



The Circuit Writer

November 2022

Sunday Services

Sunday, November 6 | 10:30AM

Sunday Worship

Led by the Reverend Brian Mason

Potluck in the Dining Hall after the service!

Sunday, November 13 | 10:30AM

Sunday Worship

Led by the Reverend Brian Mason

Sunday, November 20 | 10:30AM

Bread Communion

Led by the Reverend Brian Mason

What is your heritage? Who are your people? What traditions do you preserve and share with your friends and family? Everyone is invited to participate in this UU Wausau tradition by bringing a bread (or baked good) of your family or heritage to share. And of course, bring the story, or stories, that convey its specialness to you.

Sunday, November 27 | 10:30AM

"There and Back Again: Zen Journeys"

Led by Dr. Donna Keuck, guest speaker

Dr. Donna Keuck, Japanese sociologist and practicing Obaku Zen Buddhist, will continue exploring the practice of equanimity (Sanskrit: upekṣā; Japanese: sha), as recounted in the travel narratives of Chan/Zen masters and in her life journey. How does equanimity sustain us in the wide world? What habits help us tap the well-springs of calm at the core of our Selves? Participants will have an opportunity to sample the sitting meditation of Zen Buddhism.

RE Programming

Elementary Religious Education

This month Elementary RE will be exploring the Soul Matters theme of "Holding History" with stories, games, art, and more! Our Elementary RE group is open to children in grades K-6th.

Youth Group

For youth in grades 7-12, Youth Group focuses on building relationships, creating a greater sense of belonging, and helping each other feel supported in their spiritual journey through hands-on experiences and deep conversation. During November, Youth Group will be exploring the theme of "Holding History."

Elementary RE and Youth Group will not meet on November 20th or 27th.

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 the 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. November's book is *The Prince and the Dressmaker* by Jen Wang. Email Jessica, jessica@uuwausau.org, for this month's title and Zoom link.

Book Club will not meet November 24th.



***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.

You will receive the annual report to the congregation. This will be emailed to you. You could also make arrangements to pick up a hard copy at church. Please contact our Congregational Administrator Danika Gibson at danika@uuwausau.org or (715) 842-3697 if you want an arrangement other than email.

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 request an absentee ballot ahead of time. This would then need to be returned to the church by the day of the Annual meeting in order to be included in the vote total. Again, please contact Danika if you want an absentee ballot.

All church members are allowed to vote.

Sheryl Hemp
Board President



Reflections

Over the past year, I have been asked by different people why I don't call the children forward for the Time for All Ages (TfAA). I understand it was UU Wausau's practice before the pandemic, and admittedly, it was mine for several years. But my, and many of my colleagues', thoughts on the topic have shifted in recent years, and I wanted to share those thoughts with everyone.

Let me start by wholeheartedly agreeing that our congregation has an amazing group of children and youth. They are bright, endearing, and fill our community with energy and sparkle each week. I understand the desire to call them forward so they can have a chance to shine and share their wisdom with us. However, there are four important reasons that I do not do so:

- On the practical side, we have cold, hard floors which make sitting upfront for a TfAA very uncomfortable, and with the Sanctuary setup, to tell a story at the kids' level means the speaker cannot be seen by most of the congregation.
- When the kids come forward it signals to the adults that this is the now the "children's part of the service", but the TfAA truly is meant to be an opportunity for folks of every age to connect with and better understand each week's message and to set the stage, so to speak, for the sermon. Stories are a way people of all ages learn.
- Calling the children forward also separates them from their families. Children and youth are learning our language, how to worship, and how to be Unitarian Universalists. Separating families does not provide children the opportunity to ask questions and to learn and/or families the opportunity to teach and lift up something they think is important.
- How we worship and what we do (or don't do) in worship is a statement of those things we hold dear. At no other point in worship do we require or single out another group of individuals to lead. For instance, all 60-year-olds are not required to sing in the choir. Calling the kids forward puts the children on

display; makes their cuteness and antics the focus, rather than the story; and offers up their earnest and heartfelt thoughts at minimum as entertainment and at worst to be laughed at. I have seen this more than once. The intent is always good hearted, but the impact is still the same. And while I am certain coming forward was always offered as an invitation, not a requirement, there is an implicit power dynamic and pressure when an adult/ staff member/ teacher invites a group of children to do something. So, in worship, we honor every person's inherent worth and dignity by explicitly inviting them as an individual to participate in a specific role (like helping with a wonder box or acting in the pageant), accepting their consent or non-consent.

Shortly after starting at UU Wausau, I attended a MidAmerica webinar about post-pandemic Religious Education (RE). During, Cameron Young mentioned something that has stuck with me. Paraphrasing - We mistake proximity for relationship. And I think this is the mind trick calling children forward pulled on us. Similar to how social media can make us feel more deeply connected with acquaintances than we are and them with us.

When people talk to me about missing the children up front, I know underneath there is valid grief for what was and a desire to be in community with children and youth. Church is one of the few communities where people of all ages gather. But that community is built through togetherness. During the TfAA, we might hear something we appreciate or have a shared laugh, but we are still separate. There isn't interaction between those up front and in the pews. We aren't able to share appreciation or even learn each other's names. With the kids' backs to the congregation and being on the floor, I know it is hard to even know who said or did what. There is proximity, not relationship.

Even though things have changed, there are still many ways all ages can be together and that offer an opportunity to build relationships.

(Continued on the next page)

REflections, continued:

We have openings for adult volunteers in most of our RE groups; we have a family service project in November that is open to all members and friends of the congregation (see page 7), and our Winter Retreat in January is open to all (see below!); and friendly faces to support families in worship are *always* wanted. We need children and youth in our lives just as much as they need more loving adults in theirs. People of all ages and stages need to learn together and from each other; to celebrate and mourn together; and to be seen, heard, and held in loving kindness by each other. And we all need more relationship and less proximity in our lives.

- *Jes*

UU Winter Retreat!

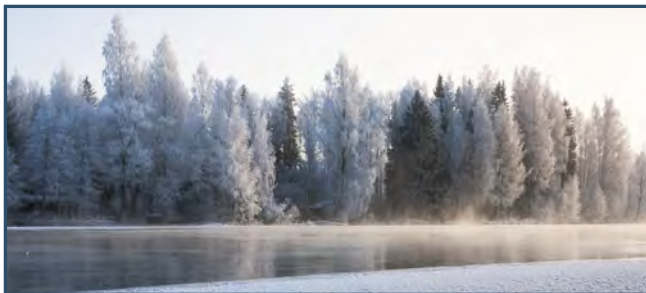
Mark your Calendars! Save the Date! Join us for the Annual UU Winter Retreat at Camp Manitowish!

We have reserved the Beautiful Schwartz Lodge with 12 rooms for families/groups the weekend of January 20th through 22nd, 2023. Please join us for sledding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, indoor rock wall climbing, great company, and tons of fun!

Contact Steve & Sally Schmidt at 715-370-1157 to sign up or with questions.

Lodge fee is divided among participants and usually ends up around \$30 per kid and \$45 per adult per night. Please don't let cost be prohibitive. Contact the church office if you'd like to receive an anonymous donation to offset the cost. We all share meal preparation.

Joining the Winter Retreat is a great way to meet church members, make friends, and enjoy winter's beauty.



Music Making Opportunities

The **UU Choir** is off and running, enjoying the practice driven process of learning new music to share with the congregation on an every three to four weeks schedule. For those of you who have had a secret wish to participate in this singing expedition, we meet every Wednesday in the Atrium from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Our present focus is on preparing new choir pieces that will be shared on November 20, Bread Communion, December 11, Sing Sunday, and December 24, Christmas Eve. As always, we welcome new members. There are no formal auditions, just bring your good ears and a desire to sing in harmony.

Our **DRUM Club** also always welcomes new members. Right now, we are having great fun preparing music that will feature our authentic West African and Afro-Cuban style drums along with various small percussion instruments. The annual Winter Solstice Celebration, Dec. 21, will be the scene of this sharing. There are no auditions, and no previous percussion experience is required. We meet Mondays in the Drum Haven (my basement) at 1005 Steuben St. from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Ad hoc, anyone? Jes and I are hoping to organize a small choir composed of members of the Religious Education program and perhaps their parents! The **December Singers** would prepare one or two songs that could be shared during the Christmas Pageant, December 18. We would practice shortly after church services on November 27, Dec. 4 and 11. Please let me and Jes know if this is a possibility for you.

- *Margaret*

First Sundays Potluck!

On **Sunday, November 6th**, our November potluck will be held in the Dining Hall right after the Sunday service. This potluck is hosted by The Soul Matters Group Who Couldn't Come Up With a Theme!

For the potluck, please bring a favorite dish to pass (main, side, or dessert), and the Soul Matters group will provide drinks.

We hope to see you there!



**Whatever YOUR reasons
for being a part of **First UU Wausau**...**

We ask YOU to be:
“ALL IN”

Fill out Your 2023 Pledge Form TODAY...

It's vital that you consider generously stepping up your church gift
to help those whose giving is more difficult this year.

As you increase your Generosity, we become Stronger.
Our Voice in the Community becomes Louder.
And we help YOU become Stronger too.

When your Pledge Form comes in the mail,
please complete it with Generosity in your Heart. ♥

DONATE



—The Stewardship Committee

From the Board Table

One of the podcasts I listen to on a regular basis is “Happier with Gretchen Rubin”. She encourages picking a theme each year to guide your goals. My theme of 2021 was “All In.” 2020 was a rough year in many ways, but for those of us working in health care it was particularly challenging. For the first time in my 30-year career, I seriously considered leaving my profession. After agonizing back and forth, I ultimately made the decision to stay, and chose the theme “All In” to affirm my commitment to my job.

“All In” meant I was determined to look favorably on the many changes at work, and instead of complaining, I would embrace challenges in an effort to make my company succeed. When I found out that this year’s Stewardship Campaign theme is “All In,” I was reminded of my decision to stay in health care.

How can I as a member of First UU be “All In”? First of all, I can examine my past pledging efforts and be honest with myself about what I can truly afford to give. Am I “All In” with my pledge? Or can I increase a little (or a lot) this year to support the mission and vision of this institution that is so important in my life?

Secondly, **am I “All In” in the way I participate in First UU?** Do I attend services regularly? Do I volunteer to usher or teach RE? I am a Board member, true, but do I use that as an excuse to not volunteer in other ways? How else can I support this community?

Finally, **do I let others know what we have to offer,** invite friends to join me at a service, and share what this church means to me in an attempt to grow our membership?

Being “All In” doesn’t mean we all agree (we are UUs, after all!). To me, being “All In” means I do the most I can to make First UU as successful as possible. How about you? ***Will you join me this year by being “All In”?***

- Dawn Ashenbrenner

UU Wausau Thanksgiving!

Join us for the Annual First UU Thanksgiving Dinner!

What: An evening of readings, songs, toasts, feasting and fellowship

When/where: Thursday, November 17th at 6:00pm in the First UU Wausau Dining Room

Provided: Turkey, potatoes and gravy, plates and tableware

Bring: In addition to family and friends,

A dish to share – vegetable, salad, bread, dressing, or dessert

A toasting beverage and glasses

A contribution to cover the cost of turkey

Sign up (so we know how many to prepare for):
At the table in the Atrium on Sundays

For information or to volunteer to help, call Sheryl Hemp at (715) 571-0604, or email her at wishemp@aol.com

All Ages Blanket Making!

Join us for no-sew blanket making on **Saturday, November 12 at 9:00 am.** We'll be making no-sew fleece blankets for area organizations. We'll have a light breakfast, and participants are invited to bring along fabric scissors if they have them. No craft skills are necessary (just tying knots), and this service project is open to families with or without children at home!

Early Risers Meeting Nov. 19th!

All women of the church are invited to gather for breakfast and conversation!

When: Saturday, November 19th, at 8:30AM

Where: The Garden Pancake House, 508 Grand Avenue in Schofield (the old Perkin's building)

Living Green

It's the orange season now. The branches on the paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*) and the speckled alder (*Alnus incana*) are bare. The side lawn is a carpet of orange hues: ginger and cinnamon, honey and marmalade, carrot and yam. Orange, of course, is a blend of the primary colors of yellow and red. There are yellow leaves on the lawn that remind me of corn, butterscotch and mustard, an odd combination of food choices to be sure, but pretty for leaves. The red shades of cherry, apple and currant can be found out there, too.

We have made a change in our autumn routine this year. Rather than raking leaves, we have decided to follow the advice of the WI-DNR and mulch them with our e-mower. The little leaf bits filter down between the mown grass blades to enrich the soil with carbon, potassium and phosphorus.

If it just isn't autumn for you without raking, the DNR suggests chopping up the piles of leaves with your lawn mower. The chopped bits can be added to compost heaps. Alternately, the bits can be kept in sacks or chicken wire cages during the winter. By spring, you will have a nice supply of home-grown mulch for the garden.

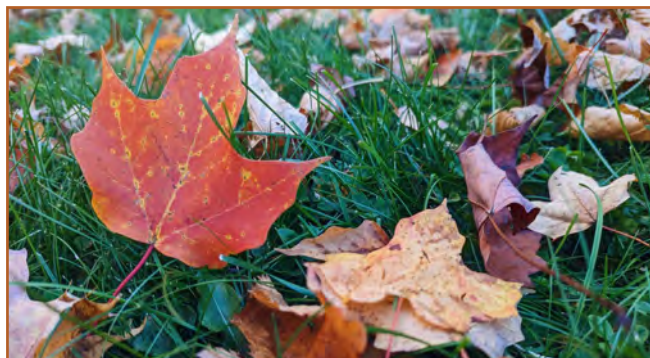
It is a beautiful second-summer afternoon. Through my study window, I see Christopher in his flannel shirt, cutting grass and mulching leaves. I'm going outside to give him a hand and to share in the delight that comes with honoring the "interdependent web of existence, of which we are all a part."

With heartfelt thanks,

Donna Keuck for the EAG

Sources:

1. [Wisconsin DNR—Autumn Yard Care](#)



November CFC: The Hmong American Center

The Hmong American Center, Inc. is a non-profit organization headquartered in Wausau, WI, providing services to the Southeast Asian and Hispanic communities in Marathon, Wood, Langlade, Lincoln, Shawano, Taylor, and Clark Counties. The organization was established in 1983 as an entity to help the Southeast Asian Community settle into the Greater Wausau Area.

Today, H.A.C. provides a variety of programs, including **The Cultural Dining Site**, which is a collaboration between the Hmong American Center, Inc. and the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central WI. The Cultural Dining Site provides meals from a local Hmong restaurant that are nutritious, healthy, and culturally catered towards the Southeast Asian Community on Thursdays from 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM. The cultural dining site is opened to anyone in the community, regardless of income and location, as long as they are 60 years and older. Individuals can qualify through their spouse. Meals includes boiled pork with greens, boiled chicken, steamed fish with herbs, and more.

Please join us on **Sunday, November 20**, to raise funds for this essential project. All donations gathered will be sent to the Hmong American Center, Inc. Additionally, you can [donate online here](#); select "Community Focus Collection" from the drop-down menu.

Wanted: "Good Leads to Green Reads"

"Books make great gifts because they have whole worlds inside of them." -Neil Gaiman

The Environmental Action Group is compiling its second annual list of books on climate, ecology, natural history and the environment, suitable for winter holiday gift-giving. Titles of books for children, young adults, and mature readers are welcome. Fiction, poetry, graphic novels, and general audience nonfiction are all suitable. Please include the full citation and a brief statement about the meaning the book has for you.

Submit your titles by Tuesday, November 15th, to: donnakeuck@gmail.com

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

NOVEMBER 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 10:30AM: All Saints Sunday the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching	31 Women's AA 6PM	1 Qi Gong 6:30PM	2 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon Adult RE 6PM Choir 6:30PM	3 Tai Chi 6:30PM Tween Book Club 7PM on Zoom	4	5
6 10:30AM: Sunday Worship the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching Join us for our Nov. First Sundays Potluck!	7 Women's AA 6PM	8 Qi Gong 6:30PM	9 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon Adult RE 6PM Choir 6:30PM	10 Tai Chi 6:30PM Social Justice 6:00PM Tween Book Club 7PM on Zoom	11 Veterans Day	12 All Ages Blanket Making 9:00AM
13 10:30AM: Sunday Worship the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching	14 Women's AA 6PM	15 BOT Meeting 6:30PM Qi Gong 6:30PM	16 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon Choir 6:30PM	17 UU Wausau Thanksgiving: 6:00PM Tai Chi 6:30PM Tween Book Club 7PM	18	19 Early Risers @ Garden Pancake House 8:30AM
20 10:30AM: Bread Communion the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching CFC Sunday! No RE or Youth Group	21 Caring Comm. 3:30PM Women's AA 6PM	22 CW articles due Qi Gong 6:30PM	23 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon Choir 6:30PM	24 Church Office Closed Thanksgiving	25	26
27 10:30AM: "There and Back Again: Zen Journeys" led by Dr. Donna Keuck, guest speaker No RE or Youth Group	28 Women's AA 6PM	29 Qi Gong 6:30PM	30 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon Choir 6:30PM	December 1 Tai Chi 6:30PM Tween Book Club 7PM on Zoom	2	3



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

The Circuit Writer - November 2022

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

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