

The Circuit Writer - October 2020

Monthly theme: Deep Listening

What does it mean to be a people of Deep Listening?

Sunday Services for October 2020

October 4th, 10:30AM: Celebrating Autumn: Join Director of Religious Education, Julie Trombley for this contemplative service that will use readings and music to honor and celebrate the changing season.

October 11th, 10:30AM: 250 Years of Universalism in America: *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

October 18th, 10:30AM: *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

October 25th, 10:30AM: *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

*Join Julie & Brian on Sundays at 11:45AM for Coffee Hour on Zoom!
Link sent via e-mail every Wednesday at 1pm.*

As of September 13th, we have resumed in-person services at 10:30 on Sunday mornings, with many precautions in place to keep everyone safe. Masks are required, hand sanitizing is encouraged, and social distancing is maintained. To read more details about our in-person services and the safety measures we take, please read the Reverend Brian's [September newsletter](#).

Every Sunday, the service is recorded, uploaded to our [website](#), posted on [Facebook](#), and sent via e-mail by 12pm every Sunday. You can sign up for e-mails from First UU Wausau [here](#).



From a Window on Grant

As the United States faces the painful consequences of the history of racism recently awoken by the deaths of African Americans by law enforcement, the Board of Trustees has unanimously voted to place a Black Lives Matter sign along Grant Street as a symbol of solidarity with the Black community.

I understand that there are various implications of the Black Lives Matter movement, and that there is not universal agreement. I also acknowledge that of course all lives matter, but in so doing I acknowledge the terrible truth that not all lives have endured a history of slavery, exploitation, and discrimination.

Our community and nation, from the beginning to now, has oppressive policies that disproportionately harm Black people and Black communities. Racism occurs not just in overt acts of violence, but also in covert aspects of economy, housing, healthcare, the justice system, food security, education, transportation, and more.

UU Wausau has a long history of taking a stand.

The First Universalist Unitarian Church has a long history of working for racial justice. Many of the church's members have worked to support the work of the YWCA, People for the Power of Love, WISDOM, and other justice organizations. I am proud of the members who are actively involved in working for justice and equality in Wausau and the greater community. As many of you are aware, a portion of the church's budget is dedicated to the Social Justice Committee, which supports a number of efforts and organizations serving diverse populations. In addition, many members work with the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service, taking seriously the need to address local, state, and national issues by merging scholarship with civic engagement. And the church has sponsored speakers, forums, and book discussions on the topic of racial justice for years.

But we have not done enough.

The placement of the Black Lives Matter sign is intended to declare and represent the church's commitment to do *more* to work toward racial justice.

I want us to commit to actively caring about racial justice and not going back to "normal." This has happened too often and must stop.

Here are some of the next steps the church will be taking:

Permanently funding a Social Justice Committee that, in partnership with the Board, as part of their overall missions, will be responsible for annually defining and assessing specific racial justice actions the church plans to take.

Participation with local, state, and national groups actively working towards racial justice and equity.

Ongoing Racial Justice Education: Sponsor and publicize regular, occasional programs open to the community, including guest speakers, book discussions, films, and lectures on the history of and ongoing racism in our local community, state, and nation.

Assessment: Assess and report progress on each commitment at annual meetings and set new commitments for the coming year.

The Unitarian Universalist theologian James Luther Adams often reminded that there is not simply a priesthood of all believers, but a *prophethood* too. The “prophet's quarrel with the world,” Fred Buechner said, “is deep down a lover's quarrel. If they didn't love the world, they probably wouldn't bother to tell it that it's going to hell.” We are called to love the world and to quarrel prophetically. Let us remember that the Constitution begins like this: *We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice.* Working towards racial justice is our civic responsibility. But more important than that, it is our religious calling. So, let us do our part to better ensure our future will be one of greater justice, compassion, and unity.

In Faith,

Brian



Reflections

I hope that your family has found success settling into a school routine. If your children are anything like mine, then perhaps your dinner conversation has turned to the important topic of Halloween. A colleague shared a resource that I'll pass along to you. The website www.halloween2020.org lets you search by county to find the current COVID risk in your community and then suggests several activities, for kids and adults that would be appropriate based on that level of risk. Wherever you get your ideas I hope you find a creative and safe way to celebrate. Because all decisions, even how to celebrate Halloween, carry so much weight these days I'm really enjoying the UU Parenting Circle discussions happening on Zoom every Thursday evening. It's nice to have a place of shared values to discuss and ask questions. In addition to the parenting group, there are several other opportunities to connect with your church community this month. Join us October 9th for a parking lot, socially distanced, movie night, or each and every Sunday via Zoom at Children's Chapel, Youth Group, or Coffee Hour! Please reach out if you have questions about any of our offerings.

Take good care of yourselves, and each other. I hope to see you in Zoom soon!

With Love,
Julie

What does it mean to be a people of deep listening?

This is our Religious Education question for the month of October. The poet Joyce Sutphen says, "This is your chance to listen carefully. Your whole life might depend on what you hear." Join us in the following ways this month as we explore deep listening.

Children's Chapel

RE for children in Kindergarten - 6th grade

Sunday mornings, 9:30 am-10:00 am

Live via Zoom

Adults and families welcome!

Topics

Oct 4th: Listen to your heart

Oct 11th: Listen to BIPOC voices

Oct 18th: Listen to nature

Oct 25th: Listen to ancestors and wise ones

Youth Group

RE for youth in 7th - 12th grade

Sunday afternoons, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm

Live via Zoom

For youth and advisors only

Topics

Oct 4th: Listen to your heart

Oct 11th: Listen to nature

Oct 18th: Listen to ancestors

Oct 25th: Listen to BIPOC voices

UU Parenting Circle

Sharing, listening, supporting, learning

Thursday evenings, 8:00 pm-9:00 pm

Live via Zoom

All parents welcome



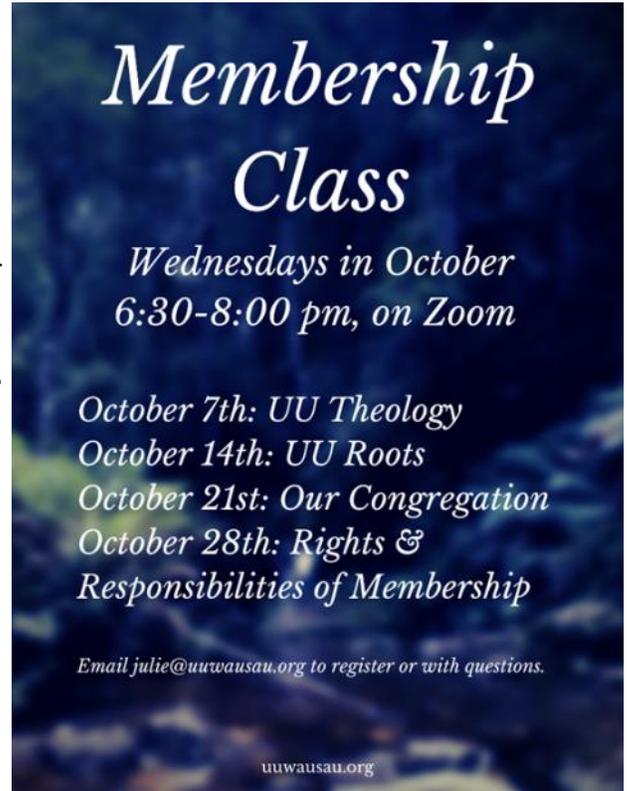
Soul Matters

If you thought about joining a Soul Matters small group but didn't get your registration in, I have good news. There are a limited number of spots still available. The group that meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday evening, 6:30-8:30 pm still has a couple of spots available. Email me at julie@uuwausau.org right away to join this group. See the August Circuit Writer for more information on Soul Matters small groups.

Membership Class

Are you interested in becoming a member of First UU Wausau? Did you recently join and want to learn more? This is the class for you! Wednesdays in October we'll offer a membership class, 6:30-8:00 pm via Zoom. During these classes you'll explore Unitarian Universalist theology, learn about Unitarian Universalist history, hear information about how our congregation functions, and come to understand the rights and responsibilities of membership at First UU Wausau. You'll also have the opportunity to get to know other people interested in membership, meet staff members, be introduced to lay leaders in the congregation, and explore your own beliefs and spirituality.

Contact Julie at julie@uuwausau.org to register or with questions.



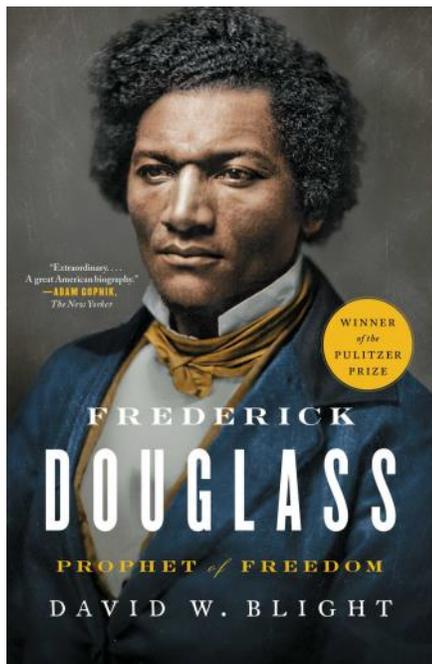
Membership Class

*Wednesdays in October
6:30-8:00 pm, on Zoom*

*October 7th: UU Theology
October 14th: UU Roots
October 21st: Our Congregation
October 28th: Rights & Responsibilities of Membership*

Email julie@uuwausau.org to register or with questions.

uuwausau.org



Minister's Book Club

Meeting date & time: Monday, October 26th, at 6:30 PM, on Zoom (RSVP to brian@uuwausau.org)

Selection: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* by David W. Blight

Blurb: As a young man Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland. He was fortunate to have been taught to read by his slave owner mistress, and he would go on to become one of the major literary figures of his time. His very existence gave the lie to slave owners: with dignity and great intelligence he bore witness to the brutality of slavery.

Link for more info: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Frederick-Douglass/David-W-Blight/9781416590323>

BRING OUT THE POPCORN!

OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT

FRI, OCT. 9 | 6:30 PM TO 9 PM
UU WAUSAU PARKING LOT

Popcorn and Drinks Available

Bring a chair!

The feature:



1st UU Treasurer's Congregation Report – Financial Results Through August 31, 2020

Key 2020 Annual Budget Numbers:

Total Income	\$280,997
Total Expense	\$229,152
Net Income	\$51,825

Outstanding Mortgage: \$144,617

Endowment Fund: \$448,082

Through eight months, Total Income was \$280,977 while Total Expenses were \$229,152, producing a Net Income of \$51,825. We continue our solid financial results. Total Income is 9.5% ahead of budget, while Total Expense is 10.7% below budget. Total Income includes \$26,300 in Federal Payroll Protection Program funds available through the CARES Act which have been used for staff salary payments.

Year to date our combined total of pledges received and prepaid allocation, \$214,789, was 96.2% of our budgeted eight-month pledge goal, \$223,250. Pledge receipts have been steady since we began our pandemic impacted changes in how we continue to provide our church's ministry. Thank you to everyone for maintaining your pledge commitments. Your steadfast financial support is a positive indication of the strength of our congregation

While the Endowment Fund experienced marked losses early in the pandemic, those losses have been recouped and we have had modest investment growth for 2020.

As in years past, I am providing a pledge profile by quartile for 2020 to help assess our pledge results and identify opportunities for improving our fiscal strength. A portion of the profile is shown in the table below. Our profile changes little year to year. We continue to vary considerably from UUA guidelines, relying on a much smaller number of pledge units for a much higher percent of our pledge income than the UUA recommends. Closer adherence to the UUA guidelines would increase our financial stability. Hopefully, this information will assist us as we work as a congregation over time to modify our giving to create a healthier, more balanced giving profile.

Quartile	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
#Pledges	2	9	24	87
% of Pledges	2%	7%	20%	71%
UUA Guide	10%	15%	35%	40%

Respectfully Submitted

Randy Jefferson

9/28/20

From the Board Table...

Black lives matter.

This is not going to be an assertion of what you should believe or what we should all be doing. You read the UU Circuit Writer, you're probably on board with most of my points of view anyway. This is mostly life experiences that have influenced my understanding of the relationship between black people and white people in America.

I grew up in rural Kewaunee County, WI. It was a predominantly white community. More accurately, it was a predominantly bovine community, but the people were mostly caucasian. In high school I dated a girl named Krysta whose parents were from Jamaica. During a conversation with her father, he pointed to his car and asked me what I thought of it. "It's nice", I said, not knowing what to say about a rusty Ford Taurus. "I can afford a better car," he told me, "but the guys at my work don't want to see me in a nicer car. They want to see me in a poor man's car." He told me that it was easier for him to allow people around him to have the illusion that he was beneath them than to show them that he'd risen above them financially. At 16 years old, this information completely changed my understanding of race and class relations.

In 1992 George Carlin performed at Madison Square Garden and reflected on wealth and division:

"That's the way the ruling class operates in any society. They try to divide the rest of the people. They keep the lower and the middle classes fighting with each other so that they, the rich, can run off with all the ****ing money! Fairly simple thing. Happens to work. You know? Anything different—that's what they're gonna talk about—race, religion, ethnic and national background, jobs, income, education, social status, sexuality, anything they can do to keep us fighting with each other, so that they can keep going to the bank!"

The first time I heard this I was 19 years old. Something about the conversation with Krysta's father came back to me. It took a long time to put my finger on it, but eventually it dawned on me that poor and middle class people of all races had more in common with each other than they had in common with wealthy people. Yet they didn't seem to see it that way.

In 2002 I began teaching in Milwaukee Public Schools. My students and the school in general were predominately black. One day the topic of race came up in the classroom. It became apparent that the students assumed I was mixed race - white and black. I told them I wasn't and asked them why they thought that. "Because you're nice," my 4th graders responded simply. The comment knocked me back. It was another moment of realization. Those students had grown to see me as kind and fair, so I couldn't have been white.

In the years since I left Milwaukee Public Schools, there have been countless incidences of people of color not getting the benefit of the doubt from white people. So many times when white people weren't kind and fair.

On April 19th, 2020, one of my former students was killed in an altercation with a white off-duty police officer in Milwaukee. His name was Joel. He had been in the room that day when students presumed I was of mixed race. On a different day when he was my student, he and I sat together waiting for his sister to come get him after school. We talked and joked until she arrived. It's one of my clearest memories of Joel. Over the years I've thought about my students and wondered how they were doing. It's heartbreaking to know that one of them is gone. People on the internet who didn't know Joel found justification for his extra-judicial killing in alleged petty crimes and character flaws. Of course that's not justification for Joel to die, but the system of division keeps us fighting with each other.

The Reverend Junius B. Dotson recently offered the following commentary on racism and white privilege in an article titled Racism Is Not A Black Problem: White Silence is No Longer A Privilege:

“This is YOUR mess, not mine. Count on YOURSELF to lead in cleaning up your mess. Raise YOUR voice against this system that privileges you. Racism is not my doing. This is a message not only for my friend, but for all my Anglo brothers and sisters. Racism is not a ‘black problem.’”

It's tempting to tell you we must do this or we must do that. It's hard to know how we can lead in helping to clean up this mess. I have no definitive course of action to give you other than be uncomfortable. If you speak out against the system that privileges white people, and white people aren't uncomfortable, you're probably not being bold enough.

Believe what you will. I believe Krysta's dad should drive whatever car he wants and his white co-workers should be happy for him. I believe black people don't need white people's help; they need us to fix our mess - racism in white culture. I believe cultural change is scary and difficult. I believe Joel should not have died at 25. I believe that “black lives matter” needs to be said because black lives have not mattered so many times, in so many ways, big and small. I believe if black lives matter, future children of color won't be surprised to meet a nice white person.

- *Josh Wright*



One Last Election Effort

As we head into the home stretch, the Social Justice Committee is encouraging you to do one small thing in addition to voting.

UU the Vote has teamed up with Vote Forward for a letter-writing campaign targeting underrepresented voters in key swing states. Sign up to write 5 or 20 letters (or more). Print template letters, add your hand-written personal note, and mail on October 17th (you contribute paper, envelopes, and stamps). This is a non-partisan effort. Visit <https://votefwd.org/> (They need a day to get you registered (to confirm you're not a bot), so don't wait until the last minute.)

If you want to do more, visit UU the Vote for phone-banking and other opportunities: <https://www.uuthevote.org/>

Thanks for helping to promote UU values in this election.

*- Jerry Phelan,
Social Justice Committee*

UU Winter Retreat

The UU Winter Retreat will be different this year, but still promises plenty of outdoor winter family fun. Due to COVID, we have found a venue that still allows us to gather for outdoor fun but more safely houses each family separately. Central Wisconsin Environmental Station Family Camp offers individual cabins for each family.

The Winter Retreat will be February 5-7, 2021 at a cost of \$134/person. That cost includes:

- 2 nights lodging
- Saturday Breakfast Lunch and Dinner
- Sunday Breakfast
- Linens and towels
- Snowshoes
- camp leaders for night hikes or other activities of the group's choosing

If arriving early Friday afternoon, dinner on Friday, around 5:30pm, would be an additional fee of \$11/person.

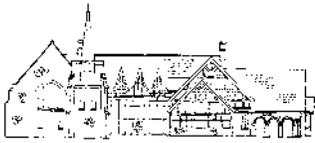
Located on two lakes near Amherst, WI, with opportunities for snowshoeing, hiking and cross country skiing. There will be a common area for meals and gathering for games, socializing, with masks and precautions. Iola Winter Sports Club offers groomed ski trails and we will be able to watch ski jump competitions that weekend as well.

Mark your calendars and contact Sally and Steve Schmidt at sallyschmidt213@gmail.com or 715-370-1157 with any questions.

OCTOBER 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 UU Parenting Circle 8PM on Zoom	2	3
4 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: Service led by Julie Trombley 4PM: Youth Group—Live via Zoom	5	6	7 Membership Class on Zoom 6:30-8:00PM	8 Social Justice 6:30PM—Zoom UU Parenting Circle 8PM on Zoom	9 UU Wausau Outdoor Movie Night! 6:30PM	10
11 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: Service led by Brian Mason 4PM: Youth Group—Live via Zoom	12	13	14 Membership Class on Zoom 6:30-8:00PM	15 UU Parenting Circle 8:00PM on Zoom	16	17
18 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: Service led by Brian Mason 4PM: Youth Group—Live via Zoom	19	20 BOT meeting on Zoom 6:30PM	21 Membership Class on Zoom 6:30-8:00PM	22 UU Parenting Circle 8:00PM on Zoom	23	24
25 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: Service led by Brian Mason 4PM: Youth Group—Live via Zoom	26 Minister's Book Club 6:30PM on Zoom—RSVP to Brian	27	28 Membership Class on Zoom 6:30-8:00PM	29 UU Parenting Circle 8:00PM on Zoom	30	31 



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau
 504 Grant Street
 Wausau, Wisconsin 54403

The Circuit Writer - October 2020

Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

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Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 9AM-1PM
Please contact us to set up an appointment.

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