



THE

CHANTICLEER

First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.

January 2021

Words on the Wind

by The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

We made it through 2020!!! Welcome, 2021, WELCOME...

I am so grateful the calendar has turned its pages, grateful for an incoming less-racist, more science-guided administration, grateful to be on the road to a coronavirus vaccine, grateful just to put 2020 to bed. Still, coming into this new year didn't have its usual gusto.

Our January 2021 theme is "Imagination," which fits for the first month of a new year. Yet I find myself scraping the edges of my consciousness for the creative energy and hope imagination requires. In the winter of this pandemic, some moments will include the space and energy for imagination, and others will just be time to rest and refill the tank.

Imagination is powerful when the energy for it is there. Not only does it return as much energy as it requires, it creates new realities! Imagination can change individual lives, when a person can imagine a different way of living, and it can change our collective reality, when we can imagine a better world together. The Rev. Jacqui Lewis says, "Imagination is our most potent political resource. Our ability to envision a future guided by revolutionary love is what will take us there!" One step on the road to a more just future is engaging in the anti-racist work of Beloved Conversations: registration for the Spring semester begins next month (see more information on page 9).

(Continued on page 2)

MONTHLY THEME

What does it mean to be a people of

IMAGINATION?

SUNDAY SERVICES

10:00 A.M.

LIVE ON YOUTUBE

JANUARY 3

"Running Jump"

The Rev. Dena McPhetres

The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,
Minister of Religious Education
Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director
Miles Schuller, Worship Associate

Imagining a new year, a new start, is a risk in and of itself. How do we prepare to take a running jump into imagining a new life together? There is an interplay between vulnerability and protection as we learned on a whole new level in the year 2020. How can we use that experience and wisdom as we enter the year 2021? We may need to let go of "yes, but" and jump into "yes, and" while using our imagination with courage.

JANUARY 10

"Imagination Can Change Your Life"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,
Minister of Religious Education
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director
Amy Wilbourne, Worship Associate

Imagination is a powerful tool for changing your life. The stronger your imagination, the more powerfully you will be able to project your vision for the future. What are you imagining this winter? How can you put your imagination to work creating the life you want? Join us for this worship service where we explore imagination's role in making dreams a reality.

(Words on the Wind, *Continued from page 1)*

Imagination is a potent resource for transformation. It takes energy, but it gives it back exponentially. May we find the time, space, and energy to imagine the lives we want, the community we want, and the world we want this month. What would a sustainable, just, and beautiful life, community, world be like? Let those dreams nourish you as you nourish them this January.

With love,
Jennifer

MORE
SUNDAY SERVICES
10:00 A.M.
LIVE ON YOUTUBE

JANUARY 17
“Imagining Justice”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
, Minister of Religious Education
Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director
Susie Seidelman, Worship Associate

In 1963, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used his moral imagination to tell the world about his dream when children would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. Moral imagination combines ethics with possibility. What alternatives can we imagine to injustice? How can we use our imagination to create a better way of being together? Join us for this Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday worship service in which we explore using empathy and moral imagination to build a better world together.

JANUARY 24
“Imagination and Creativity”
The Rev. Dena McPhetres
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,
Minister of Religious Education
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director
Paul Kosidowski, Worship Associate

Imagination starts with a question. What if? What about? Why not? What can I do with this thing? Curiosi-

ty, which children possess in abundance, is a lens that helps us see anew. We didn't get out of the Stone Age because we ran out of rocks. Imagination is an invitation to play with things in a different way.

JANUARY 31
“Imagination Is a Gift”
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,
Minister of Religious Education
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director
Dale Skaggs, Worship Associate

Imagination is a creative act. As such, it exists within some paradoxes. Imagination takes time, energy, and a room of one's own, as Virginia Woolf so famously argued. It also exists outside of commodification, in the mind and spirit of the imaginer. How is imagination both free, and costly? Join us for this worship service that explores the relationship between our creative imagination and the energy we have to nourish it.

Splinters from the Board
by Jane Peterson
Board of Trustees

Members of the Board of Trustees welcome your thoughts and concerns at any time. Our contact information is on the website.

The Board met on November 24. Dave Becker and Julie Bock from the Strategic Planning Team explained the process for hiring an outside consultant. The consultant is on board and is drafting a report which will enable coordination among groups such as Stewardship.

Bruce Wiggins and Trent Muller presented a Socially Responsible Investment Policy. The policy is one way to live our values and achieve our ends through financial means, by investing in companies that do good, and through shareholder activism. The UU Common Endowment Fund will match up to \$10,000 of a congregation's funds for business development for historically economically disadvantaged people and communities. The Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) is the best fit for First Church. They help set up funds for loans to local businesses, customizing the type

(Continued on page 3)



Update on Congregational Survey

by Jane Cliff

Vice-President of the Board of Trustees

Thank you SO MUCH to everyone who completed our second congregational survey. After several deadline extensions, we received 163 responses, versus 159 in 2018.

The survey is important because it provides the Board of Trustees information to help represent the congregation well and allocate resources accordingly, and it also gives First Church staff information to help serve us all. Here are some preliminary highlights:

1. Over 26% of respondents said they are very or extremely familiar with First Church's Ends statements, or goals, that guide our congregational commitments and actions. Roughly 32% of respondents were not at all familiar with the Ends, while 41% were somewhat familiar with them.
2. Respondents indicated that our congregational actions better reflect our Ends today as compared to 2018, which shows that people feel we are making progress towards our goals.
3. In both 2018 and 2020, the respondents think we do the best at End 4 – "generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge." End 4 was viewed as the most important goal in 2020, while it ranked second in 2018.
4. In 2020, respondents think we need the most improvement in implementing End 8 – "Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us." End 8 was seen as the second most important goal in 2020, while it ranked first in 2018.
5. The difference between how well we do in living our Ends versus how important we think they are is largest for End 8, followed by End 3, "Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice."
6. In 2020, respondents thought almost all of the Ends are more important than they did in 2018.

It will take some time to do a more thorough analysis of the survey results, and we will share them with you in a future Chanticleer article. Again, thank you for participating; you have provided us great insight.

(Splinters from the Board, *continued from page 2*)

of assistance and financing for both returns and achievement of social goals. The Board approved the Policy and the participation with WWBIC. The investment will come from unrestricted funds in the budget.

The Board unanimously approved a motion to accept the addendum to the existing policy.

Member Beth Monhollen applied for First Church's sponsorship as she pursues ministerial studies. Her application was warmly approved.

In its monitoring role, the Board approved Rev. Jennifer's compliance with Limitation 4.1: Relationship with Congregants.

Mark Bender reported on the recently completed congregational survey. Analysis of the results will be delayed because the survey deadline was extended. There were 163 responses. A subgroup formed to make recommendations for monitoring during the current church year.

Rev. Jennifer reported that financial contributions remain strong. First Church hired a Digital Outreach Coordinator. The Membership Team plans a holiday party/singalong after Christmas Eve service. A new Advent small group ministry, *Lectio Divina*, is forming.

Pastoral Care will have new lay leadership. Attendance at Sunday services averages 167 computers online at 10:00 a.m. UU the Vote and Defend Democracy Groups were active and received press coverage for the recent election.

The next meeting is December 15 at 6:00 p.m.



First Church Seminarians Omega Burckhardt and Monica Kling-Garcia Granted Ministerial Fellowship

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom,
Rev. Dena McPhetres, and
Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

In December, two of our member-seminarians, Omega Burckhardt and Monica Kling-Garcia, went before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and were approved for preliminary fellowship! This approval is the culmination of years of work, study, and training to become ministers, and it means they are now welcome to serve as Unitarian Universalist ministers. We are very proud of them, and excited to see where their ministerial journeys will go! Here are a few words from each of them to you:

Omega Burckhardt: The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee was my spiritual home for years before entering seminary and leaning into my path to ministry. Passing the Ministerial Fellowship Committee interview is the final step in a long, arduous seminary process that requires years of self-reflection and learning, and I would not have been able to succeed without the support and love of so many at First Church. From the Harvest the Power series to Chalice Circles to the Social Justice Committee and the Board of Trustees...I have learned and forged relationships that will guide me for a lifetime. As I now begin the process of finding the right fit for my own ministry, I am proud to say that I am from Milwaukee, and the congregation and ministers of First Church have been my inspiration.

Monica Kling-Garcia: The experience of going before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee was as much about reflecting on where I have been as where I hope to go in my ministry. So much of the interview experience itself was about how I have grown - the ways that my studies at Meadville and the experiences I have had these past years have made me into a minister. I am filled with gratitude for the journey and the ways First Church encouraged me on this path!

Monica and Omega, we are overjoyed for both of you, and send you forth into ministry with our First Church blessings! Congratulations on this milestone in ministry, it is well-deserved.

In faith,
Rev. Jennifer, Rev. Dena, and Rev. Kimberlee

Pastoral Care Leadership Transitions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres

I am happy to announce that as of December 1, 2020, Jeri Percy is serving as our Pastoral Care Associate Coordinator. If you are a First Church member and would like the care of a trained listener to accompany you through difficult life situations, please contact Jeri at fuspastoral-care@gmail.com or 414-416-6036. Jeri will match you with one of our Pastoral Care Associates. Please join me in thanking Jane Peterson who served in this role for over four years!

I am also delighted to announce that Dale Skaggs and Sarah Richards will serve as co-trainers for our new team of Pastoral Care Associates (PCA) next fall. There is much preparation for the training that happens in the spring and summer, so they will be working with me behind the scenes. We will be accepting applications for new PCAs in spring 2021. A huge thank you to Laurie Petersen who served as Lead PCA Trainer for over six years and as a PCA for over eight years! Our ministry is stronger because of you.

Closed Captioning Available For Zoom Meetings!

by Rev. Dena McPhetres and BJ Ermenc

We are pleased to announce that closed captioning is available for First Church Zoom meetings and events! This is part of our effort to serve members and guests who may find it difficult to understand communication via Zoom, especially those with hearing loss. We currently have only two accounts that offer closed captioning, so if you know the participants for your event or meeting would appreciate this option, please get your closed captioning request in early when you reserve your First Church Zoom room with the online form.

Captions are helpful even for people who use hearing assist devices, since those devices do not usually restore normal hearing. This is especially true when many people participate in a Zoom event and the quality of computer equipment varies from one person to another. It is important to remember that we hear with our eyes and our brain as well as our ears. All of us can help increase accessibility through the following suggestions.

1. Ask participants to turn on their video when speaking and be sure their camera image includes their full face (especially their mouth).

(Continued on page 5)



2. Select “speaker view” while you listen. Speaker view displays a larger image of the person who is speaking so you can watch their lips and facial expressions.
3. Speak close to your microphone. Speak clearly and more slowly than usual. This will help our Artificial Intelligence automatic captioning service translate your words into text more accurately.
4. Avoid talking on top of one another. A slight pause between speakers helps a listener’s brain adjust to different voices.
5. Allow participants to ask for clarification as needed.
6. Ask people to mute themselves when they are not speaking to reduce background noise. This also ensures that images of people who are not speaking do not replace the one who is speaking on “speaker view.”
7. Whenever captions are available, include this information as part of the event announcement and publicity. People make decisions to attend based on whether or not they’ll be able to understand speech.
8. Event leaders can provide a cheat sheet to participants on how to activate and control captions that can be shared prior to, and at the beginning of, the session. Settings are especially important to self-control the size of the text. Please request the cheat sheet from our First Church hearing assist volunteer BJ Ermenc at bjeHLAAMke@gmail.com prior to the event.

Thank You From the Guest House!

by Betty Schroeder, Molly Zillig, and Jean Schroeder

First Church provided dinner to the Guest House on December 19. Despite not being able to serve the meal ourselves, due to Covid protocols, we were able to provide meatloaf, cheesy potatoes, veggies, beverages, and dessert to 70 residents.

The meal was very well received and folks left with full tummys. Thank you to all who provided food and beverage including Janet & Frank, Lisa, Claudia, Beth, Becky, Thea, Kim, Tracy, Mike, Virginia, Nancy, Juanita, JoAnn, Paula, Lillianna, Lisa, and Kristin ... hope we didn't miss anyone. You folks ROCK!

Improve Your Audio & Video For Online Meetings

by Shari Wright
Office Manager

There are inexpensive ways you can improve your Zoom meeting experience. Older computers and poor Internet speed can cause video and audio problems that you can often improve easily.

First, check your Internet speed because this is the most important improvement you can make. To perform a simple Internet speed test, I recommend using this app <https://speedtest.net>. Download speeds over 10 Mbps are the minimum for surfing and watching videos online. Upload speeds over 3 Mbps are the minimum for Zoom group meetings. Test your speed during times you usually go online because other people using the Internet during that time of day will affect your results.

If your Internet speed is slow,

- move closer to your Wi-Fi device, or
- connect your computer with an ethernet cable to the network.
- You may need to contact your Internet Service Provider who can help you check your speed.

Next, here are some options to improve your audio and video:

1. To improve audio, purchase headphones with a mic. This will help your ability to hear and the mic will be closer to your mouth so your voice will be clearer to others.
2. To improve how you appear on the screen, be sure that you have HD selected in Zoom settings. If you still have poor camera quality, purchase an inexpensive external webcam from any computer supply store. Position your camera on top your computer so the camera faces you at eye level or slightly above.
3. Position a light source in front of your face so your face can be seen. Put a lamp behind your computer or face a window. Light behind you will make you look like a dark silhouette.
4. Lastly, if you still have problems or have a very old computer, you may need to upgrade your computer software or purchase a new computer or tablet to be successful with online meetings.



Big History

The Story of the Big Bang to Us!

by Ken Solis, Class Presenter

Every culture, religion, and child eventually wonders, “how did it all begin?” Traditions and authorities through the ages have offered a variety of origin stories, which are typically wondrous and insightful. To paraphrase one example, “At first there was nothingness, not even light, space or time.”

“Big History” is the multi-disciplinary study that examines and works to understand how the universe began and subsequently unfolded over the past 13.8 billion years. Big History study began in the early 1980’s with David Christian, an Australian professor, through his college courses and subsequent international organization. The organization promotes the telling and understanding of “how it all began,” based on empirical evidence from cosmology, geology, paleontology, anthropology, and yes, history.

Ken Solis, First Church member and a lecturer and writer for the International Big History Association, will offer an online class this winter comprised of four sessions with accompanying illustrative slides. Besides retelling a story of how the universe eventually led to “us,” he will also give a Big History perspective on contemporary issues that affect us today like racism and pandemics. History sometimes has as much or more to teach us as science.

The sessions will be interactive and allow participants to examine how their own questions and experiences fit in the context of a 13.8 billion years story and a vast wondrous universe – a universe that eventually made possible people who could ask questions like, “why, how, and when did it all begin?” Stay tuned for details on the class schedule and how to register!

Relax and Energize

With a T'ai Chi Class

by Lillian Schley

RE Administrative Assistant

Do you need a breath of energy? Try T'ai Chi as a spiritual practice, to improve balance, coordination, and memory and calm the mind, body, and spirit. Deb Solis will offer two, six-week classes on Zoom this winter. Tuesday night class is designed for intermediate students (including those who have been in class with Deb this fall) or beginners who want to jump right into the practice. Thursday morning class is especially for beginners, offering a slower teaching pace, although all levels are welcome.

Tuesday night - 6:30-7:30 p.m. January 5-February 9.

Register here: <http://bit.ly/UUTaiChiTuesday>

Thursday morning - 9:00-10:00 a.m. January 21-February 25.

Register here: <http://bit.ly/UUTaiChiThursday>

Each class is \$30 for First Church members and \$45 for non-members. The Zoom link will be sent out to participants prior to the first class.

Get Ready for Mystery Friends

by Lillian Schley

RE Administrative Assistant

There’s nothing like getting a real letter in the mail! With all the changes in RE this year, we are thrilled to offer the annual Mystery Friends program again, starting mid-February. During Mystery Friends, children and youth aged five years-old and up are matched up with adults in the church community as pen pals. Once you sign up, RE staff will pair you with a friend, and you will exchange short letters and notes each week for around a month. We will offer letter templates with questions and prompts to help you get started. At the end of the month, we will celebrate with a creative, virtual version of our usual party, allowing friends to meet “face to face.”

Any adult members and friends of First Church may participate – you don’t need to have a child in RE. Adults will go through a simple and secure background check to ensure Mystery Friends is fun and safe for everyone! Information about dates and how to sign up will be coming in January. If you are missing the multi-generational community at church this year, you will love being a mystery friend!



The Seed of Imagination

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education

Awhile back, my family sat in the back yard with a young adult friend as our the six-year-old ran, leapt, and jumped. The child was engrossed in a narrative that only he knew the storyline to, and my young adult friend watched him and sighed longingly.

Are you feeling nostalgic for your childhood, I asked? No, he said, but I am afraid I am forgetting how to play, how to imagine into each moment. He had been through terrible struggle and suffering that year. I could sense his fear that he had lost something that connected him to a source of joy and hope. We spoke then of how imagination is a necessary ingredient in hope, how seeing your way forward helps in creating a future.

Our imagination is more than just fantasy or meta-whimsy, imagining has a physiological effect on our how minds function. The practice of being imaginative creates new neural pathways that allow us to continue to learn new skills and ways of being. Children are now taught how to have a “growth mindset” when encountering challenges and mistakes. This framing helps children grow and establish neural pathways or “ways of thinking” that help them navigate challenges by transforming them into opportunities for growth.

Though our brains stop growing as we get older, our brains keep changing and have the ability to build new neural pathways. The practice of imagination, or visualization or meditation increases our ability to retain neuroplasticity in our minds. The ability to imagine, the power to form mental images that are not present, shifting how reality is experienced is a way we enrich, expand, and find meaning in our lives. The imagination is the seed of possibility.

We emerge from this past year, full of struggle and sorrow, awkwardly greeting a new year with relief and tentative hope. Maybe, like my friend, concerned we have forgotten how to play, find a way to imagine our way forward, knowing that it is always how we must begin again.

Blessings to You All in 2021!
Rev. Kimberlee

January RE Book Club With Author Jon Etter

by Lillian Schley
RE Administrative Assistant

Join us this January for our winter book club, open to children in grades 3-8. We will read *A Dreadful Fairy Book* by Jon Etter, winner of the 2019 Best Middle Reader Book and First Horizon Award for Debut Books, Eric Hoffer Book Awards

As well as being an author and teacher, Jon and his family are members of First Church. You can learn more about “A Dreadful Fairy Book” (and its two sequels) at <https://jonetter.com>. We can’t wait to learn more about Jon’s writing process and hear the stories behind his books!

The group will meet on Zoom for three Sundays from 1:00-2:00 p.m. On January 3 and 17, we’ll discuss the book, and then have a chance to meet the author on January 31! Visit <https://bit.ly/UJREFairybook> to sign up and for information about purchasing the book. If buying the book poses financial difficulty, we are happy to mail a copy to your family.

Send Valentine's Day Love to the Church Community!

by Lillian Schley
RE Administrative Assistant

This year, we continue the tradition of sending homemade valentines to friends in the church community who could use a smile. Children and adults of all ages are invited to make valentines at home. Please mail your cards to the church by the end of January so they can be sent out to recipients.

Please use the following guidelines for any valentines you make:

- Cards should be flat and able to easily fit into a 6X9” envelope.
- Please do not include recipient names.
- Write a message such as, “thinking of you,” “we love you” or “happy Valentines day!” Or feel free to come up with your own messages!
- Make your own cards from scratch, or print and use one of the templates included here: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ML-at-zDtxTg8YQfcHmoFG2QUhEYuElp>

With your help, we can make an abundance of valentines this year! We know that creating these personal cards will lift your spirits, and help lift someone else’s as well.



Addressing Climate Action & Equity: Earth Justice Ministry Urges All To Action!

by Bruce Wiggins
Earth Justice Ministry Chair

Action in our city, in Wisconsin, and our nation is happening! You can participate. You can make a difference. Let's move from despair to hope through action!

In Milwaukee, our Earth Justice Ministry is a supporting member of MECA, the Milwaukee Equity and Climate Alliance. MECA has pushed our Common Council (City of Milwaukee) and Milwaukee County Board to adopt a resolution to cut greenhouse gas emissions 45% by 2030 and simultaneously address racial and economic inequities. A task force will make specific recommendations. The City County Task Force on Climate and Economic Equity is forming nine work groups, and you can sign up to be on one (or more) on the City's website: <https://city.milwaukee.gov/climate/Climate-Plan>. Here you can also read the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory report which shows where Milwaukee's GHG emissions are coming from and therefore where to take action to cut them. You can also read the Task Force's Preliminary Report published last March.

In our state, the task force appointed by Governor Evers to address climate change and equity recommends 55 actions in nine sectors and three policy pathways (executive action, state budget and legislative action.) You can read the report here: https://climatechange.wi.gov/Documents/Final%20Report/USCA-WisconsinTaskForceonClimateChange_20201207-LowRes.pdf. The very first recommendation is to create an Office of Environmental Justice. The actions include a strong environmental justice focus throughout.

The national action has started only in the form that many of President-elect Biden's picks for climate-related posts give us great hope. Congress will need to be pushed to act.

Action, particularly at the state and local level, will face tough budgetary circumstances because of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. So your involvement, to voice your opinions to elected officials to address climate action with equity, can make a difference.

Florida's Data Law As a Model for Wisconsin

by Paul Geenen
Circles of Support Chair

On January 7, at 10:00 a.m., the Badger Institute will host a Zoom meeting titled "Florida's Bi-Partisan Corrections Data Law: a Model for Wisconsin." Florida House Speaker Chris Sprowls and Right on Crime-Florida Director Chelsea Murphy will be the speakers. First Church's Circles of Support Action Group invites you to participate.

On December 16, three members of First Church Circles of Support met with The Badger Institute to discuss prison reform here in Wisconsin. We learned that our prisons are at capacity, the buildings are aging and need costly repairs, and present statutes do not allow the reduction of our prison population in any meaningful way.

Julie Grace, researcher at The Badger Institute told us "Any discussion on prison reform always come back to the conclusion that there is not enough data out there." No prison reform has been enacted in our state for the last ten years and Wisconsin is an outlier in areas such as incarceration rates, length of supervision after release, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

Criminal justice reform is a bi-partisan issue; saving tax dollars while improving the quality of life has a universal appeal. Here is the link for registering for the January 7 presentation on Florida's correction data law: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/floridas-bipartisan-corrections-data-law-a-model-for-wisconsin-tickets-131907568087>.

Please let me know if you are interested in attending this and future meetings on criminal justice reform so I can keep you apprised of developments.



Beloved Conversations Spring Semester Registration Begins Feb 2021

by The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
and the Anti-Racism Team

Have you been hearing about the Beloved Conversations program and want to join? Registration for the Spring semester begins in February of 2021. Beloved Conversations is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. Beloved Conversations helps heal the impact of racism on our lives, so we can get free together.

The Spring program content will be different than the Fall 2020 semester but is still entry-level: you can begin with Spring 2021, or you can register again to continue your learning from Fall of 2020.

Sign up to receive email updates directly from the national Beloved Conversations folks about the Spring 2021 semester here: <https://mailchi.mp/meadville.edu/bcvirtualinfo>; and learn more about the program here: <https://bcvirtual.meadville.edu/p/home>.

First Church will be organizing our members into small groups to learn together, so please contact us before registering for the program if you want to participate with other First Church members by emailing belovedconversationsfusm@gmail.com. We still have a handful of scholarships available, so if you would like to participate in the program at no cost to you, contact us about registering through First Church for free. Most of our Spring 2021 participants will have to pay for the course, however. More details about how to register in a First Church small group, how to request a scholarship, and how to register will come in the next few weeks!

Two Minutes Smarter On Reparations

by Mary Devitt
Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs Coordinator

Reparations FAQs, from the BLM2WUU Website.

Q. It was so long ago; why do we need to keep bringing up slavery?

"Many Black Americans are only three generations removed from slavery. ... But the failure to pay a debt in a timely fashion does not extinguish the obligation, particularly since the consequences of past injustices continue to be visited upon the descendants of the direct victims. A national act of procrastination does not eliminate the debt." (William Darity and Kirsten Mullen, *From Here to Equality*, p. 242)

Q. How can I help?

Eventually, reparations will be paid by the U.S. government. But to get us to that point, you can help generate the political support that will be needed to make it happen.

There are lots of options for positive action. Start by reading about the issue and then talk with people about why you believe reparations are key to this country's future.

Let your representatives in U.S. Congress know that you support House Resolution (HR) 40, the commission to study reparation proposals for African Americans Act. Find out where your representative stands on HR40 and urge them to sign on as a cosponsor. Reparations won't happen on the national level without broad public support. In the meantime, create your own personal reparations plan.

Check out the rest of our FAQs to learn more at <https://tiny.cc/blm2wuu/reparations-faqs>.



Calling All Leaders!

by Tracy Kreuser
Nominating Committee Co-Chair

First Church Nominating Committee (NomCom as we are affectionately called) is charged with recruiting and recommending nominees for lay leadership positions at First Church. This generally means three Board of Trustees and two Nominating Committee positions each year. Our team has been busy behind the scenes since September having AMAZING one-on-one conversations with members of our beloved community. We have so enjoyed getting to know each of you! Thank you to everyone who has visited with us and shared a bit of your story.

As we work to finalize our nominations by early February, we would like to make sure we have not overlooked anyone interested in sharing their leadership talents with First Church. Are you an active and engaged member of First Church? Have you taken on leadership roles within your profession or community? Does the opportunity to influence the direction of our congregation excite you? Does strategic planning light your fire? Do you enjoy meeting new people? Are you simply curious about what these roles entail? If so, let's talk!

Michelle Boehm (michelle.boehm@sbcglobal.net), NomCom Co-Chair and Tracy Kreuser (trkreuser@gmail.com), NomCom Co-Chair

"Preserving connection to Milwaukee." Unitarian Universalists are honoring the commitment to Milwaukee by highlighting the work of local activists to build beloved community by dismantling white supremacist culture.

Suggest exclusive Milwaukee programming. The UUA is giving Milwaukee 90 minutes for us to do what we want. You can fill out a survey to suggest ideas for this Milwaukee programming. The deadline for responses is Jan. 10. Fill out the survey here: <https://forms.gle/CfhqYMTdJJzfHK666>. If you have questions, contact Elizabeth Lentini (elizabethlentini@gmail.com).

Plan to Attend. Be a delegate for First Church. Volunteer. First Church will have 14 delegate positions this year, and if you are a delegate, the church will pay ALL of your registration (\$200.) Application forms will be available in the near future. We want to encourage youth and young adults, in particular, to participate. Interesting volunteer opportunities are also available. Volunteers will work about 20 hours, which can also pay for your registration. See here: <https://www.uua.org/ga/registration/financialaid/volunteer>

You don't have to be a delegate to attend – just register. All registered participants will have unfettered access to GA's on-line resources (worship services, workshops, lectures, and more!), which will remain accessible for a period after GA ends.

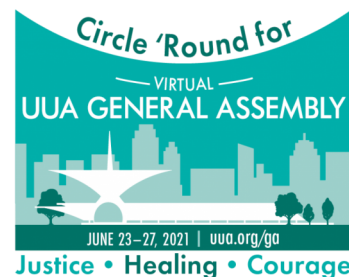
General Assembly 2021 Your Invitation to Participate

by Bruce Wiggins
Denominational Affairs Coordinator

General Assembly (GA), our national UU conference, was to be live in Milwaukee June 23–27, 2021. Now it will be all-virtual – though with Milwaukee flavor. The logo features the silhouetted Milwaukee skyline, and some programming will feature Milwaukeeans. The theme is "Circle 'round for *Justice *Healing *Courage." See info on GA here: <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

You are invited to join the festivities. There are multiple ways you can participate. Here are some:

Propose a Workshop or Presentation. Formal proposals for workshops and presentations are due to the UUA Jan. 15 – see here: <https://www.uua.org/ga/program/contribute/proposing>. One of the focus areas for workshops is



SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

11:00 AM ON ZOOM & YOUTUBE

JANUARY 3

“Militarism and Climate Change”

Presenter: Julie Byrnes Enslow,

Peace Action Wisconsin Founder & 350.org Milwaukee Facilitator

January Share the Plate Recipient



We live in perhaps the most challenging time in human history. We face existential threats to our future life on this planet: nuclear war and climate change. The links between militarism and global warming with the resulting climate change are clear. The US military is the greatest contributor of greenhouse gas of any single entity. Wars are fought for control of oil and oil is needed to fight those wars. The social upheavals caused by droughts, floods, hurricanes, rising oceans, heat waves, etc. often result in a military response. How do we live lives of joy and hope in these times? How do we address these critical issues and keep our balance, our sense of oneness with all things?

Forum Host: Dan O'Keefe

<https://www.peaceactionwi.org/>

<https://350.org/>

JANUARY 10

Lisa & Conor Williams will share this Sunday Forum.

“Democracy Becomes Action: PerSISTERS Flex their Citizen Muscles”

Presenter: Lisa Williams, Founder

AND

“Re-Entry in our Community”

Presenter: Conor Williams, Public Policy Institute, Community Advocates



Lisa Williams joined the huge Women's March the day after Donald Trump's inauguration. Knowing that more work was needed, she emailed a bunch of friends and organized a group to flex their citizen muscles and created the PerSisters. They continue to meet weekly writing letters to local, state and national leaders, administrators, crime victims and others about issues near and dear to their hearts. They are flexing their citizen muscles.

Conor Williams discusses How do we support individuals returning to the community from periods of incarceration or involvement in the criminal justice system? How does a community create restorative practices? Created by the Milwaukee Community Justice Council in 2016, this community-member facilitated, re-entry program reduces recidivism by 50% within five years. Comprised of multi-sector entities and reentry advocates working together, Conor works to serve populations reentering the community from periods of incarceration (both jail and prison).

Forum Host: Pat MacFarland

<https://ppi.communityadvocates.net/>

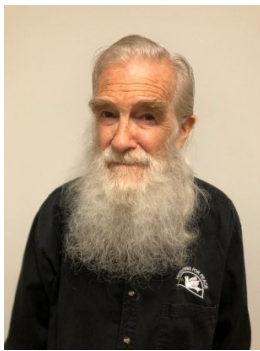


SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

11:00 AM ON ZOOM & YOUTUBE



Nils Melzer
UN photo



Ray McGovern
Rita Kennedy photo



JANUARY 17

“The Trial of Julian Assange and Its Implications for Press Freedom”

Presenters:

Nils Melzer is the [United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture](#), Professor of International Law at the University of Glasgow, and holds the Human Rights Chair at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

Ray McGovern is a former, longtime CIA Russia analyst, presidential daily briefer, and co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS) Please Note: Ray warned us that he appears rather disheveled; he has [let his hair grow in solidarity](#) with Julian Assange.

If you are not aware that Mr. Assange’s extradition trial took place at the Old Bailey this fall, you’re not alone. The more than 30 witnesses for the defense included Daniel Ellsberg and Noam Chomsky; the prosecutors declared standard journalistic practices to be crimes; and the judge cut the feed to all monitoring NGOs on the first day. Mr. Melzer and Mr. McGovern will explain why we are so unaware, what we are unaware of, and the implications of this historic trial for press freedom and justice.

Forum Host: Ann Batiza

JANUARY 24

“Science, Law, and Criminal Legal System Reform”

Presenter: Kate Judson, Executive Director,
Center for Integrity in Forensic Sciences

Forensic science is a powerful tool to convict the guilty and exonerate the innocent. But criminal legal systems have been slow to adopt just and equitable approaches to it. Most people are aware that innocent people can be convicted when bad science is involved and that good science can sometimes make wrong outcomes right. But forensic science and its uses deserve deeper study and understanding because forensic science seeps into our criminal legal system in many hidden ways. CIFS is at the forefront of this effort.

Forum Host: Molly Shiffler

<https://cifsjustice.org/>

JANUARY 31

“Eco-fascism: Lessons from the German Experience”

Peter Staudenmaier, Author

Authors Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier suggest that the synthesis of Fascism and environmentalism began with Nazism. In their book *Eco-fascism: Lessons from the German Experience*, they note the Nazi Party’s interest in ecology, and suggest their interest was “linked with traditional agrarian romanticism and hostility to ur-

(Sunday Forum continued on page 13)



ban civilization.” Richard Walther Darre, a leading Nazi ideologist who invented the term “Blood and Soil,” developed a concept of the nation having a mystic connection with their homeland, and as such, the nation was duty bound to take care of the land. Because of this, modern eco-fascists cite the Nazi Party as an origin point of eco-fascism.
Forum Host: Mark Mueller

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/janet-biehl-and-peter-staudenmaier-ecofascism-lessons-from-the-german-experience>

January Share the Plate

by Dawn Blackmore
Share the Plate Team

Peace Action of Wisconsin is our January Share the Plate recipient. Their mission statement reads: “Peace Action-Wisconsin is a peace and justice organization which works to abolish the threats of war and nuclear weapons. We are committed to non-violence as a way of life for a world where human needs are met and the environment is preserved.”

Active since 1977 as a peace and justice organization in Milwaukee, Peace Action Wisconsin holds a number of events that serve to unite people in educating, lobbying and bearing public witness to the issue of demilitarization. For example, every Saturday from noon-1:00 p.m. there is a Stand for Peace event with flags and peace signs on different corners of the Milwaukee area, socially distanced and wearing masks. Check their website for more information regarding the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 20th Annual Justice Gathering, We Banned the Bomb! march and other events. To make a donation directly to Peace Action of Wisconsin and learn more about their planned events, please visit their website at https://www.peaceactionwi.org/calendar_basic.

Book Club News

by Chris Linder

On January 10 the book club will discuss *The Splendid and the Vile* by Erik Larson. It is a compelling portrait of Winston Churchill during WWII as he led Britain to victory. It portrays a time of true leadership, courage and perseverance.

On February 14 we will discuss *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. It is a fictional portrayal of a reform school in Florida where boys were abused and murdered. However, it is based on a recently discovered real place. The book won a Pulitzer prize in 2020.

All meeting are at 1:00 on Zoom. Please contact Chris Linder to join the discussion.

HOW TO REACH US

414.273.5257

first.church.office@uumilwaukee.org
www.uumilwaukee.org
1342 N. Astor St., Milwaukee, WI 53202

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

SENIOR MINISTER

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom
jennifer.nordstrom@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 201

ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Rev. Dena McPhetres
dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 202

MINISTER EMERITUS

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

Staff

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION Jean Johnson
jean.johnson@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 203

MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Rev. Kimberlee Carlson
kimberlee.carlson@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 204

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR Lynne Jacoby
lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 205

OFFICE MANAGER Shari Wright
shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 207

DIGITAL OUTREACH COORDINATOR Molly Sommerhalder
molly.sommerhalder@uumilwaukee.org

R.E. ADMIN. ASSISTANT Lillian Schley
re.admin@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 210

YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR Deb Solis
deb.solis@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 209

FACILITIES MANAGER Tom Schroeder
tom.schroeder@uumilwaukee.org, ext. 206

FACILITIES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANT Jim Spice

MAINTENANCE WORKER Art Sims

LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR Alissa Rhode
alissarhode@me.com

CHORAL DIRECTOR Tristan Strelitzer
tstrelitzer@gmail.com

Board of Trustees Officers:

President: Mark Bender
Vice President: Jane Cliff
Secretary: Mike Hogan
Treasurer: Tom Briscoe

Members:

Dianna Dentino, Rollie Hanson, Mark Miller,
Benedict LeFort, Jane Peterson, Melinda Vernon

