

JULY 2023



# THE CHANTICLEER

The First Unitarian Society  
of Milwaukee

*nurture. engage. inspire.*



## This Issue:

Dena's Digressions	3
Rev. Jim Foti	4
Sunday Services	5
Children & Youth	6
Adult Spiritual Dev.	7
Social Justice	8
Forge our Future	9
Calendar of Events	10
Contact Us	11

## Monthly Theme



*What does it mean  
to be a people of*

## Grace

# Share the Plate THANKS!

THANK YOU on behalf of more than 150 non-profit organizations who benefitted from your generous financial support since January 2011. First Church members and friends gave more than \$250,000 to our Share the Plate partners. Whether addressing health care, job training, education, housing, food insecurity, social and environmental justice, or special disaster relief, you have been there for those in need. Below is a list of the donations First Church gave during 2022-23 to date May 2023.

## **Plastic-Free MKE \$1,226**

The goal is simply stated: Reduce single-use plastics in Milwaukee and surrounding communities.

## **Common Ground Forward Scholars \$1,512**

Forward Scholars provides a research-based curriculum in urban environments using volunteer tutors.

## **Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Milwaukee \$1,307**

The BBBS mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

## **Civic Music Association of Milwaukee \$778**

The mission is to support music education and provide performance opportunities for young musicians.

## **Alma Center \$1,132**

Alma Center works to heal, transform, and evolve the unresolved pain of trauma that fuels the continuation of cycles of violence, abuse, and dysfunction in families.

## **Nearby Nature \$1,091**

Nearby Nature is an environmental justice initiative to build healthier and more resilient communities.

## **Pathfinders \$1,097**

Pathfinders is deeply committed to ensuring that all youth are safe, healthy, independent, successful, and valued.

## **Electa Quinney Institute \$1,361**

EQI for American Indian Education was founded to strengthen and celebrate American Indian education.

# Share the Plate

by Bob Monahan



**WUUSAN**

Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist State Action Network

The Wisconsin Unitarian Universalist State Action Network (WUUSAN) will be our Share the Plate recipient for the summer months.

WUUSAN brings together the collective energy and power of Wisconsin UU congregations and fellowships to build a statewide advocacy network. In partnership with many allies, we uphold the worth and dignity of every person, while acting to further justice, equity, and compassion.

Since formation in 2017, WUUSAN has opposed “for-profit” prisons in Wisconsin, advocated against gerrymandering by supporting the Fair Maps movement, supported the Climate Strike and Green New Deal, encouraged voter registration in partnership with Building Unity and UU the Vote, supported the Black Lives Matter movement.

Make a secure online contribution at the link below or mail your check to First Church made payable to WUUSAN. We'll forward your contribution to them.

[Donate to this STP Partner](#)

# Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



There is obvious grace and then there is quiet grace. Obvious grace we notice in athletes and dancers. Quiet grace is more widespread, but flies under the radar. Who do you know who exhibits quiet grace? Grace that doesn't draw attention to itself but exists naturally. A person who is easy to be with, a person you are drawn to because you feel at ease in their presence. The person is not necessarily a quiet person, yet there is spaciousness and humility about them while they are adept at being themselves.

We have had the great good fortune to receive the ministry of Rev. Jim Foti during our Senior Minister's sabbatical. A person of grace—easy to be with, spacious and humble, yet fully himself and even a bit gregarious! Jim's ministry with First Church, though time-limited, made an important contribution to our community. His wisdom, humor, intelligence, and ability to make quick connections with people were a gift and a grace. His work helped me, Rev. Kimberlee, and our staff carry our extra workload with more ease and joy. I hope you will join me and the sabbatical team at Rev. Jim's good-bye reception during coffee hour on Sunday, July 9 at 11:00 a.m. (of course, there will be cake!)

Lay leaders who shape programs and member-ministries at First Church are another source of quiet grace. I'd like to thank Robert Szymanski for continuously serving as a small group facilitator for 21 years! Robert helped form our Chalice Circle program in 2002, served as a CC facilitator for many years, then helped reshape it into Theme Circles in 2018 and served as a TC facilitator through this spring. As he retires from this leadership role, Robert said, "I don't need appreciation because the work is the appreciation—it's about the people who encourage us to be authentic." It's this kind of graceful leadership that permeates our congregation and lifts us when we need it.

Yours,  
Rev. Dena McPhetres  
Associate Minister

# Rev. Jim Foti

## Assistant Sabbatical Minister



Seems like just the other day that Rev. Kimberlee took my picture in the snow in front of church on my first Sunday, and now it's already time for a summery goodbye.

On the off chance that it hasn't been obvious, please know that I've had a fulfilling and enjoyable time serving as your Assistant Sabbatical Minister. What a gift it's been to return as clergy to the church where I first discovered Unitarian Universalism decades ago. And what a gift to experience my hometown anew through the lens of a friendly, healthy, justice-oriented congregation filled with talented staff and committed members.

As is custom in UU congregations, when a minister departs, I'll be staying away from First Church for a period of time, so that the church can focus on its relationships with its permanent staff ministers and celebrate Rev. Jennifer's return.

In the meantime, I'll be at church two more Sundays — on July 2 to take part in the post-General Assembly panel after worship, and on July 9 to lead worship and enjoy the handshakes, hugs, and cake that will be on offer. The title of my final sermon is "Grace and Gratitude," which could not be more fitting — I've experienced so much grace from you-all, and you've made the spiritual practice of gratitude so easy.

So thankful to have shared this season in First Church's life.

Rev. Jim Foti



# SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

2

## Grace-filled Gatherings

**Rev. Omega Burckhardt, Pulpit Guest**

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Laurel Brooks, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

9

## Grace and Gratitude

**Rev. Jim Foti, Assistant Sabbatical Minister**

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Gul Afshan, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

16

## Grace Period. Grace. Period.

**Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister**

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Bizzy Schultz, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

23

## Everyday Poetry: Why poetry? Why now?

**Paul Kosidowski & Sally Lewis, members**

Teresa Drews, Collaborative Pianist

Laurel Brooks, Worship Associate

30

## Practicing Grace

**Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister**

Karen Beaumont, Guest Organist

Marisa Riepenhoffr, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

Summer services. One service at 10:00 a.m.



## Urban Ecology Center Outing

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson  
Minister of Religious Education

First Church is sponsoring a family outing with the Urban Ecology Center this summer on July 15. We'll do a guided hike and learn fire building. At Riverside Park from 1:00-3:00 p.m. Take on a new adventure with a guided hike through different ecosystems as you learn more about what makes each unique and special. Celebrate your exploration and learn how to build a fire while making the perfect s'more right here in the city. Space is limited to 20 people, and sign-up is required.

[Sign Up Here](#)



## UU Chalice Mini-Camp at UUCW July 31 - August 4

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

Explore Unitarian Universalist (UU) values (WORTHINESS, FAIRNESS, GROWTH, WONDER, VOICE, PEACE, CONNECTION, JUSTICE) in a fun and relaxed environment, on the grounds of UU Church West: 13001 W. North Ave. in Brookfield, Wisconsin July 31 - August 4, 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., for ages 7-13 (entering Grades 2-8).

Local UUs, friends and neighbors are all invited to sign up their children to give them a joyful experience bonding with others. Teen Camp Counselors will lead activities under the supervision of Dave Cicero, Dir. of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE), and a Summer RE Coordinator. Extended childcare (until 5:00 p.m.) available if arranged in advance.

Cost per camper: \$250 unless a parent/guardian is an active Member of UUCW, LCUUC, United, or FUSM – in which case the “registration party” can enter the code FUSM for \$100 discount.

Middle-school students may apply to serve as Jr. Counselors. Enrollment fee balance (after \$50 deposit) will be waived for those attending, with a parent/guardian, an advance meeting (date, before 7/20, TBD) with Dave Cicero, DLRE, and performing in that role for at least 4 of the 5 days.

## Theme Circle Facilitator Application Deadline July 15

by Rev. Dena McPhetres  
Associate Minister

Do you enjoy our monthly worship themes?  
Can you help create a trusting space for  
reflection and exploration in a small group of  
adults? Consider applying to become a  
Theme Circle Facilitator!

Serving as a Facilitator for a monthly Theme  
Circle allows you to nurture the spiritual  
journey of your peers and help create deep  
connections among our church members and  
friends. You would also meet regularly for  
leadership support with Rev. Dena and the  
facilitator team.

More information and application form at  
<https://uumilwaukee.org/theme-circle-facilitator/>

Application deadline is July 15. Selected  
applicants may be interviewed by Rev. Dena  
by mid-August. The required online  
Facilitator training with the Soul Matters  
team happens in August or September.  
Theme Circles begin meeting the third week  
of October.

BIPOC and/or members younger than 60 are  
especially encouraged to apply!

Questions? Contact Rev. Dena at:  
[dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org](mailto:dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org).



A Caring Community

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

### All in the Family

Our healing thoughts are with **Jeremy Koenen**  
who had a bicycle accident and resultant surgery  
in early June. Jeremy is home recovering. Our care  
is also with Stacy Koenen who is the primary  
caregiver for the family!

We were sorry to hear that **Marlowe Nortrom** is  
becoming frail and began receiving hospice care  
in May where he lives in Tennessee. Our love and  
care is also with his wife Janet and their family.

Congratulations to **Katie and Noel Kegel** who  
welcomed their second child into the world on  
May 27, 2023 at 10:41 a.m. Aristotle Auster Kegel  
was born at 21 inches long and exactly 8 pounds.  
Baby, parents and big sister Athena are all doing  
well. We lit the Candle of Life in celebration  
during both worship services on June 4, 2023.

## Single-Use Plastics–Yikes!

by Terry Wiggins

Earth Justice Ministry member

Do you know that Earth Justice Ministry partners with Plastic-Free MKE to help reduce single use plastics? If you already know the need to reduce plastics, consider volunteering with Plastic-Free (P-F) at <https://www.plasticfreemke.org/volunteer>, and click the “tabling” box. Name FUSM/EJM in the “What else should we know about you?” section.

Need more reasons to reduce usage of plastic? Read Year of No Garbage: Recycling Lies, Plastic Problems, and One Woman’s Journey to Zero Waste by Eve Schaub (available at Milwaukee Public Library). Some lies that she names:

- Plastic is not really recyclable.
- “Single stream” recycling is a lie.
- “Compostable” plastics are mostly lies, with one exception.
- Forget one giant ocean garbage patch, there are five.
- Plastic drives climate change.
- Plastic is racist.
- Plastics do not break down – or go away – ever.
- Plastics are in our air, water, and food. Also, our bloodstream, poop, and the placenta of newborn infants.
- There aren’t seven kinds of plastic as recycling symbols indicate; there are tens of thousands, all largely untested for effects on human health.

Join Earth Justice Ministry in spreading the word about plastic problems. Also, join in tabling or volunteering with P-F at community events. Sign up at the Social Justice Table.

## Walk & Roll at Kern Park A refuge in the city.

by Vince Bushell

Naturalist and publisher

Saturday July 8, 10:30 am to Noon,  
3614 N Humboldt Blvd, South end of park.

Part of Milwaukee’s Central Park, a.k.a. the Milwaukee River Greenway, Kern Park stands out as a great place to have a picnic or to play softball, basketball, and tennis. The tennis courts are hidden down a slope and surrounded by giant trees: Truly giants in the Sycamore genus, a giant Bur Oak, and massive Silver Maples.

Walk the paved trails and learn about the history of this park. Our parks were conceived as the “lungs of our city” where the common folk could gather, and class did not matter.

The trail down to the river is paved and a bit steep, but I am sure we can make it with care on foot and wheels. It leads down into a beautiful riverine forest with native wildflowers. There you will find the Milwaukee River, a little rapids at this point up stream. It is a habitat for numerous species including our kind. Join us on a walk of tranquility and appreciation for nature’s way.

Led by Vince Bushell, long time resident of Riverwest, naturalist, historian, and one of the many tenders of these river lands. Founder and publisher of the Riverwest Currents. It is how we flow.



## Endowment Fund Task Force (EFTF) Update

by Ron Oshima  
EFTF Member

### Objective of Endowment

The principal of the endowment fund will be protected. Any income of the endowment fund may be dispersed from time to time to meet the operating, strategic, and other financial needs of First Church.

### Governance of the Endowment

After an initial call with the trust attorney, the entire team discussed several issues that a much smaller team will take to the attorney for in-depth discussion:

- Powers of trustees
- Provisions for removing and replacing an investment manager
- Spend policy – what percentage of earnings can be responsibly distributed
- Amendment, revocation, and dissolution of the trust, assuming we set up an irrevocable trust

### Investment Management

The EFTF continues to examine the following areas as each meeting introduces a round of deeper questions:

- Investment policy statement
- Active versus passive investment strategies
- Pricing
- Asset allocation methodology
- ESG/SRI (Environmental, Social, and Governance/Socially Responsible Investments)

The EFTF plans to have a recommendation to the Board by Fall of this year.

## It's Never Too Late to Support the Endowment Fund!

Goal: \$3,000,000

Dollars pledged as of

June 22: \$2,774,623

Fulfilled to date: 788,923



Pledge to this principal-protected endowment fund with the online pledge form.

[Endowment Pledge Form](#)

To learn more or schedule a visit, contact the team.

[Contact Us](#)





## Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, July 5 & 19, 6:30 p.m.

At Church or [Join Us Online Here](#)

Join us as we meet to share our thoughts and interpretations of Buddhist teachings and ideas. Then we meditate as a group for a short while and have fellowship. Contact is Mark Miller at [gatheringwaterssangha@gmail.com](mailto:gatheringwaterssangha@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. All are welcome.

## Book Discussion Group

Sunday, July 9, 1:00 p.m.

Estabrook Park or [RSVP Here](#)

Join us as we discuss July's read, *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Contact Barbra Lancelot for more information at [uubarbra@gmail.com](mailto:uubarbra@gmail.com).

## Spirit of Life

At Church July 19, 6:15 p.m.

[RSVP Here](#)

The Spirit of Life series is offered this Summer to deepen individual understanding of wonder, ritual and intention. The monthly sessions will include individual reflection time, intentional listening, and collaborative meaning making. For more information contact Lynne Jacoby at [lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org](mailto:lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee.org)

## Beer Garden Sundays

Sunday, July 9, 4:30 p.m.

Humboldt Park [Email Reminders](#)

BYO Picnic or plan to buy a beer and brat and look for the banner where we'll be waving in full greeting our friends, visitors, and families. We will send out an email the Friday before each event with updates and location information.

## Poetry Contemplation

Every Wednesday, 9:00 am

[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.

# Staff Directory

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

## Board of Trustees Officers

President.....Pat Geenen  
Vice President.....Sarah Richards  
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## Members

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Dana Brooks  
Stacy Koenen  
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Stacey Thieme  
Amy Wilbourne

## How to Reach Us

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1342 N. Astor St. Milwaukee, WI 53202



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## Follow Us



## Summer Church Building Hours

Sundays: 8:30 am - 1:30 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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