

# 2021-2022 Annual Report



**First Unitarian**  
SOCIETY OF MILWAUKEE  
*nurture. engage. inspire.*

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# The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

Established 1842

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# ANNUAL REPORT

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

**2021-2022 Operating Budget: \$1,002,000**

**Adult Members: 714**

**Church School Enrollment: 31**

**Contributing Households: 396**

## MEMBER

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

## CHURCH STAFF

### SENIOR MINISTER

The Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom

### ASSOCIATE MINISTER

The Reverend Dena McPhetres

### MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Reverend Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

Jean Johnson

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Lynne Jacoby

### OFFICE MANAGER

Shari Wright

### DIGITAL OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Molly Sommerhalder

### FACILITIES MANAGER

Tom Schroeder

### FACILITIES ASSISTANT

Jim Spice

### FACILITIES MAINTENANCE WORKER

Art Sims

## CHURCH STAFF CONTINUED

### LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

Alissa Rhode

### CHORAL DIRECTOR

Tristan Strelitzer

### COLLABORATIVE PIANIST

Teresa Drews

### YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Deb Solis

### NURSERY COORDINATOR

Lindsey Porter

### EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATOR

Mariah Groshek

### NURSERY CAREGIVER

Cecelia Groshek

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

At this time last year, I never dreamed that I'd be preparing this report to you, our First Church congregation, from the vantage point of more than two years into the Covid pandemic. In fact, in looking over the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting, we were thinking ahead to the fall of 2021 with high hopes that we would be back in the sanctuary for in-person services.

Then, the highly contagious Omicron variant of the Covid virus hit with a vengeance. We continued to adjust our First Church Covid reopening plan using the latest science and applying our core approach of caring for the health and safety of our intergenerational congregation, as well as for the greater Milwaukee community, which was experiencing an overloaded health care system.

First Church, and all of you, have persevered through the losses, sadness, and challenges of this very difficult church year. I know it's been extremely hard. I found myself facing each day trying to find joy—even a tiny little sliver of hope - that would help me deal with the horrors of the world situation, the political climate, and the daily irritations of life. I'm guessing I wasn't alone in these feelings.

Fortunately, I was not alone. I had my First Church community to help. Even though much of the church year occurred in the internet ether, I was able to connect through online services and music. Our ministers and staff hosted several outdoor services where we could actually see each other in person! And in March 2022, we reopened the building to services and small group meetings. A few weeks ago, we even brought back coffee hour with coffee!

We are now starting to return to some sense of First Church as we've known it in the past. Yet, we will be forever changed. We will continue to adapt and be mindful of what is going on with the Covid virus as it continues to mutate, because that is what viruses do. We now know that we can pivot quickly to do what is needed to keep us all as safe as possible. Be proud, folks, of what we have done and the support we've provided each other. I personally thank you for all you've done this church year.

Now, on to the business side of things.

As is our charge, the Board of Trustees continued to live our policy governance model by implementing and monitoring progress on achieving our Ends (goals), policies, and the limitations on the Senior Minister in applying the policies. We are generally in full compliance with our policies and limitations, and where we fall a bit short, we are making good progress and have plans for achieving full compliance.

The Board worked to stay in touch with our sources of authority—namely the congregation and its youth, as well as UU principles. Having virtual church for most of the church year made this somewhat of a challenge, but you helped us understand what's important to you through personal outreach and by participating in our annual congregational survey. By the way, we still intend to have two youth non-voting members of the Board, but Zoom fatigue and other factors didn't allow us to accomplish this goal this year. Stay tuned.

In addition, the Board supported our Strategic Planning Team in its work to lead us to continued growth and financial sustainability. We have sufficient funds to more than meet our 15% financial safety net, and the business of First Church is being diligently and well-conducted.

At our May 2022 BOT meeting the board approved another deficit budget, this one larger than last year. It's something we have struggled with mightily.

Our rationale is that we want staff to continue providing the progress toward our Ends that we have come to expect and we also want to reflect our commonly held values — including paying a living wage to all church employees and moving all staff closer to the UUA salary guidelines — while at the same time implementing long-term strategies to achieve financial stability.

Unfortunately over the last many years church income from pledges has not kept up with inflation and rising costs for healthcare, etc. That's why we know the work of the Strategic Planning Team and the fall Campaign Steering Team are so crucial for the future of our community, and we are fully committed to their success.

I'm proud to report that this year, the Board and its committees participated in several hours of Anti-Racism training that was designed to help us make board decisions that are intentionally more inclusive, and reflect our UU values of diversity and the value of every person. We are practicing how to identify and challenge institutional racism and white supremacy in our decision-making and conversations. It is hard work, but we are all dedicated to continued growth in these areas.

Finally, it's been a good year—a difficult year, but we persisted! I expected nothing less from this fine congregation. Thank you for the honor of serving you.

Best regards,  
Jane Cliff

# ENDS STATEMENTS

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

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

At the heart of First Church, we value:

Wonder

Authentic Connection

Love

Justice

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## MISSION STATEMENT

We gather together to:

Nurture the Spirit. Engage the Mind. Inspire Action.

# 2019-2020 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

## Overview

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

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

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

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

The 2020-2021 FY is the second year of the COVID19 pandemic. Online services began in March 2020 and are continuing through the end of the 2021-2022 FY. In-person services began on March 6, 2022.

## Income and Expenses

### July 1, 2020— June 30, 2021

The following page shows the budget and final income statement for the 2020-2021 church year. The first section shows the income while the second section shows the operating expenses for the year. Ideally, the income should balance the expenses to yield an Income Net of Operations of \$0 or a balanced budget. The Finance Team budgeted a negative balance of \$152,806 for the church year. Final numbers for "Income Net of Operations," not including extraordinary income, show a negative balance of \$45,144 ( \$107,662 better than expected). Total income was \$45,431 below budget and the total expenses were \$153,093 below budget.

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>Income</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Total income was 5% (\$46K) below budget.</li><li>• Pledges (\$709K) were above budget 4% (\$24K); Bequests (\$32K) were above budget 29% (\$7.2K)</li><li>• Total activity income (\$5.7K) was below budget 85% (-\$32K) due to COVID restrictions. Feast for Funds was cancelled.</li><li>• Investment income (\$17K) was below budget 43% due to lower interest rates.</li><li>• The apartment income was below budget 12% due to vacancies, turnover and maintenance.</li></ul> |
| <b>Expense</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Total expense was 14% (-\$153K) below budget.</li><li>• Human Resources expense were below budget 6% (-\$47K) due to vacant staff positions.</li><li>• Building expense (-31%); Basic Operations (-23%); Committees (-36%) were below budget due to COVID restrictions.</li><li>• Krug Projects/Thaney Fund/Music Fund was 62% (\$64.6K) below budget due to COVID restrictions.</li></ul>  |

Income Net of Operation was -\$46K, a 70% decrease from the budgeted deficit of -\$152K. The pledges in future years must increase to cover this cost for First Church to become fiscally sustainable. Extraordinary income includes \$288K for unrealized gains on Investment and \$118K for the pandemic Payroll Protection Program loan forgiveness. The final Net Income including Extraordinary Income was \$360K. Unrealized Gain on Investments of \$7,186.

# FUSM 2020-2021 INCOME & EXPENSE HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

ITEM	'20 - '21 BUDGET	'20 - '21 FINAL	Variance	
			Amount	%
<b>Contributions</b>				
Pledges	685,000	709,231	24,231	4%
Bequest Income	25,000	32,247	7,247	29%
Other Contributions	37,000	54,963	17,963	49%
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>747,000</b>	<b>796,441</b>	<b>49,441</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Transfer from Fund Balance</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>36,141</b>	<b>(47,859)</b>	<b>-57%</b>
<b>Activity Income</b>				
Feast for Funds	22,000	-	(22,000)	-100%
R E Fees	7,000	1,483	(5,518)	-79%
Other Sources	9,100	4,184	(4,916)	-54%
<b>Total Activity Income</b>	<b>38,100</b>	<b>5,666</b>	<b>(32,434)</b>	<b>-85%</b>
<b>Investment Income</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>17,079</b>	<b>(12,921)</b>	<b>-43%</b>
<b>Apartment Income Net of Expenses</b>	<b>21,800</b>	<b>19,229</b>	<b>(2,571)</b>	<b>-12%</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$920,900</b>	<b>\$874,556</b>	<b>(\$46,344)</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>Human Resources</b>				
Salaries, Wages & Minister Housing	582,459	547,804	(34,655)	-6%
Professional Expenses	25,358	20,151	(5,207)	-21%
Insurance - Health & Disability	76,100	76,412	312	0%
Retirement Savings - all staff	48,000	48,951	951	2%
Payroll Taxes	28,000	23,944	(4,056)	-14%
Other	18,557	14,195	(4,362)	-24%
<b>Total Human Resources</b>	<b>778,474</b>	<b>731,458</b>	<b>(47,016)</b>	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Budgeted Contributions</b>	<b>25,312</b>	<b>21,381</b>	<b>(3,931)</b>	<b>-16%</b>
<b>Building Expenses</b>	<b>73,320</b>	<b>50,330</b>	<b>(22,990)</b>	<b>-31%</b>
<b>Basic Operations</b>	<b>78,613</b>	<b>60,327</b>	<b>(18,286)</b>	<b>-23%</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>7,152</b>	<b>3,843</b>	<b>(3,309)</b>	<b>-46%</b>
<b>Committees</b>	<b>26,835</b>	<b>17,193</b>	<b>(9,642)</b>	<b>-36%</b>
<b>Extra Operations</b>				
Capital Maintenance	14,400	6,391	(8,009)	-56%
Krug Projects/Thaney/Music Fund	64,600	24,689	(39,911)	-62%
Mortar Lecture Committee	5,000	5,000	-	0%
<b>Total Extra Operations</b>	<b>84,000</b>	<b>36,081</b>	<b>(47,919)</b>	<b>-57%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,073,706</b>	<b>\$920,613</b>	<b>-\$153,093</b>	<b>-14%</b>
<b>INCOME NET OF OPERATIONS</b>	<b>-\$152,806</b>	<b>-\$46,057</b>	<b>\$106,749</b>	<b>-70%</b>
<b>Extraordinary Income</b>				
Gain/Loss on Investment	\$0	\$288,122		
PPP Loan	\$118,000	\$118,300		
<b>EXTRAORDINARY INCOME</b>	<b>\$118,000</b>	<b>\$406,422</b>	<b>\$288,422</b>	
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>-\$34,806</b>	<b>\$360,365</b>	<b>\$395,171</b>	

## Investment Report

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

On June 30, 2021, First Church had four CD's valued at \$319K. This money satisfies the safety net of 15% of budgeted expenses as well as the additional 15% to mature in less than 3 years. The remaining funds in the General Fund as well as the Memorial Trust Fund were invested in the UU Common Endowment Fund which is managed to approximate 60% bonds and 40% equities. The UUA Common Endowment Fund had a net return on investment of 7.0% for the Fiscal YTD. This was a particularly good year for the stock market. Additional investments include one Landmark CU's CD with 0.35% interest, two Landmark CU's CDS with 0.45% interest, and a Brewery CU CD with 0.77% interest.

## Balance Sheet

### June 30, 2021

Total net assets increased as compared to previous year by \$327K (17.6%). The assets increased primarily due to an increase in unrealized gains in investments and the forgiveness of the PPP loan.

### Description of Funds

#### Restricted (by donor) Funds

Morter Fund:	This fund was established in accordance with a bequest of a former member. The funds are designated to sponsor seminars on individual responsibility.
Memorial Trust Fund:	This fund contains unspecified bequests. Money placed in the fund can be expended or borrowed against only by a super majority of the congregation. The Finance Team manages it. A fixed percentage of the fund's assets provide quarterly income to the church's operations.

#### Designated (by Board) Funds

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

Unrestricted Fund Balance:	This fund is the amount retained after payment of expenses or the allocation to designated funds. It increases during fiscal years in which there is an operating surplus and decreases during years in which there is an operating deficit. For fiscal security, the Board has adopted a policy of maintaining a balance in this fund that is equal to or greater than 15% of the operating expenses for the most recent fiscal year. If the balance drops below this 15% level, the restoration of the fund becomes a fiscal priority.
Krug Special Programs Fund:	This fund was designated by the Board in March 2019 to fund special projects in 2019-20 through 2021-22. Some projects were postponed due to the pandemic and will continue when feasible. The Music Programs Fund is a subset of the Krug Special Programs Fund.

Noreen Gilbertsen  
Finance Team Chair



**FUSM BALANCE SHEET FOR FY 2020-2021**

6/30/2021

<b>ASSETS</b>		
	June 30, 2020	June 30, 2021
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$16,121	-\$10,021
Money Market	\$155,448	\$100,243
Other	\$3,994	\$3,320
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$175,563</b>	<b>\$93,542</b>
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>		
Memorial Trust Fund - UUCEF	\$328,554	\$397,974
Calvert 1.5%	\$11,427	\$11,427
WWBIC		\$10,000
CD's	\$324,473	\$319,309
General Fund - UUCEF	\$1,022,113	\$1,356,945
<b>Total Investments</b>	<b>\$1,686,568</b>	<b>\$2,095,655</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,862,131</b>	<b>\$2,189,197</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Prepaid Pledges	\$33,044	\$48,727
Apartment Security Deposit	\$3,583	\$3,274
YRUU Account & Mission Trip Savings	\$5,605	\$5,305
27th Pay Period Accrual	\$17,034	\$18,734
Sabbatical Accrual	\$5,184	\$10,184
PPP Note Payable	\$118,300	
Other Liabilities	\$2,155	\$16
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$184,905</b>	<b>\$86,239</b>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>		
Morter Fund - Donor Restricted	\$69,247	\$64,247
Tom Thaney for the Arts	\$980	\$1,980
Memorial Trust Fund	\$328,554	\$397,974
Close the Gap Fund		\$25,000
Minister's Discretionary Fund	\$2,959	\$4,363
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	<b>\$401,741</b>	<b>\$493,564</b>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>		
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$1,043,567	\$944,625
Net Income	-\$98,943	\$361,278
Capital Maintenance Fund	\$16,595	\$10,204
Krug Special Programs Fund	\$310,020	\$292,056
Music Programs Fund	\$4,246	\$1,231
<b>Total Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$1,275,485</b>	<b>\$1,609,393</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$1,862,131</b>	<b>\$2,189,197</b>

# BOARD COMMITTEE

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

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

The Nominating Committee met monthly since September 2021. The members of the Nominating Committee reached out to both new and established members of the congregation via one-on-one relational meetings to identify skill sets and areas of interest so that we could guide members toward meaningful and impactful engagement with First Church, and identify potential candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee. This year, we focused on learning more about the life experiences or attributes of the members of our congregation that can bring diversity of background to our leadership teams. The five members of the Nominating Committee conducted approximately 20 one-on-one meetings this church year. We find this process of one-on-ones to be an important way to become acquainted with members of the church and to hear their thoughts on lay leadership.

We connected with current President Jane Cliff to determine anticipated needs and skillsets for Board of Trustees members, and connected with BOT liaison Mark Miller and Senior Minister Jennifer Nordstrom to identify people in our church community that we should talk to about church involvement and potential leadership.

In addition to ourselves, Nominating Committee members this year were: Vashti Lozier, Jessie Moffat, Susie Seidelman, Tracy Kreuser, and staff liaison, Jean Johnson. We offer our thanks and appreciation to those many generous and talented members of our congregation who have responded to the call of leadership.

Tom LeBel and Kristine Hansen, Co- Chairs

# ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES: May 16, 2021

## Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Mark Bender at 11:25 a.m., with 151 First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee (First Church) members in attendance. At this time, First Church has 612 members eligible to participate in the Annual Meeting and a quorum is 62. Due to the COVID pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

## Approval of Minutes, 2020 Annual Meeting

Elizabeth Lentini moved to approve the minutes as written and Kathy Porter seconded. 123 members voted to approve and 3 members abstained. The minutes were approved.

## Remarks from the President

President Mark Bender reflected on First Church operations in a year of the COVID pandemic, noting that with online services, we are reaching more people than ever. Pledges are strong and we are gaining some new members. Based on our annual congregational survey, respondents are more committed to our Ends (goals) and think that we are doing better at meeting them, when compared to the 2018 survey. Board of Trustees work has focused on implementing and monitoring policy governance, which provides First Church staff more flexibility to conduct daily church business. He noted that First Church business is being well conducted and within policy guidelines.

## Nominating Committee Report

Michelle Boehm thanked the committee for their work this year and presented the nominees for the 2021 Board of Trustees slate: George Bledsoe, Patricia Geenen, and Tony Panciera each for a 3-yr term. (2021 – 24). Motion to accept this slate of candidates was made by Rod DePue and seconded by Geri Pearcy. 135 members voted in favor of the motion and 2 members abstained; the motion carried.

Nomination of Susie Seidelman & Kristine Hansen for 3 years (2021-24) and Jessie Moffat for 1 year (2021-22, to fill out the term of Heather Hanson) to serve on the Nominating Committee. Motion to accept this slate of candidates was made by Alexis Fielik and seconded by Bruce Wiggins; 135 voted in favor and 1 person abstained. The motion carried.

## Financial Condition Report

Noreen Gilbertsen introduced the Finance Team and reviewed the work of the committee including an investment performance report. Details are provided in the written Annual Report. The fiscal year ending June 2020 overall was positive; investments ended the year \$20,000 ahead of budgeted expectations. Our investments did not perform as well as the market overall or the State of WI Pension plan. Noreen also answered questions: 1) What was the total dollar amount of bequests to First Church this year? Answer: \$32,000 as of April 1, 2021. 2) How did the General Fund get so large? A: From generous bequests (Krug; Wiley; Zillman), plus stock market gains. Also, anytime we have a deficit, our general fund is decreased. 3) Do gains from the Memorial Trust Fund go into the General Fund? A: No, these gains go into the Memorial Trust Fund. 4) Why didn't First Church investments perform as well as the Wisconsin State Pension Fund? A: It depends on the dates compared. First Church's fiscal year can be different than the state's. Also, the Wisconsin State Pension Fund is much larger than our investments, so they can afford to take more risks. 5) Can you share a few words about our socially responsible investments in Milwaukee? A) UUA has a matching program for donating funds to local businesses and First Church has invested

in Wisconsin Women's Business Investment Corporation (WWBIC), which gives small loans to local businesses. Bruce Wiggins and Trent Muller were very instrumental in setting this program up. 6) What goes into the General Fund as opposed to the Memorial Trust Fund? A) People can specify if they want their donations to be restricted or unrestricted. The Memorial Trust Fund contains designated bequests.

## Stewardship Report

Pledge Team chair Mark Chambers thanked all who pledged (as well as the rest of the team for their work), referenced the written report in this year's Annual Report, and also answered questions: 1) How many pledges did First Church get from non-members? Answer: About 25. 2) What is the number of First Church members? A: 620, with 435 "pledging units." 3) Can pledge waivers be requested? A) Yes. Mark C. noted that the Pledge Team made special efforts to make one-on-one contacts and reach out to past pledgers who had lapsed. We're projecting about \$735,000 in pledge income this coming church year.

## Congregational Vote: Support of Strategic Planning Direction

Strategic Planning Team members Julie Bock, Dave Becker, and Amanda Panciera presented highlights of the Team's work, including findings from consultant John Wemberley, and three options: 1) make drastic cuts up to \$150,000 in First Church expenses in the short term; 2) continue to take significant withdrawals from our financial reserves until they are exhausted; 3) grow First Church's income to close the budget gap to address First Church's longtime structural deficit. "Listen and Learn" sessions attended by almost 200 members resoundingly supported option 3. See the written Annual Report for additional details.

They also answered questions: 1) How does an endowment fund differ from the Memorial Trust Fund? Answer: The Memorial Trust Fund is a segregated fund that is governed by very specific rules and grows over time; income is taken from the Fund at 6%/year; policy allows draining of principal, under very specific circumstances and a super majority membership vote. An endowment fund would also be a separate fund, with separate policy documents to protect income and draining of principal would not be allowed. Main point is that we need a larger endowment and use income from it to help cover church operations. 2) Would this new endowment fund drive be different from our annual pledge drive? A: Yes. 3) Would the endowment fund drive be a one-year or multi-year event? A) To be determined, but most likely a multi-year event. 4) What can be done to stop hiring new staff every time we raise funds? A: We do not hire new staff every time we raise more funds. In fact, we run a "very lean ship here at First Church."

President Mark Bender asked the congregation to affirm its support for pursuing Option 3: to grow church income to achieve financial sustainability, and that we as a community will take the necessary steps to do so. This language was put into a motion by Tony Panciera and seconded by Elizabeth Lentini. At the time of the vote, there were 132 members in attendance; 119 voted in favor, 7 abstained, and 1 member was opposed. The motion carried.

## COVID Reopening Plan

Reverend Jennifer Nordstrom, and COVID Team members Erik Alexander and Lisa Koneazny made remarks and answered questions. Rev. Jennifer said that the COVID Team will continue to monitor the COVID situation in Milwaukee and adapt our First Church policy as we learn more from the scientific community. The core of this Team's work is to provide for the safety and well-being of our intergenerational community and the greater Milwaukee area. This approach is based on love, justice, and inclusivity. Because of our mission, First Church's policy is more cautious than some other organizations, even locally. Not everyone can be vaccinated right now and health officials say that probably not every who is eligible will get vaccinated, so we need to make individual risk assessments. First Church is a public institution and therefore needs to make different decisions compared to for-profit organizations. First Church will need some time to moved towards a multi-platform church. Our church building will not re-open before September 2021, in all likelihood.

Erik Alexander introduced the members of the COVID Team and talked about the “mean 7-day infection incidence” in Milwaukee County as the measure (which is also used by the Centers for Disease Control) that dictates our actions and policies. Communications will occur via e-blast to members, signage, message on First Church’s phone lines. He further noted that today there are 66 COVID cases/100,000 people in Milwaukee County, which is a decrease from 80 cases/100,000 earlier this week. Note: The reopening plan that was presented relies primarily on data outlining rolling average infection rate in Milwaukee County that will need to be met before we will meet in person.

Lisa Koneazny went over COVID precautions at different incidence rates. See the written Annual Report for details.

#### **Questions:**

- 1) Are all First Church clergy vaccinated? Answer: From Rev. Jennifer: I am. But I won’t reveal the status of anyone else without their permission.
- 2) Why will we have so many “touch” restrictions when the Centers for Disease Control says that Covid transmission is mostly airborne? A) We’re erring on the side of caution.
- 3) Will First Church provide window masks for small groups? A) That is still an open question that we’ll consider as we go along.
- 4) Why not ask members to volunteer their vaccination status? A) We will strongly encourage members to be vaccinated; anyone is welcome to volunteer their vaccination status. But remember that our First Church kids are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Also, we can’t know the vaccine status of visitors.
- 5) When we return in person, will there be any prioritization of who attends? A) No.
- 6) With the requirement of 10 COVID cases/100,000 people in Milwaukee County, do you think we will ever get to in person services? A) We sure hope that we will; things are moving in a positive direction.
- 7) Can you review the requirements for outdoor services over summer? A) Yes, we’re planning several outdoor summer services, providing that people remain masked and maintain a 6-foot distance from each other.

#### **Remarks from the Associate Minister**

Dena McPhetres said we will continue to adapt and we have each other to help find our way through these pandemic times. Dena also thanked Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson for her work with First Church’s religious education program and engaging families in it. Pastoral Care ministries were very busy this church year, and Dena thanked all those who worked in this arena. Her closing message to First Church: “Thank you for the privilege of being yours.”

#### **Remarks from the Senior Minister**

Jennifer Nordstrom expressed gratitude to all for the persistence in caring for each other and First Church, and noted that we’ve had to adapt all our operations to an online delivery format. Jennifer also noted this year’s astounding pledge results. She described First Church as a committed community and said we would be together soon. She also said that our service reach (via online views) has doubled after real time viewing, so we’re reaching more people; our Christmas Eve service had over 2,000 views. Expect a survey next week about multi-platform church. “I’m so grateful to be serving you as your Senior Minister.”

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

##### **Questions:**

- 1) Where can we access the recording of this meeting? Answer: Shari Wright will post it to First Church’s YouTube site, but it takes a day or so to load.

- 2) How can a new First Church committee on accessibility be proposed? A) The details will be decided by Rev. Jennifer and staff. Rev. Jennifer noted that First Church was working on this when the pandemic hit.
- 3) Will the Digital Outreach Coordinator use social media to increase the size of the congregation? A) The job description for this position is to build our online audience during the pandemic. When we return to in person services, we will look for ways to increase in person attendance.
- 4) Will re-opening procedures be shared? A) Yes, by late May-early June 2021, via e-blast, Chanticleer articles, etc.
- 5) Will Zoom be upgraded to free and better auto-captioning? Answer was provided several days later to B.J. Ermenc, who asked the question.
- 6) Will the Forums continue to be offered? A) Probably, but details need to be worked out.
- 7) What is First Church's involvement in UU General Assembly this year? Answer was provided several days later to Jessie Moffat, who asked the question.

**Comments from the congregation:**

- 1) The Earth Justice Ministry plans to sponsor outdoor events and hikes (following First Church COVID reopening procedures) on the first Saturday of each month.
- 2) Lorraine Jacobs invites members to join the Sunday Forum Committee; the group meets twice/year.

**Adjournment**

Alexis Fielik moved to adjourn the meeting and Bernice Popelka seconded the motion.

The motion was approved at 1:43 p.m.

# 2021 - 2022 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

## CONGREGATION OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**  
Jane Cliff  
**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Benedict LeFort  
**SECRETARY**  
Tony Panciera  
**TREASURER**  
Tom Briscoe

## BOARD MEMBERS

Jane Cliff (2019-22)  
George Bledsoe (2021-24)  
Dianna Dentino (2019-22)  
Patricia Geenen (2021-24)  
Rollie Hanson (2020-23)  
Mike Hogan (2020-23)  
Mark Miller (2019-22)  
Benedict LeFort (2020-23)  
Tony Panciera (2021-24)

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Kristine Hansen  
Tracy Kreuser  
Tom LeBel  
Jessie Moffat  
Susie Seidelman  
Vashti Lozier

## TEAMS, MINISTRIES, AND GROUPS

### ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Rev. Dena McPhetres

### ANTI-RACISM TEAM

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### AUDIO

Nick DaVia

### BOOK DISCUSSION

Barbra Lancelot

### BUDDHIST STUDY GROUP: GATHERING WATERS SANGHA

Mark Miller

### BUILDING & GROUNDS

Russ Drewry

### CHANCEL CHOIR

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Dir.

### CHILDREN'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thea Watters  
Stacey Theime

### CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED (TCG)

Pat McFarland  
Barbara Collignon

### COFFEE, CHRISTMAS

Lynne Jacoby, Membership Coord.

### COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Laura Maker

### DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

Bruce Wiggins

### FEAST FOR FUNDS

Sue Thaney

### FINANCE

Noreen Gilbertsen

### FORUM

Lorraine Jacobs  
Mark Mueller

### GALLERY

Alisha Koneazny

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY ADVISORS

Deb Solis, Youth Program Coord.

### HERITAGE SOCIETY

Lisa Koneazny

### HISTORY/ARCHIVES

Linda Presto

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Allan Ries

### MEMBERSHIP

Lynn Connelly

### MORTER LECTURE

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

### OWL TEACHERS

Deb Solis, Youth Program Coord.

### PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES COORDINATOR

Jeri Pearcy

### PASTORAL CARE PROVIDERS

**COORDINATOR**  
Jane Dorweiler

### PERSONNEL

Nancy Spransy

### PLEDGE DRIVE

Mark Chambers

### PULPIT GUEST

Rev. Dena McPhetres

### SHAWL MINISTRY

Patti Agacki  
Connie Georgenson

### SPIRITUAL RETREAT

Rollie Hanson  
Chris Aiken

### SUNDAY FLOWERS

Shari Wright, Office Mgr.

### SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social)

Camille Johnson

### THEME CIRCLES

Rev. Dena McPhetres

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

Angi Krueger  
Erik Islo

### USHERS

Cheri Briscoe

## **UU PRINCIPLES IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Rollie Hanson  
Michelle Boehm  
Terry Wiggins

## **WORSHIP ASSOCIATES**

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FAITH-BASED PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

### **CATHEDRAL CENTER**

Andy Sinko

### **COMMON GROUND**

Jerry Fredrickson

### **GUEST HOUSE SHELTER**

Thea Watters

### **INTERCHANGE FOOD PANTRY**

Beth Bruch  
Tim Ottman

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

Patricia McFarland

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

Pete Koneazny  
Bob Monahan

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL OTHER LEADERS**

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Kenyatta Yamel

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER 2 WI UUs**

Mary Devitt

### **CIRCLES OF SUPPORT**

Paul Geenen

### **DEFEND DEMOCRACY & UU THE VOTE**

Nick Hayes  
Kathy Rivera

### **EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY**

Bruce Wiggins  
Barbara Leigh

### **IMMIGRATION ACTION ISSUES TEAM**

Birger Pahl

### **SHARE THE PLATE**

Bob Monahan  
Nancy Spransy

### **THEME CIRCLE FACILITATORS:**

Jeanne Durnford  
Lisa Gies  
Candice Haight  
Diane Horne  
Barbra Lancelot  
Sally Lewis  
Juanita Mast  
Patricia McFarland  
Katy Phillips  
Nancy Spransy  
Robert Szymanski

### **PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES:**

Bob and Sue Austin  
Lynn Connolly  
Deborah Conta  
Jean Groshek  
Jeff and Joan Hansen  
Melinda Vernon  
Kitty Willkomm

**First Church**  
**Organizational Chart**  
[CLICK HERE](#)



# 2021-2022 Sermon Schedule

## JUNE 6

"Roots Hold Me Close, Wings Set Me Free"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## JUNE 13

"The Ground Is Troubled"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JUNE 20

"Architects of Our Roots"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JUNE 27

General Assembly Sunday Service

## JULY 4

"What Kind of God Do You Want?"  
Kevin Gibson, Member

## JULY 11

"Finding Your Purpose"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JULY 18

"Free Life Began"  
Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan

## JULY 25

"The Purpose of Relationships"  
Annie Wegner LeFort

## AUGUST 1

"Ask More, A Question Service"  
Rev. Leah Ongiri

## AUGUST 8

"Potential and Reality"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## AUGUST 15

"Poetry and the Art of Living"  
Katy Phillips, Member & Lynne Jacoby,  
Membership Development Coordinator

## AUGUST 22

"In the Flesh"  
Rev. Mykal O'Neal Slack

## AUGUST 29

"Side with Love"  
Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray

## SEPTEMBER 5

"Growing Ourselves from Seed"  
Rev. Sofia Betancourt

## SEPTEMBER 12

"You Can't Imagine the Good that Will Come"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## SEPTEMBER 19

"Ambiguity? Over. It."  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## SEPTEMBER 26

"Surrender, Dorothy!"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## SEPTEMBER 28

"Expectations Bound by Time"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## OCTOBER 3

"Relationships Transform Us"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## OCTOBER 10

"The World Works Through Relationship"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## OCTOBER 17

"Love Is a Verb"  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## OCTOBER 24

"They'll Remember How You Made Them Feel"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## OCTOBER 31

"Honoring Our Dead"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## NOVEMBER 7

"We Hold History in Our Bodies"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## NOVEMBER 14

"Roots Hold Me Close"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## NOVEMBER 21

"Grappling with History"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## NOVEMBER 28

"Artifact"  
Rev. Patrice Curtis

## DECEMBER 5

"Joy to the World!"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## DECEMBER 12

"Joybilee: Letting Go and Getting to Joy"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## DECEMBER 19

Multigenerational Holiday Pageant  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## DECEMBER 24

### CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## DECEMBER 26

"Much Ado About the Lure of Christmas"  
First Unitarian Church Minneapolis

## JANUARY 2

"What Do I Want My Life To Be?"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JANUARY 9

"Intention or In Tension?"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## JANUARY 16

"It Matters What You Do"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## JANUARY 23

"Holding One Another Together"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## JANUARY 30

"How to Apologize – Moving Beyond the Forced Playground Apology"  
Foothills Unitarian Church in Fort Collins

# 2021-2022 Sermon Schedule

## **FEBRUARY 6**

"Draw the Circle Wide"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FEBRUARY 13**

"Who Are We and Whose Are We?"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **FEBRUARY 20**

"Buck It"  
Rev. Denise Cawley

## **FEBRUARY 27**

"Draw A Larger Circle –  
Annual Youth Service"  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## **MARCH 6**

"Remember, Rekindle, Renew "  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MARCH 13**

"We Are Each Other's Witness"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MARCH 20**

"Faith is Another Word for Trust"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **MARCH 27**

"Faith in Our UU Principles"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **APRIL 3**

"Spring Awakening"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **APRIL 10**

"Awakening Is a Process"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **APRIL 17**

"Jesus Is a Phoenix"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **APRIL 24**

"Exploring Dreamland"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MAY 1**

"Beauty Creates Gratitude for Glory"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MAY 8**

"Nurturing Family Beauty"  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres

## **MAY 15**

"Beauty Opens the Door to Mystery"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

## **MAY 22**

"Religious Education Sunday: Honoring  
Beauty"  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

## **MAY 29**

"The Beauty of Memories"  
Rev. Carin Bringelson

## **JUNE 6**

"The Beauty of Memories"  
The Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom  
The Rev. Dena McPhetres  
The Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

# Wheel of Life

May 30, 2021 - May 8, 2022

## Deaths

Cheryl Butterfield  
Betty Gaedke  
Susan Mitten  
Katy Phillips  
Florence Waterston  
Laura Williams  
Eleanor (Ellie) Wichman

## Dedication of Parents And Children

Athena Aster Kegel  
Child of Katie & Noel Kegel

Rhyen Loa Clarke & Rowen Thaden Clarke  
Children of Troy Brandon Clarke & Serena-Jo Clarke/Jobey

Madison Lorraine Graff  
Child of Chrystal and Eric Graff

## New Members

### Fall 2021

Marie Britt-Sharpe  
Jennifer Roy  
Lorna Sullivan  
Cami Thomas

### Winter 2022

Gul Afshan  
Lindsay McGuire  
Remy Perez  
Candace Raines  
Jason Raines

### Spring 2022

Austin Baldwin  
Dennis Conta  
Sarah Dowhower  
Craig Edwards  
Annabelle Hammond  
Dharma Hammond  
Jane O'Keefe  
Ryan Pawlowski  
Duane Schultz  
Pam Wilkie  
Katie Wilson

## Graduating High School Seniors

Gus Pointer Mace  
Grace Hopkins  
Isabelle Lozier  
Dylan Duffy  
Anna Harris

## Heritage Society

Keith & Paula Anderson  
JoAnn Bachar  
Bob Balderson  
Christian Becker & Christina  
Zawadiwsky-Becker  
Mark & Jo Ann Bishop  
Patricia McFarland &  
Nick Bokas  
Rod Botts  
Tom & Cheri Briscoe  
Paul & Susanne Carter  
Dennis & Deborah Conta  
Susan Comstock  
Alexis Fielek  
Jerry Fredrickson & Jill Erickson  
Scot Henry & Laura White

Sally Heuer & Steven Culver  
Mary Houseman  
Nelson Kading  
Drew Kennedy & Lois Wesener  
Tina Keppel  
Pete & Lisa Koneazny  
Hank Kulesza  
Loren Leys & Adele Kaferly  
Bob Moore & Liz Irwin Moore  
Mark & Lonni Mueller  
Ellyn & Mike Newman  
Marlowe & Janet Nortrom  
Mimi Notestein  
Patrick & Barbara Patterson  
Holly Patzer  
Kathy & Bob Porter

Linda Presto  
Tom Radoszewski  
Michael Radtke  
Miriam Reading  
Kathy Rivera & Sally Lewis  
Max & Patricia Scharmach  
Dale Skaggs & Lynda Lambert  
Dick & Nancy Spransy  
Jane Stoltz  
Robert Szymanski  
Eileen Teska  
Melinda & Kit Vernon  
Don Weimer & Chris Linder  
Bruce & Terry Wiggins  
Jacki Zandi

# Staff Reports

## MINISTRY

### SENIOR MINISTER

Dear First Church,

We are closing yet another pandemic year, and I am so proud of how our community has held one another through this difficult time. We have continued the work of pastoral care together, navigated the complexities of returning to church in-person while simultaneously offering church online, and kept rolling with ever-evolving COVID safety measures.

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

We resumed in-person worship services and religious education in the church building in March of 2022. In Fall of 2021, we held one outdoor worship service each month, and we had Christmas Eve services indoors at church. Being back in person has been a balm for the soul, member, minister, and staff alike.

Attendance is lower this year than last year and pre-pandemic years. Like other churches across the country, even our regular attendees attend less often, a trend the pandemic accelerated. Now that we are both in-person and online, our full “to date” attendance is about 75% of our pre-pandemic average (this counts the people who attend in person, online live Sunday morning, plus those who watch Sunday’s online service later in the week). Our live attendance (in person + online live Sunday morning) is about half of our pre-pandemic average.

#### FIRST CHURCH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FIELD OF RELIGION

Congregations across the denomination and across faith traditions are seeing higher than usual decreases in attendance and membership. In 2020, there was a 38% overall drop in church attendance across the country, and in 2021, another 28% drop<sup>1</sup>. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of Americans who said they attend church at all dropped by 6 percentage points: from 34% to 28%<sup>2</sup>. The Great Resigna-

tion is also hitting congregations: according to a study from the Barna Group, 38% of clergy were seriously considering leaving their ministries<sup>3</sup>.

In the field of congregations most like ours, there are currently 34 large congregations (550 members or more) in Unitarian Universalism. Among those 34 large congregations:

- 20 congregations have had ministry transitions in the last 2-3 years, or are about to start a transition. This is unprecedented.
- 9 have senior ministers who have been in their position more than 5 years, including First Church
- 10 congregations saw a decrease of 5% or more in membership from 2021
- 15 congregations saw a 5% or more decrease in expenses
- No congregations grew their membership at 5% or more, though some had a little growth.
- 8 congregations saw a 5% or more increase in their budget.

First Church is doing *really well* in the context of the field of congregational ministry right now. Our ministers are not going anywhere, we have longevity and stability, and even though our attendance numbers are down, we are well within the norm, and in many ways doing better than the norm.

We are weathering the storm, and we are doing it with a lot of love, compassion, and commitment. This congregation has been steady through 180 years, two pandemics, two world wars, multiple recessions and the Great Depression. There are many changes, but the institution is strong, grounded, and resilient.

<sup>1</sup> <https://reachrightstudios.com/church-statistics-2022/#h-11-latest-church-statistics-for-in-person-attendance>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ifstudies.org/blog/the-decline-in-church-attendance-in-covid-america>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/local/pastors-join-great-resignation-poll-barna-group/277-7db45957-1187-4936-83ea-5da912ae7149>

# Staff Reports

## STAFF

Our deeply committed staff team has been working hard to continue online services while also opening up to in-person services and remembering how we do church in person! Like the rest of First Church, we are balancing doing with being, production with spiritual practice, and tending to the work of our own souls as we tend to others. We have been blessed with a very stable staff team this church year, and in March happily added Cecelia Groshek as our Nursery Caregiver.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

After last year's annual meeting voted to pursue increasing income to solve the structural operating budget deficit, the Strategic Planning Team moved forward with identifying a consultant to help us with a special fundraising campaign, which you can learn more about in the SPT's report. From the Senior Minister's perspective, this is an exciting and hopeful move to invest in our congregation's vitality and future! Our ministry is needed in the world today: it is needed by our members, our neighbors, and our city. I am excited to move into this chapter of exploring what we can do together to nourish people's spirits, engage people's minds, and inspire action.

## IN CLOSING

Our congregation has shown its resilience and commitment again this year, as people have come together to care for one another, discern and return to their values, and make meaning of these times. I continue to be grateful to be in the work with the people of First Church. We are stronger together.

With love,  
Jennifer

## ANTI-RACISM TEAM

The First Church Anti-Racism Team's priority for CY 21-22 was developing an operational policy encouraging the church to prioritize Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-owned vendors when contracting for goods or services. The team collected lists of vendors and are working on process for sharing them with church staff, teams, and members. Once we have all the tools ready, we will share the work with the congregation!

Also this year, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism approved the application for First Church to become a BLUU Haven.

Black First Church members are developing plans for their first meeting.

Looking back, we identified our three top CY 20 – 21 accomplishments as:

1. Our connections with one another and support for one another in the pain of the white supremacy and racism embedded in the pandemic;
2. Our work on evaluating the First Unitarian Society on an Anti-Racism Rubric for churches; and
3. Offering the Beloved Conversations curriculum to church members. About 10% of our membership has now taken the course, which is about half of our First Church leadership.

## DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) General Assembly in June 2021 was virtual, but had been slated to take place in Milwaukee. While we missed having a couple thousand UUs from all over the country visit us here, we did get a chance to highlight Milwaukee's amazing social justice work, history, community, and arts scene through a virtual "Milwaukee Spotlight" that had hundreds of views! A highlight was the very well-attended interactive session with Reggie Jackson on Milwaukee's history of segregation. We also spotlighted the work of many Milwaukee social justice organizations, musicians, and had a worship service focusing on our area congregations' work on Anti-Racism within, among, and beyond our churches. Rev. Jennifer was also honored to lead the Opening Worship of the entire General Assembly, in collaboration with the Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan, which was watched by thousands. The Closing Worship's Sunday donation went to our social justice partner organization, MICAH (Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope), contributing \$59,000 to their racial justice work in Milwaukee!

Also this year, we gathered First Church members' input on the revisions of our UUA's Principles and Purposes, contained in the UUA Bylaws' Article II. Our Principles are those values we often talk about in church: "the inherent worth and dignity of every human being; the interdependent web of all existence." The UUA Study Commission will be making a recommendation about an update to the Principles and Purposes. The First Church held four workshops educating members about this process and gathering their input. We had about 35 First

# Staff Reports

Church members participate in a workshop, including the Board, the Social Justice Council, and two open to all members. We submitted our folks' input to the UUA Study Commission, and shared the form for individual input in the Chanticleer newsletter and on social media.

## FIRST CHURCH STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) was chartered by the Board of Trustees in December 2019 to consider the overall strategic direction and long-term vision, growth, and sustainability of First Church and advise the Board and congregation. The team was specifically tasked with addressing the structural budget deficit and to make a recommendation for a sustainable model of funding to achieve our mission and ends within our financial means. Team members are Mark Bishop, Ben LeFort, Amanda Panciera, Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, and co-chairs Julie Bock and David Becker.

The SPT has met regularly since April 2020, generally every two weeks. Initial discussions yielded these areas prioritized for strategic consideration: Growth, Financial Planning, External Threats & Opportunities as well as Sustainability. To guide the process of framing the strategic question and eliciting congregational feedback, the SPT engaged professional consultant Rev. John Wimberly in 2020-2021 to research and create both a financial report and growth potential report for the SPT and Board's use. We held 14 Listen and Learn sessions involving nearly 200 church members and staff to share the information from these reports and solicit feedback in order to address the financial and growth issues identified in the reports. Unanimously, all sessions chose to **grow income to close the budget gap**. This recommendation was presented to and affirmed by the congregation in May 2021.

In the 2021-2022 church year, the SPT once again drafted and released a Request for Proposal to engage a consulting firm to advise on fundraising for First Church's financial sustainability. James D. Klote & Associates, an international fundraising firm with nearly 100 years of experience successfully assisting faith communities in raising money to support their mission and vision, was selected from a field of 7 applicants and 4 interviewees. Klote & Associates were enthusiastically endorsed by the Board of Trustees for their proposed multi-phase capital campaign model. A Campaign Steering Team is in the process of forming, led by Holly Patzer and overseen by the Strategic

Planning Team, planning for a fall 2022 capital campaign. Initial fiscal research on First Church is currently taking place, with Reverend Jennifer working with Jim Klote.

## THE COVID TEAM

While the ongoing COVID pandemic has been a challenge to all facets of life, the First Church COVID Team has been constantly adapting to the evolving situation in our community with safety as our principle and sound science as our guidance. We had high hopes for starting in-person church in the fall of 2021, but the late-summer Delta wave precluded us from doing so safely. Given the safety of outdoor activities, we pivoted to monthly services in parks to bring our congregation together.

During the fall's Delta wave, our team pivoted again to change our safety policy to rely on vaccinations so we could gather even at higher incidence levels of COVID. Our subsequent plans to restart in-person worship were temporarily delayed by the much larger Omicron wave, but we were able to hold three Christmas Eve candlelight services in the sanctuary before the situation deteriorated too much. Staff-led small groups were able to start meeting in-person again over the winter, followed shortly by member-led small groups.

Regular in-person Sunday worship services resumed on March 6, 2022 with strict attendance limits, a high-quality mask mandate, and a vaccine or test regime, among other restrictions. In the Spring, the COVID team continued to follow the science and incrementally ease restrictions, such as eliminating the attendance caps/reservation system and permitting masked congregational singing. The team has plans to continue easing restrictions as COVID incidence numbers decrease, and has identified the numbers which would necessitate the reimposition of these limitations. The high-quality mask mandate and vaccine or test regime are the easiest and most effective ways to protect the congregation, so the team has no immediate plans to eliminate them.

We appreciate everyone's patience as we attempt to bring back as much pre-pandemic normality as possible while navigating this ever-changing landscape with an eye toward health, safety, compassion, and empathy.



# Staff Reports

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

This year, our Social Justice Council focused on sharing organizing wisdom, re-grouping for in-person church, and connecting with our partners. The Council developed a new tool to assess the quality of our relationships with our partners, moving from a quantitative survey to a qualitative conversation about the relationship. The Council shared strategies for outreach and connection during the pandemic. Some council teams have had trouble staying connected, while others have thrived.

The Council reflected on engaging the congregation upon return to in-person worship. Questions ranged from, “How do we engage the congregation in 2022?” to “How much will the congregation want to be engaged?” to “Who is the congregation in 2022?” The Council revised their Coffee Hour tabling strategy, with a higher focus on engagement, and a lower focus on information.

Some highlights from individual teams on the Council:

- On October 21, Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA), a congregationally-based organizing group of which we are a member, held their Annual Meeting. A number of First Church folks attended, and Rev. Jennifer gave the blessing. They celebrated the UUA’s General Assembly Closing Worship offering to MICAHA of \$59,000!
- In December, the Interchange Food Pantry Board, of which First Church is a member, chose to increase their 2022 budget for fresh produce and personal care items, and hire additional office staff. Their goal is to become the food pantry known for fresh and healthy food. In February, the Council engaged in an action / reflection exercise on how the Interchange Food Pantry’s growing mission reflects First Church’s values and Ends.
- On December 9, the Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee’s held their annual meeting and fundraiser, which a number of First Church Social Justice Council members attended.
- In March, the Interfaith Council of Greater Milwaukee held their annual luncheon series, this year focusing on climate. Rev. Jennifer opened the series with a prayer.

- On January 6, the First Church Defend Democracy Team led about a dozen of First Church members at an outdoor vigil in front of the courthouse to commemorate the 2021 January 6 attacks.
- Over the course of the year, the Earth Justice Ministry engaged our members in the plastic-free MKE campaign, challenging our members to find an alternative to one plastic product each month.
- The Circles of Support team has met with citizens returning to Milwaukee after being incarcerated, and listened to their stories.
- On March 13, Common Ground held their Milwaukee Mayoral Forum with over 1,000 people in attendance to hear the candidates present their perspectives and to ask them to commit to Common Ground’s issues.

## ASSOCIATE MINISTER

If I needed anything to make me notice how much I love you, it was to be physically apart for two years of pandemic and then reunited at in-person church this spring. It is a joy to behold you and rebuild our connections. It will take time and gentle attention to find out who we are as individuals and as a community—how we have changed and what we need to nurture our spirits, engage our minds, and inspire action in this new world.

## ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Adult Spiritual Development (ASD) Team, (Javier Dorantes, Lisa Gies, Diane Horne), continued to support opportunities for spiritual growth and learning. Participation dropped somewhat due to second year pandemic Zoom fatigue—small but mighty was our motto! Much gratitude to our facilitators who keep these opportunities going, whether weekly or monthly.

- Connect & Reflect group had 8 regular participants weekly. Diane Horne and Amy Wilbourne facilitated.
- A Geography of Grace had 4 sessions in the fall, a continuation from the previous church year with 10 participants. Dale Skaggs and Diane Horne co-facilitated.
- Poetry Contemplation Group has 29 people on their list

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averaging 18 participants weekly. Lynne Jacoby and her team facilitated.

- Advent Lectio Group had 7 participants for the season. Lynne Jacoby and Nancy Cross Dunham facilitated.
- Ongoing Yoga classes with teacher Morgan Engels served an average of 5 students twice a week.

**Theme Circles** completes its fourth year at First Church, where members and friends gather in groups of eight with a trained facilitator to delve deeper into our monthly worship themes. Theme Circles include homework with spiritual exercises, questions for reflection, and multi-sensory resources, which can be done at your convenience at any level. Participants make a commitment to attend once a month October – June. Theme Circles served 45 members and friends, plus 11 Facilitators in 7 circles this year. Three new facilitators joined our team. Registration for next year begins September 1.

We invested in a subscription and launched a new program this year: UU Wellspring Sources. Five participants, including the facilitators, took a deep dive into the six UU sources of spiritual wisdom, attending a retreat in August, meeting twice a month September - June, committing to a daily spiritual practice, doing homework, and reflecting together on UU history, theology, identity, and their own spiritual growth. Much appreciation to Candice Haight and Diane Horne who researched and launched this program with me, and to Nancy Cross Dunham and Diane Horne, co-facilitators. Look for a new UU Wellspring Sources group next fall!

## PASTORAL CARE

Someone once said, “grief shared is halved, joy shared is doubled.” We continued to lighten each other’s burdens and increase each other’s joy from a distance during the pandemic. The support we give and receive from each other, both formal and informal, makes a world of difference to our well-being.

Most of my summer was dedicated to redesigning our Pastoral Care Associates training utilizing the online UU Leadership Institute Spiritual Care resources in combination with our own excellent training resources. I oriented and trained our new PCA Co-Trainers while updating our First Church PCA training manual. I recruited, interviewed, and led our 20-hour training for a new team of nine Pastoral Care Associates (PCAs) with the excellent help of Co-Trainers Sarah Richards and Dale

Skaggs, and PCA Coordinator Jeri Pearcy. PCAs offer a confidential listening presence to members who face significant life events including illness, accidents, surgeries, death of a loved one, separation and divorce, parenting challenges, hospice, homebound elders and the stress of caregiving, among other life transitions. PCAs made multiple contacts with 30 members since last May. Rev. Jennifer, Rev. Kimberlee and I made at least 136 pastoral care contacts with members.

We continued the ritual of lighting the COVID Candle during Sunday online worship for any church member who lost a loved one to COVID or any other cause. We lit the COVID Candle at least 14 times before resuming in-person worship in March. We distributed 9 Home Grief Kits to those who wanted supplies and instructions for a simple home ritual to mark the loss of a loved one, in lieu of gathering in person for a memorial service. We delivered 26 shawls, lap robes and baby blankets from our Shawl Ministry, thanks largely to the knitting needles of Connie Georgensen, our intrepid Shawl Ministry Coordinator.

I added an online, drop-in, monthly Grief Support Group in January, co-facilitated by myself and PCA Deborah Conta.

Our Pastoral Care Provider (PCP) Team of 18 church members provide practical help for short-term needs. They provided contactless meal delivery to one household, two grocery shopping and delivery runs, one delivery of a Christmas Eve kit, and two miscellaneous physical tasks. Two additional requests went unfilled due to unavailability. Big thanks to Jane Dorweiler, PCP Coordinator, who has served for over 3 years while we recruit a new coordinator.

## SMALL GROUPS

Four Affinity Groups were active online including Book Discussion, Gathering Waters Sangha (Buddhist Study Group), Chancel Choir, and The Chronologically Gifted. SWANS (Seasoned Women Are Naturally Social) and UUUFDA (Unitarian Universalists Under Forty Doing Activities) went on hiatus until they could start up again in person. These Member-Led Ministries gather around shared interests or demographics to find friends and deeper belonging. Affinity Groups are open to everyone to come and go as they please.



# Staff Reports

## SUMMER SERVICES

Summer worship services and religious education programs continue to be an important ministry of year-round church. I work closely with the Pulpit Guest staff-led team to plan and coordinate summer services. I also provide one-to-one coaching for each member who leads a service. We held 13 summer services online in 2021, including 3 clergy guests, 3 member-led services, 4 services from me. We also virtually visited the Appleton UU Fellowship, Side with Love service, and the General Assembly closing worship.

## CONCLUSION

The Rev. Ken Sawyer said, “ministry is about love and death.” The poignancy of this statement resonates in the intimacy of my ministry with you while we grieve the many losses of the pandemic, climate change, threats to democracy, war in Ukraine, and more. I am deeply grateful to you as we remind each other and affirm together that ministry is also about love and life. I hope and trust that beholding each other gives us strength and joy on life’s journey. Thank you for the honor of serving First Church.

Yours,

Dena

## ADMINISTRATION

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

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

Here are some highlights of pandemic year two.

## OFFICE/ADMIN HIGHLIGHTS

Office Manager Shari Wright is responsible for general operations of the office so that it operates efficiently and smoothly. In addition to general office and admin processes, her responsibilities include technology integration, events planning, IT and database management, contributions accounts and data, and along with our Communications Team, publications and communications.

Shari developed forms and systems for scheduling multi-mode meetings (in-person with online participation option) as well as the tech needed to support these programs. She installed a new livestream camera in the sanctuary which has better resolution in low light. She developed an automated check-in system for Sunday RE kids and worked with Sunday Forum to phase-in their return to the building.

The admin team implemented and refined COVID-required logistics for returning to the building such as checking proof of vaccination, clarifying room capacity limits, and developing a reservation system for in-person services. We developed a simpler order of service.

To reflect lower building use, Jennifer and I trimmed building open hours and moved to one Facilities & Tech Assistant (Jim Spice) at 25 hours per week (vs. pre-pandemic 2 Facilities Assistants at 34 hours/week).

I’m a member of the COVID Team, focusing on implementation of the policy and precautions as well as communicating how they shape our safety and behavior in the building.

## COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Communications staff team currently includes Office Manager Shari Wright, Digital Outreach Coordinator (DOC) Molly Sommerhalder, and me. Using a variety of channels, the comm team worked to keep folks engaged in programs and up to date with the ever-shifting pandemic plans for returning to the building. Special highlights include: The upgraded digital monthly Chanticleer launched in July to great reviews. Special comm about the three outdoors services as well as in-person Christmas Eve services were a fall focus. Messaging about COVID reopening was adjusted and campaigns executed numerous times throughout the year with pandemic swings.

DOC Molly works to engage our community online for current members and share our mission, beliefs, and ends statements to attract new members. The objective is to sustain and grow

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First Church with strategic, consistent posting, reviewing, and engagement on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as shaping paper communications into digital formats.

Molly continues to work to build engagement on our social media platforms. As of April 2022, the First Church Facebook Page has 2,252 followers and 2,195 likes, the Facebook community group has 462 members, and Instagram has 452 followers. Molly provided support to groups and leaders by creating a new Social Justice Group brochure and a digitally enhanced Group Directory brochure with QR codes. She also used our social platforms to support campaigns such as in-person/online Christmas service, continuous COVID updates, Pledge Drive, and the return to in-person Sunday Service.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Our excellent IT Team is dedicated to updating our computer systems, security data, and managing our reliable network infrastructure. The team is led by Office Manager Shari Wright with chair Allan Ries and Steve Culver.

Over the past year, several groups and church employees depended on the church's Office 365 cloud-based network. The Office 365 SharePoint sites allow for document collaboration with teams and groups and the Outlook email services can be accessed remotely and by phone providing necessary communication tools for the pandemic priorities. The IT Team has been important in servicing these tools, making them secure and dependable along with their continued maintenance for the on-premises servers and network equipment.

The return to the church building required a mixed-mode meeting solution which would allow Zoom meetings to participate with in-person meetings. Three audio visual (AV) carts were repurposed or purchased to be configured with large screens, cameras (including a new Meeting Owl camera), and speakers to enable online participants to engage with in-person meetings via Zoom.

In November, the Chancel Choir started using a new AV cart to allow remote choir members to participate with in-person choir rehearsals. This year, about eight small groups and working teams' monthly meetings met in mixed-mode (in-person and Zoom). Since March 1, the Sunday Forum has been on-site and used an improved AV cart with the projector to invite speakers to participate from remote locations.

Other project this year include installing two security cameras

by the front door and a server to capture video from these cameras. The IT Team has also assisted with network support for the audio upgrades in the Sanctuary and the future livestream configuration that is being tested for use this fall.

## FACILITIES HIGHLIGHTS

Facilities Manager Tom Schroeder is responsible for managing building use and directing our friendly and capable Facilities & Technical Assistant Jim Spice. Tom manages repairs and improvements of our facilities with the assistance of part-time Maintenance Worker Art Sims and the talented Building and Grounds Staff-led Team, headed by Russ Drewry.

Tom and the B&G have done a great job managing numerous projects this year. Highlights include: Replaced the primary boiler and circulating pump. Replaced the elevator fire control cabinet. For COVID safety, investigated air exchange rate of the lower level and other means to clean interior air. Fixed apartment plumbing and cleaned and repaired extensive leaking into the office below. Painted the service hallway. Added 2 baby changing stations. Replaced cracked exterior glass on north elevation near Ogden Street sign. Devised a more secure Black Lives Matter banner hanging system.

## FINANCE OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Financial systems operated smoothly this year. Working with the Treasurer and Shari, I provide accurate monthly financial statements and pledge fulfillment reports. Working with the Finance Team, we provide quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees. I also lead the development of the annual

budget. Our Payroll Protection Program loan of \$118,300 was forgiven in full in April 2021. We are now applying for CARES Act Employee Retention Tax Credits. With the continued uncertainties of the pandemic, we kept an especially close eye on contributions, and pledge payments have kept pace all church year. Please also find a report from Finance Team chair Noreen Gilbertsen in this annual report.

This year has been filled with challenges and joys. Our connection as a church community as we weather the second year of pandemic is so very precious, essential, and strong. I'm happy to see you in the church building again. I'm honored to serve First Church.

Jean Johnson,  
Director of Administration

# Staff Reports

## MUSIC

### LEAD MUSIC DIRECTOR

#### SUNDAY SERVICES

Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode and Choral Director Tristan Strelitzer continue to strive for Sunday programming that inspires wonder and transformative experience in a communal setting, while simultaneously seeking to provide a full spectrum of musical styles designed to engage and welcome a diverse range of people and perspectives. Collaborative Pianist Teresa Drews continues to contribute piano solos both online and in person, as well as accompany the Chancel Choir. As we transitioned back toward in-person programming over the course of 2021-22, our Music staff's efforts also shifted toward resuming in-person rehearsal and programming while simultaneously curating videos for our online services. When we offered outdoor in-person services at Milwaukee County Parks, extra notable efforts were made by members of the house band—not only to rehearse and perform within strict COVID protocols, but to transport gear and technically make those services possible. Now that a shorter online service is offered, Tristan Strelitzer has become the primary video editor for the online service.

#### AUDIO UPGRADE

In collaboration with Audiofyte LLC, Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode supervised a substantial upgrade of our Sanctuary sound system. This was a Krug-funded project which had been delayed due to the pandemic. Installation took place in January. Training for the Audio Team began in February and is ongoing. Church member Nick DaVia now serves as our Audio Team Leader, working together with Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode to coordinate training, establish best practices and procedures to support the audio tech needs of our Sunday services.

#### CHANCEL CHOIR

In Fall of 2021, the Chancel Choir held a few outdoor rehearsals, often challenged by the weather. Eventually, Chancel Choir rehearsals were moved indoors, following protocols established in conjunction with the COVID Team.

#### CHORAL SCHOLARS

The Choral Scholar program was put on hiatus for the 2021-22 church year, as only one year of program funding remains. We hope to resume the program in 2022-23.

#### SINGERS IN THE STREETS

This project remained on hold during 2021-22, however, we hope to pick up and continue the work when it is safe to do so.

Alissa Rhode  
Lead Music Director

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It has been a long and winding road for religious education. This year began with all our religious education opportunities online; children, youth and families found their way by joining Sunday RE Zoom spaces. We connected, participated in social justice, learned, played, and even cooked with one another, all online. Fall arrived and finally offered us our first chance to be together as a congregation but not at our church, so we journeyed into parks and new spaces. With fits and stops the winter revealed a spring opening and together, having cautiously navigated the many twists and turns, we safely returned to RE in our church while remaining online.

The last two years has taken us on quite journey, we have stayed true to our vision and mission and have learned many new skills. In the last two months, there has been a resurgence in RE, with 23 new children/youth registrants and 22 new RE volunteers since reopening First Church. We have shown perseverance throughout this pandemic, and as we rebuild a place for children, youth, and families at church we will need to be patient, as what we lost over time will also take time to rebuild. I am optimistic about what future religious education opportunities might offer our children, youth, families.

Despite all the obstacles of this year, it has been a privilege and a blessing to serve with so many fine and caring people and I am grateful for you all.

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## MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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

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

**2020-21 Goal:** Children's Religious Education Team's 2021 goal is to openly explore innovative ideas that welcome and connect families.

## 2019-20 CHURCH YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

### RE Structure

At the beginning of the church year, RE online sessions were offered at different times on Sunday and throughout the week. This allowed for participants in one household to join different RE age groups, and to utilize the RE staff, who led most of the RE sessions. This is an overview of the RE structure from September-February:

- Early childhood classes with Mariah Groshek and Lindsay Porter at 9:15 am on Sundays.
- Families Together, family ministry, on Sundays led by Rev. Kimberlee.
- Crossing Paths: Exploring world religions, 5th-10th grade led by Rev. Kimberlee & Deb Solis. (September-December) on Sundays.
- Youth Worship Planning (December-February) led by Rev. Kimberlee with Deb Solis assisting on Thursdays.
- UU Wellspring for Youth (ages 14-19) led by Jessie Moffat and Deb Solis on Thursdays.
- OWL: Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators (see YPC report for details) on Tuesday evenings.

As the new year arrived, we began the many preparations needed before RE could return to church. This included Deb Solis and I doing significant amount of cleaning and reorganizing as we readied the space for our children and families. I am thankful for the RE families who helped us finish that process. Recruiting volunteers, setting up schedules, a new check in system, communicating about RE requirements and registration were some of the many tasks that required RE staff attention. Fortunately, twenty-three new RE volun-

teers got their background checks, vaccinations, and booster shots to generously give of their time and energy to the children and youth at our church allowing us to restart in-person religious education in March. Additionally, we needed to hire a new Nursery Caregiver to assist with our youngest UU's and were fortunate to add Cecelia Groshek to the RE Staff.

This is an overview of the RE structure March through to May:

### Online:

- Early childhood at 9:15 am on Sundays.
- Families Together (through March 2022.)
- UU Wellspring for Youth (ages 14-19) led by Jessie Moffat and Deb Solis on Thursdays.
- OWL: Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators (see YPC report for details) on Tuesday evenings.

### In-Person on Sundays:

- Early Childhood Care with Cecelia Groshek and volunteers
- All Ages RE lead by Rev. Kimberlee with assistance from RE volunteers.
- Youth Group, grades 7-12th (March & April)
- OWL for 7-9th Graders led by OWL volunteers and Deb Solis
- Hearts on Fire: Senior Credo lead by Rev. Kimberlee and Deb Solis

### Children's RE Team

The Children's Religious Education Team met monthly throughout this year to plan and work together in creating events and programming for RE. The CRE team has been instrumental in helping organize and lead many of the special events we implemented this year as well as teaching RE classes as needed. Our CRE team includes co-chairs Thea Watters and Stacey Theime, Stacey Koenen, and we welcomed Caroline Robbins to the team this spring. I thank them dearly for their dedication and service through a particularly challenging time for RE.

### Intergenerational Social Action

Throughout the year, we offered ways for members to support people in need in our community. This fall we collected hundreds of books at church and community gatherings that were donated to Next Door. In December, we offered a virtual "Giving Tree" in cooperation with United Way, raising \$850 for holiday gifts for local families to be purchased from

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local black-owned businesses. This spring, our young people created flower art to sell at church and donated to the people of Ukraine. Finally, in May this year we will be making 300 sandwiches for people in need donated to Guest House, who RE has also chosen to be our Share the Plate partner in May.

## Multigenerational Services

Our first in-person RE events started with Yoga in Humboldt Park with Annie Wegner LeFort in October. In November, our church collaborated with Unitarian Universalist Church West to create a Halloween Celebration for all ages, that 60 people attended. I also led our in-person multi-generational service, Roots Hold Me Close at Lake Park Stage, in cooperation with the remarkable efforts of Alissa Rhode and the house band, Patrick Mulvey, Revs. Jennifer and Dena, and our church staff. For our Holiday Pageant this year over 70 generous members shared their holiday traditions and memories to create the content of our service. Our other multigenerational services included Youth Service (see YPC report) and RE Sunday in May.

## RE Extras

Additional initiatives of our Religious Education team included sending caring Valentines to members, setting up a safer check-in attendance system for children and youth and restricting the process of welcoming and tracking new children in our congregation, from baby blanket to child dedications.

## Children and Youth RE Metrics

2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	Comparisons taken on average through the 2nd Sunday of March
48	31	118	Number of registered children and youth
10 Online 16 In-Person	21	56	Average Attendance
N/A	70%	52%	Average percentage of registered students attending

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson  
Minister of Religious Education

## YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR

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

The 2021-22 church once again proved to be a challenge as we offered virtual-only youth programming from September 2021 through February 2022 and then returned to in-person Sunday morning youth group in March 2022. No fundraising took place and our YSC meetings were put on hold in January 2022 so that we can focus on rebuilding our youth group. I continued to assist co-teaching our middle school virtual class Crossing Paths in late 2021.

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

## OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL) PROGRAM

The COVID-19 pandemic required us to postpone any on-site OWL programming until April 2022. We did offer a once-a-month online-only class: Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators from September 2021 through June 2022 facilitated by Shannon Widlanski, Liz Hopkins, Crysta Jarczycki and myself. We had a regular attendance of ten parents. Topics included: How Do We Talk About Sex?; Gender Identity; Sexual Health; Consent and Decision Making.

We took advantage of our church reopening in March 2022 and were able to offer an in-person OWL class for 14 enrolled Grade 7-9 youth starting in April 2022 and running weekly through September 4, 2022. This class is being facilitated by Jacqi Akert, John Fitak, Jeremy Koenen and myself.

We are continuing to offer sexuality resources, curated for families and children and youth of all ages.

The monthly sponsored UUA & UCC OWL facilitator monthly webinars continued throughout this church year. I attended many of them with topics ranging from: Sex Trivia!; OWL: Why We Do The Things We Do; Under Your Wing: an eight part short video series for parents of children in grade K-1; and OWL revisions for Grade 7-9 and 10-12 curriculum.



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

Youth group met online on Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m. starting in September 2021 and continued until March 2022 when we returned to in-person church and met on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. Attendance for regular online Youth Group program disappeared, with Wellspring being the only regularly attended Youth program on Thursdays.

We started with more structure for our youth using Soul Matters resources, and community building activities/games. We did not offer any in-person youth sponsored fundraisers this year due to the pandemic restrictions.

The annual youth service (February 27) Draw a Larger Circle was all virtual once again and required our MRE to edit and assemble this service. If we seek to widen the circle of respect, reconciliation, understanding, and love, particularly in places where there is a history of oppression, we need to know our own history. Our youth reflected on our church's history, shining a light on past efforts to "draw a larger circle" and the times we missed the opportunities to "widen our circle." This young generation of UU's seek a clear-eyed approach to the challenges before us while gaining wisdom from our past. We had eight youth share their personal and researched church history stories, and musical talents as they drew a larger circle in the future.

On February 5 we had six youth visit church for a history tour in person for the first time since the pandemic began two years ago.

Special thanks to our youth who participated in our virtual Youth Worship: Gus Pointer Mace, Kailey Thieme, Vera LeFort, Myles Pointer Mace, Isabelle Lozier, Anna Harris, and Leah Twente.

The youth selected America's Black Holocaust Museum (ABHM) as the March Share the Plate recipient. ABHM builds public awareness of the harmful legacies of slavery and Jim Crow in America and promotes racial repair, reconciliation and healing. ABHM's vision is to a society that remembers its past in order to shape a better future – a nation undivided by race where every person matters equally.

We offered our Hearts on Fire program for our graduating high school seniors and participants included Gus Pointer Mace, Grace Hopkins and Isabelle Lozier. These seniors met in April with our MRE and myself leading discussions as youth develop their credo for RE Sunday (May 22, 2022) delivery.

New this year was a virtual monthly Youth UU Wellspring program led by Jessie Moffat and myself where youth explored our six UU sources in connection with many types of spiritual practices. We had three youth participate in this program.

Special thanks to our caring and supportive 2021-22 youth advisor team: Don Weimer, Bizzy Schultz, Rollie Hanson, Nick DaVia and Jessie Moffat.

Special thanks to all of our caring, supportive YRUU Advisor Team: Don Weimer, Bizzy Schultz, Rollie Hansen, Jessie Moffat, Nick DaVia and Jean Crandall-Jacobs.

## LEADERSHIP

The Youth Steering Committee (YSC) consists of adults and high school youth that oversee the senior high religious education program extra curricular activities and events. Members this year were: Gus Pointer-Mace, as our youth co-chair for the second year, Grace Hopkins, Paul Maynard, Zahni Gulbranson Leah Twente and Myles Pointer Mace.

The YSC primarily implements the fundraisers and extracurricular activities for youth, all of which did not take place this past church year due to the pandemic. We are hoping to offer our overnights, Habitat for Humanity service trip to Battle Creek, Michigan, Boston Heritage Trip and resume our fundraising activities next church year.

## CROSSING PATHS: MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

I continued co-teaching responsibilities with the MRE working with our middle school youth in our virtual Crossing Paths class. Crossing Paths helps youth build and clarify their own UU identity through engagement with other faiths. It was offered on Sundays at 1:00 p.m. in self-contained 4-week units exploring faiths that are sources for UUs. Faiths which we explored included Catholicism, Paganism and Evangelical. Six youth regularly attended this online class during Fall/Winter months of 2021.

During July 2021 and January 2022, I spent a great deal of time reorganizing and cleaning all of our lower level RE classrooms, cabinets, supplies and storage facilities. As well as organizing our RE office spaces. This was done to prepare for in person RE classes.

Blessings,  
Deb Solis, Youth Coordinator

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## MEMBERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

#### MEMBERSHIP TEAM

Team: Lynn Connolly (Chair), Paula Anderson, Dana Brooks, Alexis Fielek, Megan Kaminsky and Lynda Lambert.

#### Accessible Welcome

Again this year the Membership Staff (and therefore Team) struggled with connecting with virtual visitors we know were joining our services. Some of the ways we attempted to do so were:

- A Virtual Visitor Welcome form
- A Virtual Visitor Coffee Hour
- A Virtual Welcome Brochure (with links to accessible “drop-in” opportunities to connect.)
- Sending a Virtual Brochure to people who sign up on-line to our Constant Contact list for email announcements

Team members also played a bigger role in our Journey to Membership classes to build more connection with our virtual new members some of whom would not have otherwise met a single Member before joining.

#### Welcome Stand

Once back in person, the Welcome Stand in the hallway (started just two months before shut down) has become a permanent feature with a new custom-made podium by First Church member Pete Hill. A consistent presence in the hallway allows the MDC to recognize guests and visitors on their 2nd or 3rd visit and greet them whether or not they make it into the social hour.

#### Innovative Welcome

Like many groups the Team spent some energy planning a Welcome Back events only to delay and delay again.

When we finally regathered in-person we pivoted to an Engagement Fair aimed at both new who joined during COVID and longer term members who may have drifted from connection over the past two years. Lay-leadership response was terrific with twenty-five groups and teams represented to chat with interested people about what they do here at First Church. Member and New Member response may have been a little less enthusiastic, nonetheless it felt like a start to our membership reconnecting and re-engaging with one another beyond Sunday Services.

#### Numbers

20 people joined First Church this church year (11 from our April Journey Class). 97 records were entered into our database for the first time this year (July 1, 2021 – April 26, 2022) including 8 of the new members, 26 via Welcome/Visitor Cards (mostly on-line this year), 9 Adult Spiritual Development Program Registrants, 9 new Contributors and one Pledging Friend. The remaining new records are miscellaneous including friends and family who registered for our Christmas Eve Service and plate “text to give” donors.

#### Re-Establishing Sunday Routines

After a two-year shutdown, life changes and individuals navigating their own parameters for COVID safety our Usher and Welcome Table corps were scattered. Many thanks to Cheri Briscoe for regathering and recruitment for Spring services, no mean feat.

Many thanks to the Membership Team for being patient, willing (and suddenly very busy organizing an Engage Fair) through a difficult time to figure out how to connect with visitors and engage new members. A special personal thank you to our outgoing Chair Lynn Connolly for her attentiveness, wisdom and unfailing good humor in keeping her Staff lead on Track all through two years of COVID.

# Staff Reports

## STEWARDSHIP

### PLEDGE TEAM

Team Members: Team Members: Mark Chambers (Chair), Bob Balderson, Matt Byrnes, Jeff Hansen, Kathy Donius, Patricia McFarland & Jacki Zandi.

#### Goal

With the ongoing pandemic, but also an ongoing budget operations gap, the Pledge Team set a goal of a 5% increase this year or \$788,000. This goal, while reflecting the need for more pledge income in this community, proved unrealistic and I am projecting a 1% decrease from our current \$755,000 pledges on file, or \$742,000 in pledge commitments this year.

Roughly 45% of our community increased their pledges, and many met or exceeded our ask (at 12% overall for this group), thank you! Another 45% generously renewed their commitment exhibiting their value of, and faith in, this community after two years of not gathering in person. A final 10% of the pledges received to date decreased their annual commitment.

This 10%, though similar in the number of households that decrease in a typical year, made a larger impact in our total amount. Every year there are different reasons people need or choose to decrease their pledge. On top of the usual decreases, this year, a handful of our larger donors who have had changes in their personal lives in the past two years, from family situations to moving to medical needs, came in at a decrease. These donors have been incredibly generous to us and continue to be, but understandably some of their finances are shifting to support the ways their lives are changing.

In addition to the impact of the known decreases, I am projecting 20 fewer pledging families overall which also affects our bottom line. On the positive side, after the first COVID New Member class (directly after we closed in Spring 2020), we averaged 6 new members per the remaining COVID classes (5). Last week, just 2 months after we re-opened in person, we had 12 new members join our congregation. So there is some indication that my projection of year end overall pledging families may be conservative.

#### Remember, Rekindle, Renew

In addition to raising money (and awareness) towards the financial obligations we share to keep our beloved congregation a viable institution in Milwaukee, the Pledge Team is also tasked with helping all of us to connect our pledge commitment to gratitude and the value of this community in our own lives and beyond. This year, with the pledge drive's opening coinciding with the reopening of in-person church, it felt important that our theme also resonate with the congregation as we return to our spiritual home after two years. I think our theme succeeded in that, and perhaps helped people deepen their own reflections on this return as well.

- Theme and messaging development of Remember, Rekindle, Renew as connected to both recommitting to our financial support of the church; and also to how this institution supports our spiritual growth, the practice of our values, and our connection to this 170 year old community that truly is greater than its individual elements past or present. The decision to delay the drive to coincide with the delay in our scheduled reopening certainly helped us in this last aspect of reconnecting with this community.
- Hosted lead do'ers and lead donors to an appreciation event of member music, testimony and fellowship.
- Used a more personalized touch to nearly half of our membership via personalized ask letters, personalized thank yous and/or one-to-one conversations.
- Invited the congregation to share their reflections on our theme words during three Sunday services while creating a giant mosaic flame – to “relight our chalice” together.
- Invited members to send a picture with their pledge to share our community of support in both our virtual and in-person services.
- Coordinated testimonials from six individuals in our community including one of our longest standing members (joined 58 years ago) to one of our newest (joined during COVID).



# Staff Reports

## Pledge Team Thanks

Thank you so much to our patient Stewardship Visitors: Sally Lewis, Nancy Spransy and Julie Hamrick who, along with Pledge Team members participated in conversations about the stewardship of First Church with individual members of our community. Reportedly, while the conversations can be wonderful connections, getting a response regarding having a conversation can often take perseverance.

Likewise many thanks to Anne Alexander, Nancy Cross Dunham, Thallis Drake, Diane Horne, Angi Krueger and Dale Skaggs who all courageously responded “yes” to sharing their own reflections about the value of this church in meaningful testimonials.

Finally much appreciation to Jason Ludtke without whose know how (and artistic support) our community chalice mosaic may have never been realized; and to Nick Hayes, Paul Kosidowski, Chad Larget and Patricia Witt who graciously and beautifully contributed time and talent to provide the cornerstone of our Leadership Event, live music!

Personal and deep appreciation to the 2022 Pledge Team. They maintained energy and creativity all this COVID year; worked around a shifted time-table and strict opening covid restrictions; created an engaging leadership event, meaningful theme, slideshows under deadline, and an impressive community-wide project/worship element: all while also completing calls, notes, and personalized thank yous to our membership. I especially thank them though for just being a fun group of people to be with – even in a Zoom room.

I am especially grateful for our Chair Mark Chambers whose attention to detail, loads of good humor and gift for knowing when to shift from business to team building to space for community healing – made our pledge work effective, fun and meaningful.

## Giving Tuesday

In collaboration with the staff Communications Team we launched our second Giving Tuesday Campaign to raise money towards upgraded technology to enable a better virtual church experience. While only 22 donations came in raising \$3,300 total, eight of the contributions were from non-member donors, seven of whom were first time contributors to the

church. In addition of the members who donated, two now live out of state (as do two of the non-member donors).

In short, although not a big return this year – this initiative shows potential to expand our donor base beyond our membership.

## FEAST FOR FUNDS

The Feast for Funds Team coordinates the First Church annual event-auction which has not seemed feasible during COVID. If you are interested in participating in the re-creation of this important fundraiser and community builder please contact Lynne Jacoby.

## HERITAGE SOCIETY

The Heritage Society recognizes church members and friends who have included First Church in their wills and estate planning. In a year when the possibility of an in-person appreciation event for Heritage Members was impossible to plan, and key members are amid major life changes, the Heritage Team took a hiatus from meeting regularly this year. If interested in being part of a revived Team of Members dedicated to education and recognition regarding legacy giving to First Church, please contact Lisa Koneazny or Lynne Jacoby.

Lynne Jacoby,  
Membership Development Coordinator

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

The BLM Committee had a hybrid year as services began to be in person. Activities that members were involved with also returned to meet in person. The chair focused on the work of recruiting new and younger members. The members were involved with the Interchange Food Pantry, African American Roundtable, BLOC, Souls to the Polls and NAACP. Instead of organizing events the Committee allocated funds to these groups. The City of Milwaukee faces many challenges as poverty and meeting basic needs challenged people. Evictions and the cost of food hit people. The African American community increased its strength in political leadership in the community. However this change has not yet improved daily living for a lot of people. At the same time people are opening more small businesses. In the fall voting rights, meeting basic needs and staving off the eviction crisis will be the main crises facing the community members. The members will meet at needed and communicate through social media and email.

Kenyatta Yamel, Chair

## BLACK LIVES MATTER TO WISCONSIN UUS COLLABORATIVE

BLM2WUU continued to organize and educate ourselves and community members around racial justice in 2021-22. In particular, we focused on:

- Supporting the efforts of each of our five individual UU congregations to understand white supremacy and to advocate for racial justice in our churches and in our communities. At First Church, our BLM2WUU Liaison functioned as a member of the Black Lives Matter Team.
- Establishing and nurturing relationships with accountability partners from organizations representing people of color in the Milwaukee area, including the Milwaukee chapter of N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America).
- Continuing to grow the Reparations Fund held for the Collaborative by UUUC (United Unitarian Universalist Church) in Waukesha.
- Preparing to disburse the first \$6000 from the fund, with the guidance of our accountability partners.

- Planning and presenting a follow up workshop on Reparations for members of each of the 5 churches, facilitated by Rev. Marilyn Miller, who facilitated our earlier Reparations Workshop in December of 2019.
- Continuing work toward a more permanent structure of the collaborative, addressing mission, composition, roles, and funding.

Mary Devitt

First Church Liaison and Organizer, Black Lives Matter to Wisconsin UUs

## BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

The book club met every month in 2021-2022 instead of just during the church year. In the summer we met in Estabrook Park in order to practice social distancing and by Zoom during the colder months. The decision about where to meet is made monthly, depending on the weather. Attendance was variable compared to the past with 8-12 people per session.

We choose all the books for the year in the early summer. People suggest books that they have read and participants vote on the choices. We read a mix of fiction and non-fiction. The book list is available on the church website, and the current title is in the Chanticleer.

All meetings are open to everyone, including people who are not members of the church. To get on the monthly list for book titles and location of meetings, contact Eileen.

To suggest a book or other topic for discussion, contact Barbra. The coordinator of the Book Club is Barbra Lancelot, contact person for the mailing list is Eileen Teska. Chris Linder will join us when she is in town.

Barb Lancelot, Chair

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## CIRCLES OF SUPPORT

Twelve Circles of Support members met on Zoom with Sylvester Jackson, our Circle Keeper and a half dozen returning citizens on a rotating basis the fourth Wednesday of each month. Two team members are invited to join each monthly Circle in order to keep the the group small and ensure that everyone has a chance to share their thoughts.

Sometimes it is challenging to get men and women who have recently returned home to respond to questions such as “tell us about a struggle that you wrestled with last week” or “how do you describe courage?” Sharing our own experiences helps to get the conversation flowing. We listen and offer support.

We have been invited to join the God’s Touch Circle, which meets the second Wednesday of each month. God’s Touch is a street ministry that serves the homeless and previously incarcerated on the south side of Milwaukee. They offer Bible study and have strict rules for those that live in one of their four homes. Those residents would be “sleeping rough” without God’s Touch. First Church team members have elevated their listening skills in responding to God’s Touch’s Pentecostal theology.

Contact Paul Geenen if you would like to join Circles of Support and be invited to join one of our two monthly Circles.

Paul Geenen

## COMMON GROUND

Starting in the Spring of 2021, Common Ground conducted a Listening Campaign. Hundreds of virtual “house meetings” were held with the intent of finding out what issues people really cared about and willing to work on to make a difference in people’s lives. In October, Common Ground acted on that feedback and the following issues are those that rose to the top

### Reckless Driving

Access to driver’s education is a public safety and equity issue, which is why CG is launching a campaign to raise over \$1.5 million in annual funding from the major auto insurance companies that serve Milwaukee.

### Washington High School

Working with students, staff and residents, CG raised \$900,000 and convinced MPS to put in the balance of the \$2.3M project. When completed in the fall of 2022, an artificial turf field, rubberized track and new basketball courts will be constructed.

### Universal, Affordable Broadband

We now have the opportunity to expand this service by directing funding from two Federal funding programs. Working with the Governor and the Mayor, we hope to achieve equitable access to high-speed internet in our city within 12-24 months.

### Workforce Development

In order to better serve those who are struggling to find meaningful work, the CG Jobs Team is entering into a partnership with the CARA organization of Chicago to build a new kind of workforce development organization in Milwaukee.

Increasing Racial and Gender Diversity in Fire and Police Departments

It’s vital that our police and fire departments represent the diversity of Milwaukee. Unfortunately, women and people of color are greatly underrepresented. CG is working on strategies to increase the recruitment, retention and promotion of women and people of color.

### Education

In May 2021, MPS was slated to receive an additional \$506M in COVID recovery funds. CG’s Education Team quickly organized listening sessions to find out what should be the priorities for this funding. We then put a plan into motion to get our priorities funded.

### Reducing Gun Violence

CG is partnering with our sister organizations on a campaign to curb gun violence and save lives without jeopardizing the ability of law-abiding citizens to buy and own firearms.

We wish to express our gratitude to all of the First Church Friends of Common Ground who have supported our work through these years. Should you have any questions about Common Ground or wish to become involved, please contact one of our Core Team members:

George Bledsoe, Lynn Connolly, Rod De Pue, Mary Ann Fisher, Jerry Fredrickson, Allan Jaberg, Russ Langford, and Cathy Startt. For more information go to <https://www.commongroundwi.org/>

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

## EARTH JUSTICE MINISTRY

Although the pandemic slowed down some of our plans, here are some great activities we did this past church year:

1. We organized walks or hikes in local parks on Saturday mornings.
2. We joined Plastic-Free MKE Coalition to work on reducing single-use plastic.
3. Our representative to the Interfaith Earth Network resigned from that group, but has kept up with the Coalition on Lead Emergency in Milwaukee.
4. We worked with Beevangelist Charlie Koenen to plan activities when we can open up again.
5. Several members sponsored virtual discussions on films that were advertised for people to watch on their own time.
6. We published articles in the Chanticleer newsletter about ways people could engage on Earth Justice issues through Zoom, webinars, reading, and personal actions.

We look forward to re-engaging with these and other activities in the coming year.

Bruce Wiggins, Chair

## THE GUEST HOUSE

The Guest House Team has continued to provide meals to the shelter to serve up to 80 men for a hot Saturday meal every other month throughout the year. During the pandemic, the team and our donors have been limited to simply dropping off the meal as their facility has not been open to volunteer servers. Serving tasty nutritious food and chatting with the men is an important and fulfilling piece of this social justice work and the team looks forward to upcoming meals where the serving restriction may be lifted. The team develops a menu for each meal and collects donations from our generous members. This church year, some of our menus included jambalaya with mache choux and corn bread, chicken pot pie with green salad and coconut cake, and pulled pork with baked beans and coleslaw.

Thea Watters,  
Co-Chair

## SUNDAY MORNING FORUM

I'm proud of our Sunday Morning Forum Group Members. We managed a full schedule of Sundays with timely and well done Forums. Mark Mueller pursued the new and ever-changing computer technology with curiosity and expertise. Lorraine, thankful to master the Zoom Host technology, focused on correspondence and finding that "final missing detail." Without the support of Shari Wright, Jean Johnson, Jim Spice, and Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom we could not have maneuvered the process of safe COVID gatherings. The Forum on Sunday morning is an important tradition at First Unitarian Society-Milwaukee, it's part of the comfort and routine of coming together. An exciting surprise, Zoom allowed us to broaden our geographic outreach for presenters.

Sunday Forum Group Members: BJ Ermenc, Dan O'Keefe, Jo Ann Bachar, Ann Batiza, Mark Mueller, Bruce Wiggins (also Zoom Host back up), Jerry Fredrickson, Gus Pointer-Mace (representing the YRUU Group), Thallis Drake, Pat McFarland, Molly Shiffler, Christian Becker and Chris Schmidt. Our Group Members are the Hosts, who invite and support our Forum Presenters. Hosting responsibility begins months prior to the Church Year, by promoting a candidate at one of two Selection Meetings which overflow with ideas for speakers and topics. Once selected, the presenter is scheduled, marketing material completed, then introduced at their Forum. Each Church Year includes 18-20 Sundays, our Group of 13 members often are responsible for 2, sometimes 3 Forums. Have you said, "I wonder why there isn't a Forum on....?" That's how it starts! You can make it happen!

A sample list of Forums: a series featuring young Black political leaders in Milwaukee, (Bruce Wiggins' project), Susan Simensky Bietila, "Art Activist", Marcelia Nicholson "Working Toward More Equitable, Sustainable Milwaukee County", Willie Karidis "The Route of the Badger...a Connected Trail System", Suzie Ryer "Preventing Falls Amongst Older Adults", Erick Shambarger "Environmental Sustainability with Equity as a guide", Jonathan Lord "PBS Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Symphony", Anthony Gonzalez "Importance of Indigenous Peoples Day", Patricia Jursik "Who Owns the Garden? A Poetic Response", Fidel Navaraz "Julian Assange-Can Exposure Bring Justice?".

Two Goals for 2022-2023:

# Member-Led Ministries Reports

- Recruit a “Technology Guide” willing to dedicate and ensure that the Forums have consistent technology support.
- Welcome younger Church Members to join us. Interests and activism of another generation is needed to expand our service to the Congregation and near community.

Lorraine Jacobs and Mark Mueller  
Co-Chairs

## THE CHRONOLOGICALLY GIFTED

The Chronologically Gifted met on Zoom on the last Saturday of the month except in December.

We were entertained by musicians Kari Gunderson, Sheila Larkin, Julie Ann Lovely Thompson. In February, we had a program on alternative burial options. In March, we shared memories of Katie Phillips. For the last Sunday in April, we will meet in person at the Estabrook Beer Garden. As of now, plans for May are yet to be determined.

Best, Barbara Collignon and Pat McFarland, Co-chairs

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

**Indeed, we are interested in actively promoting  
more diversity within our congregation.**