

The Circuit Writer - February 2020

February Services at First UU Wausau

Monthly theme: Resilience

Sunday, February 2, 2020 – 10:30AM:
“Throwback Sermon”
The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

In recognition of our church’s 150th anniversary, the Rev. Brian Mason will be selecting sermons from the historic ministers of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau and giving them new life by preaching them with occasional commentary to offer perspective for living in the 21st century. As we approach a historic anniversary, he, and others, will offer a “throwback” sermon the first or second Sunday of the month. Please come and hear the words of Noble McLaughlin, Brainard Gibbons, Joseph Nerad, John Robinson, Glenda Walker, and other luminaries who have led this church through troubled and thrilling times.

This month’s Throwback: “New Wine and Old Bottles” by the Rev. Brainard F. Gibbons (minister from 1942-1953; minister emeritus from 1979-1995).

Sunday, February 9, 2020 – 10:30AM
“Questions for the Minister”
The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Every year the children and youth of our congregation submit questions to the minister on topics ranging from his opinion on Crocs to what the most embarrassing moment of his life was, not to mention inquiries about the meaning and purpose of life. Please join us for this inter-generational tradition.



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

Sunday, February 16, 2020 – 10:30AM
**“Wellsprings of Wisdom: Our Sources
in Word and Song”**

The Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk, guest preacher

We often refer to our UU principles, but what are the places from which we get sustenance, hope, inspiration, wisdom? Our Living Tradition draws from many sources. Today we will – briefly – consider these sources.

The Reverend Suzanne Wasilczuk’s previous career was as a registered nurse, primarily in Sitka, Alaska. She has lived in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she was a docent at a maritime museum; and in Missoula, Montana, where she volunteered at the local food shelf and as a Court-Appointed Special Advocate for children. She now lives in Duluth, where she preaches at the Mesabi UU Church in Virginia, MN, and serves as a part-time consultant to the Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She received a Master of Divinity from Meadville Lombard Theological School, a MA in Philosophy from the University of Montana, and a BA in English Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Suzanne is married to Tim Stratton, a professor at the University of Minnesota-Duluth and a registered pharmacist. She has one son, three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild who live in Milwaukee.

Sunday, February 23, 2020 – 10:30AM
“A Time to Build”
The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

FROM A WINDOW ON GRANT. . .

I want to address the issue of safety, as it's something that comes up from time-to-time, especially in the wake of yet another house of worship being invaded by a madman with a gun. As minister and chief of staff I want everyone to know that safety for the staff and for members and visitors is of vital importance to me.

Even though I feel confident that the church is a safe place I will not hide the fact that there have been issues. For instance, a minor theft took place in the first weeks of my ministry. Individuals in the midst of personal and emotional crises occasionally stop by during business hours and attend worship. People have vandalized signs and tampered with heating/cooling equipment. All, relatively speaking, are rather minor.

Nevertheless, as a result, cameras have been placed outside and there's another one that constantly monitors the office and main entrance. The staff often leaves the doors locked during office hours with a posted sign asking people to ring the bell to be let in. I made the executive decision to limit the number of people who have access to the building and will continue to trim that number in the months ahead (and give notice to those people). The staff has plans for what to do in disastrous situations. There are emergency routes and exit signs posted in every room. The staff has solicited safety advice from local law enforcement and the church's insurer. After staff email accounts were hacked, cyber security was addressed, and the congregation received information about staying safe online. I wrote a grant that allowed us to obtain an AED device for minimal cost and had every member of the staff professionally trained in CPR. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees routinely engages in conversation about safety.

However, in saying this I know it is impossible for me or anyone to create a perfect safety plan. But that doesn't stop me from wanting to make a *perfected one*. **For that reason, I am inviting everyone interested to a Safety Fireside Chat in Yawkey Hall after the service on Sunday, February 9.** I feel confident that we are doing a lot right. But I want to include anyone interested in that conversation to help us see if there are areas being overlooked, or in need of improvement.

With that in mind, I want to remind everyone of our Mission: *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 free-thinking, inclusive church community.*

As you develop your questions and suggestions, keep this foundational statement in mind. Everything we do, even the way we try and keep people safe, must be rooted in what it is we have endeavored to do, which is to provide a welcoming sanctuary of hope, compassion, service, and understanding. I look forward to the conversation. Thank you for caring so deeply about this community.

In Faith,

Brian

REflections

Don't miss the annual inter-generational "Ask the Minister" service on February 9th! In January, each RE class spent time brainstorming questions they'd like to ask their minister. February 9th we'll get to hear the answers to some of those questions, such as who caused the big bang and whether Brian considers a hot dog a sandwich.

February RE Schedule

February 2nd – Regular Classes

February 9th – Inter-generational
"Ask the Minister" Service

February 16th – Regular Classes

February 23rd – Regular Classes



Pictured above: High School youth helping with snow removal at "Hillcrest House" (the future home of a teen homeless shelter) on January 19th.



Introduction to Mindfulness for Teens: 4 week series

Sunday evenings, 6:30-7:30

February 23, March 1, 8, and 15th

Being a teenager can be pretty stressful. Did you know there is something you can do for just a few minutes a day that has been scientifically proven to improve your ability to handle stress, enhance your athletic, academic and artistic performance, decrease sleep and health issues, and even improve communication and relationship skills? All of these (and more!) are the benefits of incorporating a few minutes of mindfulness meditation practice into your day- join us for this 4 week Introduction to Mindfulness for Teens series to learn more and explore together. No need to register in advance- join us for all four sessions or pop in whenever it fits your schedule. Class will be led by Holly Briquet Miller – UU member, mom to teens, longtime meditator, and student in a two year Mindfulness Meditation teacher certification program taught by Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield.

Feel free to email with any questions: hollybriq@gmail.com.

REflections...for Adults

REflections...for Adults

February's Soul Matters question: What does it mean to be a people of *RESILIENCE*?



Once again this month's small group packet is full of wonderful resources and information on the topic of *RESILIENCE*. These packets are available to all members. If you aren't in a small group, you can pick up a packet on the reception counter at church or ask Julie to email one directly to you, by writing to julie@uuwausau.org. Questions can be sent to the same email address.

February Adult RE Offerings (in addition to Worship Services and Soul Matters Groups):

Adult Choir – Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00

Singing as spiritual practice. Join the choir to connect to yourself and others through soulful music.

Adult Drum Club – Mondays, 7:00-8:00 pm

1005 Steuben Street, home of Margaret Jerz, Music Director

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 fundamental skills.

Family Drum Club – Tuesday, February 18th, 6:30-7:30 pm

1005 Steuben Street, home of Margaret Jerz, Music Director

Similar to Adult Drum Club but geared to all ages. This percussion experience includes plenty of instrument exploration.

Minister's Book Club – Tuesday, February 25th, 6:30-8:00 pm

Join Brian to discuss *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead.

About the book: Based on a real school for boys that closed in Florida in 2011 after more than one hundred years in existence, Colson Whitehead's *Nickel Academy* is the kind of institution that purports to rebrand bad boys into good young men. So in theory it should be a good place for Elwood, a young black man who, although he had planned to attend a nearby college, was caught unknowingly riding in a stolen car. But what happens inside Nickel Academy does not match its public image, and Elwood is about to learn that, no matter how idealistic or optimistic he is, his life is taking a very bad turn. He is lucky to meet Turner, who does not share Elwood's idealism and who helps him to survive Nickel Academy. But what Elwood experiences there will never leave him. Set in the 1960s during Jim Crow, *The Nickel Boys* is both an enjoyable read and a powerful portrayal of racism and inequality that acts as a lever to pry against our own willingness to ignore it.

(Chris Schlupe, Amazon Book Review)

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

In the late 1800s, James Vila Blake, a Unitarian minister in Evanston, Illinois, wrote:

“Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law.
United in the free quest of high values in religion and life,
We covenant with one another:
To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another.”

We used this covenant of faith during Paul Beckel’s ministry (although we said that “service is our gift”) and I think of it often, especially “to seek truth in love”. Each of us knows the importance of love – we gather together in fellowship and love and love, indeed, is the truth of our beloved community.

Check out the church’s website for the many opportunities to express love in all our communities. And in celebration of February as the month of love, let us all do our part to demonstrate our love of our church community through our gifts of pledges, time, and talents.

In this unsettling time, remember Margaret Mead’s call to action, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”

~Joyce Reynolds Kurth

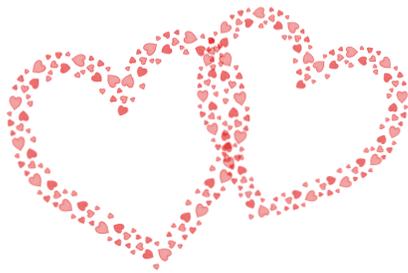
IMMIGRATION PRESENTATION

Your Social Justice Committee is involved in supporting an upcoming series on the topic of immigration. The first event sponsored by WIPPS is entitled, *U.S. Immigration Policy - How Did We Get Here?* The presentation will be held on **Monday, February 10th from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm** at the UW Center for Civic Engagement, James F. Veninga Theater, 625 Stewart Avenue, Wausau, WI. The Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service is committed to providing high-quality services that will benefit our community. This presentation will be a deep dive into both Wisconsin history as it relates to immigration and also current information on a national level. This is an important topic of interest to all of us, and we would welcome your attending. The poster gives you more information on the speakers and two other dates for upcoming events on immigration. Bring your questions as there will be time for you to engage with the speakers!

-Roxann Bornemann, Social Justice Committee

SECOND FRIDAY NIGHTERS

Please join Laura Syring and Jerry Phelan at their home on **Friday, February 14th** at 6:00 p.m. for an evening of socializing and good food. This is a great way to get to know people who attend First UU Wausau. Bring a hearty appetizer to share. It is not usually necessary to eat beforehand. The hosts will provide beverages. They do have a cat. This is an adults-only event. 313 Ruder St., Wausau. 715-432-4249 (Laura's cell).



JOIN US FOR THE FAMILY FRIENDLY SOUP LUNCHEON!

On Sunday, February 9, after the church service, we will be holding a hearty soup luncheon in the Dining Hall for your enjoyment with family and friends. Some people signed up at our auction, but you can still join in by paying at the church office, or at the event. Offerings will include soups of all kinds, chilis, breads, crackers, relishes, coffee, and desserts!

Adults \$10.00. Kids 6 and older: \$5.00. Under 6 are free! Max per family is \$25.00.

Sign up for this delicious soup luncheon in the church office, or by e-mailing danika@uuwausau.org

- LeeAnn Venne & Carol Bronston

SOUP & NUT BREAD SALE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD

The sale will take place before and after the Sunday morning service. Please consider bringing soup or bread to sell; all proceeds will go toward purchasing portable microphone headsets.

Soups should be put in quart-sized glass jars, some of which are available in the Atrium. Please label soup and bread. Sale items can be dropped off at the church office in advance, or brought on the 23rd.

Thank you!



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.

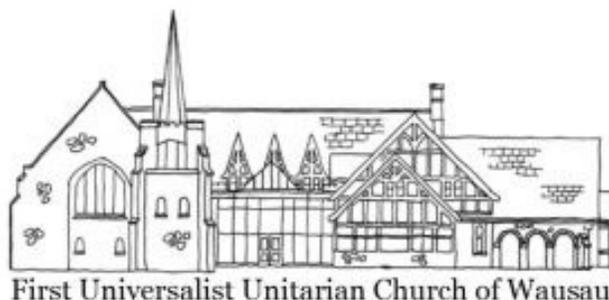
WELCOMING CONGREGATION “RENEWAL”: LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

Our First Universalist Unitarian Church became a “Welcoming Congregation” back at a time when many churches did not provide an equitable place, programs, or outreach for LGBTQ+ persons to become members of a church community.

This congregation responded in early 2000 and offered Adult Religious Education sessions to educate and raise an awareness of needs, followed by a series of other changes to the church, including a Statement of Conscience and a Congressional vote to formalize the commitment to members of the LGBTQ+ community. Joni Hahn and Richard Olson, along with others, were involved in this important work.

Well, time has moved on and it is now 2020 – time to relook at a process of self evaluation and review so that we can once again stay current by offering our congregation best practices as a Renewed Welcoming Congregation. The UUA now offers a formal process of annual renewal, and this congregation is in the beginning stages of forming several work groups interested in doing research, examining what we offer now, what needs to change or continue, so that new people in the congregation as well as long time members are made aware of best practices, learn about current needs of the LGBTQ+ community, and formalize a renewed commitment for our Church.

If you would like to help, please contact Roxann Bornemann at roxannbornemann@gmail.com



“PAY IT FORWARD” WITH HELP FROM THE ARI SCHMIDT FUND FOR BUS, BAIL AND PIZZA

To support the mission of the Fund to “promote positive social change,” the committee will be offering assistance for First UU Wausau participants to engage in pay it forward activities. The inspiration comes from the book Channel of Peace, by Kevin Tuerff. Kevin was as one of over 6500 passengers who were stranded in Gander, Newfoundland on 9/11/2001. As a result of his experiences, Kevin offered his Austin, Texas employees opportunities and assistance to pay it forward on 9/11 each following year.

Copies of the book will be available soon from Julie in the church office. We hope the book will foster ideas of how we can spread kindness, encouragement, peace and love among people whose worth and dignity we would like to acknowledge and celebrate.

Check out the book and stay tuned for more details in the March Circuit Writer!

- Ari Schmidt Fund Committee

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY-FOCUSED COLLECTION: COLLEGE FOR KIDS

The unique opportunities at the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point - Wausau campus offer children paths to discover new fun ways to learn. As it has for the last 38 years, classes are taught by highly trained and talented instructors from the university community and area school districts.

Programs are for children seeking fun and adventurous learning opportunities from yoga to science to art to languages to Harry Potter! These are incredible sessions which intellectually challenge, build confidence, encourage imagination and develop critical thinking skills. To serve as many area children as possible, the university asks the community to help fund their scholarship coffers. Scholarships are awarded based on economic need and other extenuating circumstances.

As always, the CFC committee thanks you for your outstanding support as we celebrate our Year of the Child.

- CFC Committee

2020 ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DRIVE NEEDS YOUR \$UPPORT!

If you haven't yet turned in your **2020 Pledge Form** committing your financial support to First UU Wausau, please take 2 minutes (it's that QUICK!) to complete & return a form ASAP.

As of the time of this newsletter's printing, we have **over \$255,841 pledged** to support our church. That's fantastic, and we're so appreciative of to all of those who've already pledged, but:

We have a loooong way to go yet to reach our goal...

Your pledge helps us teach children and adults in our community about love and acceptance, forgiveness and grace, integrity and awe, and so much more!

In addition, **your financial support impacts our community** through its many **dedicated service projects** and by providing a **welcoming sanctuary and spiritual home for people from EVERY walk of life.**

Exciting news! An anonymous donor has generously offered an additional \$20,000 matching grant to be made to help us achieve our goal!

This generous offer ends on Valentine's Day, 2-14-2020!!

We have several easy ways for you to pledge your financial support:

Download a Pledge Form at the church's website, <http://www.uuwausau.org>

Pick up a Pledge Form at the church's Front Desk.

Return the Pledge Form existing Members received in the mail in the S.A.S.E. provided.

Request a Pledge Form be snail-mailed or emailed to you: danika@uuwausau.org.

(We'll gladly accept your Pledge Form anytime, but the sooner the better for budget planning.)

First UU Church is a cause you can truly FEEL GOOD about contributing to.

We thank you in advance for your generous financial support of this beloved church community — whether it's your 1st or 101st pledge. Please consider raising your annual pledge by 15% to help us meet our ambitious goal. **We can't do all the wonderful things that we do at First UU Church of Wausau without YOU!**

Please take some time to reflect on all that First UU Wausau offers its Friends, Members, and Visitors and **pledge generously to help us guarantee that people will always have a spiritual home that welcomes them just as they are, that inspires them to dream of a more JUST and LOVING world, and that nurtures them along the way.**

We thank you in advance for your generous support of this beloved church community.

Your 2020 Stewardship Committee,

Carl Drake, Marsha Fitzgerald, & Sarah Thurs



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 the Reverend 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.

May we enter this new year holding these principles in our hearts.

-from www.uua.org

February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Buddhist Meditation 4PM
2 10:30AM — Service "Throwback Sermon" 3:30PM —Narcotics Anonymous 6PM — Overeaters Anonymous	3 Women's AA 6PM	4 Qi Gong 6:30PM	5 Shawl Time 10AM PFPL—6PM Adult Choir 6:30PM	6 Tai Chi 6:30PM	7	8 Buddhist Meditation 4PM
9 10:30AM — Service "?'s for the Minister" 3:00PM—UU the Vote 3:30PM —Narcotics Anonymous 6PM — Overeaters Anonymous	10 Women's AA 6PM	11 Social Justice 6PM Qi Gong 6:30PM	12 Adult Choir 6:30PM	13 Tai Chi 6:30PM	14 Second Friday Nighters Syring- Phelan house 6pm	15 Early Risers— 8:00AM Buddhist Meditation 4PM
16 10:30AM — Service Guest Preacher CFC: College for Kids! 3:30PM —Narcotics Anonymous 6PM — Overeaters Anonymous	17 Church office closed. Women's AA 6PM	18 Board of Trustees 6:30PM Qi Gong 6:30PM	19 Shawl Time 10AM PFPL—6PM Adult Choir 6:30PM	20 Tai Chi 6:30PM	21	22 Buddhist Meditation 4PM
23 10:30AM — Service "A Time to Build" 3:30PM —Narcotics Anonymous 6:00PM — Overeaters Anonymous	24 Women's AA 6PM	25 Minister's Book Club 6:30PM	26 Adult Choir 6:30PM	27 Tai Chi 6:30PM	28	



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau
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Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

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