



# The Circuit Writer

*First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau*

December 2018

## **December 2, 10:30AM**

### ***-Advent I: Watch for the Light***

The Rev. Brian Mason

Advent is liminal space, a time bookended by winter's darkness and spring's light. It is a time of waiting—waiting for things you cannot achieve on your own: light and warmth, rebirth and new life. Advent encourages us to make room in our hearts especially for people who suffer want and lack; it encourages us to make room for God, which is, as the Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams wrote somewhere, the sustaining, commanding, and transforming reality that brings “us into a new kind of community that provides new channels for love.” Let's pause on the brink of this holiday season and meditate in the space between.



## **December 9, 10:30AM**

### ***-Advent II:***

### ***Probably wasn't that Silent of a Night***

The Rev. Brian Mason

I have an abiding love for the song “Silent Night.” You know how it goes, “Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, ‘round yon virgin Mother and Child.” There is a tender sweetness that reminds me of watching a newborn sleep, swaddled in a bassinet. I like to imagine Mary and Joseph when I sing “Silent Night.” As the story goes, their child was an absolute miracle. I'm not aware of anyone experiencing anything quite like they did. But that doesn't mean their story can't teach us something. By my lights, it's a story about living with wild faith. It's about keeping your heart open to hidden possibilities, miracles even. So, let us gather in this season of miracles to consider, well, miracles.

## **December 16, 10:30AM**

### ***-Christmas Pageant***

Please join us for this annual UU tradition that dates back to the congregation's founding. Come and see the children, youth, and adults of our church perform the story of Mary and Joseph's courageous journey, and Jesus Christ's birth.

## **Friday, December 21, 7:00PM**

### ***-Winter Solstice Service***

Randy Jefferson

Again this year we will observe the northern hemisphere's longest night of the year in Yawkey Hall, celebrating the passage from darkness to light with readings, songs, drumming, meditation, and candles. All are welcome to join this special seasonal service which honors our earth centered traditions that celebrate the sacred circle of life.

## **December 23, 10:30AM**

### ***-Christmas Sing!***

The Rev. Brian Mason & Margaret Jerz

The Christmas season is filled with so many wonderful traditions, from cutting down the Christmas tree to hanging stockings, to making a ham and caroling. It's also a season filled with music, and hymns too good to be sung only on Christmas Eve. This morning we'll gather to merrily sing several of the season's best tunes.

## **Monday, December 24, 7:00PM**

### ***-Christmas Eve Candlelight Service***

The Rev. Brian Mason

This evening we will gather to sing traditional Christmas hymns, shine our lights bright in the night, and be reminded of the beauty and gift inherent in each new life.



## **December 30, 10:30AM**

### ***-Reflection and Projection***

Randy Jefferson

We are always on the forming edge of life. Reflecting and projecting are integral components of that process. From the vantage point of our final Sunday service gathering of the year, we will look back, sharing experiences that especially touched us during the year that is ending, and peer ahead by voicing our vision of the year to come. This will be an intergenerational service of shared stories and heartfelt hopes.

## From a Window on Grant



Our spiritual ancestors, the Puritans, banned Christmas celebrations. They worried they'd never be able to give it proper justice, and that they'd violate the sacredness the holiday deserves. Christmas is my favorite time of year. Like my spiritual ancestors, I worry about getting it right. I know I fail to acknowledge the holy gift of the Christmas season. So, I pray that I might awaken to life's many marvels. "You'll get it next year," I assure myself every December 31st.

Most of us readily admit we fall short of our lofty expectations for ourselves and others. But people of faith aren't supposed to stop there. We strive to live in covenant relationships. We do this for several reasons. It's good practice for life in general, of course. But we do so because we believe in the possibility of an otherwise world—a world ripened by Faith and Freedom, and Fellowship and Friendship. We regard our relationship with one another as a sacrament and symbolize this by breaking bread together—every Second Friday Night of the month to be precise. When the Puritans began their worship services, they'd offer a prayer of confession together, naming aloud that very human tendency of falling short of our commitments to ourselves, one another, and the world; and then the Puritans would sing and preach and break bread—they'd begin again in love. In so many ways, we do this still.

Back in the '30s this church was served by the Reverend Noble McLaughlin. In 1932 the Wausau Daily Herald published a story he'd written about Martians on Mars hearing the story of Jesus' birth for the first time. In his science fiction story, Mr. McLaughlin imagines Rib Mountain as a giant telephone to Mars. The Martians, curious about earthlings, peer through a telescope and watch as the season of Christmas draws near. They marvel at how busy everyone looks. One of the Martians shares this observation with a human he's communicating with. The human explains the busyness, saying, "If we of earth have seemed terribly busy the last few weeks, it has been because everybody has been busy getting ready to bring happiness and joy to other hearts." He goes on to tell the Martian that Christmas is the deathless dream of a world in

which no one will be overlooked, no one is forgotten. Christmas is for the "old, young, rich and poor, sick and well, just everybody." And then the communication device fails. But that night the Martians decided to celebrate Christmas for the first time. Back on earth, right here in Wausau, Wisconsin, a bunch of earthlings gather in churches and living rooms and front porches to worship and sing "Silent and Holy Night."

I don't know why, but I like this cheesy story. I doubt it'd amuse the Puritans, though Cotton Mather might have gotten a kick out of it. But in a way it does feel as though the whole world worships at Christmas. Streets and living rooms are transformed. So are grocery stores and barsbershops. People wish happiness upon one another. It's as though everyone is trying to begin again in love. That's the marvel of the season. It's not the presents and god-awful commercialism. That's precisely what worried the Puritans to begin with. And, let's be honest, they were right to be fearful. But this really is a season in which people have looked to the stars for centuries. Some people look up and imagine Martians celebrating Christmas. Others were guided by the stars and led to a miracle child-savior born of penniless, refugee parents. Christmas is about miracles after all. It's about an otherwise world, a world where nobody is overlooked or forgotten. Look in your hearts this season, dear friends. Then look to the stars.

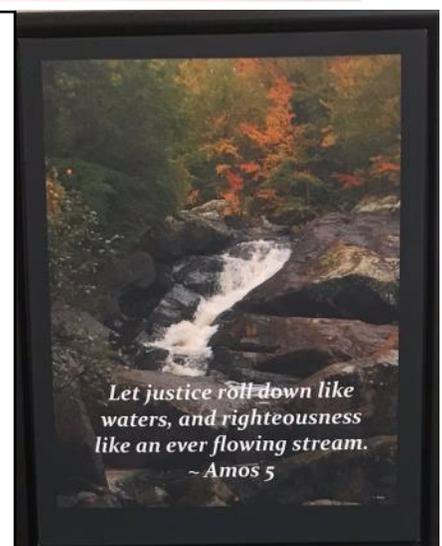
In Faith and Love,

*Brian*



Many thanks to Jim Maas, who recently moved to Madison, for the lovely art piece he donated, which is hanging in Walker Hall.

Says Jim, "I'm proud that I could leave a gift with first UU featuring my favorite Old Testament verse excerpt."



## REflections



It's an exciting time of year! It can also be a hectic and stressful time of year. I want to share some wisdom from the book, "Unplug the Christmas Machine" by Jo Robinson & Jean Coppock

Staeheli, which states that the four things children and youth really want for Christmas are: 1) a relaxed and loving time with their family, 2) realistic expectations about gifts, 3) an evenly paced holiday season and, 4) reliable family traditions. I would invite you to pause for a moment and ask yourself if you're giving your children (and yourself) those four things during the Holiday season.

If you're looking for a new family tradition we're offering several opportunities at First UU Wausau this month that could fit the bill. Perhaps your family wants to join in for the Hanging of the Greens on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Holiday Sweater Day at church on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the Christmas Pageant on Dec 16<sup>th</sup>, the Solstice Service on Dec 21<sup>st</sup>, or the beautiful candlelight Christmas Eve service on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

However you decided to participate, I'm wishing you an evenly paced, relaxed, and loving Holiday Season,

*Julie*

## December RE calendar

Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>—Regular RE classes

Youth choir rehearsal—9:15 am

Children's choir rehearsal—9:45 am

Youth group movie night!—3:00-6:00 pm

Dec 7<sup>th</sup>—Hanging of the Greens—6:00 pm

Dec 9<sup>th</sup>—Regular RE classes

Holiday Sweater Day!!

Youth choir rehearsal—9:15 am

Children's choir rehearsal—9:45 am

Christmas Pageant rehearsal—12:30-2:00 pm

Dec 15<sup>th</sup>—Christmas Pageant and Choir Dress rehearsal—4:00-5:30 pm

Dec 16<sup>th</sup>—No RE classes—Intergenerational Christmas Pageant (nursery open)

Dec 21<sup>st</sup>—Solstice Service—7:00 pm (NO nursery)

Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>—No RE classes—Intergenerational Christmas Sing (nursery open)

Dec 24<sup>th</sup>—Christmas Eve Candlelight service—7:00 pm (NO nursery)

Dec 30<sup>th</sup>—NO RE and NO nursery

## Office Space

Happy Holidays, UU Wausau members and friends! With the hanging of the greens, Christmas Eve Candlelight service, and everything in between—it's going to be a bustling season here at church.

Speaking of Christmas Eve service, we will be having our traditional Cookie and Punch Reception in the atrium, courtesy of our hosts, Karen and Tim Peterson! Your donation of a dozen cookies may be dropped off in advance, if you wish.

As the year ends, please remember to get your 2018 pledge fulfilled so that you will get full credit on your year-end contribution statement to use for your taxes.

Please note that the office will be closed from December 25 through January 1. If you plan to pay your pledge during that time, please drop it off in the locking mailbox outside of the church entrance. As long as your payment is dated within 2018, I can attribute it to your tax-deductible pledge.

Thanks to all of you for another fruitful and fulfilling year.

See you in church!

*Anji*





# News for UUs

## ☛ Special January Event

Mark your calendars for special events coming in January!

Dr. Fran Kaplan and Mr. Reggie Jackson will speak on "The Trauma of Racial Disparities" Sunday, January 20, at 3pm at the YWCA. They represent Milwaukee-based Nurturing Diversity Partners and are nationally known social justice leaders and speakers.

The event is coordinated by our own Social Justice Committee and co-sponsors are the YWCA, People for the Power of Love and Wisconsin Institute of Public Policy and Service.

Dr. Kaplan and Mr. Jackson will also be guest speakers during our January 20th service.

## ☛ Family Winter Retreat

Join old friends and make new ones at the **Family Winter Retreat** January 25–27, 2019. We meet at **Camp Manitowish** in Boulder Junction for a fun-filled weekend of sledding, cross-country skiing, snow-shoeing, good food and fellowship. There is room for 12 families (each room has 4 bunks) with shared bathrooms and communal meals. Cost is around \$31/night/adults 13 and up, \$15/night 6-12, free 5 and under. If you are interested contact **Dawn Ashenbrenner** at 715-212-6481 or [dawn1969@yahoo.com](mailto:dawn1969@yahoo.com). Spots fill up quickly!

## ☛ Yoga Returns in January!

Starting Sunday, January 6 at 3:30pm, Jean Miller will lead a 6-week yoga class here in our Atrium. No need to sign up or attend every session. Free will donations accepted.

Jean teaches a gentle Hatha yoga. Emphasis is placed on breath, proper alignment, and being in the present moment. All levels are welcome. Options are given for modifications or challenges. Your practice, your mat. Every body and everybody are welcome! Please bring a yoga mat (a few will be available if you need one).

## ☛ Dec Community Focus Collection

As in past years, the December Community Focus collection will benefit the Neighbors Place and the Mosinee Community Center of Hope food pantries. Our donations, along with those of other area churches, will help these pantries brighten the holidays for their clients. This special offering can be handed in any time during the month of December using the Christmas offering envelopes that will be in Sunday orders of service. The final collection will be taken during the Christmas Eve Service. The CFC committee thanks you for your generosity.

## ☛ December's Shopping Cart Recipient

December's Shopping Cart Recipient is Community Corner Clubhouse.

We're trying something new that we hope will better meet the needs of local organizations. Each month we will try to fill current needs of an organization. The Community Corner Clubhouse will receive the contents of our shopping cart for the month of December. Please check out the needs list posted on the cart. Needs vary from socks to soap and cereal to playing cards. Please see what you can do to help them with their current needs.

The November collection went to The Women's Community. It was much appreciated. Thank you for your continued support.

## ☛ 2018 Annual Meeting

The 2018 Annual Congregational meeting will take place December 2 after the service. All UUA certified members are encouraged to attend to vote on the 2019 Budget, board and endowment nominations, minutes from last year's meeting, changes to the bylaws, endowment declaration revisions, and a social justice committee resolution. The meeting documents are available on our website ([www.uuwausau.org](http://www.uuwausau.org)) or the atrium.

# News for UUs



## 🌿 Hanging of the Greens

Friday, December 7 beginning at 6pm we will ring in the holiday season here at UU Wausau with an evening of decorating and celebration. Bring a dish to pass for a potluck in the dining hall before we haul out the holly and trim the trees! After decorating, we will gather around the tree in the atrium and sing carols. Hanging of the Greens is a fun event for the whole family.



## 🌿 December First Sunday Potluck

The December potluck will be Sunday, December 2nd following the annual meeting. Our hosts are Tim and Karen Peterson, and the theme is soups and sandwiches. See you there!

## 🌿 Second Friday Nighters

This month's Second Friday Nighters will take place at the home of Jim Sheibley and Macia Anderson on December 14 beginning at 6:30pm. 1312 Green Vistas Dr., 715-459-9132 or 716-560-0426. This is an adults-only event. There are pets in the home.

## 🌿 Poinsettia Memorials



It's not too late to help make our sanctuary festive for the upcoming holiday season. Make a small donation for the purchase of poinsettias and greenery and have a memorial or message in the Christmas Eve order of service. \$25 tax-deductible suggested donation per memorial. Order forms are available in the atrium and on the reception desk.

## 🌿 Holiday Sweater Day

December 9 is Holiday Sweater Sunday! Grab your favorite festive-wear and show your holiday spirit!

## 🌿 Fair Trade Holiday Gift Baskets

The Ari Schmidt Troublemaker Fund for Bus, Bail and Pizza is offering Fair Trade Baskets for the Holidays! Do you need a hostess gift for the Holidays? Perhaps a ready to go gift for that last minute invite? Or a gift full of delicious goodies for that person who has everything? Consider a basket of Fair Trade goods! You purchase the coffee, chocolate or nuts from our Fair Trade supplies and we will provide complimentary baskets (or bring your own), tissue and wrappings. We will even wrap it up for you!

Find us in the atrium at the Hanging of the Greens on Friday, December 7, and after church December 2, 9, and 16. Profits from sales of Fair Trade Goods support the Ari Schmidt Troublemaker Fund which provides assistance to First UU participants in undertaking social justice experiences or projects.

## 🌿 Qi Gong and Tai Chi Holiday Schedule

Please note that there will be no Qi Gong or Tai Chi classes on December 20, 25, 27, and January 1 in observation of the holiday season.



## Happy Membership Anniversary!

Don & Jane Christianson, 47 years. Liz Barr, 29 years. Becky Filiatreau, 28 years.  
Glenda Walker, 28 years. Nan Cedar, 26 years. Gale Fisher & Dave Wenninger, 26 years.  
Jerry Phelan, 26 years. Steve Rhyner, 20 years. Lee Williams, 20 years.  
Ray Kraemer, 17 years. Kent & Heather Busig, 14 years. Kathy Thurs, 14 years.  
Greg & Ingrid Clark Zavadoski, 12 years. Pat & Kay Meyer, 12 years. Jeff Leigh, 11 years.  
Jane Rusch, 11 years. Lanore Rusch, 11 years. Paul & Carol Hagstrom, 11 years.  
Kim Schmutzler, 10 years. Kim & Dean Day, 9 years. Francis Passineau, 9 years.  
John Pochinski, 8 years. Tony Schultz, 5 years. Laura Place, 2 years.  
Jaime Rannow, 2 years. Gretchen Egan, 2 years. Margaret Jerz, 2 years.  
Kate Passineau, 2 years. LeeAnn & Greg Venne, 2 years.  
Katelynn DeLosh, 2 years. Jared Kage, 2 years.



## The Board Table

As a representative of your Board of Trustees, I have the pleasure of reflecting on the good things we, as a congregation, have accomplished this year.

Last Saturday, a group of dedicated volunteers undertook the Herculean tasks of cleaning and clearing out both what Tim Peterson refers to as The Dungeon and Walker Hall. The Social Justice Committee has set goals that will have a positive effect on our larger community. Our Religious Education program continues to grow and is filled with energy and talent. Sunday services are well attended AND filled with glorious music. New faces show up for services every week (please remember to welcome them during coffee hour).



Going forward into 2019, it is important to be reminded of our mission statement:

To transform ourselves and the larger community by being a bright and welcoming sanctuary of hope, compassion, service, and understanding—allowing individuals of differing spiritual and religious beliefs to experience acceptance and support, a sense of belonging, and continued personal growth as part of a freethinking, inclusive church community.

First UU of Wausau has become my touchstone during these challenging times. There is so much to be done. But in the words of Margaret Mead: "**Never doubt** that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Together we can...

Joyce Kurth



## Goods & Services Auction 2019

There will be a UU Goods & Services Auction this spring. This wonderful evening of great auction offerings, socializing, fine munching, and refreshing beverages only happens once every two years. It's an opportunity to spend time with new and old UU friends in a fun social setting.

It's not too early to start thinking of ways you can contribute. For those unfamiliar with this event, church members and friends donate goods, skills, and services and others bid on your offerings. Examples of past donations include theme dinners, yoga lessons, carpentry, tutoring, cottage use, artwork, gift certificates, firewood, etc.

Our first planning meeting will be held on Sunday, December 9th at 9 AM in the dining room. We would love to welcome new members to join the committee to help plan and execute this enjoyable and profitable event!

Hope to see you on December 9th.

Laura Syring, [lksyring@gmail.com](mailto:lksyring@gmail.com)

## A Note from the Endowment Committee

Please consider listing First UU Church as a beneficiary of your IRA. It's a quick and efficient way to leave a legacy gift. Quick: Just complete/revise your account's beneficiary form. Efficient: Your kids get taxed on inherited IRA money, i.e., traditional IRA money (which went into the account as pre-tax money), whereas the Church receives the full sum of what remains in your IRA at the time of your death.

You'll probably need the following information for the beneficiary form:

Church federal tax ID: 39-0823471

Official Church name and address: First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau, 504 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403

Thanks for helping to keep your values alive after you're gone!

The Endowment Committee: Tom Eberlein, Dan Schaut, Jerry Phelan, Carol Bronston, and Tim Peterson



## The Social Justice Committee

The Social Justice Committee is alive and well after a couple of years of near-dormancy during the Church's period of transition. There are a few stalwart members from previous years (decades, actually) and lots of new members. There's always room for more. Please consider coming to the December 3rd meeting (6 PM at church) to see what might interest you.

The Committee wants to continue its past efforts, including collaborative efforts with other area churches through NAOMI, but we have agreed to concentrate our attention on the kinds of issues that more closely define us as UUs. With the Congregation's backing, our top two priorities for 2019 will be reproductive rights and immigration (especially as tied to racism). Look for more on these issues in the coming months. Also watch for information about a special event called "Nurturing Diversity Partners" on Sunday, January 20, 2019 (special thanks to Anne Jefferson for spearheading this).

As 2018 nears its end, here's a brief summary of the Church's 2018 good works that fall under the general banner of social justice.

**Community Focus Collection** - Once per month (third Sunday, non-summer), the Church gives that Sunday's collection to a different local cause. Joyce Schneider, Judy Beier, and Jim Maas collaborate on the selections, and YOU are encouraged to suggest recipients. Thus far in 2018, donations total over \$3400, going to six different causes. Thanks to all for your monthly generosity.

**Community Meals Program** - Four times per year, volunteers from church plan, provide, cook, and serve a free, hot community meal as part of the meal ministry at First Presbyterian Church (in collaboration with 14 other faith communities). Marsha Fitzgerald has been coordinating our efforts for the past few years. Talk to Marsha if you want to help.

**Food Collection** - Keep putting those non-perishable food and toiletry donations into the church's grocery cart. The Social Justice Committee helps decide where the donations should go; however, the administration and distribution effort is largely thanks to Joyce Schneider. Joyce keeps her hand on the pulse of what's needed around the community, so look for notes on the grocery cart for special needs you can help fill. The Women's Community was the primary recipient this year.

**Ari Schmidt Troublemaker Fund** - Your purchases of fair-trade products (coffee and chocolate) go into the fund that helps "finance actions that stir up trouble where it's needed" for positive social change. In 2018, fund organized/financed the 12 Days of Valentine baskets and contributed \$300 each to three UU middle school students going to China as part of a student-exchange program. The fund is currently administered by Sally Decker, Linda Haney, Suzan Miller, Kim Casey, Margaret Jerz, Joni Hahn, and Joyce Schneider. Talk to them about your troublemaking ideas. Grab a brochure from the free-trade table and learn more about Ari Schmidt, applying for funds, and Ari's 5-faceted approach.

**Love in Action Award** - This award was received by the church in January from People for the Power of Love, and celebrates our commitment to social justice. For more about this award, see Brian Mason's January 20, 2018 sermon or the February 2018 Circuit Writer. Worthy of reminder is the part about the well-wisher saying to Brian, "Our eyes are on you, and our hearts are with you." And, yes, it's intimidating to be reminded that people look to this congregation as a defender of justice and equity. Carry on!

Jerry Phelan, Social Justice Committee





# December 2018 Calendar



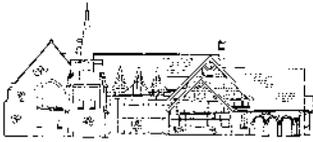
1 Sat	4:00PM	Buddhist Meditation	13 Thu	6:30PM	Tai Chi
2 Sun	9:15AM	Youth Choir Rehearse		7:00PM	Table Tennis
	9:45AM	Child Choir Rehearse	14 Fri	6:30PM	Second Fri Nighters
	10:30AM	Church Service	15 Sat	8:00AM	Women's Early Risers
	11:45AM	Potluck		4:00PM	Buddhist Meditation
	3:00PM	Youth Group Movie		4:00PM	Pageant Rehearsal
	6:00PM	Overeaters Anon	16 Sun	10:30AM	Church Service
3 Mon	6:00PM	Women's AA Mtg			Christmas Pageant
	6:30PM	Wausau Bird Club		6:00PM	Overeaters Anon
4 Tue	6:30PM	Qigong	17 Mon	6:00PM	Women's AA Mtg
	7:00PM	Table Tennis		7:00PM	Amnesty Int'l
5 Wed	10:30AM	Shawl Time	18 Tue	6:30PM	Board of Trustees Mtg
	4:00PM	People/Power Love		6:30PM	Qigong
	5:00PM	Proud Theater		7:00PM	Table Tennis
	6:30PM	Adult Choir Practice	19 Wed	10:00AM	Shawl Time
6 Thu	6:00PM	Unity Project		4:00PM	People/Power of Love
	6:30PM	Tai Chi		5:00PM	Proud Theater
	7:00PM	Table Tennis		6:30PM	Adult Choir Practice
7 Fri	6:00PM	Hanging of Greens	20 Thu	6:00PM	Unity Project
8 Sat	4:00PM	Buddhist Meditation		7:00PM	Table Tennis
9 Sun		Holiday Sweater Day	21 Fri	7:00PM	Solstice Service
	9:00AM	Auction Meeting	22 Sat	4:00PM	Buddhist Meditation
	9:15AM	Youth Choir Rehearse	23 Sun	10:30AM	Church Service
	9:45AM	Child Choir Rehearse		6:00PM	Overeaters Anon
	10:30AM	Church Service	24 Mon	6:00PM	Women's AA Mtg
	12:30PM	Pageant Rehearsal		7:00PM	Christmas Eve Service
	6:00PM	Overeaters Anon	25 Tue		Merry Christmas!
10 Mon	6:00PM	Women's AA Mtg	27 Thu	7:00PM	Table Tennis
11 Tue	6:30PM	Qigong	29 Sat	4:00PM	Buddhist Meditation
	7:00PM	Table Tennis	30 Sun	10:30AM	Church Service
12 Wed	5:00PM	Proud Theater		6:00PM	Overeaters Anon
	6:30PM	Adult Choir Practice	31 Mon	6:00PM	Women's AA Mtg



## Winter Solstice Reflection

By Gregory Jones

On this, the longest night of the year, we are warmed by the certain knowledge that tomorrow will welcome more light than today. As it has for eons—for billions of years—the coming of light brings life. May we be awed by the great miracles of light and life, and faithfully nurture the mystery and magic of wonder.



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