

The Circuit Writer - May 2020

Monthly theme: Thresholds

What does it mean to be a people of Thresholds?

Join us for our **online service** every Sunday! Our podcast is e-mailed and posted on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/firstuuwausau>) Sunday mornings at 10:15, along with an Order of Service. Grab a cup of coffee, settle into a comfortable chair, and join us as our community gathers in spirit together. Then join us on Zoom at 11:30 for our virtual Coffee Hour, and enjoy catching up, seeing familiar faces, and spending time in the warmth of beloved community.

Want to sign up for e-mails? Contact danika@uuwausau.org and she'll be happy to add you.

Sunday Services for May 2020

May 3: *Throwback Sermon* by Glenda C. Walker. The Reverend Brian Mason, (re)preaching.

May 10: *Rediscovering Mother's Day*, the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

May 17: *Bridging & Baccalaureate*, Julie Trombley, DRE, and high school graduates, preaching.

May 24: The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

May 31: *Flower Communion*, the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

The First UU Wausau staff posts Morning Meditations on Facebook at 8:30AM, Monday-Saturday. Follow First UU Wausau on Facebook to be uplifted, and for reminders that despite the distance, we are still all valued members of this interdependent web of existence. We hold you in our thoughts and our hearts, and look forward to the day we can all gather together in person again.



From a Window on Grant. . .

Dear UU Wausau Family,

I hope all of you are well given the circumstances. This pandemic and Safer at Home restrictions are affecting everyone differently. Maybe you're doing fine. I wish that were the case for everyone. But I know it's not. Whether you're fine or not, the church is here for you. Reach out. I call people every week and would be happy to connect. Just let me know the best way to reach you.

This newsletter is a bit longer than usual, but it contains a lot of helpful info.

CHURCH BUILDING ACCESS & STAFF INFO

With the Governor's Safer at Home Order extended we have to face the fact now that the 2019-20 church year will conclude with us worshipping together virtually, and that the church building will remain closed. I wish this wasn't the case. But I support the Governor's decision and believe that physical/social distancing is needed to help flatten the curve and reduce the spread of coronavirus.

I've also made the decision to continue online services through August. The Board and I routinely monitor news about public gatherings. We will make a determination about fall's services as soon as possible and will notify everyone once that decision is made. **Let's hope and pray the 2020-21 church year will kick off with us meeting in person.**

The staff and I continue to carry out the work of the church. Get in touch with us anytime.

SUMMER SERVICES

The staff and I will lead services through June 21 before handing them over to the Worship & Music Committee as usual. **Please reach out to Randy Jefferson or Sheryl Hemp if you'd like to lead a summer podcast service.**

YOUR HELP MATTERS

Many have asked how to help. I really believe that one of the best things everyone can do is follow the Safer at Home guidelines. When it comes to that, we're *all* essential workers. By following the guidelines, we help the *actual* essential workers stay safe and healthy. This is a worldwide effort of which we are all part.

If you're still itching for action, here are some suggestions:

CLOTH MASKS – If you're able, you could sew or obtain cloth masks for the church. **(If you can sew but need material, contact Julie.)** Having cloth masks for worshippers will help keep everyone safe once we're back together.

CHARITABLE GIVING – Support local non-profits like United Way of Marathon County, Neighbor's Place, Community Foundation, and The Women's Community. These organizations work hard to keep people right here in Wausau safe and healthy.

SHOP & DINE LOCALLY – Support local business when you shop or get takeout. Think of the businesses you love and find out how to support them now. Many are offering online, delivery, and curbside options.

GIVE TO THE CHURCH'S PANTRY – Donate non-perishable food and toiletries to the UU Wausau/First Presbyterian pantry. Every Saturday this pantry is open to the public and it offers a hot meal to people in need. Items can be dropped off at the church office. A member of the staff will deliver them on your behalf. **Please schedule drop offs with Dänika in advance.**

From a Window on Grant. . .

COMMUNITY – Call your fellow church members. **Connection matters!** Host a virtual cocktail/tea party. Put flowers on someone’s porch. Send a card. Paint someone a picture. Tell someone they’re beautiful. Send a kid a coloring book. Get addresses for the church’s high school seniors and mail them a nice note. Tell someone you care.

MEMBERS IN NEED – Give to the **Minister’s Discretionary Fund**. Friends/Members in our church have been impacted by the horrific unemployment. These funds help people with rent, groceries, child-care, copays, and more.

SUPPORTING THE CHURCH – Please continue supporting the church. This church, *your* church, has a legacy, a 150-year-old legacy, to be proud of. We stand on the shoulders of thousands, literally *thousands*, of people who came before. People who lived through wars and depressions and pandemics just like us. Through it all they worshiped and laughed and cried in the very same pews we long to return to. **Your financial support is the *only* thing that keeps UU Wausau going.** Please maintain your pledges and consider making an additional gift if you can. **Checks can be mailed to the office or gifts can be made using the secure online giving form [here](#).**

ALMOST DONE

I’m going to be very candid now. The past two months have been difficult. I didn’t sign up for this. I didn’t sign up to be an internet pastor. I didn’t sign up to preach in an empty sanctuary. I signed up to speak to people I could see and embrace. I signed up to create ministries that move out into the community and spread the love of Unitarian Universalism in action and deed. All of that boils down to this: No one signed up for this. I miss all of you and can’t wait to be with you again. We’ll get through this. I know we will. Hang in there.

JUST A LITTLE MORE

Thank you. Thank you for continuing to pledge and give gifts that help the church and its community partners. Thank you for the nice letters and emails. Thank you for the love and encouragement. Thank you for answering the phone when I call and talking and laughing with me. Thank you for your patience as I learn how to pastor the church from a computer. I couldn’t do it without you.

FINALLY

Remember this: the church isn’t empty; it’s been deployed.

Love,

Brian

Reflections...

I'd be lying if I tried to say that I'm not sad and disappointed about the way our church year is ending. I am. Some of my favorite UU Wausau traditions happen in May. I wish I was gearing up for a big volunteer appreciation event, the Bridging service, Mother's Day Bacon Fest, and even the last day of RE classes. I am sad that those events won't happen in the same way this year. I miss interacting with each of you in our usual ways. I miss our old ways of connecting. I don't know about you, but what I find myself needing most in this strange reality is meaningful connection. I feel grateful that First UU Wausau is working hard to offer a variety of ways to CONNECT—with yourself, others, and life.

This month you can **connect and socialize** through our weekly Virtual Coffee Hour, Second Friday Nighters (May 8th), and weekly Choir gatherings. You can **connect and learn** through the Minister's Book Club, weekly Children's Chapel, and Youth Group meetings. You can **connect and deepen** through engaging the weekly podcast service, daily Facebook meditations, and through Soul Matters participation. I've talked with families who have created a Sunday ritual out of gathering and listening to the podcast together. They are loving that way to connect with each other each week. Maybe you can try that with your family? You can **connect and relax** through Midweek Meditation each Wednesday in Zoom. You can **connect and celebrate** our graduating seniors by listening to our Bridging podcast service on May 17th.

Please remember that you can also connect with me individually. Reach out to schedule a phone conversation or Zoom meeting for yourself OR your children. I'm here for you. Please take good care of yourself and reach out. Connect in ways that feel good to you this month.

With Love,
Julie

Opportunities to Connect:

Daily Opportunity to Connect:

Morning Meditation on Facebook, Monday-Saturday at 8:30 am
Member Facebook Group, anytime
Phone calls, cards, letters, surprise deliveries, anytime you choose

Weekly Opportunities to Connect:

Podcast Service, released Sundays at 10:15 am
Children's Chapel in Zoom, Sundays 10:00-10:30 am, for children ages 4-12 (No meeting May 10th)
Virtual Coffee Hour in Zoom, Sundays 11:30-12:30
Youth Group in Zoom, Sunday 4:00-5:00 pm, for youth in 7th-12th grade (No meeting May 10th)
Midweek Meditation in Zoom, Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00
UU Wausau Adult Choir Social in Zoom, Wednesdays, 6:30 pm

Monthly Opportunities to Connect:

Minister's Book Club in Zoom, May 28th, 6:30 pm.
May's book selection: *Gilead*, by Marilynne Robinson.
2nd Friday Nighters in Zoom, May 8th, 6:30-8:00 pm

Reflections...

May's Soul Matters question:

What does it mean to be a people of THRESHOLDS?



From this month's packet: "But what if the true invitation of a threshold is not to successfully move from here to there, but instead to just sit and pause? What if we saw thresholds as resting places rather than as those moving walkways that transport us through airports? What if thresholds help us 'become' by asking us to just 'be' for a while? No moving. Just noticing and naming. Less traveling and more listening."

We all currently find ourselves at a threshold. We all will forever mark our lives as pre and post COVID-19. This month's packet is full of spiritual exercises, questions, and resources to help us pause and be, before we step into whatever is next. Soul Matters packets are available to all church members.

E-mail Julie at julie@uuwausau.org to request one be emailed to you.

Midweek Meditation

WEDNESDAYS, 11:00 AM

Take a midweek break and
CONNECT to yourself and others,
lower stress, and recharge for
the rest of your week.
Email julie@uuwausau.org
to request Zoom link.

From the Board Table...

During these strange and frightening times, I find myself looking for the things that fill my heart with good. Right at the top of the list of good, is my church and the many ways that it brings me comfort. This morning, as I do every morning, I looked for the daily posting on Facebook and was deeply touched by Joy Harjo's beautiful Eagle Poem. I found myself thinking over and over again of the last few lines "We pray that it be done in beauty. In beauty." I am aware that beauty takes many forms and comes to us in so many ways.

The administrative team of our church embodies that beauty. Danika Kozlovich, Julie Trombley, Margaret Jerz, and Brian Mason have taken a situation that is fraught with anxiety and fear and they have worked hard to hold and comfort us all.

I can only begin to list some of these beautiful acts of generosity and kindness. Through their collective talents, they have managed to bring badly needed hope and goodness into our lives. We have a service every Sunday that fills our hearts with music and words that reach deeply into our individual struggles. Our children continue to have their religious education program. Our choir continues to meet on a regular basis. The adult education program offerings are meaningful and varied. And instead of sitting in the pews on Easter Sunday with the sanctuary filled with flowers, the flowers came to us thanks to our generous staff and friends!!!

Brian, Julie, Danika, and Margaret—we thank you for your talents, your generosity, and your service to this church that we love so well.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for all that you do for beauty.

- Joyce Reynolds Kurth

Kindness Never Goes Out of Style

Our society, our community and our church family has certainly had a "wake up" call over the last couple of months, but one thing is absolutely certain - kindness and helping others never goes out of style. The Ari Schmidt Fund had hoped to join our minister and education director on Mother's Day in a family service devoted to the idea of "pay it forward," but it may have to be rescheduled because of Covid-19. The meaning of the pay it forward phrase comes from both a book with that name and from another book about how the many kindnesses of a small community, Gander, Newfoundland, affected the lives of stranded travelers on 9-11. We are willing to bet that if you have ever had (and who hasn't) a tough time and someone showed you a small kindness (small to them maybe, but not to you), you were unbelievably grateful and you have never forgotten it. We're hoping that those feelings of gratitude resulted in and will continue to result in doing kindnesses for others - or paying it forward. If you have a little time on your hands, you might contact the church office about borrowing a book (maybe even asking them to mail it to you, or to drop it off?) called Channel of Peace, by Kevin Tuerff. It not only details the gift that Gander gave to scared visitors, but also provides some suggestions for how you can pay it forward. Here's hoping that our pay-it-forward service will take place one these days not too awfully long from now. In the meantime, please do what you can to help others - it never goes out of style - and it will be especially meaningful during these difficult times.

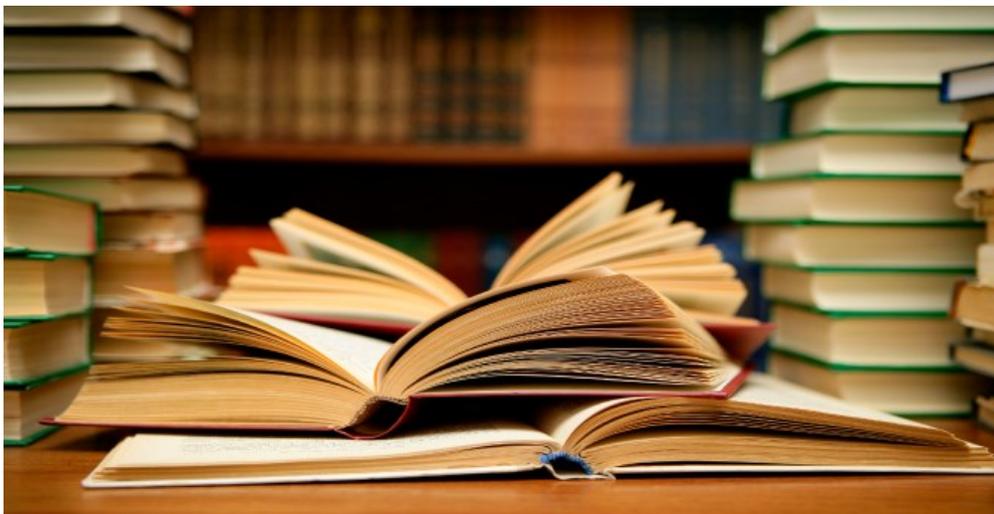
- The Ari Schmidt Fund

Books and Puzzles!

Don't Forget the First UU Little Free Library!

During this time of separation
If you're looking for something to read
Or have books to share,
Stop by our Little Free Library
To take or give.

The stock will be periodically updated,
But can always use an infusion of books.
It's one thing we can share
During this time of forced isolation.



"Books are the plane
And the train
And the road.
They are the destination,
And the journey.
They are home."

- Anna Quindlen

Puzzles to Share!

During this time at home, many people have looked to jigsaw puzzles as a fun way to spend some time. Joyce Schneider has many 300-2000 piece puzzles she would like to share! Though she doesn't have puzzles for children, these would be wonderful family projects.

Puzzle trades are welcome, as well! If you're interested, please call Joyce at (715) 675-9567.

Building Unity project

Building Unity is a project shared by many groups that are striving to build a united, non-partisan movement for world peace, social justice, ecological sustainability, and democracy. It aims to do this by bringing various groups and individuals together and helping them organize for action. We see this movement as essential to our survival.

Realizing that how Wisconsin votes in 2020 will have profound impacts on humanity's chances of making the profound shifts that must be made, Building Unity groups started this year with the goal to increase voter turnout for the causes that we embrace. We set out to bring volunteers on a 35 straight weekend tour that would visit over 70 communities. We planned to help local pro-voting activists with a few hours of voter engagement work, and then conclude with a community potluck and program. In doing so, we planned to increase voter turnout across the state and strengthening the Building Unity movement.

One weekend into the tour, the pandemic changed our plans.

The Building Unity Tour is now ready to re-launch our pro-voting tour, but for now, it will be in a virtual or on-line way.

Moving our 34-foot motorhome, the Vote Mobile, around the state as a mobile billboard, *we are inviting people to our BuildingUnityWisconsin.org website, learn about the project and join our upcoming virtual gatherings that will occur in communities all over Wisconsin.*

The Vote Mobile will be in your area on about July 12 for about 10 – 15 days. *We could use your help finding one or more high-visibility places where the Vote Mobile can park, as well as local landmarks that could serve as interesting backdrops for photos for our social media campaign.*

We're hoping that you will *help us spread the word* and pull together other pro-democracy residents of your area who are ready to help make sure that all of us vote in this year's coming elections.

If you have any interest in helping us organize an on-line gathering, and/or if you can refer me to others in your area who might, please call me at the phone number below.

Together, we can merge our creativity, our networks, our skills and our resources towards record breaking turnout for the 2020 elections.

For the good of all of the good people of Wisconsin,

Ann Stevens Smiley

Building Unity

(608)745-2217

www.buildingunitywisconsin.org



May 2020

Morning meditations are posted to our Facebook page Monday-Saturday at 8:30AM

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 10AM Children's Chapel on Zoom! 10:15AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail 11:30 Coffee Hour 4PM Youth Group	4	5	6 Meditation with Julie on Zoom 11AM-12PM Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	7	8 2nd Friday Nighters on Zoom 6:30PM	9
10 10:15AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail 11:30 Coffee Hour!	11	12	13 Meditation with Julie on Zoom 11AM-12PM Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	14	15	16
17 10AM Children's Chapel on Zoom! 10:15AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail 11:30 Coffee Hour! 4PM Youth Group	18	19 BOT meeting on Zoom 6:30PM	20 Meditation with Julie on Zoom 11AM-12PM Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	21	22	23
24 10AM Children's Chapel on Zoom! 10:15AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail 11:30 Coffee Hour! 4PM Youth Group	25	26	27 Meditation with Julie on Zoom 11AM-12PM Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	28 Minister's Book Club on Zoom 6:30-8:00PM	29	30
31 10AM Children's Chapel on Zoom! 10:15AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail 11:30 Coffee Hour! 4PM Youth Group						



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

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Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

Inside this Issue:

May Services	1
<i>From a Window on Grant</i>	2
<i>REflections</i>	4
<i>REflections</i>	5
From The Board Table	6
Ari Schmidt Fund	6
Books & Puzzles	7
Building Unity project	8
Calendar	9

All staff is available via e-mail.
Please contact us to set up a phone call or online meeting.
Church phone: (715) 842-3697, www.uuwausau.org

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