



THE

CHANTICLEER

First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.

August 2020

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres

This month we explore the question: what does it mean to be a people of invitation? At first glance, we may wonder how this applies to congregational life when all our activities are online. We can't invite someone across the threshold of our beautiful building to engage with the folks who are there. Not yet. But online church has many possibilities for invitation and we are reaching people since March 15 that we've never reached before.

Poet David Whyte wrote, "A real conversation always contains an invitation. You are inviting another person to reveal themselves to you, to tell you who they are or what they want."

I invite you to consider joining a Theme Circle this fall. Finding connections and making meaning are two primary needs that human beings have during challenging times. We do both those things in small groups called Theme Circles. We meet on Zoom. It's not ideal, but it works. People see and hear each other—what is on our hearts and minds and spirits, held within the compelling theme of the month and the group that is there to listen. Guided by a trained facilitator, the exchange of experiences is deep and rich.

See the FAQ page 3 in this newsletter for more information. Registration begins August 21 and Theme Circles begin meeting for the new church year during the third week of October.

Here are a few things people said about last year's circles:

"I greatly appreciate the synchronicity of the theme circles with Sunday services. It greatly reinforces learning."

"I appreciate connecting with people who have similar values."

"This was the most meaningful thing I did at church this year."

So, think about it, and consider yourself invited to Theme Circles. We do expect a commitment to attend monthly and engage with the packet of materials before each meeting. If you're bored, this may be a gift.

SUNDAY SERVICE

ONE SERVICE AT 9:00 A.M.
LIVE ON YOUTUBE

AUGUST 2

"What We Owe the World"

Beth Monhollen, First Church Member

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Mark Richards, Worship Associate

Mark Twain once said, "Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first." If we accept, as Twain says, that the world was here first, then how do we define what and who the world is? And how do we determine what we owe it? How can we, in an ever-changing, ever-uncertain world, use our talents, whatever they are, to act with great love?

Beth Monhollen has been a member of First Church since 2013 and served in a variety of roles—from coffee host to book sales, plus Membership Team and OWL facilitator. She is finishing her final year as a Worship Associate and is excited to continue to co-facilitate Geography of Grace, an adult spiritual development group. She has worked in higher education for almost 20 years, but will soon be leaving that life to pursue a call to ministry, attending Meadville Lombard Theological School in the fall. She is filled with gratitude for our First Church community, and for her partner of more than 20 years.

MONTHLY THEME

What does it mean to be a people of

INVITATION?

AUGUST 9

“Going to the Sidewalk”

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Nick Hayes, Worship Associate

Invitation is different than welcome, it's more active and deeply intentional. We have to leave our bubble and engage with the possibility that we have something to receive as well as to offer. We have a genuine interest in others for who they are, not what they represent. What does it take to be a people of invitation? It takes a sense of security in who we are, willingness to go out of our comfort zone, to go to the sidewalk and make an authentic connection with who is there.

AUGUST 16

“When You Were the Stranger”

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Paul Geenen, Worship Associate

Nobody fits all the time everywhere, even those with power and privilege. Can you think of a time when you were the stranger and someone invited you in? How did they do that and what was it like? Being a stranger in a strange land is an ancient human experience. How can we invite each other out of exile and into community? What does it take to invite someone into a relationship or a place that is close to your heart?

AUGUST 23

“Extending the Bridge”

Amy Wilbourne, First Church Member

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Dale Skaggs, Worship Associate

In his 2015 TED Talk, Johann Hari stated, “the opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection.” Addiction and mental illness too frequently silently threaten the ones we love. Isolation, disconnection, and shame can get in the way of asking for help. How can we, as a community, care for one another and ourselves when someone in our midst is struggling? Join me in contemplating how to extend a bridge of connection and caring.

Amy Wilbourne has been a member of First Church since 2011. She served as a Pastoral Care Associate, a Worship Associate, on several committees, and attended Midwest Leadership School 2018. She enjoys participating in small group ministry, such as Theme Circles and Geography of Grace. Amy is a School Counselor in the Milwaukee Public Schools, and loves to spend her free time with her two sons, Preston and Niall, her partner Mark, and her two four-pawed friends.

AUGUST 30

“And Then I Come Home: Sustaining Our Commitment to Social Justice”

Jeff Percy, First Church Member

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Nick Hayes, Worship Associate

We become energized and motivated by the plight of disadvantaged people around the world. There is a surge of concern and action. Then we move on with our daily lives or the next urgent issue presses for our attention. I have had the wonderful experience of photographing people in marginalized situations all over the world. Their struggles are ongoing and often generational. But, then I come home. I will explore my own reflections of sustaining creative energy and commitment to social justice, as well as thoughts of others who successfully remain energized to a cause.

Jeff Percy is a documentary photographer who worked on assignment from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee on three different occasions, including documenting the recovery effort in the Philippines following a typhoon. He has a long term commitment working with a village in the Jong Chieftdom in Sierra Leone. Jeff and his wife Jeri have been members of First Church around 28 years.

SEPTEMBER 6

“Nap, Pray, Love”

Monica Kling-Garcia, First Church Member

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Beth Monhollen, Worship Associate

In our society, productivity is often the measure of success. Yet, during the COVID-19 pandemic, our ability to be “productive” was prevented by our collective grief and sudden changes in our society. If we listen to ourselves, we may find that we are tired in many ways – physically and spiritually. This Sunday, we will explore the different ways to let ourselves rest and why it is important. Log in to church in your comfy clothes and with your favorite warm beverage in hand as we care for our mind, body, and spirit together!



Virtual Coffee on Zoom!

Community, Conversation & Connection
Summer Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

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



Theme Circles

Frequently Asked Questions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres

What is a Theme Circle?

Theme Circles are monthly small groups that deepen and support the spiritual journeys of participants in community with each other and in connection with the church's monthly worship themes.

Is this a sermon discussion group?

No, the goal is not to explore the sermons in more depth, but to explore the monthly themes in more depth. Sunday services enrich the experience of the theme but are not the focus of Theme Circles.

What is the focus of Theme Circles?

Connection to self, others, and that which is larger than ourselves through engaging reflective questions, short readings, spiritual exercises, and sharing our experience in a space of trust.

What do we mean by spiritual exercise?

Spiritual exercise goes beyond the question "What do you think?" and invites us into the deeper question: "Where are you willing to let your faith take you?" The goal is to get us out of our heads and into our lives. This is not to say we leave thinking behind. Instead, the aim of the spiritual exercises is to challenge our tendency to use "objective analysis" as an escape. By pushing us to engage and talk about "what is really going on in our lives," we find ourselves challenged not just to think differently, but also to live differently.

What do Theme Circle meetings look like?

Here is a sample format:

- Centering (opening words, chalice lighting, followed by a moment of silent reflection)
- Brief Check-In – around 15-20 minutes
- Spiritual Exercises – around 40 minutes (Members share which spiritual exercises they chose and how it went)
- Engaging the Questions – around 40 minutes (Members practice deep listening as they share their experience "living the questions" related to the month's theme)
- Check-Out – around 10 minutes
- Closing Words

Who can participate in a Theme Circle?

Theme Circles are open to the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee members, pledging friends, and regular guests who register during the annual fall registration period.

How often do Theme Circles meet?

Theme Circles meet once a month for two hours during the third week of October to June. Circles include up to eight par-

ticipants guided by a trained facilitator.

What is expected of Theme Circle members?

Each month, members engage in pre-reading and contemplation exercises based on that month's worship theme. Materials are sent in advance for participants to delve into whatever level works for them.

Because Theme Circles only meet once a month and focus on spiritual exploration within community, we expect participants to make every effort to attend all meetings. If you already know you will miss more than two meetings, please wait to register until next year.

When do Theme Circles meet?

Theme Circles meet once a month for two hours during the third week of the month October to June. Registration begins August 21, 2020. Registration deadline is September 27, 2020. You may select which meeting time works best for you. Meeting schedule is below.

Third Mondays 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Third Mondays 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Third Tuesdays 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Third Wednesdays 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Third Thursdays 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Third Thursdays 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

How do I sign up?

Available on August 21, click [here](#).

Try a Theme Circle

by Diane Horne and Eric Heilig
Adult Spiritual Development Team

Have you wondered if you'd like to be in a Theme Circle? Theme Circles are a way to explore the monthly themes of the church year, as well as to connect with other church members. In August and September, we are offering an opportunity to try it on and see how it fits. We will have two Zoom sessions available and plan on meeting for an hour.

You can sign up for one of the sessions being offered, either Sunday, August 23 at 11:00 a.m., or Sunday, September 20 at noon. Each session is limited to 6 participants. The registration form is linked on page 4.

Once you sign up for one of the sessions, you will be sent an email with a Soul Matters Sharing Circle small group

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

packet for one of the themes explored in the 2019 – 2020 church year.

The email will also contain a document of Theme Circle FAQs, as well as for instructions for how to join a Zoom meeting (in case this is new to you.) You are encouraged to spend time with either a spiritual exercise or a question from the packet before the session. In the Try a Theme Circle session, we will spend an hour together, first going over a few agreements to better support a safe and meaningful experience.

Then we will offer a shortened Theme Circle, facilitated by Eric Heilig and Diane Horne, trained Theme Circle facilitators.

Please sign up and try on a Theme Circle! With the nature of the current world, connecting with other church members provides community, and exploring the themes facilitates a deeper connection with ourselves and the wide web of life in which we are vitally alive and growing.

Register here for either sessions: <https://form.jotform.com/202024856677056>.

IN MEMORIAM

Norman J. Fons
1929 ~ 2020

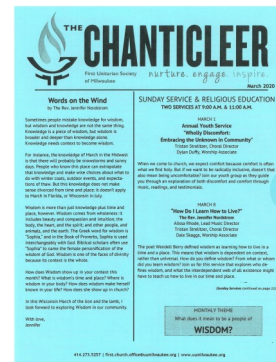
Norman J. Fons died peacefully on Monday morning July 13, 2020 with his wife and family close by. Norm had cancer that spread beyond the help of treatment. Lovingly cared for by his family, he entered home hospice care a few weeks before his death. He and his wife Judy were married for 61 years. Norm was 91 years old, and was a member of our congregation for 13 years.

The family gathered privately to share memories of Norm. A Candle of Life was lit in honor of Norm during our online Sunday worship service on July 19, 2020.

Donations in memory of Norm can be sent to:

Interchange Food Pantry
1105 N. Waverly Place, Milwaukee, WI 53202
<https://interchangefoodpantry.org/>

Guest House of Milwaukee, Inc.
1216 N. 13th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53205
<https://guesthouseofmilwaukee.kindful.com/>



Changing Our Chanticleer Newsletter With Your Help

by Shari Wright
Office Manager

The communications team is extremely interested in your opinion on how to receive our church news this year. In the last few months, our paper *Chanticleer* was not mailed due to the COVID-19 shut-down, and the newsletter was sent out electronically to everyone and posted on our church's website. It is a priority to communicate with our church members and friends, especially during this pandemic. We'd like to invite you to participate in a short questionnaire to get your feedback about how we will improve the design and delivery of the newsletter. Please answer these questions in the online form (link below). Or if you prefer to contact Shari Wright, call 414-273-5257, during work hours 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Questionnaire online form includes these questions:

- Do you prefer a paper copy mailed to you?
- If you prefer a paper copy, can you print the online newsletter at home?
- Do you prefer to read the online newsletter?
- Rank your preferred topics: All-in-the-Family, Board News, Children's Religious Education, Events, Adult Spiritual Development, Ministers' articles, Social Justice News, other items.
- How often would you like to receive news from First Church? On a scale of 1-5: 1=monthly news with a comprehensive newsletter including all events and news and 5=two or more per week electronic news with shorter focused events or articles for the upcoming days.

Questionnaire link: <https://form.jotform.com/202023363376044>





Reparations—Time to Act

by Mary Devitt
BLM2WUU Coordinator

Reparations for slavery is no longer a fringe conversation about a pie-in-the-sky idea. In this time of urgent push to deal with centuries of racial injustice in this country, leaders are saying that “Black Lives Matter” rings hollow unless reparations are paid.

Recent articles in mainstream publications include *Reparations Now: Why White People Must Join The Call To Pay Reparations For Slavery* (Forbes Magazine, Jun 29, 2020); “*What Is Owed: If true justice and equality are ever to be achieved in the United States, the country must finally take seriously what it owes black Americans*” (New York Times Magazine, June 30, 2020); and *Only After Reparations Can America Heal and Move On* (Newsweek, July 15, 2020.)

Recent government actions taken include:

- the City of Chicago’s 2015 provision of reparations for the victims of police torture;
- the City of Evanston, Illinois’ 2019 establishment of a Reparations Fund, financed by taxes on the sale of recreational cannabis;
- the California State Assembly’s June 2020 passage of a bill authorizing the study of reparations implementation;
- the City of Asheville, NC’s July 2020 approval of funding for reparations in the form of support for home ownership and business opportunities; and
- Providence, RI’s mayor’s July 2020 Executive Order to examine the feasibility of reparations for Native Americans and African Americans, confronting Providence’s historical participation in colonial land theft and the slave trade.

Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs, our five-congregation collaborative, along with our local partners, is proceeding with work on reparations, focused presently on education and readiness for allies. We recommend the following resources, accompanied by discussion and other self-directed learning. More to come.

- “Restoration and Reparations” in the UUA’s Commission on Institutional Change Report, Widening the Circle of Concern <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/restoration-reparations>.
- M4BL’s *Reparations NOW Toolkit* <https://m4bl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Reparations-Now-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf>.

Address Climate Change and Promote Environmental Justice

by Bruce Wiggins and Terry Wiggins
Earth Justice Ministry

Write to the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change – Deadline July 31

In late 2019 Gov. Evers and Lt. Gov. Barnes signed an Executive Order establishing the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change. The administration proclaimed its commitment to science, and to chart a path to meet its goal of 100% carbon-free energy by 2050, while improving the state’s economy and environment, diversifying the resources used to meet the state’s energy needs, and generating family-supporting jobs. Public health, farmers’ livelihoods, tourism, hunting, fishing, and hiking are all at risk.

The Task Force is maintaining a lens of environmental justice with this work, so that communities of color and low-income communities—which too often experience the first and worst consequences of climate change—are part of the conversation and the solution.

The Task Force is still accepting written comments on its website until July 31. FUSM’s Earth Justice Ministry is submitting comments and encourages you to do likewise.

Need ideas for climate action and environmental justice?
How about:

- Establishing an Office of Environmental Justice and Climate Justice.
- Scrapping the idea, recently revived, of expanding I-94 through Milwaukee.
- Reducing the volume of food waste, by incentivizing composting, growing the local food economy, reducing the surplus of food generated, and donating extra food to food banks.
- Developing a plan for dealing with the crisis of electronic waste.
- Divesting pension funds and investments from fossil fuels. Remember when FUSM and the UUA did so several years ago?

We hope you read this article before July 31 and are inspired to submit your ideas to the state Task Force! After that date, look for other venues and discussions where you can advocate for these goals and ideas. We see these actions to be upholding our seven UU principles. If you have questions about the commenting process, contact Terry or Bruce.



Shelter Meals Are Back!

by Nancy Pajewski
Guest House Meal Organizer

First Church will be providing the meal for 86 men at the Guest House on Saturday evening, August 15. This is the first time since the pandemic restrictions began that volunteer groups are permitted to bring meals. However, we are still not permitted to serve the meal in the building. As a result, we are planning to have four members scattered throughout the area serve as collection points, so food donors will drop off their food at the nearest collection point instead of at the Guest House itself. You will be notified of details about where to take your food donation a week before the meal.

Our menu will be easy to serve food - cold taco salad, tortilla chips, salad, guacamole, and cupcakes. To donate food for the meal, go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084BA4AD2DA6F49-guest7> or contact Nancy Pajewski at npajewski@wi.rr.com or 414-482-0307.

If you use Sign-up Genius, check the "Sign Up" box next to the food item you want to bring, then hit "Submit and Sign Up" at the bottom of the screen. Then you will see where you can enter your information.

UU Books Club News

by Chris Linder
UU Book Club Chair

The Book Club has chosen the books for the 2020-21 church year. We are meeting on Zoom the second Sunday of the month. On August 9 we will meet in the park, weather permitting, and observe Milwaukee's COVID-19 social distance and mask policy. Click [here](#) for more information on the Milwaukee policies.

In August we are discussing *Deaths of Despair* by Anne Case and Angus Deaton. The Princeton economics professors detail the loss of the American dream for white males without a college degree. It helps us understand Trump voters.

On September 13 we are discussing *The Ghost Map* by Steven Johnson. This is an in-depth study of the 1854 cholera epidemic in London and how it changed science, cities and the modern world.

For specific information on how to meet with us contact Chris Linder at celinder@att.net.

All About Youth

by Deb Solis
Youth Program Coordinator

Our youth group will be meeting Sunday, August 2 and September 6 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. August 2 is a Virtual Scavenger Hunt led by Zoe & Zahni Gulbranson and September 6 will be Youth Worship. To keep up to date with youth opportunities and links to Zoom meetings, sign up for the [RE Weekly Email](#).

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Program Update

by Deb Solis
Youth Program Coordinator

The Our Whole Lives program (comprehensive, age-appropriate, value-based sexuality education) is on hold until further notice due to the pandemic. I am subscribing to a quarterly OWL program newsletter to keep on top of the progress being made to bring OWL programming back to our church community. I am also attending monthly webinar trainings to discuss the future of OWL programming at church.

First Church's plans to host an OWL training weekend have also been postponed. OWL training relies on necessary small group assessments and interactive content, which cannot be done virtually. Our OWL program is important justice work and must be introduced with appropriate consideration, thought, and planning.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Former church member **Dorothy Lachowicz** passed away May 21 at the age of 93. She suffered from congestive heart failure. Her family asked that she be remembered by our congregation, which was near and dear to her heart. She was a member here for 25 years, beginning in 1960, and was a stalwart church school volunteer. On the last day of her life, she and her daughter Brena were reading a sermon from John Cyrus and remembered how he always closed his Sunday service with these words:

"Let us follow the truth wherever it may lead us, and let us be assured in our hearts that the truth which will make us free, will in the end make us glad also."

Our condolences are with Dorothy's husband, children and extended family.



Virtual Poetry Contemplation

Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m.

Continuing throughout the summer

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

Ongoing Meeting Link <https://form.jotform.com/201557183259964>

Call +1 312 626 6799 with ID 138 116 309

Password to enter the meeting: **Poetry**

Questions? Email lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org

Join Us Any Thursday Evening!

7:15-8:30 p.m.

Continuing throughout the summer

See your First Church friends and meet new ones in smaller breakout room opportunities every Thursday evening.

- 2nd and 4th Thursdays - Team Trivia (As in you'll be working with a small team so you don't have to know it all!)
- 1st and 3rd Thursdays - Short Video Share and Chat ("Ted Talk" type videos with a chance to share thoughts in smaller groups.)

Bring your own refreshments....

Both events are drop-in, so come any Thursday. Save this link for both!

<https://form.jotform.com/201556720178051>

Learn About Computers and Become an Expert

You are invited to join us every Friday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. by computer, tablet or smartphone. Shari Wright and other tech experts will be available to answer your computer, smartphone or Zoom questions. Each week you will receive information related to a specific topic.

Click [here](#) to receive the link to join us.



HOW TO REACH US

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Staff members have varying hours. Please contact them directly to set up an appointment.

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