

NOVEMBER 2021



THE

CHANTICLEER

The First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

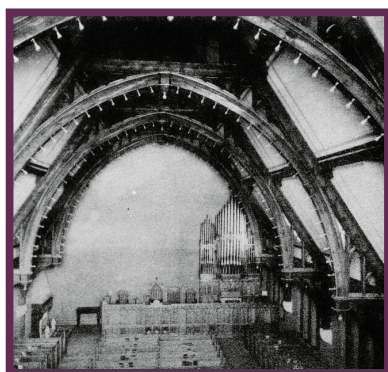
nurture. engage. inspire.



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Monthly Theme



*What does it mean to
be a people*

Holding History

News from the Editors

November has arrived with cooler nights and early sundown. It's a great time to grab a cozy blanket, enjoy the gentle changes of autumn, and check out this issue of *The Chanticleer*.

The COVID Team is making new plans for phasing-in safe re-entry to the church. Phase 1 allows certain small group meetings indoors starting November 1. See page 10 for the full story.

Also in November, First Church will have Open Sanctuary hours for anyone who wants to intentionally re-enter our community's sacred space. See page 11 for details and times that are available.

Rest assured, that while we begin to re-enter the church buildings, we will continue to provide quality online events for our congregation members and friends.

November 14, we hope you will join us for another outdoor Sunday Service at 10:00 a.m. at Lake Park.

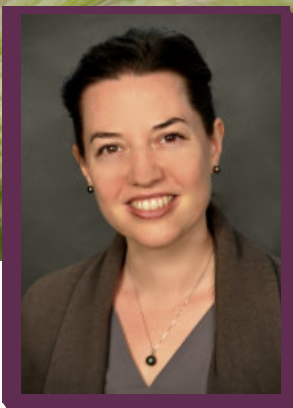
November Share the Plate

Law Forward Inc. is our November Share the Plate partner. Law Forward is a nonpartisan, nonprofit impact litigation firm committed to protecting and advancing democracy, and to restoring Wisconsin's pragmatic progressive tradition.

Currently, Law Forward is focusing on these efforts: 1. Protecting voting rights, access to the polls and fair administration of elections. 2. Advancing fair legislative districts and resisting efforts to gerrymander Wisconsin again. 3. Enforcing state constitutional requirements and separation of powers. 4. Resisting current efforts to revive long discredited legal doctrine. 5. Promoting the proper function of Wisconsin's regulatory agencies. To learn more about Law Forward Inc. please visit their website: <https://lawforward.org/>

Contributions can be made securely online at the First Church link below or mail your check to First Church made payable to: Law Forward Inc. The church will send all contributions to Law Forward.

[Donate to this STP Partner](#)



Words on the Wind

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

What are the joys and challenges of holding history?

History has many gifts to offer us. It can bring data, insight, and wisdom. It can also be difficult to hold, especially when it includes trauma, violence, or loss.

Why are some people drawn to history while others eschew it? What aspects of history call your name? Which would you rather avoid?

There's a debate raging in our nation right now over how we teach and learn the racial history of the United States. Some people are opposed to learning how different racial groups have been treated differently during our history. I wonder what forces are at work in the energy of this resistance. Who does telling this history help and who does it harm? Who benefits from not knowing the fullness of history?

When you turn to your own history, and the history of your family, what do you notice? Are there stories you tell over and over? Are there silences? What do you know, and what do you wish you knew? What would you rather not hold?

Join us this November as our community wrestles with the joys and challenges of holding history: in our own lives, in our families, and in the life of our community.

With love,
Rev. Jennifer

In-Memoriam

Susan Mitten

Mary Susan ("Susan") Mitten died peacefully, surrounded by family, after a 9 ½ month journey with brain cancer on Friday, October 1, 2021. Susan was 65 years old, and was a member of First Church for five years.

Susan's husband Tom Hester welcomes cards at his home, which you can find by looking him up in the First Church member portal. Susan's family is planning a celebration of life for the spring of 2022. Details will be posted to Susan's CaringBridge page, and we will share them as they become available.

Remembrance donations in Susan's honor can be made to the **Interchange Food Pantry**, on whose Board Susan served faithfully for years as the First Church representative.

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



Late in his life, my father played a cassette tape for me in which he interviewed his mother about the house where he was raised. It was lovely to hear my grandmother's voice after all these years, but the content was not memorable, so we discarded the tape.

Decades ago, after my mother's death, I enjoyed a visit with her best friends from childhood as they reminisced about growing up together in their small town. I recorded the conversation on a teeny tiny tape. It was healing to hear about my mother's early life and helped me understand her better. I have no idea where that tiny tape is now or how I would listen to it, technology has changed so much.

Several photos of my ancestors hang above my home altar reminding me of who I come from. I know some stories of their lives but not all. These examples make me wonder: is it the history that matters or the relationships?

When I hold my family history, I hold the relationships most dear. My grasp of the content of our history comes and goes. Some of the content was difficult and not talked about much, certainly not written down. My aunt once told me that when her younger brother, my dad, was drafted into service in WWII and went off to basic training, my grandmother had a nervous breakdown. So my aunt decided it would be a good time to start a family. She claimed that her pregnancy and the first grandchild brought my grandma back to rights—gave her something to hope for and plan for during a scary time.

What do you know about your family history? What is ultimately unknowable? How do you hold both? Does the content or the relationship matter more to you? What part of history gives you hope?

All in the Family

Life is hard sometimes. We experience sickness, job loss, broken hearts, and broken bodies. We want to support you through those difficult times.

We send our heartfelt condolences to **Miriam Reading**, whose beloved husband of 38 years, Dick Miller, died peacefully on Sept. 18 at their home at St John's on the Lake after a long battle with cancer. Dick was 88 years old and had been in hospice care at St. John's. Dick's Memorial Service was held on Oct. 4, at St. Mark's Episcopal church. Members can send cards to Miriam at her address in the church directory. Memorial donations can be made to St. John's Communities Foundation, Chautauqua Foundation, Inc. or North Shore Presbyterian Church.



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



And here's a young girl
On a kind of a telephone line through time
And the voice at the other end comes like a long lost friend.
--"Virginia Wolf" by Indigo Girls

This lyric is from the song "Virgina Wolf" by the group the Indigo Girls in response to finding solace in her poetry and written words. It captures the enigmatic sensation of finding and being claimed by an ancestor. A message time travels to you through a story, a place, the written words connecting you to a moment in history. A synergy, filled with voices echoing from the past moves through time and space to resonate inside of you, and you feel seen and known.

I am grateful for the teachings of Rev. Tandi Rodgers, who instructs us to claim our religious ancestors and then leads by example with unabashed delight! She has created a collection, filled with Unitarian, Universalist, and UU luminaries that can be both honored and consulted as needed. From Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross, to Rev. Olympia Brown, the first women ordained as a minister, fine ancestors who were flawed and fabulous and shaped who we are today as a faith community.

I love the idea of being chosen and choosing your ancestors. The idea that our lineage is more than familial. It is one of ideas, values, and commitments to one another in our time and throughout our shared history. Ancestors are tapping you on the shoulder insisting that it is your turn now to do what you can for the common good.

The history that holds us is filled with the many seekers whose lineage we carry by building a community grounded in welcome and love, by working for justice and centering our connections with the natural world and one another.

"History has its eyes on you." -Hamilton by Lin Manual Miranda

Certainly, history will record these moments we are living through. May we live into becoming the ancestors that are needed in our time, worthy of being remembered by seekers in future generations.

Blessings,
Rev. Kimberlee





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We Hold History in Our Bodies

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Marisa Riepenhoff, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

[Sunday Service YouTube link](#)

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Roots Hold Me Close

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, MRE

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Patrick Mulvey, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

[Sunday Service YouTube link](#)

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Grappling with History

Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Yalanda Ludtke, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

[Sunday Service YouTube link](#)

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Artifact

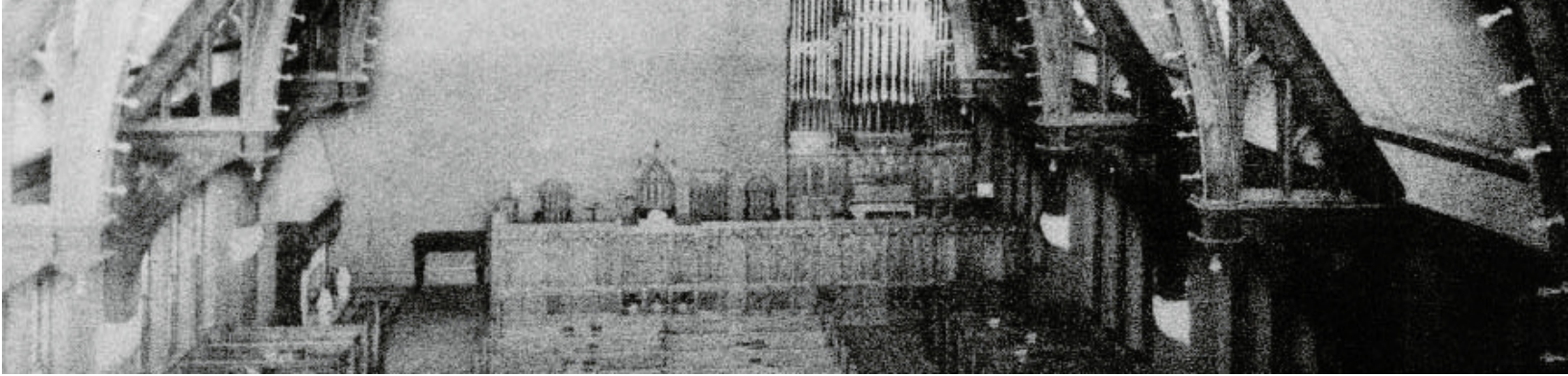
Rev. Patrice Curtis, Pulpit Guest

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Paul Kosidowski, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

[Sunday Service YouTube link](#)



Please RSVP
for this event

Outdoor Service, Sunday November 14 at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Summer Stage is located in the northern third of the park. The park is located at 3233 E. Kenwood Blvd. [Click here](#) for the park map.

Seating: Bring your own chairs and blankets.

COVID safety: Please remember to wear your masks and keep 6 feet of distance between households.

Restrooms: Those nearby will be open for us.

Accessibility: For folks with mobility issues, please be dropped off at the circle drive. The path to the stage is flat. Please let us know on your RSVP form if you have mobility issues so we can have ushers ready to assist and be in touch with the details.

Child Dedication
Sign up

Child Dedication Ceremony November 14

Dedication of Parents and Children will take place during our outdoor service on November 14 at 10:00 a.m. at Lake Park. The Child Dedication is a time for celebrating the birth or adoption of a child in a ceremony of naming and dedication. Child Dedication Rituals are limited to Members of the Congregation. For more information contact Office Manager Shari Wright at shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org or fill out the online form by November 7.



Pulpit Guest Rev. Patrice Curtis ♦ November 28

Rev. Patrice Curtis is the Transformational Interim Ministries Director on the UUA Ministry and Faith Development team. Patrice collaborates with and supports interim ministers and religious professionals in amplifying and practicing diversity, equity, and inclusion within congregations, and to disrupt unhealthy cultural patterns that make Beloved Community difficult to realize. Patrice has served congregations in Clearwater, Florida, Washington, DC, and Church of the Larger Fellowship and interned at First Unitarian in Portland, OR.



What's on Your Holiday Tree? Holiday Pageant, Dec. 19 2021

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

Do you recall a remarkable holiday moment? Perhaps it is a beloved family tradition, an act of generosity, or the first Christmas away from home? What do you love about the winter season?

Give the gift of yourself and share some of your wisdom and joy with the community by contributing to the All-Ages Holiday Pageant! We long to hear one another's stories and keep good company as we turn toward another December. Connect with our church community by sharing something true and authentic about you and yours this holiday season.

You're invited to record a short video or send in a drawing to become a collaborator in our collective holiday effort to celebrate the stories that make the holidays exceptional.

Content from all ages is welcome. Videos should be between 10 seconds and 2 minutes long. Drawings or original art should be holiday season themed. Questions and creativity are welcome.

By the way, we hide a pickle on our tree and drink glogg at my house each year. I am so curious to hear all about your favorite carols, the decorations on your tree, holiday memories and more!

Please contact me if you have any questions or ideas. But if you already know what you can contribute, please upload it by December 10 at the holiday pageant Dropbox.

ADD YOUR SUBMISSION TO THE HOLIDAY PAGEANT HERE



We hide a pickle on our tree and drink glogg at my house each year.

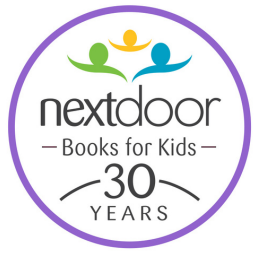
We make lefsa every December from my mother's recipe.

We had a real holiday tree inside the house and decorated a tree outside for the wildlife.

Holding a candle and singing Silent Night at the candlelight service on Christmas Eve.

Our large extended family celebrates with a meal, music, games and presents on Christmas Eve (Julaften=Yule Eve), whereas Christmas Day is a quiet day, a hike outside, and a movie.

Each year our family sleeps by the tree on Christmas Eve.



Last Month for Our Next Door Book Drive

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomzcak Carlson

Thanks to everyone who donated books for Next Door Milwaukee in October. Our Book Drive will continue for one more month, so be sure to get your books to the church on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m.--7:00 p.m. or bring them to in-person events such as Sunday service on November 14.

For 30 years, the Next Door's Books for Kids program has collected and distributed more than 1 million books to children across Milwaukee. Research shows that the number of books available to a child may surpass all other variables in predicting their long-term success in school.

First Church is supporting their good work and need you to make our Book Drive a success! All book donations need to be for children, gently used or new. Especially needed are books for children 0-5 years of age, multicultural books, and board books.

If you'd rather donate via Amazon, visit Next Door's [Amazon Wish List](#) to purchase the books needed most. These books will ship directly to Next Door.

Thank you for caring and supporting our Book Drive!

November RE Calendar

November 4

7:00 p.m. Youth UU Wellspring

November 7

9:15 a.m. PreK-2nd Grade

11:15 a.m. Families Together

1:00 p.m. Crossing Paths: Evangelical Megachurch

November 11

7:00 p.m. Youth Group

November 14

Lake Park Outdoor Service 10:00 a.m.

Child Dedication

No Children's Religious Education

November 18

7:00 p.m. Youth Group

November 21

9:15 a.m. PreK-2nd Grade

11:15 a.m. Families Together

1:00 p.m. Crossing Paths: Evangelical Megachurch

November 28

9:15 a.m. PreK-2nd Grade

11:15 a.m. Families Together

1:00 p.m. Crossing Paths: Evangelical Megachurch

New COVID Plans (Again!)

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom & the First Church COVID Team

Wisconsin's COVID numbers unfortunately remain high. So First Church is adapting with a step-by-step approach designed to lead us cautiously, safely, and inclusively towards more in-person activities, including activities indoors.

Phase 1

Meetings of Small Groups of Staff-Led Teams (meetings of less than 20 people in any First Church group led by a staff member, e.g. Pastoral Care Associates)

For the first step, the COVID Team is working with the staff to experiment with small groups of staff-led teams meeting in person indoors. This is only allowed if every member of the team is willing to show proof of either: 1) vaccination or 2) a negative COVID test within 72 hours. Participation in these meetings will be available via Zoom for those who would prefer to not meet in-person. Staff members will initiate the conversation with their staff-led teams about the possibility of meeting in person, how to submit proof of vaccinations and tests, and how to Zoom-in to a meeting if you would prefer not to meet in person.

Phase 2

Meetings of Small Groups of Member-Led Ministries (meetings of less than 20 people in any First Church group led by First Church members, e.g. The Chronologically Gifted group)

After we learn from this experiment in Phase 1, we hope to open the church to more people, beginning with small member-led ministry groups whose members are willing to opt-in for proof of vaccination or testing. We will let you know how to do this once we have more information from Phase 1 about what procedures work and what we can improve.

Phase 3

Larger Groups, Working Towards In-person Sunday Services

As we learn how to do this safely and inclusively, we will continue to open to more and larger groups of people. We are simultaneously watching our local COVID incidence rate. In this moment, when transmission risk is still very high, one way we can open more safely and inclusively is through creating a system of proof of vaccination and negative testing for indoor participation.

New COVID Plans, continued on Page 11

New COVID Plans, continued

We hope to learn enough from Phases 1 and 2 of our process to be able to increase the number of people who gather and move towards having indoor worship services in Phase 3.

We are still learning and experimenting with new systems as we work hard to keep you safe, and we will keep our online and outdoor church options running during this time.

Thank you so much for your graciousness and your patience as we adapt again to circumstances and learn yet another new way to provide spiritual nourishment and care in line with our values while attending to the needs of the most vulnerable.

You all are in our hearts as we venture into this new world, our minds fully engaged in the science, our hearts committed to nourishing your spirits, and our spirits oriented towards justice.

Open Sanctuary at First Church

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

In November, First Church will have Open Sanctuary hours for anyone who wants to intentionally re-enter our community's sacred space. We will have tea lights available up front if you would like to light a candle to mark your return to the sanctuary, or to represent a hope for the future, or to honor anyone or thing who has been lost during this time.

November 1--20 Open Sanctuary Hours:

- Mondays: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesdays: 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesdays: 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- Thursdays: 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
- Saturdays: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Please remember to wear your mask and keep 6 feet of distance between yourself and other households. The HVAC air circulation system will be on during these times and we'll have extra masks and hand sanitizer available.

Bring your light to our community, be it your inner light re-entering the church, your sacred intentions for what will come, or the light of your love for what has passed.

May your re-entry hold you and your heart in this time of transition.

Earth Justice Ministry Continues Sierra Club Programs

by Terry Wiggins

Earth Justice Ministry

First Church Earth Justice Ministry joins Sierra Club Wisconsin for presentations which provide an opportunity to explore racial and environmental inequities. They help shine a light on critical environmental justice components that exist in our state and country. Environmental Justice includes everything from accessibility of public lands to health impacts of burning fossil fuels, to food sovereignty, to degradation of land and water from mining.

Join the November 3 program “Uprooting Racism, Seeding Sovereignty.” It features a riveting keynote address delivered by Leah Penniman of Soul Fire Farm. The program closes with world-renowned poet, and Soul Fire Farm’s Program Manager, Naima Penniman. Storytelling weaves the history and structural realities of racial injustice in the food system, with movement strategies of frontline communities mobilizing for food and land sovereignty. For more info and [RSVP here](#).

November 11, join the panel discussion “Indigenous Resistance to Mining in Wisconsin.” For more info and [RSVP here](#).

For more information on Environmental Justice, contact EJM Co-chairs, Barbara Leigh or Bruce Wiggins.

Reparations Workshop Rescheduled

by Mary Devitt

BLM2WUU Coordinator

Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs is pleased to announce that we have rescheduled our Reparations Workshop which was postponed from last summer. We’re hosting this free and virtual event, following up on our previous Reparations Workshop in December, 2019. We welcome returning and new participants. We’d love to see you there. Join us for “It’s Still Time for UUs to Talk About Reparations,” Saturday, November 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Register soon!

<https://bit.ly/UUReparations2R>

Space is limited. When registration is full, we will keep a waiting list, and notify you if space becomes available.

We hope you’re able to join us!

Splinters from the Board

by Tony Panciera

Board of Trustee Member

The Board of Trustees held their monthly meeting on September 28 together with Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom.

The Board completed their annual review of the Ends to ensure they are still pertinent and relevant and unanimously reaffirmed our existing Ends for the year ahead.

Jennifer presented the monitoring data for Ends 4, 6, and 7 relating to congregational support and connection, opening ourselves to wonder, and finding interconnectedness through communal experiences. While some engagement has waned with the pandemic, overall engagement is up and survey responses are solid. The Board unanimously found evidence of progress for Ends 4, 6, and 7.

The Board discussed reports from delegates to the 2021 UUA General Assembly and affirmed recommendations from the delegates. The Board also discussed a plan for joint training with the Board and Board committees with dual purposes of strengthening linkages between members and committing more deeply at the Board level around anti-racist action. The Board also discussed our self-assessment process and made a few small revisions.

Jennifer provided her Sr. Minister's report covering initial planning for her sabbatical that would begin next fiscal year, relayed appointments to the new Special Fundraising Committee from the Strategic Planning Team (SPT), and shared concerns of the Social Justice Council relating to our partner survey. The Board passed a motion to support the SPT communications plan and appointments and passed a motion to support the Social Justice Council developing an alternative measurement plan.

Finally, the Board updated a corporate resolution pertaining to the role of the church's Treasurer and receipt of bequests.



Sunday Morning Forum

11:00 AM ON ZOOM & YOUTUBE



NOVEMBER 7

Ecological Cycles & Ecofeminism: Poetic Responses

Patricia Jursik, writer and poet, will speak about the earth as our garden, ecofeminism, ecological cycles, and the laws of ownership and the western world. She will also share some poems. Patricia now dedicates fulltime to writing, advocating for public parks, and economic justice. She sits on the board of Preserve Our Parks, the board of Sheridan Park Friends, and is a member of Midwest Environmental Advocacy.

NOVEMBER 17

20 Years of Riverwest Currents

Vince Bushell, Founder, Publisher, Editor, will tell the story of 20 years of publishing the monthly newspaper **Riverwest Currents** in an urban village within Milwaukee. He'll discuss how media can define a place, how changing media challenges our definitions, and how common goals are more important than silos of information.



Join the Forum on Zoom or watch these presentations live or saved after Sunday on the First Church **YouTube Channel**.



NOVEMBER 21

When Reform is Not Enough

Nora Rasman, Former UU the Vote UUA Coordinator

An experienced organizer and facilitator rooted in community and relationship, Nora seeks to build communities that envision and build a more liberated world. She grew up in First Church and worked with Side With Love. She moved back home to Milwaukee in May 2020 to work on the UU the Vote Campaign. Nora will share her most recent work in organizing and strategy.

NOVEMBER 28

Lead Poisoning Emergency in Milwaukee

Richard Diaz, Blue-Green Alliance & Coalition on Lead Emergency (COLE), will address the lead poisoning emergency in Milwaukee. The Blue-Green Alliance is a national collaboration of the Steel Workers Union and the Sierra Club. COLE is active in Milwaukee addressing the lead problem which stems from lead in paint, water and soil





Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, November 3 & 17 6:30 p.m.

[Join Us Here](#)

Join us as we meet to share our thoughts and interpretations of Buddhist teachings and ideas from the current book. Then we meditate as a group for a short while and have fellowship. On Zoom. For more information, contact Mark Miller at gatheringwaterssangha@gmail.com.

Book Discussion Group

Sunday, November 14, 12:45 pm

Join us as we discuss November's read: *The Alchemy of Us* by Ainissa Ramirez. This scientist explores the scientific discoveries and inventions by overlooked people of color and women that have changed the world. Drop in welcome. Contact Chris Linder for the meeting location at celinder@att.net.

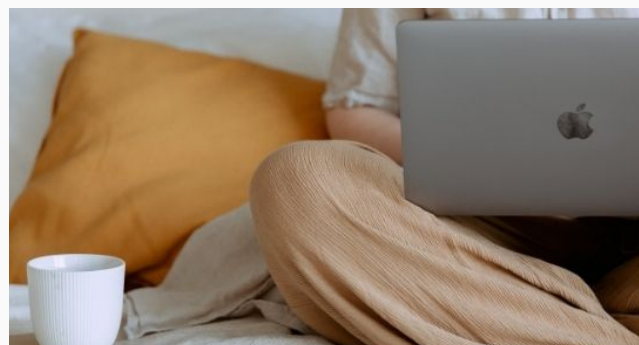
Poetry Contemplation

Every Wednesday, 9:00 am

[Join Us Here](#)



Join us online as we listen, respond, and rest with the words of selected poets and in the company of others in our community. Come listen for what resonates and illuminates. Members, guests, and visitors are welcome to join this open, weekly, drop-in practice.



Connect & Reflect

Every Thursday, 6:00 pm

[Join Us Here](#)

Connect with a small group as we share a short reading and check in with how your spirit is doing. Reflect together on a few questions prompted from the reading. Sharing is always optional. Bring yourself, your dinner, your joys, your concerns. All are welcome.

Is a QCD For Me?

by Mark Bishop, CPA, CFP, Congregation Member

As we look to the end of 2021 (and hopefully a sense of normalcy), many of us start thinking about holidays, family gatherings, and year-end tax planning. I thought that I would share an idea that may be useful to many of our members, especially those approaching or over the age of 70½.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a tax-efficient way to make charitable donations. It's a direct transfer from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charity, such as First Church, and it's available only to IRA owners (and IRA beneficiaries) who are age 70½ or older. QCDs can be taken out of your traditional IRAs free of any federal income tax.

With the recent tax law changes, many of you who previously itemized deductions now find it advantageous to take the standard deduction instead. As a result, you no longer deduct your charitable contributions, but via a QCD, some can still make those contributions with pretax dollars, resulting in significant tax savings. Unlike typical charitable donations, you can't claim itemized deductions for QCDs. That's OK because the tax-free treatment of QCDs equates to a 100% deduction as you'll never be taxed on those amounts. In addition, you don't have to worry about tax law restrictions that apply to itemized charitable write-offs. QCDs can effectively add to the standard deduction (or existing charitable

deduction, if you are still itemizing) by allowing direct donations made from IRAs to be excluded from income, thus lowering adjusted gross income – and the tax bill.

A QCD is different from a required minimum distribution (RMD), which individuals must begin to take no later than the year they reach 72. One could take their first RMD before reaching age 70½, but they would not be eligible to do a QCD until they attain age 70½, or they may delay their first RMD until 72 and still take advantage of a QCD at age 70½.

The QCD limit is large, and QCDs can be done in excess of the RMD amount. Each IRA owner is permitted up to \$100,000 in QCDs annually.

As with all tax or financial planning issues, it is advisable to consult with your personal tax or accounting advisor as to how this may impact or benefit you. When you are ready to take advantage of a QCD, your investment advisor or retirement account custodian can and should assist you with the direct transfer of funds to your charity of choice. Happy planning!

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

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Treasurer Tom Briscoe

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Dianna Dentino
Patricia Geenen
Rollie Hanson
Mike Hogan
Mark Miller

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PLEASE NOTE: In November, we will have some limited meetings and programs in the building. Please email the staff for more information.

Visit us at



uumilwaukee.org



Follow us on Instagram. Like us on Facebook. Join our Facebook Group. Subscribe to our YouTube Channel.