



THE

# CHANTICLEER

First Unitarian Society  
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.

February 2021

## Words on the Wind

by The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
Senior Minister

Beloved Community has never been a more important concept. We are entering the height of the coronavirus pandemic, even as vaccines are being distributed. We are wrestling with the evils of white supremacy, even as we have just rid ourselves of its demagogue. We are in the midst of the coldest days of winter, even as we anticipate spring just around the corner. This is a time of paradoxes and tensions, of danger and hope. It is a time to reflect on who we are, and dive deeply into who we wish to become.

Following the work of theologian and civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, our work to build the Beloved Community must undo the evils of racism. In Dr. King's philosophy, racism was fundamentally connected to the evils of poverty and militarism as well. At his time, observing the pain of deep poverty, the Vietnam war, and segregation, Dr. King said the Beloved Community would be a place without these three evils. How might we make connections between racism, poverty, and the threat or use of force today?

Our congregation often talks about itself as a beloved community, meaning a community that is beloved to me. What relationship does this understanding of beloved community have with Dr. King's theological concept of the Beloved Community? How can we use the theological concept to reflect and deepen our own understanding of who we are, and who we might become?

*(Continued on page 2)*

## MONTHLY THEME

What does it mean to be a people of

# BELOVED COMMUNITY?

## SUNDAY SERVICES

ONE SERVICE AT

10:00 A.M.

LIVE ON YOUTUBE

FEBRUARY 7

### "Beloved Community on the Horizon"

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,

Minister of Religious Education

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Paul Geenen, Worship Associate

Philosopher and theologian Josiah Royce created the term "Beloved Community" at the beginning of the 20th Century to refer to the ideal community of all people dedicated to loyalty, truth, and reality. In the mid-20th Century, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. popularized and specified the term to refer to mean a community not ravaged by the three evils of racism, poverty, and militarism. How does our understanding of the Beloved Community build on these theological foundations? When you imagine a community unharmed by racism, poverty, and militarism, what does it feel like? What is the bridge between here and that horizon?

FEBRUARY 14

### Pulpit Guest, TBA

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson,

Minister of Religious Education

Kevin Gibson, Worship Associate

February in Wisconsin is often a cold, dark time when the winter blues threaten mightily, and gathering with community is more important than ever. This February, when the coronavirus pandemic prevents us from gathering in person with one another, may we find each other virtually, online and in the written word, on the telephone, and in one another's hearts.

Sending love to you,  
Jennifer

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## **MORE SUNDAY SERVICES**

**10:00 A.M.**  
LIVE ON YOUTUBE

FEBRUARY 21

### **"Building the Beloved Community"**

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister  
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director  
Miles Schuller, Worship Associate  
Pledge Drive Kick-Off Sunday

In moving towards our vision of the "Beloved Community," what role does difference play? According to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's theology of the Beloved Community, we can build community across real differences by choosing to negotiate conflicts non-violently, with dignity, and even love. What would it mean to move our community towards the Beloved Community ideal of many different kinds of people held together by shared commitment to eradicating racism, oppression, poverty, and violence? Join us for this Pledge Drive Kick-off Sunday where we explore building Beloved Community.

FEBRUARY 28

### **"Beloving Community"**

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister  
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director  
Jeff Percy, Worship Associate

"Beloved Community" begs the question of "beloved to whom?". For the theologians who developed the term, part of the answer was "Beloved to God," building on the Universalist concept that all human beings are universally beloved of God. In 21st Century Unitarian Universalist communities, there are a variety of beliefs about God, and a shared commitment to love one another. What happens when we shift the responsibility of the Beloved Community from God, to ourselves? How do we work to become the Beloving Community?

## **Dena's Digressions**

by The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
Associate Minister

I recall with deep gratitude the first few times that a friend truly listened to me. Those experiences made me feel loved and beloved. Being truly listened to as I express feelings I don't know how to name and while I process perplexing life situations make me feel like I belong, like I matter in all my complexity and vulnerability. I am a firm believer that listening helps to create the beloved community.

Do you enjoy listening to someone tell you about their life? Can you be present to someone going through a hard time without giving advice or trying to fix them? Are you aware of cultural differences and open to connecting across difference? If so, you might be who we are looking for as we gather a new team of Pastoral Care Associates this Spring.

The ministry of pastoral care is one way that we accompany one another through difficult life situations and transitions. Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs) are members of our congregation who are trained listeners committed to maintaining strict confidentiality. The PCA team works closely with me, your Associate Minister, for support, consultation, spiritual development, and accountability.

If you are interested and curious about this important way to grow your soul and serve our congregation, please let me know or contact one of our current PCAs to learn more. We'll offer information sessions online this winter and accept applications this spring. Applicants will be interviewed via Zoom and those who are chosen will need to permit us to do a background check.

We require new PCAs to participate in a 20-hour training which will occur in Fall 2021. As the COVID-19 vaccines roll out, we don't know yet when it will be safe to gather in person. The training may be online or in-person or a combination. I look forward to hearing from you if serving as a PCA seems like your next calling. This opportunity only arises every three years.

Yours,  
Dena



## Updates from the Strategic Planning Team

by Benedict LeFort  
Strategic Planning Team Member

One foundational piece of any congregation's life is financial stability. First Church has a history of gathering the financial resources needed to have an impact on its members and the wider community. To ensure that we continue having the financial resources needed now and in the years to come, last year the Board authorized a Strategic Planning Team to think through the challenges and opportunities we face.

As part of the process, the Strategic Planning Team (STP) hired a congregational consultant who has prepared a report on our finances and as well as our potential for growth in mission and membership.

In January and early February, our consultant and members of the Strategic Planning Team have been leading Listen and Learn sessions with a large number of our members. In addition to three sessions that were held for any and all members in January, we have also reached out directly to the vast majority of First Church groups and committees.

In each group's 90-minute meeting, we have been hearing from the congregation as we respond to the information and recommendations in the reports. The idea has been to exchange information and gather feedback as we finalize a Strategic Plan for our congregation that will be presented for a vote by our congregation at the Annual Meeting in May.

We will be wrapping up the Listen & Learn sessions by mid-February, and greatly appreciate everyone's feedback and participation.

For more information on the work of the SPT, feel free to reach out to co-chairs Julie Bock (jabock.jb@gmail.com) and David Becker (David.Becker@med.ge.com).

## Board of Trustees Clarification

by Jane Peterson  
BOT Member

In the January "Splinters from the Board", please note that the Board approved the Socially Responsible Investment Policy as noted, but not the choice of WWBIC as a partner. The meeting minutes were correct in this regard.

## Splinters from the Board

by Melinda Vernon  
BOT Member

A meeting of the Board of Trustees (BOT) was held on December 15, 2020 using video conferencing. The meeting was held one week earlier than usual due to the upcoming holidays.

The BOT reviewed the preliminary results of the recent congregational survey. The gap has narrowed between the perceived importance of an End and the evaluation of the congregation's progress toward that End. The survey also revealed that many respondents are still not very familiar with Ends. A full report will be reviewed in January 2021.

A final report of the Project Management Team was distributed and placed on file as a reference for future planning. COVID has interfered with the full implementation of several of the Lu Krug-funded projects. A few have been placed on hold and will resume when the pandemic has passed. The Strategic Planning Team will be best positioned to consider any future development of these projects.

The board received preliminary reports on the church's financial status and the potential for church growth from John Wimberly, consultant to the Strategic Planning Team. Mr. Wimberly believes the church needs to significantly increase its financial reserves but also is confident it has great potential for growth, especially among young people. A planning team will lead focus groups of church leaders early in 2021 to consider alternatives. A strategic plan will then be developed and presented to the congregation at the May 2021 annual meeting.

Jennifer's monitoring reports on achieving End 5: "Promote Unitarian Universalism and our shared values in the world." and End 8: "Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us." were discussed. It was agreed that sufficient evidence of compliance was present.

In her Senior Minister's Report, Rev. Jennifer noted the hire of our first-ever Digital Outreach Coordinator, Molly Sommerhalder. She informed the Board of the development of a detailed 2020-2021 Pledge Campaign Plan. Rev. Jennifer also reported our virtual worship service attendance numbers are strong, averaging 510 views per Sunday.

Minutes of Board meetings are posted on the First Church website. Members of the Board of Trustees welcome your thoughts and concerns at any time. Their contact information is available on the church website.



“As a person of color, the Beloved Conversations sessions for UUs has allowed me to expand my growth culturally, historically, and religiously. The growth has been personal, intimate, and within the UU group. The resources and support that are necessary are extensive and readily available. It is an individual experience with each person picking the size and rate of growth.” ~ **Don Jackson**

“Living as a white person in a white-centered society has insulated me from talking about race, racism, and racial injustice. Now, more than ever, I want to overcome my discomfort in conversations about race and to understand my role as a white person in the perpetuation of racism; and how I can begin to undo it.

The Beloved Conversation curriculum provides rich resources - from poetry to music to podcasts and readings - and many opportunities for meaningful conversations. I'm reflecting and confronting my own ignorance about race on a deeper level. I've always fancied myself enlightened but this course has overhauled my entire belief systems. Rather than retreating in shame and silence, I hope to be a better anti-racist ally and to challenge racist structures.” ~ **Rachelle Alioto**

“Beloved Conversations has truly helped to open my eyes to several aspects of systemic racism, and I've become more aware of my own blind spots. It has broadened my awareness of the White privilege that surrounds us all that we're often unaware of and has educated me on the particular ways this appears in our lives and in my own thinking.” ~ **Mark Miller**

“After participating in Beloved Conversations in person, I wasn't sure how it would be online, but I have really enjoyed it. I am happy to have the opportunity to go deeper in anti-racism work with fellow church members who are similarly committed to racial justice. The online format gives us flexibility to approach the resources in whatever way works for each of us individually but still come together as a group for productive, interesting conversations.” ~ **Laurie Baker**



## Uproot Racism in Beloved Conversations

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
and the Anti-Racism Team

Racism and white supremacy have continued to plague our country throughout the fall, culminating in the awful display we saw at the US Capitol on January 6. Many of you have reached out wanting to learn and do more. We want to offer you an opportunity to participate in Beloved Conversations, 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.

This is a revised program adapted for online participation. The curriculum for the spring session differs from the fall, and you can participate regardless of whether you have taken the fall course. It is staged in three parts: Within, Among, and Beyond.

This spring, “Within” will focus on the internal self-reflection work of Anti-Racism in small groups of 4 or 5 members.

“Within” work will include:

- individual lessons with reflection prompts;
- bi-weekly small group conversations in a Learning Pod;
- and larger, monthly, facilitated Meaning-Making Sessions on Zoom.

You can watch this short video to learn more about the

“Within” curriculum: <https://vimeo.com/452406802>

You can also read more about Beloved Conversations here: <https://bcvirtual.meadville.edu/>

If you would like to participate in Beloved Conversations with other First Church members online this spring, there are two stages to sign up — the deadline for both is Friday, Feb 26.

**(Uproot Racism in Beloved Conversation, continued on page 5)**



(Continued from page 4)

Please email [BelovedConversationsFUSM@gmail.com](mailto:BelovedConversationsFUSM@gmail.com) by Friday, February 26, indicating your desire to participate in a First Church pod, and include four morning, afternoon, or evenings that generally work for you, (e.g.: "Saturday afternoon, Tuesday evening, Thursday evening, and Friday morning"). We will put you in small groups that have general availability overlap, and let your group find a day and time that works for everyone. Please send any questions to [BelovedConversationsFUSM@gmail.com](mailto:BelovedConversationsFUSM@gmail.com).

Between February 1 and February 26, please register with the national Beloved Conversations program on their website at <https://bcvirtual.meadville.edu/>. They will ask you to fill out a registration form (the form will not be live until February 1, and your registration must be received by February 26).

On that form, check the box that says "I've already been podded with my congregation"—this will ensure you get into a small group with other First Church members.

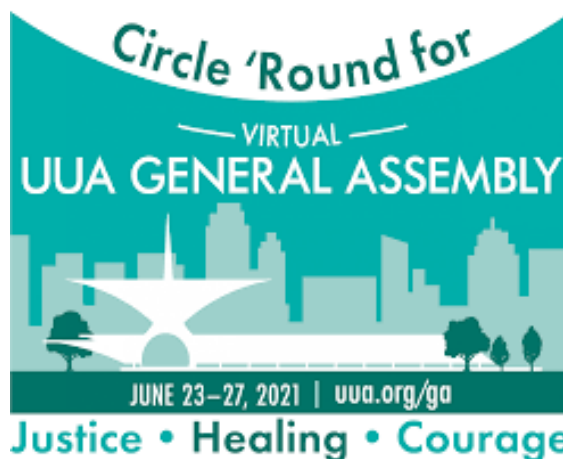
The cost of participating in this program is \$250/person. If you would like a full or partial scholarship, indicate so on the form, and it is highly likely you will receive one. If you would like to pay more than \$250 to contribute to scholarships for other people, please indicate that on the form, and they will give you an opportunity to contribute.

We look forward to continuing to travel with you on our journey to dismantle racism and white supremacy.

## **Funds Available for Members and Friends in Crisis**

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

There are funds available for First Church members and active friends who are in short-term need. If you, or one of your First Church friends, is having a sudden financial need, contact one of the Ministers to talk about this crisis support fund. These funds are available as a result of the generosity of First Church members who have been donating to a small Ministers' Discretionary Fund designed to help our members and active friends financially in emergency situations like sudden job loss, hospitalization, or pandemic-related urgent financial need.



## **Financial Assistance Available for You to Attend UUA General Assembly MKE**

by Bruce Wiggins  
Denominational Affairs Coordinator

Funds are available for you to attend General Assembly (GA), our always-interesting and inspiring national UU conference. GA 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 attend this conference. There are great speakers and workshops, and wonderful worship services. 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 time after GA ends.

First Church has funds to help with your registration fee. We especially want to send young people (youth and young adults) and people who have not attended GA before.

First Church will have 14 delegate positions this year, and if you are a delegate, the church will pay ALL of your registration (\$200.) Delegates vote at business meetings and put our fifth principle (right of conscience and use of the democratic process) into practice in running our Association of Congregations.

Application forms and additional information for financial assistance will be available in the near future. Watch for information in the weekly e-announcements. In the meantime, you can explore the GA website (URL above) for further information.



# Sustaining our Community, Our Values, Our Souls

by Lynne Jacoby  
Membership Development Coordinator

“Democratic citizenship may be an art we are forgetting how to practice...” notes author Marilynne Robinson in a Guardian opinion piece following the January 6 insurrection attempt. She wonders if the self-restraints on resentment and self-interest, which enable citizens to accept leaders we haven’t chosen, are disappearing. “Perhaps” she mused “these (restraints) were instilled with the old cultivation of the soul...”

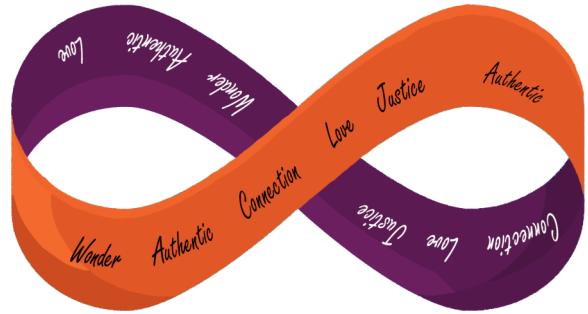
The pledge team has landed on the Mobius Strip as the 2021 pledge drive symbol, and I love it as a metaphor for faith practice. The inside of the loop becomes the outside of loop becomes the inside, into infinity. Begin drawing a colorful line on one side of the strip and next you know both sides are vibrant, like magic. I imagine many faith traditions might say the same is true regarding inner spirit and outer behavior. Both in need of attention as they are so intrinsically linked, each leading into the other infinitely cultivating our soul.

In this beloved community we might use love and justice instead of spirit and behavior, or gratitude and generosity, or reflection and action. But however differently we may imagine our own spiritual practice, we do have common restraints on how we act in the world. We are charged to “Justice, equality and compassion in human relations” and “the use of democratic process within our congregations and society at large” as well as “a responsible search for truth and meaning” within our principals as Unitarian Universalists. Three of our seven values I am finding useful to lean on right now.

What I love about practicing spirituality within a congregation is the support and wisdom you all give to me in this endeavor. But, knowing how fragile my own self-restraint can be at times, what I think is important about it is the accountability you all hold me to in living into the values we share.

When we talk about “Sustaining First Church” this pledge season, we are talking about sustaining a community that strives to live into justice and democracy and works to cultivate truth seeking souls. In fact we are a community that sees these goals as intrinsically linked. A Beloved Community.

Please join us in the conversation! Many of your fabulous fellow members have agreed to host Zoom Community Pledge Events in February to talk about practice, values and (a very little bit) pledging! PLEASE respond yes when you get an invitation!



## Pledge Drive 2020-21 ALL IN! Sustaining First Church

This year our goal is a 100% participation of membership and friends.

Currently there is a \$125,000 gap between our operating expenses and income. If everyone raised their pledge 15% we could close this gap and make sure First Church is sustained long term. Not everyone can do this. To learn more about Equitable Giving Church-wide go to our [pledge giving page](#) on our church website.

Pledge Kickoff Sunday February 21  
Pledge Deadline Sunday March 21

Pledge on-line and upload a picture of your family for our community montages during Sunday Services late February and early March.

## Record-Breaking First Church Christmas Eve Sharing & Generosity!

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

On Christmas Eve, our First Church members and friends were incredibly generous. We have had over 2,300 views of our Christmas Eve service, and one of our largest collections for our share the plate partners. We collected \$8,110 to be shared between the Interchange Food Pantry and Cathedral Center. Thank you, First Church, for sharing the service with your family and friends and for sharing your resources with our Milwaukee Community partners! Through sharing, we grow more abundant and more generous.





## We Invite You to a Lenten Practice

by Molly Shiffler

Following a promising Advent trial of weekly Lectio Divina, participants expressed interest in continuing a uniquely UU format of this contemplative practice. Lectio Divina will be hosted by Lynne Jacoby and Molly Shiffler during the Friday mornings of Lent (February 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26.) online on Zoom from 8:00 -9:00 a.m. Hopefully, this earlier time will make our drop-in session more accessible to those working virtually or in-person.

Tracing its roots to third century Africa, Lectio Divina blends listening reflectively to the words of the scripture writers and exploring their relevance (or not) to our lives. The session format is similar to that used in the UU poetry group. The scriptures are those chosen for the ecumenical Common Lectionary, which is used simultaneously worldwide. That said, familiarity with (or belief in) the Bible is not necessary at all for participation.

Advent Lectio Divina participant Nancy Pajewski writes that she is “attracted to both the process and content of Lectio Divina. It is a deeper way of reading and listening to myself, quite apart from my usual habit of plowing through the words quickly to see what happens next. I have gained from looking back at the Biblical text I grew up with, discovering different and more personal meanings.”

Spoiler alert: The Lenten passages are taken from the New Testament gospels and focus on thought-provoking parables and teachings of Jesus. Their enigmatic content invites application to our lives and world reality.

Since the format is always similar and the text is new each week, you're invited to drop-in whenever or however often it works for you. Your wisdom and reflections are welcome, as are pjs, coffee, and bagels. Click here and enter your contact information to receive the Zoom link: <https://form.jotform.com/203235689058967>.

## Getting Your Ducks in Order End of Life Planning

by Linda Presto  
Heritage Society Member

Especially in this sad time of COVID-19, with all the stress and depression it causes, the unexpected death of a loved one can devastate a family. If a family hasn't taken appropriate steps in advance, financial and legal complications can compound loss and grief.

Many of us think of end-of-life planning as a concern of the elderly. It is, of course, but anyone who has dependents, especially minor children, must also be prepared, just in case.

If your ducks aren't lined up, if you aren't even sure which ducks you need, join us on Tuesday, February 23, at 7:00 p.m. as the Heritage Society welcomes attorney Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer for the first night of this two-part program. Elizabeth will outline the steps you should take now to identify and line up those ducks and provide for your family's security.

During her program, she will discuss wills and probate, medical and financial powers of attorney, trusts, including special needs trusts, and Title 19/Medicaid planning. She will allow plenty of time at the end to answer your questions.

On March 23, in the second part of this program, Rev. Dena will discuss the spiritual issues related to end-of-life planning. Put this one on your calendar now and watch for more information to come.

We hope to see you on February 23. Click here to register for this program, hosted by Zoom at <https://form.jotform.com/210196797850971>.

Members of the First Church Heritage Society

Lisa Koneazny

Linda Presto

Chris Linder

and Eileen Teska

Reminder: Be sure that one of your ducks is leaving a bequest to First Church. Contact Lynne Jacoby or one of us in the Heritage Society for information on how to do that.



## Interested in Serving as A Pastoral Care Associate?

by Dena McPhetres

Are you a good listener? Would you like to develop your listening skills while practicing the ministry of being present to other members of our church who are going through difficult times? If so, please consider applying to become a Pastoral Care Associate (PCA). PCAs serve our congregation as confidential, trained listeners for members experiencing difficult life transitions. We meet monthly for support, ongoing training, and spiritual development. This opportunity arises only once every three years.

For more information, please visit the [FAO page on our website](#) and contact Rev. Dena (dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org), Jeri Percy, PCA Coordinator (fuspastoralcare@gmail.com), or Sarah Richards and Dale Skaggs, Co-Trainers (sarahjoehl@gmail.com or dale-skaggs@sbcglobal.net) with questions.

If you know a member of First Church who is a good listener and might be interested, please encourage them to contact us! For greater diversity and inclusion, we especially encourage people under the age of 50, parents, males, or people of color to apply, although all applications are welcome. Application forms will be available online by March 1. The application deadline is May 1.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Judith C. Anderson

April 17, 1940 ~ January 22, 2021

Judy Anderson died peacefully Friday morning at 11:31 a.m., January 22, 2021, while a nurse held her hand at Lawlis Family Hospice in Mequon, Wisconsin. Judy was diagnosed with liver cancer recently and entered inpatient hospice care Monday, January 18. Although her health declined faster than expected, she said she was ready to go and looking forward to it. Judy was 80 years old and a member of our congregation for 20 years.

Plans for an informal online Memory Circle will be forthcoming. Judy did not want a full memorial service, but requested a party to celebrate her life when it is safe to gather in person. A Candle of Life was lit in Judy's honor during our online worship service on Sunday, January 24. Memorial donations may be made to:

#### **Florentine Opera Company**

Attn: Development Department  
930 E. Burleigh Street, Lower Level  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

<https://www.florentineopera.org/ways-to-give-2>

#### **Lyric Opera of Chicago**

20 N. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606

<https://www.lyricopera.org/support-lyric/donate/>

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

<https://bit.ly/Give2UU>





## For Us to Repair

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson  
Minister of Religious Education

Tikkun Olam represents a distinctive Jewish concept towards life that Unitarian Universalist share: The world can be made better by human action. During our month-long exploration of Judaism in January, our middle schoolers explored Tikkun Olam which translates to, “repair or mend the world.”

The myth that frequently accompanies this concept is called, “The Shattered Vessels,” and as a potter it has always captured my imagination. In the myth, God who fills the universe, withdraws, or contracts to make space for the world to be created. The void that is formed is dark and empty and so God says, “Let there be light!” and ten vessels filled with God’s light enter the void.

The ten vessels, however, cannot contain God’s immense and overwhelming light and they shatter, sending a multitude of holy sparks across the void, forming our world. God creates humanity so that we may gather the holy sparks, which have been scattered across creation, and make them whole. Some believe each living thing contains one of the holy sparks, and our purpose here is to nourish and cherish each one.

My potter’s heart always envisions the broken and scattered pieces of the vessels, shapes smooth and jagged that must be found and collected before any repair can begin. What vessels in our world must be repaired so that all of our light can be held and whole again? How can the systems that are meant to cherish and nourish us, our schools, governments, communities be repaired so that we can truly hold all that the beloved community needs to thrive? What pieces of the broken vessel can each of us find, collect, and use to serve the greater good, the light we all have and long to be made whole?

Help us all find out together during Religious Education in February, as we explore Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s concept of Beloved Community and look for the sparks in each of us.

In faith,  
Rev. Kimberlee

## Hearts On Fire

### Returns to First Church

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson &  
Deb Solis, Youth Program Coordinator

For the past four years, we have invited our seniors to participate in our Hearts on Fire program. Hearts on Fire is a faith development opportunity for seniors to meet with our ministerial staff to explore their faith and examine their credos. The Latin root word cred means “believe,” a credo translates to: “what I set my heart to.” Creating a credo helps our youth examine and clarify what they have faith in, what they ultimately value, and what greater purposes they believe life offers. Some of the questions we will explore are:

- How have your ideas about God/Spirit of Life developed as you have grown?
- What are you coming to believe about God, spirit, and mystery of the universe as a whole?

#### The 2021 schedule is below:

- January 27: Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister (Topic: God/evil-theodicy)
- February 24: Deb Solis, Youth Program Coordinator (Topic: UU Identity)
- March 17: Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister (Topic: Humanity & Salvation)
- April 14: Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Religious Education (Topic: Developing your Credo)

We will meet virtually on the above Wednesday evening dates from 7:00- 8:30 p.m., participants will be provided with Zoom links for the meetings.

On Sunday, May 16, 2021, we will be holding our annual Religious Education Sunday Service virtually. During this service, it is our tradition to recognize our High School Seniors. For Seniors who wish to speak in front of the congregation virtually, participation in this series is required. However, you do not have to speak in front of the congregation and may choose to just attend Hearts on Fire and/or be represented with a photograph instead during our virtual RE Sunday worship on May 16.

We are so pleased to invite your family to take part in this virtual ceremony, and have your Senior present their credo at our worship service that day!

All completed credos are to be recorded and sent to Kimberlee (kimberlee.carlson@uumilwaukee.org) by May 10.



## Crossing Paths: 6th-8th Grade

Our next faith journey happens on February 7, 14, 21, 28 at 2:00 pm with our focus on Islam.

Crossing Paths is an interfaith learning program with the goal of helping youth build and clarify their own UU identity through engagement with other faiths. This interfaith journey will include Unitarian Universalism, Judaism, Christianity, Catholicism, Quakerism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Paganism.

## New Youth Group Meeting Time for 2021!

Our First Church Youth Group will be meeting virtually from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on THURSDAYS. Our format will have an extended check-in time and FUN community building activities. Preparation for Youth Service on March 7 happens in February.

## Want to Become A Worship Associate? Apply by March 15!

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Worship Associates help lead our Sunday worship services, collaborating with the ministers to reflect on meaning, purpose, and the life of the congregation. Worship Associates help develop Sunday themes for worship in monthly meetings with the Ministers, Music Staff, and Program Staff. At these meetings, we delve into personal and communal understandings of monthly themes like “Hope,” “Intention,” and “Welcome,” and then identify topics for each of the Sunday services of the month. Then individual Worship Associates work one-on-one with the ministers to prepare individual Sunday services by selecting readings or telling a personal story related to the theme of the service. During the pandemic, Worship Associates record their stories the week of their service date and submit to our Music Directors. On Sunday morning, Worship Associates moderate the chat on YouTube, then join Zoom coffee hour online as a welcoming presence to newcomers. The program includes training for Worship Associates on recording stories, how to write a compelling story, and how to create the container for the shared experience of the worship service.

### WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We are looking for church members who:

- are inspired by worship and want to contribute to the congregation’s depth of experience;
- want to engage in philosophical and theological reflection about meaning and purpose;
- have diverse identities, which this year particularly means young adults, newer members, and people of color;
- have poise and public speaking ability; and
- are deeply committed to the church and its values.

### SERVICE COMMITMENTS AND APPLICATIONS

Please submit your application by March 15, 2021, through the website at <http://uumilwaukee.org/ministers-and-leaders/worship-associates/>. Worship Associates will begin with planning worship with the required Worship Associate meetings on Sunday, May 23, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., and Sunday, June 13, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., and will begin serving at worship services in September 2021. The other WA meetings will be held during the 2021-22 church year, typically on the third Sunday of each month, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Worship Associates make a commitment to serve for two years, including during the summers, and commit to attending all WA meetings. Worship Associates will support the Ministers in leading worship about once every two months; on the date they serve covering the 10:00 a.m. worship online during the pandemic, and both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services in person when we re-gather.



## Criminal Justice Data Legislation

by Paul Geenen  
Circles of Support Leader

In an attempt to encourage bipartisan support for criminal justice reform, members of First Church Circles of Support are meeting with Republican legislators in the Senate and Assembly asking them to sponsor a bill to authorize and fund-collecting data from the Department of Corrections, the courts, district attorneys and law enforcement state-wide, using a standard set of definitions. Our criminal justice system collects a lot of data, but it is kept in stakeholders' silos. This bill will help legislators make better decisions.

Getting a big bill like this passed is a daunting task. A bill has to have a sponsor in both the Senate and Assembly, get a committee hearing in both branches, be passed by the appropriate committees, and get a hearing before the Joint Finance Committee which then has to pass it and put it in the budget. The bill has to be in the final budget that is passed by the Senate and Assembly and then signed by Gov. Evers.

We started requesting Zoom meetings with Republican legislators in early December, had our first meeting in early January, and are now having Zoom meetings with legislators weekly. Please let me know if you are willing to be part of the First Church Circles of Support team and join one or two of these Zoom meetings with legislators.

You may feel unsure about joining, as the first view, the benefit of this bill is not readily apparent, but advocates for criminal justice reform believe that sharing a uniform set of data about current practices is an important first step. Your presence will be meaningful to the legislative staff members we talk with, and we will need a lot of help over the next five months to get this bill passed.

## Max Otto and Hollywood Icon Fredric March Battle for Racial Justice

by George Gonis  
Church Member

A recently published article written by church member George Gonis explores Unitarian civil-rights history and the intimate 48-year friendship enjoyed by Unitarian humanist Max Otto and Hollywood Golden Age legend Fredric March.

Racine native and Badger alum March — a boisterous, seven-decade racial-justice activist and one of Hollywood's most outspoken liberals — was incredibly and mistakenly labeled a white supremacist in 2018.

For the article, George conducted recent interviews with March defenders Harry Belafonte, actor/activist Ed Asner, actor/activist James Cromwell, Stanley Kramer widow Karen Sharpe-Kramer, Smithsonian Secretary Lonnie Bunch, and an array of other civil rights scholars. A link to the article is provided below.

<https://brightlightsfilm.com/a-star-is-shorn-thanks-to-woefully-underinformed-campus-activists-acting-legend-badger-alum-and-civil-rights-champion-fredric-march-is-suddenly-off-wisconsin/#.X77KJs1KhPY>.

## Think Reparations Before Donating Your Stimulus Check!

by Mary Devitt,  
Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs Coordinator

If you are considering donating the stimulus checks your family has received, please be aware that Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs is partnering with MICAHA to hold a Milwaukee Area Reparations Summit in mid-March (details TBA). At the Summit, consistent with our First Church Ends and principles of the Black Lives Matter movement, we will seek the direction of members of the Black community concerning how that money might best be directed. We will strengthen our practice of "followership."

If we act as a community of faith, rather than as individuals, we can have greater impact. This is not to say that individual efforts are not meaningful and important. But another option is to consult with those most affected: by COVID-19 and its

*(Continued on page 12)*



(Reparations, continued from page 11)

economic and social and psychological ravages, by centuries of racism and white supremacy, and by the gross imbalance of power and resources that characterize our society and our community.

Adrienne Maree Brown, in *Emergent Strategy*, advises us to move “at the speed of trust” in our social justice work. Deepening relationships with change partners and those we seek to help requires us to slow down our unilateral decision-making and learn more about what is needed, and desired. This is one way of challenging the white supremacy baked into our previous ways of operating in the world.

So if you can, and are so inclined, we invite you to squirrel away intended donation monies while we hear from the community. In the meantime, stay tuned for details about the forthcoming community-wide Reparations Summit.

## Heart Wide Open SoulFolk and Song with LEA

Saturday, February 13  
2:00 p.m. on Zoom

Register at: <http://bit.ly/HeartWideOpen>

Ticket prices: \$0 to as much as you wish to donate

A great song can open the heart and touch the soul. It can tear down walls and build bridges. If you want to move mountains, never underestimate the power of a great song. LEA writes great songs.

Please join us for this heartwarming, interactive experience as the award-winning LEA shares music in her signature style. Thanks to a sophisticated tech set-up, LEA will even perform and harmonize with herself “live” through the miracle of looping pedal technology.

You will be invited to engage in a variety of ways, including a talkback discussion near the end of the session. Be ready to stomp, clap and/or sing at the top of your lungs as LEA shares her eclectic and inspiring music.

Let's raise our voices while raising funds! Proceeds from this event will go to support the First Church Music Ministry.



**This is LEA.**

“A great voice singing great songs.” That is the simplest way to introduce you to LEA’s music. While she often draws comparisons to other female phenoms like Tracy Chapman, Joni Mitchell, and Ani DiFranco, LEA’s sound seamlessly blends gospel, jazz, country, and R&B into her own style - SoulFolk.

Having shared the stage with luminaries including Odetta, Mavis Staples, Dar Williams, and Anthony Hamilton, LEA performs at a far-ranging array of venues, including art centers, universities, festivals, and places of worship. She is a Grand Prize winner of the Bernard/Ebb songwriting competition and consistently acknowledged by the Washington Area Music Association as one of the region’s best vocalists, songwriters, and recording artists.

A prolific creator and musical presence, LEA can be found online at [thisislea.com](http://thisislea.com)



# SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

## 11:00 AM ON ZOOM & YOUTUBE

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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 urban 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>

FEBRUARY 7

### **“Keepers of the Flame: Starr King School for Ministry”**

Presenter: Jessica Neno Cloud

Vice President for Advancement of Starr King School for the Ministry



“Where do ministers come from? It’s a question most congregants don’t ask until perhaps they serve on a search committee. Starr King School for the Ministry is one of our two Unitarian Universalist identity schools. Their Vice President for Advancement, Jessica Cloud, will discuss the role of “identity schools” and how congregational support matters to these vital institutions and the future religious leaders of our faith movement.

Forum Host: Bruce Wiggins

February Share the Plate Recipient

<https://www.sksm.edu/> <https://www.peaceactionwi.org/>  
<https://350.org/>

FEBRUARY 14

### **“Politics in Wisconsin, 2021 Edition”**

Presenter: Jay Heck, Executive Director of Common Cause-Wisconsin



As a major watchdog of Wisconsin politics, Jay Heck will give us his perspective on the important government reforms that are critical in the new year and what our roles could be in bringing about needed change. Jay became the executive director of Common Cause in Wisconsin (CC/WI) in 1996. CC/WI is Wisconsin’s largest non-partisan citizens reform advocacy organization with more than 2,500 members. It is considered by Wisconsin’s major newspaper editorial boards and by

*(Sunday Forum continued on page 14)*





# SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

## 11:00 AM ON ZOOM & YOUTUBE

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*(Continued from page 13)*

pro-reform legislators of both major political parties to be Wisconsin's most effective and influential state reform organization.

Forum Host: Jerry Fredrickson

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

FEBRUARY 21

### **“What’s it like to Run for the Assembly in Wisconsin? Funny you should ask.”**

Presenter: Jacob Malinowski,

former candidate for Wisconsin’s 82nd Assembly District.



Have you wondered what it’s like to run for a state office in Wisconsin? Candidate Jacob will share with us his first-ever experience campaigning against a long-standing incumbent, from the time the idea first popped into his head, through election day on November 3rd, 2020. Jacob is a 22 year-old-recent Yale graduate. He ran as a people-first bipartisan Democrat who believes that our representatives need to stop playing partisan games and do the jobs that we pay them to do. The 82nd is a strong Republican district, where he mounted a grass-roots campaign to defeat an incumbent 60 years his senior. With young, articulate candidates such as Jacob, there is indeed hope for our future!

Forum Host: Jerry Fredrickson

FEBRUARY 28

### **“Milwaukee: Home Base for a National and International Peace and Climate Activist”**

Presenter: George Paz Martin, Life-Long Community Activist.



‘A life-time activist seeking change in the community’ could be a description for George Martin. George Martin began with the civil rights movement in Washington DC, just 10 feet from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He has dedicated his life to more than 100 grassroots organizations and has been a consultant to many more. He recently represented the World Peace Council and served as NGO delegate to the United Nations in disarmament and climate. Our current day challenge of ever-changing, clashing war of ideas, philosophies, movements, and systemic change will guide George in his presentation at this Forum.

Forum Host: Lorraine Jacobs (for Christian Becker)





## February Share the Plate

by Dawn Blackmore  
Share the Plate Team

Starr King School for the Ministry is our February Share the Plate recipient. Operating as a school for the ministry since 1904, Starr King's mission is "to educate people for Unitarian Universalist ministry and for progressive religious leadership in society." Starr King School's distinctive educational approach is rooted in the UU values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning and creating just and sustainable communities.

Starr King School for the Ministry is located in Berkeley, California and emphasizes student-centered, holistic learning that cultivates habits for successful ministry and effective religious leadership. It offers the following programs of study:

- Master of Divinity (M.Div.)
- Master of Arts in Social Change (MASC)
- Master of Arts (M.A.)
- Chaplaincy Institute Joint Program
- Interfaith Chaplaincy and Ministry Certificate
- Interfaith Spiritual Direction Certificate
- Graduate Certificate in Multi-Religious Studies
- Graduate Certificate in Unitarian Universalist Studies

By investing as a congregation in UU theological education, we support students who minister within our tradition and beyond. We also help sustain our UU institutions that serve both as repositories for our UU traditions and as incubators for our future as a faith movement. To give a donation directly to Starr King School please visit <https://www.sksm.edu/about/giving/>

## Book Club News

by Chris Linder

The book for February 14 is *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. It is a fictionalized account about a real reform school in Florida where boys were abused and murdered. It won a Pulitzer prize in 2020.

On March 14 we will discuss *Spying on the South* by Tony Horwitz. It is about the observations of Frederick Law Olmstead who traveled to the South in the 1850s as a journalist to report to northern readers what it was like. Olmstead later became known as a famous landscape architect. The book club meets on the second Sunday of the month at 1:00 PM.

To be put on the contact list for announcements and the Zoom connection, Please contact Chris Linder at [celinder@att.net](mailto:celinder@att.net)

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

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