

AUGUST 2024



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*

Embodiment

Inside News

by *The Chanticleer* Editors

Share the Plate 2023-24 Success

The 2023-24 church year was a great year of growing membership, strong giving, and exciting programs to engage our community. One of our giving programs, Share the Plate, continues with great success.

THANK YOU ALL for raising \$19,749 for our Share the Plate partners. Your contributions help provide hope to families, children, and marginalized people in Milwaukee and around the world.

Here is the list of all the organization that we have supported this past church year:

May 2024 World Central Kitchen - \$1,710.00
April 2024 Groundwork Milwaukee - \$1,414.00
March 2024 Peace Action of Wisconsin - \$1,634.50
Feb. 2024 Church of the Larger Fellowship - \$1,443.50
Jan. 2024 Community Center for Immigrants - \$1,463.00
Dec. 2023 Just One More Ministry - \$1,354.50
Dec. 24, 2023 Guest House - \$1,902.67
Dec. 24, 2023 Interchange Food Pantry - \$2,253.67
Dec. 24, 2023 Repairers of the Breach - \$1,803.66
Nov. 2023 Common Ground's Forward Scholars - \$1,716.00
Oct. 2023 Kinship Community Food Center - \$1,699.50
Sep. 2023 MATC Believe in Students FASTFund - \$1,354.50

Each month, the Share the Plate recipient is posted in our Chanticleer newsletter and listed on the church website at <https://uumilwaukee.org/committees/share-the-plate/>.

3 easy ways to donate to each month's recipient. 1) Sunday collection plate (half of all cash collected or a check written directly to the organization), 2) using our online donation form, or 3) by cell phone text to 73256 with the message give2uu.

Share the Plate Summer 2024

by Lynde Uihlein
Share the Plate Team Member



Hanan Refugees Relief Group

The Hanan Refugees Relief Group is an international charitable organization with an active branch in Wisconsin. Dedicated to both short- and long-term solutions, the organization provides social services that include the problem of food insecurity as well as English as a Second Language programs for adults. Their goal is to transition refugees into contributing members of their host communities by providing long-term solutions, such as housing, labor opportunities, and medical relief.

The group consists of dedicated volunteers that join together for the sole purpose of aiding refugees and people in need. Staff and volunteers help with the mentoring, shopping, housing, employment, and health care. 100% of donations go directly towards charitable supplies. All overhead, including travel and administrative expenses, are paid for by the volunteers. Volunteers are welcome, including youth to babysit during the ESL classes.

Learn more at www.hananrrg.org

Donate to this STP Partner

Dena's Digressions

by Rev. Dena McPhetres



Some people live primarily in their mind, some live in their emotions, some in their body. If thinking is your happy place, perhaps you live in your head. If feelings flow freely and inform your actions, perhaps you live in your heart. If you encounter the world primarily through touch or learn best through doing, perhaps you live in your body. Yet everyone has a body. Most everything we perceive comes through the senses in our bodies. Why are we sometimes disassociated or otherwise unaware of our bodies? That, my friends, is a complicated question to answer, heavily influenced by culture, history, philosophy and religion.

Our theme in August is Embodiment – a word that gets tossed around frequently. But what does it mean? Embodiment means to give body to a spirit, so body and spirit are connected. We enter this world through a body and become a body to live. Our body is the last thing we relinquish when we die. Some believe that body and spirit disconnect after death and a person's spirit lives on in a disembodied state.

Choreographer Martha Graham said, “The body is a sacred garment. It’s your first and last garment; it is what you enter life in and what you depart life with, and it should be treated with honor.”

How might you treat your body with honor? What would it be like to love your body as it is? What do you need to do in your life to be able to listen to what your body tells you?

I believe our bodies hold much wisdom and if we could only unlock that wisdom, we’d be able to integrate mind, emotions, body and spirit into wholeness. Perhaps you have a physical spiritual practice that helps you do that, such as yoga, walking, tai chi, dance, singing, making art, cooking, or mindful eating.

As the summer flies by, try slowing down, go the speed of the body, listen to its wisdom, and find out what it has to tell you at any given moment.

Yours,
Rev. Dena McPhetres, Associate Minister

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

4

Resting at the Edge

Andy Agacki, Pulpit Guest

Karen Beaumont, guest organist

Don Weimer, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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The Soul Loves the Body

Rev. Dena McPhetres

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director

Dave Umhoefer, Worship Associate

Backpack Blessing (see page 6)

[Click for info about this service](#)

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Freedom, Family, Flags, and Faith

Rev. Jim Foti

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director

Don Weimer, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

25

Suffer Through It!

Amy Wilbourne, Pulpit Guest

Teresa Drews, Collaborative Pianist

Trudy Watt, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

SUMMER SERVICES AT 10:00 a.m. ONLY



Resting at the Edge ◆ **August 4** **Andy Agacki, Member**

Andy Agacki, took first Lay Precepts with the Kwan Um School of Zen in 1998 and reconfirmed them with Bright Dawn Institute. After training with the late Rev. Koyo Kubose, Andy was inducted as a Buddhist Minister in 2008. Andy has given Dharma Talks and sermons at First Church and other UU churches. He has served as Meditation Facilitator for First Church's annual Silent Retreat, where he has also conducted Evening Vespers.

Freedom, Family, Flags, and Faith ◆ **August 18** **Rev. Jim Foti, Pulpit Guest**

Rev. Jim Foti is a Unitarian Universalist minister based in Minnesota and Wisconsin. A Milwaukee native, he served as First Church's assistant sabbatical minister in the first half of 2023 and recently completed a sabbatical ministry at the First Unitarian Society of Madison.



Suffer Through It! ◆ **August 25** **Amy Wilbourne, Member**

Amy Wilbourne has been a member of First Church since 2011. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees and the Anti-Racism team. She has filled various other roles here such as Worship Associate, and Theme Circle facilitator. Amy is a School Counselor in the Milwaukee Public Schools, and a part time storytelling coach for Ex Fabula. In her free time, she enjoys drumming, the outdoors, and cooking. She has two adult children, Preston and Niamh (Neeve), who grew up attending First Church.



Backpack Drive!

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education

This summer we are engaging in a new way to help support the children in our community of Milwaukee and at First Church. Starting in July we will be joining the Backpack Coalition with the United Way whose goal is to provide over 9,000 filled backpacks for the start of the 2024-25 school year. Backpack Coalition is committed to providing backpacks and school supplies to students with financial constraints, so they have the tools they need to succeed in school.

There are three ways you can contribute to the Backpack Coalition.

1. Purchase Supplies and drop them off in the bins in the hall and Common Room at church. High Priority Items: Crayons, 24 ct.; Folders, paper or plastic; Markers, 10-12 count, thin or broad tip; Composition notebooks, college or wide ruled; Spiral notebooks, college or wide ruled.
1. Visit the [Amazon Wish List](#) and purchase items to be shipped directly to United Way. Double Your Donation Promotion: For every backpack you donate, Fenrici Brands will ship an additional backpack on your behalf.
1. Donate to the [Backpack Coalition](#) \$30 provides one child with a backpack, filled with grade-appropriate school supplies.

Backpack Blessing Sunday, August 11

On Sunday August 11, we invite children to bring their backpacks to service for a blessing from the congregation. This blessing ritual will honor their return to learning at school and each child will receive a talisman for their backpacks. Backpack blessings are a way for our faith community to recognize the importance of children's lives and let them know that their faith community's love is with them at school and wherever they journey.

RSVP here for our Backpack Blessing on August 11. I know together we can create backpack blessings for our community and our children.

In faith,
Rev. Kimberlee

Welcome to First Church Religious Education 2024-25!

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Religious Education

We are excited to offer our religious education program for children and youth starting on Ingathering Sunday on September 8th! We encourage families to take advantage of our early registration discount of \$25 and sign up today. Our program is designed to provide children with a safe and nurturing environment to explore their spirituality and learn about our UU values.

[Register Here](#)

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 RE 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 Space, until 10:15 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 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. during the first service, and from 10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. during the second service.

We are planning to offer OWL classes this year for 4-6th grade and 10-12 grade. Please indicate your family's interest in these programs during registration. The Youth Group (ages 13-18) will meet throughout the year, the schedule to be determined. Youth are always welcome to join the activities in All Ages, UU Play and UU Maker Space.

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 Minister of Religious Education Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson. We never turn a family away!

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. New RE volunteers can register [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.

What Can Theme Circles Do for You?

by Rev. Dena McPhetres
Associate Minister

If you are longing for connection and would like to get to know others on a deeper level, consider joining a Theme Circle—small groups that reflect together on our monthly worship themes. More information will be in the September newsletter with an updated schedule on our church website coming soon! Registration opens on September 1. Listen to church member Amy Wilbourne describe her experience in this video below or with this [link to YouTube](#).



Buddhist Study Group: You've Wanted to Join Us. How About Now?

by Mark Miller

If you're now like I once was about 16 years ago, you've been thinking of joining the Buddhist Study Group but can't find the right time. Now is the right time! Our sangha is starting a new book on September 18, following a September 4 potluck, at which we will be looking for you!

What do we do? We're like a book club, but with 10 minutes of meditation. We generally discuss about a chapter of material at a time, and we meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Just email me at bikeover@gmail.com if you would like to join the mailing list for meeting notifications. Here's are the details.

The fall kickoff potluck is on Wednesday, September 4, at 6:00 p.m. and the first meeting is Wednesday, September 18 at 6:30 p.m. Our reading is *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*, by The Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Douglas Carlton Abrams.

Discover UU Wellspring

by Rollie Hanson & Diane Horne

What do you believe as a UU? Do you know, principals, values and sources, oh my! Wellspring is a spiritual journey to explore, verify, clarify, illuminate, elucidate and perhaps even purify your path. And you get to do it with other UUs! Agnostics, Theists, Atheists, Pagans, Buddhists, Transcendentalists, any and all religious histories – come as you are and experience the wonderful joy of discovery.

This upcoming church year, we will offer two programs from UU Wellspring: Sources, focused on the six sources of the UU religion; and Love at the Center, rooted in the recent changes to Article 2.

This is our fourth year of offering Sources, past participants have found it a deeply enriching and enlivening experience. Both programs meet twice a month for the church year, a significant commitment that rewards significantly. UU Wellspring provides an opportunity for developing “a sense of purpose and meaning, arising from UU Wellspring’s unique combination of spiritual practices, spiritual companionship, readings, and heart-opening sessions. A sustaining joy emerges while deepening commitment to creating change in ourselves and the world.”

Opportunities to meet with alumni will be available in August. Look for announcements and postings on our Facebook group page for more information. Contact Diane Horne with questions and interest.



Listen to church member, Nancy Pajewski on the UU Wellspring program.

Study Group: A Book by Ralph Harper’s: *On Presence*

by Dennis Conta

The *On Presence* Study Group is a 10 to 12 person discussion group that draws upon the lives and thoughts of philosophers, theologians, writers, poets and aesthetes as they appear in the book *On Presence*, written by philosopher, theologian Ralph Harper. Through nine monthly sessions beginning in September and ending in May 2025, the group will study how daily encounters with objects, places, ideas, individuals and communities touch our minds and emotions; define and refine our values and beliefs; and enhance the essence of our unique selfhood.

Is there anything else we should know? Please contact Dennis Conta at dennis@dconta.com or 414 651-1969 if interested.

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Journey Couture

A memorial service for Journey Couture, Nancy Spransy's daughter, will be held at First Church on Monday, August 5 at 10:00 a.m. with a light reception immediately following in the Leenhouts Common Room.

Those who knew and loved Journey are welcome to send brief tributes, anecdotes, or favorite memories to Rev. Dena at dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org by Wednesday, July 30, for possible inclusion in a Collage of Voices for the service.

Memorial donations may be given to **Sojourner Family Peace Center** or checks mailed to Nancy Spransy or Tom Kruse for a memorial tree planting.

Dan O'Keefe

A memorial service for Dan O'Keefe will be held on Saturday, August 17 at 11:00 a.m. with a reception following the service.

Memorial donations can be given to:

- **Project RETURN** at 2821 Vel R Phillips Ave, Suite 223, Milwaukee, WI 53212
- **Peace Action Wisconsin** at: P O Box 11126, Shorewood, WI 53211
- **United Nations Association of Greater Milwaukee** at: PO Box 511638, Milwaukee, WI 53203



Pastoral Care Resources

If you would like to talk to a Pastoral Care Associate for a listening presence, please contact PCA Coordinator Lynn Connolly at fuspastoralcare@gmail.com or 414-573-9823.

If you'd like to talk to the Ministers, please call our Pastoral Care Emergency line at 414-216-3113.

For practical help, grocery shopping and delivery, or contactless meal delivery, contact Liz Irwin Moore, Pastoral Care Provider Coordinator at: fuspcprovider@gmail.com.

For personal financial assistance, please contact Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom at jennifer.nordstrom@uumilwaukee.org.



Reimagine Together From An Extractive Age To A New Era

Save the Date: Oct. 5-6 Lea Morris & Climate Justice Revival

by Terry Wiggins
Co-Chair, Earth Justice Ministry
& Climate Justice Revival Planning Team

The Revival is coming! The Revival is coming!
Lea Morris is coming! Lea Morris is coming!

What a weekend October 5-6 is going to be at
First Church!

That's the weekend we will be holding our
Climate Justice Revival. In addition to the Climate
Revival, Lea Morris, beloved musician of our
pandemic-time services on YouTube, is going to
be our Morter Lecturer on October 5, and co-
leading the service with Rev. Jennifer on October
6. She has been commissioned by the UUA to
write the song to celebrate the Revival.

What will the Climate Revival Be Like?
The UU Climate Justice Revival will take place in
congregations and communities across the
country. Although each congregation's revival
will look a little different, everyone will engage
in the same process with the same resources.

Day 1: Facilitated Conversations

Designed to nourish relationships, make
connections, build capacity, vision the future,
and chart a course of actions, these facilitated
conversations will include creative engagements,
music, relationship-building activities, and
congregational connections that will advance
intersectional climate actions with justice at the
center.

Day 2: Worship and Advocacy

The UU Climate Justice Revival worship services
will engage the whole congregation with the
same spirit of intention as the dialogs. Following
worship services, congregations will join a
national advocacy hour.

Your First Church planning team is “preparing
the soil” and “planting the seeds” so that our
congregation can “grow together”!

Many GOTV Canvassers Will Be Needed Soon

by Jerry Fredrickson, Chair of Common Ground at First Church

Common Ground and First Church's Defend Democracy action group are teaming up to help over 30,000 people to vote in the November election. A major part of the plan is to visit every public housing location in Milwaukee to make sure residents are registered and to assist them with voting. That includes knocking on 11,000 doors of families in public housing or receiving rent assistance.

In addition, we will be asking residents if they have any issues with plumbing, rodents, insects, security, etc. that have not been addressed by the Housing Authority. If so, we will assist them with getting these issues resolved.

We will start visiting the public housing locations in late August and continuing up to the election. People will be working in pairs in four hour shifts on Saturdays and Sundays. Training will be provided.

If you are passionate about the outcome of this election, you will have opportunities to sign up at the Social Justice table and on-line. We will be having an assembly on August 19th, 6:00 to 7:30 to kick off our GOTV campaign. Details to follow as we get further into August.

Knocking on that many doors will require a lot of volunteers. First Church has shown up many times before. Let's do it again!

Walk and Roll Gordon Park/Beer Line Trail

by Jacki Zandi
Earth Justice Ministry Member

Join us on Saturday August 10 from 10:30 a.m.-noon at Gordon Park at 2828N. Humboldt Blvd. Let's meet in the parking lot accessed from Humboldt. From there we will Walk and Roll the trails that Charles Whitnal walked with Annie Gordon, his future wife. This old railroad line leads to a beautiful prairie at the old dam site. It is a paved trail with a lot of history and beauty.



Hello from Fiona

by Fiona Higgins
RE and Membership Assistant

I'm Fiona Higgins, I was born and raised here in Milwaukee and have studied both theater and sociology. In my personal life I love to read and write, I almost always have a book on me. I also listen to a ton of music, if you're ever looking for something new to read or listen to, I'd love to chat with you.

My title here at the church is RE and Membership Assistant. That means most of the time I'm helping Rev. Kimberlee with the Religious Education program but I'm also spending time working with Rev. Dena and the Membership Team behind the scenes printing name tags, sending welcome emails, and maintaining our data base. This fall, I'll start assisting the "Journey to Membership" classes. I'm happy to be part of this team and the church, too.

Journey to Membership

Saturday, Oct. 12, 10:00 am – 4:30 pm and
Tuesday, Oct. 15, 6:30 -8:30 pm
In-person, at First Church

People join churches for many reasons, including making a commitment to a personal practice, supporting their values in the world, and strengthening their connections to something larger than themselves, whether that is defined by community or purpose.

At First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, we do not share a common creed, but we do share a commitment to practicing an intentional life towards justice, spiritual growth and love.

Helping our community nurture souls, engage minds, and inspire action can look like warmly welcoming a stranger on Sunday morning, providing pastoral care, organizing a social justice action, teaching children, singing in our choir, or the many additional ways members help to sustain and shape everything we do at First Church. Service to the community is also an important part of strengthening our connections and sense of belonging.

Learn more about membership or register at uumilwaukee.org/get-involved/become-a-member/. Email dena.mcphetres@uumilwaukee.org for more information.

Slowing Down and Showing Up for All That is Our Life

by Steve Sieck
Ministerial Intern

A Retreat for Male Identified Folks will be held at church on Saturday, September 14, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. This retreat is an opportunity for male-identifying folks to slow down, show up, and courageously and honestly explore with one another what is most real and alive in their lives at this moment in time. This retreat will include:

- Short presentations and reflections by Rev. Justin Schroeder to be used as springboards for deepening conversation among participants.
- Guided embodied practices to help us all ground, settle, and arrive in the present moment.
- Small Group time for men to listen and share whole-heartedly with one another.
- Snacks and a meal together.
- Deeper connections with one another!

Register [online here](#).

Questions? Please contact Ministerial Intern and coordinator for the retreat, Steve Sieck, at steve.sieck@uumilwaukee.org

Delicious Fun, Circle Suppers!

by Eileen Teska
Circle Suppers Coordinator

Mark your calendar now, sign up in September.

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.

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. The dates are scheduled for four Saturday evenings of dinner parties: Nov. 9, Jan. 18, March 1 and May 17. 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.

Are You Interested in a LGBTQI+ Theme Circle?

by Andrew Whitver and Laurie Foss
Co-leaders

We would like to offer a Theme Circle for our LGBTQI+ community members and friends for the upcoming 2024-25 program year. Like the Parents Theme Circle offered last year, ours would follow the regular theme circle format with people who self-identify in the queer community demographic.

A Theme Circle is an Adult Spiritual Development program that deepens and supports the spiritual journeys of participants through a deep dive into our church's monthly themes. This happens in community with each other in a small group setting, through the spiritual practices of deep listening, authentic sharing and respectful silence. The format and material encourage us to explore the monthly themes by talking about them in the context of our lives.

We think that the LGBTQI+ community has a unique context in which to engage our hearts and minds through our shared connectedness, offering a safe space to express our lives and differences with each other.

Please let us know if you are interested, so we can tell if this group is viable! Contact Andrew at: awhitver@gmail.com or Laurie at lauriefoss@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you by August 14, so Rev. Dena can get us into the schedule for Theme Circle registration, which begins September 1.

Seeking Donations to Replenish Crisis Support Fund

by Rev. Dena McPhetres
Associate Minister

We strive to have funds available for First Church members and active friends who are experiencing short-term financial need. These funds are available only because of the generosity of First Church members who donate to our Ministers' Discretionary Fund. We designed this assistance to help people who are in emergency situations like sudden job loss, hospitalization, or eviction.

Our fund has run dry. We are so grateful that we've been able to help people over the years with back rent, security deposits, car repair, etc. Please consider helping to replenish this resource, so we can continue to help those in need in our community.

You can visit our website and choose "Ministers Discretionary" on the fund drop down tab here: <https://uumilwaukee.org/ways-to-give/support-us/> or send a check made out to First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee with "Ministers Discretionary Fund" on the memo line.

Tax Exempt Status Granted by IRS for Endowment Fund

by Ron Oshima
Endowment Trustee

Good news! In June, earlier than expected (we were aiming for September), the trustees of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Endowment Fund- Dave Becker, Ron Oshima, and Betty Shroeder - received notice from the IRS that our endowment fund is officially recognized as a 501 (c)(3) entity. This means that dollars can now be transferred to the endowment without losing its charitable donation status.

Next steps

Once all three trustees are back in town, we will meet with the Finance Team to create a plan for transferring the endowment assets collected so far into the trust.

As of June 14, 2024, here's the current status of the Endowment Fund:

Pledge total \$2.7mm

Expected pledge total after shrinkage \$2.6mm

Total funds collected to date \$1.6mm

Thank you all for your incredible support. The goal of our endowment is to help eliminate our annual operating deficits and insure the strength and vitality of our congregation, enabling us to continue connecting, caring, learning and growing, and joining with others in making a positive impact on the world. We're not finished yet. Please continue fulfilling your pledges or contributing in any way you can. Together, we can achieve great things.



Support the Endowment Fund!

Goal: \$3,000,000

As of July 24, 2024

Dollars pledged: \$2,819,433

Fulfilled Amount: \$1,597,946



It's never too late to pledge!

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



Staff Directory

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

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Amy Wilbourne

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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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