

The Circuit Writer - September 2020

Sunday Services for September 2020

Monthly theme: RENEWAL

What does it mean to be a people of RENEWAL?

September 6, 9:00AM: For the last of UU Wausau's summer service series, Jerry Phelan and Kay Meyer of the Social Justice Committee will lead the service. Podcast episodes are posted to our [Facebook](#) page and [website](#), as well as sent via e-mail. You can sign up for e-mails [here](#), or write to danika@uuwausau.org.

*** * * Start of the 2020-2021 Church Year * * ***
Unless otherwise stated, all services begin at 10:30AM

*Beginning Sunday, September 13, UU Wausau will enter Phase 1 of the Bounce Back Plan (full plan included beginning on page 4), and resume **in-person Sunday morning services**.*

Sunday services will continue being sent via podcast in addition to being offered in-person with restrictions for everyone's safety. There are also plans to upgrade the church's audio-visual equipment to include video streaming. More info about that will be available in the coming weeks.

September 13th, 10:30AM: Water Communion: Please join us for our annual ingathering celebration to kick off the start of the 2020-21 church year. *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

September 20th, 10:30AM: Sanctifying Imagination: *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

September 27th, 10:30AM: Crack the Door Open: *The Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*



From a Window on Grant

GREETINGS

What a delight it is to be writing to you in the midst of such a beautiful summer. I hope you've had time to relax and spend time with the people who bring you joy. My family and I spent much of our time off reading, walking, and cooking together. It was our first full summer in Wisconsin, and it didn't disappoint.

With the new school year approaching I'm praying often for educators, parents, and students who are preparing for school in the midst of these unique circumstances. The year ahead promises to be a trying one. With that in mind I encourage you to discover what truly matters, and then bring to those people and responsibilities the best of your heart and soul. Take time to rest and enjoy simple pleasures. You and your faith will be the better for it.

150 YEARS

As many of you know, November 2020 marks the 150th Anniversary of our church's gathering. Prior to the pandemic there were plans for parties, special guests, fundraisers, and more. Due to the pandemic a decision was made to postpone most of the activities until 2021, which means we'll get to have a **150 + 1** celebration of the church's sesquicentennial. I know this is disappointing, but **I'm certain all of us will find a way to make the 150 + 1 extra special.**

2020-21 CHURCH YEAR

I've received questions from several people curious about what the upcoming church year will look like. After extensive conversation with the church's staff and Board of Trustees a decision was made to resume some highly restricted in-person activities.

Beginning Sunday, September 13, UU Wausau will enter Phase 1 of the Bounce Back Plan (full plan below).

The **Bounce Back Plan** details the phases of the church's reopening, which adheres to all local, state, and federal guidelines, and includes several additional safety measures. The plan is designed with fluidity in mind, as there may come a time that church needs to return to online only. **The Board will assess the plan monthly and make changes when necessary.**

I understand that in-person church will not be for everyone, which is why **UU Wausau will offer a hybrid model so that everyone can connect whether in person or online.**

Sunday services will continue being sent via podcast in addition to being offered in-person with restrictions. There are also plans to upgrade the church's audio-visual equipment to include video

streaming as well. More info about that will be available in the coming weeks.

I'm asking everyone to join me in growing your tolerance for patience and experimentation. I plan to try new things in worship services, deepening our practice of meditation and contemplation by incorporating some elements of monastic liturgies. I have other plans, too. But I'll let some of that be a surprise. Seems to me that if ever there was a time to experiment it's now.

IN CLOSING

This has been an extraordinary year, from the pandemic to the shift to online schools, social unrest and protests, to natural disasters and a tense election season. My own family has been touched by COVID and I worry about my parents and siblings who work and go to school, and I know many of you have these same kinds of worries and worse. I pray daily for all of you; and I pray daily for clarity and it never seems to come. Most of the time I feel like I'm making the best worst decision. And every time I make a decision about something important, I almost never feel completely good about it. But I keep praying, not because I think my prayers will change these circumstances; I pray because I hope it will change me.

I'm sure all of us could share an endless list of things that have been negatively impacted by recent events. Let yourself feel that anger and disappointment, but don't let it have the last word.

Christian and Buddhist mystics speak frequently about surrender and letting go. This isn't easy work, in fact it's terribly hard. However, if change is what we want, then we have to start with the changes we need to make in our own lives. We have to ask, what *really* matters? For me it's a short list: being a father and husband, being a son and brother, and finally, being this church's minister.

This August kicks off my 4th year at UU Wausau. Even though the circumstances are tough, I'm excited to see what this year has in store. It's going to be strange and unique, but my focus for this year is centered on three things: spiritual growth, humility, and connection.

In the coming days we'll be sending information about opportunities for the fall. I'm certain there's something in there for everyone.

The Board, staff, and I are doing everything we can to ensure the health and safety of everyone who worships and gathers with us, whether online or in-person.

Thank you for your continued support of this church. It's been here for 150 years because of great people like you. **So, here's to you and to the next 150 years!**

Cheers & blessings,

Brian

FIRST UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH (UU WAUSAU) - REOPENING PLAN

UU Wausau's Board voted to resume some in-person activities so long as strict and extensive health and safety measures are upheld. The church's staff is capable of upholding additional measures and is prepared to do so. This process will be methodical as leadership wants to ensure the resumption of in-person activities is safe and successful.

The goal of this document is to communicate the reopening of the church building and programs responsibly and in accordance with legal and health guidelines. The reopening plan is aligned with the Marathon County Health Department, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Beginning Sunday, September 13, UU Wausau will move into Phase 1. Separate correspondence about activities will be published at a later date.

Phase	Description	Activity	Notes
UU At Home	Safer At Home	All services/activities online.	Minister and staff working mostly from home. Visitors can enter the building by appointment.
Phase 1	Limited reopening Limited in-person gatherings for: Sunday Worship Some groups of 10 or less No nursery care.	Worship service(s) with restrictions and precautions will be held in locations in the church building where appropriate social distancing can be maintained.	Same as above.
Phase 2	Expanded reopening No nursery care.	Same as above, with these changes: Limited in-person gatherings extended to RE Renters Committees/small groups	Moving towards regular office hours. Appointments still recommended.
Phase 3	Final phase; all restrictions lifted. Nursery care resumes.	No attendance limits for all services and gatherings. Congregational singing TBD.	Office hours normal; no appointment required. Responsible health measures followed.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Reference: [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Community & Faith-Based Organizations.](#)

General Information

UU Wausau, in every phase, will offer Sunday services, religious education, and other resources online.

Minister and staff will continue to offer small group gatherings online.

Board of Trustees and Committee meetings will continue meeting online.

There will not be coffee hour or other social gatherings.

High-risk individuals (people over 65, or with underlying conditions), including staff, are encouraged to shelter in place.

Communication with the minister and staff should be done over the phone or by e-mail (Phases 1-2).

To learn about RE, contact the Director of Religious Education.

If you or any member of your family feel ill, please do not come into the building.

Physical Building and Grounds

We will close spaces and rooms in the building where people are not permitted with posted signs.

We will open windows and doors to encourage fresh air over recycled air (weather permitting).

All hangers will be removed from the closet.

Nursery will not be provided, and the nursery room will be closed (Phases 1-2).

All materials will be removed from worship and gathering spaces such as hymnals, pens, information cards, welcome pads, children's bags, shawls, etc.

We will not hand out paper bulletins. Orders of service will be sent via email prior to the service.

Outside of regularly scheduled church activities, ALL building entry/use must be scheduled with the Congregational Administrator.

Hygiene and Safety

We will provide hand sanitizer and disposable facemasks at all entrances and in the pews/seating area.

We will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces after the service.

Facemasks/coverings will be required at all times.

Clean personal facemasks/coverings are allowed.

You are encouraged to use good hygiene practices.

Food and drink will not be permitted (Phases 1-2).

Physical Distancing

In the sanctuary, only every third pew will be used. Signs will be placed to close off rows in order to guide worshipers to sit at least six feet from each other.

Sanctuary seating will be limited (about 30-45 people in Phase 1). Single household families will be able to occupy the same pew.

Speaking, Singing, and Playing Instruments in Worship

Singing together, even from a distance, is risky due to the spread of aerosols through the air. Therefore, most music will be instrumental. 1 or 2 vocalists may be used but will perform in a remote area restricted to visitors.

Worship Practices

No collection plate will be passed during services.

There will be no sharing the peace or physical greetings. However, you may wave, give a peace sign, exchange brief greetings, offer a reverent bow, etc., while practicing social distancing.

There will be no receiving lines at the door before and after worship.

Worship Leadership

The minister or speaker may choose to not wear a mask while leading the worship service if she/he is over six feet away (an analogy for this would be public health officials who do not wear masks for press conferences when following physical distancing protocol). Speakers may still choose to wear masks and they should if they come into closer proximity with others.

The minister or speaker must be mindful of physical distancing when speaking, especially because leaders need to project their voices.

Additional [health and safety guidelines here](#).

Minister & Staff contact info:

Brian Mason	<i>Minister</i>	brian@uuwausau.org
Dänika Kozlovich	<i>Congregational Administrator</i>	danika@uuwausau.org
Julie Trombley	<i>Director of Religious Education</i>	julie@uuwausau.org
Margaret Jerz	<i>Music Director</i>	margaretjerz1@gmail.com

REflections

My heart is with everyone preparing to send kids back to school. Regardless of what that looks like for you, this is a challenging time. We are all about to experience a school year unlike any other. I'm sending you abundant amounts of patience and care during this time of transition. It will be an RE year unlike any other as well. I want to thank the teams of volunteers who are currently giving their time to help me reimagine religious education at UU Wausau.

Soul Matters Facilitation Team

Dawn Ashenbrenner
Holly Briquelet Miller

Youth Group Advisor Team

Sarah Mason
Karen Monarski
Jaime Rannow
Greg Zavadoski

Children's RE Team

Joni Hahn
Kate Passineau
Sally Schmidt

Our primary focus across the board, this church year will be **connection**. Our secondary focus will be **fun** and light heartedness— kids just getting to be kids. I think we could all agree that everyone could use a little more fun in their lives right now. We've decided to experiment with a thematic approach to religious education this year. Children's RE and Youth Group topics each month will align with the same theme that Soul Matters groups are exploring. For September that theme is *RENEWAL*, or what does it mean to be a people of *RENEWAL*? We'll also be giving particular attention to anti-racism content each month. Another goal is for the youth group to keep its service focus. We'll continue to partner with K.A.T.S. (Keeping Area Teens Safe) and hope to have an outdoor in-person service activity for youth lined up soon.

We'll start the church year on **September 13th** with live Zoom RE opportunities for children and youth. Other types of opportunities will come as we go through the year. Here's how we'll begin:

Children's Chapel

RE for children in Kindergarten - 6th grade
Sunday mornings, 9:30 am-10:00 am
Live via Zoom
Adults and families welcome!

Youth Group

RE for youth in 7th - 12th grade
Sunday afternoons, 4:00 pm-5:00 pm
Live via Zoom
For youth and advisors only

Watch your email for information on how to register and receive the Zoom link for Children's Chapel or Youth Group. These Zoom links will not be shared publicly for the safety of our young people.

Parents, I know this is a challenging time for you. I'm excited to offer an opportunity just for you. UU Parenting Circle, a place to discuss the current joys and challenges of parenting. These will be facilitated sharing circles where you'll have the opportunity to share, listen, get support, and learn from each other. This is a drop-in style group, with no commitment to attendance. UU Parenting Circle will begin **September 10th**.

UU Parenting Circle

Sharing, listening, supporting, learning
Thursday evenings, 8:30 pm-9:30 pm
 Live via Zoom
 All parents welcome

Email julie@uuwausau.org before September 10th to receive the Zoom link for the UU Parenting Circle.

Soul Matters

If you thought about joining a Soul Matters small group but didn't get your registration in, I have good news. *There are a limited number of spots still available!* The groups that will meet on the 1st & 3rd Thursday afternoon, 1:00-3:00 pm **and** 1st and 3rd Tuesday evening, 6:30-8:30 pm both still have a couple of spots available. Email me at julie@uuwausau.org right away to join one of those groups. See the [August Circuit Writer](#) for more information on Soul Matters small groups.

Take good care of yourselves, and each other. I hope to see you in Zoom soon!

With Love,

Julie

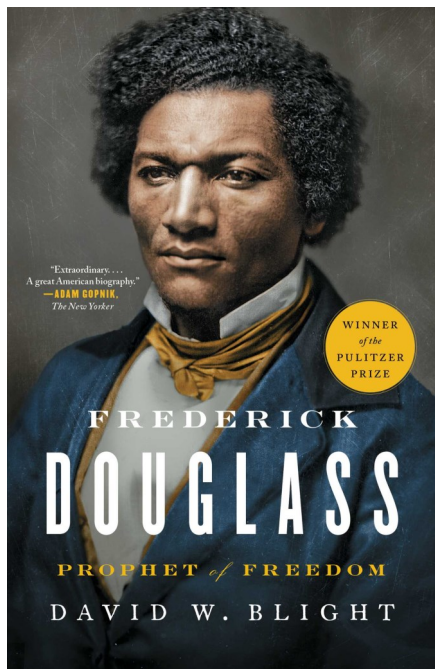
Minister's Book Club

Meeting date & time: Tuesday, September 29, at 6:30 PM, on Zoom (RSVP to brian@uuwausau.org)

Selection: *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* by David W. Blight

Blurb: As a young man Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) escaped from slavery in Baltimore, Maryland. He was fortunate to have been taught to read by his slave owner mistress, and he would go on to become one of the major literary figures of his time. His very existence gave the lie to slave owners: with dignity and great intelligence he bore witness to the brutality of slavery.

Link for more info: <https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Frederick-Douglass/David-W-Blight/9781416590323>



From the Board Table...

Greetings all!

As I write there is bright sun and a cool breeze: the rustle of the leaves in the wind offering a sense of calm and grounding. However, as I ponder the decision to reopen the church for some in-person activities, I feel ambivalence – and I expect I am not alone. Last March, when everything changed, I felt blessed, even proud, to be part of a congregation that was brave enough to make the proactive decision to close to protect the most vulnerable among us. I believe it was a good decision. There have also been consequences: unexpected challenges and surprising new opportunities for fellowship and connection. Our church, led by the brilliance and dedication of the staff, rose to the occasion in many ways for which I am grateful. They made the necessity of doing things differently more bearable.

For months none of us knew whether being together in-person would be an option at all for this church year. That was a very difficult thing to consider. We miss each other. We miss the Sanctuary, and coffee hour, pot-lucks, RE, and singing together!! Oh, how I miss singing with all of you! There is healing power in presence, physical presence, that we have been cut off from. So, here we are, cautiously reopening because we have more information about how we can be together again. We aren't yet able to get back everything that we miss, perhaps not even most of it. For many, including some of our most actively engaged members, returning in-person remains too risky. Because of this, the option to be even more cautious, to hold off until there is some sort of "all clear", has been tempting for me. However, despite the fact that the re-opening will be challenging, there will also be opportunities. The possibility of these opportunities helped me decide to vote with the Board to move forward with Phase 1.

I remain grateful and confident that this congregation is moving forward conscientiously, with due respect for the fluidity of the situation. Which brings me back to the wind, a fine metaphor for this time. To understand the complex, intersectional, challenges the pandemic has laid bare is like anticipating the wind. We have imperfect tools to anticipate what is coming next. Our actions will reflect what we can know. We'll work together so we can go with the flow without being blown over, and maybe along the way, we'll find unexpected joy, collectively flying a metaphorical kite or two.

Sincerely,
~Kara Hall

From the Religious Services/Worship Committee

The Sunday, September 6, podcast service will be the final summer service scheduled by the Religious Services/Worship Committee. While the podcast delivery method was new this year, we again presented a series of services that we hope provided a meaningful link between church years. Thank you congregation members Richard Olson, Greg Venne, Jerry Phelan, and Kay Meyer, and our intrepid DRE and minister duo, Julie Trombley and Brian Mason, for leading services. Thanks also to Ryan O'Leary, Kimberly Debus, and Kayley McColley for providing the message for services. Margaret Jerz, Music Director, and Danika Kozlovich, soloist, performed beautiful music for most of the services, for which we are most grateful. Finally in her Congregational Administrator role, Danika was steadfast in recording, editing, and posting the podcasts each week. Well done. Great working with you Danika. Any feedback you wish to give on this summer's services is appreciated.

For the Religious Services/Worship Committee, the beginning of a new church year means starting to work with the minister on planning and scheduling services when he will be away. On average that is about one service per month. We need some help. If you are interested in being a service participant, we would like to hear from you. Any ideas you have for services and/or speakers are welcome. Obviously church COVID protocols will be adhered to whether participating in a service or attending one.

- Randy Jefferson & Sheryl Hemp



Back to School Blessing

May your mask keep you safe and your light always be seen.
May you learn and grow each day in person or on your screen.
May your heart and mind journey and discover what is true.
But most of all, may you know you are loved-for simply being you!

- By UU DRE Jules Jaramillo

SEPTEMBER 2020



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2 Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	3	4	5
6 9:00 AM Podcast posted to FB & e-mail Service led by Jerry Phelan and Kay Meyer	7	8	9 Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	10 UU Parenting Circle 8:30PM on Zoom	11	12
13 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: In-person Water Communion Service 4PM: Youth Group— Live via Zoom	14	15 BOT meeting on Zoom 6:30PM	16 Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	17 UU Parenting Circle 8:30PM on Zoom	18	19
20 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: In-person Service 4PM: Youth Group— Live via Zoom	21	22	23 Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM	24 UU Parenting Circle 8:30PM on Zoom	25	26
27 9:30AM: Children's Chapel on Zoom 10:30AM: In-person Service 4PM: Youth Group— Live via Zoom	28	29 Minister's Book Club 6:30PM on Zoom—RSVP to Brian	30 Choir Hangout on Zoom 6:30PM			



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau
504 Grant Street
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The Circuit Writer - September 2020

Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

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All staff is available via e-mail.

Please contact us to set up a phone call or online meeting.

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