

CHANTICLEER

The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.



Monthly Theme



What does it mean to be a people of

Generosity

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Inside News

by The Chanticleer Editors

Feast For Funds is back!

Sunday, October 29 - November 5.

Feast For Funds is First Church's favorite fundraiser. Thanks to many generous church members who have donated dinners in their homes, events, vacation homes, and more, there are numerous opportunities to connect with church friends while supporting the church.

We're excited to share with you a preview of the Feast For Funds catalog. See page 10 for more info and the link to the auction catalog.

Church YouTube Channel

We are very proud to celebrate one year of successful online Sunday services livestreamed to our church YouTube channel. The volunteer team has worked hard this past year producing the entire service including the music and clear speech with our stories and sermons, and the closed caption is more reliable. We have an average of 136 views per Sunday service. We hear from many members and guests who appreciate our online services.

This past fall, we had exciting pulpit guests including Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt and Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu. Explore our church YouTube channel for entire Sunday services, Forum presentations, RE videos, and sermon videos series. Subscribe to our channel and get reminders if you choose that option.

First Church YouTube Channel.

Share the Plate

by Bob Monahan Share the Plate Chair

Our November Share the Plate partner is Common Ground's Forward Scholars program.



The pandemic changed the course of kids' lives in many ways and had a devastating effect on education. Many kids fell behind and are still working to get back on track. Time is not on their side. Studies show if a child cannot read age-appropriate books by the end of third grade, they will struggle with reading their entire lives.

Thanks to many dedicated staff leaders and volunteer tutors, Forward Scholars was a resounding success in the 2022-23 school year. Students in the program grew an average of 3.3 reading levels versus an expected 2 levels for a year of classroom instruction. That means a Forward Scholars student starting at a late 1st grade level would be at a mid-3rd grade level after a year of tutoring.

An expanded 2023-24 program will work with 180 students at seven MPS schools to provide 1:1 support for K-3rd graders.

As the window of time between kindergarten and third grade closes, your generous financial support will help put kids back on a path to lifelong success.

Contribute securely online at the link below, or mail or bring your check to First Church made payable to "Common Ground" with "Forward Scholars" in the memo line. We'll forward your contribution to the Forward Scholars program.

Donate to this STP Partner



Words on the Wind by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

In our First Church Journey to Membership classes, we ask our new members to tell a story of a time when they gave a gift, and it changed them. The stories pour forth: people will tell stories of giving to children and parents, friends and loved ones, and strangers. And they tell about how in the giving they received something beautiful. Can you remember a time when giving a gift changed you?

There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between experiencing generosity and abundance. When we approach giving joyfully, it reinforces our experience of abundance. We both feel the blessing of being able to give, and we strengthen our connection with the person, family, or community to which we are giving. It increases our experience of having abundance in our own lives, as well as increases our experience of belonging and relationship.

In this month where we explore the theme of generosity in our lives and faith, may you experience a positive feedback loop between giving and receiving. May you and your loved ones be held in love, give generously to one another and the world, and experience abundance.

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

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



During Journey to Membership, one of the exercises we do in pairs is to tell someone about a time when your giving made a difference, however you define it. When our giving makes a difference, we are developing the muscle of generosity, a spiritual practice for sure!

I remember when my parents asked me and my sister to consider giving our backyard playhouse to the younger kids across the street. At first, I didn't believe we could part with it, but our parents were right – we had outgrown it. Giving our playhouse to the younger kids made a difference to them, and to us, because we learned to detach for the benefit of others. Same with toys we stopped using and the piano many years later. Developmental giving, age appropriate.

What about giving when we are not done using a favorite thing? One year at 4th of July fireworks when I was a child, someone was injured by a firework. My parents jumped up and covered them with our picnic blanket as the injured person waited for the emergency vehicle. On the way home, I asked why we had to give away our favorite blanket. My parents said, "that person needed it more than we did."

My sister and I learned a form of tithing when my parents required us to use some of our allowance to buy a Christmas gift for an unknown child through Toys for Tots. We also put our dimes in the offering plate during children's chapel services and collected for UNICEF at Halloween. I grew to like the sound of coins in the UNICEF box better than the Halloween candy.

These days, my practice of generosity includes tithing money to First Church and other causes, but where I'm stretching is by giving my attention. Simone Weil said, "Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity." Who or what is calling for my attention? Can I stretch to listen even if that connection will sweep me into the deep and transforming river of suffering and compassion? As the song by Pat Humphries says, "we're all swimming to the other side." I'm honored and glad to be swimming alongside you.

Yours, Dena Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister

OUR PEOPLE OUR COMMUNITY

Enthusiastic Engagement



Did you know that our chalice was a logo design before it was a cup of light in our Sunday services? Our children learned all about the heritage of the UU chalice and made clay chalices of their own design in our UU Maker Space last month.



Family and Friends Singers performing the prelude for our Sunday service featuring UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt.

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 healing thoughts to **Kathy Rivera**, who had knee surgery on October 17.

We send our healing thoughts to **Anna Strelitzer** as she climbs the mountain of recovery after the Strelitzer family's September 30 car accident. We continue to hold **Tristan, Milo, and Jonas** in love as they support Anna and recover emotionally themselves. Information about Anna's CaringBridge site, and the MealTrain and GoFundMe for the Strelitzers was emailed to our First Church email list and is in our First Church Facebook Group.

We send our heartfelt condolences to **Amy Horst** whose father died peacefully in his sleep on September 21, 2023. May Amy, Birger, Thomas and family be held in love and comfort.



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



For a time, I volunteered at the Freeport Area Church Cooperative (FACC), a homeless shelter and food pantry in the city where I lived.

Scarcity, giving, and gratitude were narratives that chased one another every day at FACC with the flow of donations and distribution of services, goods and foods cycling in and out. We were always in need of something, yet the entire endeavor was fueled by generosity, armfuls of groceries delivered to volunteers who kept the doors open.

One Tuesday before Thanksgiving, I arrived expecting to hand out every last holiday fixing we had available. The family solace bringers would appear, doing all they could to create that feeling of abundance, safety, and wholeness that a family feast can bring. Apon arrival, I discovered that FACC had received a large donation of 40 frozen turkeys! I will skip over the logistics of freezer space issues and equitable distribution concerns, to tell you that being a part of giving those turkeys away to families that day was one of the best experiences of my life.

The Buddha said, "If you knew, as I do, the power of giving, you would not let a single meal pass without sharing some of it." The sheer force of generosity on the day, in those turkey give

away moments, shifted all the energy to pure joy, each of us were filled with a kind of ecstatic ebullience that radiated with wide grins, shared recipes, and open hearts.

"Generosity is this powerful for very good reason. Because it is characterized by the inner quality of letting go or relinquishing, it reverses the forces that create suffering. It is a profound antidote to the strong habits of clinging, grasping, guarding, and attachment that lead to so much pain and suffering. Generosity brings happiness at every stage of its expression: we experience joy in forming the intention to give, we experience joy in the action of giving, and we experience joy in remembering that we have given. As Gandhi said, 'The fragrance remains in the hand that gives the rose." ~~ "The Joy of Generosity" by Beth Roth.

The beacon of generosity shines brightly at First Church. We exist on the generosity of our ancestors, members, staff, and community while offering diverse paths of generosity to find and follow. From ushering to working for justice, from Guest House meals to Religious Education volunteers and more, may each of us find a generous path here that brings all the joy of giving.

Rev. Kimberlee Minister of Religious Education



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The Selfishness of Generosity

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director Don Weimer, Worship Associate Church House Band Click for info about this service

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Generosity Builds Community

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director Jeremy Koenen, Worship Associate Church House Band Click for info about this service

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Givers and Receivers

Multi-generational Thanksgiving Service Child Dedication

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Religious Education

Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister Bizzy Schultz, Worship Associate Chancel Choir Click for info about this service

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Thanks, I Guess?

Steve Sieck, Intern Minister

Karen Beaumont, Organist Dave Umhoefer, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

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

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

300 Sandwiches for the Guest House

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Religious Education

On Sunday November 5, our Religious Education program is partnering with Guest House to learn about homelessness in Milwaukee. Guest House of Milwaukee provides shelter, housing, education, and services to Milwaukee's homeless who seek to transform their lives with dignity and purpose. Guest House provides approximately 300 sandwiches every day to people in our community. Our goal is to make enough sandwiches for one day. Christine Jacobs is visiting from the Guest House that Sunday to talk with us about the people they serve and what we can do to help people in need. Everyone is welcome to join us after the first service to make sandwiches and help feed the hungry from 10:00-10:45 a.m.

Sliced bread, meat and cheese are needed for our big sandwich making day! To make 300 sandwiches, we need approximately:

- 36 lbs. of sliced deli meat,
- 30 regular size loaves of sandwich bread,
- 300 slices of cheese, and
- 300 zip-top bags.

We hope you will consider donating sliced bread, cheese or meat for our sandwich making day.

Let us know what you can donate by signing up: **SIGN UP HERE!**

Donations can be dropped off at church in the downstairs RE refrigerator from November 1-4. Wed, Nov. 1, 10:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Thurs, Nov. 2, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

All donations need to be at church by Sunday at 9:00 a.m. on November 5. Thank You.

Child Dedication Nov. 19



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.

The ceremony is a public declaration by parents dedicating themselves to faithfully nurturing and supporting their children. 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.

Silent Retreat Registration

by Sarah Fowles Co-Leader

Join us for an opportunity to be silent and a chance to retreat. What's there to do at a silent retreat? Relax, reflect, contemplate life changes, nurture the spirit, and enjoy beauty.

"It should not be surprising that many silent retreats result in life-transforming resolutions, decisions, affirmations, and tears of both grief and joy." ~~ Rev. Drew Kennedy, from Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life.

The First Church Silent Retreat returns April 26-28, 2024 at the Cedar Valley Center in West Bend, which boasts 100 acres of natural beauty with hiking trails, gardens, a pond, rolling hills, and panoramic views.

The event fee includes lodging and meals (which are delicious!) and is \$320 per person for single occupancy rooms and \$290 per person for double occupancy rooms.

To register and pay the event fee, please visit the registration form here.

Questions may be directed to Sarah Fowles at tiredandwired@gmail.com, Lynda Cipov at lyndacipov@aol.com, Rollie Hanson at rollie@hansonlaw.net, or Chris Aiken at chrisaiken2@gmail.com.

Learn More About Your Church Technology

by Shari Wright Office Manager

You may wonder about our church Member Portal and what you can do with your online account. Or maybe you're a leader of a group and want to do more to recruit, communicate, and lead "mixed mode" meetings with our AV carts. Or perhaps you just have some tech questions.

On November 5 and 12, Office Manager Shari Wright will be in the Parlor after both the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. services to answer questions and show you how to navigate our technology. You don't need to bring anything, but if you wish to log into your Member Portal account, bring your smartphone or laptop.

If you are interested in having your picture taken for the Member Portal, please email Shari Wright at shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org and let me know what date works for you.

Come learn and be curious.









From Swedish Smorgasbord to Tacos Around the World

by Lynne Jacoby Membership Development Coordinator

Feast for Funds has something for everyone!

Preview now unique feasts and First Church gatherings from Icelandic delicacies to learning how to make spring rolls or brunch at a Frank Lloyd Wright home. Here's your chance at a family vacation, an opportunity to score original artwork, have a handmade custom table created, plus services, theme baskets and a HOUSE BAND CONCERT! -- all brought to you by the creative and fun-loving members of First Church!

Look now at the preliminary auction site as many of the feasts are "buy now" (limited number at a set price) and you don't want to miss out on a fabulous feast. Register at

https://www.32auctions.com/F4F-2023

Bidding opens 10:00 a.m. Sunday October 29 and closes 6:00 p.m. November 5.



Splinters from the Board

by Dana Brooks Board of Trustees Member

The Board of Trustees had a busy meeting on September 26. The Board approved:

Rev. Jennifer's report on progress toward achievement of End 4 (Generously give and receive support, connection, and care in times of joy and challenge.) End 6 (Open ourselves to wonder, making ourselves vulnerable and available to find meaning, inspiration, and transformation.) and End 7 (Create communal experiences celebrating our interconnectedness.)

Rev. Jennifer's proposal to deviate from the budget was approved. Lynne Jacoby's duties will be shared by ministers and staff, although some activities may be reduced. The Board thanks Lynne for her work for the Church and wishes her well.

Extension of the Endowment Fund Task Force authority until January 1, 2024. The governing document necessary to establish the Endowment will be presented to the Board for consideration in the next few weeks.

The Board thanked the Anti-Racism Team for facilitating Reverend Tutu's lecture and her participation in the Sunday service the next day. The team reports that more people are seeking information about anti-racism.

The Board will participate in the Feast for Funds fundraiser. This event the Board will host will be announced before the auction to give everyone the opportunity to bid.

Leadership in Divesting from Fossil Fuels to Address Climate Change

by Bruce Wiggins Co-chair Earth Justice Ministry

The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee was the first UU congregation to divest from fossil fuels, and we brought the issue to our national association. This issue is emerging again among UUs, especially among young people.

In 2012, several First Church Earth Justice Ministry (EJM) members were inspired by Bill McKibben's Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign. Our UU principles ground our moral responsibility not to invest in fossil fuels, the most important catalyst for our current climate chaos.

In 2013, with the leadership of EJM member Terry Wiggins, the First Church Board of Trustees passed our divestment resolution. That summer, Terry gathered a national group focused on taking this action national. In 2014 at General Assembly (GA), the group introduced a business resolution which required the UUA to divest its Common Endowment Fund from the largest 200 fossil fuel companies (except for the minimum needed for shareholder activism to promote environmental justice) and make green investments instead. Our then-Senior Minister Rev. Drew Kennedy helped persuade the UUA Board to support the resolution, which then passed overwhelmingly.

At her First Church reception on October 15, UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt elaborated on the current status of this issue in UU circles. For more information contact Terry Wiggins.

NOVEMBER EVENTS



Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, Nov 1 & 15, 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.

Book Discussion Group

Sunday, November 12

Join Us Online Here

Join us as we discuss November's read, Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World--and Why Things Are Better Than You Think, by Hans Rosling. Contact Barbra Lancelot for more information at uubarbra@gmail.com.

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 Teresa Drews: for more information or to join at teresa.drews@uumilwaukee.org.

The Chronologically Gifted Potluck

Sunday, November 26, 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



NOVEMBER 5

Bobby Fischer World Chess Champion

Bob Bruch, Expert Rated Chess Master and 25-year career as a Social Worker/Mental Health Therapist at VA Medical.

Bob Bruch will present the social history of Bobby Fischer, his chess history within an assessment of his recognizable mental health issues. Also included will be examination of the Cold War and Bobby Fischer's route from hero to traitor, as well as an exhibited antisemite. Bob will follow Bobby Fischer's calm and beautiful chess moves accompanied by his chaotic mind. He will represent his own, individual observations and opinions only.

NOVEMBER 12 Life in His City

James Causey, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Reporter and Columnist.

James Causey started reporting on life in his city while still at Marshall High School through a Milwaukee Sentinel high school internship. He's been covering his hometown ever since, writing and editing news stories, projects and opinion pieces on urban youth, mental health, employment, housing and incarceration. James will review for us some of his favorite stories. Causey was a health fellow at the University of Southern California in 2018 and a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 2007.





NOVEMBER 19

John Nichols on National Affairs

John Nichols, national affairs correspondent for The Nation.

John Nichols has written, co-written, or edited over a dozen books on topics ranging from histories of American socialism and the Democratic Party to analyses of US and global media systems. His latest book, co-written with Senator Bernie Sanders, is the New York Times bestseller It's OK to Be Angry About Capitalism.

FORGE OUR FUTURE ENDOWMENT

Update from the Endowment Fund Task Force

by Ron Oshima EFTF member

The team is happy to report that it has made great progress and is ready to move on to the next step. Representatives of the team will be presenting the following items to the Board of Trustees for discussion on October 24:

- 1. A final draft of the trust fund agreement to govern the purpose and management of the endowment with oversight by appointed trustees of the endowment. Much thought was invested in maintaining proper checks and balances in the administration of the endowment. Real life examples and scenarios raised by our trust lawyer and other UUA congregations also informed our approach.
- 2. A presentation of three of the four investment management firms we investigated. The Board expressed a desire to see and discuss the range of alternatives that the EFTF came up with.



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

Goal: \$3,000,000 Dollars pledged as of October 24: \$2,816,084 Fulfilled Amt: \$1,012,150



Pledge to this principalprotected endowment fund with the online pledge form.

Endowment Pledge Form

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

Contact Us

Is a QCD For Me?

by Mark Bishop, CPA Congregation Member

As we look to the end of 2023, many of us start thinking about holidays, family gatherings, and year-end tax planning. I thought that I would share an idea that may be useful to many of our members, especially those approaching or over the age of 70½.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a tax-efficient way to make charitable donations. It's a direct transfer from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charity, such as First Church, and it's available only to IRA owners (and IRA beneficiaries) who are age 70½ or older. QCDs can be taken out of your traditional IRAs free of any federal income tax.

With the recent tax law changes, many of you who previously itemized deductions now find it advantageous to take the standard deduction instead. As a result, you no longer deduct your charitable contributions, but via a QCD, some can still make those contributions with pretax dollars, resulting in significant tax savings. Unlike typical charitable donations, you can't claim itemized deductions for QCDs. That's OK because the tax-free treatment of QCDs equates to a 100% deduction as you'll never be taxed on those amounts. In addition, you don't have to worry about tax law restrictions that apply to itemized charitable write-offs. QCDs can effectively add to the standard deduction (or existing charitable

Planning to donate in 2023 via a donor advised fund or another fund? Please start the process in November. It can often take longer than you would expect.

deduction, if you are still itemizing) by allowing direct donations made from IRAs to be excluded from income, thus lowering adjusted gross income — and the tax bill.

A QCD is different from a required minimum distribution (RMD), which individuals must begin to take no later than the year they reach 73. One could take their first RMD before reaching age 70½, but they would not be eligible to do a QCD until they attain age 70½, or they may delay their first RMD until 73 and still take advantage of a QCD at age 70½.

The QCD limit is large, and QCDs can be done in excess of the RMD amount. Each IRA owner is permitted up to \$100,000 in QCDs annually, so each spouse can contribute up to \$100,000 on a joint tax return. The limit will be indexed for inflation beginning in 2024.

As with all tax or financial planning issues, it is advisable to consult with your personal tax or accounting advisor as to how this may impact or benefit you. When you are ready to take advantage of a QCD, your investment advisor or retirement account custodian can and should assist you with the direct transfer of funds to your charity of choice. Happy planning!

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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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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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