

The Circuit Writer - September 2021

Services for September 2021

Services begin at 10:30 a.m. unless otherwise stated

September 5th, 2021 | 9:30AM

Blessing of the Backpacks

Led by DRE Jes Zimmer & the Rev. Brian Mason

Join us for this annual celebration honoring parents and students as they return to school.

**Service starts at 9:30 a.m.*

September 12th, 2021 | 10:30AM

Ingathering and Water Communion

The Rev. Brian Mason, preaching

Welcome back! Please join UU Wausau for the first service of the 2021-22 church year with the annual Water Communion and Ingathering celebration.

This Sunday, we'll share a service for all ages based around the classic hymn, "Peace Like a River." What do you bring with you into this new church year? Peace? Tears? Strength? Love? A bit of them all? And when you bring water from your tap or travels to mingle with the contributions of others, the combination symbolizes that together we're powerful — a community.

September 19th, 2021 | 10:30AM

"Grace and Acceptance"

The Rev. Brian Mason, preaching

September 26th, 2021 | 10:30AM

"Learning Silence"

The Rev. Brian Mason, preaching

First Day of RE classes!

9:00AM: K-6th Grade RE class on Zoom



From a Window on Grant—September 2021

I never imagined we'd still be dealing with the pandemic. I'd thought, incorrectly, that masking and physical distancing would be subjects spoken of in past-tense by now. But here we are, embarking on a new church and school year with the dark cloud of yet another wave of COVID-19 due to the Delta variant. Thankfully we know that getting vaccinated and masking in public are effective ways to stop the spread. I'm heartened to see that vaccination rates in Marathon County are on the rise. I think all of us can play a part in helping to stop the spread by encouraging friends and family to get vaccinated, mask in public, and continue supporting healthcare workers and hospitals.

The new church year will kick off much like last year's ended: We will continue offering in-person Sunday and special services and other events with basic mitigation efforts. The Bounce Back Plan has been updated to reflect current CDC, DHS, and Marathon County Health Department guidance about masking and distancing. Activities in Music and Religious Education have been modified to better ensure health and safety. The church's staff and leadership will continue monitoring the rate of community transmission in Marathon County. Any decisions to change the way we gather will be communicated immediately.

Your generous support of UU Wausau is essential to our future. I thank you for your patience and understanding, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

-Brian

Soul Matters Small Groups Fall 2021

We have openings in our Soul Matters Small Groups! Soul Matters Small Groups offers participants the gifts of spiritual connection to their deepest selves, others, and life, through individual reflection, spiritual practice, and the practice of deep listening. In traditional small groups, questions are an opportunity for the group to think together. Soul Matters treats them as tools for individual exploration. Instead of having small groups to go through a list of questions and discuss them one by one, Soul Matters participants are asked to read all the questions ahead of time and find the one question that speaks to and challenges them personally. Participants then live with that question for a couple weeks leading up to the group, coming to their meeting, not with an answer to each of the questions on the list, but with a story about how this one particular question led them to a new and personal insight. Learn more about [Soul Matters Small Groups here](#), and check out [the participant guide here](#).



Soul Matters Small Groups consist of 6-10 people, a group member(s) acts as facilitators/co-facilitators, who meet once a month for 2 hours, or twice a month for one hour, plus reflection and practice time on your own. Fall groups will meet mid-September through January, and participants will have the choice to continue for February-June sessions, change groups, or take a break. Participants are also asked to make a strong commitment to attend all meetings.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/nrnn33MmMHchDBnC7>, and the Director of Religious Education, Jes Zimmer, will follow-up with your group assignment.

FIRST UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH (UU WAUSAU) REOPENING PLAN

LAST UPDATED: AUGUST 31, 2021

CURRENT PHASE: 2

Purpose: The goal of this document is to communicate the reopening of the church building and programs responsibly and in accordance with legal restrictions and health guidelines.

Reference: The reopening plan is aligned with the Marathon County Health Department, Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Phase Determinations: With the input of staff and members, the Board of Trustees reviews recent guidance from local, state, and federal health officials regarding COVID-19 safety and determines whether to move phases or amend the reopening plan. Board meetings are open to all members and are held the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m.

Phase	Description	Activity	Notes
UU at Home	Safer at Home	<u>All activities, events, and services held online only.</u>	Church building closed; minister and staff work mostly from home.
Phase 1	First steps for reopening building. Still mostly online but occasional in-person small group gatherings allowed in designated areas with pre-approval from the Cong. Administrator.	<u>Sunday & special services online only.</u> <u>Limited in-person gatherings allowed for:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Small groups (RE, committees, renters, etc.) Childcare is unavailable.	Church building reopens; regular office hours resume. Masking & distancing required in all areas of the church building when public health officials list community transmission as substantial or high.
Phase 2	Expanded in-person events & offerings.	<u>In-person Sunday & special services resume.</u> Childcare available after health officials rate community transmission low (<10 per 100,000) for two weeks.	Same as Phase 1.
Phase 3	Gathering and building restrictions lessened.	Childcare resumes as normal.	Responsible health measures followed. <i>Specific details will be subject to then-current health guidance.</i>

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Staff, members, and visitors should observe the gathering restrictions and note the information below:

- The Marathon County Health Department, DHS, and CDC recommend that masks be worn regardless of vaccination status in areas with substantial or high levels of community transmission. Up-to-date information on community transmission as well as details on safe activities and vaccinations can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>.
- Weekly professional cleaning of premises (All Phases).
- Building users must prearrange meeting times and locations with the Congregational Administrator (All Phases).
 - Prospective & returning renters: Contact the Congregational Administrator for updated information and to sign a new building use form.
- Families are welcome to bring children to all services and events.
 - Note: Childcare is currently suspended in consideration of the health and safety of children and their caregivers, as well as the church's childcare providers. The nursery is open for families to use if needed. Contact the Director of Religious Education for further information.
- Contact the Director of Religious Education for information about religious education for youth & young adults.
- If you or any member of your family feel ill, please do not enter the building.

INFORMATION ON COVID-19 AND VACCINES

- DHS information on COVID-19: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>.
- CDC information on COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.
- Marathon County Health Department information on COVID-19 vaccines and how to obtain one: <https://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Departments/HealthDepartment/COVID19/VaccineInformation.aspx>.
- DHS information on COVID-19 vaccines and how to obtain one: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine.html>.
- DHS guidance on what to do if you test positive for COVID-19: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02803.pdf>.

INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES AND SERVICE TIMES

- Beginning Sunday, September 12, services start at 10:30 a.m. unless otherwise stated. Services are streamed live on the church's YouTube page and posted as a podcast everywhere they are available.

MINISTER & STAFF CONTACT INFO

Brian Mason	Minister	brian@uuwausau.org
Dänika Kozlovich	Congregational Administrator	danika@uuwausau.org
Margaret Jerz	Music Director	margaretjerz1@gmail.com
Jessica Zimmer	Director of Religious Education	jessica@uuwausau.org

STAY CONNECTED TO UU WAUSAU

E-mail:	To join the church's e-mail list, visit our website at uuwausau.org
Like us on Facebook:	facebook.com/firstuuwausau
Follow us on Twitter:	twitter.com/uu_wausau
and Instagram:	instagram.com/uuwausau
Subscribe to our Podcast:	uuwausau.podbean.com
Watch us on YouTube:	tinyurl.com/UUWausauYouTube
Office hours:	Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
Phone:	(715) 842-3697
Address:	504 Grant Street, Wausau, WI 54403

Reflections

Greetings, UU Wausau! I am so happy to be here and to be joining your Religious Education (RE) program. Like most startups, my first few weeks have been a whirlwind of getting settled in and planning all with the added challenge of trying to do so in a pandemic. I am enjoying learning about the RE program and thank you to everyone for the very warm welcome!

If this column had a title though, to paraphrase from a minister I know, it would be “Oh, dear. This is not what I had planned.” Many UU professionals had thought this fall we would be announcing an RE format that looked much more like our pre-pandemic programs with all of spring’s excitement and hope that came with being able to connect in person and with loved ones we have been distanced from. I certainly thought my first newsletter article would be filled with getting to know me jokes about sharing my office with a Dalek and Mister Rogers (check out my windowsill) and all the plans for RE to look more like its typical format.

Painfully, the pandemic had other plans for this year. If I am being completely candid, as this summer has worn on and it became clear that plans would have to change in order to keep our communities safe in the face of the Delta variant, there have been moments of exasperation, compassion fatigue, anger, and exhaustion. And to all of you who are feeling this and the grief over having to choose from no-win education and work scenarios again; feeling like you are being pushed back into isolation after finally feeling like you can breathe easier; and the broken social contracts to protect those most vulnerable by mass campaigns of misinformation and denial of science, please know you are not alone. So many of us are sharing in those losses and please know the grief we feel for plans not realized is real and valid.

One thing I will never say is that the pandemic has a silver lining or is a learning experience because that diminishes the trauma it has caused. However, that doesn’t mean we haven’t gleaned things from it. We are one year more knowledgeable. We now know precautions we can take to help us gather more safely, like wearing masks and having programming outdoors, we have a safe and effective vaccine, and we will soon have access for those ages 5-12. Most importantly though, we now know that in times of darkness and despair we can still find joy and community, even when we are apart. True, it may not be the same as the before times, but through our relationships and connections to each other we have support and hope. And that has always been part of the plan and is certainly part

of the plan for this year!

In my short time at UU Wausau, I have had the pleasure to work with a dedicated and passionate group of volunteers who have been serving your children, youth, and families. After discussing what we learned from last year, what went well and what didn’t, and the precautions we would need to take to keep the most vulnerable among us safe, we will be offering the following RE programming:

- RE starts Sunday, September 26
- At Home RE Kits for preschool-6th grades
- Elementary RE (K-6th grade) Sundays @9:00am via Zoom
- Youth RE (7th-12th grade) - in person service projects and Zoom meetups. Dates TBD
- UU Antiracism Storytime, weekly starting in October with the option to attend in-person or on Zoom, open to all.
- Junior High OWL - early 2022. Due to the pandemic, we are not able to train facilitators at this time, and will have to delay the start of OWL.

Additionally, we are looking at ways and places we might be able to hold some semi-regular to regular Elementary RE and/or Family Programming in-person, outdoors, and while these programs are running, we will be planning an in-person, indoor RE program. We are hopeful we will be able to return to in-person, RE programming for all this year, likely in the second half of the RE year. Updates and details about this and the programs above will be shared in the weekly RE email, but also please feel free to contact me with any questions, jessica@uuwausau.org.

Over the coming months, I hope we will have many chances to get to know each other. I’d love to get to chat with each of you; tell you about my awesome family (Garrette, Josh (aka Rowan), Maddi and Amellia), my love of reading, hiking, camping and kayaking, and my vision for and philosophy of RE; and I would love to hear more about you all, how you came to UU Wausau, and what you love about being part of it. Until then!

In community,
Jes

Treasurer's Report to the Congregation

Financial Results 1/1/2021 – 7/31/2021

Key Annual Budget Numbers:

Total Income	\$259,387
Total Expense	\$210,400
Net Income	\$ 48,987

2021 Pledges Received (7 Months):

Pledges Budget	\$206,799
Pledges Actual	\$198,439
Pledges Less Than Budget	\$ 8,360

Outstanding Mortgage: \$136,672

Endowment: \$578,169

Total Income includes a \$39,752 Federal Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan which we secured under the CARES Act pandemic legislation.

Total Income was 110.4% of budget, while Total Expenses were 89.5% of budget.

Pledges received through 7/31/2021 plus seven months of 2021 prepaid pledge allocation, shown as Pledges Actual above, is 96.0% of budgeted pledges.

The Endowment grew by \$42,025 from 4/30/2021 primarily due to a significant legacy gift.

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Jefferson
Treasurer
08/23/2021

Religious Services

With summer winding down and a new church year beginning, the Religious Services Committee wants to thank all those members who participated in summer services through leading or co-leading a service and/or attending services. Our attendance numbers were consistently higher than seen in past years, and those attending were rewarded with a wide variety of quality services, with many of them planned and presented by first time worship leaders. We are starting our regular church year service planning and are interested in suggestions for speakers, leaders, and topics. It's never too early to start thinking about next summer either. We would also welcome anyone interested in joining our committee to help with service planning.

Contact [Randy Jefferson](#), [Sheryl Hemp](#), or [Brian Mason](#) with ideas or to volunteer.

From the Board Table

As I sit to write today, I feel compelled, once again, to reflect on the impact of this pandemic. For awhile, things were starting to feel normal-ish. Then came the Delta variant requiring that we adapt. The rules and recommendations changed...again. Even though we've been through this many times now, it remains challenging. Uncertainty is hard, and I, for one, am tired. As some of you know, I am a therapist. As many of you may know, the mental health sector, like so many others, was hit hard during this pandemic. When it began, I recognized that I'd have to approach the demands of the challenge ahead — not like a sprint, but a marathon. Before long, it became clear that a more apt metaphor would be a marathon relay. We keep moving forward, passing the baton when we need to, so we can keep going together. I've been thinking a lot about this marathon relay metaphor in relation to the challenges the church has faced over the course of the past 17

months, and indeed throughout her 150 year history. I trust that, as a church community, we'll continue to be responsive and resourceful and rise to the challenges. There are remarkable people who step up and step in to ensure that our church community remains strong.

We are also actively seeking more volunteers to step into board positions, committee positions, and to fill the many volunteer opportunities that arise throughout the church year. And the next church year is right around the corner. I don't know what this year will look like, but I know it will be different than every year that came before. My hope is that we find our way through together with compassion, acceptance, and trust.

Sincerely,

~ Kara Hall

Community Focus Collections 2021-2022

Since 2001 our church has been contributing to monthly Community Focus Collections. In those 20 years we've donated to 78 different organizations or appeals. While creating awareness of local non-profit agencies purposes and efforts we've shown our support for them with our generosity.

Through CFC we've also contributed to local, national and international relief efforts for disaster relief from hurricanes (5), floods, tornadoes, tsunamis and earthquakes. We've aided young and old, men and women, animals and the arts. We've given generously to establish new programs that meet the current and changing needs of our community.

If you've read this far, now reread the above and replace the word "we've" with YOU. *You*

have made this possible. It couldn't be done without YOU.

CFC will continue to be on the 3rd Sunday of the month. If you're able to be present you'll hear a short presentation about the agency and be able to show your support during the collection. If you're not in church on that Sunday you can still show your support by sending your check to UU Wausau, marked for the specific organization in the memo line. Thank you for all you do to support others.

CFC Committee: Joyce Schneider
 Elizabeth Robinson
 Roxann Bornemann

Climate Justice & Green Sanctuary Status

Social action comes after accepting social responsibility, and the Social Justice Committee believes that climate and the health of our lived environment is a responsibility of society. The Unitarian Universalist Association provides a framework for UU congregations to make a positive contribution to climate and environmental justice. That framework is named “Green Sanctuary” and includes an accreditation process. For those of you familiar with the process that UU Wausau went through to obtain the *Welcoming Congregation* status, this is similar.

The Green Sanctuary process is less about how “green” our building is and more about how the activities and activism we take outside our sanctuary bring positive impact on the lives of those most affected by climate change, plus reduce human-caused climate change to the best of our abilities. If UU-Wausau chooses to embark on this initiative, we will need volunteers, activists, approval and support of the Board and good coordination.

What could make *Green Sanctuary* stand out is that it would make us a prominent congregation taking a stance on this massive issue and making it a societal issue, defusing those who see it as a political issue. That alone can change minds for the better.

Green Sanctuary is a process including education, assessment, action plans and projects, all of which must be related to climate justice. Most congregations have a 2–4-year journey to accreditation that begins with organizing, then Board approval of a charter. At our July “Community Café” summer service, 20+ people gave input on the consideration of UU-Wausau chartering a Green Sanctuary effort, documenting more than 40 ideas of actions and tactics that can make a difference.

The axiom of “think globally, act locally” comes to mind in this case, as we need to both take local action, plus support and influence those who can take federal and international action on this borderless, globe-encompassing issue. There can be a welcome spot for those who find passion in taking action on reducing the carbon footprint of our church, those who can educate on water conservation methods, and those who are thrilled or nervous yet inspired to protest inaction on government-controlled issues. Teaming up with the Citizens' Climate Lobby would fit into the scope of an initiative in this area.

The Social Justice Committee would be the genesis of this effort, if we take it on, followed by a separate task force focused on climate justice. If you are passionate in this area and willing to lend a hand, send a note to jmsheibley@charter.net. If you are unsure yet interested, look through our Community Café Coffee Hour review on the next page, and visit our tabletop presentation to ask questions and learn more.

Jim Sheibley

Social Justice Committee



A Recap of the Community Café Conversation Hosted by the Social Justice Community

For several years the Social Justice Committee has worked on various topics and projects, sharing information with the congregation, raising money, hosting speakers, and volunteering in the community. On Sunday July 18th, they hosted a “Community Café,” organized around table topics so the congregation could hear what committee members have worked on and hear from our members about their viewpoints, share their knowledge, perspectives, and opinions.

The feedback from the Café was very positive. People appreciated the opportunity to visit at the different tables hosted by a leader who shared specific subject matter information, asked questions to get conversation going, and had a scribe to take notes on the conversation which focused on five issues: Reproductive Rights, Access to Voting/Fair Maps, Immigration Reform, “Green Sanctuary” (UUA’s environmental initiative), and Racial Justice. Participants were interested, knowledgeable, and wanted more opportunities to learn about the topics.

What stood out was how knowledgeable our congregants are. Many of them were eager to share their experiences, wanted to learn more, and share their efforts volunteering in the community.

Partnership in the community was frequently mentioned as an important element to successful change being made. The groups asked that information should be shared with the whole congregation on a more regular basis. Everyone has differing priorities but it was clear environmental issues are a constant and growing concern that impacts all areas of our lives.

In response to the feedback from the groups the Social Justice Committee has plans to share their table topics in the Atrium after the September 26th Sunday Service. There will be coffee, topic information and updates on projects that you may have an interest in supporting. If you would like more detailed information about the Cafe contact the Committee Chair [Jerry Phelan](#) who led the discussion on Racial Justice, [Jim Sheibley](#) on “Green Sanctuary,” [Macia Sheibley](#) on Reproductive Rights, [Joyce Schneider](#) on Immigration, and [Don Dunphy](#) on Voter Access/Fair Maps.

The goal of the Café was to converse and come away listened to and heard. Let us keep the conversation and work going forward. Thank you.

- Roxann Bornemann



The Noon Swoon

Attention *The New Yorker* readers, every Wednesday at noon, others like you have been gathering at church for lively talk about recent print or on-line articles that we found worthy of sharing. It's an informal, drop-in gathering that always provides insights and perspectives on some of the limitless range of subjects provided by *The New Yorker*. Stopping by and just listening is OK too.

Contact [Randy Jefferson](#) with any questions.

From the Stewardship Committee

Greetings to You All, my fellow Congregants.

It's that time of year again when we must think about paying the bills: *It's Stewardship time.*

In several weeks you will be receiving your pledge form in the mail, and we will ask you to return it with a promise to support our church for another year.

Despite being confronted with Covid issues for the past year, we still achieved most of our financial goal for this year, coming up less than 5% short of our target. I'm confident we can do *even better* this year, as our church - our spiritual haven - has remained an important part of our lives, and thus remains most worthy of our continued support. So I ask you to keep UU Wausau in your thoughts and be open to continuing to be Stewards for this our spiritual home.

- Your Stewardship Committee



New Book by Annette Grunseth

Annette Langlois Grunseth, grew up in the First Universalist-Unitarian Church, along with her brother Peter Langlois. After many years and a promise to their parents, she has published a book of Peter's letters and photos from the Vietnam War titled "Combat and Campus: Writing Through War." (Elm Grove Press, 2021, Old Mystic, CT). The book also includes her letters and responses while a freshman on a turbulent UW- Madison Campus of the same year.

As a journalist and soldier with the 25th Infantry Division, riding armored personnel carriers into rice paddies, engaging in night time sweeps of the jungle, Sgt. Peter Langlois chronicles the smells, sights, and sounds during some of the darkest days of the Vietnam war from 1968 - '69.

Their correspondence offers a unique perspective of the war in Vietnam and social change happening at home.

Annette will return to Wausau on two dates to share her book:

September 11th, Festival of the Arts, downtown, Janke Bookstore, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

September 25, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Central Wisconsin Book Festival and Book Fair located at Whitewater Hall.

Stop by to greet one of our own and hear some "inside" stories about the book. Learn more and check out the book:

<https://www.annettegrunseth.com/>

September 2021



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	2 Tai Chi 6:30PM	3	4
5 9:30AM: Blessing of the Back- packs Service led by the Rev. Brian Mason and DRE Jes Zimmer	6 Office Closed Women's AA 6PM	7 no Qi Gong class tonight	8 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	9 Social Justice 6PM on Zoom Tai Chi 6:30PM	10 Blood Drive 12pm-5pm	11
12 10:30AM: Ingathering and Water Communion Service led by the Rev. Brian Mason	13 Women's AA 6PM	14 Qi Gong 6:30PM	15 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	16 Tai Chi 6:30PM	17	18
19 10:30AM: "Grace and Acceptance" Service led by the Rev. Brian Mason CFC Sunday: Proud Theater	20 Women's AA 6PM	21 Office Closed BOT meeting 6:30PM Qi Gong 6:30PM	22 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	23 Tai Chi 6:30PM	24	25
26 9:00AM: K-6th grade RE on Zoom 10:30AM: "Learning Silence" led by the Reverend Brian Mason	27 Office Closed Women's AA 6PM	28 Office Closed Qi Gong 6:30PM	29 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	30 Tai Chi 6:30PM	Red Cross @ UU Wausau September 10th 12pm-5pm Visit redcrossblood.org to schedule a donation time.	



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

Red Cross @ UU Wausau
September 10th, 12pm-5pm
Visit redcrossblood.org
to schedule a donation time.

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Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

Inside this Issue:

September Services	1
From a Window on Grant	2
Soul Matters Small Groups	2
Bounce Back Plan	3-4
RE Newsletter	5
Treasurer's Report	6
Religious Services	6
From the Board Table	7
Community Focus Collections	7
Green Sanctuary Status	8
Community Café Recap	9
Noon Swoon	9
Stewardship Message	10
New Book Information	10
Calendar	11

Church Office closed 9-6, 21, 27-28.

Office hours: Monday-Thursday, 9AM-2PM
Please contact us to set up an appointment.
Church phone: (715) 842-3697, www.uuwausau.org

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