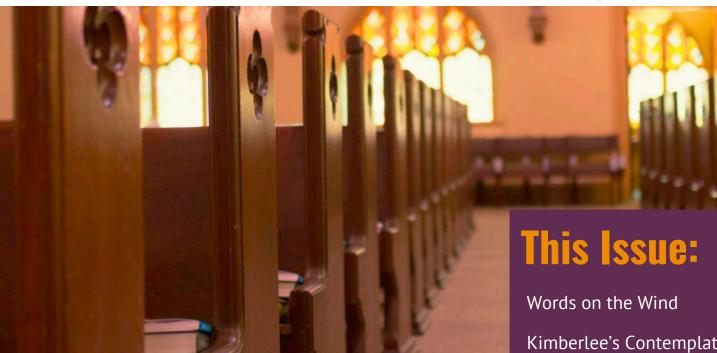


CHANTICLEER

The First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

nurture. engage. inspire.





Monthly Theme

What does it mean to be a people

NURTURING GRATITUDE

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Inside News

by the Chanticleer Editors

With cooler weather and warm spirits, we begin our plans for the holidays. We have a lot to celebrate this fall including new guests taking our Journey to Membership class and Rev. Chris's first sermons at First Church.

Here are some fall events to look forward to at First Church:

Sunday Nov 2 - Celebrate the Pagan Sameheim festival with UU Pagans.

Sunday, Nov 2 - UU Men's Group meets. See page 10.

Sunday, Nov 9 - New Member ceremony

Sunday, Nov 16 - Multi-generational Thanksgiving service & child dedications

Sunday, Dec 21 - Holiday Pagent

Wednesday, Dec 24 - 3 Christmas Eve Candlelight services and receptions

Here are some ways to help the church and the community:

Searching for a new Dir of Admin (p. 3)

Endowment campaign home stretch (p. 7)

Interchange Food Pantry drive. Help fill the gap from Federal cuts. (p. 9)

Guest House sandwich making day is coming. Donate supplies or time. (p.13)

the beginning

Share the Plate November

Lynde Uihlein Share the Plate Team

The Beginning is a collaborative hub of smaller grassroots, legacy, and upstream community organizations focused on youth and family. It currently consists of seven partner organizations. As they increase space and capacity, they will bring together additional strategically aligned partners.

Their objective is to provide peer support and mentorship to individuals helping them find the intervention suitable for their lives so that they can reach the most sustainable, healthy, and productive adaptation possible. The goal is a systems change that will impact generations and address the way community organizations work together, challenge each other, and challenge funders to ask the right questions.

The Beginning is in a 70,000 sq ft historical structure in the Historic Mitchell Street neighborhood, in a neighborhood which has the most overdoses recorded in our state. They are working with the building owner to create a Mecca for youth justice, reentry, and community stability, with several neighborhood partners (Public Allies, the Cinderella Project, and A Reliable Care Coordinator). Find out more at tbmke.org

Donate to this STP Partner



Words on the Wind by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Nurturing Gratitude strengthens our connection to what we love in this world. It builds the pathway between us and the things that make life worth living: our beloveds, our home, and our place on this vibrant living earth.

Every moment of living contains pleasure and pain, love and loss. Nurturing gratitude brings our attention to the parts of living that bring us joy and peace. Right now, what is there to be grateful for? Is your body cared for? Do you have connections that matter to you? Are there moments of rest or laughter?

As the earth turns towards deeper darkness and coldness this month, may we appreciate the harvest of our lives. May we each take a little time each day to nurture gratitude and strengthen our connection with those we love.

Love.

Rev. Jennifer

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Do You Know our Next Director of Admin?

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom and The Director of Administration Search Team Amanda Panciera, Personnel Team Holly Patzer, Finance Team Russ Drewry, Building and Grounds Team Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

We are in the midst of our search for our next Director of Administration at First Church! Do you know a fantastic candidate who aligns with our Unitarian Universalist values and has 10+ years of non-profit administration experience? Send them our way!

The job description and information on how to apply before the November 7 deadline is on our First Church website here:

https://uumilwaukee.org/looking-for-our-next-director-of-admin/

We know that word of mouth is the best way for us to find candidates for this role. Who do you know who loves process management and has

continued on Page 8



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



Sometimes gratitude can sound like a platitude, a polite reflex rather than a felt response. We hear or read "thank you" without the earnest gratefulness it is meant to carry. Maybe that is the result of a hurried, demanding world, or of being told to "be grateful" when our heads are crowded, and our hearts are heavy with grief.

Right now, gratitude and grief feel tightly entangled—within our personal lives and as we witness the fraying of values on the global stage. The relentless news cycle amplifies our anxieties; fear for loved ones and neighbors deepens; leaving us shaken and distant from life's calm, sweet, precious moments. We cannot honestly be grateful for everything, and we do not have to pretend otherwise. We can, however, bravely choose gratefulness in the hardest moments.

A line from Matt de la Peña's The Last Stop on Market Street captures this for me: "Sometimes when you're surrounded by dirt... you're a better witness for what's beautiful." Read during a Sunday service last month, it landed like a quiet instruction: grief can crush us and, at the same time, saturate us with a heart aching appreciation for life's small, profound gifts.

Sustaining gratitude is not mere sentiment or social performance. It is a chosen spiritual practice that asks us to see, even amid sorrow, the presence of beauty and the gift of being alive. Gratitude that

endures is a spiritual practice that allows sorrow and appreciation to coexist, fortifying the heart when distress arrives and is all-encompassing.

I am grateful to all of you who continually create our First Church community of care and love, filled with the best of intentions, good trouble and such sweetness it breaks my heart open on the regular. There is an exhaustive list of ways each of you show up to be present and center love that makes First Church magic. It is more than a place; it is a sanctuary of people.

May we return to gratitude and discover some of life's sweetness on our paths each day.

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Faith Formation

Curiosities & Musings

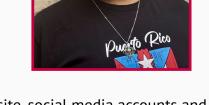
by Rev. Chris Long

"Complicated Gratitude"

As I sit on my comfortable sofa, literally wrapped in a blanket to meet the morning's fall chill, I start this musing sending you, your family of choice, or of origin, continued hopes and blessings for more ease, comfort and grace. November 2025 has arrived, and I can hardly believe I am here as your Acting Assistant Minister for three full months already. I continue to be filled with awe, humility and deeply inspired in meeting many of you, with loads more yet to go.

It is also abundantly clear that First Church is on the move and continuing to ground itself in its mission to "nurture the spirit, engage the mind, and inspire action" with each passing day. Specifically, in my relatively short time of being here, I have been deeply moved by the level of dedication members and friends have to this church and its work in the community. From the shear amount of programming in its social justice and faith formation ministry (inside and outside of the church), to the church's worship life which includes dynamic engagement in "love-centered" Unitarian Universalist values of generosity, equity, interdependence, transformation, pluralism and justice, and soul-stirring music each week. There is a lot going on.

Since the start of the church year in early August, our Theme Circles are all now underway, our affinity groups are also gathering, and a few more ways to get connected are still being planned. Please keep



connected to our website, social media accounts and to each other to stay tuned.

By the time you read this article, we will have invited as many as 28 perspective members to consider membership with us through our fall 2025 Journey to Membership sessions in late October.

Even still, with our Soul Matter's theme for November being "Nurturing Gratitude," it is also true that gratitude can be hard to come by with all that is happening on the political, social and environmental fronts for so many we care for and love deeply, including our planet. Of course it is good to show gratitude as often, and as authentically as we can. However, with all that is going on, gratitude can be complicated. As we begin to ease towards the holiday (holydays) season, and the close of this calendar year, how might we also make space for gratitude when it is complicated?

Let's continue to find ways to slow down, plan time for tea, coffee or meals together, and to add a bit of beauty and joy to our lives, and the lives of those we encounter with each passing day.

Sincerely and in deeper Unitarian Universalist faith, Rev. Chris Long Acting Assistant Minister

Imagining Abolition

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino (they/them), Guest Minister

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director Jen Murray, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

9 Spiritual Practice, Not Spiritual Bypass

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director, and the Chancel Choir Rev. Chris Long, Acting Assistant Minister Katie Kegel, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

16 Complicated Gratitude

Rev. Chris Long, Acting Assistant Minister

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director and the Sanctuary Jazz Quartet Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Faith Formation Alecia Altstaetter, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

Antidote for the Heart

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Faith Formation

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director Austin Pawlowski, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

Until We Are All Free

Rev. Allison Farnum (she/her/ella), Guest

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director Jessie Diliberti, Worship Associate Click for info about this service

Sunday Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

FORGE OUR FUTURE ENDOWMENT

Forge Our Future Endowment Campaign is 3 Years Old!

by Jean Johnson
Director of Administration

Some of you will remember how we kicked off the campaign with a joyful Halloween block party in late October 2022. We celebrated together outside on Astor Street with a live jazz band, food truck, bouncy house, and of course cake. The costume contest was a riot of fun.

Our goal was to secure \$3 million in pledges and we've been incredibly successful. As of today, the Forge Our Future Endowment has \$2.8 million total funds pledged.

We are so grateful as we close the three-year campaign at the end of 2025, that you have contributed \$2,506,400 so far! Your generosity is amazing.

Remember, the endowment fund is principal-protected. It is invested in the UUA's Common Endowment Fund. This fiscal year, some of the interest from the fund is fulfilling its purpose of closing our annual income gap and supporting the church's mission and goals.

If you are able, please consider fulfilling your Forge Our Future pledge by the end of December. Contact us if you need more time to complete your pledge or you need to adjust your pledge. As always, we are so grateful for all contributions.

Click here to Contribute

Jean Johnson, Director of Administration jean.johnson@uumilwaukee.org
Shari Wright, Office Manager
shari.wright@uumilwaukee.org









OUR PEOPLE OUR COMMUNITY

continued, Do You Know our Next Director of Admin?

great attention to detail? Do you know someone who wants to contribute to the world through an institution that works for the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings and defends the interconnected web of all existence?

We know they exist and you may know who they are

- so how can you help?
 - Share our Facebook post (LINK).
 - Share the job description on your LinkedIn profile.
 - Email the job description to folks in your network.

Your support will help First Church be the most organized and effective institution for UU values that we can be!

With gratitude,

Rev. Jennifer and The Director of Administration Search Team

In Memoriam

Jack Forbes Wilson

July 25, 1956 - September 29, 2025

Jack Forbes Wilson died while in hospice care in Lincoln, Nebraska, at 10:30 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2025. His family was able to be with him during the week between his diagnosis of Stage 4 pancreatic and liver cancer and his death. He was surrounded by love and care from all the communities who loved him dearly.

Jack was 69 years old and part of the First Church community for 29 years. He served as our beloved Music Director from 1996 - 2019. We lit the Candle of Life in memory of Jack at both worship services on Sunday, October 5, 2025.

All in the Family

We send our care and support to **Jen Murray** and the Murray-Bentz household as Jen's father enters hospice.

We send our comfort to **Bob and Amy Monahan** on the loss of their dear brother-in-law, Jerry, who died on October 6 after a 4-month journey following a July cancer diagnosis.

We send our healing prayers and caring thoughts to **Bruce Wiggins,** who had successful shoulder replacement surgery on October 20.

We send our healing thoughts and care to **Patty Agacki** who had spinal surgery on October 13.

Interchange Food Pantry Drive 2025: Help Counteract Federal Cuts With Donations

by Beth Bruch First Church Liason to Food Pantry

As tariffs take effect, grocery prices rise, and federal food assistance programs are being slashed, our own Interchange Food Pantry is launching a drive for donations to help feed Milwaukee families.

Please consider donating! There are two ways:

- 1. Donate FOOD: Five categories are most needed: canned fruits, vegetables, baked beans, pasta sauce, and soups. A food collection bin will be available at the church throughout November and December.
- 2. Donate FUNDS: A tax-deductible direct financial contribution makes your dollars stretch up to 10 times further, since the pantry can use it to buy food in bulk at wholesale prices.

The food drive will run from Sunday, October 26 through Sunday, January 4. Drop off items in the barrel at Church near the Common Room.

You can donate online **HERE** at the Interchange Food
Pantry or or by
scanning the QR code.



Or, mail a check made out to "Interchange Food Pantry" to Interchange, 130 E. Juneau Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53202, with "2025 drive" on the memo line.

Background: First Church is one of the founding members of Interchange Food Pantry, which opened in 1971 and has helped combat hunger for more than 50 years as part of our social justice program. The pantry has a focus on providing fresh fruits and vegetables, and expanded in 2018 to serve all Milwaukee zip codes. Our mission is to provide our guests with nutritious food and compassion. We aim to feed all guests who enter our door ... until there is no one at our door.

Thank you for any donations you can provide!

You Are Invited

by Tony Panciera and Andrew Boddyspargo

Do you identify as UU (or a friend of the church) and male (cisgender, transgender, gender non-conforming; all are welcome!)? If so, you are warmly invited to join the group continuing the meetings begun last year by Rev. Steve and others. This is a group that is open space for dialogue, connection, reflection, and community on the first Sunday of each month, from 12:30-2 p.m.

In the group, many of us have found an opportunity for sharing that was missing in our lives, and we hope you'll visit and try it out. Our first meeting will be on November 2 in the Young Room. Feel free to bring a snack to contribute to a pot-luck style small meal.

Walk & Roll at Estabrook Park

by Jacki Zandi Earth Justice Ministry Member

Please join us on Saturday, November 8th from 10:30-noon for our Walk and Roll in Estabrook Park, nestled along the east bank of the Milwaukee River at 4400 Estabrook Parkway, Shorewood.

You can park in the Beer Garden lot and meet by the refreshment building. From there we will Walk and Roll north on the Oak Leaf Trail. We always see more together! Come and be part of the experience and invite friends and family. Paula Anderson and Jacki Zandi (wearing yellow shirt) are your hosts.



A Little about UU Wellspring at First Church

by Diane Horne UU Wellspring Facilitator

As part of Adult Faith Formation, we have offered UU Wellspring programs since the 2021-2022 church year. The first level program is Sources, which explores the 6 sources of the UU faith. Prior to Sources, I would tell people that I was a member of a UU church. Since offering Sources and working with the program materials for the past 4 years, I now say that I am a UU and know what that means to me.

Now in our fifth year, we have enough 'graduates' to offer a next-level program. This church year, we have a very strong Sources group as well as a group taking Deep Questions, which explores our 7 principles in depth. Our hope is to continue to grow the number of people who journey with Sources and thus the additional next-level program offerings from UU Wellspring. We begin recruiting for participants in June, have the groups formed by mid-August, supporting a kickoff in early September.

UU Wellspring includes:

- Commitment to daily spiritual practice
- Participation in small group community
- Individual work with a spiritual director strongly encouraged
- Readings and resources for knowledge and reflection
- Reflection and commitment to live our values in the world

If this is something you'd like to explore further, feel free to reach out to any of the current or previous facilitators of UU Wellspring programs. They are: Laurie Foss, Rollie Hanson, Diane Horne, Ryan Pawlowski & Jeri Pearcy.

The Power of Silence Together

by Andrew Whitver & Kari Gunderson, Members

In our Sunday service September 27, James Crews read us his poem "How to Listen", which included these lines:

"Even if no one says a word for a while, receive the silence"

Each Monday night from 5:30 – 6:30, we sit in silence, listening to our deeper selves and to the beauty of our sanctuary and each other.

Why? Well, later that day James told us that silences "help tame the roaring elephant of the mind." Or perhaps they bring calm and insight in this new, quiet language as we breathe together.

If you would like to join us, there's no sign-up. Simply come.

CHILDREN & YOUTH FAITH FORMATION

Volunteer Appreciation

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Faith Formation

At First Church, we're overflowing with gratitude for the incredible volunteers who dedicate their Sundays to nurturing and guiding our children and youth. With humility, warmth, and generosity, these amazing individuals create spaces where young hearts feel seen, supported, and loved.

On Sunday, November 19, we'll be celebrating our volunteers before and after the first service with special drinks and treats. It's our way of saying "thank you" for the joy and care they bring each week.

Want to be part of the celebration? There's only one way in—join us as a Sunday volunteer and experience firsthand the energy, curiosity, and spirit of our young people at First Church!

Volunteer Information Here

We are currently seeking Youth Advisers. Youth advising can be one of the most rewarding and challenging roles you can fill. It may also be one of the most essential roles you could play in a youth's life! Reach out to Rev. Kimberlee if you are interested.

Join the Cast of the First Church Holiday Pageant!

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Faith Formation

This year's holiday pageant will be on December 21 at 10:00 a.m. It's titled "Hope of the Holidays." Join us for an interfaith exploration into the gifts that the holidays bring! Our youth and children lead us on a journey in discovering how being present brings hope, inspiring our hearts and minds during the holiday season.

Rev. Kimberlee is writing this pageant and would like to know how many children and youth are interested in participating! The script does not need to be memorized, and the rehearsals will be during Faith Formation in December, on the Sunday morning of the pageant before service and another date to be determined by participants.

Please speak with your children and indicate if they are interested in a speaking role and/or being on stage and speaking with a group. We will do our best to accommodate everyone's requests. This pageant will also feature an opportunity for young children and children who are not in the cast to join the pageant from the audience.

Click here to Sign Up

Guest House Sandwich Making Day

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Faith Formation

Sliced bread, meat and cheese are needed for our big sandwich making day! To make 300+ sandwiches, we will need approximately 36 lbs. of sliced deli meat, 40 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.

On Sunday, November 9th, our Faith Formation program is partnering with Guest House to learn about homelessness in Milwaukee and help feed people in need. Guest House provides approximately 300 sandwiches every day to people in our community. Our goal is to make enough sandwiches for one day. 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.

Donations can be dropped off at church in the downstairs refrigerator.

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

Let us know what you can donate by signing up. THANK YOU!

SIGN UP FOR SANDWICH SUPPLY DONATIONS HERE!

The Holiday Giving Tree Is Coming!

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson Minister of Faith Formation

Later this month, keep an eye out for the Holiday Giving Tree on the Faith Formation table! We're excited to once again join United Way's Holiday Giving Tree program—a heartfelt initiative that brings joy to local children who might otherwise go without gifts this season.

Through this program, our congregation will be paired with children from a nearby school. Each child has a holiday tag with a special gift wish, and our goal is to fulfill 50 of these wishes with gifts valued at \$25 each.

How You Can Help:

- Choose a tag from the tree.
- Record your selection on the spreadsheet provided.
- Purchase the gift listed on the tag.
- Return the unwrapped gift to church by December 14.

We'll take care of delivering the gifts to the children in time for the holidays. Let's come together to share the spirit of the season and make a meaningful difference. Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

Splinters from the Board

by Kathy Donius

Member of the Board

A key role of the Board of Trustees is to represent the congregation in helping to shape the vision and longer-term goals (Ends) of the Church. This year, the Board is undertaking an Ends revision process. Our Ends (posted on the church website) were created before the Covid pandemic and the ongoing upheaval in our world created the need for us to re-examine our longer-term strategic priorities.

Board members Mark Chambers, Elizabeth Hayes, Deborah Conta and Stacy Koenen have volunteered to serve on a Board task force that is working with Rev. Roger Berschausen, a consultant with Unity Consulting to develop an appreciative inquiry-based, data-gathering process. Appreciative inquiry sessions will take place in early 2026 and you will be invited to participate and help inform the Board's discernment of our revised Ends this spring. More details will follow soon, but we hope you will plan to attend a session and help us build toward a common understanding of our congregational priorities for the next 5 to 7 years.

Another significant undertaking for the Board this year will be to close our Memorial Trust Fund and transfer the funds to our Forge our Future Endowment Fund. Board members Andrew Wittver and Ryan Pawlowski have volunteered to work with the finance team to lead this process.

Our Community at No Kings Protest





Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, Nov. 5 & 19, 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 Online

Sunday, November 9, 1:00 pm

Join Us Online Here

Join us as we discuss November's read, *The Memory Wall* by Anthony Doerr. Contact Eileen Teska at eileenteska@gmail.com.

Chancel Choir

Nov. 6 & 20, 7:00-8:30 pm At Church

Sing with us on Thursdays as we prepare to perform for Sunday services. Contact Tristan Strelitzer at tristan.strelitzer@uumilwaukee.org to join.

The Chronologically Gifted Group

Nov. 30, 11:20 - 1:30 pm At Church

Join other older adults for this drop-in potluck. Bring a dish and join your contemporaries after the Sunday service, in Max Otto Hall.

UU Men's Group

November 2, 12:30 - 2:00 pm At Church

This is a group that is open space for dialogue, connection, reflection, and community on the first Sunday of each month. Contact Michael Pointer Mace for more information..

The Shawl Ministy Group

Sunday, November 2 at 12:00 pm At Church

The shawl ministry group plans to meet after the second church service on Nov. 2 in the Common Room. Hoping to see you soon, Juliet Hills.

The Practice of Presence

Every Monday, 5:30 - 6:30 pm At Church

Join us in the Sanctuary for the Practice of Silence as we sit in silence. Silence can bring calm to the mind and restore balance. Drop-in and stay the entire hour or just a few minutes. No meditation experience required.

Poetry Contemplation Online

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 2

An Overview of Healthcare Reform: Successes & Failures

Robert DeVita, Lecturer UWM Lubar College of Business, MBA.

A leadership practitioner's introduction to the successes and failures of the most recent initiatives to reform US healthcare. Robert will discuss why we are where we are today and what lies ahead.

NOVEMBER 9

From Vision Loss to Vision Forward: A Journey of Possibility

Susan Eggold, Director of Philanthropy.

Vision Forward is a non-profit in Greater Milwaukee providing training, tools, and support for people of all ages living with vision loss. Whether it's a child born without sight or an adult facing age-related conditions like macular degeneration or glaucoma, Vision Forward empowers individuals to live independently and confidently. This presentation will highlight the services that make a difference and the hope that comes from a community committed to inclusion and possibility.





Sunday Morning Forum

10:00 AM IN-PERSON & ON YOUTUBE



NOVEMBER 16

Maintaining Democratic Values & Structures in the Trump Administration

Dennis J. Conta, Former State Representative and Secretary of Wis. Department of Revenue.

Within relevant Supreme Court decisions and Trump's expansion of executive authority, Dennis will outline, within the framework of political pragmatism, what can and cannot be done to maintain core democratic values and structures.

NOVEMBER 23

MTEA: Public Education & Social Justice Organizing

Amy Mizialko, Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, Executive Director.

This talk will cover current union organizing, public education in Milwaukee and the 2027 Wisconsin state budget.



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MINISTER EMERITUS

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Please contact them directly to set up an appointment.

Board of Trustees Officers

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Members

Dana Brooks Deborah Conta Elizabeth Hayes Stacy Koenen Stacey Thieme **Andrew Whitver**

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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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