

SEPTEMBER 2026



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*

Beginnings



Inside News

by the *Chanticleer* Editors

INGATHERING SEPTEMBER 13

Don't miss the Ingathering Service on Sunday, September 13, at 9:00 or 11:00 a.m. It's an exciting time to reconnect with friends and meet new ones as we begin the 2026–2027 church year. All three ministers will be present to welcome everyone back.

In September, we kick off our social justice and spiritual development programs, with many opportunities for you to get involved. The Board of Trustees will also highlight this year's shared ministry, focused on the congregation's newly selected ENDS. See page 17 for the full article about our new ENDS, and visit the tables during Coffee Hour to learn more about these opportunities to engage.

Our community is mourning the loss of Mary Ann Fisher and Chris Zapf, long time members of our community. Information on memorial services will be sent on the weekly email announcements. Subscribe below. Visit page 7 for more "All in the Family" news.

**Subscribe to
Weekly Announcements.**

First Church Facebook Group

Share the Plate

Lynde Uihlein
Share the Plate Chair

The Bronzeville Center for the Arts (BCA) exists to create vibrant spaces that celebrate and empower artists of African descent, nurture emerging talent, and actively engage diverse local, regional, and national audiences. Through the establishment of a major new African American art museum in Milwaukee's Bronzeville neighborhood, the BCA seeks to expand Bronzeville's legacy as a vibrant artistic hub of the Midwest and make experiences with the art of the African diaspora accessible to everyone.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, African American migration from the South fueled the growth of Milwaukee and Bronzeville emerged as a community and cultural hub with a flourishing commercial corridor. In recent years, a renewed commitment to Milwaukee's contemporary African American visual arts movement has helped inspire Bronzeville's revitalization.

BCA's headquarters, Gallery 507, is the organization's first development in the heart of Milwaukee's Bronzeville District at 507 W. North Ave. In development is an art museum at the northeast corner of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and North Avenue. Site Plans include a major new museum supported by original landscaping for public use, public programming, and neighborhood beautification. Through this project, BCA seeks to expand Bronzeville's legacy as a vibrant artistic hub of the Midwest and make experiences with African American art accessible to everyone.

Donate to this STP Partner



Words on the Wind

by Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

Dear First Church,

The beginning of our church year coincides with the Jewish New Year this year, inviting us to begin again in love.

How do new beginnings make you feel? What medicine is there for a tender spirit and what nourishment is there for our longings?

The invitations of the spirit can come like whispers and they can come like wallops. I invite you to pay attention to the places you are being invited to begin again this month. What is the universe's inviting you to begin? Do you feel something beckoning to you from the future, or maybe the past? What calls to a longing in your soul?

Let's explore the ways beginning anew can open doors in our spirits, our community, and the world.

Love,
Rev. Jennifer
Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Seeking Our Church Community?

When you're exploring a new faith community, it's natural to have questions. How does this church work? How do you connect with people, make friends, and find belonging? What makes Unitarian Universalism unique? What opportunities for spiritual growth and service are available beyond Sunday worship?

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee's Seekers Sessions are designed to help you find connections and answer those questions. These sessions provide a first step in meeting other seekers, finding a sense of belonging in community, and learning about our congregation and faith.

Join us for one or all of the six drop-in sessions that are held at the church on Sundays between the two worship services. At the conclusion of the series, participants are invited to celebrate together and, if they choose, take the next step by signing the First Unitarian's Society membership book.

See page 18 for the outline of the sessions.



Kimberlee's Contemplations

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson



It may not be back-to-school season for all of us, yet one of the joys of belonging to a faith community is the gift of beginning again. As the wheel of the years turns, carrying us through each ending and each new start, we are continually invited into renewal. We enter this church year anew in our soulful home, a place rich with shared values and common purpose, enlivened by the gifts of music and wisdom, and sustained by the joy and justice we create together.

Behind our green doors, so much is already stirring at First Church. New staff members are beginning to discover who we are, how we serve, and the spirit that carries us forward. Everywhere, seeds of possibility are being planted through the loving care of so many among us: preparing Theme Circles and Seeker Sessions, welcoming Youth Advisors, gathering the Choir, organizing Circle Suppers, nurturing Faith Formation for all ages, coordinating our Ushers, and sustaining the many teams that bring our shared ministry to life.

In ways both seen and unseen, countless hands and hearts are tending these beginnings, creating space for connection, growth, and community to flourish once again.

Within Faith Formation, opportunities abound to deepen relationships, explore new ideas, and share in the adventure of learning together. Whether with children, youth, or fellow adults, we are invited into a community of curiosity, care, and discovery.

• **Youth Advisor Training** on September 27 invites adults age 25 and older who delight in the wisdom, questions, and insights of teens to accompany them on their journey.

• **Faith Formation Volunteer Orientation** on October 4 reminds us that it truly takes a village. Come be part of that village, helping to nurture our children and families while finding connection, purpose, and joy along the way.

• **Courage to Be** offers a monthly opportunity to explore the enduring wisdom of Paul Tillich with Dennis Conta, deepening our understanding of faith, courage, and what it means to live fully.

Adult Faith Formation TBA: If you have an idea, share it with me [here](#).

May you find hope and renewal in making your own beginning this season. I am especially looking forward to Ingathering on September 13th, when we will gather once again to celebrate the start of a new church year, reconnect with one another, and set our hearts toward the shared journey ahead.

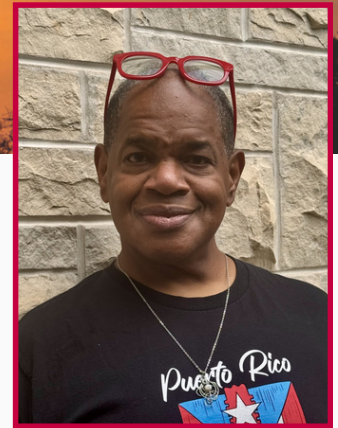
With a heart full of gratitude,

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Faith Formation



Curiosities & Musings

by Rev. Chris Long



“Beginnings”

I hope this month’s Curiosities and Musings finds you doing relatively well as summer’s ending is not too far in the offing and we begin to engage this month’s Soul Matters theme of “Beginnings”.

First, again, I cannot thank Reverends Jennifer and Kimberlee, The Board, the entire church staff, and so many of you for the care I received during and post my short-term medical for Ulcerative Laryngitis. My heart continues to be warm from your expressions of deep care and generosity of spirit.

I would also like to thank the many volunteers in our Pastoral Care Associates Team, Our Pastoral Care Providers Team, and our Pulpit Guest Liaison Team who continued the unwavering support needed for these ministries of First Church throughout my time away and for the entire summer. We are truly blessed by your dedication. Again, thank you.

Beginnings, what does the very word call to mind and body for you? For me, it is any number of emotions ranging from excitement, awe, what’s next, courage, and even, “not again”. What about for you? As individuals and as a sacred, religious community, what might beginnings mean as spiritual practice?

This month, with our “Ingathering”, “Water Communion” Services (both 9am and 11am beginning on September 13, 2025), and with any number of annual programs beginning anew, what might

engaging these new beginnings, some of us for the very first time, and others being relative new and longtime members, how might we see things afresh as we will get back into the swing of things as the 2026 – 2027 Church Year begins?

As this is now the start of my second year as your Acting Assistant Minister, who had a truly positive, even successful year of Ministry with so many of you, I am looking forward to what this Church Year will hold.

Speaking of beginnings, registration for this year’s Theme Circles will take place throughout the month of September. If you are interested in learning more about our Theme Circles, please see our church website for more information and the link to register: <https://uumilwaukee.org/get-involved/theme-circles/>

Of particular note this fall is, many the staff here at First Church were able to attend a retreat last November with three other larger Unitarian Universalists Churches to join together fellowship and share best practices around many of the systems of larger churches. Around the programming for Membership within these churches, we came back to

continued on page 7 .

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Beginnings: We Labor in Love

Rev. Chris Long

Teresa Drews, Collaborative Pianist
Katie Kegel, Worship Associate

13

We Begin Again In Love

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Ingathering Sunday

Tristan Strelitzer, Choral Director, and the Chancel Choir
Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Faith Formation
Alecia Altstaetter, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

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Wade in the Water: Water Is Life

Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Faith Formation

Water Ceremony

Rev. Chris Long, Acting Assistant Minister
Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director
Nick Rummler, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

27

I Am, You Anxious One

Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom, Senior Minister

Alissa Rhode, Lead Music Director, with Claudia Russell
Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, Minister of Faith Formation
Austin Baldwin, Worship Associate

[Click for info about this service](#)

Sunday Services at 9 and 11 a.m.

continued “From Rev. Chris”

think through and began to plan how we might continue to enhance our First Church welcome and continue to enhance the many ways to meet the needs of more people seeking spiritual, religious community with us. To that end, we will be transitioning from our Journey to Membership (Pathways to Membership) ministry into “Seekers Sessions” starting this October. Please stay tuned to this exciting new development here at First Church.

We will also be starting up our “Shawl Ministry”, “Being UU: Being Male” group, and any number of our “Affinity Groups” that you may wish to get involved with this Church Year. If you currently lead any of our Affinity Groups, please email me so that we can plan time to connect around what may be offering this Church Year within your group:
revchris.long@uumilwaukee.org

Whether you have ever thoughts of “Beginnings” as a possible spiritual practice, let’s see what we might discover, together, as this Church Year gets underway.

Sincerely and in deeper gratitude,
Rev. Chris Long
Acting Assistant Minister

In Memoriam

Mary Ann Fisher

September 16, 1946 - August 16, 2026

Mary Ann Fisher died peacefully in her home on August 16, 2026, at St. Rita’s in Milwaukee after living with cancer. She was surrounded by her son and daughter, John and Sarah Fisher, and two longtime friends. Mary Ann was 79 years old, one month short of her 80th birthday, and was a member of First Church for thirty years.

We will hold a Memorial Service for Mary Ann here at First Church on Sunday afternoon, September 19.

May we continue to hold Mary Ann Fisher’s memory and her family in the loving embrace of our First Church community.

All in the Family

We send our comfort to **Kathy Porter** as she grieves the loss of her beloved Aunt Maxine Claire, who died this summer.

We hold **Rollie Hanson** in our hearts as he grieves the loss of his older brother this summer.

Please send a few extra thoughts and prayers of loving support to **Alecia Altastaeller**, as she faces difficulties in her family.

We send healing to **Diane Horne** who is recovering from back surgery. May your pain ease.

Call for Submissions for Share the Plate

by Nancy Cross Dunham
Co-chair Share the Plate

Share the Plate is a First Church social justice ministry that shares 50% of all cash collected in the weekly offering plates with non-profit organizations in Milwaukee. The work of recipient organizations is also highlighted during church services, at the Social Justice table during coffee hours, in the Chanticleer, and on the Share the Plate page on the Church's website.

There are opportunities for you to become more directly involved in our Share the Plate ministry. Please consider nominating a deserving organization working to address social issues that are close to your heart.

Criteria for Share the Plate eligibility include the following: the organization is a non-profit, providing services in the greater Milwaukee area; and the work focuses on serving one or more of a range of economically and socially challenged populations.

You can find more complete information on the nomination criteria on the Share the Plate page, along with a link to the nomination form. You can find the Share the Plate page on the church website [HERE](#).

If you have questions about the nomination criteria and process, feel free to talk with any of the Share the Plate team members: Bob Monahan, Nancy Cross Dunham, Lynde Uihlein, Laurie Petersen, or Rod Bott.

Educate & Engage Voters by Sending Postcards

by Juanita Mast
Defend Democracy

Join with the Defend Democracy Team to help educate voters and remind them to vote on November 3. We will write postcards with messages about reasons to reject the Constitutional Amendments on the ballot in November.

Meet in the Common Room after each service during Coffee Hours on Sunday, October 4. Post cards, names and addresses, sample messages and stamps will be provided. In a few minutes you can write messages that will help voters understand the importance of their votes.

The Courage to Be: Finding Meaning, Connection, and Strength in Uncertain Times

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson
Minister of Faith Formation

How do we live courageously in a world marked by uncertainty, anxiety, and change? Join facilitator Dennis Conta for a nine-month exploration of theologian Paul Tillich's influential work, *The Courage to Be*. Through monthly discussions, participants will examine Tillich's understanding of courage as the power to affirm life and meaning despite doubt, ambiguity, vulnerability, and the limits of human existence.

Tillich argues that courage is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to move forward in spite of it. Together, we will explore how this insight can help us navigate life's challenges while remaining grounded in purpose, connection, and hope.

Dennis is an experienced facilitator who has lead programs at First Church on Annie Dillard and Paul Tillich, and at Saint John's on Ralph Harper's *On Presence* and existentialist thought.

This program is designed for anyone seeking deeper meaning, spiritual growth, and practical wisdom for facing life's complexities with courage and integrity. We will be meeting in person and on Zoom the first week of each month starting in October. Day and time to be chosen by group availability. All are welcome. If you are interested please sign up [here](#).

Gathering Waters Buddhist Sangha Study Group

by Mark Miller

The Gathering Waters Buddhist Sangha (Buddhist Study Group) is starting a new book in September, *The Art of Living*, by William Hart. It's about Buddhism and Vipassana meditation. Vipassana is purportedly an ancient type of meditation from India that the Buddha rediscovered and used in his own teaching.

I've been with this Sangha now for 18 years and I wish I had started with this book! While the later chapters explain how Vipassana meditation works and how to practice it (one should really get it first hand at a 10-day Vipassana retreat), the majority of the book, to me, explains Buddhism in such a clear, straightforward fashion. I anticipated a dry read but I honestly couldn't wait to get back to it. I hope you can join us in our book discussions beginning in September. The book is available at no charge here:

<https://cicp.org.kh/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Art-of-Living-in-English.pdf>

Ushers and Greeters Needed!

by Ben Trubach
Welcome Team Member

The Welcome team is seeking volunteers to serve as Ushers and Greeters for our Sunday 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. worship services this church year beginning in September. Ushers and greeters play an essential role in creating a warm, inviting experience for everyone who walks through our doors. This easy volunteering opportunity is a great way to meet new people as well!

Each service needs a team of four ushers and one greeter, and we are grateful for all who are willing to share their time and hospitality. No prior experience is necessary, and training will be provided to ensure everyone feels comfortable and prepared.

If you are interested in serving, please submit your availability by Sunday, September 6. The schedule and teams will be released in early September, with training held this fall as needed.

You may sign up in any of the following ways:

- Fill out a simple paper interest form at the Questions and Connections Table during Coffee Hour
- Contact Welcome Team member Jeanne Kowalski directly at jeannekowalski21@gmail.com

Delicious Fun-Circle Suppers!

by Eileen Teska

Sign Up Now!

Join us for any of the four Saturday evening dinner parties on Nov. 7, Jan. 16, Mar. 6 and May 22.

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, dessert or something else, 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.

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, if you aren't sure what dates you can commit to or would just like to try it out. Sign up deadline is September 27.

2026-27 Theme Circles

by Diane Horne & Laurie Foss

Theme Circles are monthly small groups that deepen and support the spiritual journeys of participants in community with each other and in connection with the church's monthly worship themes.

Prior to each meeting, participants engage in pre-reading and contemplation exercises based on that month's worship theme, at whatever level they can. Theme packets are sent in advance which include Questions to Live With, Spiritual Exercises, readings, links to articles, music, podcasts, videos and more.

To build community, depth of connection, and a healthy small group dynamic, monthly attendance is a priority. Theme circles are open to members, friends, and regular guests of First Church.

This fall, we offer seven Standard theme circles and four Focused theme circles. The Focused theme circles focus on a certain demographic (LGBTQIA, Parents, Young Adults) or a particular type of sharing (UU Writers).

Explore the Theme Circle Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers), schedule, and registration form [HERE](#) or visit the Membership Table during coffee hours in September to pick up a flyer and talk to someone wearing an Ask Me badge!

Registration starts on September 1 and the deadline to register is September 27. Theme Circles begin meeting during the third week of the month in October.

LGBTQI+ Theme Circle

The LGBTQI+ circle 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. We follow the standard format with people who self-identify in the queer community demographic.

Parents Theme Circle

Join other parents of school-age and younger children to explore our monthly worship themes. This Theme Circle is designed to accommodate the needs of parents, so it meets just for 1.5 hours. We encourage parents to hold the attendance and homework commitment as best you can.

UU Writers Theme Circle

Explore our monthly themes through the art of creative writing! Use whatever writing practice you are most comfortable with (journaling, poetry, prose, storytelling). Follow the writing prompts and come ready to share, inspire, support and witness each other.

YA Theme Circle

Gather monthly with adults under 40. We will explore the themes together with the connection of being young adults.

Faith Formation at First Church

by Rev. Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson

Our Children & Youth Faith Formation program brings each month's church theme to life through hands-on projects, interactive games, meaningful spiritual practices, and thoughtful conversations. Grounded in Unitarian Universalist values and history, every session offers a vibrant, enriching experience that nurtures curiosity, compassion, and connection.

Each Sunday, children ages 6–12 begin with Circle Time—a welcoming space for reflection and community—before choosing between UU Play or UU Maker Space, where creativity and exploration take center stage.

All-Ages Gatherings. Throughout the year, we host joyful, inclusive All-Ages Faith Formation events that unite children and youth across age groups. These special gatherings feature collaborative social justice projects, worship preparation, seasonal celebrations, guest speakers, and more. It's a dynamic space where community, creativity, and shared purpose flourish.



UU Maker Space (6-18 years of age)

UU Maker Space is all about unleashing creativity & exploration with a range of materials & activities children will learn through hands-on experiences.



UU Play (6-18 years of age)

Play is important in a child's development. In UU Play children learn through games that reflect our values and build strong relationships with their peers and the environment.



Childcare for Children (Birth-3 years of age)

Nursery Caregivers provide care for our youngest children during both Sunday services.



Soul Matters Preschool (3-6 years of age)

Early Childhood Coordinator Mariah Groshek guides our children in exploring our faith through ritual, story, and play related to the church's monthly theme during both Sunday services.



Youth Group

The Youth Group meets Sundays of every month in the Emerson Room. We explore our church's theme with "whole person" learning, focusing on the different ways we engage with the world: head, heart, hands, body, spirit/soul, and community. Youth are always welcome to join the activities found in our UU Play & UU Maker Space.



OWL Our Whole Lives

2026-2027: WINTER 4-6 th Grade

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a special program that helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior by equipping participants with accurate, age-appropriate information.

Parent/Guardian required meeting this fall TBA.

Faith Formation Registration!

Each church year, we ask families to register their children for Faith Formation.

The annual registration fee is:

- \$50 per child for members
- \$100 maximum per family
- \$75 per child for guests

REGISTRATION LINK FOR FAITH FORMATION 2026-27

If your family would benefit from a full or partial fee waiver, please don't hesitate to reach out to Minister of Faith Formation Rev. Kimberlee. We're committed to making this program accessible to all.

We warmly welcome guests to attend our Children and Youth Faith Formation (FF) program up to three times before registering. It's a wonderful way to experience our community and see if it's the right fit for your family.

Faith Formation Weekly Update

Every Friday, we send out an email featuring:

- A full rundown of FF Sunday offerings
 - Volunteer assignments for the week
 - Upcoming events, groups, and workshops tailored for children, youth, and families
- It's your one-stop update to stay connected and informed!

LINK FOR THE SIGN UP HERE!

What You Need to Know About Faith Formation on Sundays!

- Everyone begins on Sunday by checking-in at the FF Table in the Leenhouts Common Room to receive a name & safety badge. Caregivers will receive a coded identity ticket to ensure safety of child retrieval.
- Faith Formation for children over 5 years of age begins in the sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. service only.
- Children 12 years and under need to be picked up at 10:15 a.m. by parents/guardians on the lower level.
- After our time together in the sanctuary, Children, Youth and FF Volunteers will depart for the FF programs in the lower level.
- For children under the age of five, the Nursery and Preschool are 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.
- Most Sundays, FF offers UU Play or UU Maker Space, until 10:15 a.m. Options such as All Ages Sunday and special workshops are available on some Sundays.
- Families are welcome to stay in the sanctuary or in the parlor.
- Worship Activity Bags are available in the sanctuary and FF Table for all ages to enjoy!



FF Volunteer Orientation October 4 at 11:15 am

Faith Formation at First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee is a shared effort—when each of us offers our time and care, we create a nurturing space where children feel safe, loved, and truly belong. Whether you can help one Sunday or many, *you* make FF happen!

Join us for the FF Volunteer Orientation as we kick off the new church year:

Sunday, October 4, 11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Young Room (Lower Level)

We'll cover:

- Overview of the Faith Formation program
- Child and youth safety practices
- Scheduling and volunteer opportunities
- Plans for the upcoming year

Faith Formation Volunteering 1-2-3 Steps!

1. **All volunteers:** please fill out the FF Volunteer Form as we have new safety policies in place for 2026-27.

Faith Formation Volunteer Registration

2. Look for an email from Rev. Kimberlee and Trusted Employees to get your background check link. All volunteers working directly with children must be willing to complete a general background check to ensure the safety of our families.

3. Add yourself to the FF Volunteer schedule!

FF Volunteer Schedule 2026-27

Youth Adviser Meeting Sept 27 at 11:15 am

Youth Advising is one of the most rewarding and meaningful ways to support young people in their faith journey. Caring relationships with trusted adults help youth build resilience, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

As we continue rebuilding our youth ministry, we hope to offer Youth Group every Sunday this year, along with leadership opportunities, service projects, and outings.

If you feel called to this important ministry, join us for Youth Adviser Training. Together, we will explore how to:

- Build healthy, supportive relationships with youth
- Create safe, inclusive, and welcoming spaces
- Empower young people as leaders
- Communicate effectively in youth ministry
- Develop the skills, presence, and self-awareness needed to accompany youth on their spiritual journey

Together, we can create a vibrant youth ministry where every young person feels seen, valued, and inspired to grow.

Questions? We'd love to hear from you. Please contact Rev. Kimberlee Carlson for more information.



BIG QUESTIONS WITH LITTLE PEOPLE

When it comes to the big questions that shape our lives, Unitarian Universalists understand that we cannot give our children certainty, but we can give them beauty.

Join Rev. Dr. Molly Housh Gordon for a reading of her new picture book *Dance Together, Spin Apart*, followed by a conversation with parents and caregivers.

When we do the work to develop our own beautiful imagery and imaginings, we can talk with children about mortality and other existential issues both honestly and beautifully, giving them a sense of mystery and comfort alike.



OCTOBER 7, 6PM

6pm Pizza in Common Room

6:30pm-7:30pm

Rev. Molly in Max Otto Hall

Limited
Childcare
Available
with RSVP



Splinters from the Board

by Trudy Watt
BOT member

The Board of Trustees opened its meeting on August 25, 2026 by sharing fond memories of the beginning of the school year. After reviewing and approving minutes from two previous meetings, as well as a staff update about new FUSM staff members, the BOT set to work on the matters of the day.

First, Mark Bishop and Manni Marquez led a discussion on the Fiscal Year and Q4 Financial Reports. Expenses came in under budget and, overall, the financial condition of the church is strong. Our main challenges include delays caused by turnover at our bookkeeping firm, outstanding needs to develop a consistent capital maintenance reserve funding strategy and the persistent need to increase revenue to meet operating costs. The quarterly report was approved unanimously, as were motions to find that we are in compliance with financial policies.

Related to questions of capital projects and maintenance, the BOT discussed several matters: the condition of the sanctuary roof (which needs repair) and options for installing air conditioning to improve summer accessibility in our facilities. Members of the church's Building & Grounds Committee, Russ Drewry and Ben Trubach joined Manni and board members to talk through options and cost estimates for adding AC to the Sanctuary and Leenhouts Common Room. The important relationship between decisions about AC and

future solar panel expansion, as well as the aforementioned capital maintenance reserve strategy were also discussed. Portable AC units, which the church purchased over the summer to provide cooling during the AAUM conference, have been providing relief during recent hot weather and may also impact AC plans. The Board will vote on the matter of AC installation at its next meeting, in September.

As we continue our work on the church's Ends, the BOT reviewed and incorporated feedback received in response to the three draft Ends that were shared at the Annual Meeting. Stay tuned for updates on our new Ends!

Finally, the board heard from Rev. Jennifer about church attendance, the roof repairs, Mary Ann Fisher's memorial service and plans for the new member process this year, now called "Seeker Sessions."

New First Church ENDS

by Sarah Fowles
BOT member

This fall, First Church will share its new “Ends,” which are the impacts our church seeks to make for our members and the world.

These Ends grew from the question: With the world on fire, how do we both nurture spiritual flourishing within our congregation and inspire action centered on love and justice beyond?

Over the past year, congregants have shared stories of FUSM at its best, named hopes for the future, and created imagined “future magazine covers” showing what we hope will be said about us years from now. Congregants responded to draft Ends and helped the Board see what mattered and what needed more attention.

The final Ends are:

To meet the moment, we will grow Unitarian Universalism in ourselves and the world by:

- **Deepening lifelong spirituality and faith formation within our First Church community.**
- **Cultivating a multigenerational community of belonging, joy, and care, including by leaning into anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multicultural work.**

- **Building capacity in our congregation for love-centered action through practicing moral leadership and followership, guided by those most impacted by social, economic, and environmental injustice.**

Taken together, the Ends move in widening circles – from deepening faith within ourselves, to strengthening our community, to building our capacity to act with love and justice in the wider world.

An End is not a program list, a committee assignment, or a one-year plan. The Ends give us a shared direction for the next several years. This fall and winter, Rev. Jennifer and staff will identify the concrete programs and actions that make these Ends real in the life of the church.

The Board is grateful to everyone who contributed stories, hopes, questions, and feedback. We look forward to continuing this work together as the Ends move from words on a page into the lived ministry of the congregation.



Finding the right faith community is about more than beliefs. It's about being seen, understood, and connected.

Our Seeker Sessions are a welcoming space to ask questions, meet new people, and learn what it means to be part of community at First Unitarian Society.

Join our drop-in sessions to connect with others who are seeking meaning and purpose, learn about Unitarian Universalism and opportunities to find a sense of belonging beyond Sunday worship. Sessions are held Sundays between services in the Parlor.

SEEKER SESSIONS



OCT. 4

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

REV. KIMBERLEE TOMCZAK CARLSON

OCT. 11

MAKING MEANING

REV. JENNIFER NORDSTROM

OCT. 18

FINDING YOUR PEOPLE ONLINE

FIONA HIGGINS, FAITH FORMATION ASSISTANT

OCT. 25

WORKING BELIEFS*

REV. CHRIS LONG & FIONA HIGGINS

NOV. 8

FINDING YOUR PEOPLE AT CHURCH*

REV. KIMBERLEE, REV. CHRIS LONG & FIONA HIGGINS

NOV. 22

HOW WE BUILD COMMUNITY *

REV. JENNIFER NORDSTROM & FIONA HIGGINS

**DEC. 1,
6PM**

MEMBERSHIP CELEBRATION

* SESSIONS REQUIRED BEFORE JOINING FIRST CHURCH

MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY IS DEC. 6, 2026 BOTH SERVICES

SEPTEMBER EVENTS



Buddhist Study Group

Wednesday, Sept 9 & 23, 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, September 13, 1:00 pm
[Join Us Online Here](#)

Join us as we discuss September's read, *Changing Minds* by Howard Gardner. Contact Eileen Teska or more information at eileenteska@gmail.com.

The Shawl Ministry Group

Sunday, October 4 at 10:00 am
At Church

The shawl ministry group plans to meet after the first church service on October 4 in the Common Room. Hoping to see you soon, Juliet Hills.

Chancel Choir

Thursday or Wednesday, 7:00-8:30 pm
At Church

Join us on Sep. 3, 10, 16, 24 at 7:00-8:30 pm at Church in singing as we prepare to perform at Sunday services. Open to all singers high school age and up (no previous experience required). Contact Tristan Strelitzer for more information or to join at tristan.strelitzer@uumilwaukee.org.

The Chronologically Gifted Potluck

Sunday, Sept. 27 at 12:15 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 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

SEPTEMBER 13

Hyperscale Data Centers

Chris Larson, State Senator and First Unitarian member

How moneyed interests are currently winning the fight and what we can do about it. Hyperscale data centers are the physical manifestation of many bad decisions. Come hear about the neighbor-led movements to push back and organize for common sense. The development of hyperscale data centers to meet the needs of AI computing has become a political lightning rod in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. Senator Larson has introduced the strongest legislation so far to address the many concerns communities have. He'll discuss the problems with hyperscale data centers that need to be addressed and legislative and regulatory approaches to protecting rate payers, our air and water quality and our climate.

SEPTEMBER 20

Three Constitutional Amendment Ballot Questions in November!

Margo Kirchner, Executive Director of Wisconsin Justice Initiative

Wisconsin's Legislature keeps sending constitutional amendment questions to voters. The ballot questions can be vague, confusing, or even misleading, and the Wisconsin Supreme Court has said that's OK. As a result, voters need to prepare in advance to understand the proposed changes. This November, voters will find three constitutional amendment questions on the ballot. One concerns religious gatherings during health emergencies, one concerns the governor's partial veto power, and one concerns government's ability to address inequity. You'll leave this talk with some guidelines for considering amendment ballot questions generally and with information regarding these three proposed amendments specifically.

SEPTEMBER 27

League of Women Voters Unite & Rise 8.5:

Sinceree Dixon, LWVWI Communications Manager

Unite & Rise 8.5 aims to build a movement of 8.5 million individuals to unite and rise up against the anti-democratic actions of this administration. Launching in May 2025 and running until the 2026 midterm elections, this initiative is part of our Women Defend Democracy campaign. This presentation will discuss the pillars of democracy that we aim to protect, actions you can take to get involved, and how to stay engaged in the movement.

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

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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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