

THE CIRCUIT WRITER

SEPTEMBER 2019

September Sundays at First UU: *EXPECTATION*

*"There goes another summer,
Snoopy. . . ."
- Charlie Brown*

September 1: Annual Labor Day Picnic & Blessing of the Backpacks

Picnic begins at 11a.m. at Oak Island Park shelter, 500 River Drive, Wausau, WI 54403. This year's grill masters will cook burgers (veggie & beef) and hot dogs. Please bring a side dish to share. Tea and lemonade will be offered. Feel free to bring any games and activities. A Blessing of the Backpacks, at 11:15, will be celebrated for all returning students and anyone else who'd like to have a special bag of theirs blessed. We look forward to seeing you for an afternoon of fun and fellowship!

September 8: Ingathering and Water Communion – 10:30 a.m.

The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

The entire congregation is invited to celebrate together the beginning of the new church year with our annual Ingathering and Water Communion service. Please bring a small container of water collected from a special place during the summer's travels or closer to home.

September 15: The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching - 10:30 a.m.

The September 15th Community-Focused Collection will be for the Wausau Boys and Girls Club. Come and find out how their unique program called 'Teen Cuisine' can make a difference in a young person's life. We're happy to support the continuation of this program. We hope you will be too.

September 22: "Twenty Pounds, Seven Days" – 10:30 a.m.

The Reverend Laurie Bushbaum, preaching

"At the end of August, my husband and I are setting off to walk 80 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail in Washington. We have 7 days and my pack weighs 20 pounds. During that time, I will have my 61st birthday and we will honor 29 years of marriage. I have no idea what we will encounter, except dirty, sore feet and lots of beauty. This is definitely an exercise in walking into the unknown. Why do it on purpose? I'll let you know when I get back."

September 29: The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching - 10:30 a.m.



FROM A WINDOW ON GRANT. . .

The Third

I love this time of year in Wausau. The Farmers Market overflows with beautiful fruits and vegetables and the air feels perfect. My own backyard flower and vegetable gardens have gone better than I expected, and I have the tomatoes and peppers to prove it. I've started noticing the days are growing shorter. And the aisles in stores are no longer filled with sun and bug screen. In their place are glue sticks and pencils, which means school is just around the corner. Baseball's post season is coming into focus as the season moves into the final months. (Go Cardinals!) In my mind these are signs pointing to one thing: the next church year is about to begin.

Can you believe it? We are about to start our *third* year of ministry together.

So, I want to take a moment and share with you a few sneak peaks of the year to come:

Mission & Vision

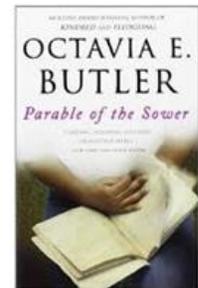
The Board and I spent most of last year studying the church's bylaws and governance model. We brought in a church governance "guru" and studied various ways congregations operate. Shared leadership is vital to the long-term health of any congregation. I look forward to continuing this work and sharing with you any noteworthy developments.

We've also thought seriously about the church's Mission and Vision, which states: "*We bring light to social justice issues and are conduits for sparking change.*" It also says that we are a "*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 free-thinking, inclusive church community.*" These words aren't meant to make us feel good. They're meant to guide our work within and beyond our walls. So, this year I am going to weave the Mission and Vision statements into my sermons and contemplate their meaning in our particular context.

I also want to engage you directly. The leadership of this church has some big questions, like: How can we raise the funds necessary to maintain our aging and historic building? What is the best governance model for this congregation? We're also beginning to plan for the 150th Anniversary of our church's founding. If ever there was a time that you wanted to deepen your involvement with the church, now is the time to do it. Let a Board member or me know if you're interested in joining the Capital Campaign or the 150th Anniversary Planning committees.

Minister's Book Club

I'm going to continue hosting a monthly book club from September thru May. We will start this year with Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. Butler's fiction is widely regarded as captivating, but it is also the inspiration for some of today's social justice movements that think of her work as visionary – fiction that shows a future that calls us to manifest it into reality. We'll kick things off on Tuesday, September 24, at 6:30 p.m., and continue meeting at that time on the last Tuesday of every month, in Yawkey Hall. Everyone is welcome.



See you in church,

Brian

Ex Libris

It's been a few seasons since I found myself earnestly preparing for a new academic term, but this time of year always conjures fond instincts to stock up on school supplies, invest in a new outfit or two, and eagerly anticipate new knowledge and experiences. What a happy circumstance that the spirit of those instincts is fulfilled here at First UU! This month is full of promising new beginnings:

- Our sexton, Rachele Schorer, has already begun work and is a welcome addition to our staff and church family. In addition to keeping our facilities cleaned and organized, she will also be assisting on Sunday mornings and at church events. She can be reached at rachele@uuwausau.org or through my office.
- We are in the process of evaluating the safety and security of our building and grounds. In an effort to maintain a space that is both welcoming *and* safe for our members, friends, and staff, we will be updating our key access policies and security protocol.
- An updated building rental fee schedule has been posted to our website. If you or anyone you know have questions about using our space for a one-time or recurring event, please don't hesitate to contact me. As before, rental fees for members are discounted and will include a cleaning fee.

In my experience, faith communities are especially attuned to the importance of institutional memory. First UU is no exception, so I want to be mindful of our history and legacy while administering the business of the church in perhaps new and creative ways. My privilege to witness and play a small part in Margaret Carspecken's memorial service on August 24 was a reminder of that living legacy. We are indeed blessed to live in a community that honors, remembers, and celebrates an extraordinary life in such meaningful fashion.

I hope you have had a restful, rejuvenating summer, and are looking forward with hope and excitement to the coming change of seasons.

Blessings,

Peter

From the Board of Trustees. . .

Dear Friends,

Summer days are gone too soon, and we're racing to get in those last tastes of summer. Still, Your Board of Trustees has continued its diligent work.

As has been shared in recent months, your BOT has continued to take advantage of the current state of relative stability within the church to carefully consider our policies which help define how we are accomplishing our broader vision and mission. We have taken the insights from the Dan Hotchkiss book *Governance and Ministry; Rethinking Board Leadership*, and applied them to consideration of our own policies, with a view toward assessing if they continue to meet our current needs. Work has continued to progress on addressing building projects, including signing a contract for tuckpointing work on the century-old masonry, and installation of air conditioning units in the dining room. We are also continuing to gear up to the celebration of the congregation's 150th anniversary in 2020.

Furthermore, in light of recent - and not so recent - events across the nation, we have been challenged to assess vulnerability within our physical space. This has prompted reconsideration of a comprehensive safety plan that includes fire, severe weather, and active shooter/armed intruder events. Actions taken to date include directing the staff to complete an exhaustive checklist to assess our physical space for potential security problems that may increase our vulnerability, consideration of potential roles for staff, volunteers, and congregants in maintaining security during church events, and review of policies and procedures to ensure everyone has the knowledge to complete the tasks required to maintain the safety of the church. There has also been discussion of the benefits of positively engaging the unfamiliar visitors to our space, which upholds our UU values of the inherent worth and dignity of every human; and justice, equality, and compassion in human relations.

REflections

Please join us for the church picnic on September 1st at 11:00 am. Everyone who will be a student this year (pre-school through college) is invited to bring their backpack to the picnic. At 11:15 am there will be a **Blessing of the Backpacks**, where Brian will share a message and blessing for the coming school year. September 8th will be the start of regular 10:30 am services with our intergenerational Water Ceremony. RE classes will begin on September 15th.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you back in the building!

~Julie

Please be sure to fill out an RE registration form between now and September 15th. We need a new form each year for every family participating in RE.

Here's our exciting line-up for class topics this year:

4K-1st grade – Chalice Children

Our youngest class will explore our UU values and traditions with this program that strives not just to teach about our faith, but also to provide experiences around the strength of community, the wonder and awe that transcend everyday understanding, and life issues we all share.

2nd & 3rd grade – Moral Tales & Bible Tales

This group will focus on stories. They'll start the year with Moral Tales, a program that attempts to provide children with the spiritual and ethical tools they will need to make choices and take actions reflective of their UU beliefs and values. The last part of the church year they'll engage with Biblical stories from a UU perspective.

4th-6th grade – Harry Potter and UU

Through a social action curriculum based on J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books, participants will use fun wizarding activities as the basis for discussion about values, social action, and the seven UU principles.

7th-8th grade – The Simpsons

This curriculum uses episodes of *The Simpsons* as the basis for in-depth discussions of a wide variety of religious and social justice topics. After viewing an episode, the class will engage in discussion and activities, designed to encourage deep contemplation of issues.

9th-12th grade – Coming of Age

The goal of Coming of Age is to help youth better appreciate Unitarian Universalism, their own beliefs and values, and how these intersect. It will help participants recognize that as they mature, there is still a place for them in our congregation: a new place, full of fresh opportunities. High School families, watch for more information coming soon.

REflections...for Adults

Many new and exciting offerings are coming to Adult Religious Education this church year. Watch for an adult RE brochure with more detail later this month. One new offering is **Soul Matters small groups**. Soul Matters, a program used by hundreds of



UU congregations across the country, uses monthly themes to explore ways of being that line up with UU values. Three separate Soul Matters groups will be offered October-January in our congregation. Themes those months will be: belonging, attention, awe, and integrity. Soul Matters groups will meet in Yawkey Hall twice a month for two hours each meeting. These facilitated conversations will offer the gift of a deeper connection to life, others, and ourselves – rather than the opportunity to debate or intellectualize. These are closed (as opposed to drop-in) groups. Prior to meetings, participants will be given suggested spiritual exercises, questions, and resources to help guide exploration in the theme before engaging in group conversation. The following groups will be offered this fall: **first and third Thursdays of the month, 10:00 am-12:00 pm; second and fourth Sundays of the month, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm; and a women's Soul Matters group that will meet at a day and time determined by group participants**. As the name implies, space in these groups is limited. Registration is required. Reserve a spot by emailing your preferred meeting time to Julie at ju-lie@uuwausau.org. Questions can be sent to the same email address.

September Adult RE Offerings:

First UU Wausau Adult Choir

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00

Join the choir to connect to yourself and others through soulful music.

Autumnal Equinox Contemplative Collage

Saturday, September 21st, 10:00 am-12:30 pm

Join us to celebrate the turning of the season. Art-making is a contemplative practice that affects us internally, through our thoughts & emotions, as well as externally, through the creation of object & imagery which can serve as a source of inspiration & healing. Collage is a playful, eclectic, & liberating medium for any-and-all skill levels.

Bring your favorite beverage and a light snack to share. You're also invited to bring craft paper, old magazines, stamps, or any other potential collage materials that you're willing to share with the group. And of course, still come if you don't have any of those things to contribute.

Minister's Book Club

Tuesday, September 24th at 6:30 pm

Join Brian to discuss *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler.

Notes from the Music Director

There is something new and exciting! (Do we need the traditional drum roll?) We are starting a Drum Club, probably named **“Beat for Peace,”** which will meet three times a month in my basement, aka the Drum Room. No previous experience in percussion is necessary – just a pair of hands and the willingness to “listen, watch, focus and match.” All instruments will be furnished. The sessions will feature equal parts of community building, meditative drumming, and recreational activities along with the development of some fundamental skills. The first sessions will meet at my house at 1005 Steuben St.: **Tuesday, Sept. 10; Monday, Sept. 16; and Tuesday, Sept. 24, from 7:00-8:00.** We will discuss future schedules and times as we go. See you soon!



Our Adult Choir will kick off preparations for the 2019-2020 church year Wednesday evening, September 4, from 6:30-8:00 in Yawkey Hall. The choir sings during the Sunday services usually once a month or so. We also share our love of group singing with nursing homes at Christmas and in the spring. Interested in joining us as we explore and expand our quite eclectic choral repertoire? Reading standard music notation is not a requirement – just bring your good ears. Have you heard the rumors that we have a really good time each practice? It’s true!

Margaret Jerz, Director of Music

The worldwide **Little Free Library** movement is 10 years old. Have you looked in ours lately? Interesting books for kids, youth and adults are



coming and going. If you have gently used books to share, you can also place them in the blue plastic bin outside the church offices. Exchanging books is a great way to encourage people to read.



Remember that First UU Wausau has **Fair Trade coffee and chocolate** for sale on Sundays.

The products come from Equal Exchange: A worker owned co-operative founded in 1986. Take some home to share with friends and family.

The modest profits from these sales go to the Ari Schmidt Fund for Bus, Bail and Pizza – which offers funding to individuals from our church community wishing to experience, participate in or start social justice activities.

Treasurer's Quarterly Congregation Report

Financial Results Through June 30, 2019

Key 2019 Annual Budget Numbers:		2019 Pledges:	
Total Income	\$175,449	Pledges Budget	\$285,000
Total Expense	\$162,007	Pledges Made	\$285,277
Net Income	\$13,442	Pledges Percent of Budget	100.1%

Outstanding Mortgage: \$155,446

We continue to have positive financial results through the first half of our budget year, as indicated by the \$13,442 surplus. Income was 1.4% higher than budget, while expenses were 1.9% below budget. Our income was helped significantly by a generous \$20,000 non-pledged contribution received in June. There are no noteworthy variances from budget in any income or expense category.

Pledge receipts plus six months allocation of 2019 pledges prepaid in 2018 total \$141,347, which is 49.6% of our budgeted pledges, \$285,000. The \$141,347 is 13.0% higher than the 2018 six month results of pledges received plus six months allocation of 2018 prepaid pledges received in 2017. Our anticipated giving growth in 2019 has been realized through pledge receipts for the first six months. Continuing to meet our pledge commitments for the second half of 2019 will be necessary for us to retain our positive financial position. Thank you for your gifts of support for our church.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Jefferson

Upcoming Events

Community Ukulele Strum

Area ukulele players are invited to a Community Ukulele Strum on the first and third Thursdays of the month, to be held from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. (September 5th and 19th). All abilities are welcome and music will be provided. If you have questions please call Kay at 715-843-7873 or email kmeyer1104@gmail.com.

“Friday Nighters” is Back!

Join Karen Wentz and the Venne's at Karen's home (1028 Easthill Place, Wausau) on September 13 for food and fellowship.

Wausau Bird Club

Monday, September 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the Atrium

Matt Plank will give a program entitled: “The Lost Art of Bird Language: Tuning Into Nature's Communication System.”

The program will discuss "identifying when a bird is demonstrating baseline behavior vs. alarm behavior. When a bird is in the alarm state, they take different shapes in relation to the predator causing the alarm, so it is possible to identify other animals on the landscape in real time by knowing bird alarm patterns. Just two weeks ago I was sitting on the back porch in Indiana with my wife & mother and predicted there was a Cooper's Hawk moving through the area. Sure enough, about 10 seconds later we saw one flying between the houses across the street!"

Abriendo Fronteras – Opening Borders

Nell Anderson, former Wausau resident and Wausau School District employee, had the opportunity for a transformative educational experience in El Paso, Texas this past Spring. This border experience allowed her direct exposure to migrants and human rights advocates on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. The group of 12 people from throughout the U.S. were able to visit with Customs/Border Patrol and ICE officers; converse with immigration judges and observe court hearings; and work with immigrants, volunteers, and staff at hospitality centers and detention centers throughout El Paso.

Nell will share her own experiences as well as the stories and wisdom of those who live and work with the daily struggle for survival along the border.

Tuesday, September 24, at 6:30 p.m.

First English Lutheran Church

402 N. 3rd Ave, Wausau

Fellowship Hall

(use the Cedar St. entrance)



Advancing Economic and Climate Justice as a Moral Issue

---Building a Movement for A Green New Deal---

September 15 – September 17

Washington, DC

Advocacy & Action Conference on Environmental Justice, Class, and Race

UUJEC.org/gndconference

Sunday only, no deadline (\$40); Full conference, deadline 9/5 (\$125)

\$125 Scholarships Available until 9/5 from UU Fund for Social Responsibility

Tickets at brownpapertickets.com/event/4255228

Learn how climate change is an economic justice issue-----
How UU values inform our justice work----How to lobby,
and then go lobby on Capitol Hill----How to organize for
upcoming actions, direct actions & strikes----How you
can take this knowledge home and work locally----How
First Nations people's values can preserve the earth

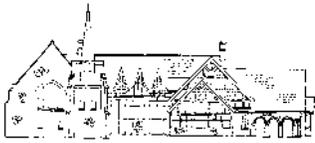
Why Advocate?

**"Unless someone like you cares
a whole awful lot, Nothing is
going to get better. It's not."
- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax**



SEPTEMBER 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Labor Day Picnic— 11:00	2 Women's AA— 6:00	3 Qi Gong— 6:30	4 Shawl Time— 10:00 Adult Choir— 6:30	5 Soul Matters— 10:00 Tai Chi—6:30 Ukelele Group— 6:30	6	7 Buddhist Meditation— 4:00
8 Ingathering and Water Communion—10:30 Soul Matters—1:00	9 Women's AA— 6:00 Bird Club— 6:30	10 Qi Gong— 6:30	11 Adult Choir— 6:30	12 Tai Chi—6:30	13 Friday Night- ers	14 Buddhist Meditation— 4:00
15 Service—10:30 *RE Registration deadline*	16 Women's AA— 6:00	17 Board of Trus- tees—6:30 Qi Gong— 6:30	18 Shawl Time— 10:00 Adult Choir— 6:30	19 Soul Matters— 10:00 Tai Chi—6:30 Ukelele Group— 6:30	20 Eden Child Concert—6:00	21 Women's Early Risers—8:00 Collage—10:00 Buddhist Medi- tation—4:00
22 Service—10:30 Soul Matters—1:00	23 Women's AA— 6:00	24 Minister's Book Club— 6:30 Qi Gong— 6:30	25 Adult Choir— 6:30	26 Tai Chi—6:30	27	28 Buddhist Meditation— 4:00
29 Service—10:30	30 Women's AA— 6:00					



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau
 504 Grant St.
 Wausau, WI 54403

The Circuit Writer - September 2019

Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

Office Hours: Mon-Thu, 9AM-2PM
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