting minutes.

Rev. Jennifer covered her Safe Congregation Plan and gave a COVID-19 update. This was about how the staff will operate from home and how the church building will be maintained during this period. Also covered was the plan for Sunday services and other activities.

Jennifer also stated her Interpretation of Ends Limitation 4.3 on Compensation & Benefits for church personnel, a compensation policy for during the pandemic, and a compensation recommendation for 2020/2021. The former two passed unanimously and the latter was for board discussion.

The annual congregational survey discussion was led by Mark Bender. After a long discussion it was determined that since it's an extraordinary year and while we would like to ask the questions for long term trending, many of the questions don't seem appropriate under the circumstances. It was determined not to do the survey at this time.

We're excited to note that Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson's request for ordination by First Church passed, and did so unanimously.

Rounding out the meeting was the Sr. Minister's Report, and discussion about the Sr. Minister's evaluation, which has been compiled from individual board member feedback.

To see details on the above information, please see the Board minutes. Board meeting minutes are posted on the First Church bulletin board in the central corridor and on the church website. Members of the Board welcome your thoughts and concerns at any time. You can find our contact information in the First Church directory on page 11.



Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres

When I passed my Integrative Exam at the seminary, lo, these many years ago, it felt like crossing a huge threshold, since it allowed me to advance to graduation. My best seminary buddy greeted me after I received the exam result and said, "Let's go over to the park and walk across the foot-bridge!" I truly felt different after I walked across the foot-bridge over the pond, with her cheering me on the other side. It made the moment real.

Each time I passed the test to advance to a different level in karate, also many years ago, I felt like I crossed a threshold. That threshold was marked by congratulations from the sensei and an offer of the next color belt from a fellow dojo member who had already advanced past that level.

This month, so many children, youth and young adults are likely not going to be able to formally cross the threshold of graduation, whether it be from kindergarten to first grade, or high school and college graduation ceremonies. And yet, you have crossed a threshold. How will you mark it? Mark it, you must, for you have changed. Even if it is just walking across a footbridge over a creek or pond, even if you have friends and family cheering for you with face masks on at six feet apart, you will feel different, and joy and gratitude and love will bloom in you if you find some way to mark it.

I look forward to celebrating you on Religious Education Sunday, even virtually online. For you are blessed, and I am proud to know you.

Yours,
Dena

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Our healing thoughts are with **Kathy Arndt** who is recovering well from hip surgery in February.

Our heartfelt condolences are with **Sonya Fitak** whose sister died in late March.

Our heartfelt condolences are with **Chuck Hays** whose wife Alice died from cancer in April.

"All in the Family" announces members with births, adoptions, surgeries, deaths of family members, significant illness, an honor or award to celebrate. We invite you to submit to "All in the Family" by using the Chanticleer submission form.

The Threshold of Abundance

by Lynne Jacoby

Membership Development Coordinator

Congratulations Pledge Team!
THANK YOU, MEMBERS, FRIENDS, and FELLOW STAFF!

Not un-typical for early May, we do not have all our pledges in. But pledges received to date, our members increased their pledges 3.43% overall. Even in the midst of the coronavirus shut-down!



Thank you to the 347 members who have their pledges in! If you have not pledged to date, please click [here](#) and do so! We are still \$45,000 short of our coronavirus-adjusted monetary goal... and every gift strengthens the fabric!

In the Church Stewardship world, we talk about a practice of generosity and an attitude of abundance. On Stewardship Kick-off Sunday when members cheerfully lined up at coffee hour to weave their part of our "Spiritual Tapestry" it felt to me like gratitude of our shared community filled the room! A spirit of generosity seemed to light people's smiles as they filled out pledge cards. And our congregation was very much on the threshold of an attitude of abundance!

I was wrong that Sunday (that seems so long ago now). It feels to me we are not on the threshold of an attitude of abundance, but well into that space.

In this time when some have lost jobs, many have lost the structure of our lives, all have lost in-person community are living with uncertainty about the future, not only are pledges continuing to come in based on faith but what I hear from members' and staff over and over is wondering about how to reach out to those who have lost more. "Yes this is hard" I hear people saying, "but... I am okay." Or yes hard, but I am making masks, calling others, ordering Chinese, wondering how to help." And yes this is hard "but I am thankful, grateful, feeling lucky..." entering yourselves in gratitude and grounding yourselves in care for others. Abundance indeed, and I am lucky for it.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this community in so many ways. And, most especially, thanks to our dedicated, creative, kind, and generous Pledge Team: Chair Fred Gutierrez, Bob Balderson, Mark Chambers, Kathy Donius, Sally Lewis, Deb Manske, Beth Monhollen, and Jacki Zandi. You are the best, and I will miss you in the coming months!



The Ritual of Making a Path

by Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Director of Religious Education

May arrives demanding our attention with spring-blooming, promises of more sunshine, and transitions forward even as we are in the middle of a historic pandemic. The future is unfolding even if we feel stuck in the vernal muck.

John Schaar wrote that “The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created – created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not someplace we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.”

Even while we are adrift in a stay-at-home holding pattern, waiting for this to be over, babies continue to be born, children grow, and a path forward is made. Our high school seniors, even without prom and graduation, will mark the end of their childhood as they cross the threshold into adulthood.

At church, our rituals help connect us with the cycles in nature, life, and each other while marking change. We know that rituals help give meaning and direction on our journeys. Each May, we mark the growth, work, and lives of our children during RE Sunday.

Like lighting the chalice, Ingathering, and Forum; RE Sunday it is one of First Church’s rituals. It is a ritual that connects our heritage and our future while celebrating the love our beloved community shares.

This year the ritual we make together will be not be found in its usual place and format.

This year we will dare to bear witness to our children’s transitions virtually, shaping this activity anew. This ritual will be made by all of us choosing to help create the path forward.

And it is my hope that this year our children will know that we see their abundance even in a time of scarcity.

I hope to see all of you -virtually- on May 17, rejoicing in our children’s accomplishments, beholding their growth with love and reminding them and ourselves that we must help shape our destination.

General Assemble is Virtual and Affordable

by Bruce Wiggins
Denominational Affairs Coordinator

General Assembly June 24-28

General Assemble (GA) is our annual Unitarian Universalist national convention and it will be virtual this year. This announcement, made in mid-April, makes GA affordable and accessible to many more people. We ask First Church members to consider attending before GA is in Milwaukee in 2021. It will undoubtedly be as successful as our virtual Regional Assembly was.

On April 18 Regional Assembly (RA) was held virtually on Zoom and was both inspirational and successful! Worship, workshops and business meetings engaged attendees, according to our delegates:

Rollie Hanson: *There is much to be said for personally attending an Assembly but I was still really attending and participating and experiencing it in another very real impactful way. It makes me feel I want to be part of our changing world. I am really happy I was able to do this.*

BJ Ermenc: *Ms. Taquiena Boston’s speech was more than worth the price of admission. Her moving talk, blending facts with feelings, was powerful and memorable. She provided a deeper meaning to the term “equity” than I had known before. Circles of Hope and Resilience (workshop) was ideal for me.*

Terry Wiggins: *I found it very interesting that (the UUA is) working on completely reimagining General Assembly to figure out what could be done virtually that can’t be done in person. Now I am very much looking forward to a virtual GA.*

Registration for GA is now \$150 for everybody. See the GA website for details of programming: <https://www.uua.org/ga> There will be fantastic workshops and worship, as always, and Naomi Klein will give the Ware Lecture. As the three testimonials above indicate, virtual attendance can be a great experience! The church can pay registration for ten people. Contact Bruce Wiggins (info in Directory) if you’re interested.



Candidates for the Board of Trustees

Benedict LeFort

Ben joined the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee in 2006, though his first exposure to Unitarian Universalism was at a historic congregation in Provincetown, MA. The minister there at that time was Rev. Jennifer Justice, and her sermons were as powerful as her name! In his time as a member at First Church, Ben has led the Marketing Committee and taken photos and staffed the Coffee Hour Table for the Religious Education program. Ben brings to the board skills in nonprofit marketing and volunteer management, as well as experience with for-profit social enterprises, startup companies, consulting, budgeting, and operations. His daughter Vera is in 5th grade, plays violin and piano, and is an avid Latin dance enthusiast; they live in Bay View. Ben is thrilled to be nominated for the board, and looks forward to putting his shoulder to the wheel for the mission of our community.

Rollie Hanson,

A member of First Church since 2005, Rollie's is committed to social, racial and gender justice, particularly for young people. He is also concerned with environmental issues. Rollie has served the congregation as a Pastoral Care Associate, a Worship Associate, and a member of the Children's Religious Education Committee. He has taught Children's Religious Education for various grades over the past 12 years, currently serving as a Youth Advisor for our high school youth. He will be participating in Beloved Conversations this spring and look forward to engaging more on anti-racist, anti-oppression work this year. He is starting his first term with the UUA Mid-America Region Committee. Rollie is an attorney with a small practice where he does general practice areas such as estate planning, probate and bankruptcy, litigating consumer issues such as auto fraud, illegal collection actions and defending homeowners facing foreclosure.

Mike Hogan

A First Church member for more than 15 years, Mike visited his first Sunday service when he saw the lawn marquee that said "Everything Jesus Ever Said About Homosexuality," and thought that any church willing to put that on the front lawn was worth a visit. Mike has served on the Religious Education Committee, as a Worship Associate, one year on Finance Committee, and on Minister Emeritus Drew Kennedy's Committee on Ministry. He met his wife Irene 15 years ago after a RE teacher training. Between them, they have five children who have all attended Sunday School through OWL classes. Four of their children have attended university in different cities and their youngest is a sophomore at Wauwatosa East High School. Mike has been Director of Operations at The Women's Center in Waukesha for 25 years. Mike and Irene enjoy camping, hiking, biking, and many other casual outdoor activities. Mike is active in the Elmbrook Rotary Club and the Wauwatosa East Athletic Boosters.

Candidates for the Nominating Committee

Tracy Kreuser

Tracy and her children (Kira Straub, Austin Straub, Aaron Straub) have been attending First Church for more than twenty years. During this time, Tracy has led the Silent Retreat Committee, been a member of the Intergenerational Committee, and participated in Chalice Circles. In addition, she has volunteered in various roles in religious education. Outside First Church, she volunteers with the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha Counties championing programs relating to Women's Leadership and Healthy Youth. Professionally, Tracy promotes business excellence through her role as an Account Executive with the American Society for Quality (ASQ).

Tom LeBel

Tom and his wife have been members of First Church for more than eight years. He was a co-head usher for the 11:00 a.m. service for several years, and served on the Pulpit Guest Committee. He participated in Chalice Circles for several years, and assisted in organizing a Community Building Workshop for First Church members. He is an associate professor in the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology in the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare (HBSSW) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). He is interested in social justice issues and currently serves as a board member for two organizations: Project RETURN and the Felmers Chaney Advocacy Board (FCAB), that assist and advocate for persons involved with the criminal justice

First Church Annual Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee on Sunday, May 17, 2020. This meeting will occur online using the video conferencing Zoom. Members are eligible to vote if they signed the Membership Book 60 days prior to the meeting date and have made a financial pledge or contribution of record in the past year. A list of voting members will be posted on the website 15 days prior to the meeting.

In addition to the election of members to the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee, we will hear about the financial condition of First Church and other important matters. Members should look for special emailed announcements about details for joining this online meeting, link to the list of members eligible to vote, link to the agenda, and annual report. Please show your support of the church and its work by attending this once-a-year event!



More Zoom Information

by Shari Wright
Office Coordinator

Many people are finding our Sunday service on YouTube and connecting with friends on Zoom. Our Sunday livestream service is produced on Zoom and livestreamed to YouTube. It has been successful with over 400 views per service. On average, each Sunday has over 900 views of the live service and the saved video that is available on our YouTube channel. We have heard that smaller churches in our Wisconsin area are enjoying our service because they don't have the resources to livestream.

When Zoom and other video conferencing application exploded with users, security concerns were addressed. We have not seen security breaches in our Zoom meetings, but we implemented a Zoom meeting security policy and guide to help our leaders. This information is found on our website and [here](#).

In May, we will host our Annual Meeting on a Zoom webinar. More information about how to attend the Annual Meeting will be emailed to church members. We have a small team ready to help members learn how to use their computer, smartphone or other ways to connect to Zoom meetings and webinars. If you are having difficulties with your access to Zoom, please contact shari.wright@uumilwaukee. Our Zoom tech team, Paul Geenen, Erik Islo, Laura Maker, and Susie Seidelman will reach out to you with personal help.

Our weekly email announcement will include a URL link, a meeting ID, and a phone number for our upcoming events. You will need to decide what method you will use to join the meeting.

- **Phone** – call the phone number, enter the meeting ID.
- **Smartphone** – download the Zoom application on your smartphone, create a Zoom account and enter the meeting ID to connect with your phone audio and camera.
- **Computer (PC)** – Connect with the URL link. Laptops usually have a built-in camera and a microphone. A desktop computer might need a microphone to communicate. When you connect on a computer, Zoom will download the Zoom application, but you can also download the application anytime. Create an account to save your settings.

Here are some links and great resources to learn more:

[LINK](#) – Zoom Meetings information on our website for church leaders who host an event.

[LINK](#) – Set up a Zoom account.

[LINK](#) – Download the PC Zoom Client application.

[LINK](#) – Test your computer to see if you have audio (a microphone) or a camera (video).

Step Up Your Online Game

By Paul Geenen

On Tuesday, April 7, I was leading a group of people making calls to voters asking them to return their absentee ballots. I reached out to my Beloved Conversation Monday group but was unable to reach two of them because their information was not on our MyFirstChurch Member Portal, Realm.

The injustices of the fast-moving COVID-19 pandemic are starting to become apparent, and we need to respond. First Church has a full range of online tools that each and every member of First Church needs to be using.

1. MyFirstChurch member portal (Realm) – post your contact information and become familiar with its capabilities.
2. Our web site – It is a good source for finding links to the events such as the Sunday Service and the Zoom Coffee hour. Navigate around it to find the information you need.
3. Our Facebook Group – people are posting daily in this closed group with over 350 members. It is a good way to stay in touch. Some might be hesitant to join the Facebook community; our community is in crisis mode and you need to take the leap.
4. Zoom – once people learn how to use it, they like this video platform. If you are having technical issues, try a different device. It supports a wide range of devices, including iPads. Put your router on a timer so it reboots every night.

We are blessed at First Church to have these tools and Office Coordinator Shari Wright and Director of Administration Jean Johnson who is managing them. Some African American congregations in Milwaukee have neither the tools nor the expertise. Step up your online game by using these tools to strengthen our First Church community as we respond to this pandemic that is tearing our community apart.

I am willing to help anyone in the congregation learn how to use these platforms. Email me at paul.geenen9@gmail.com.



Will Every Day Be Earth Day?

by Bruce Wiggins
Co-Chair, Earth Justice Ministry

Be sure to watch Jennifer's wonderful Earth Day service (April 19) on the [First Church YouTube channel](#). She cited one way to let go of toxicity: plant trees.

Planting Trees from Local Nurseries

The Earth Justice Ministry encourages tree planting. Trees provide multiple environmental and economic benefits. Planting one is an act of faith, as future generations will enjoy the benefits. EJM will reimburse up to \$20 for the first five households to buy a tree from a local nursery. Two excellent local nurseries are Chief River Nursery (<https://www.chiefrivernursery.com> or 262-377-5330) and Johnson's Nursery (<https://www.jniplants.com> or 262-252-4988). Both have extensive inventories of bare root and potted trees, excellent websites, catalogs you can request, helpful staff available by phone, online ordering, and curbside pickup or shipping. Be sure to verify soil, sun, and space requirements for your tree. Contact Bruce Wiggins or Tree Moore, EJM Co-Chairs, for reimbursement.

Earth Day Every Day

Grow Your Food or Get a CSA

Buying local food or growing your own avoids commodities being shipped all over the world and also addresses food insecurity during the pandemic. A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) subscription supports a local farm business and also reduces "food miles" that exacerbate global warming. Many farmers are developing alternatives to the standard "box every week" that you may be familiar with. Many CSAs give you choices in box size and delivery schedule to meet your household preferences. Search online for CSA farms in our region or see the Urban Ecology Center webpage: <https://urbanecologycenter.org/what-we-do/csa-farmers.html>

Or you might garden in your yard or a community garden. Many community garden plots are available in the County and City. Research UW Extension Milwaukee County, Groundwork Milwaukee, Alice's Garden, and Victory Garden Initiative.

"Is anybody else, like me, getting three weeks to the gallon?"
—A fun sign Bruce saw recently.

Social Justice Through Social Distancing

By Cesar Cornier
Social Justice Coordinator

"The future is uncertain...but this uncertainty is at the very heart of human creativity." I resonate with this quote by Belgian chemist Ilya Prigogine as I continue learning how to navigate life in this new state of unpredictability. I knew when the reports started coming in that the healthcare disparities and economic impact this would have would disproportionately affect those who were already struggling. Though this situation was unprecedented and never before in my lifetime, I can't say I am surprised at the horror stories of discrimination this has caused to come to light.

Initially, I became overwhelmed with anxiety thinking about those marginalized communities that were already vulnerable to financial hardships and inadequate healthcare. These problems in the inner city and undocumented communities aren't new, they are just being magnified and brought to the surface.

In spite of knowing all the obstacles ahead, hope was also prevalent in the community. I knew that there would be people empowered to act on injustices, and ready to help reduce the pain during this turbulent time. Collectives such as Ayuda Mutua MKE, an organization on the Southside directly helping the immigrant community by distributing food and household supplies for all who need assistance. We also have partner organizations that work with our Social Justice Council such as Guest House, Interchange Food Pantry, and Voces de la Fronterra, who continue to serve those in marginalized communities.

Even if it feels like we are in a constant state of confusion, one thing is clear. There is and has always been, people from the community, for the community. That alone makes life sweeter and reinforces my desire to live for a change.



Looking For New Theme Circle Facilitators

by Rev. Dena McPhetres

Theme Circles are designed to support and deepen the spiritual journey of participants in community with each other and in connection with our church's monthly worship themes. Next church year will be our third year with this ministry and we are looking for new facilitators.

Theme Circle participants and facilitators say that the spiritual exercises, readings, reflection, and sharing have significantly affected their personal lives and experience of Sunday services. They feel closer to each other and the congregation through sharing how a theme like Belonging, Attention, Awe, Integrity, and Resilience resonates and brings meaning to their life.

We'd like to add more circles next fall to give more people access to this wonderful opportunity. To do that, we'll need more facilitators. Please consider whether you feel called to this ministry of creating a trusting space for reflection and exploration in a small group of your peers.

More information and an application form can be found [here](#). The application deadline is June 15. The required two-session Facilitator training with Rev. Dena will be in early August.

Take A Yoga Class From Home

by Lillian Schley
RE Administrative Assistant

Mondays, May 4–June 8, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
Wednesdays, May 6–June 10, 9:00-10:00 a.m.

Instructor Morgan Engels will offer two, 6-week yoga classes online, allowing students to participate in the safety of their homes. These yoga sessions will be a chance to slow down and create space for stillness while nourishing joints, ligaments, tendons, and fascia.

The cost for either 6-week session is \$45 for First Church members and \$54 for non-members. Please pre-register online. The link to join the class will be sent to you prior to the first session.

Monday registration: bit.ly/UUonlineyogaMonday

Wednesday registration: bit.ly/UUonlineyogaWednesday

A Geography of Grace, An Invitation to Explore Your Inner Landscape

by Diane Horne, Beth Monhollen & Dale Skaggs

Coming in September 2020, A Geography of Grace is a new adult spiritual development offering which will invite you to explore your inner geography, listen for your inner Teacher, and hear the wisdom of your own spirit.

Just as many of us are removed from contact with the natural world through urban living or busy lives, so too do we live distanced from our inner nature. These two landscapes have much in common and inform each other. The natural world desperately needs people who appreciate it, have reverence for it, listen to it, preserve, and restore it. With the same urgency, our inner lives need this kind of attunement and nurturance.

Using the circle of trust approach developed through The Center for Courage and Renewal (based on the work of Dr. Parker J. Palmer) this small group program utilizes “third things” – poetry, stories, music, and art – to map a journey of metaphor, symbol, and intuition, opening new vistas in our inner landscape. In addition to the focus on geography, the other theme for this program is grace. The Latin word for grace is the same as the word for gratitude: grata or gratia, which means “a given gift.” This program is meant to help us gain (or regain) contact with our best selves, with those innate gifts we hope to offer the world.

Enrollment in A Geography of Grace is a maximum of fourteen participants, and we'll meet monthly for eight sessions of two and a half hours each. If this speaks to you, be on the lookout for more information on this program over the next few months.



Dedication of Children and Parents

by Revs. Jennifer and Dena

Mother's Day is coming and we are thinking about our beloved Child Dedication Ceremony. This simple ceremony is the Unitarian Universalist version of Christian baptism, but with significantly different meaning. We recognize your child's original blessing, and we dedicate ourselves to nurturing your child and you. In the ceremony, you and your family also dedicate yourselves to nurturing and supporting your child. Because we dedicate ourselves to life-long support of you and your child, these ceremonies are only available to church members.

We don't know if we'll be back in our sanctuary and together as an embodied community again by May. If you would like your child dedicated, we will figure out a way to do that remotely, through Zoom or other technology. If you would like to wait until we are physically together again, that is fine, too.

If you would like your child dedicated, please complete a Dedication form [here](#). If you have questions, please contact the church office at first.church.office@uumilwaukee.org.

IN MEMORIAM

Alice Mae Gillam
1944 ~ 2020

Alice Gillam died peacefully early Friday morning, April 10, 2020, at Columbia St. Mary's hospice in Ozaukee, with her husband Chuck at her side. She was lovingly cared for at home in the days prior, surrounded by the adoration of her daughters, and her devoted husband.

Alice and her family traveled the cancer journey over the last fourteen months since she was diagnosed with a rare neuro-endocrine cancer. Alice was 75 years old and was a member of our church for seven years.

A Candle of Life was lit in memory of Alice during our online Sunday worship service on April 12, 2020. A memorial service will be held at a later time.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to an academic award in her honor at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee online at uwm.edu/give. Choose English 3312 from Giving Opportunities and note "Alice Gillam Award" in Special Instructions. Or checks can be made out to the UWM Foundation with "Alice Gillam Award" in the memo line. Mail checks to UWM, Attn: Leslie Horn, PO Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53217.

Interchange Food Pantry Needs Help! COVID Fundraiser and Emergency Appeal for Volunteers

by Beth Bruch,

First Church co-representative on the
Interchange Food Pantry board

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Interchange Food Pantry is in urgent need of two things:

1. Emergency volunteers
2. Financial support to continue providing our guests with fresh vegetables and fruits.

Could You Be an Emergency Volunteer?

If you are healthy and between the ages of 16 and 59, please consider volunteering at the pantry to help provide pantry guests with vital food during this crisis. Our brave volunteers are doing an amazing job keeping the pantry open in these difficult times, but our guest numbers are surging and we need help. Volunteers are protected with careful personal-distancing and sanitizing procedures—surfaces are frequently disinfected and everyone stays 6 feet apart.

Emergency Volunteer Opportunities:

1. Unload shipments and recycle cardboard (no pantry guests present) on Mondays and Fridays, 9:00 a.m.-noon.
2. Help pack bags of food for guests to take home (no direct contact with pantry guests.)
 - Tuesdays: 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. & 1:00-4:00 p.m.
 - Wednesdays: noon-3:00 p.m. & 3:00-6:00 p.m.
 - Thursdays: 8:00 -11:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.-2 p.m.
 - Saturdays: 8:00 a.m-11:30 a.m.

If you could help during any of these times or would like more information, please email pantry director George Neureuther: ifpmilwaukee@gmail.com

Could You Provide Support with a Donation?

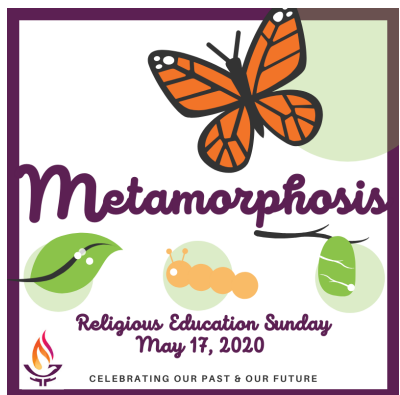
Because of severe shortages at Feeding America (which usually provides produce at very low or no cost) we've been purchasing from local wholesale produce companies, a 20-fold cost increase.

Interchange is one of the only food pantries serving all of Milwaukee County, and First Church is a founding member. We want to be able to keep supplying healthy food to all who come (50% are children). Please consider a donation if you can.

Thanks to those who already donated to our GoFundMe campaign! We are 2/3 of the way to our goal of raising \$15,000.

[DONATE](#)





MAY 17

“Metamorphosis”

Religious Education Sunday Multigenerational Service
Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education
Religious Education High School Seniors
Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Join us in our annual ritual of bringing the past and future together on RE Sunday as we honor our children and their caregivers. We gather to celebrate the learning of our Kindergarten and 8th grade O.W.L. students. We gather to be awed by the transformation of our eldest children as we listen to our high school seniors' words of truth. We gather in gratitude for their many caregivers within our faith community. This year we will dare to bear witness to our children's transitions virtually, helping our children know that we see their abundance even in a time of scarcity. Let us rejoice in our children accomplishments, behold their growth with love, and remind them and ourselves that we must help shape our destination.

MAY 24

“Service as a Prayer”

Rev. Linda Berez, Pulpit Guest
Karen Beaumont, Guest Organist
Mark Richards, Worship Associate
Memorial Day Sunday

Chaplain Linda Berez, Major in the Civil Air Patrol, will reflect on this line from the covenant read at her home congregation, First UU San Diego, “service as a prayer.” She will briefly share some of the history of the Civil Air Patrol along with its mission which was born out of a need to protect our country's coastline during World War II. On this Memorial Day weekend, let us consider together those who served and sacrificed all during wars and conflicts, as well as those who are offering service and sacrifice today.

Chaplain Linda Berez is a Major in the Civil Air Patrol and a Unitarian Universalist minister. She is a Meadville-Lombard graduate, an Air Force veteran, and has thirty-nine years of experience in computer technology. Linda enjoys serving as the Chaplain to Milwaukee Composite Squadron 5 where she teaches Character Development lessons, manages the squadron's information technology needs, and provides spiritual care to the cadets and seniors. Linda also serves as the Chaplain at the annual Wisconsin Wing Encampment at Volk Field, where she was awarded an Achievement Award for outstanding Duty Performance. Linda currently works for Apple. She is married to her partner the Rev. Dr. Marcia Marino who is a retired Unitarian Universalist (and UCC) chaplain. They feel fortunate to live with their rescued cockatiel DeeDee who loves listening to elevator music and smooth jazz.

MAY 31

“Letting Go: When Elvis Has Left the Building”

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director
Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education
Jeff Percy, Worship Associate

Thresholds feel different depending on whether you are coming in or going out. As we exit our month of the Thresholds theme, we will explore leaving places, and crossing the threshold as an exit. Are there aspects of your life that need to exit right now? Are you in need of an exit, or perhaps mourning a recent exit? Join us for this worship service that explores exits, releases, and completions.

Invite Your Loved Ones to Join Our Sunday Worship Services

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Many people are looking for the kind of spiritual sustenance you have found at First Church. People are hungry to connect, and inviting them to watch an online service in the comfort of their own home is an easy, low-risk way for them to explore First Church's community and spiritual offerings. It is also a way you can connect with them through a shared experience.

To invite them to join us, direct them to our [YouTube channel](#) (they can go to YouTube.com and search for “First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee” or go to our website, and click on the YouTube icon in the far upper right corner of the landing page) at 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning for one of our livestreams. Visitors are welcome to join us for Coffee Hour or Forum as well, or you can schedule your own post-service phone or Zoom call to connect and reflect! See you on Sunday.





Virtual Coffee on Zoom!

Community, Conversation & Connection
Sundays, 10:00 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.

Join Membership Coordinator Lynne Jacoby online for a Zoom Coffee Hour. Once you enter, Lynne will coordinate smaller groups of five or six for conversation. Members, guests, visitors are all welcome! Bring your own coffee.

Link to Join Sunday <https://zoom.us/j/3109225327> Password: uumke
Call +1 312 626 6799 enter the Meeting ID 310 922 5327 when prompted.

Virtual Poetry Contemplation

Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m.

for the duration of the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Order

“Listen, respond and rest with” the words of selected poets and in the company of others in our community. Based on the Monastic practice of Lectio Divina, the focus of this practice is our individual responses to the words. Come listen for what resonates, illuminates. Members, guests and visitors, all are welcome to join this open, weekly, drop-in practice.

Ongoing Meeting Link <https://zoom.us/j/138116309>

Call +1 312 626 6799 with ID 138 116 309

Password to enter the meeting: **Poetry**

Questions? email lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org

Mindful Mondays

by Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Director of Religious Education

Mondays, 9:00 a.m.

May 4 & 18 Tai Chi With Deb

May 11 Mindfulness Practice with Kimberlee

Join us each Monday as we learn about fun ways to be mindful together. We know that mindfulness reduces stress, and grows resilience and well-being. Each week we will learn fun interactive ways to practice mindfulness with our families. We will alternate between Kimberlee teaching Mindfulness practices suited for all ages, from simple songs to breathing games.

Every other week we will have Tai Chi taught by Deb Solis. Mindful Mondays can be a source of inspiration, new practices, strength, and community connection. All ages are welcome!

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/717908677>

Or call in: 312 626 6799 Meeting ID: 717 908 677

HOW TO REACH US

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

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