

FEBRUARY 2023



THE

CHANTICLEER

The First Unitarian Society
of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.



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Monthly Theme



*What does it mean
to be a people of*

LOVE

Inside News

by the *Chanticleer* Editors

There is much to celebrate this month! See details in this issue.

Come celebrate our Forge Our Future success on Sunday, February 5 during worship and special Coffee Hours. (p. 4)

Join us Sunday, February 12 for special Coffee Hours as we welcome Assistant Sabbatical Minister Rev. Jim Foti and we say farewell to Rev. Jennifer as she embarks on her sabbatical. (p. 8)

The Endowment Fund Policy Task Force has been appointed by the Board of Trustees. They will develop policy details and identify an investment vehicle and fund manager. (p. 14)

We are so grateful to the 7 church members who have just completed intensive training to be OWL teachers for our elementary-aged children.

Much gratitude to all who have made their annual operating pledge (July 2023-June 2024) during the Forge Our Future campaign. If you have not yet made your pledge, please help us wrap up the annual pledge drive by using this link to pledge.

Annual Pledge Form

Share the Plate

by Bob Monahan

Nearby Nature Milwaukee is our February Share the Plate partner. Nearby Nature is an environmental justice and equity initiative to build healthier and more resilient communities. A grant from the Sierra Club Foundation enabled them to start up in the Fall of 2017. They now operate under the fiscal sponsorship of the Milwaukee Environmental Consortium.

Recognizing a great need in neighborhoods stressed by high poverty and injustice, the group concentrates its efforts on Milwaukee's 30th Street Corridor and the Lincoln Creek Greenway.

They build partnerships and direct their efforts in four main areas to have positive impact in the lives of our neighbors.

- Build community: To celebrate and support the environmental movement in Milwaukee's communities of color.
- Outings and stewardship: To promote renewal and stewardship of land and access to natural areas in the 30th Street Corridor and Lincoln Creek Greenway.
- Youth education: To support environmental education in youth servicing agencies in these neighborhoods.
- Addressing racism: To address the history of systematic racism and non-inclusiveness in the environmental movement.

Nearby Nature relies heavily on private donations from people like us. Contribute securely online at the link below or mail your check to First Church made payable to Nearby Nature. We'll forward your contribution to them. To learn more about this organization at <https://nearbynaturemke.org/our-work/>.

Donate to this STP Partner

Joyful Gratitude

by Mark Chambers & Holly Patzer
Forge Our Future Team

Thank you to our members and friends!

In this new year, we are full of joy and gratitude for the generous spirit of our First Church community. Members and friends have been phenomenal with their willingness to accept visits and share their gifts. We are grateful for the collective generosity of this community and appreciate gifts at all levels. Opportunities to contribute to the Forge Our Future endowment will be ongoing. We will periodically update you as to the progress of building the Forge Our Future legacy. Being part of something long-term and larger than each of ourselves has been profound, and we look forward to that continuing far into the future.

In addition, we all need to ensure that our annual pledges are submitted regardless of whether we made an endowment pledge. Our annual pledges are essential to maintaining current church operations.

Thank you to Forge Our Future volunteers!

The Forge Our Future Steering Committee and the large team of volunteer visitors are to be commended for their time, hard work and deep commitment to visit every household over the last several months. You have modeled “authentic connection” and inspired our entire First Church community!

We look forward to celebrating the success of this campaign on Sunday, February 5.

We're getting close
to our \$3,000,000
goal!



Support this goal with the online pledge form. You will have three years to fulfill your pledge to our principal-protected endowment fund.

[FOF Pledge Form](#)





Words on the Wind

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Dear First Church,

Love is the ground of our faith as Unitarian Universalists: it is who we are at our core, and what we do when we're at our best. It holds us in suffering, nourishes our spirits, and pushes us towards justice.

Love is the basis of our national work to define who we are and is the foundational value of our four core values as a congregation.

I have witnessed such love from all of you during our Forge Our Future campaign, which we will celebrate together in church on February 5, and as I prepare to go on sabbatical this month, with a farewell-for-now party after church on February 12. I look forward to seeing you there!

I am so grateful for your generosity. You have expressed your love for this congregation through financial support and also through the opportunity for me to take some time away from the daily duties of ministry to re-fill the spiritual well and return to you refreshed. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

I look forward to returning to you in August and discovering how you have grown during our time apart, and sharing with you my own experiences of rest, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

With love,
Jennifer

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Forge Our Future Victory Celebration!

Please join us on Sunday, February 5 at both services for a victory celebration of our Forge Our Future campaign! First Church members have been working hard towards our goal of raising \$3,000,000 for an endowment that will fund First Church's life and ministry for generations to come.

Come to hear what we have accomplished, come to celebrate our future, come to eat cake during coffee hour! See you Sunday, February 5 for worship celebrations and coffee hour cake!

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



It is a gift of love for a congregation to send a minister on sabbatical and it is a gift of love for our community members to tend to each other so that all will be well in her absence. I'm honored to do what I can to help keep things running smoothly at church while Rev. Jennifer enjoys rest, renewal, study, and travel during her months away from First Church. I won't be doing this work alone: all of us will be tending to the life of our church community so that all will be well while Jennifer is recharging her batteries.

Sometimes when an authority figure is gone for a while, we need reminders of best practices for communal health. Here are some that come to mind: kindness, direct communication, assuming good intentions, deep listening, empathy, recognizing and managing our own anxieties, doing our spiritual practices, asking for help. I know you know these things. We'll just have to remind each other to practice them and extend grace and understanding if we forget.

I have great trust and confidence in you, the members and friends of First Church. I have great trust and confidence in my colleagues, the staff at First Church. I have great trust and confidence in our lay leaders and teams. We will miss Jennifer during her sabbatical and look forward to welcoming her back with open arms in

August, excited to hear her stories and to bask in her energy—the result of our community's loving gift of sabbatical.

Love stretches us. It calls to us to let go and trust. It calls forth our best selves. Love teaches us in unexpected ways. What will we learn between now and August? Greater love for sure.

Yours,

Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister

All in the Family

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

We send our heartfelt wishes for healing to **Demetria Smith's** mother after her January surgery, and our support for the Smith family in the recovery process.

We send our loving care to **Anne Hefter**, whose mother entered hospice in December.

We send our hopes for healing to **Allen Jacobson**, as he and Lila navigate a new, non-cancer diagnosis. We also share in their gratitude that this diagnosis does not appear to be recurrent cancer!



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



Over the past two months, our middle schoolers have been exploring the topic of Christianity in our “Crossing Paths with Neighboring Faiths” program which I lead on Sunday mornings during religious education.

As we foray into this immense faith tradition, it is hard not to feel a bit overwhelmed about how to help them navigate the breadth of this topic. I want them to know that Christianity can be many things. What our UU youth know about Christianity varies greatly. As someone who was raised Christian, I am often surprised by their impressions, acute theological insights, and sharp thinking, as well as by the deep gaps in their knowledge.

After a lesson on sin and the Garden of Eden, this youthful insight stood out: “It seems to me that we created God in our image, flaws and all, rather than the other way around.” When we explored Bible stories, each reporting back on a well-known story, the overall impression seemed to be that the Bible was just full of violent hateful stories (and they are not all wrong). Furthermore, many youths have experienced struggles with peers who believe they need to become Christian. When asked, “What do you believe about God?” I heard a version of Pascal’s Wager in their

response: “I guess it is better to believe in God, than not. I suppose here is nothing to lose by believing.”

But what “God” you believe in matters. Our Universalist forbearers were Christians that understood God as a parent who loved all of humanity so much that God would not damn anyone to hell. At its core, Christianity holds the belief that God loves and accepts all of humanity. This affirming view led to the belief that all people and all religions were of worth. Our UU value of “inherent worth” came from our Christian origins. UUism didn’t reject Christianity as much as it grew out of its most generous and loving view of God. Christianity is our close cousin who gave us a great gift, the legacy of love.

When we must navigate all the expressions of Christianity, some caring, some harmful, let us also remember the heritage of hope that we carry. The one that centers love and the practice of love above all else, that of love is our inheritance and our responsibility.

May it be so,

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education



SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

5

Love Is the Ground of Growth

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Ryan Pawlowski, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

12

Love Is a Gateway Drug

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Marisa Riepenhoff, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

19

Resurrecting Love

Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Bizzy Schultz, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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Love Makes Us Brave

Rev. Jim Foti, Assistant Sabbatical Minister

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director and the
Chancel Choir

Laurel Brooks, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

In-person Sunday services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.



Assistant Sabbatical Minister Jim Foti

Rev. Jim Foti is a freelance UU minister based in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A Milwaukee native, he received his B.A. from UW-Madison and his Master of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago. From 2014 to 2022, he served as an assistant minister at the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis and recently served as sabbatical minister at United UU Congregation in Waukesha. Prior to seminary, Jim had a 20-year career as a newspaper journalist, including three years at the Milwaukee Journal. Jim discovered Unitarian Universalism at First Church in the early 1990s and looks forward to helping serve the congregation over the next five months.



"Goodbye-Hello" Reception Sunday Feb. 12

You are invited to join the congregation and friends for our "Goodbye-Hello" Celebration. We say Goodbye for now and Hello again in the summer, to Rev. Jennifer, as she leaves for her sabbatical. We say Hello to Rev. Jim Foti, Assistant Sabbatical Minister, as he begins his time with our congregation.

Join us at Coffee Hour after each service on Feb. 12, (light refreshments will be provided). An opportunity for socializing, greetings, and personal conversations with both ministers. Sponsored by the Sabbatical Team,

We hope to see you there!

Learn about the exciting sabbatical pulpit guests [here](#).

Staff Roles During Sabbatical

Rev. Dena McPhetres

We have a good plan to cover Rev. Jennifer's responsibilities while she is on sabbatical. I will serve as Head of Staff, supervising five staff members. I will also lead the Worship Associate retreats and Worship Staff team.

To ease your mind, it might help to know that I'm in my 14th year of serving as your Associate Minister and I was ordained into the UU ministry over 25 years ago. Every summer while Jennifer takes vacation and study leave, I function as Head of Staff. In 2016, during the four-month gap between our Interim Senior Minister's departure and Jennifer's arrival, I served as our "bridge minister." I also served as a solo minister for a small congregation for ten years before First Church called me to Milwaukee.

I'm super excited to work with and supervise our part-time Assistant Sabbatical Minister Rev. Jim Foti. I think you will love him! I'm grateful for my colleagues Rev. Kimberlee and Jean Johnson who serve with me on our staff executive team and who will also cover some of Jennifer's work. We have a great staff that works well together and enjoys each other. All will be well.

Jean Johnson, Director of Administration

During Jennifer's sabbatical, I am happy I will work closely with the Board of Trustees. I'll assist them in shaping their monthly agendas and holding their monthly meetings. Larger annual issues the Board will engage in are planning for the annual congregational meeting and reviewing the annual budget proposal.

Over the 24 years I've been administrator at First Church, I've worked with the Board quite a bit. I

filled a similar role during Minister Emeritus Rev. Drew Kennedy's sabbatical several years ago. I'm familiar with the Board's policies and annual monitoring calendar as I participated in portions of the Board's retreats while they developed policy governance structure and processes. I've been reporting and presenting quarterly financial information as well as the annual budget process for many years. There are additional Board policies about which I report to the Board on an annual basis, such as asset protection. The Board and church staff has worked with policy governance since 2019. I'm certain all will run smoothly.

Rev. Kimberlee Tomzack Carlson

During Jennifer's sabbatical, I will be assisting more with pastoral care as well as leading our First Church Anti-Racism Team. Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression education and action has been a part of my UU faith journey since attending a Journey Toward Wholeness retreat at First Unitarian Society of Madison in 2000. Since then, I have helped create and coordinate numerous AR/AO events to help inform and educate UU's in the Midwest and across the country.

Our Unitarian Universalist values beckon us to respond in a world that continues to be dominated by systems of oppressions, it calls us to do the work of creating equity. The Anti-Racism Team is one way we do that work in our church. I am excited about the projects the Anti-Racist Team will be working on this spring. First, we will be researching and discerning future educational and training opportunities to offer to the congregational about dismantling racism and oppression. Additionally, Rev. Jim Foti and I will work with the Anti-Racism Team to offer a Juneteenth multi-generational worship service on Sunday, June 18.

Hearts on Fire 2023

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
and Deb Solis

Hearts on Fire is a faith development opportunity for high school seniors to meet with Rev. Kimberlee and church staff to explore their faith and examine their credo.

The Latin root word *cred* means “believe.” A credo translates to: “what I set my heart to.” Creating a credo helps our youth examine and clarify what they have faith in, what they ultimately value, and what greater purposes they believe life offers.

We will be offering this program over three evenings online via Zoom this spring, schedule to be determined by the participants and Rev. Kimberlee’s availability.

On Sunday, May 21, we will be holding our annual Religious Education Sunday Service. During this service, it is our tradition to recognize our high school seniors as they bridge into adulthood. For seniors who wish to speak in front of the congregation, participation in this series is required. However, you do not have to speak in front of the congregation and may choose to just attend Hearts on Fire. All credos are to be completed and sent to Rev. Kimberlee by May 15.

Let Deb Solis, deb.solis@uumilwaukee.org know by February 20 if you are interested in participating in Hearts on Fire this year so we can prepare materials for each session ahead of our meeting dates.

Get Ready for Mystery Friends 2023!

There’s nothing like getting a real letter! We are thrilled to offer the annual Mystery Friends program again, starting mid-February. During Mystery Friends, children and youth aged 5 and up are matched with adults in the church community as pen pals. Once you sign up, RE staff will pair you with a friend, and you will exchange short letters and notes each week for a month. We will offer letter templates with questions and prompts to help you get started. On Sunday, March 19, we will celebrate with a party allowing friends to meet “face to face” and have some in-person fun!

Any adult members and friends of First Church may participate— you don’t need to have a child in RE. Adults will go through a simple and secure background check to ensure Mystery Friends is fun and safe for everyone!

For more information and to join Mystery Friends follow this link: <https://bit.ly/MysteryFriends2023>



Preschool Goodness

Plastics' Impact on Us

by Terry Wiggins

Co-chair Earth Justice Ministry

Concerned about the Plastic Invasion? Earth Justice Ministry invites all to learn more about efforts to make changes through plasticfreemke.org, with which we partner. We are fortunate to have this group in Milwaukee. Its mission is "to reduce the harms that unnecessary plastics have on environmental health, public health, and social justice."

Plastics are made with a fossil-carbon backbone and are becoming more prevalent as the fossil-carbon industry turns to make plastic with its products, as we turn to vehicles that don't need gasoline. Plastics also incorporate thousands of chemical additions, from dyes and stabilizers to flame retardants and water repellents. None of these chemicals are tested for safety or toxicity like drugs are. Ouch!

By 2025, for every three pounds of fish in the ocean, there will be a pound of plastic in the ocean. Ouch!

We can take hope from the many environmental successes in our recent past, such as the banning of DDT, removal of lead from gasoline, control of air pollution, protection of the ozone layer, and so on. Now we need the courage of elected officials and policy makers to confront the fossil carbon industry.

Check out this recent webinar, Plastics' Impact on Human Health,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utUFl4gqiYc>, with Dr. Philip Landrigan.

Walk and Roll at the Domes

by Barbara Leigh

Co-chair Earth Justice Ministry

Join Earth Justice Ministry and others for our monthly "Walk and Roll" at the Mitchell Park Domes on Saturday, February 11 at 10:30 a.m.

There's a special exhibit in the Show Dome -- Plant-itary Orbits. Come on an adventure like no other, trains in space! The trains will pass through the unusual plant orbits of miniature white azalea trees, miniature Vietnamese cypresses, "Headliner Starry Night Burgundy" petunias, and into the deep blues of the pansy matrix. Make it your mission not to miss this wild enterprise of plants, planets, and trains. It's going to be out of this world!

Plus, you can explore the Desert and Tropical Domes. There is a fee of \$6 to \$8 for Milwaukee County Residents.

Democracy in Peril—Interfaith Conference Lecture Series

by Pat McFarland

Interfaith Conference Representative

Four Tuesdays in March. Come hear speakers address topics such as: why we embrace conspiracy theories and fake news; impending cases in the judicial system that could affect fair maps, voting, women's issues and democracy; and the rise in radical authoritarian populism as a powerful force affecting democracy here and abroad.

Watch weekly announcements for more details about the speakers. More information coming soon at www.interfaithconference.org.

Heads-Up for the Supreme Court and Spring Elections

by Dan O'Keefe
UU the Vote Team

The next round of elections will be a statewide primary on February 21 for a Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice seat followed by a combined statewide supreme court run-off, district courts and local elections on April 4. Our local Defend Democracy and UU the Vote advocates will repeat methods used for the November election to get out the vote. While the schedule for the spring election is extremely tight, there are many opportunities to take part.

Lesson plans for all of our children, youngest to oldest, will be created to add insight into the judicial systems, an extension of the election classes from October. Teach-ins are in the works to clarify the importance of the courts, and why this particular supreme court election is critical.

We'll repeat last October's popular postcard writing event on Feb. 5. Our relationships with nonprofit groups like Supermarket Legends and Interfaith Council will continue with voter registration and forums. In March, each Tuesday at noon, the Interfaith Conference of Milwaukee will feature court related forums at First Church.

To take part in this creative and engaging effort, plus enjoy the company of your fellow UU's, contact Dan O'Keefe at danok@att.net. Your information will be shared with three other co-leaders: Peter Koneazny, Pat McFarland and Dave Umhoefer.

Join First Church's Own Buddhist Group

by Mark Miller

I joined the First Church "sangha" about 15 years ago. I had been thinking about it but was a bit intimidated about joining. Of course, there is hardly a more welcoming practice than that of Buddhism. And, after all, it's made up of the same First Church members that sit around us on Sunday mornings. There are no robes or incense, but we do bow to each other at the end, which is just another way for the divine in us to recognize the divine in others.

We sometimes describe our group as a book club with meditation. We take 10 minutes at the end of our one and one-half hour meeting to meditate. Need some help getting started with meditation? We've all been there and can help you with that, too.

But the main event of our meetings is our discussion of the current book. Over the years we've read a variety of authors like Pema Chödrön, Norman Fischer, Thich Nhat Hanh, and many others. We're wrapping up a book in February and going back to the basics with discussing the Four Noble Truths (in a free PDF), which are the very basic principles of Buddhism.

It's a great time to be welcomed by our group and to ground yourself in the basics. We'd love for you to join us on first and third Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Important Business at General Assembly

by Bruce Wiggins
Denominational Affairs Coordinator

June 21-25, Pittsburgh, PA

Virtual or Live

This year, two extremely important matters will be decided by delegates at General Assembly (GA), our national conference of UU congregations: election of our UUA President (see related story), and debate plus a vote on the principles and purposes of our Association.

Many of us love what we call “The Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism.” They are printed on the inside cover of our gray hymnal. Our UUA bylaws call for them to be evaluated periodically and a study commission has been working for several years. Ordinarily, discussion of bylaws does not get one’s blood boiling, but discussion of our principles and purposes can do that for some UUs. Drafts of the items to be voted on at GA will published this spring.

But GA is always rewarding and stimulating beyond these important business matters. GA also offers workshops, lectures, worship and witness opportunities. You can attend virtually or in person, as a delegate representing First Church or as an interested person.

First Church has funds to reimburse you for being a delegate at GA. We will pay the cost of virtual conference registration (\$250 through Feb. 28) or will reimburse the equivalent if you attend in person. Info on GA at <https://www.uua.org/ga>.

UUA President Candidate to Visit First Church

by Bruce Wiggins

The President of our Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) is an important position affecting all UU congregations across the country. The UUA President serves a six-year term and our current president, the Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, ends her term at General Assembly this year. The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt has been nominated for UUA President. She will be here as a guest in the pulpit on April 2 and we will try to arrange a time for her to speak to our congregation about her view of the job, its challenges and opportunities.

First Church gets 13 delegates to cast votes in this election. If you are interested in being named a delegate by our Board of Trustees, please contact Bruce Wiggins, Denominational Affairs Coordinator. You can vote electronically or in person by attending General Assembly in June (see related story about GA.)

Splinters from the Board

by Joe Riepenhoff

Board of Trustees Member

The Board had a productive meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, January 24.

Based on the congregational surveys, sufficient progress toward ends 1, 2, and 3 was determined. Staff compensation for the 2023-24 year was approved.

Accounting numbers for Quarter 2 were considered and FUSM was found to be in good financial order with the Board finding unanimously compliance with monitoring Policies 4.4 and 4.5. Those policies include keeping a “safety net” of 15% of operating expenses and implementing Socially Responsible Investment Policies with the UU Common Endowment Fund, Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation, and the Self-Help Credit Union.

A portion of the Lu Krug Fund was previously designated for “long term use.” The Board determined that the Forge Out Future (FOF) endowment is the long-term project envisioned and approved the transfer of those funds to FOF.

Endowment Task Force Appointed

The Board developed a Forge Our Future Endowment Fund Policy Task Force, and voted on the charge and members: Dave Becker, George Bledsoe, Tom Briscoe, Elizabeth Lentini, Ron Oshima, and Kathy Rivera. These members bring decades of legal, financial, and investment experience to the team, and include members from the Board of Trustees, Finance Team, and Strategic Planning Team.

Over the next six months, the Task Force will draft an Endowment Fund Policy that sets forth the purpose of the endowment, protects the principal, separates the funds from other First Church investments, sets guidelines for withdrawals, and identifies an investment vehicle and fund manager.

To do this, they will consult with outside counsel and experts and identify best practices from other religious organizations. The Task Force will also recommend a future oversight process and congregational communications plan, and report to the Board of Trustees.



Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, February 1 & 15, 6:30 pm
At Church or [Join Us Here](#)

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

Book Discussion Group

Sunday, February 12, 1:30 pm
At Church or [Join Us Online Here](#)

Join us as we discuss February's read, *Girls on the Line*, a novel by Aimie K. Runyan. Contact Barbra Lancelot for more information at uubarbra@gmail.com.

Connect & Reflect

Every Thursday, 5:45 pm
[Join Us Online Here](#)

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

Chronologically Gift Potluck

Sunday, February 26, 12:30 pm
At Church

Contact Pat McFarland or Barbara Collignon for more information.

Grief Support Group

Wednesday, February 1 at 6:30 pm
[Join Us Online Here](#)

If you are experiencing loss, broadly defined, and would like the support of a small group, please join us. Open, drop-in, monthly group co-facilitated by Rev. Dena McPhetres and Pastoral Care Associate Deborah Conta.

Poetry Contemplation

Every Wednesday, 9:00 am
or 2nd & 4th Tuesday, 6:30 pm
[Join Us Online Here](#)

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



Sunday Morning Forum

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & ON YOUTUBE



FEBRUARY 5

Voters First Wisconsin: Final Five Voting Initiative

Tracy Hunter; Member of Voters First Wisconsin

Voters First Wisconsin partners with other groups to pass bipartisan legislation in Wisconsin that replaces the existing primary-based elections for the US Senate and House with a "Final Five Voting" system. Tracy will explain how this encourages cooperation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and participation.

FEBRUARY 12 Forum has been rescheduled. See you at the sabbatical reception.

FEBRUARY 19

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of the UN's Climate Change Conference

Steve Watrous, President United Nations Association-Greater Milwaukee

Watrous participated at COP27 in Egypt in November as a representative of the national UNA-USA. The UN's annual climate change Conference of the Parties was a great opportunity to see what governments, businesses and NGOs are thinking and doing about this existential threat. Come hear about the U.S. official delegation, the final declaration, activist caucuses, demands of indigenous peoples, some brilliant ideas and a few scary predictions. See what it was like to be there: the pavilions, the art, the people in native dress from their countries, and the limited demonstrations demanding better action.



FEBRUARY 26

Democracy and the Wisconsin Supreme Court

Elizabeth Pierson, Attorney with Law Forward

In recent years, the Wisconsin Supreme Court has decided a series of cases with dramatic implications for how we vote and how our government works, often to the detriment of democracy in Wisconsin. Law Forward, a nonpartisan, pro-democracy nonprofit law firm, has participated in many of these cases and closely monitors the Court's docket. This talk will describe and explain recent trends at the Court, discuss the importance of the upcoming election for a seat on the Court, and preview some democracy issues we expect to see before the Court soon.

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

Board of Trustees Officers

President.....Ben LeFort
Vice PresidentPat Geenen
SecretaryGeorge Bledsoe
TreasurerTom Briscoe

Members

George Bledsoe
Rollie Hanson
Mike Hogan
Tony Panciera
Sarah Richards
Joe Riepenhoff
Amy Wilbourne

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Follow Us



Church Building Hours

Sundays: 8:00 am - 3:00 pm
Saturdays: 10:00 am - 2:30 pm
Monday - Wednesdays: 5:00 - 8:30 pm

If you are attending a scheduled group, ring the bell. If you need access to the building at other times, please make an appointment at first.church.office@uumilwaukee.org.

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