

AUGUST 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*

Kinship

Join a Fun and Rewarding Team in The Upcoming Year

Are you looking for a fulfilling way to give back to your community? First Church relies on the passion and dedication of our amazing volunteers to keep our church vibrant and thriving. We have a variety of teams that could use your help and this is a great way to meet our community and learn fun new roles with our operations. See the sidebar for our volunteers' stories.

Sunday Audio Team. The Audio Team needs more members to share Sunday duties. Here's your chance to control the pulpit volume from an iPad in the pews! Contact Lead Music Director Alissa Rhode at alissa.rhode@uumilwaukee.org for more information.

Sunday Livestream Team. During the Sunday service at 9:00 a.m., the livestream technicians operate the cameras and monitor the audio to livestream to YouTube. If you love to work on computers and want to learn how to livestream, join this team. The technicians usually volunteer one Sunday each month. Contact Shari Wright at shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org.

Children and Youth Religious Education. Our Religious Education program needs lead facilitators and volunteer helpers for UU Play and UU Maker Spaces, as well as people to assist in the nursery and pre-school during Sunday service. For more information, contact Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson. Sign up on Page 6 to volunteer.

Office Help. This volunteer role is NEW for our daytime office tasks. This volunteer will help us greeting visitors, using our copying machine, organizing files and other administrative tasks. We are looking for anyone who likes office work and has 1–2 hours per week sometime between 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Contact Shari Wright at shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org.

Ushers. We depend on ushers to greet members and guests and help with service tasks on Sunday morning. Contact Lynne Jacoby for more information.



Holly Patzer is one of our volunteers and she shared this story.

“When I was asked to help lead the Forge Our Future endowment campaign, I could think of ten reasons why I should say no and frankly it made me very nervous to be part of such big and important initiative. But then I thought of the reasons why I needed to say YES and so I did. As it turns out, saying YES was contagious and 35 other church volunteers brought the campaign to life and ultimate success. While being a First Church volunteer as an individual can certainly make a difference, it’s being part of the collective force of something larger than ourselves that can lead to the true impact of volunteering in a church.”

Eileen Teska says, “Volunteering (Heritage Society, Book Club, coordinating Circle Suppers) has turned out to be a great way to meet people and make new friends as well as helping the church.”

For more information to get involved, see the [UUMilwaukee website](http://www.uumilwaukee.org) to volunteer or participate with a group.

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



On a recent visit to Minneapolis, I was reunited with my “spiritual friends” group. We hadn’t seen each other in-person for over five years, although we do a conference call almost every month. It’s just three of us and we’ve been meeting since 1995. During our last year of seminary, a professor required students to form small “spiritual friends” groups. She said, “Ministry can be lonely and isolating. You need people you get to know and trust deeply, who you can count on for anything, that you can call in the middle of the night. Otherwise, you’ll burnout.”

The three of us didn’t know each other and perhaps wouldn’t have chosen to connect in other contexts, but I know now that my life and ministry would not be the same without them. This experience makes me think of kinship, our theme for August, and how liberating and useful it can be to widen our definition of kin. Who might you consider kin, outside of your family of origin? How might extending your circle of kin become a spiritual practice? We get to decide by mutual consent who is our kin, whether we call them chosen family,

friends, or something else. Life is challenging, so the connections that hold us through confusion, sorrow, and despair are a deep joy. May you find ways to give and receive in a nourishing network of kin, however you define it.

Yours,
Rev. Dena McPhetres
Associate Minister



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



Welcome to First Church

Religious Education 2023-24!

As we approach the fall season, we are excited to offer our religious education program for children and youth. This year, we are providing a range of options to choose from, including UU Play and UU Maker Spaces. We encourage families to take advantage of our early registration discount of \$25 and sign up today! Our new program is designed to provide children with a safe and nurturing environment to explore their spirituality and learn about our UU values.

All Religious Education programs for children over 5 years of age begin at 9:00 a.m. only during the first Sunday service. After our time together in the sanctuary, Children, Youth participants and RE Volunteers will depart for the R.E. programs, beginning in the Leenhouts Common Room and then moving to the lower level. The Lower Level offers two options for most Sundays, which are UU Play or UU Maker Spaces, until 10:30 a.m. Additionally, other options such as All Ages Sunday and special workshops will be available on some Sundays.

For children under the age of five, the Nursery and Preschool will be open from 8:45 to 10:30 a.m. during the first service, and from 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. during the second service.

We are excited to offer the 7-9th grade Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.) sexuality education program this year! The classes will run from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. most Sundays, and you can find the schedule [here](#). Please note that there is a required Parent/Caregiver orientation meeting for OWL students on August 27 at 11:00 a.m. in the Reeb Room at church. The Youth Group will be meeting throughout the year, the schedule will be determined by the participants. Youth are always welcome to join the activities in UU Play or UU Maker Spaces. Please contact Deb Solis, our Youth and OWL coordinator for more information.

Registration cost for the entire year is \$50 per child for members, maximum cost is \$100 per family for the year. If your family could use a full or partial fee waiver, please do not hesitate to contact the Minister of Religious Education, Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson at kimberlee.carlson@uumilwaukee.org. We never turn a family away!

If you are not a current member of the First Unitarian Society, you can register for RE [here](#).

Continued on Page 7



SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

6

Radical Kinship

Rev. Dena McPhetres

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Patrick Mulvey, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

13

How Do You Ken Your Kin?

Rev. Dena McPhetres

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Dave Umhoefer, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

20

Showing up Imperfect

Annie Wegner LeFort, First Church Member

Teresa Drews, Collaborative Pianist

Erik Alexander, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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The Last Dance

Jeff Percy, First Church Member

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Ryan Pawlowski, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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



Welcome back, Reverend Jennifer!

The Sabbatical Committee invites you to join us on August 6 as we host a Coffee Hour reception after service to welcome back Reverend Jennifer! Our Senior Minister will be recently returned from her five-month sabbatical and we are excited to have Reverend Jennifer back at First Church. Please stop by the Leenhouts Common Room after the August 6 service to visit with fellow First Church members and guests, eat some cake, and provide a warm welcome back to Reverend Jennifer. The reception will begin around 11:00 a.m., immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Sunday service.



Pulpit Guest August 20 ♦ Annie Wegner LeFort

Annie Wegner LeFort has been a First Church member since 2006. She teaches yoga and cooking classes in the metro-Milwaukee area. She identifies as a movement practitioner (dancer, capoeirista, distance runner, acroyogini, hiker, drummer) artist, and mother to Vera. Annie works with adults and young people to help them become more comfortable in their bodies, celebrate their uniqueness, learn practical relaxation techniques, gain focus and stability, and heal through gentle stretching and meditation.



Pulpit Guest August 27 ♦ Jeff Pearcy

Jeff and Jerilyn Pearcy have been members of First Church for over thirty years. After careers as a photojournalist, AODA counselor, and executive director of two nonprofit organizations, Jeff blossomed into a documentary photographer. Jeff has worked for the UUA documenting the aftermath of typhoon Hiyan in the Philippines, the struggle of legal aliens in Texas, and the water crisis in Detroit. He has traveled four times to Sierra Leone to help raise money for a small village hospital. He is a founding member of "For Good Photography." Jeff has had four exhibits in the First Church Leenhouts Gallery. Jeff served as First Church congregation President for two years and has volunteered on many committees.

Required Parent Meeting For OWL Grades 7-9

by Deb Solis

Youth and OWL Program Coordinator

We are planning to offer the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for grades 7-9 youth at First Church for the 2023-2024 church year. Parents of youth in grades 7-9 who may be interested in participating in our yearlong program must be members of First Church and are required to attend a parent orientation meeting which has been scheduled for Sunday, August 27 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at church in the Reeb Room. The class will be held on Sundays from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with two extended weekend classes.

The OWL program helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their relationships, sexual health, and behavior. With a holistic approach, OWL provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including relationships, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, sexual health, and cultural influences on sexuality.

We are so very grateful to our lead facilitators: Jessie Moffat, Jeremy Koenen, John Fitak, Katie Maedke Hall and Crysta Jarczyński. We couldn't offer this important program for our youth without them and their commitment.

If you are interested in having your youth participate in this life-changing program at First Church please contact Deb Solis at deb.solis@uumilwaukee.org by August 20, 2023.

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson continued from page 4.

Religious Education depends on volunteers sharing their wisdom, energy, and time with our children. We ask all families to contribute to the RE program by being one of the 8-13 people First Church needs each Sunday to create our RE program. [RE Volunteer Schedule and Roles](#) & [RE Volunteer Registration here](#).

We look forward to seeing your children and continuing their faith development through our Religious Education program. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Rev. Kimberlee.

Member Religious Education Registration

Guest Religious Education Registration

RE Volunteer Testimonial

Beth Bruch shared this testimonial. "My boys and I had lots of fun volunteering at the Magic and Mystery party this past year. We set up a station to make a crystal ball with dry ice and soap ... and it was fun to see the kids' faces as their magic bubbles grew, filled with mysterious swirling smoke, and then popped. We were glad to be able to help participate in the success of this great RE event. I also enjoyed helping to chaperone RE field trips this year as part of our excellent "Crossing Paths with Neighboring Faiths" program. "

Sign up for RE Volunteer

First Church Youth Worship Featured by UUA

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education



We are proud to announce that the First Church 2023 Youth Service has been chosen to be a part of the new Article II Congregational Resources for the upcoming year of study and reflection about the proposed Article II changes. This is a great accomplishment for our youth, and we applaud their hard work and dedication to our church community. We encourage everyone to check out all the resources available on the UUA website and to join us in this important year of study and growth. Please click on the following link to access the Article II resources: Link to [Article 11 Resources HERE!](#)



For More Information about General Assembly 2023, check out these links.

- [UU World: GA Highlights](#)
- [Unitarian Universalism revisits identity, values at 2023 gathering](#)
- [The unofficial Article II Values Language with GA Amendments](#)
- [General Assembly 2023 Public Video](#)
- [Unitarian Universalists elect first woman of color, openly queer president](#)



We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who attended our event at the Urban Ecology Center of Milwaukee last Saturday.

What Can Theme Circles Do for You?

by Rev. Dena McPhetres
Associate Minister

Church member Dot Sherman describes her experience:

“I enjoyed the opportunity to share life’s experience on a small intimate basis. Everyone was very accepting. The facilitator did a great job of fostering participation. The best part was thinking about our spiritual growth in a positive environment.”

If you are longing for connection, consider joining a Theme Circle—small groups that reflect together on our monthly worship themes. Registration opens September 1.

All in the Family

Our heartfelt condolences are with **Carolyn Schendel** whose brother Russell Maxim died on June 24 at the age of 67.

Our love and care are with **Maggie Krochalk** whose mother Rita Krochalk died on July 4 at the age of 95. The family plans a memorial service on August 20 at the UU church in Duluth, Minnesota and an informal Celebration of Life in Milwaukee in October.



In Memoriam

Noreen R. Cook

September 30, 1929 ~ May 30, 2022

We recently and belatedly received news that Noreen Cook died peacefully while in hospice in Mequon, Wisconsin on May 30, 2022, from complications of long-standing congestive heart failure. Her daughter, Sue Cook, was with her when she passed.

Noreen was 92 years old and a member of our congregation for 22 years. The family had an informal get together in the summer of 2022 to celebrate Noreen’s life. A book of Noreen’s poetry was published just two weeks before her death, called “Poems: Images Through Words.”

Memorial donations may be given to: Courage MKE at <https://www.couragemke.org>. This organization provides services and housing to LGBTQ+ youth in the Milwaukee area.

Forward Scholars 23-24

by Molly Shiffler

Thanks to many dedicated staff leaders and volunteers (including First Church members), Common Ground's FORWARD SCHOLARS was a resounding success this last school year. About 128 MPS students participating in tutoring grew an average of 3.3 levels in reading versus an expected 2 levels for a year of instruction. Thank you to so many of you for contributing as tutors or substitute tutors, with donations (First Church Share the Plate) and by spreading the word about the impact that we were making together in our community.

Due to this success, we are expanding for this next school year. We will need over 200 tutors in order to provide 1:1 support for K-3rd grade students at 6-9 schools in MPS. We will likely return to many of the same schools.

If you, or someone you know, is ready to commit as a tutor, substitute tutor or provide help such as prepping materials, please sign up at:

[www.commonground Wi.org/forward-scholars](http://www.commongroundwi.org/forward-scholars).

Additionally, we will be holding 2 informational sessions for new tutors. A program flyer, short summary and commitment form are available at the Social Justice table.

There will be a zoom meeting for potential tutors on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, from 1:30-2:45 p.m.

Contact Dr. Carrie Streiff-Stuessy, Executive Director, to register, for more information or with questions at carriess@forwardscholars.org

Walk & Roll at Wilson Park Pond

by Jacki Zandi

Earth Justice Ministry Member

The EJM monthly nature Walk & Roll is on Saturday August 12 from 10:00 a.m.-Noon at Wilson Park. The location is on Howard Avenue between Thirteenth and Twentieth Street. It is hosted by Paula Anderson and Jacki Zandi.

Wilson Park features the largest pond in the Milwaukee County Park System. We will take the .07 mile asphalt trail loop. There are plenty of fishing holes and a large concrete platform with benches from which to view the pond. A side trail leads to a bridge with a view of a canal. Living is easy at Wilson Park Pond.

You can park in a large lot accessed from Thirteenth Street just South of Howard Avenue. Follow the gazebo sign. There we will meet at the asphalt trail which goes past the baseball diamond to the pond.

Circle Suppers Are Back!

by Eileen Teska

Circle Supper Chair

Circle Suppers are a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and deepen existing friendships in a relaxed setting. The small-group dinners are held in participants' homes, with everyone bringing an assigned element of the meal: main dish, salad, or dessert, with the host providing the beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

This year the dinners will be on November 11, January 20, March 23, and May 4. Each of the four dinners includes a different mix of up to eight participants. The responsibilities of hosting and what participants bring are rotated for each dinner. You don't need a big dining room table to host--buffet style serving with informal seating is just fine.

Circle Suppers are open to all adult church members and friends. You can sign up as a pair/couple, as an individual, or as a substitute, either hosting or non-hosting.

Many thanks to Sam Mueller who did a magnificent job of facilitating Circle Suppers for a number of years before the pandemic forced a long hiatus on this popular church activity. Eileen Teska is the new coordinator.

You can sign up online using the form below beginning now. In-person on-paper registration will be available at the Membership Table during Coffee Hour beginning in September. Registration deadline is September 24. [Sign up HERE.](#)

Chancel Choir starting up for 2023-2024

by Tristan Strelitzer

Choral Director

The Chancel Choir will be starting up again for the 2023-2024 Church year with Thursday evening rehearsals starting on August 24th. New and returning choir members are invited to join us for rehearsals from 7:15 – 9:00 p.m. and choir membership is open to all members and friends of church, high school age and up. The choir sings about once a month for services from September to June.

Previous knowledge/experience with music is helpful, but not necessary. If you are interested in joining or have questions, please contact Choral Director, Tristan Strelitzer at Tristan.strelitzer@uumilwaukee.org



Staff Directory

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Tristan Strelitzer

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Teresa Drews

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Staff members have varying hours.

Please contact them directly to set up an appointment.

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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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