

# 2019-2020 Annual Report



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# The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Established 1842

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION:

2019-2020 Operating Budget: \$1,070,000

Adult Members: 710

Church School Enrollment: 118

Contributing Households: 426

## MEMBER:

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

## CHURCH STAFF:

### SENIOR MINISTER

The Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Reverend Dena McPhetres

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Jean Johnson

### DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

### YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Deb Solis

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Lynne Jacoby

### OFFICE COORDINATOR

Shari Wright

### COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Cindy Lorentzen (through January 30)

### SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

Cesar Cornier

## CHURCH STAFF CONTINUED:

### LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alissa Rhode

### CHORAL DIRECTOR

Tristan Strelitzer

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Lillian Schley

### NURSERY COORDINATOR

Lindsey Porter

### PRESCHOOL COORDINATOR

Mariah Groshek

### FACILITIES MANAGER

Tom Schroeder

### FACILITIES ASSISTANT

Jim Spice

### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE WORKER

Art Sims

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To say that 2019-2020 was an interesting year for our Congregation and the Board of Trustees would be a gross understatement. The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges for our beloved church community that we have never faced before. If there was any silver lining from the Board's perspective, it was the fortuitous timing of our adoption of the policy governance model several years back. As policy governance delegates operational policies and procedures to Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom and staff, the result has been a more nimble and timely decision-making process. This framework proved to be extremely helpful and afforded Reverend Jennifer and staff the ability to react quickly as information pertaining to the crisis seemingly was changing by the hour, without the need to wait for a change in Board policy or Board approval.

Pre-pandemic, the Board continued to live into the policy governance model by initiating the monitoring of progress towards our eight Ends, as well as determining compliance with the new policies adopted last year. In addition, the Board approved an investment policy developed by the Finance Team, designed to enable enhanced asset protection and provide clarity around the church's investment philosophy and strategy. Additional details on our governance structure including a policy governance overview, Board policies, Ends and their interpretations and measures can be found at [uumilwaukee.org/governance/](http://uumilwaukee.org/governance/). As we are early on this journey, initial monitoring and progress towards our Ends is limited but encouraging.

The Board also took steps to address how to continue the progress being made towards our Ends and the church's financial sustainability by reformulating the Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT) into a Strategic Planning Team and a Project Management Team. The Strategic Planning Team is charged with development of recommendations regarding growth and sustainability while the Project Management Team will focus on oversight and delivery of the previously Board approved and KGAT recommended initiatives. These teams will play a significant role in our path forward as we progress towards our Ends.

Finally, the Board approved a youth liaison role on the Board for up to two youth members in a non-voting capacity. This decision is driven by the Board's desire to have more direct input from our youth and better linkage to this critical element of our church's future. Details surrounding this role will be discerned and formulated early next church year in concert with the Youth Steering Committee.

All my best,

Mark Bishop, Congregation President, 2019-2020

# COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

On March 12, 2020, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency due to COVID-19, and on March 13, Milwaukee had its first confirmed case. On March 25, Governor Evers issued a “Safer at Home” order for Wisconsin, calling on all non-essential businesses to close, and non-essential workers to stay at home. On April 20, Gov. Evers released a Badger Bounce Back plan with three phases dictating when various Wisconsin business could re-open, and what would trigger the move to each next phase. On April 27, Gov. Evers loosened some restrictions on businesses that could operate with no contact with customers.

During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, all First Church in-person activities moved online or were rescheduled. We closed the building on Monday, March 23, and the staff began working from home. Staff members, in consultation with the Board, adapted, and will continue to adapt, strategies to respond to the crisis as information became available. Based on science and the Badger Bounce Back plan, we understand we may not be able to meet in large groups for some time. In the meantime, we will continue to livestream worship every Sunday, as well as offer religious education, coffee hour, pastoral care, and small groups online. We decided to focus on several Operational Goals during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

## OPERATIONAL GOALS DURING COVID-19

- I. Help our people stay healthy and safe
  - a. No FUSM in-person meetings during this time
  - b. Practice, model, and encourage social distancing
  - c. Help people grapple and come to terms with this reality
2. Reduce fear and anxiety among our people, and increase calm
  - a. Model non-anxious presence in our interactions
  - b. Engage in healthy processing and reflecting in staff and with members
  - c. Prioritize feelings and relationships over production
  - d. Clearly identify operational priorities, work on those first, practice letting go of the things at the bottom of the list
3. Care for our people
  - a. Pastoral Care Associate support designed for the emergency
  - b. Pastoral Care Provider support designed for the emergency
  - c. Increase connection, decrease isolation
  - d. Think of all of our work as pastoral care and connection work
4. Help our people find purpose and meaning
  - a. Provide appropriate ways for people to engage in church work and community support—give them avenues to help, safely
  - b. Frame staying at home as purpose work

## 5. Nourish our people's spirits

- a. Provide worship on Sundays, and other opportunities for collective spiritual practice during the week
- b. Help our folks engage spiritual practices at this time
  - i. As families
  - ii. As couples
  - iii. As individuals
- c. Help our folks practice gratitude for anything they can appreciate in the moment as much as possible

In our initial response to the emergency, we asked all staff to triage their work in the context of these goals, and make plans for:

- 1 week (short-term triage: what needs to happen immediately?)
- 2 – 4 weeks (medium-term triage: what needs to shift so we can function?)
- 2 – 6 months (longer-term triage: how will we make this sustainable as the time stretches?)

As time unfolds and we stabilize, we are beginning to explore how our community can be a supportive presence in Milwaukee. How can we support our neighbors? How can we support our people to support their neighbors? How can we care for folks more broadly? What is the church's unique role at this time?

### ESSENTIAL FIRST CHURCH OPERATIONS HAVE CONTINUED DURING COVID-19

#### Worship

Senior staff members, in consultation with Congregation President Mark Bishop, moved worship to online-only beginning March 15. We livestreamed the service from our sanctuary March 15 and March 22. On March 29, we began livestreaming from worship leaders' homes, with some elements pre-recorded as touchstones back into our sanctuary (the chalice lighting and extinguishing, the singing bowl, and Spirit of Life). Livestreaming from home will continue until it is safe to gather again.

#### Religious Education

Religious Education also moved online beginning March 15, with Religious Education for All Ages meeting at 10am online, and Youth Group meeting at 1pm online. Additional religious education opportunities, including Wednesday night Youth Group meetings, Mindfulness Mondays, and Parents' Spirit Group were offered during COVID-19.

#### Coffee Hour

Coffee hour began online on March 22, hosted by Membership Development Coordinator Lynne Jacoby. Members and visitors meet in small groups in Zoom break out rooms for conversation.

#### Pastoral Care

Associate Minister Rev. Dena McPhetres took swift action to expand our pastoral care ministry exponentially during the time of COVID-19. Our intention has been to multiply love and care for our church members faster than the virus

spreads, which required re-shaping our pastoral care systems. We doubled the size of the Pastoral Care Associate (PCA) team, with ten former PCAs joining our current team of ten, to make Wellness Check phone calls to all our church members in high risk demographics. We developed a framework for online Memorial Circles, and created a COVID Candle to be lit during worship for members who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 or during the COVID-19 crisis.

#### Administration

In early April, we learned from the Unitarian Universalist Association that congregations were eligible for loans through the Paycheck Protection Program of the Small Business Administration, which would be made through our local bank. Loans of up to 2.5 months of payroll expenses were available to small businesses and non-profits to cover payroll and other fixed expenses like mortgages, debt, rent, and utilities. If all conditions of the loan are met (loans are spent on the above items, employees are retained, and wages are not reduced), then the loans will be forgiven. The UUA urged us to act quickly to apply, and Jean worked with our Finance Team, our Treasurer, and our Accountant, as well as the loan officers at our bank to apply within the first day of them accepting applications. We were approved, and the loan was given to us on April 15. We will meet all the conditions of this loan, and therefore anticipate it will be forgiven. If any portion of it is not forgiven, we will return the money immediately. With an interest rate of 1%, we have determined this to be low risk, and high reward.

Communications: We moved communications online and over the phone, moving to phone calls, e-blasts, website, Facebook, Zoom, e-announcements, and electronic *Chanticleer* to communicate.

Director of Administration Jean Johnson goes in to the building once a week for essential functions that require someone at the building, including picking up the mail; receiving checks and making deposits; paying bills and keeping a paper record of them; and checking on the building once a week. Payroll is done electronically and through the mail.

### **SUPPORTING MILWAUKEEANS DURING COVID-19**

Giving to community partners: We heard from many First Church members that they would like to support Milwaukeeans in need, and those hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with our Social Justice Council teams and their partners in the community, Social Justice Coordinator Cesar Cornier developed a list of our community partners' needs, and how to give. This list is on our website:

<https://uumilwaukee.org/support-milwaukeeans-covid19/>

Masks for Prisons: First Church member Scot Henry was moved by the April 19 worship service to collect masks for prisons and jails in the Milwaukee area. Working with Cesar and Laurie Petersen, they developed a system for creating, collecting, and distributing masks for incarcerated people and folks working in prisons. Our church members began sewing away, and made dozens of masks in less than a week! Ayuda-MKE donated 800 disposable masks to this effort, and the Sheboygan Mask Makers donated 400 cloth masks. The team dropped them off at the Milwaukee County Jail on April 28, 2020, and was covered on CBS News.

# ENDS STATEMENTS

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

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

At the heart of First Church, we value:

Wonder

Authentic Connection

Love

Justice

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We gather together to:

Nurture the Spirit. Engage the Mind. Inspire Action.

# 2018-2019 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

## Overview

In compliance with Board policies 4.4 and 4.5, the Finance Team oversees the financial condition of the church by:

- Monitoring/Managing financial performance of operations and investments to determine if it is in compliance with the budget;
- Analyzing financial data and developing alternatives and strategies when necessary;
- Preparing the budget for each new fiscal year;
- Serving as a resource for teams, ministries, and the Board concerning financial matters.

The Finance Team closely monitors the financial results of our church and keeps the Board of Trustees and the congregation informed of significant developments. We generate projections to help forecast the financial condition of the church over the near and long term and to assist with the formation and maintenance of a balanced budget. We develop strategies to help improve the financial status of the church as needed, while trying to fulfill the diverse program goals established to pursue the church's Ends.

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

## Income and Expenses

### July 1, 2018 — June 30, 2019

The following page shows the budget and final income statement for the 2018-2019 church year. The first section shows the income while the second section shows the operating expenses for the year. Ideally, the income should balance the expenses to yield an Income Net of Operations of \$0 or a balanced budget. The Finance Team projected a negative balance of \$106,908 for the church year. Final numbers, not including extraordinary income, show that a negative balance of \$61,675 – more than \$45,000 better than expected. Total income was \$2,242 below budget and the total expenses were \$47,476 below budget.

Income – total income was very close to budget

Pledges were down 6% (-\$41,809); Bequests exceeded budget.

The apartment income was up 19% (+\$4,265)

Expense – total expense was down almost 5% (-\$47,476):

Human Resources expense were down almost 8.5% (-\$64,186) due to open positions and lower DRE salary

Capital Maintenance was down 40% (-\$7,470)

Income Net of Operation was -\$61,675, a 42% decrease from the budgeted deficit of -\$106,908. The pledges in future years must increase to cover this cost for First Church to become fiscally sustainable.

Extraordinary Income – unexpected and unusual income – saved the bottom line for the year

Bettie Zillman bequest of \$273,689

Gain on Investments of \$48,900

## FUSM 2018-2019 INCOME & EXPENSE HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

ITEM	'18 - '19	'18 - '19	Variance	
	BUDGET	FINAL	Amount	%
<b><u>Contributions</u></b>				
Pledges	700,000	658,191	(41,809)	-6%
Bequest Income	25,000	25,911	911	0%
Other Contributions	35,200	48,980	13,780	39%
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>760,200</b>	<b>733,083</b>	<b>(27,117)</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b><u>Transfer from Fund Balance</u></b>	<b>23,872</b>	<b>47,964</b>	<b>24,092</b>	<b>101%</b>
<b><u>Activity Income</u></b>				
Feast for Funds	25,000	19,554	(5,446)	-22%
Adult RE	(1,400)	4,478	5,878	420%
RE Fees	9,000	7,823	(1,177)	-13%
Other Sources	7,600	7,453	(147)	-2%
<b>Total Activity Income</b>	<b>40,200</b>	<b>39,308</b>	<b>(892)</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b><u>Investment Income</u></b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>23,910</b>	<b>(2,590)</b>	<b>-10%</b>
<b><u>Apartment Income Net of Expenses</u></b>	<b>22,330</b>	<b>26,595</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$873,102</b>	<b>\$870,860</b>	<b>(\$2,242)</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b><u>Human Resources</u></b>				
Salaries, Wages & Minister Housing	568,476	516,264	(52,212)	-9%
Professional Expenses	24,822	14,798	(10,024)	-40%
DRE Transition	-	22,395	22,395	*
Insurance - Health & Disability	74,370	64,362	(10,008)	-13%
Retirement Savings - all staff	44,285	39,076	(5,209)	-12%
Payroll Taxes	28,054	23,838	(4,216)	-15%
Other	16,757	11,844	(4,913)	-29%
<b>Total Human Resources</b>	<b>756,764</b>	<b>692,578</b>	<b>(64,186)</b>	<b>-8%</b>
<b><u>Budgeted Contributions</u></b>	<b>22,881</b>	<b>22,512</b>	<b>(369)</b>	<b>-2%</b>
<b><u>Building Expenses</u></b>	<b>72,425</b>	<b>76,905</b>	<b>4,480</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b><u>Basic Operations</u></b>	<b>70,856</b>	<b>69,811</b>	<b>(1,045)</b>	<b>-1%</b>
<b><u>Religious Education</u></b>	<b>7,152</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>(3,050)</b>	<b>-43%</b>
<b><u>Committees</u></b>	<b>26,060</b>	<b>18,663</b>	<b>(7,397)</b>	<b>-28%</b>
<b><u>Extra Operations</u></b>				
Capital Maintenance	18,872	11,402	(7,470)	-40%
Krug Projects/Thaney	-	36,562	36,562	*
Mortar Lecture Committee	5,000	-	(5,000)	-100%
<b>Total Extra Operations</b>	<b>23,872</b>	<b>47,964</b>	<b>24,092</b>	<b>101%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$980,010</b>	<b>\$932,534</b>	<b>-\$47,476</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>INCOME NET OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>-\$106,908</b>	<b>-\$61,675</b>	<b>\$45,233</b>	<b>-42%</b>
<b><u>Extraordinary Income</u></b>				
Gain/Loss on Investment	\$0	\$48,905		
Bequests, Unrestricted	\$0	\$273,689		
<b>EXTRAORDINARY INCOME</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$322,594</b>		
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-\$106,908</b>	<b>\$260,920</b>	<b>\$367,828</b>	

## Investment Report

In compliance with Board policy 4.6.10, the Finance Team actively monitors our investments and manages the funds per our investment policy goals and objectives. The full investment policy is available on request.

On June 30, 2019, First Church had three certificates of deposits (CDs) valued at \$314,682. This money satisfies the safety net of 15% of budgeted expenses as well as the additional 15% to mature in less than three years. The remaining funds in the General Fund as well as the Memorial Trust Fund were invested in the UU Common Endowment Fund, which is managed to approximate 60% bonds and 40% equities.

The UUA Common Endowment Fund had a return on investment of 14.1% for the Fiscal YTD and 10.6%/year for the last three years; two Landmark Credit Union CDs of 2.47% fixed for 18 months, and Brewery Credit Union CD of 2.5% fixed for 27 months. Money market rates at Associated Bank averaged 1.6%.

## Balance Sheet

### June 30, 2019

Total net assets increased by \$208,990 primarily due to the Bettie Zillman bequest and gain on investments. The assets were decreased by \$61,675 due to the income deficit shown in the Income and Expense Summary.

## Description of Funds

### Restricted (by donor) Funds

**Morter Fund:** This fund was established in accordance with a bequest of a former member. The funds are designated to sponsor seminars on individual responsibility.

**Memorial Trust Fund:** This fund contains unspecified bequests. Money placed in the fund can be expended or borrowed against only by a super majority of the congregation. The Finance Team manages it. A fixed percentage of the fund's assets provide quarterly income to the church's operations.

### Designated (by Board) Funds

**Capital Maintenance Reserve:** This fund contains unrestricted bequest and donations that the Board designated for capital improvements.

### Unrestricted Funds

**Unrestricted Fund Balance:** This fund is the amount retained after payment of expenses or the allocation to designated funds. It increases during fiscal years in which there is an operating surplus and decreases during years in which there is an operating deficit. For fiscal security, the Board has adopted a policy of maintaining a balance in this fund that is equal to or greater than 15% of the operating expenses for the most recent fiscal year. If the balance drops below this 15% level, the restoration of the fund becomes a fiscal priority. The Bettie Zillman bequest was added to this fund this year.

**Krug Special Programs Fund:** This fund was designated by the Board in March 2019 to fund special projects in 2019-20 through 2021-22.

Noreen Gilbertsen, Finance Committee Chair

# FUSM BALANCE SHEET FOR FY 2018-2019

6/30/2019

ASSETS		
	June 30, 2018	June 30, 2019

## CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$14,087	\$21,182
Money Manager	\$307,510	\$154,091
Other	\$12,696	\$8,981
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$334,294</b>	<b>\$184,254</b>

## INVESTMENTS

Memorial Trust Fund - UUCEF	\$337,169	\$340,178
Oikocredit USA	\$10,616	\$11,041
CD's	\$210,692	\$314,682
General Fund - UUCEF	\$864,285	\$1,115,889
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>\$1,422,762</b>	<b>\$1,781,790</b>

<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,757,055</b>	<b>\$1,966,045</b>
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## LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE

### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Prepaid Pledges	\$41,061	\$40,284
Apartment Security Deposit	\$4,269	\$3,565
YRUU Account & Mission Trip Savings	\$6,382	\$5,283
27th Pay Period Accrual		\$15,334
Sabbatical Accrual	\$5,184	\$5,184
Other Liabilities	\$3,415	\$7,979
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$60,310</b>	<b>\$77,629</b>

### RESTRICTED FUNDS

Morter Fund - Donor Restricted	\$74,106	\$74,106
Tom Thaney for the Arts		\$480
Memorial Trust Fund	\$337,169	\$340,178
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>\$411,276</b>	<b>\$414,764</b>

### UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$467,073	\$783,932
Net Income	\$766,153	\$260,920
Capital Maintenance Fund	\$49,589	\$38,186
Krug Special Programs Fund		\$390,613
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$1,282,815</b>	<b>\$1,473,652</b>

<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$1,754,400</b>	<b>\$1,966,045</b>
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# Board Committee and Teams

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As a committee of the board, the Nominating Committee is charged with nominating members for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee.

The members of the Nominating Committee have continued to participate in Common Ground's training on how to conduct one-on-one relational meetings with members of the congregation. This year, the six members of the Nominating Committee conducted 20 one-on-one meetings. We find this process to be a valuable way to become acquainted with members of the church, learn their talents and interests, as well as hearing their thoughts on lay-leadership.

We also worked closely with Director of Membership Lynne Jacoby, Director of Administration Jean Johnson and Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom to produce a list of viable candidates for both the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee, as well as discussing future needs for leadership development within the church.

In addition to myself, Nominating Committee members this year were: Michelle Boehm, Heather Hansen, Scot Henry, Vashti Lozier, Tracy Kreuser, and Jean Johnson staff liaison. We offer deep gratitude to those many generous and talented members who have responded to the call of leadership.

Beth Bender, Chair

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM (PMT)

Team Members: Erik Alexander, Mary Ann Fisher, Jennifer Nordstrom, Melinda Vernon (Chair), Patricia Witt.

With the ending of the Krug Gift Acceptance Team (KGAT) in late Fall 2019, the Project Management Team was formed to complete two specific tasks. The first task was to appropriately honor Bettie Zillman for her generous bequest and to then advise the board on how we might recognize future large donors to our church. The second task was to evaluate the thirteen Krug projects and to report on their success as well as lessons learned from the process of requesting proposals and approving these projects. Additionally, the team will make recommendations to the board for a potential additional year of funding for three projects currently funded through the 2020-2021 church year.

The team was just beginning its work when the coronavirus upended our initial plans. It has been decided to honor Bettie

Zillman during the on-line service on June 7th. A further, more tangible tribute is under discussion. As the timeline of several of the Krug projects was necessarily delayed, we are in the process of communicating with project leaders as to the timing of an evaluation.

Melinda Vernon, Chair

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

The Strategic Planning Team was chartered by the Board of Trustees in December 2019 to consider the overall strategic direction and long-term vision, growth, and sustainability of First Church and advise the Board and congregation. The team was specifically asked to address the structural budget deficit and recommend a sustainable model of funding to achieve our mission and ends within financial means. As part of this charter, the team will consider how remaining monies from recent large bequests from Lu Krug and Bettie Zillman could support the plan.

To fully live into our First Church values, mission, and ends, this team will consider the following elements:

- *Growth*: Review national trends in church attendance and membership; and First Church attendance, membership, outreach, and marketing
- *Ends Implementation*: What progress are we making on our Ends? How are all of the other factors contributing to or inhibiting progress?
- *Financial Planning*: Review the First Church predictive financial model and long-term sustainability of First Church finances; bequests and legacy planning; consider new revenue streams; trends in fundraising, non-profits, and pledges.
- *Our Building*: Consider capital improvements, maintenance, and capital fund drives.
- *Human Resources*: How does our staff configuration support our vision, ends implementation, and growth? How are we investing in our priorities?
- *Vision*: How is everything we do moving us forward to-

(STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM, continued on page 14)

ward our vision of the Beloved Community? Is there a big visionary project we could tackle that would move us forward?

- *External Threats and Opportunities:* What are the major external factors and trends affecting our congregation, our sustainability, our vision, and our ability to implement it?
- *Sustainability:* Given all of the foregoing needs and factors, how can we best set ourselves on a course which can be sustained for decades to come?

Team members include: Mark Bishop, Amanda Panciera, Dale Skaggs, Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, and co-chairs Julie Bock and David Becker who will each serve for three years. The team has met regularly this spring to form and begin this significant undertaking and looks forward to presenting our recommendations to the Board and Congregation by the Annual Meeting in May 2021, and then working through the 2021-22 church year to define the strategies and assist in the implementation to achieve the desired plan.

David Becker, Chair

## PERSONNEL TEAM

The Personnel Team provided support to Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom and staff during this past year. The committee primarily focused on reviewing and updating personnel policies and benefits.

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

Nancy Spransy, Chair

# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES: May 19, 2019

## **I. Call to Order**

Congregation President Michelle Naples called the meeting to order at 12:32 pm after a congregational quorum was achieved. Maria Dorsey lit the chalice. Jeremy Koenen acted as Recording Secretary.

## **II. Approval of Minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting**

*Motion of approval by Don Weimer. Seconded by Bob Monahan. Motion passed.*

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

Michelle discussed the ends that were adopted by the Board. Rev. Jennifer and the staff worked towards interpreting those ends, and coming up with interpretations on those ends. Those interpretations were then presented to and approved by the Board. Detail was given on the new congregational survey, detailing its purpose and desire to have it conducted regularly to act as a pulse of where we are in succeeding in those ends, as well as consistently reevaluating their relevance.

Covered the formation of the Boards' new policy governance model. The policies are meant to provide oversight of the operations conducted by the church, and can be found on the website. Policy governance is meant to clarify accountability, provide focus and clarity, empower staff and lay members, and ultimately encourage collaboration.

Michelle covered the sources of authority. Members and children of congregation, followed by those coming in the future, those who have come before us and contributed to our heritage, and finally our larger Unitarian Universalist community.

Michelle covered the main core areas of the policies in relation to the ends, means, BOT-Minister relationship, minister's limitations, and Board clarifications.

It was presented that the finance and personnel committees now staff led. The nominating committee remains a committee of the Board.

Jeanne Durnford asked if the policies can be printed out. Michelle responded that they are only on the website right now, but can be printed out and provided in that form.

## **IV. Nominating Committee Report**

Beth Bender reporting on the Nominating Committee's efforts.

Two people stepping off the Board, Michelle and Maria. Omega is stepping down, and Chris Aiken will be filling her remaining year's role.

*Moved to elect Jane Cliff, Diana Dentino, and Mark Miller to the Board of Trustees.*

*Motion made by Kathy Rivera, and seconded by Liz Irwin.*

*Joe Schuller and Patricia Witt are retiring from the Nominating Committee.*

*Correction noted that contrary to the agenda, Laura Ehlers is not on the Nominating Committee, but instead that Scot Henry stepped into that role.*

*Moved to elect Heather Hansen and Vashti Lozier to the Nominating Committee.*

*Motion made by Alexis Fielek, and seconded by Beth Monhollen.*

*Many thanks were given to the various individuals that have contributed to nominations and the workings of the committee.*

## **V. Financial Condition Report**

Noreen Gilbertsen, Finance Committee chair, presented the financial condition report.

Noreen clarified that the book of business does not close until June, so finances covered were for the 2017-2018 church year. It was stressed that pledges are such an important contribution.

Summary was presented that we budgeted \$706,000 and spent \$696,000.

Noreen covered in further detail the income and expenses, followed by the balance sheet between general fund, CD's, Oiko Credit USA, Memorial Trust Fund, and cash.

Question was raised by Kathy Rivera of the recurring -\$100,000 deficit. Conversation ensued with Rev. Jennifer over how the predictive model is helping to see any projected deficits, and develop 7 year strategies to avoid them.

Additional information is provided in the Annual Report.

## **VI. Stewardship Report**

Fred Gutierrez and Lynne Jacoby gave the stewardship report. Fred detailed that as of May 11th, pledge totals stand at \$696,000, and projecting that in the end we will see \$725,000 as the stewardship pledges, which is a 6% increase. Aspirational goal was to target 15% increase, which was recognized as being optimistically aspirational. Fred gave details about the kickoff event that was held at the Urban Ecology Center. The Stewardship Team had training classes to help train through role-playing how stewardship conversations could transpire. Alexis Fielek helped coordinate that training.

Virtually all groups were contacted to help spread the word about pledging.

Lynne is not concerned about the generosity of the community. The struggle this year has been the loss of 41 pledging units, and 25 units that still have not responded. They are currently reaching out to engage those individuals on why they have drifted away from the church. She is very optimistic that the operating gap will continue to shrink.

## **VII. Krug Gift Acceptance Team**

Dave Becker presented on behalf of the Lu Krug Gift Acceptance Team, also known as KGAT. Dave covered how the Board policy directed how a team should be formed to recommend and advise on how the funds should be applied. 30% of the funds would be short term, 50% would be midterm goals, and 20% would be allocated for long term goals that are still to be defined.

Three projects were funded to help jump start this initiative, including choral scholars, a social justice intern, and live streaming of the services.

The team established a website to allow members to propose projects to be funded as part of the midterm funds. The team only sought to allocate half of those funds initially. Dave outlined the process of how projects were submitted. The ends were a critical consideration for how the expenses would be allocated.

The funded projects included:

- Social Justice (1,2,3)
  - \* First Action Mobilization Network
  - \* BLUU donations
  - \* Social justice intern
- Worship/Pastoral Care/Community (4,6,7)
  - ◇ Beloved Conversations
  - ◇ Choral scholars

- ◇ Youth pilgrimage to Boston (partially funded as a head start)
- ◇ Growth/Outreach/Welcome (5,6)
- Expand music ministry
  - ◇ UUA Assembly Scholarship

Covered next steps, including how requestors were notified of funding decisions. Some will be funded immediately, while some will be planned for future funding. Periodic reports will follow on their status and progress.

Questions then followed. Bruce Wiggins asked what the process is for requesting funds to be released for approved projects. Dave clarified that those needing their funds would need to reach out for those funds by presenting the immediate plan for them, and relation to the project. Additional communication will be coming on how to receive access to the funds, as they need to be tracked to the bequest for the finance committee.

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

Rev. Dena McPhetres presented her remarks. She began by acknowledging that this year has been one of many losses. Regarding these losses, recognition was given to how the church had supported each other through these losses, as well as the Pastoral Care Associates, leaders of the PCA team, the Pastoral Care Providers, Shawl Ministry, and the Memorial Service Reception Team. These groups create authentic connection.

Details were presented on realignment of roles between Rev. Jennifer and Rev. Dena. Beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, Dena will supervise the new Director of Religious Education, while Jennifer will take over social justice. The new Director of Religious Education would be Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, and covered the experience Kimberlee brings with her to help transform our religious education into a more modern model.

Dena proceeded to recognize many of the groups she had worked with in social justice. She concluded by indicating an enthusiasm that she has for the new policy governance model that the church is transitioning into.

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

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom presented her remarks, which began by recognizing the conclusion of her third year with First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee. Rev. Jennifer also acknowledged the grief and support that the church has shown over the past year.

She thanked Michelle and Mark for their contributions in leading the Board of Trustees during the policy governance transition.

The staff worked on interpretations of the ends, followed by metrics for tracking the progress and success in accomplishing those ends. The annual service assists in that.

She thanked the Krug Bequest Team for forming a process in handling those funds. Further thanks were given to the Stewardship Team for their job in leading us forward in taking a bold step.

Rev. Jennifer will be the staff team lead for the Social Justice Council, including a social justice coordinator supervised by Rev. Jennifer, while Rev. Dena will be the staff lead for life-span religious education.

There will be staff led teams, including the Personnel, Finance, and Committee on Ministry Teams. The Nominating Committee will remain a committee of the Board.

Rev. Jennifer presented the new organizational chart to the congregation.

All of the groups involved in the new organization were recognized and appreciated for their contributions, as well highlighting their place in the new organizational chart.

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

- Bruce Wiggins asked to look at median versus average on the annual survey. Asked to consider varying the banners outside the church to diversify our endorsement of causes. Asked the Board and staff to consider the interrelationships of the ends when considering projects and proposals.

- Rod DePue asked if with regard to the roughly 40 members, are we doing any exit interviews of the members that are leaving, and why? Furthermore, Rod asked about the current membership numbers.
  - ◇ Lynne Jacoby responded, indicating that members notifying us are interviewed, and follow-up was planned during the summer for individuals that appear to have left but did not notify us.
  - ◇ Rev. Jennifer elaborated on the official membership of roughly 750 current members on the rolls reported to UUA, which is growing. Lynne's follow-up over the summer will help clean up those official rolls.

#### **XI. Adjournment**

*Moved to adjourn at 2:05pm by Beth Bender, seconded by Janet Nortrom*

# 2019 - 2020 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

## CONGREGATION OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**  
Mark Bishop  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Mark Bender  
**SECRETARY**  
Jane Cliff  
**TREASURER**  
Tom Briscoe

## BOARD MEMBERS

Chris Aiken  
Mark Bender  
Mark Bishop  
Jane Cliff  
Dianna Dentino  
Jeremy Koenen  
Mark Miller  
Jane Peterson  
Melinda Vernon

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Beth Bender  
Michelle Boehm  
Heather Hansen  
Scot Henry  
Tracy Kreuser  
Vashti Lozier

## TEAMS, MINISTRIES, AND GROUPS

**ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

**AUDIO**  
Mike Paulson

**BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**  
Chris Linder

**BOOK SALES**  
Nancy Pajewski  
Barb Lancelot

**BUDDHIST STUDY GROUP:  
GATHERING WATERS SANGHA**  
Jeanne Lowry  
Mark Miller

**BUILDING & GROUNDS**  
Russ Drewry

**CHANCEL CHOIR**  
Tristan Strelitzer

**CHILD CARE**  
Sonya Fitak

**CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
Sarah Richards

**CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED (TCG)**  
Sharon DePue  
Cecile Langford

**CIRCLE SUPPERS**  
Sam Mueller

**COFFEE, CHRISTMAS**  
Lynne Jacoby

**COLLECTION COUNTERS**  
Shari Wright

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**  
Barbara Rasman

**DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Bruce Wiggins

**ELECTION INSPECTORS**  
JoAnn Bishop

**FEAST FOR FUNDS**  
Sue Thaney

**FINANCE**  
Noreen Gilbertsen

**FORUM**  
Lorraine Jacobs

**GALLERY**  
Alisha Koneazny

**HERITAGE SOCIETY**  
Lisa Koneazny

**HISTORY/ARCHIVES**  
Linda Presto

**INCOME OPPORTUNITY**  
Holly Patzer

**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**  
Allan Ries

**MEMBERSHIP**  
Susan Borri  
Lynn Connelly

**MISSION TRIP ADVISORS**  
Deb Solis

**MORTER LECTURE**  
Lorraine Jacobs

**OWL ADVISORS**  
Deb Solis

**PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES  
COORDINATOR**  
Jane Peterson

**PASTORAL CARE PROVIDERS  
COORDINATOR**  
Jane Dorweiler

**PERSONNEL**  
Nancy Spransy

**PLEDGE DRIVE TEAM**  
Fred Gutierrez

**PUBLICATION ASSEMBLY**  
Shari Wright

**PULPIT GUEST COMMITTEE**  
Kristine Hansen

**SHAWL MINISTRY**  
Patti Agacki  
Connie Georgenson

**SPIRITUAL RETREAT**  
Rollie Hanson  
Chris Aiken

**STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**  
Lynne Jacoby

## **SUNDAY FLOWERS**

Shari Wright

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

Barbara Collignon  
Camille Johnson

## **THEME CIRCLES**

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

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

Angi Krueger  
Erik Islo

## **USHERS**

Cheri Briscoe

## **UU'RE HOME**

JoAnn Bishop

## **UU PARENTING GROUP**

Stacey Thieme

## **UU+ STUDY GROUP**

Nancy Pajewski  
Chris Linder

## **WORSHIP ASSOCIATES**

Beth Monhollen  
Paul Geenen

## **WOMAN SPIRIT**

Janet Nordstrom

## **YOUTH STEERING**

Bizzy Schultz (adult)  
Ehlona Walker (youth)

## **OUTSIDE FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

### **COMMON GROUND**

Jerry Fredrickson

### **INTERCHANGE**

Susan Mitten  
Beth Bruch

### **INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE**

Patricia McFarland

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

Pete Koneazny  
Bob Monahan

## **OTHER LEADERS**

### **THEME CIRCLE FACILITATORS:**

Jeanne Durnford  
Eric Heilig  
Diane Horne  
Juanita Mast  
Patricia McFarland  
Katy Phillips  
Nancy Spransy  
Robert Szymanski

### **PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES:**

Andrew Alden  
Julie Hamrick  
Bob Kollmeyer  
Donna Moberg  
Susan Nolte  
Jerilyn Percy  
Sarah Richards  
Dale Skaggs  
Jen Vargas  
Laurie Petersen, Lead Trainer

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL**

Cesar Cornier

### **ANTI-RACISM**

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Kenyatta Yamel

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER 2 WIUUs**

Mary Devitt

### **CIRCLES OF SUPPORT**

Paul Geenen

### **EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY**

Bruce Wiggins  
Tree Moore

### **IMMIGRATION ISSUES**

Pat Geenen  
Birger Pahl

### **SHARE THE PLATE**

Bob Monahan  
Nancy Spransy

### **UU THE VOTE**

Joan Hansen

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

[CLICK HERE](#)

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

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

# 2019-2020 Sermon Schedule

## **JUNE 2**

"When Simplicity Brings Abundance"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **JUNE 9**

"Simplicity Takes Practice"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **JUNE 16**

Pete Seeger Songfest  
Jim Scott, Special Guest and Composer

## **JUNE 23**

"Live Simply So That Others May Simply Live"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **JUNE 30**

"Joy in My Heart"  
Beth Monhollen, Member

## **JULY 7**

"Tongues of Fire"  
The Rev. Misha Sanders

## **JULY 14**

"Deeper Hungers"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **JULY 21**

"Desire's Power"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **JULY 28**

"What Dr. King Would Say to African American Youth Today"  
The Rev. Ron Ballew

## **AUGUST 4**

"Many Kinds of Honesty"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **AUGUST 11**

"Being Honest With Self and Others"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **AUGUST 18**

"A God as Big as Lake Superior, Revisited"  
The Rev. David Kraemer

## **AUGUST 25**

How to Live: Aristotle and the Buddha in Agreement"  
Robert Szymanski, Member

## **SEPTEMBER 1**

"Rebellion: An Act of Spirituality and Love"  
Ehlona Walker, Member

## **SEPTEMBER 8**

"We're Expecting"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **SEPTEMBER 15**

"Open to Hope"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **SEPTEMBER 22**

"When Life upends Us"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education

## **SEPTEMBER 29**

"Expectations Bound by Time"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **OCTOBER 6**

"Becoming Belonging, Being Belonging, Giving Belonging"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **OCTOBER 13**

"Belonging to Place"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **OCTOBER 20**

"Divinity in the Devil's Curve"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **OCTOBER 27**

"Carrying Home With Us"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **NOVEMBER 3**

"Attention Is Our Most Valuable Currency"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **NOVEMBER 10**

"The Tension in Attention"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **NOVEMBER 17**

"Radical Welcome"  
Zr. Alex Kapitan

## **NOVEMBER 24**

"What We Give Attention to Grows"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **DECEMBER 1**

"The NEW Covenant: Redefining UU Polity for the 21st Century"  
The Rev. Marcus Fogliano

## **DECEMBER 8**

"The Awesome Power of Human Connection"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **DECEMBER 15**

"Awesome Fear of the Holy"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **DECEMBER 22**

Multigenerational Holiday Pageant  
Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education and  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **DECEMBER 24**

**CANDLELIGHT SERVICES**  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **DECEMBER 29**

"Going Fast or Going Far: The Power of Community"  
Beth Monhollen, Member

## **JANUARY 5**

"You Don't Have It Until You Live It"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **JANUARY 12**

"When We Fail"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

# 2019-2020 Sermon Schedule

## **JANUARY 19**

"Morality vs. Ethics"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **JANUARY 26**

"Weaving Morals and Ethics Together"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FEBRUARY 2**

"Grit, Grief, and Resilience"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **FEBRUARY 9**

"Re-setting Your Stink Meter"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FEBRUARY 16**

"Weaving Community Creates Resilience"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FEBRUARY 23**

"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House"

The Rev. Bill Sinkford

## **MARCH 1**

Annual Youth Service

"Wholly Discomfort: Embracing the Unknown in Community"

## **MARCH 8**

"How Do I Learn to Live?"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MARCH 15**

"Wisdom Lives in the People"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MARCH 22**

"Is Ketchup a Smoothie?"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MARCH 29**

"Wisdom Shows Up in the Rearview Mirror"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **APRIL 5**

"Sticky Justice"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **APRIL 12**

"Freed From a Lack of Imagination"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **APRIL 19**

"Letting Go of Toxicity"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **APRIL 26**

"Forgiveness as Liberation"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MAY 3**

"Threshold Wisdom"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MAY 10**

"Doorways of Life"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **MAY 17**

Religious Education Sunday

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Director of Religious Education

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **MAY 24**

"Service as a Prayer"

The Rev. Linda Berez

## **MAY 31**

"Letting Go: When Elvis Has Left the Building"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

# Wheel of Life

May 30, 2019 - May 10, 2020

## New Members

### Fall 2019

Sue Austin  
Bob Austin  
Max Schultz  
Courtenay Teska

### Winter 2020

Debbie Ambruso  
Jobey Clarke  
Kelly Gauthier  
Barbara Leigh  
Michael McDermott  
Ashley Moniz  
Taylor Moniz  
Nancy Nedland  
Justin Pischke  
Caroline Robbins

## Deaths

Carla Anne Ernst  
Peg Fleury  
Alice Mae Gillam  
Joseph Stephen Lowry  
Katherine Marrs  
Shelley Schaffer  
Russell Monroe Sherman  
Robert Teska  
Edwin (Ted) P. Wiley

## Weddings

Elizabeth Ann Gies and  
Kirstin Anne Anglea  
Officiated by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Richard Gene Horner and  
Angela Marie Zausch  
Officiated by Rev. Kent Mayfield

Wesley Blake Edens and  
Hannah Elizabeth Purnell  
Officiated by Rev. Dena McPhetres

Richard Todd Hamalainen and  
Rebecca Anne Nault  
Officiated by Rev. Kent Mayfield

## Dedications of Parents and Children

### November 2019

Marta Kathleen Jarczyński-Monacelli  
Child of Crysta Jarczyński & Teddy Monacelli

Joshua Trevor Sinko  
Child of Andrew Sinko & Lizzy Andersson

## Graduating High School Seniors

En Fitak  
Lucy Pyne  
Ehlona Walker

## Heritage Society

Judy Anderson  
Keith & Paula Anderson  
JoAnn Bachar  
Bob Balderson  
Christian Becker & Christina  
Zawadiwsky-Becker  
Mark & Jo Ann Bishop  
Patricia McFarland &  
Nick Bokas  
Rod Botts  
Tom & Cheri Briscoe  
Paul & Susanne Carter  
Susan Comstock

Judith & James Ford  
Jerry Fredrickson & Jill Erickson  
Scot Henry & Laura White  
Sally Heuer & Steven Culver  
Mary Houseman  
Jane Stoltz  
Nelson Kading  
Drew Kennedy & Lois Wesener  
Tina Keppel  
Pete & Lisa Koneazny  
Hank Kulesza  
Jeanne & Michael Lewis  
Loren Leys & Adele Kaferly

Kate Marrs  
Bob Moore & Liz Irwin Moore  
Mark & Lonni Mueller  
Ellyn & Mike Newman  
Marlowe & Janet Nortrom  
Mimi Notestein  
Patrick & Barbara Patterson  
Holly Patzer  
Kathy & Bob Porter  
Bronze Quinton & Will Fellows  
Tom Radoszewski  
Lisa & Michael Radtke  
Miriam Reading & Dick Miller

Kathy Rivera & Sally Lewis  
Max & Patricia Scharmach  
Dale Skaggs & Lynda Lambert  
Dick & Nancy Spransy  
Robert Szymanski  
Melinda & Kit Vernon  
Don Weimer & Chris Linder  
Bruce & Terry Wiggins  
Jacki Zandi

# Staff Reports

## MINISTRY

### SENIOR MINISTER

The 2019 -2020 First Church year has been a wild and intense mix of abundance, progress, and tragedy. We began the year with an incredibly generous bequest from our dear member Bettie Zillman, and closed the year with a global coronavirus pandemic. In the middle, we built relationship with our new Director of Religious Education Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson (M.Div) who will become our Minister of Religious Education in 2020-2021, welcomed our Social Justice Coordinator Cesar Cornier and made progress on social justice, strengthened our governance system, and continued to nourish our people's spirits, engage their minds, and inspire them to action. Our community has shown up for one another this year, and has been beautifully loving and resilient during a time of tragedy and loss. First Church, you inspire me and give me hope for the future.

To lead us forward in our shared ministry, this year I have prioritized:

- Leading worship, where we share spiritual practice, search for meaning, and cast vision together;
- Collaborating with the Board on monitoring the achievement of our First Church Ends and interpreting the Board's Policy Limitations;
- Leading the staff, who are responsible for implementing our shared vision, and accountable for the outcomes of our shared ministry;
- Implementing the portfolio switch between the Senior and Associate Minister, with social justice moving into my portfolio, and Lifespan Religious Education moving into Rev. Dena McPhetres' portfolio; and
- Developing the framework to strategize a pathway to financial sustainability.

Some highlights:

#### **WORSHIP: NURTURE, ENGAGE, INSPIRE, AND SHARE**

In worship, we have celebrated, grieved, marked births and deaths, and honored humanity's beauty and complexity. We have discovered new things about ourselves and the world, and opened to wonder. We have found new meaning, deepened previous understandings, been inspired, and made our-

selves vulnerable to transformation. We have moved our bodies, joined our voices, engaged our minds, and nurtured our spirits.

We have shared worship in 39 two-service Sundays, 14 one-service Sundays, one Vespers service, and three Christmas Eve services. We continued livestreaming our services this year, and were able to pivot quickly to online-only services on March 15, three days after Governor Tony Evers declared a public health emergency. In the first two months of holding online-only services, we have been averaging 850 views of our services per Sunday.

People need spiritual sustenance right now, and you can help them find us as a resource for their well-being. We encourage First Church members to keep sharing our services on their social media accounts, and inviting friends to join them in watching the service online on Sunday mornings. People can go to YouTube and search for "First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee" or go to our [uumilwaukee.org](http://uumilwaukee.org) website and click the YouTube icon in the far upper right corner to go to our YouTube channel, where we broadcast our services live on Sunday mornings at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. We hope all our members subscribe to our YouTube channel and invite their friends and family to do so as well!

#### **BOARD: ENDS, LIMITATIONS, AND COLLABORATION**

The Board of Trustees and I have continued to develop systems for how the Board (Governance) will hold the Ministry (Operations) accountable for achieving our Ends within acceptable means. This year we have begun monitoring achievement of the Board's Ends, which are our roadmap for success for the next 5 -7 years. The Senior Minister and staff developed systems for measuring and collecting data on our progress towards our Ends, and have given the Board baseline data for each End.

Last year, the Board developed comprehensive policies that set limitations for how ministry will achieve the Ends, which ensure the church will be safe, fair, sustainable, and healthy. These limitations policies are published on our [uumilwaukee.org](http://uumilwaukee.org) website under "Members/ Governance / Board Policies." This year, the Senior Minister, in collaboration with staff, interpreted how we will stay within the limitations set by the Board, and how the Board will know we have done so.

# Staff Reports

The Board has approved as reasonable the Senior Minister's interpretations of all their Limitations policies.

## **STAFF: TEAMBUILDING AND TRANSITION**

This year on staff, we have continued to build our team, incorporating our new Director of Religious Education Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson and our Social Justice Coordinator Cesar Cornier. In January, we initiated a sequenced move to transition Kimberlee to the job title "Minister of Religious Education" beginning in the 2020–2021 church year. In February, Kimberlee asked the Board to consider recommending that the congregation ordain her. The Board voted to make that recommendation to the congregation, which is before you on the Annual Meeting agenda.

In December, we said goodbye (and see you again) to our beloved Jack Forbes Wilson, who moved to Nebraska to be near his parents. While Jack is no longer a member of the First Church Staff, he will return as a Sunday musical guest when he visits Milwaukee, and potentially during the COVID-19 time of online services. We are incredibly lucky to have the extremely talented Teresa Drews join our team as Collaborative Pianist this year. We have had some turnover in our second Facilities Assistant (FA) position this year, with Andre Singley leaving our team in October of 2019, and Gary Rebholz joining the team in November and leaving in March. As always, the ever-dedicated and knowledgeable Jim Spice has been our steady FA presence.

## **PORTFOLIO TRANSITION: SM TAKES ON SOCIAL JUSTICE**

After deep discernment and a decision to do so in 2019-2020, this year Dena and I have transitioned our portfolios. Starting in August of 2019, I have been leading the Social Justice program, and Dena has been leading Lifespan Religious Education, with me supervising the Social Justice Coordinator, and Dena supervising the new Director of Religious Education.

It has been a pleasure working with our Social Justice Coordinator Cesar Cornier, who comes to our staff from the Public Allies program. Cesar has worked with our Anti-Racism Team on the Beloved Conversations program, and with our Social Justice Council teams on all their work. See his Annual Report for more details.

## **STRATEGY: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR A PATH TO FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

After receiving Bettie Zillman's generous bequest of \$276,000 in August of 2019, our Lu Krug bequest team returned to the question of how to manage our resources in the long-term. This question touched intersecting issues of growth, outreach, financial sustainability, 21st century church trends, investments, capital projects, legacy programs, vision, staffing, and implementing our Ends. After much discernment and in conversation with the Board, the Lu Krug Team divided into two teams: a Project Management Team, chaired by Board Member Melinda Vernon, to manage and evaluate the current Lu Krug projects; and a Strategic Planning Team, chaired by Dave Becker and Julie Bock, to consider the list of intersecting concerns regarding long-term use of our resources. The Strategic Planning Team is developing a framework for a path towards financial sustainability, and plans to engage a consultant to support us in this work.

## **CONCLUSION**

This has been quite the year, dear First Church members. The last several months have included such intense change, loss, and grief, that it might be hard to remember the time before this spring. We did have a beautiful fall and connected winter with one another, however, learning together in Beloved Conversations, welcoming our dynamic new Director of Religious Education and Social Justice Coordinator, worshipping together in our sanctuary, and caring for one another. We continue the care, the worship, the welcome, and the learning in this new world of COVID-19. We will weather this time together.

With love,  
Rev. Jennifer

## **ASSOCIATE MINISTER**

A minister is only as good as the people they serve and the strength of the love in their relationship. I am deeply grateful for both the strength and the love in our relationship. We have no idea where the future will take us, but we know that love will get us there.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

Death and losses of many kinds continue to impact our congregation. The support we give and receive from each other, both formal and informal, makes a world of difference. Our team of

# Staff Reports

nine **Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs)** served their second year of a three-year term. PCAs offer a quiet listening presence to members who face significant life events including illness, accidents, surgeries, death of a loved one, separation and divorce, parenting challenges, hospice, homebound elders and the stress of caregiving. PCAs made contact with 34 members since last May and Jennifer and I gave pastoral care to at least 79 members. Thanks to PCA Coordinator Jane Peterson and Lead Trainer Laurie Petersen who support the team with continuing education and coordination.

During the outbreak of COVID-19, we added 10 former PCAs to our team in order to reach out to 166 members in high risk demographics for coronavirus. These “wellness check” phone calls were appreciated and helped keep the fabric of community strong.

Our **Pastoral Care Provider (PCP) Team**, comprised of 22 members, provide meals and rides for short-term needs. Several meals were brought to four households and one ride given to a medical appointment. Members express great appreciation for the kindness of a warm meal upon return from the hospital, after the birth or adoption of a baby, or during difficult medical treatments. Jane Dorweiler had served just over a year as PCP Coordinator when we needed to reconfigure services to keep everyone as safe as possible during pandemic conditions. We recruited a younger team, so those at higher risk could stay home. Thanks to Jane and the 8 younger adults who responded to this special call to action to do grocery shopping and delivery, and pick up prescriptions for members. We’ve had only 2 requests so far.

The **Memorial Service Reception Team** served their fourth year hosting receptions after a memorial service, upon the family’s request. This ministry both supports a grieving family at a vulnerable time and allows members to give back to the community. They provided receptions at five memorial services, all within a 44 day period. Approximately 33 members provide food and help with these receptions. Thanks to Sharon DePue for coordinating this team.

The **Shawl Ministry** completed their third year creating shawls and lap robes to comfort members going through difficult times. Many baby blankets were also created and given to new parents with joy. About 12 members and friends knit or crochet these offerings of love. Although we cannot take away another’s suffering, we show our care through the gentle

embrace of the shawl, which serves as a visible symbol of the love of our community.

## ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

I’m grateful to the Adult Spiritual Development (ASD) Team, (Javier Dorantes, Lisa Gies, Pete Hill, Diane Horne, and Nancy Pajewski), for discerning and supporting the growth of this ministry. Over 267 adults attended ASD programs this church year, including an Ethics class, Geography of Grace pilot group, Grief Support Group, Memorial Service Planning class, Spiritual Practices Exploration Group, Theme Circles, UU Elevator Speech class, and ongoing Yoga sessions. This also includes the intellectual and spiritual-oriented Affinity Groups (Book Discussion Group, Buddhist Study Group, UU+ Study Group), and the off-site Spiritual Retreat.

Our ASD Team conducted one-to-one relational conversations this spring to learn more about what members want for their spiritual development. Next year, we hope to offer Adult “Our Whole Lives,” which must take place in person. In the meantime, we’ll explore online opportunities, including aging and spirituality.

## SMALL GROUPS

We have nine active **Affinity Groups** including Book Discussion, Gathering Waters Sangha (Buddhist Study Group), Chancel Choir, The Chronologically Gifted, SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social), UUUFDA (Unitarian Universalists Under Forty Doing Activities), UU Parenting, UU+ Study Group and WomanSpirit. These Member-Led Ministries gather around shared interests or demographics to find friends and deeper belonging. Affinity Groups are open to everyone to come and go as they wish.

**Theme Circles** completes its second year this summer, an evolution in our small group ministry program that invites members and friends to gather in groups of eight with a trained facilitator to delve deeper into our monthly worship themes. Theme Circles include homework with spiritual exercises, questions for reflection, and multi-sensory resources, which can be done at your convenience at any level. Participants make a commitment to attend once a month October – June. Theme Circles served 43 members and friends, plus 8 Facilitators in six circles this year. Registration for next year runs late August through September.

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## SUMMER SERVICES

Our summer worship service and religious education program continues to be a vital ministry of year-round church. I work closely with the Pulpit Guest staff-led team to plan and coordinate summer services. I also provide one-to-one coaching for each member who leads a service. We held 13 summer services in 2019, including 4 guests, 6 services from me, and 3 member-led services. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we plan to hold 2020 summer services online.

## PORTFOLIO TRANSITION

Rev. Jennifer and I made our portfolio transition last summer, trading Social Justice for Lifespan Religious Education. It was a great joy to welcome our new Director of Religious Education, Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson on August 1, 2019. She tackled learning a new congregation, new job, and many transitions with the RE program with grace, humor, creativity and efficiency. All while healing from a broken leg! We celebrated with Kimberlee after she passed the “big minister test” at the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and look forward to the vote at our Annual Meeting to ordain her as our Minister of Religious Education.

It was sweet to celebrate my ten years of service with you last fall. I feel deeply grateful and thoroughly blessed. I look forward to the next leg of the journey. Thank you for the privilege of ministry here, for the honor of being yours.

Yours,

Dena

## ADMINISTRATION

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Reporting to the Senior Minister, I am responsible for overall administrative functions of the church including financial management, human resources administration, communications, and facilities management. I manage these areas with a combination of talented staff, expert volunteers, and contract services. I supervise our Office Coordinator, Facilities Manager, and Communications Coordinator. As the church’s administrator since 1998, I have a long and broad overview of church operations. I help provide staff a larger context for our work, historical perspective and systems dynamics.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Coordinator Cindy Lorentzen developed new brand guidelines, shared them with staff and leaders with educational sessions about brand. Our visual brand gained momentum as we continued to incorporate it in a newly-designed exterior sign, numerous smaller signs, and various flyers and publications. The staff comm team developed a comprehensive church organizational chart, which clearly shows relationships between congregation, Board, staff, staff-led teams, and member-led ministries. Unfortunately for us, Cindy left our employment at the end of January for a job offer she couldn’t refuse. But her work, expertise, and kind spirit have strengthened our communications program. The plan was that I would maintain some basic comm tasks while we await the results of our application for a Marquette Trinity Fellow. However, the COVID-19 epidemic has required considerable modification of our website and enhanced communications to connect the congregation and the wider community to our online Sunday services, RE, programs, and group meetings.

## FACILITIES

Facilities Manager Tom Schroeder is responsible for managing building use, directing our friendly and capable Facilities Assistants Jim Spice, and for a few months Gary Rebholz, to assure we accommodate all program needs. Tom manages repairs and improvements of our facilities with the assistance of part-time Maintenance Worker Art Sims and the talented Building and Grounds (B&G) Staff-led Team, headed by Russ Drewry. Tom and the B&G have done a great job managing numerous projects this year including: replacing the Ogden Street sign, rebuilding a damaged stained glass window, installing additional light in balcony stairwell, replacing north side gable trim and rebuilding rotted wood trim on west side, replacing two sump pumps and one elevator pit pump, upgrading bathroom fixtures in one apartment and replacing a cracked bathtub in another. This spring the coronavirus has slowed some maintenance work, but I am inspecting the buildings weekly to ensure all is essentially sound.

During Fall 2019, I learned we would no longer be able to use the parking lot at Cass Park on Sundays. I reconvened the Parking Solutions Task Force and we found a workable solution in the lot at Juneau and Van Buren; we began using it January 1.

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## CHURCH MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE UPDATES

Office Coordinator Shari Wright manages our cloud-based church management software application called Realm, also known to us as MyFirstChurch Member Portal. It continues to grow many features, and 317 church members are active on the Member Portal. We have groups using features to email their members and post documents. New this year, both members and guests can register for events via MyFirstChurch. URL links to MyFirstChurch registration forms are embedded on event promo pages. This method provides better administrative workflow. Our online giving form on the Member Portal is advertised in weekly electronic announcements, our website, and our “Great Ways to Pay & Fulfill Your Pledge” card. With the “safer at home” order, more people have paid their pledge using our online form. In April 2020 we received \$35,000 in online gifts as compared to \$22,000 in April 2019.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) Team, led by Shari Wright, was busy last summer. They upgraded older computers to Windows 10, updated backup processes, installed new laptop computers on AV carts, and replaced an old projector with a new one. They upgraded the network to get ready for Ingathering. Last fall, they began reviewing church security policies in order to comply with the Board’s Asset Protection Policy 4.6. They chose the CIS (Center for Information Security) model to review all aspects of computer data security. They completed the first step, which was to comprehensively inventory and document our computer systems. They project the CIS model process will take another two years to complete.

Shari also addressed another information security policy, PCI compliance certification, which is required by our credit card processing company Vanco Payment Solutions. The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) is a mandated set of security requirements for protecting cardholder data. First Church does not store any card information on our servers or on personal computers. PCI compliance requires us to verify our third-party card processing. This also includes PayPal, GivingSmart for Feast for Funds, and Brown Paper Ticket for some music events. In December 2019, we received our PCI compliance certificate. Our excellent IT Team is dedicated to updating our computer systems, security data, and managing our reliable network infrastructure. Team members are Steve Culver, Scot Henry, chair Allan Ries, led by Office Coordinator Shari Wright.

## COVID-19 TECHNOLOGY PROJECTS

First Church determined we must suspend all in-person programs on March 13. For worship service on March 15, Office Coordinator Shari Wright worked with the Sunday Services Team to produce a YouTube Live online service that included music and dance by “Lucky” Diop and Kassumai. We were excited that 136 people watched this live service on YouTube at 9:00 a.m.; the saved video was viewed 1,462 times after Sunday! The March 22 services were also livestreamed from the sanctuary.

On March 29, the entire Sunday service was livestreamed to YouTube via Zoom Webinar from the ministers’ and DRE’s home computers, integrated with pre-recorded music. Despite the difficulties of remotely producing a Sunday service, Shari and the Worship Team successfully offered 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. live services on March 29 through April 26 to date. The average number of total views (live and saved video) is 909 views.

As of March 13, all group meetings, events, and staff meetings have moved to meet online also. First Church increased our Zoom Video Conferencing Pro Accounts to meet First Church needs. Shari created documents to teach leaders and members how to host or join a Zoom meeting. When we learned more about security breaches on Zoom. Shari created a Zoom Security Policy, and a Security Guide for church leaders. All documents are posted the website in the Policies and Procedures section of the Members tab.

## FINANCE

Financial systems operated smoothly this year. Working with the Finance Team and Treasurer, I provide accurate monthly financial statements and lead the development of the annual budget. The Finance Team, with the expertise of member Trent Muller, completed a robust investment policy that was accepted by the Board in compliance with Board policy 4.6.10 & 11. One of my projects was creating a clear accounting system for tracking funding of this year’s numerous Krug bequest projects from the Krug bequest funds. Our CPA concurred that it was more complex than first envisioned. The other major accomplishment was applying for a CARES Act Payroll Protection Program loan, which was awarded in the first round of the SBA funding. The COVID-19 epidemic has prompted us to modify payroll and check-writing processes to require as little contact as possible. You can find a report from Finance Team chair Noreen Gilbertsen in this annual report.

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## GOVERNANCE, POLICIES, METRICS

With the adoption of policy governance one year ago, staff now works within the framework of the Board of Trustees' new policies. Throughout the year, senior staff has been coming to agreement with the Board as to how the staff might interpret those policies in the operation of the church. I've been responsible for interpretations of policies regarding financial planning /budget (4.4) and financial condition and activities (4.5), and responsible for parts of policies regarding asset protection and safety (4.1 & 4.6). In addition, I've led the staff to begin the long process of establishing operating policies and procedures using a standardized process and shared in a central place. In addition, Shari Wright has provided extensive support to staff as they established methods of collecting data about their programs for reporting metrics to the Board of Trustees.

I am also staff liaison to the Board's Nominating Committee, and a member of the Krug Gift Acceptance Team and Staff Executive Team. You can find reports from these groups in this annual report.

This has been another year filled with new challenges and joys. Our connection as a church community, even as we are currently isolated physically from one another, is so very precious, essential, and strong. I'm honored to serve First Church.

Jean Johnson

## MUSIC

### LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

#### STAFFING

This year the Music Department welcomed Teresa Drews to our staff as the Chancel Choir's Collaborative Pianist. We also said goodbye to our beloved Jack Forbes Wilson as he moved to Nebraska in order to be with family.

#### SUNDAY SERVICES

Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode and Choral Director Tristan Strelitzer continue to strive for Sunday programming that inspires wonder and transformative experience in a communal setting, while simultaneously seeking to provide a full spectrum of musical styles designed to engage and welcome a diverse range of people and perspectives.

When we shifted to online services during the COVID-19 health

crisis, that programming effort shifted to curating pre-recorded video content for Sundays. In order to be in strict compliance with copyright law, we then limited this music to three areas of sourcing: a) public domain content sourced from 1924 or earlier, b) contemporary music for which the UUA has already secured the copyright permission for online streaming, or c) contemporary music written by composers with whom we are personally in relationship. When music professionals agree to make their video or audio available for our use, we then pay them directly for the rights to stream that content, using the Guest Musician budget similarly to how it might have been used for in-person services. This is a way to help spread love and support to the broader community of independent artists suffering from the loss of their performance event income.

#### EXPANDED MUSIC MINISTRY

Thanks to Krug funding, we began a robust program of expanded music offerings. This included a concert and other music events with singer-songwriter-activist Sara Thomsen, programmed in conjunction with the Irma Morter lecture weekend. Repeat offerings included Gong Meditations and Singing Circles. Four additional areas of expanded music programming had been scheduled, which unfortunately had to be canceled/delayed due to COVID-19.

#### SINGERS IN THE STREETS

As an extension of Faith in the Streets, a social justice singing initiative was in the beginnings of its launch in conjunction with Zao MKE church. While this initiative has likewise been affected by COVID-19, we hope to pick up and continue the work when it is safe to do so.

#### CHORAL SCHOLARS

The Choral Scholar program continued to prove as a successful anchor and support to our Chancel Choir. While the choir was unable to rehearse in the traditional sense during COVID-19, the Choral Scholars remained engaged as a musical support to the community.

Alissa Rhode

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

My focus in my first year as Director of Religious Education has been on building relationships within the First Church commu-

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nity, and learning how the Religious Education program functions while working to enrich and improve upon it. During the past few months, we have made significant changes to religious education (RE), some planned and many unexpected. I am fortunate to be working with remarkable staff and volunteers who demonstrate their dedication to our mission and this faith each week. Their flexibility, love, and hard work are the backbone of RE and allow this church to provide a loving learning space for our families. I feel blessed to serve this congregation as it continues to care for our families and do good in the world during these tumultuous times.

## MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Vision:** Rooted in the church's mission, we envision a church community modeling and teaching children and youth to embrace a strong core of Unitarian Universalist (UU) values, influencing their way of being in the world while serving the needs of our world.

**Mission:** Children's Religious Education Ministry Team's mission is to nurture spiritual growth by engaging and inspiring our children, youth, and volunteers. ~Rev. 2017-18

**2019-20 Goal:** Children's Religious Education Team's 2020 goal is to openly explore innovative ideas that welcome and connect families.

## 2019-20 CHURCH YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

**RE Structure** - We implemented many changes in the RE program structure this year to address the needs of our families and volunteers. They included: simplification of lesson plans, online volunteer scheduling, All Ages Worship led by the DRE on the first Sunday of every month, clarification of the sign-in and drop-off process for children (including students exiting the sanctuary together after the story), the faith formation station room, and weekly RE Update e-mail announcements to our families.

Lillian Schley and I spent significant time reorganizing our RE classrooms to make them more accessible and convenient for all RE participants. Additionally, we now post RE descriptions for each Sunday in the Leenhouts Common Room and hallway outside the sanctuary, to help orient new and returning families and volunteers. The children's area in the common area has been adjusted to be more accommodating for families trying to socialize and manage children during coffee hour. Finally, we reorganized the RE Library with the help of Anne Hefter, who alphabetized hundreds of children's books.

**Children's RE Team** - The Children's Religious Education Team met throughout this year and to plan and work together to create events and programming for RE. Additionally, the team began an appreciative inquiry process to help shape the RE program for the 2020-21 year.

**RE Lessons** - ALL RE lessons are now adapted and simplified to fit the needs of each age group, and require less teacher preparation. Our RE teachers are fantastic. They engage with the lessons and write to me with clarifying questions and to give feedback. In February, we recruited enough volunteers to change the age groupings from 1st-4th grade and 5th-8th grade to 1st-3rd, 3rd-5th, and 6th-8th grade, allowing more age appropriate engagement with lessons. Additionally, we moved away from set curriculum and I began writing all the lessons based on Soul Matter themes. The CRE Team helped generate ideas they wanted represented on each theme. We continued the tradition of teaching anti-racism lessons this year during the month of February using lessons that I wrote.

**Intergenerational Social Action** - The Good Neighbor Bag project struggled this year, so we changed it to Good Neighbor Sandwich Sunday. Sienna Morrissey from Guest House Milwaukee was our guest speaker, and we made 400 sandwiches with supplies donated almost entirely from congregants. The children adored this project and we hope to revisit it again soon.

We also explored integrity and created origami peace cranes in partnership with Japanese Americans who travel to Washington, D.C. for a National Pilgrimage to Close the Border Camps. The tradition of connecting the congregation with community valentines continued with our children making 109 valentines to be sent out to people in our faith community. In addition, Lillian and the CRE team managed our Mitten Tree and the holiday gift tags for Friedens Community Ministries, which brought in many donations for the community.

**Multigenerational Services** - Rev. Jennifer, Jack Forbes Wilson, and I collaborated to create our intergenerational Thanksgiving worship on November 24. The worship engaged all ages through music, liturgy, and the story Grandad's Prayers for the Earth.

Our holiday pageant focused on Hanukkah, Solstice, and Christmas. Twenty-five children and youth participated in the service as readers, candle lighters, actors, singers, and dancers. Children spent December learning about holidays and the faith traditions they come from. 1st-4th grade focused on

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Christianity and Christmas, while 5th-8th graders learned about Judaism and Hanukkah, and high school focus on Solstice and Yule. I am grateful for the many staff and congregants who made this happen, especially Deb Solis for choreographing, Jack Forbes Wilson for all the music making, and Paul Akert for portraying Santa.

Planning has begun for the May 17 RE Sunday service. We are working hard to make it a celebratory and joyous event in the new virtual format. High school seniors Ehlona Walker, En Fitak, and Lucy Pyne will speak their truth, and we will send them forth with love, and the hope that they have an enduring sense of First Church as a spiritual home they can

return to at any time. Our Share the Plate partner this year is Guest House.

**Mystery Friends** - We had 35 participants this year. Many were in attendance to play games, build fruit chalices, and get to know one another at our Leap Year Party. It was a joyful event! Lillian Schley did an amazing job coordinating and connecting everyone.

**First Sundays** - The first Sunday of each month, we held multi-age activities for 1st-7th graders in the Young Room. We focused on the monthly worship themes with topics including Imbolc, clay chalice making, and a Halloween party. I led each program, frequently with guests generously sharing their talents, including Hank Kulesza, and Paul Akert who taught about John Muir.

**RE Extras** - Throughout this year, I met with Klaudia Rixman, a freshman at UWM and a member of our young adult group. We began to help her start a Campus Ministry group at UWM.

The Thaney Youth Art Fund allowed us to offer a series of workshops called Hymns for Our Future with songwriter Anne Heaton. The youth who participated will have their music featured on RE Sunday.

**RE and COVID-19 Pandemic** - This past month, RE has been reinvented to utilize online video conferencing. Guided by the input from the CRE Team, we have found ways to help our families connect and find strength through the pandemic. We are prioritizing spiritual practices for families that cultivate health, happiness, and are grounded in our values and faith. We offer multiple RE Zoom rooms each week: All Ages Sunday RE and Sunday preschool-kindergarten classes, Mindful Mondays, Parent Spirit Group, songwriting with Anne Heaton, twice-weekly youth group, and other emerging RE opportunities.

The RE Weekly Update has been a valuable tool, providing all the information needed to get involved in RE activities, as well as curated resources for families to utilize at home, from tools to talking to children about COVID-19 to ways to help our community.

**Children and Youth RE Metrics** - It takes many hands to create faith formation experience. This year we are grateful for the CRE Teachers: 14 teachers, 38 assistants, 10 CRE Team members, 6 youth advisers, 9 O.W.L. teachers, 12 Youth Steering Committee Members, and 2.2 FTE divided among five staff.

## Sunday RE Programming During COVID-19 (March 15-April 19)

Number of Registered Children and Youth	Average Sunday Attendance	Average percentage of registered students attending
118	23	20%

2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	Comparisons taken on average through the 2nd Sunday of March
118	134	163	Number of registered children and youth
56	54	78	Average attendance
52%	50%	54%	Average percentage of registered students attending

Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson  
Director of Religious Education

## YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Youth Program Coordinator (YPC) reports directly to the Director of Religious Education and is responsible for the planning and coordinating of programs for youth in grades 9-12 by working with adult advisors, the Youth Steering Committee (YSC), staff, and parents. In addition, the YPC is responsible for coordinating the week-long Habitat for Humanity service trip, coordinating the annual youth service, and coordinating all levels of Our Whole Lives (OWL) classes.

As a part-time, 18-hour/week staff position, each year brings me more joy and satisfaction knowing that I can make such a positive difference in the lives of our youth at First Church.

### OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL) PROGRAM

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a lifespan sexuality education Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) curriculum. In the Fall of

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2019, we offered for the first time Grade K-1 OWL class, an eight week curriculum edited to be gender inclusive in a renovated kid-friendly Anthony room. Grade K-1 OWL class had five participants facilitated by Crysta Jarczyński, Bruce Wiggins, and Katie Maedke-Hall.

In the Fall of 2019, Shannon Widlansky offered a workshop for all of our trained OWL facilitators and youth advisors on gender language, and we also showed the documentary *The Trans List*, attended by 24 adults. We offered a five-week Adult OWL class on gender identity and sexual orientation in the Spring of 2020, which will be rescheduled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. All of our adult OWL classes are facilitated by Shannon Widlansky and Liz Hopkins.

Our eighth grade OWL program with seven participants, was offered on Sunday mornings all year long. This class was facilitated by Jacqi Akert, Beth Monhollen, Katie Maedke-Hall, Jeremy Koenen, and Lorinda Flores. Thank you to all of our outstanding and dedicated OWL facilitators this past year.

We scheduled to host an all level OWL training July 31-August 2, 2020, but had to cancel it due to the pandemic. We are looking at rescheduling this training for next year with some of our best trainers in the U.S., CB Beal, Meredith Olson, Aisha Hauser and Karen Richter.

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

Our ninth graders once again joined grades 10-12 youth in our YRUU Sunday morning classroom from 9:00-10:30 a.m. for heartfelt discussions chosen and led by the youth, with youth advisor guidance as needed.

In July 2019, we sent 13 youth and three adults on our annual service trip to work for Habitat for Humanity in Battle Creek, Michigan. Thank you to our 2019 service trip advisors Don Weimer, John Fitak and Alisha Koneazny. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, our July 2020 trip to Battle Creek, Michigan most likely will be canceled, but we do thank our volunteer advisors Don Weimer, Katie Maedke-Hall and Ken Solis for their work in the Fall of 2019 with the youth in preparing for this trip. We anticipate offering this summer trip next year.

Also, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we canceled our Krug bequest funded Boston Heritage trip, which was planned for June 9-13, 2020. Thank you to our volunteer trip advisors Don

Weimer and Kristine Radke-Norris and to our new Director of Religious Education Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson for their work this winter in preparing for this trip. We will be rescheduling this trip at a later date, which has yet to be determined.

Our YRUU youth continue to be inspirational and dynamic. The annual youth service (March 1), “Wholly Discomfort: Embracing the Unknown in Community” focused on when we come to church, we expect comfort because comfort is often what we find holy. But if we want to be radically inclusive, doesn’t that also mean being uncomfortable? The youth group led an exploration of both comfort and discomfort through music, readings, and testimonials. This service raised \$761.74 for our service trip fund and for Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. Additional service trip fundraisers included our weekly bagel, croissant and doughnut sales at the Religious Education (RE) Table during coffee hours, and a winter Parent’s Night Out evening of childcare. Our annual Mother’s Day Gourmet Dessert Auction had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Highlights of the year included:

- Two lock-ins with themes of community building and Halloween and youth service planning. These lock-ins took place in October 2019 and January 2020. Our other two scheduled spring 2020 lock-ins had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Attendance at one CON (weekend conference events for youth from UU congregations) in Evanston, Illinois in the Fall of 2019. The scheduled April 3-5 CON in Palatine, Illinois was canceled due to the pandemic.
- A Game Night in November 2019 with grades 5-8 youth invited to join the YRUU youth to play board games and share pizza in the Reeb Room.
- MATC economics educator, congregational member and youth advisor, Don Weimer’s Financing College workshop for youth and their parents in the Fall of 2019.
- On January 5, 2020 the youth hosted their first youth-nominated Forum Speaker Destinee Cesar from the YWCA, speaking on the topic Unlearning Racism. In past year’s youth offered a Forum where they shared what they do in youth group with Forum attendees. This Forum was very well attended and youth are looking forward to hosting another youth-nominated speaker in the future.
- For the fourth year, we offered our four-part series for

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our graduating high school seniors called Hearts on Fire, which provided them with opportunities to reflect on topics of good and evil, humanity and salvation, UU identity and how to put a Credo together - under the direction of our senior minister, associate minister, director of religious education, and myself.

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

I met twice this past year (October 2019 and December 2019) and with our young adults ages 18-23 to figure out what we can do to meet their spiritual needs in our church community.

## LEADERSHIP

The Youth Steering Committee (YSC) consists of adults and high school youth that oversee the senior high religious education program. Members are: Ehlona Walker, Gus Pointer-Mace, Dylan Duffy, Lucy Pyne, En Fitak, Zoe Gulbranson, Sam Mulvey, Zanzi Gulbranson, Bizzy Schultz, Jean Crandall-Jacobs, and Beth Monhollen. This year, we focused on trying to relate to three of our eight Ends statements in youth group. These were Ends number (4): Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge, (6): Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation, and (8): Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us.

Youth are given the opportunity to take the lead in planning and facilitating class discussions and activities. Advisors found this to be a great way to empower youth in shaping their leadership skills and fostering a deeper commitment to Sunday morning classes. Thank you to our caring, supportive YRUU Advisor Team: Bizzy Schultz, Don Weimer, Rollie Hansen, Nick DaVia, Jessie Moffat and Jean Crandall-Jacobs.

We sent two youth, Gus Pointer-Mace and Zoe Gulbranson, to the Youth Midwest Leadership School in July 2019 in Decorah, Iowa. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, we will not physically send youth to the summer Youth Midwest Leadership School (YMWLS) in Bloomington, Illinois, July 2020. Two of our youth, Ehlona Walker and Zoe Gulbranson, have been asked to serve as youth leaders for the 2020 Youth Midwest Leadership School.

Blessings,  
Deb Solis

## MEMBERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

#### MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Team: Susan Borri and Lynn Connolly, co-chairs, Paula Anderson, Greta Andrews, Rod Botts, Cheri Briscoe, Dana Brooks, Jane Cliff, Lynn Connolly, Lynda Lambert and Linda Presto.

**Accessible Welcome** – The Membership Team began several new initiatives this year to try and help visitors and new members alike access information and connections with-in the church including:

- A visual display board of First Church Groups categorized by type to help members and visitors alike identify more easily where they might seek involvement.
- A Membership Table Team recruited and trained to engage more members in our “welcome,” and help free up the Membership Development Coordinator (MDC) and the Team for other roles during Coffee Hour.
- “Visitor Coffee” substituted for our “Inquirers Series” as a more accessible visitor-focused offering for those new people to First Church.
- A roll-up “Welcome Stand” initiated in the entrance hallway providing more visibility and familiarity with visitors of the MDC.
- Virtual Coffee hour on Zoom created by the second week of on-line services.

**Ongoing Accessible Welcome** – Usher Service continues to be accessible thanks to the organizing efforts of Cheri Briscoe and the addition of 5th Sunday recruits to maintain a once-a-month commitment throughout the year. New members warmly welcomed by two meals per New Member Class as well as a welcoming reception on New Member Ceremonies. Continuing support of Member Portal engagement by providing regular “Photo Days” (every New Member Ceremony Sunday) so both new and long-term members have an easy way to get a picture on their profile page.

**Courageous Welcome** – 32 Members signed up to be “New Member Mentors.” Sixteen of these volunteers came to a “One-to-One Relationship Conversation” training facilitated by

# Staff Reports

Bob Connelly and 12 have been connected to new members to date. This Mentoring Program engages a broader range of members in supporting New Members to find connection at First Church via a limited, but nonetheless on-going personal relationship with assigned mentorees.

**Innovative Welcome** – The team has begun using the UUA Welcoming Assessment tool to evaluate our welcome and already it has generated some priorities and new ideas. The coronavirus shut-down is also demanding some innovative thinking about how to keep current members connected and engage new members virtually. We hope to be developing ideas in the coming weeks.

## Numbers

- 14 people joined First Church this church year (and 13 people signed up for our Virtual Journey Class this May).
- 179 records were entered into our database for the first time this year (May 1, 2019 – April 29, 2020) via Welcome Card, Religious Education Families or as Journey to Membership registrations.
- 32 unique individuals attended Visitor Coffees (December 1 – March 16).

The Membership Team has the tough job of balancing the week-to-week tasks of supporting the front-line welcome folks; the quarterly tasks of supporting our Journey Classes; while also seeking out and implementing new and better ways to serve both members and visitors. They are awesome! I am so grateful to be working with this team.

I am also very appreciative of the so many of you who help us create assessable, courageous and innovative welcome all year. Thank you Ushers, Greeters, Christmas Eve Ushers, Holiday Reception Elves, New Member Mentors, Visitor Coffee Hosts, Membership Table Team and every single one of you who has smiled at someone you didn't know and said "Hi my name is.... have we met before?" Thank you!

Lynne Jacoby

## STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL MEMBER-LED MINISTRIES REPORTS

### PLEDGE TEAM

Team Members: Fred Gutierrez (Chair), Bob Balderson, Mark

Chambers, Kathy Donius, Sally Lewis, Deb Manske, Beth Monhollen and Jacki Zandi.

## Stewardship

The Pledge Team set a goal of \$735,000, or a 5% increase from last year's pledge result. This goal was balanced between a perception of achievability; and the congregation's long-term plan to reach Pledge Sustainability as we currently rely on unsustainable income from bequests and special gifts to meet our annual budget.

Unfortunately I am predicting a flat drive this year, or a total of \$703,000 pledge total. This prediction reflects both a coronavirus effect we are already experiencing and fewer pledging households. What the prediction doesn't reflect was the very successful pledge drive despite missing an "in-person" Stewardship Ritual and Celebration Sunday, and a pledge clean-up amidst a pandemic crisis.

Given the circumstances the drive did very well. Members who have pledged to date responded wonderfully to the team's messaging, and within the group of current pledging members (353) pledges increased overall by 3.43%! Thank you all!

## Generosity as Spiritual Practice

In addition to raising money (and awareness) towards the financial obligations we share to keep our beloved congregation a viable institution in Milwaukee, the Pledge Team is also tasked with helping all of us connect to generosity as a practice of gratitude and growth. In other words, when we give in gratitude and love rather than duty or guilt, our giving becomes so much more meaningful to us! We know this as a people of faith, yet it is hard to access this truth in the day-to-day of life expenses. This year the Pledge Team strove to create campaign elements that underlined our Unitarian Universalist values, practice and relationships by:

- Theme and messaging development of "Our Spiritual Tapestry" highlighting both the strengthening connections we reap from being a part of this congregation today, and how we each bring contributions to a future we are weaving together now.
- A well-attended Leadership Event recognizing our large contributors of time and/or financial resources; and also inviting them to explore together the connection be-

# Staff Reports

tween generosity and commitment, and how First Church is/became meaningful to them.

- Theme-driven, community-wide weaving project introduced an embodied experience of adding our individual gifts to the whole, while also maintaining a Pledge Drive presence in Coffee Hour for the month.
- Eight Pledge Team members and nine additional Visiting Stewards contacted 63 pledging households to invite them into a conversation about what makes giving to First Church meaningful to them.

While the drive fell short of the goal, it is clear by both the enthusiasm at Kick-off Sunday and by the increases we did receive that the messaging of strengthening our shared fabric resonated with a congregation that cares deeply about this church.

Thank you so much to our involved, committed and generous membership! Thank you for your energy, investment and engagement that continues even during this time of fear and discombobulation. Thank you for your faith that the strength of this community will continue to weave whatever fabric is needed in our changing world..

## Pledge Team Thanks

With much gratitude to our **Leadership Event Auxiliary Team** members Elizabeth Lentini and Susan Thaney. Our **Visiting Stewards** Mary Buchel, Dianna Dentino, Tom Duffy, Jeanne Durnford, Diane Horne, Lisa Koneazny, Elizabeth Lentini (again) and Pat McFarland. Our **Weaving Project Advisors** Angela Hays and Mariah Groshek, and to Angela again for the use of her loom. Our **First Church Board of Trustees** who assisted with pledge reminder/clean-up calls.

Personal appreciation to a stellar, creative and dedicated Pledge Team! And especially to out-going Chair Fred Gutierrez. Not only did this almost all new team collate quickly and accomplish a lot well, but at our final Zoom meeting almost all expressed their surprise at how much fun they had doing it! That's Fred's leadership.

## FEAST FOR FUNDS

Team Members: Sue Thaney (Chair), Roger Blau, Stacey Koenan, Ellen Kruger, Cecile Langford, Amanda Panciera, Laurie Petersen, Jane Peterson, Linda Presto and Tom Radoszewski

Once again donated events, activities, services, member-made artwork, vacation homes, and contributions from local businesses created a diverse catalogue of items for our annual community building, fun and fundraising auction.

Our highest revenue items, as usual, were vacation home get-aways. Our largest bidding wars were created by Drewy Farm Maple Syrup and homemade greeting cards. Our most popular category by far remains the in-home events including fireworks viewing, mosaic making and a treasure hunt this year as well as a plethora of creative dinners and member musical offerings.

## New and/or Growing

- "My Favorite Restaurant" gift certificates is building as an easy way to donate and still represent something of the donor's taste, expertise and/or personality.
- A member's generous contribution of their vacation home for a second week created a fabulous and successful raffle item (finally!).
- Bidding for "2 seats" was introduced as a way to avoid couples not securing two seats for a anticipated event. This felt like a useful strategy that may need better advertising and communication regarding next year.

## By the Numbers

- Over 130 Unique Items
- 68 First Church Donors (not individually counting Committee, Affinity, Board and Youth Group members who contributed via group donations)
- 238 Bidders
- 602 Bids
- 114 Winners
- \$21,014 Raised!

## Analysis

While the total raised is on par with last year, this was helped by a very successful raffle. In general our donations remain very strong, creative and fun! But our number of bidders is down by a third, and the number of bids similarly effected. Less competition means our wonderful donations are not always going for value. The community building these events contribute to First Church (perhaps as important as the revenue) is also being lost as a smaller group participates in more events. The goal for the coming year will focus on how to cre-

# Staff Reports

ate more energy, communication and excitement about the auction to a larger portion of our membership.

**Thank You** to our fabulous, our ongoing, and our new this year **donors!** You make building an auction catalogue relatively easy and fun as your creative ideas pop up on donation forms! The **additional hands** who helped set-up, decorate, solicit contributions and build our on-line presence. Your help is so appreciated, and keeps us going that last week. **Our bidders!** Without you we wouldn't have an auction. Please tell your friends how easy it is and how fabulous the events you attended were!

Special gratitude to our tireless and supportive Chair, Susan Thaney, and the entire hard-working and dedicated team whose commitment to the event and to our community is inspiring.

## ELECTION INSPECTORS

Team Members: JoAnn Bishop (Leader);

Via City of Milwaukee's "Adopt-a-Site" Jo Ann Bishop and 12 trained First Church Election Inspectors ran an entire voting location for the November election. This service raised \$800 for our congregation and brought members together to work for one of our most sacred principals – supporting the democratic process in our underserved city.

The First Church Inspection Team ran it's site so efficiently they were promoted to a larger busier site for April's primary, before the coronavirus closed the majority of the city's voting locations. Nonetheless, First Church has 18 trained inspectors ready to run a site again in August and November, if they can do so safely.

Many thanks to Jo Ann and all the Inspectors volunteers for your hard work, stellar representation of our congregation in the wider community, and for supporting First Church.

## HERITAGE SOCIETY

Team Members: Lisa Koneazny (Chair), Jill Erickson, Chris Linder, Mike Newman, Linda Presto and Melinda Vernon.

Heritage Society recognizes church members and friends who have included First Church in their wills and estate planning.

In November, the Heritage work group sponsored an appreciation luncheon in Max Otto Hall. This was followed by a presentation at the Milwaukee Jewish Museum, "Inescapable: The Life and Legacy of Harry Houdini," and almost 50 First Church members attended. In addition, the Heritage Group sponsored a Feast For Funds event.

Our congregation has recently benefited from the significant generosity of members who have included First Church in their estate. These gifts have allowed us to plan for the future as well as take care of some immediate needs. This level of giving is not an option for many members. Commitments equal to a member's annual pledge for 1, 3, 10 or more years would also make a difference in future program planning.

If you have questions about how to become a Heritage Society member, please feel free to contact any work group member. We request that you let First Church know if you have committed to planned giving by utilizing the First Church web page at [uumilwaukee.org/ways-to-give/planned-giving/](http://uumilwaukee.org/ways-to-give/planned-giving/). If you are unsure if you have notified First Church of your intent, feel free to complete the form on the website.

I would like to thank Jill Erickson, Chris Lindner, Linda Presto and Melinda Vernon for their hard work and support. If you are interested in working with the Heritage work group, please feel free to contact any of us.

## INCOME OPPORTUNITY TEAM

Team Members: Holly Patzer (Leader); Don Weimer; Laura White

The Income Opportunity Team's (IOT) purpose has been to strategically consider and analyze opportunities for new and/or enhanced income streams in order to sustain church operations and to accomplish the church mission and Ends.

The primary initiative this year was to create a guide for church staff and/or stewardship teams to use in vetting income ideas that may be brought forward by staff or members. The guide is a series of questions with a scoring option to be used as a tool that could assist with a Cost Benefit Analysis in order to determine whether the Return on Investment of an income idea is prudent and viable.

In addition, the IOT began exploring a model to strategically encourage First Church's culture of generosity and to more fully integrate into a comprehensive Stewardship Council structure under the leadership of the Membership & Development Coordinator.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR

As the Social Justice Coordinator since August, I am excited to see the progress made within the last eight months. I started my tenure with individual meetings with the leaders of the various

# Staff Reports

Social Justice Council teams to learn about their work, their teams, and their relationships with their partner organizations. I also supported the Social Justice Council and the Anti-Racism Team's monthly meetings, and worked with teams to build their bench list.

One of the biggest events in Social Justice and Anti-Racism at First Church this year was the Beloved Conversations program, which is designed for Unitarian Universalists to have conversations about race and faith in a healthy and productive way. I helped organize the January opening retreat where over 40 people from our congregation and around 80 people in total came together to launch the curriculum. After the opening retreat, four small groups met bi-weekly until the COVID-19 health crisis required social distancing measures to be put in place.

In March, the Social Justice Council voted to approve a new action group called "Circles of Support" led by Paul Geenen. Circles of Support helps men, women, and people leaving prison make a positive and permanent return to our community. It gives returning citizens an opportunity to share their stories as a form of emotional therapy and offers a chance for their voices to be heard.

In the winter, we held our first meeting of the Faith in the Streets initiative with Zao MKE Church, to explore how our two congregations can collaborate to bring our Faith into the Streets. At our first protest together, we had over 50 members of both congregations gathered to protest. The two congregations are also working together on singing together, bringing our Faith into the Streets by singing at protests.

When the COVID-19 public health crisis emerged, many members of our Social Justice Council and our congregation asked how we could help members of the community hit by the crisis, and particularly what kind of support our community partners needed. In response, I spoke with our Social Justice teams and partners, and:

- Helped set up a GoFundMe page for the Interchange Food Pantry, which raised over \$15,000 to provide fresh produce for all in need.
- Helped create a Partner Relief document listing the needs of our partners and how we can support them and vulnerable communities during this time.

One of my most proud moments during my time this year was

the mask initiative led by Scot Henry and myself. So far, we have been able to donate 790 masks to people currently incarcerated in the Milwaukee County Jail and we will continue receiving masks to distribute to people detained. This has been a collaborative effort, including contributions from congregation members making masks, as well as working with community organizations like Ayuda Mutua and Public Allies. This initiative has also inspired the UUA to promote continuing this mission throughout the state through other UU churches and organizations.

This year we celebrated both the 50th anniversary of the Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee and the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

This year has been very different as it ends on this new reality of social distancing, but the Social Justice Council and Anti-Racism teams have continued to meet online and connect over email. This is an important time for the Social Justice Council, and we are grateful to the congregation for your interest in wanting to support the community as a whole.

Cesar Cornier

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Black Lives Matter Team continued to evolve from the so-called cabal to a regular full-fledged member led ministry. In particular, the committee took the following steps:

1. Submitting a formal proposal to the Social Justice, a step which we discovered had previously been overlooked.
2. Focusing much of our attention on the Mothers For Justice United to help it evolve and achieve status as a tax exempt non-profit organization.
3. Submitting a successful proposal to the Lu Krug Bequest to begin a pilot project offering peer support for mothers of children who were killed by the police.
4. Developing a subcommittee which will seek funds from foundations and other sources to determine whether Mothers For Justice can be a viable organization or seek an alliance with an existing non-profit organization.
5. Organizing a showing of *The Blood is at the Doorstep* at the First Unitarian Society. This event was co-sponsored by 3 community organizations.
6. Participating in the Social Justice Council and using up our entire budget.
7. Facilitating a service with pulpit guest Christopher D. Sims.
8. Encouraging participation in the Dentre Day event.
9. Maintaining an active presence on Realm, the church social engagement platform, with 19 members.

Kenyatta Yamel

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The UU Book Club meets one time per month from September through May, usually on the second Sunday, to discuss fiction and non-fiction. This year, the books have ranged from *W.E.B. Dubois, The Souls of Black Folk* to *Unsheltered* by Barbara Kingsolver to *Educated* by Tara Westover.

Everyone is welcome to attend. You do not have to sign up to be a member. You are welcome to come to any meeting. We send monthly reminders and other information to our active list. If you are interested, contact the coordinator.

This year, things have been a little different due to the need for social distancing. We met on Zoom in April and plan to do it again in May. We met one time in the summer to choose books for the coming church year.

The book list for the coming church year is publicized in the summer *Chanticleer* and on the church website. We also have copies at the book table on Sundays.

For information and questions, please contact Chris Linder [celinder@att.net](mailto:celinder@att.net).

## BOOK SALES TEAM

The Book Sales Tower provides books about the beliefs and development of Unitarian Universalism, at both introductory and deeper levels, as a service to members and visitors. We also stock meditations, poetry, books about current social justice issues, and occasional writing by Forum speakers. This year, we focused on books related to Unitarian Universalist (UU) history, involvement in the civil rights movement, and efforts by congregations to become more multicultural. We also sell UU merchandise such as jewelry, mugs, and, for the first time, holiday cards. Almost all of our items come from the Unitarian Universalist Association bookstore.

The Used Book Sale, our big annual event scheduled for late March, was postponed indefinitely until our beloved church building can re-open.

Barbra Lancelot and Nancy Pajewski, Co-chairs

## CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Circles of Support helps men, women, and people leaving prison make a positive and permanent return to our community. This is a program for those that have experienced incarceration, allowing returning citizens an opportunity to share their stories as a form of emotional therapy, and offers a chance for their voices to be heard.

The goal is the successful reintegration of returning citizens into society with the benefit of First Church members building authentic connections on an equal playing field. Two monthly sessions were held, January 22 and February 26, before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and social distancing became the norm. Each session consisted of a shared meal, followed by a discussion led by our Circle Keeper, Sylvester Jackson. We carpool together to build community, eat with the members of the Circle who are often nervous and shy, use our active listening skills to make sure that every member has a voice, and share our observations on the drive home.

Returning citizens' stories raise good questions, including observations about racial differences and the impact of systemic discrimination. Our values and religious beliefs will shine through, in a non-threatening manner, as we connect with the participants. Each session is different and there might be some

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

disorganization. We recognize that we are entering a world with few resources, filled with uncertainty and disruption.

Currently, we have seven members and need five for each monthly Circle. Several others have indicated an interest and may be called upon after the Circles start up again. It is important that we show up and have a deep “bench” so that we always have enough people. We need to show our returning citizens that First Church will be there for them.

Paul Geenen

## COMMON GROUND

As Common Ground celebrates its 12<sup>th</sup> year in Milwaukee, we find ourselves to be in the highly unusual situation of a global pandemic! As a result, some of our original plans had to change. For instance, March 29<sup>th</sup> was to be the date of a Common Ground assembly with a hoped-for 900 members at St. Mark’s AME church. Members were to get assignments to go door-to-door throughout Milwaukee neighborhoods for GOTV, along with the hiring of additional organizers. Unfortunately, COVID-19 squashed those plans, but we are modifying our GOTV plans and testing software for organizing within our member organizations.

In the meantime, other campaigns continue on with Zoom meetings, such as Workforce Development, Washington High School (athletic space improvement), Do Not Stand Idly By, and South Side Organizing. There is not space in this report to provide all the details on these campaigns, so we encourage you to go to the Common Ground web page at <https://www.commongroundwi.org/> to find out more.

Common Ground is now up to full force with three full-time organizers as well as a part-time administrative organizer. In 2019, we welcomed Jeremy Jones as associate organizer and Jeannie Stranzl as administrative organizer. As always, Common Ground chooses its campaigns and allocates organizers by listening to people in its member organizations and in the participating neighborhoods.

Common Ground continues to offer Common Ground University, twice yearly, to teach people organizing skills. This spring, Common Ground offered a seminar on “How to sustain and strengthen congregational giving in this crisis” and information on how congregations can obtain government-crisis funding through the Paycheck Protection Program.

In April 21, the racial profiling hearing finally occurred with two Common Ground pastors suing the Waukesha County Sheriff. Due to the pandemic, Common Ground members could not witness the trial in person, but those who wished to listen could do so via teleconference. Over 100 people dialed in to the hearing. We were pleased that the judge allowed the case to move forward to trial in June.

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of the First Church friends of Common Ground who have supported our work through all these years. Should you have questions about any of the Common Ground campaigns or wish to become involved, feel free to contact one of our Core Team members: George Bledsoe, Lynn Connolly, Rod De Pue, Mary Ann Fisher, Jerry Fredrickson, Allan Jaberg, Russ Langford, Cathy Startt, and Mary Ann Steger.

## EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY

Earth Justice Ministry (EJM) had a positive year in spite of the pandemic causing cancellation of several activities in the second half of the year.

Highlights:

- EJM continued the style of the past year, having few committee meetings in order to concentrate on doing activities. The Fall Advance (we do not retreat) and mid-year Huddle served for planning and coordination.
- Terry Wiggins coordinated communications, submitting articles for the *Chanticleer* and managing the Earth Justice Google group.
- Mark Mueller and Bruce Wiggins pursued solar panels for the sanctuary roof and the apartments. They explored an innovative financing mechanism with federal tax credits. They met with the Building & Grounds and Finance Committees, and obtained permission from the City’s Historic Preservation Commission. Unfortunately, these plans must be put on hold for now because of the pandemic.
- Kitty Wilkomm, Pat Parcell, and Tree Moore encouraged plastic-free holiday gifts with displays during December coffee hours.
- Tree Moore recruited volunteers to conduct surveys about modes of transportation to church. Janet Nortrom,

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

Tammy Gibbs & others surveyed members during coffee hours. The plan was to have a walk-bike-transit to church Sunday in the spring with a celebration of persons using these “alternative” (to cars) modes of transportation to church. This is on hold because of the pandemic.

- EJM members Janet Nortrom, Tree Moore and Terry Wiggins assembled two baskets for the Feast for Funds auction. One basket was local food and the other was plastic-free products.
- Erica Gottschalk fed the worms in their bin at the church, keeping them alive until the building was closed for the pandemic. The plan was to work with Religious Education (RE) on how to use worms for creating fertile soil and reducing food waste.
- EJM worked with Rev. Jennifer on Earth Day activities. Our plans were for a grand celebration on this 50th anniversary of Earth Day, with tree planting groups and a potluck. However, plans for groups were thwarted by COVID-19. Yet EJM offered to pay for church members or friends to buy a tree from a local nursery and plant it, and also encouraged attendance at the 50th anniversary virtual Earth Day conference of the Nelson Institute at UW Madison.
- EJM created plans for a screening of “The Reluctant Radical” film, with refreshments and a discussion on civil disobedience. This program may be converted to a virtual event in May (after this report is submitted.)

Some other plans were canceled because of the pandemic – such as trips, potlucks and building bee houses in RE. We are looking forward to General Assembly in Milwaukee in 2021.

Bruce Wiggins and Tree Moore, Co-chairs

## IMMIGRATION ACTION ISSUES

The Immigration Issues Action Group worked to increase awareness, understanding and support of Milwaukee area immigrants who may live in fear of arrest and deportation. Our dissemination of information about issues and opportunities for demonstrating support enables members of an interest and action list to live our faith by “supporting immigrants regardless of their immigration status.”  
(UU College of Social Justice)

## 2019-20 Group Actions:

- Updated content and increased membership from 70 to 93 of Google Group used for disseminating ongoing information about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) practices, support activities for immigrants, and witness opportunities to lobby for just laws at the local, state and federal government (ongoing).
- Participated in interfaith rally protesting ICE family raids (June 24th).
- Participated in “Lights for Liberty” rally at City Hall (July 12th).
- Attended Voces de la Frontera meeting regarding policing collaboration policy with ICE (August 17th).
- Participated in Voces rallies at City Hall to change Milwaukee Police/ICE collaboration policy (9/26, 10/3, 10/31).
- Participated in First Tuesday monthly vigils at Ascension Lutheran Church service supporting immigrants facing discrimination, deportation or separation from family members.
- Participated in New Sanctuary Movement meeting to plan for interfaith support and defense of Luz, an undocumented immigrant in imminent danger of deportation, who is entering sanctuary at Ascension Lutheran Church. Results included a “Needs Assessment” for Luz, which was distributed to our Immigration Interest Group Google List for action.
- Hosted a table for ten at Voces de la Frontera Gala on October 25th and accepted an award from Voces honoring Rev. Jennifer in recognition of our congregation’s support of immigrants and the New Sanctuary Movement.
- Attended “Asylum Seekers at Our Southern Border” at United Methodist Church in Whitefish Bay (Nov. 19th).
- Co-Chairs met with Rev. Jennifer and Cesar Cornier, First Church Social Justice Coordinator, to update goals for 2019-20.
- Participated in planning with Voces de la Frontera “Get Out the Vote” initiatives (Jan. 4th).
- We continue to engage in and encourage charitable support for immigrants while physical demonstrations are prevented by the coronavirus social distancing recom-

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

mendations. The New Sanctuary Movement Emergency Fund (Voces de la Frontera) is slated for Share the Plate in 2020.

Patricia Geenen and Birger Pahl, Co-Chairs

## INTERCHANGE FOOD PANTRY

Interchange Food Pantry's mission is improving the health and well-being of guests through nutritious food and compassion. The pantry, located in downtown Milwaukee, is open four times each week and serves guests from throughout Milwaukee County. Founded in 1971, Interchange is supported by seven local congregations. First Unitarian support has traditionally included an annual pledge, a portion of the Christmas Eve collection, monetary and food donations from individual church members, and volunteers who work at the pantry.

In 2019, after expanding its services to all of Milwaukee County, the pantry served 13,871 guests, a 51% increase over the 9,169 guests served in 2018. Since the 2020 arrival of the coronavirus pandemic, the number of guests served has increased over 100% compared to the prior period, with a significant increase in families with children.

The pantry is committed to serving guests healthy food, with over half the food choices being fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit, supplemented by proteins, dairy and whole grains. The majority of food comes from our partnership with Feeding America, along with numerous grocery stores. However, the pandemic has disrupted normal supply channels, so certain food items, particularly fresh produce, must be purchased from more expensive wholesalers. The pantry is currently engaged in additional fundraising to supplement its food budget to accommodate these increases in volume and cost.

Beth Bruch and Susan Mitten

## INTERFAITH CONFERENCE OF GREATER MILWAUKEE

Our church works very actively with 22 other faith communities as part of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee (ICGM). Our mission is to uphold the dignity of every person and the solidarity of the human community.

Our website at <https://www.interfaithconference.org/> highlights programs, committees, activities, and events throughout the year. Contact us at 414-276-9050, [Office@Interfaithconference.org](mailto:Office@Interfaithconference.org) or [mcfarlap@gmail.com](mailto:mcfarlap@gmail.com). Pat McFarland represents SEWUUC on the cabinet and ICGM executive committee.

We work closely with several non-member faiths and grass-roots coalitions. We get constituents motivated by faith to contact legislators. We help get out the vote. We dialogue to build personal relationships, and conduct public programming to counter hate and fear while fostering interfaith, intercultural and interracial understanding, tolerance and friendship. Working with the faith community and in coalitions to challenge hate-related incidents, we sponsor vigils and press conferences. Rev Jennifer has passionately advocated for peace, justice and equity at several large gatherings.

We work on restorative justice, hunger, unemployment, environmental challenges (Interfaith Earth Network-IEN), and other social issues such as Wisconsin Immigration Network, to create a better society for everyone. IEN is a catalyst for congregations and people of faith to live, work and worship in environmentally sustainable ways. IEN meets monthly. An Amazing Faiths Dinner Dialogue Program, a program initiated by UU's, brings people of different faiths, philosophies, races and cultures together in private homes or intimate institutional settings for a deep sharing.

An annual Tuesdays-in-March Luncheon Lecture Series is hosted at our church; we presented #Truth . . . or Consequences (We won't know what we don't know...)

3/3 – Rev Jennifer opened with a prayer and welcoming for the first meal. An Independent Press: Essential for Democracy with George Stanley, Editor, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

3/10 – Democracy at Risk in Wisconsin-- Matt Rothschild, Director, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, presented to a packed house.

The last three Tuesdays are postponed:

- Truth & Broadcasting in a Digital Society: How TV/radio newscasts and interview shows have been affected by economic pressures, political polarization, and the public's increasing reliance on social media for news. Joanne Williams, host of MPT & Black Nouveau program, and Kathleen Dunn, retired host of Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) for decades.
- True News & Social Media Blues: "Fake news" and conspiracy theories, dynamics affecting all of the information we receive, and checklists to guide us.
- Truth & Mind Games: Our minds and the dangers if we consume media that feed only our ingrained opinions of truth with Pardeep Kaleka, our ICGM executive director.

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

- Pardeep and former white supremacist, Arno Michaelis, presented at the 49th annual luncheon; they have collaborated since the 2012 attack in Oak Creek where his late father, Satwant Singh Kaleka, a founder of the Sikh temple, was one of six slain.

Resources will be available online with a reading list on these topics and recommended alternative news sources, and ways to support independent news coverage.

Pat McFarland

## IRMA MORTER LECTURE TEAM

Members include: Cheryl Maranto, Jane Cliff, Nick DaVia. In fall, we welcomed additional members Mary Ann Steger, Barb Rasman, George Bledsoe, Sally Lewis, Dana and Laurel Brooks and Jessie Moffat.

Our most honored group member, Irma Morter, established the lecture fund for future generations, with its message of “individual responsibility” through a bequest in 2000. Her 91-year life was filled with learning philosophy and enjoying the natural world. In 2016, we expanded the definition of her intent to include: “We each have individual means of becoming change agents in our communities, both large and small.”

October 5-6, 2019 was a “Circle of Song” weekend with Sara Thomsen, social justice songwriter and musician. In addition to her lecture, “Planting Hope: Note by Note,” she joined the Chancel Choir at Sunday services, and led a joyful Sunday afternoon “Join in Singing” workshop of spontaneous songs that had the building humming. A staunch supporter of struggles for human dignity and ecological sustainability, Sara helped us experience the power of singing together, sharing music, and building bridges between communities.

The 2020 Irma Morter Lecture on October 3-4 will feature young adult/children’s fiction author and Newberry Medalist Lois Lowry. Publishers describe Ms. Lowry as a popular American author who tackles difficult subject matter such as racism, terminal illness, murder, and the Holocaust in her books. She also wrote a quartet series of futuristic societies, beginning with *The Giver*. Ms. Lowry’s newest book, *On the Horizon*, was released April 2020 and explores the personal, individual devastation of two closely tied global catastrophes, the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the Hiroshima nuclear attack. She uses her family travels and childhood experiences to explore similarities and contrasts between the two significant

historic events. Ms. Lowry’s visit will be all-virtual, and include the lecture, participation in Sunday services and conversing with our young Religious Education (RE) people. We are excited to sponsor this gregarious, active, and engaged woman who shares her life experiences and understanding with others, especially young people.

Lorraine Jacobs, Representative

## SHARE THE PLATE

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

In just nine calendar years, January 2011 through December 2019, First Church members and friends gave a yearly average of \$22,878, distributing a total of \$205,904 to support organizations and causes. Of the total, \$148,627 came from “normal” monthly/summer collections and went to 96 recipients, with an average contribution of \$1,548. An additional \$57,277 was distributed from Christmas Eve services, special one-time events, and disaster relief efforts to 24 recipients, with an average contribution of \$2,386. A complete list of past recipients can be found on the First Church website at [uumilwaukee.org](http://uumilwaukee.org).

Our youth and children actively participate in the Share the Plate program by selecting organizations twice each year. The Youth Steering Committee chose Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin our March recipient. Unfortunately, the “safer-at-home” order issued by Gov. Evers suspended in-person worship and collections with the March 15 service. Planned Parenthood will receive contributions from March 1 and March 7. The official Share the Plate program will resume with in-person services. In the interim, church members are encouraged to give generously of goods, services or money to our community partners who feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and protect victims of domestic violence.

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

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

Bob Monahan and Nancy Spransy, Chairs

## SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

What an honor to serve First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee as a member of the Sunday Morning Forum Group. It was a joyful year for us, when on January 19, 2020, we celebrated a festive 50th Anniversary Celebration, having offered consistent weekly Sunday Morning Forums to our members and friends. The year also brought Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. Our congregation's physical time together came to a sudden close, we learned new ways of being together. Sunday Morning Forum Group members persisted in combining our skills, with invaluable assistance from Shari Wright, to offer Zoom Forums in April/May.

Members of Sunday Morning Forum Group include: JoAnn Bachar, Ann Batiza, Christian Becker, Joan Christopherson-Schmidt, Jerry Fredrickson, Juliet Hills, Mark Mueller, Janet Nortrom, Bruce Wiggins, Jean Groshek, Cesar Cornier, BJ Ermenc, Sally Lewis, Elizabeth Martorell, Pat McFarland, Molly Shiffler and the members of our YRUU, the high school youth. A total of 38 presenters were engaged. Average attendance, September – March 15, was 48 people, usually including 3-6 visitors to First Church. A total of \$854 was raised in the "free will" donation basket. Topics ranged from local issues, social justice initiatives, personal interest, creative arts, history, health and politics. A sample includes: African Spirituality, Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers, Children's Literature, Tricklebee Café, Therapy Dogs, Peacemaking, Milwaukee's Green New Deal, ACLU for 100 years, and Frank Lloyd Wright's homes.

On Sunday, January 19, a grand celebration of our 50th Anniversary was held in Max Otto Hall. Over 75 friends and colleagues attended. Lively conversation and many memories were shared. An abundant, gourmet buffet, prepared by Janet Nortrom, with assistance in serving by Jean Groshek and other volunteers, was thoroughly enjoyed. Juliet Hills, with the help of Christian Becker, our dedicated holder of past paper records and deep memory detail, archived our past and created a quality document listing by decade, all speakers and topics through 50 years. As Master of Ceremonies, Christian cleverly managed the job of nudging memories, storytelling, and ensuring that im-

portant "characters" were properly appreciated. I was one of those "characters", in absentia (due to a family situation). Later, we heard, "I never knew that Christian could be so funny and entertaining!" (a visitor), "What a marvelous celebration!" (Christian Z.), "I have never regretted coming to a Sunday Forum." (Camille J.), "What a rare and splendid history! (BJ Ermenc), "Forums have been rewarding, satisfying and stimulating over the past 10 years."(anonymous).

Lorraine Jacobs, Representative

## THE CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED

The Chronologically Gifted (TCG) group is primarily for social interaction between the not-so-young (but the young at heart) members of First Church. We meet on the last Sunday of each month through May for a potluck and a short program at 12:30 p.m. in Max Otto Hall. Shortly after it's inception, our group took on our one service project. Upon receiving a request by a Unitarian Universalist (UU) family, our group hosts and provides finger foods and coffee/tea following a memorial service for a deceased member of our church family. Sharon DePue currently manages this function, which has become a most welcome service to the First Church community. This year we hosted five memorial receptions (within a 44-day period)!

As I write this, we are all in the throes of the coronavirus that has plagued our city, country and world. We have not met as a congregation since mid-March and consequently have not had a TCG potluck since the last Sunday in February. As of then, we had six gatherings with wonderful programs. Unfortunately, due to the virus it's unlikely we'll be meeting again until next September. We can only hope!

Cecile Langford, Co-Chair

## SWANS (SEASONED WOMEN ARE NATURALLY SOCIAL)

In August, 22 SWANS attended an ingathering in the garden of Barbara Collignon, Co-leader. The number of women attending was more than usual so we enjoyed a lovely potluck together. We met regularly on the first Sunday of the month at nearby restaurants for lunch until March. (Usually 12 -14 women met at these gatherings.)

In December, representatives of Franciscan Peacemakers joined us at St. John's for lunch, told us about their mission

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

and brought various items to sell to support their mission. It was a nice opportunity for us to buy Xmas gifts while supporting Franciscan Peacemakers. SWANS and Women Sprit worked on a program to celebrate the Women's Suffrage anniversary. It was to be held the first Saturday in March but was cancelled due to Covid-19. We have not met or been in touch with each other formally since then.

Barbara Collignon

## UU PARENTING GROUP

This year, the UU Parenting Group has been exploring new ways to meet our members' needs. Under our current situation of COVID-19, the UU Parenting Group is meeting remotely. We are joining Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson for the Parent Spirit Group on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 8:00 p.m. We look forward to holding more in-person meetings, picnics, and other events in the future. But for now, stay safe. Based on interest, we will consider alternative ways to communicate and socialize remotely.

If you would like to connect to other UU parents, please contact Stacey Thieme (414) 369-2869 [staceythieme@gmail.com](mailto:staceythieme@gmail.com).

## UU+ STUDY GROUP

Now in its fourth year, the UU+ Study Group continued its mission of deepening our understanding of Unitarian Universalism and enriching our spiritual journeys through reading and discussion. We attracted our largest attendance so far with the six-part video series *Long Strange Trip: A History of Unitarian Universalism*, which we presented in October, November, and December. Thirty-seven members viewed one or more of the videos. We learned to appreciate many key people in our denomination's past and to understand the theological questions that have shaped the character of who we are today.

In March, we held two sessions to discuss *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt. This author challenged us by contrasting our rational thinking with our stronger intuition and by suggesting six foundations upon which to build moral decision-making.

Chris Linder and Nancy Pajewski, Co-chairs

## WOMANSPIRIT

WomanSpirit is one of our connections to the National Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation organization. It also links us to the central Midwest District Women's Connection Committee. Our mission is to join for mutual support, personal growth, and spiritual enrichment. We welcome UU women of all ages, straight or gay, to join meetings that celebrate the meaning of our lives through music, ritual, social, and educational concerns. In the fall, we encourage women to join, for a nominal membership fee, to support our national and district programs. We are invited to three Women's Connection retreats each year and many national programs at the annual General Assembly. You either get a personal invite, see them mentioned in the *Chanticleer* or see them posted on our church bulletin board. We provide scholarships to women who need some financial help.

This year, we had three fascinating Luncheons planned with outstanding musicians. The luncheons were planned with our UU Swans group (many women are members of both groups). The first October luncheon had us Crowning the Crones ceremony, and Patricia Witt provided beautiful crowns for all. The ancient crone archetype strengthens belief and confidence in age-accumulated knowledge, insights and intuitions enabling women to step into power. Transformations were like butterflies that Jackie Zandi had created for all. Throughout the ceremony Kari Gunderson, our renown violinist and keyboard artist, joined by many of our UU women singers, provided music dealing with wise women. Jackie Zandi, Kitty Wilkomm and Janet Nortrom provided lunch for 45 women who attended.

Another Saturday luncheon highlighted Kari Gunderson playing her keyboard for choir member, Dr. Gul Afshan singing Indian music, and we ended the program with Marquette University poet renown professor Angela Sorby, who shared many of her poems, and some of our favorite Mary Oliver poems.

Our third luncheon celebrating 100 years since U.S. women got the vote in August 1920, but our suffragette luncheon was to be March 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:00-2:00 p.m. and was canceled because of COVID-19. WomanSpirit members and the SWANS again called upon Kari Gunderson, on the violin and keyboard, with many women planning on dressing as early suffragettes, vocalists Valerie Pogue and Diane Horn, were to sing, Barbara Collignon to share humorous poetry, history of the movement

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by Mary Spicuzza, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reporter, and Cesar Cornier, our social justice coordinator, prepared original rap music. All will be scheduled again in the future as soon as COVID-19 is gone. It is a sad note to end our WomanSpirit annual report, but we will survive and provide some outstanding lunches and programs for women in the future.

Janet Nortrom and Jackie Zandi, Co-chairs & Cooks

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