

OCTOBER 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*

## Heritage



# Inside News

by *The Chanticleer* Editors

## Welcome UUA President Rev. Dr. Betancourt Sunday October 15

We delighted to welcome the new president of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA)! Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt will join us for both Sunday Services on October 15. See page 7.

**At 1:00 p.m., meet Rev. Betancourt!** Hear Rev. Betancourt's vision for our faith, and her priorities for our future. Ask her your questions about who we are and where we are going together. In Max Otto Hall.

As president of the UUA, Rev. Betancourt is responsible for administering staff and programs that serve its more than 1,000 member congregations. She acts as principal spokesperson and minister-at-large for the UUA. Her academic work focuses on environmental ethics of liberation in a womanist and Latina feminist frame. Betancourt's ministry centers on work that is empowering and counter-oppressive.



[Subscribe to Announcements.](#)

[First Church Facebook Group](#)

## Share the Plate

by Bob Monahan  
Share the Plate Chair

Kinship Community Food Center, previously known as Riverwest Food Pantry, is the October Share the Plate recipient.

Feeding hunger is a catalyst for the well-being of a community. Kinship Community Food Center engages volunteers and neighborhood residents to end hunger, isolation, and poverty. Their innovative programs nourish food security and wellness, foster belonging and community engagement, and empower stability and economic prosperity in our city.

Building community in 2022:

- 78,333 lbs. of produce distributed to community members in need.
- 11,553 lbs. of produce grown in community-run gardens.
- 290,472 lbs. of food distributed to community members.
- 14,933 people served.
- 5,691 total volunteer visits.
- 81% referral success rate for STRIDE (crisis assistance and mentoring) program.

Your generous financial contribution or a gift of your time can help Kinship Community Food Center continue to feed thousands of our neighbors, accompany them through their deepest struggles, and create a space in our city for meaningful relationships between people of all backgrounds.

Learn more about Kinship Community Food Center at <https://www.kinshipmke.org>. Contribute securely online at the link below or mail your check to First Church made payable to Kinship Community Food Center and we'll forward your contribution to them. Please be generous in your support.

[Donate to this STP Partner](#)



# Words on the Wind

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Heritage is full and complicated: we all have ancestors that have passed us beauty and pain, because all of our ancestors were human. We also inherit gifts and grief from our faith. There are long lineages of Unitarian and Universalist commitments to reason, liberation, justice, equity, and love. We also have painful episodes in our denominations' histories that need be faced in order to be transformed. We are a people, which means our communities hold joy and struggle, and have inherited gifts and grief. Learning about all of it allows us to pass on a little more of the beauty to our descendants.

By now you've read the news that our beloved Lynne Jacoby is leaving her role as Membership Development Coordinator at the end of this month. We love Lynne and are so sad to see her go, but we also honor her choice to take care of herself. (Read Lynne's letter to the congregation as well as what happens next on page 8.) May we take the time to offer her our blessings on her journey.

As we move forward together as a community, we will keep learning about how to hold and heal with one another through life's twists and turns. I am grateful to be traveling with you.

With love,

Jennifer

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

## Come Hear (and Tell!) Sabbatical Stories

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

On Sunday October 8 at 1:00 p.m, join us in Max Otto Hall for Sabbatical Stories! Rev. Jennifer will share stories from her sabbatical and listen to any sabbatical stories you want to tell from your time at church while she was away. Coffee, tea, and water will be available. If you would like to register to join us by zoom, click here:

<https://form.jotform.com/232606627929970>

# Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



Fourteen years ago, when I entered First Church, I inherited a rich culture of deep listening. One of the first things I noticed as a newcomer was the beautiful quality of listening you offered each other. I asked around, “how did you learn to listen so well in this congregation?” Members replied, “Chalice Circles and Pastoral Care Associates.” Then went on to tell me about how small groups taught them to practice listening without interruption or crosstalk. Since 2002, Chalice Circles (now called Theme Circles) offer space to explore enduring life themes in a small group with attentive listening. If someone had served as a Pastoral Care Associate (PCA), they sang the praises of the training that taught the art and skill of deep listening.

Since 1997, when First Church had around 400 members, PCAs have offered their listening presence to fellow members going through difficult times. For 26 years, our members have accepted care from a PCA when they needed someone outside of their circle of family and friends to simply listen to them talk about their life struggles. It is a rare and special gift to have a good listener, one who is a peer in our spiritual community, yet outside the dynamics

of our personal life. Someone who won't interrupt to say, “Yeah, the same thing happened to me—let me tell you about it!” Someone who waits for our story to unfold and supports us unconditionally.

The rich heritage of good listening at First Church is a rare and beautiful thing. Rev. Jennifer and I encourage you to request and engage in this kind of relationship, which is different from a social visit. We encourage you to accept a phone call or visit from a PCA, because this is how we care for each other in our community. We have 650 members now, so our large church relies on a robust team of lay ministers reaching more people than the reverends possibly could.

Our current team of PCAs is entering their third year of service. They are excellent experienced listeners with a deep bench of life experience. They'll reach out to you more often this year, when we hear of members who've had a death in the family, a health issue, or other significant life transition, so don't be surprised when they call. You can graciously decline, but we hope you'll say yes and receive the experience of deep listening that First Church does so well.

Yours, Dena

Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister



## RE Volunteers at Work



We had a lovely time with some amazing guests in Religious Education the Sunday of our water ritual! The DePue's were helping out and Thallis Drake, Jackie Zandi, and Juliet Hills joined us and shared their watercolor expertise with our children in the UU Maker Space. Our Maker Space is the perfect place to get a little messy and learn by creating! We encouraged our children to reflect on what keeps



them afloat during tough times and then we created beautiful paintings together of what brings us hope. Come down to the lower level to see our artwork and the UU Maker Space!

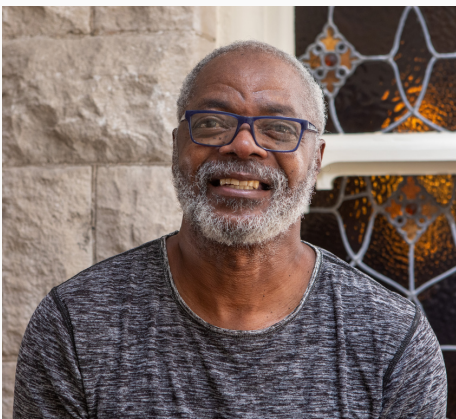
## All in the Family

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

We were sad to receive the news in July that members **Max and Pat Scharmach** died where they lived in Florida. Their daughter Nancy informed us that Max passed away May 11, 2023 and Pat died on June 7, 2023. We've been in touch with their daughter and await more information to prepare the proper In Memoria and light our Candle of Life. Pat and Max were members of First Church since 1988. Our deep condolences are with the Scharmach family.

We send our heartfelt condolences to **JoAnn Bachar**, whose grandson died by suicide. May JoAnn and her family be held with tender grace in this great loss.

Our sincere condolences are with **John Gielow**, whose brother died. May the Gielow and Dentino family be held in love and comfort.



## Nate Jackson Facilities Maintenance Worker

We are pleased to welcome Nate Jackson to the staff as our very part-time Facilities Maintenance Worker. In the few short weeks he's been working with Facilities Manager Ken Liddell, we can see the results of his expertise and commitment to quality work. Nate replaces former Facilities Maintenance Worker Art Sims. Please welcome Nate to First Church.



# Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



I remember the day I told my grandmother I was not a Christian. Her response was, “Oh yes, you are!” I firmly disagreed, but even in my youthful willfulness I knew better than to argue my reasons too long with my elders. My heritage, my family’s faith roots, from all the sides, stepfamily, in-law, and biological are firmly grounded in forms of Christianity. Like many, I grew up earnestly praying, practicing and believing in the Christian faith, until I did not, then left my Christian heritage behind to find something that aligned with the values that I hold dear.

Years later, I went to a workshop called UU Christianity. Primarily because I was baffled by the concept. Why would you be a Christian and a UU? There I found people who were earnestly grappling with their Christian heritage, and in a way, I found Jesus again. These folks were wiser than I, weaving their inherited faith with their chosen one, loving the radical social justice rabbi as well as faith ancestors who were seeking more. It was a powerful reckoning, reuniting of my childhood love of Jesus while holding the gift of a progressive faith built on a foundation of love that included freedom, reason, hope, and courage.

Our UU faith ancestors gifted us a progressive faith inheritance. Those imperfect UU ancestors, like many of us, were courageously willing to question entrenched ideas and systems that were oppressive, unjust, and unloving. In a way, my grandmother was right. The fullness of my heritage includes Christianity. Each faith journey includes heritage and choice. It is up to each of us to choose what we will carry forward.

Our faith tradition does not ask us all to adhere to one set of defined beliefs but instead we get to create together aspirational promises grounded in liberating love. Unitarian Universalism heritage is one that centers our relationships. This is why we are a covenantal, not a creedal, faith.

Our covenant to one another, our planet, all living beings is the cornerstone of who we are. Caring for one another, nurturing our lives through connection, engaging ourselves and the community creates a legacy of love worthy of giving to future generations.

It is a privilege to be on this faith journey with all of you.

Rev. Kimberlee  
Minister of Religious Education



# SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

1

## Building on Love

**Rev. Dena McPhetres**

Teresa Drews, Collaborative Pianist

Erik Alexander, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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## What Do We Do with the Painful Stuff?

**Rev. Jennifer Norstrom**

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Amanda Thomas, Guest Musician and Conductor

The Chancel Choir

Don Weimer, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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## Growing Ourselves from Seed

**Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, UUA President**

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Nancy Spransy, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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## How Do We Carry Our Histories?

**Rev. Jennifer Norstrom**

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Trudy Watt, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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## Passing Away, Passing It On

**Rev. Dena McPhetres**

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Liz Irwin Moore, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

Sunday services at 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.



## Lynne's Goodbye

by Lynne Jacoby

I am writing this shortly after Ingathering Sunday heartbroken. The theme was welcome and in the last five years I have seen (and felt!) Your welcome to me - and so many others, so it is particularly difficult to tell you that I have made the decision to leave my position as Membership Development Coordinator in this community.

It is even harder as I sense the energy coming into this year, note the influx of new people courageously walking in our doors seeking the kind of spiritual home you all have created. I love First Church, and it is also true that it has been increasingly difficult for me to feel able to do my job well. I've been struggling emotionally, and it has affected how I accomplish my role, which in turn is affecting how I feel.

I'm sure there are many contributing factors including the distance from my support systems back East, Covid and... I'll confess, not having a regular grounding spiritual practice we recommend to new members every class. I can't tell you how much I wish I could've been a little more resilient. It is so easy for me to imagine what First Church will be in two years, five, ten... because I can feel our leadership and membership unfurling to welcome families, young adults and members of all ages, identities, and beliefs in new ways and in new spaces.

But, wishing to reset one's emotional balance without commitment, practice and (I have come to believe for me) space, is not helpful. I have made the difficult decision to leave First Church mid-November to spend some time with my sisters' family and Dad in Vermont, take the space to figure out how I might hold my struggles better, and find what is next.

I will be taking you all with me, always.

Lynne

Membership Development Coordinator

## Journey to Membership

### October Membership Classes

Saturday, Oct. 7, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm

and Tuesday, Oct. 10, 6:30 -8:30 pm

In-person, at First Church

Led by our ministers and staff, this series explores our theology, history, principals and social justice framework, as well as the meaning of membership and connection at First Church.

The class is a prerequisite to membership, but joining is not a requirement to take the class.

Learn more about membership or register at [uumilwaukee.org/get-involved/become-a-member/](https://uumilwaukee.org/get-involved/become-a-member/). For questions? Email

[lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee](mailto:lynne.jacoby@uumilwaukee)



## Empower the Next Generation! VOLUNTEER!

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson  
Minister of Religious Education

Religious Education is a collective enterprise, it only works when we work together.

RE depends on you becoming a volunteer by sharing your wisdom, energy, and time with our children. That's how it happens, someone finds the time and decides they will be a part of the solution. And when we all work together, we create a place where the next generation of UU's can thrive.

There is no magic group of childcare givers, perfect parents who have lots of extra time, or enough RE staff to make Sundays incredible for our children. There is just all of us together, and that is plenty! You do not need to help every week, you do not need to plan, (unless you want to), you just need to bring your caring self to the lower level a few times a year.

We ask that everyone who can contribute to the RE program by being one of the 10 people we need each Sunday to create our RE program. To make our program a success, we need your help.

By volunteering on Sundays, you empower the next generation and support our families. Your time and energy can make a significant impact on the lives of our young people.

Volunteering is flexible. Full descriptions of the volunteer roles can be found on our church website and here: [RE 2023- 24 Volunteer Schedule](#). In order to ensure the safety of our

families, all volunteers who work with our children will need to be vaccinated and willing to have a general background check. If you are ready to be part of the solution, please apply here: [RE Volunteering 2023-24](#).

Our next RE Volunteer Orientation is on October 8, at 11:30 a.m. in the Young Room. Snacks and childcare provided. Hope to see you there!

### RE Volunteer Signup

## Parents as Sexuality Educators Small Group

We are pleased to announce monthly parenting sessions on sexuality education for children. These 90-minute sessions help parents and caregivers explore their role as the primary sexuality educators of their children. Led by experienced OWL facilitators Rev. Kimberlee, Deb Solis, and Rollie Hanson, we will meet on the second Thursday each month via Zoom only.

Don't miss this opportunity to become the most important sexuality educator your children will have! Join our monthly group on sexuality education for children and start building a strong foundation for your child's healthy sexual development. [Register HERE](#).

## Hunting Moon Pow Wow

**October 21**

by Rev. Kimberlee Carlson

Attending a Pow Wow is an amazing way to learn about Native American culture and traditions! In Religious Education, we have been learning about the native people of Wisconsin and are



excited to extend our learning by attending the upcoming local Hunting Moon Pow Wow together on Oct. 21 from 12-3:00 p.m. The Hunting Moon Pow Wow is free, open and welcome to the public and all are invited to join us!

Pow Wows are celebrations of life and festive gatherings to celebrate Native American culture and dance. Pow Wows are gatherings full of music, dancing, and friends new and old. Rev. Kimberlee has participated in many Pow Wows in Wisconsin and is eager to attend with a group gathered from First Church. Bring your open mind and respect for Native traditions and get ready to join us on Oct. 21! Event details at

<https://www.huntingmoonpowwow.com/>

Please contact Rev. Kimberlee if you plan on attending,  
Kimberlee.carlson@uumilwaukee.org.

## Child Dedication Nov. 19

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

On November 19, a Dedication of Parents and Children will take place during our 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Sunday services.

The Child Dedication Ceremony is a time for celebrating the birth or adoption of a child in a ceremony of naming and dedication. It is a time for welcoming our children into the world, into the family, and into the church community. It is a time for acknowledging that each child's life is sacred and holding that truth in the light of our faith.

This simple ceremony is related to the Christian "baptism" or "christening," though the meanings we attach to it are significantly different. Please read our UU Child Dedication website link for a full description.

The ceremony is a public declaration by parents dedicating themselves to faithfully nurturing and supporting their children. The congregation recognizes your child's original blessing, and we dedicate ourselves to nurturing your child and you. Because of the promises our congregation makes to the family during the ceremony, child dedications are available only to members of the church.

If you are interested in having your child dedicated on November 19, fill out this [online form](#) by Sunday, November 12 or email Rev. Kimberlee.

## Feast Your Eyes on the Feast For Funds Silent Auction

by Scot Henry  
Feast for Funds Team Chair

There are some gatherings where you look back and savor the memory of your time together many times over. A chocolate tasting party that my wife Laura and I hosted several years ago brought excitement to the attendees, and positive comments well after the event was over. It started with a small idea because we wanted to participate in the Feast for Funds silent auction to help our congregation and build community.

Feast for Funds is back this year! You can contribute to this great event in several ways. How about supporting a restaurant or store by donating a gift card, along with a brief description of why you love that place? You can consider a themed dinner. The “Yoooper Dinner” is legendary. A pesto making demonstration was full of good food and conversation. I remember a party with delicious food and stories from the Greek Islands, and a taco party where I met someone in my line of work who I might not otherwise have met. If you have a vacation home with a weekend to loan out, bidders love these getaway options.

Be a part of shared memories and submit your donation today online or at coffee hour. Feast for Funds consultants will be available to discuss ideas and a plan. I look forward to seeing what you bring to the auction!

Make your donations at  
<https://form.jotform.com/232623905371050>

## Fun, Food, Future. Earth Justice Ministry Gathering October 21

by Bruce Wiggins  
Co-chair Earth Justice Ministry

The Earth Justice Ministry will gather for the first time this Fall emphasizing fun and connecting with each other regarding what we care about now in our world and Milwaukee. Join us Saturday, October 21 at church 10:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m. Doors will open at 9:30 for snacks and informal conversation. We will catch up with each other, play games, share food, and share what matters to us now. Those who want to stay a little later will watch a short film together. This gathering will help set our agenda for the church year.

Do you have a passion to help pollinators? Eliminate plastics waste? Address climate change? Get out the vote, and defend democracy? Watch films together or discuss books? These, or other ideas you bring, are possibilities we could consider connecting about -- individually or in teams. Join us if you care about building relationships in the face of climate change; or celebrating nature as a spiritual exercise; or promoting environmental justice.

There'll be bagels and coffee. Contributions of finger food are welcome but not necessary. For more information about Earth Justice Ministry or the Fun, Food, Future event, ask Bruce Wiggins, Barbara Leigh, or Terry Wiggins.



## Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, Oct 4 & 18, 6:30 pm  
At Church

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).

## Book Discussion Group

Sunday, October 8  
[Join Us Online Here](#)

Join us as we discuss March's read, *Out of the Shadows* by Emily Midorikkawa, 2021. Contact Barbra Lancelot for more information at [uubarbra@gmail.com](mailto: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. All are welcome.

## Chancel Choir

Every Thursday, 7:15 -9:00 pm  
At Church

Sing with us on Thursdays as we prepare to perform for Sunday services. Open to all singers high school age and up (no previous experience or audition required). Contact Tristan Strelitzer for more information or to join at [tristan.strelitzer@uumilwaukee.org](mailto:tristan.strelitzer@uumilwaukee.org).

## The Chronologically Gifted Potluck

Sunday, October 29 at 12:30 pm  
At Church

Reconnect with old friends and make some new ones. Bring a dish and join your contemporaries for a potluck after the Sunday service in Otto Hall. We may even have some entertainment! Plan ahead! Show up! Enjoy!

## 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.





# Sunday Morning Forum

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & ON YOUTUBE



**OCTOBER 1**

## Shame of Indian Boarding Schools

**Richard J. Gonzalez M.A., Loliwayntati "He Who Brings the Good Word" Iroquois, Oneida, Turtle Clan**

Why were Native children as young as four years of age taken from their parents and tribes and sent to horrific boarding schools hundred of miles away from family, spirituality, language, and culture? Learn through the life of the presenter's mother, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The use of letters, records, pictures, and oral narratives, will carry the truth.

**OCTOBER 8**

## Every City Needs Its History: The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee and Its Use

**Margo Anderson, Distinguished Professor Emerita, UW – Milwaukee**

Historians call it "the usable past." What do we know about our hometown and local environment? Where do all those place names, on buildings, streets, or neighborhoods, come from? How do you find out? The Encyclopedia of Milwaukee is designed to be the first stop to answering such questions for the Milwaukee Metropolitan area, now and in the future. We'll talk about how we did it and how understanding Milwaukee's past contributes to understanding Milwaukee's present and future.



**OCTOBER 15 - tbd**



September 10 Forum with Derek Mosley JD



# Sunday Morning Forum

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & ON YOUTUBE



**OCTOBER 22**

## Indigenizing Milwaukee: Developing a Walking, Biking, & Driving Tour of Indigenous MKE

**Dr. Bryan C. Rindfleisch, Marquette University**

This presentation focuses on the research, scripting, and development process of the “Indigenous Milwaukee” tour that the Indigeneity Lab of Marquette University created in partnership with Historic Milwaukee Inc. during summer 2022. In addition to describing how the relationship between the two partners developed along with the actual mechanics of putting the tour together, this presentation guides audiences through a number of the places and spaces along the walking, biking, and driving tour, providing a glimpse of the Indigenous shaping of Milwaukee in the past, present, and for the future.

**OCTOBER 29**

## The Milwaukee River Greenway: A Wealth of Nature in the Heart of the City

**Eddee Daniel, Project Director for Preserve Our Parks**

The Milwaukee River Greenway, a system of connected parks along the river, is larger than New York’s Central Park. But, unlike that world-famous urban park, it is not well known—even by local residents. During a period as Artist in Residence for the River Revitalization Foundation, photographer Eddee Daniel produced a book entitled “The Milwaukee River Greenway: A Wealth of Nature in the Heart of the City.” He will share a little of the history of the Greenway and how it came to be protected. His stunning photographs will demonstrate what a treasure we have in our midst.



## Update from the Endowment Fund Task Force

by Ron Oshima  
EFTF member

With summer vacations receding into distant memories and Reverend Jennifer's welcome return, the EFTF is ramping up its activities. The task force met with Reverend Jennifer to bring her up to speed and get some initial feedback. As a result of that conversation, the team will revisit the trust fund agreement with our retained trust lawyer to strengthen current, and insert new, checks and balances features of governance. Once that is completed, we will present a draft to the Board of Trustees in October for discussion and feedback.

Proper checks and balances are important to ensure that the endowment is managed in a responsible manner for the purposes for which it is intended. This will help us meet one of our primary objectives – the protection of principal.

The team continues to evaluate investment manager alternatives. We have narrowed it down from four to three, with further evaluation taking place as new facts come to light.



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

Goal: \$3,000,000  
Dollars pledged as of  
September 20: \$2,804,884  
Fulfilled Amt: \$950,764



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](#)

# Staff Directory

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Staff members have varying hours.

Please contact them directly to set up an appointment.

## Board of Trustees Officers

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Vice President.....Sarah Richards

Secretary .....Joe Riepenhoff

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George Bledsoe

Dana Brooks

Stacy Koenen

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Amy Wilbourne

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uumilwaukee.org

## Follow Us



## Church Building Hours

Sundays: 8:00 am - 2:30 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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