



First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

# The Circuit Writer

December 2022

## December Services

**Sunday, December 4th | 10:30AM**

**“Less Explaining, More Living”**

*the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

**Sunday, December 11th | 10:30AM**

**“Christmas Sing!”**

*led by the Rev. Brian Mason & Margaret Jerz*

Join UU Wausau for the annual Christmas Sing, a special service with an extra helping of the season’s favorite hymns and carols, with special musical performances, and a whole lot of cheer.

**Annual Congregational Meeting, December 11th, at 11:45AM. All church members are encouraged to attend and vote. [Meeting packet is here.](#)**

**Sunday, December 18th | 10:30AM**

**Christmas Pageant**

Join us for a unique take on the traditional Christmas Pageant, a rich and favored service at UU Wausau for more than 100 years. With performances by the children and youth of the congregation and help from the audience, accompanied by the heartwarming music of the season.

**\*\*Wednesday,\*\* December 21st | 7:00PM**  
**Winter Solstice Service**

*led by lay leader Randy Jefferson*

Again this year we will observe the northern hemisphere's longest night of the year by celebrating the passage from darkness to light with readings, songs, drumming, letting go, quiet meditation, and candles. All are welcome to join in this special intergenerational seasonal service which honors our earth centered traditions that celebrate the sacred circle of life.

**\*\*Saturday,\*\* December 24th | 7:00PM**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

*the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

UU Wausau’s traditional Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols and candlelight.

**Sunday, December 25th | 10:30AM**

**Christmas Day**

*the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching*

Join the Rev. Mason and Music Director Margaret Jerz on Christmas morning to enjoy the bounty of the season in an around the Christmas tree service of lessons and carols.



## *From A Window on Grant—December 2022*

As this is my last newsletter until I return from sabbatical in May, I want to use this occasion to elaborate on the plan for when I'm away and to convey my heartfelt appreciation for UU Wausau. First, the appreciation: In the last six years I've been privileged to experience some of the most challenging and rewarding moments in my professional life. During the challenges, I was able to lean on church members, thanks be to God, who nudged me to keep going. The rewarding times let me witness members speak of personal breakthroughs and when I watched groups revel in acts of service and accomplishment. Seeing others enjoy the fruits of the Spirit is ministry's greatest gift, and this church is a gift in many ways.

Now for the plan. After discussion with the church's leadership, it's been decided that members of the Board will temporarily act as Chief of Staff while I'm on sabbatical. This arrangement, recommended by the UUA, ensures that staff continue to receive the support they need to carry out their work without undue burden. I am appreciative of the staff and Board's support and flexibility and am confident in their abilities.

Attached to this letter is a contact list that will help you determine the best person to contact for various circumstances. It's not exhaustive, so when in doubt call the church office or speak to a Board member. They'll be able to get you to the right person.

Now that the logistics are done, let me return to the topic of sabbatical. As I shared in an earlier newsletter, one of the first things I'll do is walk the Camino Frances. My walk begins on January 17 in Saint Jean Pied de Port, France, and ends on February 18 in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. I will get back to the U.S. sometime in late-February, and will spend the rest of sabbatical in prayer, study, and fellowship with beloveds.

There are two questions I get when I share sabbatical plans. The first is, "How can I help Sarah and Ellie?" The short answer is, they don't need help, but thank you for asking. We are blessed with a devoted family, wonderful friends, a warm home, a neighbor who enjoys shoveling snow (glad there's someone), and busy lives as professionals

and students. We've got all we need and more. So, don't worry.

The second question is, "Is there a way I can follow you on a blog or social media?" The short answer is, yes, I've set up a blog (<https://beejaymay.micro.blog/>). On there I plan to track what I'm reading and listening to, post photos, and keep an online journal. Please bear in mind that this is a personal/spiritual (i.e., not a professional) blog and should be read as such.

But I'm not on sabbatical yet! We still have December to enjoy. We have Advent, Christmas Sing, the Pageant, Christmas Eve Candlelight, and Christmas Day morning to spend together. And don't forget that the worship and music committee are hosting the Winter Solstice service. In this Christmas season there are many ways to serve the Wausau community, extra ways to help around church like Hanging of the Greens, acting in the Pageant, or by making a year-end donation. December is one my favorite months, mostly because it's a liturgical treasure trove: rich with anticipation and joy.

In closing, I thought I'd share my 2022 "Bests":

- **Best film (tie):** *Top Gun: Maverick* and *Turning Red*. *Maverick* was fun, nostalgic, exciting, way better than expected. *Turning Red* is a blast, hilarious, touching, expansive.
- **Best fiction:** *Search* by Michelle Huneven. This was an understandably controversial book in the world of UU. Regardless, the book's wonderfully written, filled with delightful characters and delicious drama (and a few great recipes). IMO: it's full of insight into 21st century liberal Protestantism, UU especially, and its practitioners.
- **Best non-fiction:** *Strangers to Ourselves* by Rachel Aviv. Powerful reporting about mental illness and the mind, with amazing profiles. The people you meet, and the details of their lives, will inspire you to think in new ways about illness and identity.
- **Best poetry:** *Balladz* by Sharon Olds. Love and loss, life and death, rage and hope. Olds is in a league of her own yet again with this collection.

- **Best theology:** *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* by David F. Ford. Ford taught at Cambridge forever, so it goes without saying that he's an insightful teacher. In the book, he leads readers on an intimate encounter with the Bible's most poetic and challenging Gospel.
- **Best album (great year for music):** Taylor Swift's *Midnights* (rock/pop), Daniel Hope's *America* (classical), The Beths' *Expert In A Dying Field* (pop punk), Beyoncé's *Renaissance* (pop/R&B), Florence and the Machine's *Dance Fever* (rock/pop), and The Smile's *A Light for Attracting Attention* (rock) all sat on my playlist for months. This list could go on...and on.
- **Best DVD reissue:** David Lean's *Summertime*. Katharine Hepburn, need I say more?
- **Best album reissue:** Wilco's *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*. Midwestern dad rock at its finest, remastered to sonic perfection.
- **Best TV show (tie):** *Bob's Burgers*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *House of the Dragon*, and *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*
- **Best pizza:** Ha! Good pizza doesn't exist in Wausau.
- **Best burger:** My kitchen.
- **Best Friday fish fry:** Hiawatha (RIP), now Bunkers Bar & Grill...maybe
- **Best cheese curds:** Hiawatha (RIPx2), now TBD
- **Best bar & grill:** Hiawatha (RIPx3), now TBD
- **Best brew pub:** Beer is gross (except IPAs), but Red Eye I guess
- **Best restaurant:** Tine & Cellar
- **Best supper club:** Ask me in 2023
- **Best day trip:** Driftless region
- **Best boutique:** The Milk Merchant
- **Best bookseller:** Janke Book Store, duh
- **Best grocer:** Lamb's on Wausau Ave because it's the most unpretentious place around
- **Best church:** UU Wausau
- **Best UU Wausau member:** [REDACTED]

Love,  
Brian

## Sunday, December 4th:

Service @ 10:30AM

Potluck @ 11:45AM

Hanging of the Greens @ 12:30PM



Help decorate our  
Atrium & Sanctuary  
for the holidays!!



It may be cold and (sometimes!) snowy outside, but our church sanctuary always seems warm and beautiful during the holiday season, thanks to the poinsettias provided through your generous donations. Poinsettias also brighten the season for our members who are unable to join us at our Sunday Services.

Please consider making a \$25 donation to go toward this holiday tradition in honor or memory of someone you hold dear. Your memorial message will be printed on the Christmas Eve order of worship to acknowledge your tribute.

**Pick up a memorial form at the church, or [download a form here.](#)**

**Please return your donation and memorial information to the Church Office by Sunday, December 11th to guarantee printing in the Christmas Eve Order of Worship.**

## SABBATICAL CONTACT SHEET

Sabbatical dates: January thru April

Office hours: M-Th, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Phone: 715-842-3697

### **Day to day:**

*Danika Gibson, Congregational Administrator ([danika@uuwausau.org](mailto:danika@uuwausau.org))  
(Building use/rental, facilities management, room reservations, accounts payable/receivable, day to day operations)*

### **Religious Education:**

*Jes Zimmer, Dir of Religious Education ([jessica@uuwausau.org](mailto:jessica@uuwausau.org))  
(All things religious education)*

### **Sabbatical preacher:**

*The Rev. Suzanne Wasilczuk ([suzwas@hotmail.com](mailto:suzwas@hotmail.com))*

### **Music & choir:**

*Margaret Jerz, Music Director ([margaret@uuwausau.org](mailto:margaret@uuwausau.org))*

### **Worship & guest speakers:**

*Randy Jefferson ([rpi1115@yahoo.com](mailto:rpi1115@yahoo.com)) and Sheryl Hemp ([wishemp@gmail.com](mailto:wishemp@gmail.com))*

### **Temporary Chiefs of Staff:**

*Sheryl Hemp, Jeff Leigh ([jeff.leigh88@gmail.com](mailto:jeff.leigh88@gmail.com)), and Randy Jefferson*

### **Illness, surgery, death, resource assistance, need someone to chat about life with:**

*Sara Eberlein ([eberlein.sara@gmail.com](mailto:eberlein.sara@gmail.com)), Caring Committee Chair; and Temporary Chiefs of Staff*

### **Property issues, concerns:**

*Tim Peterson ([timnp67@aol.com](mailto:timnp67@aol.com)), Property Committee co-chair; and Danika Gibson*

### **Interested in membership & how to get involved:**

*Carolyn Powers, Membership & Involvement Coordinator ([carolyn@uuwausau.org](mailto:carolyn@uuwausau.org))*

### **Funeral/Wedding officiant, pastoral care & counseling:**

*The Rev. Wasilczuk; the Rev. Erik Olson ([reverik23@yahoo.com](mailto:reverik23@yahoo.com)), pastor at First English Lutheran, Wausau; and the Rev. Rebecca Voss ([rebecca@fumcwausau.org](mailto:rebecca@fumcwausau.org)), pastor at First Methodist Wausau*

### **Funeral planning:**

*Sara Eberlein and Danika Gibson*

***Official notice—from the Board of Trustees  
of First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau***

As required by the Bylaws, an annual meeting of the congregation will be held **Sunday, December 11th at 11:45 AM** after the service. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary.

The annual report to the congregation [is available online here](#), and hard copies are available in the Church Office, as are [absentee ballots](#).

Included in the annual report will be at least the following:

- Reports of officers and staff
- The election of members to the Board of Trustees, the Endowment Committee, and the Nominating Committee
- An annual budget
- Minutes from the last annual meeting

We will vote on necessary business during the course of the meeting including the following bylaw change recommendation:

- Bylaw IV, section 1: Change number of board members from 9 to 6-9, and changing from “3 of whom shall be chosen annually” to “2-3 of whom”.
- Under number 4: Change Nominating Committee to Board Development and Nominating Committee
- Bylaw VII, section 1: Change name of Nominating Committee to Board Development Committee and Nominating. Rewrite number 1 to reflect updated number of board members and name of committee
- Number 3: Update name of committee

If you are unable to attend the meeting you can also fill out [an absentee ballot](#) ahead of time. This would then need to be returned to the church before the annual meeting in order to be included in the vote total.

**All church members are allowed to vote.**

Sheryl Hemp  
Board President

## *REflections*

I think my favorite parts of the winter holiday season are the traditions. Putting up decorations the weekend after Thanksgiving (including many from my childhood holidays with my Grandparents), going to see my children's holiday concerts and plays, driving around to see the lights, a Christmas Eve dinner filled with the special family recipes, heading to church for the awe of candlelight and a Sanctuary filled with *Silent Night*, and spending Christmas morning in our pajamas, playing games, and eating leftovers and goodies from our stockings. And even the traditions I didn't even realize we had started and that my family now insists on. Like celebrating Solstice with friends, opening one present on Christmas Eve - always the aforementioned pajamas - and finding the pickle ornament on the tree for a special pickle-themed gift. Last year's was pickle cotton candy (it tasted just like you think it would!).

As you may have concluded from the pickle cotton candy, generally, I am not a very traditional type of person, but there is something beautiful in being connected to and making for my family the magic and rituals my parents and grandparents created for me and as their parents did for them.

I feel the same about the holiday traditions at UU Wausau. It really is amazing when you stop to think about it. How the Christmas pageant, carols, baked goods, and love and hope we will share over the next month or so have been shared within this community for generations.

And now that my partner and I are our family's Co-Chief Holiday Magic Makers, I also know how much love and energy goes into those traditions. So, thank you to all the holiday magic makers at UU Wausau, and no matter the traditions you celebrate, may this holiday season bring you and yours joy and peace.

*Happy Holidays,  
Jes*

## *Living Green December 2022*

The days grow shorter here in North Central Wisconsin. The Cold Moon reaches the full on the seventh. Thoughts turn to giving gifts in celebration of the season's holidays—Solstice/Yule, Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanza, New Year's Eve/Ōmisoka.

Gift-giving can be a muddle. Greenwashing abounds in the retail marketplace, and I am bewildered by all the organizations that certify sustainable products. Is an ugly Christmas sweater from a Certified B Corporation better than a Fair Trade Certified ugly Christmas sweater? If, like me, you're looking for the answer, consider ["The Treehugger Guide to Sustainable Certifications."](#)

To avoid the ugly Christmas sweater dilemma altogether, consider nonmaterial gifts for your family and friends. Here are a few possibilities:

*Donations* in their names to international aid for climate refugees and to environmental and conservation organizations.

*Memberships* in local wildlife refuges and botanical gardens.

*Experiences* that expand horizons such as vegetarian cooking classes and Nordic ski lessons.

The greatest joys are found not in what we give or receive, but in celebrating our shared appreciation for the "interdependent web of existence, of which we are all a part."

With heartfelt thanks and blessings of the season,  
*Donna Keuck for the EAG*

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**Winter Solstice 2022** in Northern Hemisphere will be at 3:47 PM (cst) on Wednesday, December 21st. That evening at 7PM, you are invited to participate in UU Wausau's annual intergenerational Solstice Service, which honors our earth centered traditions that celebrate the sacred circle of life.

## *RE and Youth Events!*

### *Elementary & Youth Group*

On Sunday, December 4, our Elementary RE and Youth Group will explore our monthly theme of "Joy."

Then to celebrate the holidays as a whole community, Elementary RE and Youth Group will not meet on the following Sundays:

December 11th—Holiday Sing  
December 18th—Pageant  
December 25th—Christmas Day

Children and youth are invited to join us for worship on those Sundays.

*The Elementary RE group is open to children in grades K-6th, and the Youth Group is open to youth in grades 7-12.*

### *We Rock It! Book Club*

Geared for tweens and their families (caregivers, grandparents, etc.), we meet weekly on Thursdays at 7:00 pm on Zoom, to discuss that month's graphic novel or chapter book.

Selections explore themes of equity, inclusion, justice, and celebrating the diversity of differing and intersecting identities, including race, ethnicity, sexuality, faith, ability, class, and gender.

Our December read is *Measuring Up* by Lily LaMotte. Email Jessica, [jessica@uuwausau.org](mailto:jessica@uuwausau.org), for this month's reading schedule and Zoom link.



### *Join Our Christmas Pageant Players, December 18*

Be one of our players in our annual Christmas Pageant! We have roles for people of all ages, and most are non-speaking parts. If you prefer more of a behind-the-scenes role, we will also need two "stage managers" to help our players get set in their places. This is also a low-rehearsal commitment with just one dress rehearsal on the morning of the pageant. Email me, [jessica@uuwausau.org](mailto:jessica@uuwausau.org), with questions or to sign up.



### *Parent/Caregivers' Night Out December 9*

On Friday, December 9th, from 6pm-8:30 pm, drop the kids off at UU Wausau for a holiday pajama party while you enjoy an evening out! We'll provide dinner, a movie, games, snacks, and holiday crafts.

This event is open to UU Wausau families, and registration is required. Email me, [jessica@uuwausau.org](mailto:jessica@uuwausau.org), with questions.

Signup for Parent/Caregiver's Night Out here: <https://bit.ly/UUWausauPCNO>.

## *Don't Forget — UU Winter Retreat!*

We are once again gathering at Schwartz Lodge at Camp Manitowish for our traditional Winter Retreat, from January 21-23, 2022!

Due to the communal layout and meal-sharing at the lodge, participants will be asked to show proof of vaccination for those age-eligible for the vaccine.

Each family unit gets their own room and 12 rooms are available. Each family/group will partner up to provide one of the meals for the group.

Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, rock wall climbing available onsite and ice skating available within a 5 minute drive. Games, great food, great company, wonderful memories!

Lodge fees generally run \$15 per night for children and \$45 per night for adults, depending upon final attendance count. Please contact Sally & Steve Schmidt at [sallyschmidt213@gmail.com](mailto:sallyschmidt213@gmail.com)



**Fair Trade  
Coffee & Chocolate**

**THESE ARE WONDERFUL  
STOCKING STUFFERS  
OR HOLIDAY GIFTS!**



## *From the Board Table...*

As the holiday season begins, I have been thinking a lot about connection. It is impossible for me to consider my connections without thinking about UU Wausau. The people who make up this congregation are welcoming and inspiring, and the building itself stirs a calming, familiar, sense of belonging that so many of us need.

I believe that there is something special about UU faith that can elicit feelings of connection, belonging, and acceptance. As a lifelong UU, I am grateful to have grown up in that culture. Our family were the only UUs in the town where I grew up, and when I was young, some of my friends were not quite sure what to make of their friend who openly questioned traditional Christian teachings and was talking about different ways to have faith and spirituality. As we grew up, however, there was increasing curiosity and questioning. I witnessed what can happen when a person begins to realize that they no longer feel connection or belonging within their faith community. I've met many who never had a faith community at all. Those who've lost this connection, or who've never had it, often describe living with challenges that accompany isolation and disconnection. Challenges that are often overcome in our society through church membership.

When appropriate, I've tried to introduce the UU religion to those who appear to be seeking a way out of the isolation and disconnection of modern life. To be honest, I've always found it a bit awkward: like I'm proselytizing, which of course feels antithetical to what it means to be UU. In truth, I'm not proselytizing, I'm earnestly sharing my passion about our church in hopes that I might provide opportunity for others to consider making a change that could broaden and deepen their connections. UU faith is a fertile foundation for connecting; not only with other people, but with deeper parts of ourselves.

As a board member, I have begun exploring opportunities to communicate this message beyond the friends and members of UU Wausau. I'm curious and hopeful about the possibilities to step outside familiar spaces and places to

explore new ways to bring people in. If anyone reading this is interested in this as well, and would like to discuss further, please get in touch. I can be reached via email at [kara.h.hall@gmail.com](mailto:kara.h.hall@gmail.com), or come say hi during coffee hour after the service.

Happy Holidays,  
~Kara Hall



## Calling All Congregants!

Participate in making UU Wausau the warm, welcoming place we love! Carolyn Powers, our Membership & Involvement Coordinator, is seeking ushers to start in January. Please e-mail [carolyn@uuwausau.org](mailto:carolyn@uuwausau.org) with your availability, or sign up on the sheet in the Atrium!

## *Poinsettias for Homebound Members*

After the service & Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 11, there will be poinsettias available on the table in the Atrium, which need to be delivered to our homebound members.

If you have time, please take a poinsettia & an address card, and brighten a congregant's day with a quick visit and beautiful holiday flowers either that Sunday or Monday!

## *From Your Stewardship Committee*

We are a Community. We are a voice for liberal religion. We accept you just as you are.

For us to continue to be these things for another year, we ask you to offer us financial support. We request that you renew your pledge for 2023, increasing it 15% over last year's pledge so that we can support you spiritually for another year. You may [give online here](#), by texting "FirstUUWausau" to 73256, or by dropping by church or mailing a check with your pledge form.

We need one another again. Thank you in advance for remembering to give!!

## **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 Rev. 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.

-from [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)

# December 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1  Tai Chi 6:30PM  We Rock It! 7PM on Zoom	2	3
4 10:30AM: "Less Explaining, More Living" led by the Reverend Brian Mason First Sundays Potluck Deck the Halls!	5  Women's AA 6PM	6  Qi Gong 6:30PM	7 Knitting 10AM  The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm  Adult Choir 6:30pm	8 Social Justice 6PM Tai Chi 6:30PM We Rock It! 7PM on Zoom	9 Parent's Night Out 6PM	10
11 10:30AM: Christmas Sing! No RE Classes **11:45AM: Annual Meeting** Poinsettia Memorial Information Due	12  Women's AA 6PM	13  Qi Gong 6:30PM	14 Knitting 10AM  The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm  Adult Choir 6:30pm	15 Tai Chi 6:30PM  We Rock It! 7PM on Zoom	16	17  Atrium Reserved for Bird Club 5-9pm
18 10:30AM: Christmas Pageant! No RE Classes  Special Coffee Hour to celebrate Rev. Brian before his sabbatical!	19  Women's AA 6PM	20  January Circuit Writer Information Due  Qi Gong 6:30PM	21 Knitting 10AM  The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm  Winter Solstice Service 7:00PM	22 Church Office Closed  Tai Chi 6:30PM  Adult Choir 6:30pm	23	24  Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00PM
25 10:30AM: Christmas Day led by the Reverend Brian Mason No RE Classes	26 Church Office Closed  Women's AA 6PM	27 Church Office Closed	28 Knitting 10AM  The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm	29	30	31  



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

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

**Board of Trustees:**

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