



The Circuit Writer

January 2022

January Services

Sunday, January 2nd | 10:30AM
“Shocking the Body Electric”

Randy Jefferson, guest speaker

For the initial pulpit message imprinted on the blank slate of the new year, with apologies to Walt Whitman, some first hand observations on the effect of what modern science can do to take advantage of our electric nature.

Sunday, January 9th | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Sunday, January 16th | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Sunday, January 23rd | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Sunday, January 30th | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

RE Updates

In-person Elementary Returns January 9

On January 9, our Elementary RE group (K-6th grade) will be returning to in-person, indoor programming. It will take place during its normal time during worship. However, instead of being broken into age-based groups, all the Elementary RE kids will stay together for centering time – chalice lighting, joys and concerns, and story/activity/mindfulness moment – and then the children will get to choose how they would like to explore that week’s theme. This might be anything from picking a game to play with a new friend, reading a book, using a finger labyrinth, building with Legos, or creating with arts and crafts. One of the RE rooms will be set up with a variety of activities that kids can pick from each week, and we will work in the RE Commons space to help with space and distancing for safety. We will also be continuing our other COVID precautions, including masking and vaccination requirements for RE volunteers.



From A Window on Grant

Happy New Year, dear church! Research shows you're about 91% likely to bomb any resolutions you might have made. But I hope you're off to a good start, enjoying the fruits of your hard labor until you get back to late night potato chips or milk chocolate (or both at the same time). I've failed at every resolution I've made, unless you consider that I've never failed at failing New Year's resolutions.

A few years ago, on New Year's Day a church member sent me Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poem "The Year." I love the line, "The new years come, the old years go, We know we dream, we dream we know." Here's to all of you, a great congregation of dreamers on the edge of possibility. May your 2022 be better than all the years before, and may it pave the way for even better years to come. Here's Wilcox's poem "The Year":

What can be said in New Year rhymes,
That's not been said a thousand times?

The new years come, the old years go,
We know we dream, we dream we know.

We rise up laughing with the light,
We lie down weeping with the night.

We hug the world until it stings,
We curse it then and sigh for wings.

We live, we love, we woo, we wed,
We wreath our prides, we sheet our dead.

We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,
And that's the burden of a year.

Cheers,

Brian

Antiracism Storytime Book Club

Starting in January, our Antiracism Storytime is going to be checking out a new format - graphic novels with a Book Club! We'll still meet on Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm on Zoom and will be exploring themes of antiracism, but unlike past storytimes where we would read the book together on Zoom, for these sessions, participants are invited to read a section of the book before each meetup (no worries if someone doesn't get to read beforehand though, as part of our conversation, we'll recap that week's section).

The Book Club is geared for grades 3rd-6th, but older and younger participants, including parents, grandparents, and caregivers are welcome! Our first book is *New Kid* by Jerry Craft, and we have several copies available if anyone needs one. If your family is interested in participating, would like a copy of the book, or you have questions, please email Jessica at jessica@uuwausau.org.



Community Focus Collection

The Community Focus Collection this month will focus on the important work of the Patriot K9s of Wisconsin. Their mission states "Helping veterans win the war against suicide, depression and anxiety by empowering them with the use of a service dog. Veterans learn to train and care for their own service dog and regain independence in civilian life and a sense of self mastery." I had the good fortune of touring their facilities here in Wausau and saw first hand the work done as well as speak to veterans whose lives have been impacted in a positive way. Join us in welcoming Lani Rethaber on January 16th. We might get lucky and meet one of the service dogs!

Reflections

Earlier in December, I shared an update about the RE program in the “This Week in RE” email, and wanted to share it here as well. I wrote that last year was hard because we didn’t have choices. We had to be online because that was one of the only ways we knew to keep our communities safe. This year is also hard but for the opposite reason. We have choices, but they don't work for all of us. Some of us are back to some quasi-normal life; some of us have high-risk family members or are concerned about the new surges and variants and are still operating extra cautiously; some of us just aren’t ready; some of us have packed schedules back to pre-pandemic levels; some of us are holding tight to the vastness the pandemic created in our schedules; and some of us are in between or fluctuate from one day to the next.

While Zoom RE and online choices have helped us rethink ways we can connect and do church, I don't think it is anyone's ideal way to do RE long-term. So the RE teams and I have been pondering what choices do we have that will allow us to be together while doing everything we could to keep each other safe? Thinking of the above, how can we design a program that meets people where they are at? What would it look like if after not meeting for almost two years, we created a program that’s main goals were to re-establish trust and rebuild and strengthen the relationships of our RE participants?

Instead of trying to contort our RE program to work under the framework and precautions required by the pandemic and the resources limited by a pandemic, we’re going to try something new to UU Wausau. Starting on Sunday, January 9, our Elementary RE group (K-6th grade) will be returning to in-person, indoor programming. It will take place during its normal time during wor-

ship. However, instead of being broken into age-based groups, all the Elementary RE kids will stay together for centering time – chalice lighting, joys and concerns, and story/activity/mindfulness moment – and then the children will get to choose how they would like to explore that week’s theme. This might be anything from picking a game to play with a new friend, reading a book, using a finger labyrinth, building with Legos, or creating with arts and crafts. One of the RE rooms will be set up with a variety of activities that kids can pick from each week.

This setup is based on a more recent model of RE – sometimes called RE Choice, RE Lab, Studios, etc. – designed to honor the interests and spiritual journey of each participant, create community and friendships across many ages, and engage children in faith development through several modalities. Its design also allows us to naturally put in place some of the precautions we need to take due to COVID. For instance, instead of worrying about how to safely get everyone around a table for an activity, we can use the large RE Commons space and have small groups or individuals spread out playing and exploring together but safely apart. We will also be continuing our other safety precautions, including masking and vaccination requirements for RE volunteers, and while there is no vaccine requirement for participation, we do encourage everyone who is eligible and able to do so.

We will also continue to offer multiplatform and Zoom options - like the Antiracism Storytime Book Club that is also starting this month- whenever possible, because we know that meeting in person is not a choice for all families at this time.

This change will happen with the youth group (grades 7+) as well. They will continue with their their twice a month meetups, but starting in the new

Reflections

year, along with a service-learning project each month, they will have a Sunday morning session. We're working on a calendar of dates and projects for families and hope to have more details out after the holidays.

And finally, as you may have noticed this year, we have made an intentional move towards having more family and parent programming. Just like with our children's programming, our goal is to create welcoming spaces where it will be easy for families to build community and to find support in nurturing their children's spiritual lives, and the plan is to increase family programming in the new year with both social programs – like the Winter Retreat – and through Small Group Ministry – like Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators .

This year has looked and will continue to look very different than the “before times”, but I am so excited for the possibilities ahead. If you'd like more information about how these programs will work, or how you can help, please feel free to chat with me after service on a Sunday or email me, jessica@uuwausau.org.

- *Jes Zimmer*

Bird Club Meeting January 3rd

On January 3, 2022, at 6:30PM, area poets are going to read poetry on birds and/or nature at the Wausau Bird Club meeting. It may be original works or some of their favorites. Anyone else is welcome to also read poetry they love or have written.

Everyone is welcome to attend starting at 6:30 pm in the Atrium. *Masks are required and chairs will be 6 feet apart.*

Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators in January!

Trusted adults carry extraordinary power to influence their children's attitudes and values around sexuality, but we can struggle to have these conversations with intentionality, grace, and confidence. Often, our own experiences, perspectives, and worries get in the way. So the UUA has released a parent and caregiver companion program to Our Whole Lives (OWL) as an invitation to begin conversations with a sex-positive foundation and a curiosity to learn more about our children's values and ideas, as well as to transmit our own values in a positive and healthy way.

Over 12, 90-minute sessions, using a small group ministry format, we'll engage deeply with our hopes, fears, values, and practices; build comfort in talking about sexuality-related topics; offer skill-building activities, and offer each other support and encouragement.

We'll explore the themes: Hopes and Concerns for Kids' Sexual Health; Communication: How Do We Talk about Sex?; Gender Identity: Exploring Emotions around Gender; Sexual Orientation: Supporting Self-Discovery; Relationships: Guiding with Wisdom; Sexual Health: Be a Trusted Source; Decision Making: Ready, Set, Let Go!; Consent: Building Healthy Boundaries; Social Media: Integrity in a Changing World; Pornography: It's Not Sex Ed; Unintended Pregnancy; and Ethical Non-monogamy.

Sessions will begin on Sunday, January 9, at 2:00 pm, at UU Wausau, and will be facilitated by Mandy Wright, Bob Thompson, and Jes Zimmer. While these topics would be especially helpful for families whose youth will be doing OWL, they are open to all UU Wausau parents and caregivers (if there is space we may open it up to the community). We recognize that busy family schedules mean conflicts may happen, but we ask all to make a strong commitment to attend as many sessions as possible.

Sign up to take part in Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators:

<https://bit.ly/UUWausauPaSE>.

Winter Retreat

We are once again invited to Schwartz Lodge at Camp Manitowish for our traditional Winter Retreat, from January 21-23, 2022!

Due to the communal layout and meal-sharing at the lodge, participants will be asked to show proof of vaccination for those age-eligible for the vaccine.

Each family unit gets their own room and 12 rooms are available. Each family/group will partner up to provide one of the meals for the group.

Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, rock wall climbing are available onsite, and ice skating available within a 5-minute drive. Games, great food, great company, wonderful memories!

Lodge fees generally run \$15 per night for children and \$45 per night for adults, depending upon final attendance count.



Please contact Sally & Steve Schmidt at sallyschmidt213@gmail.com



Fair Trade Coffee & Chocolate

CHOCOLATE - \$4
COCOA MIX - \$7
COFFEE - \$10



The Seven Principles of UU Congregations

Unitarian Universalist congregations affirm and promote seven Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides. We live out these Principles within a “living tradition” of wisdom and spirituality, drawn from sources as diverse as science, poetry, scripture, and personal experience.

As Rev. Barbara Wells ten Hove explains, “The Principles are not dogma or doctrine, but rather a guide for those of us who choose to join and participate in Unitarian Universalist religious communities.”

1st Principle: The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

2nd Principle: Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

3rd Principle: Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

4th Principle: A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

5th Principle: The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

6th Principle: The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

7th Principle: Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

-from www.uua.org

January 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 10:30AM: "Shocking the Body Electric" Randy Jefferson, guest preacher	3 Women's AA 6PM Bird Club 6:30PM	4 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	5 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	6 Tai Chi 6:30PM	7	8
9 10:30AM: Sunday Worship led by the Rev. Brian Mason	10 Women's AA 6PM	11 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	12 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	13 Social Justice 6:00PM on Zoom Tai Chi 6:30PM	14	15
16 10:30AM: Sunday Worship led by the Rev. Brian Mason CFC Sunday: Patriot K9s	17 Women's AA 6PM	18 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	19 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	20 Tai Chi 6:30PM	21	22
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First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau
 504 Grant Street
 Wausau, Wisconsin 54403

The Circuit Writer - January 2022
 Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

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Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 9AM-2PM
Please contact us to set up an appointment.

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