



The Circuit Writer

February 2022

February Services

Sunday, February 6 | 10:30AM

Breaking Out of the Uncomfortable

Pey Carter, guest speaker

Guest speaker Pey Carter will share their experiences attending a Methodist seminary as an agnostic UU. They will also talk about their journey towards being comfortable with God language.

Sunday, February 13 | 10:30AM

“On Belonging”

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Join us this Sunday for a service in recognition of UU Wausau’s nine new members!

Sunday, February 20 | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

Sunday, February 27 | 10:30AM

the Reverend Brian Mason, preaching

RE Updates

In-person Elementary Returns February 6

After a brief pause due to the Omicron surge, on February 6th, Elementary RE group (K-6th grade) will be returning to in-person, indoor programming. It will take place during its normal time during worship. However, instead of being broken into age-based groups, all the Elementary RE kids will stay together for centering time – chalice lighting, joys and concerns, and story/activity/mindfulness moment – and then the children will get to choose how they would like to explore that week’s theme. This might be anything from picking a game to play with a new friend, reading a book, using a finger labyrinth, building with Lego, or creating with arts and crafts. One of the RE rooms will be set up with a variety of activities that kids can pick from each week, and we will work in the RE Commons space to help with space and distancing for safety. We will also be continuing our other COVID precautions, including masking and vaccination requirements for RE volunteers.



From A Window on Grant

I thought about writing a long philosophical treatise on how I think UU Wausau is more culturally disposed to a congregational governance model as opposed to its current model of policy governance. In fact, I did write that letter. But when I showed it to someone they said, “What does that even mean? What are you getting at? Just get to the point!”

Here’s the point: The board, of which I am a proud member, needs more people to take an active interest in what it’s done, what it’s doing, and where it’s going. The board is down a member and needs someone to step up. The board needs people to help form policy mandated committees such as Personnel, Conflict Management, and Nominating. The board needs help thinking through governance. The board needs people to help cast a long-term vision.

Your church needs your help; its elected leaders need your help; its staff needs your help; its minister needs your help. The church’s present and future depend on it.

Sincerely,

Brian

P.S. The board meets the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 in Yawkey Hall. Reach out to me or the other board members if you have interest in contributing or serving.

Antiracism Storytime Book Club

Children and their families are invited to join us for our Antiracism Storytime book club! In February we are reading the follow-up to Jerry Craft's *New Kid* with [Class Act](#). The book is geared for older elementary students, but all are welcome. We meet on Zoom on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm, and we'll be covering roughly three chapters a week. No worries if someone doesn't get to read beforehand. As part of our conversation, we'll recap that week's section. Email Jessica, jessica@uuwausau.org, to get a copy of the book, the schedule, and the Zoom information.



Community Focus Collection

The Women's Community provides many different services to people in our area. While we tend to think of it as a women's shelter we often forget the children that are involved in these homes. Cheng Thao, Children's Advocate at The Women's Community, will explain a little about the children's programming at The Women's Community. It supports and helps youth who have seen and experienced domestic violence in their own home. They reach out to young trauma victims through play therapy as well as individual one on one interventions. They also go to schools to educate students about domestic violence. Come and learn more on Sunday, February 20th.

Note from the Office: Last month's CFC for Patriot K9s of Wisconsin raised \$525 for their wonderful organization! Thank you for giving so generously.

Reflections

What are our stories?

Was the first sentence in my notes from a Renaissance Module (aka: a RE professional development course) I participated in in January based on Natalie Briscoe's, co-Lead of the Southern Region's Congregational Life Staff Team, work – Dimensions of Faith Development.

Dimensions of Faith Development is a shift from James Fowler's work on the stages of faith development to be un-siloed from others area of development – intellectual, cultural; to look at congregations and communities' faith development as a whole; and to approach faith development through an anti-oppression/anti-racism lens. Pretty exciting a groundbreaking stuff!

And at the center of this work, we are asked to find our stories. Stories matter, because as Natalie told us in our first session, "...our core narrative, our core teaching stories, the stories we tell over and over, are the ways in which we transmit Unitarian Universalism to each other and to new members and new generations." They show the things that we value, the way we want to be in the world, the world we want to create. And in years like the last three, when our lives are turned on their heads, these stories ground us and remind us of who we are.

While Unitarian Universalism is a non-creedal faith and to its betterment and detriment lacks mythos, a creation story, a savior story, etc., that doesn't mean we lack a core narrative. We have stories around the founding of our congregations, the merger story, stories around the formation of Unitarianism and Universalism, stories of Unitarian, Universalist, and

Unitarian Universalist heretics, heroes, and humans. Stories we share with all other UU congregations, and ones that belong uniquely to UU Wausau.

This is where I must admit, I don't know the answer to my opening question. Sure, I know I great deal of stories, and even a good number of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist (U/U/UU) stories, but I don't yet know UU Wausau's core narrative. And this is where I need your help. I'd like to start a collection of UU Wausau's core stories to be used in RE and other areas of congregational life to help transmit to new folks and new generations what it means to be UU. They could be specific to our congregation or about our faith in general. They could be about the U/U/UUs who inspire you, historical or modern. They can be based on true events and real people or mythical. Send me the stories that showed and continue to show you what it means to be Unitarian Universalist and more specifically, a Unitarian Universalist at UU Wausau.

In community,
Jes

Registration for Taking Flight is Open!

In March-June, we're going to be offering Taking Flight - a sexuality education program based on Our Whole Lives (OWL) - for youth in 7th through 9th grade. Families that expressed interest in Jr High OWL should have received an email with all the details, including schedule, mandatory Parent and Caregiver Orientation, and instructions for signing up. If you did not receive the email or would like information, email Jessica, jessica@uuwausau.org.

This program is open to UU Wausau youth, and you can find general details about OWL here: <https://www.uua.org/re/owl>.

Course Offering: Spiritual Autobiography

Instructor: Rev. Brian Mason

Thursdays, February 17 – March 10, 7-8:30pm | Yawkey Hall



COURSE DESCRIPTION Join Brian and a small group to reflect and consider your life through a spiritual lens while sharing and writing about it. Fear not, defining “spiritual” will be left to you.

With in-class exercises and writing assignments, participants will consider the different chapters of their journey up to now. You will select from a [provided list](#) of spiritual autobiographies, a companion to accompany your odyssey. You will have short (two page) weekly writing assignments that will evolve to become the final product: a “spiritual autobiography” (6-8 pages in length).

Everyone brings with them different experiences and questions. Some of the questions we will consider are: **What have been the gifts and graces of your life?** How did loss and pain, and success and winnings, impact your journey? **What name do you give the holy, God, life?** How do you speak of the moments in life that matter most, as miracles, as chance, as luck, as gift? **What creates in you a sense of reverence?**

Participants will be invited to share their weekly and final writings with the class, though restraint will be respected. Attendance is expected at each session.

To RSVP and claim your book, email Brian at brian@uuwausau.org

Image: “Hopi Visions: Journey of the Human Spirit” (2001) by Michael Kabotie (1942-2009) and Delbridge Honanie (b. 1946)

Join Us in Welcoming Our New Members!

Beth Burke

I have lived in Wausau with my husband, John, for over 20 years. I am an elementary school reading teacher, and I also work in my husband's race-timing business. We have two daughters, two sons-in law, and in October we welcomed our first grandson.



Donna Gregg My name is Donna Gregg and my husband and I have called Weston, and the Wausau area, home for the last 7 years. We are originally from Chicago, where most of our family still resides. I worked for 24 years for the city government of one of the Chicago suburbs, doing digital mapping and database management, and I am now very happily retired. I'm an artist, having illustrated 3 books and I have my art hanging in various local places. Also keeping me busy are my two dogs and a pile of yarn that doesn't shrink, no matter how many things I knit and crochet. I'm looking forward to becoming active in this church, and meeting new friends.

Donna Keuck, MAT, PhD

Donna was born in Kenosha and raised by her Lutheran mother and Jewish stepfather in Phoenix, Arizona. She has been a faculty member at a liberal arts college in Upstate New York, an exhibiting artist in the Sonoran Desert and an independent educational consultant in Baltimore. Her most amusing gig was being paid to eat pizza in a Tokyo trattoria. Her days are now taken up with writing a memoir about anti-violence activism during the feminist second wave in Ohio. She met her husband, Christopher Young, in the sociology doctoral program at Cornell University. A newcomer to Wausau and UU, Donna has been a practicing Zen Buddhist for fifty years.



Erin Tuyls

Hello, my name is Erin Tuyls. I moved to the Wausau area two years ago with my soon to be 4 year old son Porter and we love it here. I work as a registered nurse. I am excited to become a part of this church community!



Mary Lou Werner

I'm the mother of a son and daughter and now have four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. As Garrison Keillor used to say, "And they're all above average." My husband and good friend died twenty three years ago. I lived on Eagle Lake north of Willmar in the same cozy house for fifty-five years. I am a retired educator of 34 years primarily in special education. I was very active in the League of Women Voters, the DFL party, educational activities and my lay-led UU Church.



I first attended services at First UU Wausau about six years ago when I came to stay with my daughter and granddaughter during the winter. I moved to Wausau from Willmar in July, 2019 so have been attending more regularly since then. I joined the Willmar Unitarian Church in Willmar in the late 80s and have grown more enthusiastic about Unitarian Universalism ever since. I felt great relief at finding that small congregation that I grew to love for so many reasons. I now have more physical limitations, but am very happy to have found a group of kindred spirits here in Wausau. UUism has brought me much joy!

Christopher H. Young, PhD

Chris was raised in an academic family based in Ithaca, New York. His parents were unwavering humanists and sociologists at Cornell University. As a child exploring the streams and ponds of the Finger Lakes region, Chris formed a deep connection to the natural world, which continues to this day. After causing a riot at his kindergarten graduation in San Juan, Puerto Rico, he got serious about education. Chris earned a doctoral degree in sociology (emphasis in social statistics) at Cornell and co-authored a book on economic development with his mother. For many years, he has worked in the health care industry, specializing in real world outcomes research. He and his wife, Donna Keuck, live on the edge of a wetland, where he celebrates the renewal of life each spring.



Refugee Adult Tutoring Opportunity and Information

As more families arrive in Wausau, there will be an ongoing need for adult tutors who are available during the weekday and evenings. **Tutor training** (February 12th, 9AM, at UU Wausau) is being provided and coordinated by McLit (Mary Testin - volunteer coordinator). McLit is located downtown next to Janke Book Store.

Persons with an interest can call McLit directly to get information and ask to be put on the tutor volunteer list which sends out information and updates, or e-mail sharee@mcritofwausau.org

Some UU volunteers have signed up and begun the first of a 3-part series of training provided free through McLit on Adult Literacy, being taught via zoom by Anna Bierer from The Wisconsin Literacy, Inc. If you would like information on that training, contact Roxann Bornemann (715-216-3466) or McLit directly. If you plan to tutor, a book, "Teaching Adults: An ESL Resource Book," is provided, which you can pick up at McLit after you register.

Senakai Family Begins to Settle In

The month of January has been busy for the Senakai family as they adjust to their new home in Wausau. They were one of two families first to arrive in Wausau. Each family is being supported by sponsorship groups. The congregations of St. Anne's and our church are one team of volunteers who have partnered to support the basic needs of the family for a year. ECDC, the Resettlement Agency, provides regulatory oversight for 90 days, and then it is up to the support team of volunteers to make sure that the family has what they need and provide help in gradually becoming independent.

The co-sponsorship group has been involved in helping them get situated in their apartment, setting up appointments with new medical providers, and getting oriented to new schools. Both ECDC and New Beginnings, a local community-based support organization, have had overall responsibility for making sure housing and basic supports were in place, but the sponsorship team does the daily contact and detailed help. For the first few weeks, the family has been learning about shopping, banking, bus routes, and school schedules. Volunteers from the UU group have helped with getting registrations done for medical and school enrollment, getting to appointments, rides to school, and transitioning to school bussing. Our volunteers have also been working on learning tutoring skills. The children have been welcomed in their schools with the help of English Language Learner teachers as well as their regular classroom teachers. The parents have been involved in cultural awareness classes as well as beginning to attend tutoring in English. The family speaks Pashtu, so volunteers have found translation apps to be very helpful to communicate. The current emphasis in the next weeks is assisting with job interviews.

As more needs are identified, more volunteers will be asked to help. New families have recently arrived in Wausau, so there are more opportunities to assist. Right now, existing teams are being asked to support additional families or help in setting up more teams. If anyone is interested in taking on a leadership role for a new team contact New Beginnings. Training is underway for preparing volunteers interested in English tutoring to adults. Both New Beginnings and McLit will provide training and support to tutors. If you are interested in learning more, please contact [Joyce Schneider](#) or [Roxann Bornemann](#). Updates and volunteer information will continue to be on the table in the Atrium at church.

The Caring Committee Needs You!

UU Wausau's Caring Committee is always looking for volunteers to assist with:

- set up, serving and cleanup for memorial services held at church or for church members
- meals for church goers who are experiencing a need of some kind
- our homebound members – sending cards, an in person visit when appropriate, or delivering flowers

If any of these opportunities sound like something you could do, please contact Sara Eberlein - eberlein.sara@gmail.com

Just a Little Bit More: A Second Ask

Hello Fellow Congregants and Friends of our Church:

I take on this role in the Stewardship Committee because I believe our Church plays an important role in my life. As I gather with you on Sundays, I believe you feel the same way. We all want this relationship to continue as we all profit from it all the time. For this reason, I must ask you to dig deeply into your pockets one more time: We need fifteen percent more from you if we are to continue into the future. You will be receiving another letter from us containing a pledge form once again. Please use it to increase your Stewardship Commitment 2022 by 15%, or simply send us a check for an additional 15% of the Pledge you have already made.

Once again I have convinced a fellow Congregant to provide **a \$10,000 matching grant** at this time, so your gift will count double! Please join us in providing the additional resources necessary for our church to be there for us without having to reduce programs.

Thank you so much for accepting my request,
Carl Drake



Fair Trade Coffee & Chocolate

CHOCOLATE - \$4
COCOA MIX - \$7
COFFEE - \$10



Two Opportunities to Help Our Community

In February, we are partnering with two programs to help distribute needed hygiene and medical supplies to our community!

Mandy Wright, with Thrivent, is hosting a drive to gather supplies for the [Wausau Free Clinic](#), a ministry of our neighbors at the First Presbyterian Church of Wausau, and operating out of the First United Methodist Church. Their mission is “To serve others by providing urgent and ongoing high quality medical care to all low income and medically uninsured/underinsured persons without charge to assist in the healing of body, mind and spirit.” To help support this valuable and much-needed ministry, please review [this list of their most-needed supplies](#), and drop off your donations at UU Wausau by the end of February. Mandy will collect and deliver the donations the beginning of March.

Also, from February 13th-March 6th at UU Wausau, we will be collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies, through The Family Radio’s annual “Help for the Homeless” hygiene drive. Please place your donations in the *Help for the Homeless* collection box located in the reception area by March 6. Or make a financial donation for the purchase of supplies for our community at [TheFamily.net](#). Supplying these items to local shelters —your donations will remain in our community —will help them direct their limited funds to provide qualified staff, counseling, food, and shelter to those they serve. [Click here to see a list of their needed items.](#)

The wishlists for both organizations will be printed and available in the Atrium!

From the Office: In 2021, UU Wausau partnered with The Neighbors’ Place for the “Help for the Homeless” hygiene drive, and our participation helped supply five Marathon County area crisis agencies with over \$14,000 worth of toiletries and cleaning products! Thank you for giving so generously to help people in our community.

Coffee Hour
is back –
if we have hosts!

Sign up to host:

<https://tinyurl.com/UUWausauCoffeeHour22>



From the Board Table

Chloe came to live with us in November of 2019. She was a 10-year-old mostly-outside cat that belonged to my parents. We weren't sure she'd be able to make the transition to a mostly-inside cat but she's been a welcome addition to our household and I've learned a few things from her.

1. Learn to adapt to new situations.

At first Chloe had difficulty learning the rules in her new surroundings. We didn't appreciate the yowling at 4 in the morning or the gifts of half-eaten rabbits left on the doorstep but she now knows that we sleep later than my dad did and that holding your prey in your mouth means you stay outside.

2. Go outside every day.

Even if it's 20 below Chloe insists on being let out. She may only stay a moment but when the weather is nice she'll stay out all day.

3. Human connection is important.

Warm laps and being petted are two of life's pleasures—enjoy them as often as possible.

4. Napping is good for the soul.

Cats sleep 18 or more hours a day. Even though I'm not much of a napper I have learned to slow down and rest more often.

5. Forgive easily.

Chloe hates having her nails clipped and will squall like she's being murdered. When she finally escapes she gives me a look like I'm her worst enemy but just a few minutes later she's back, asking to sit on my lap. Oh, if it were that easy for humans to forgive.

6. Self-care is mandatory.

Cats spend an hour or more each day grooming themselves. I think I spend 15 minutes on a good day but how nice to take time for a luxurious bath or to get a massage.

7. Always save some food in your dish for later.

Enough said!

8. Chase the sun.

Chloe spends a large chunk of her day moving from room to room to sit in the sun. It's easy to spend too much time looking for the negative instead of the positive, being stuck in the shade instead of moving to the sun.

9. A good stretch feels amazing!

Must do more yoga! Chloe often does it with me, although she prefers to call the position “downward facing cat”.

10. Enjoy every day.

Chloe seems to love her new home and her new humans. Cats don't bother with regrets or wishing things were different but instead embrace the now. Humans can learn so much from our pets—you just need to pay attention!

-Dawn Ashenbrenner



February 2022

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	2 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	3 Tai Chi 6:30PM	4	5
6 10:30AM: Breaking Out of the Uncomfortable, Pey Carter, guest speaker	7 Women's AA 6PM	8 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	9 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	10 Social Justice 6:00PM on Zoom Tai Chi 6:30PM	11	12 Adult Tutoring Training 9AM-11AM
13 10:30AM: On Belonging, led by the Rev. Brian Mason	14 Women's AA 6PM	15 Qi Gong 6:30PM BOT meeting 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	16 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	17 Tai Chi 6:30PM	18	19
20 10:30AM: Sunday Worship led by the Rev. Brian Mason CFC Sunday—The Women's Community	21 Church Office Closed Women's AA 6PM	22 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	23 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	24 Tai Chi 6:30PM	25	26
27 10:30AM: Sunday Worship led by the Rev. Brian Mason	28 Women's AA 6PM	1 Qi Gong 6:30PM Anti-racism Family Storytime 6:30PM on Zoom	2 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12pm Adult Choir 6:30pm	3 Tai Chi 6:30PM	4	5



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

The Circuit Writer - February 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.

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