



The Circuit Writer

September 2022

Sunday Services—September 2022

Sunday, September 4 | 9:30AM

“Your Soul Matters: Musings and tidbits from a current UU Soul Matters group. And a chance to experience a ‘mini’ session of listening to others and self-reflecting.” *Led by guest speakers Anne Jefferson, Karen Monarski, Kate Passineau, and Sarah Thurs.*

Stay after this service for doughnuts and our annual **Backpack Blessing!**

****Sunday, September 11 | 10:30AM****

Water Communion

Led by the Reverend Brian Mason

We will celebrate the start of the 2022-23 church year with our annual Water Communion service. Please bring a small container of water collected from a special place during the summer’s travels or closer to home. Afterwards, we’ll gather upstairs in the Dining Hall for food & fellowship.

Sunday, September 18 | 10:30AM

Sunday Worship

Led by the Reverend Brian Mason

RE begins today!

Sunday, September 25 | 10:30AM

“What I Learned During OWL Training”

Led by guest speaker Randy Jefferson

In Randy’s words, “While Anne was immersed in OWL facilitator training August 19-21, 2022, my meanderings in the lakefront neighborhood of Milwaukee’s First Unitarian Society provided inspiration for a message of serendipity, discovery, and memory. The weekend’s lessons reminded me that commonplace encounters are often the source for insight into the wonder of it all.”

➡ **Please note: September 4th is the last of our Summer Services. Beginning on Sunday, September 11th, we will be gathering at 10:30am every Sunday morning.** ⬅



From a Window on Grant

While doing research in Harvard's library archives (where a lot of Universalist and Unitarian records are kept), I discovered that the date of UU Wausau's organization isn't 1870 as commonly understood (that is the date the church was formally registered in the Wisconsin courts). The actual date of organization is 1858, which makes the upcoming 2022-23 church-year the congregation's 165th.

Our church is Wisconsin's 2nd oldest Universalist congregation (Racine's was organized in 1842 as the Church of the Good Shepherd). Among Wisconsin's historic Universalist churches, a roll that once boasted more than a dozen, only two remain: Racine's and Wausau's.

Over the years, I've grown proud of our church's history and heritage. Many of the personalities that live large in the church's archives shine brightly in my mind. I often find myself wondering, What would Mary Scholfield say? What might Noble McLaughlin do? What perspective would Judge Reid suggest?

All the conversations amongst lay leaders and clergy held around dinner and board tables through wars, the Depression, pandemics, and personal triumphs and tragedies humble me. The decisions made, the missions observed, the imprints left are uniquely Universalist. All this makes me wonder: Why did we add "Unitarian" to the church's name?

My take on the decision, which took place decades after the 1961 merger, was that it was made as a respectful tip of the hat to our Unitarian fellows and the agreement Universalists made with them. A lot of Universalist churches added "Unitarian," and some changed their names entirely. But if you look, you'll notice that few Unitarian churches added "Universalist." Did Milwaukee or Madison? Nope. New York City or St. Louis? Nein. Tulsa or Portland? Nuh-uh. There's a reason for this: because it wasn't their name. I suppose a better question to ask is, Why do we *keep* "Unitarian" in the name?

With or without "Unitarian," the church remains a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) if we want. I'm not suggesting that we leave the UUA. I think they're helpful. They assist with credentialing ministers, with managing the endowment and staff healthcare and retirement plans. They offer decent

resources, but so what? Geico and Pick 'n Save are just as resourceful (probably even more so) for my family as the UUA is to churches. But we'd never change our name from Mason to "Mason-Geico-Pick 'n Save"!

Trigger warning: I'm going to ask something that might be shocking. I am asking it in all seriousness, but primarily to spark reflection. Here it is: What if we dropped "Unitarian" from the church's name? What if we reclaimed our Universalist heritage? What if we decided to honor our spiritual ancestors by calling ourselves what they decided to 165 years ago?

After the vote to merge with the Unitarians was held at Wausau, then-board president Henry McEachron told the congregation that the merger for him was essentially a bureaucratic one, like where you buy car insurance from. What really mattered and what would endure, he said, was that nothing would change that we are a local congregation, a unique people—a sacred family. We're not UUA-ers. We're members of Wausau's First Universalist Church. McEachron's assurances were a splendid articulation of congregational polity and the sacred significance of the local church.

Ask yourself this: If in 25 years the United Church of Christ merges with the UUA (a legitimate possibility) and asks "Christ" to be added or for the name to be changed to something like the "Liberal Church of America," will we in Wausau change our name to the "First Universalist Unitarian Christ Church of Wausau" or Wausau's "First Liberal Church of America"? Precedent says we will.

For what it's worth, count me as an "aye" in favor of returning the church's name to its historic one. Let's save ourselves five syllables every time we say the church's name. Let's save money on ink every time we print something with the church's name on it. Let's do it to prove we're the non-conforming upper-Midwesterners we claim to be. Let's do it honor our spiritual ancestors and the church's unique history and heritage. But what do *you* think?

Here's to the start of the church's 165th year. It's going to be an adventure. Always is. I'm glad to have you as a partner on the journey.

-Brian

Below are our Children, Youth, and Family RE programming for the 2022-2023 church year. Contact Jes, jessica@uuwausau.org, with any questions.

Sunday Morning Religious Education (RE) Starts September 18!

Meets Sunday mornings, September-May. Children and youth start with their families in worship and then may choose to attend RE or remain in worship with their family.

Elementary RE

Our Elementary RE group explores themes like belonging, love, and creativity through activities of their choice, including stories, games, art, and play! *Elementary RE is open to children in K-6th grade.*

Youth RE

Our Youth RE group focuses on building relationships and helping each youth feel supported in their spiritual journey. They explore themes like belonging, courage, and resistance through hands-on activities and deep conversation. Youth group is also an opportunity for youth to develop leadership skills and to engage in our and the wider community through service and social action projects. *Youth Group is open to youth in 7th-12th grade, and they also schedule one-off meetups for social events and justice projects.*

Additional RE Programming for Children, Youth, & Families

Book Club

Growing from our Antiracism Storytime, Book Club is for tweens and their families (caregivers, grandparents, etc.), we meet weekly 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. *Meets Thursdays @ 7:00pm on Zoom starting October 6. Tweens may also attend without their family.*

Our Whole Lives for 5-6th Grade

Our Whole Lives (OWL) is a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education program. OWL for 5-6th Grade provides accurate, developmentally appropriate information about a range of topics, including values, body image, gender and sexual identity, peer pressure, and healthy relationships with sensitivity and inclusiveness, and it is designed to help children ages nine through twelve to gain the knowledge, life principles, and skills they need to understand and express their sexuality in holistic, life-enhancing ways. *OWL will begin in January 2023, and requires separate enrollment. To find out more, contact the DRE.*

Family Ministry Programming & Events

At several times throughout the year, we offer events and programs for children, youth, and/or their families to connect. This might look like a movie night, sleepover, social justice project, or small group program for parents and caregivers. This year we are focusing on the Belonging - helping families build community and support for being themselves; Becoming - supporting families in articulating and deepening their personal UU faith identity; and Being - living that faith in the world. *Watch the weekly emails and newsletter for upcoming family ministry programming and events.*

CYRE 2022-2023
Belonging. Becoming. Being.



Join Us for Music Making Opportunities Galore!

Starting **August 31**, our **Adult Choir** meets weekly, Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00, for our fun filled practices in the church's atrium. The schedule for singing during a Sunday service fluctuates but we average every three to four weeks. There are no formal auditions - just bring your good listening skills and a love of community singing. The ability to read musical notation is also an asset but not a requirement. Reading is visual. Music is aural. They are truly very different. Non readers can sing wonderfully well "by ear." Our song literature varies from the easily learned to soul satisfying challenges.

Sound is a marvelous gift and when we sing together whether in joy, desolation or everyday hope, we affirm our common humanity and build our community through this shared craft. No other gift connects us in quite this way. We all possess the ears, voices, minds and hearts that are all that we need to make joyful music together.

Song Leadership - our song leaders give strength to the congregational sound. Because you would be joining several others already serving in this position, you might be called on perhaps as few as three or four times a year. This leadership supports the congregational singing while giving the viewers at home a stronger sense of the music of the day. The cost of a sound system that would pick up the sound of congregational singing would be prohibitively expensive, so the voice of the song leader is vital to our home viewers.

Participants in our adult **Drum Club** meet Monday evenings, 7:00-8:00, in the Drum Haven (my basement) located at 1005 Steuben St. Wausau. (**Our first session will be Sept. 12.**) Whether we are developing musical skills and techniques or enjoying recreational drum circle activities, everyone is part of the musical experience in a safe, inclusive, explorational environment. While all of the drums (most of them straight from Ghana!) and other small percussion are furnished, the real instruments that make up the evening's experience are the people. The drums become our voices, offering an immediate portal into musical expression, a quick-start experience. No previous percussion experience is necessary. After all, rhythms have been beating inside us since before we were born!

If you are interested in any of (or all) these vital ministries, please contact me - in person after church, at margaretjerz1@gmail.com or by phone, 715-573-2612.

Early Risers Meeting September 17th!

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

When: Saturday, Sept. 17th at 8:30AM

Where: The Garden Pancake House in Schofield



From the Board Table

"The windows are open, admitting the September breeze: a month that smells like notepaper and pencil shavings, autumn leaves and car oil. A month that smells like progress and moving on."

—Lauren Oliver

Aaaah, September. For some it signifies back-to-school, for others it is just part of the ever-changing seasons—a time to turn off the air conditioning and enjoy those cool evenings, to review the year so far and anticipate the sprint to the holidays and 2023.

September is the traditional beginning of the church year and we'd like to kick it off with a bang. September 11th will be the first service of the season and it will be a celebration! Celebrate starting the year in person, with new friends and old. Celebrate surviving over two years with Covid changing the way we come together. Celebrate the beginning of a new, exciting RE program (starting September 18th!).

After the service we invite everyone to stay for a delicious lunch and fellowship. Enjoy seeing those we've missed and meeting new UUs.

Your First UU Board has been busy this summer reviewing what's been accomplished and what needs work. We've identified goals to increase membership, attendance, and participation for the 2022-23 church year. We can't meet those goals without your help. We need volunteers to strengthen our commitment to our mission. Can you usher or greet on a Sunday morning? Can you host coffee hour or a potluck? Or teach RE? Can you join the stewardship committee or the Board? We are only as strong as our members and we can't do it alone.

Let's come back from the pandemic stronger, more unified, more committed. Let's remember what we have been in the past and vow to surpass it.

Your Board is ready. Now we ask that you are, too.

—Dawn Ashenbrenner

Community Focus Collections Return This Month!

The CFC will have some new community organizations to introduce you to this year, along with some old, familiar organizations that are hard at work in our community. All are in need of your support, perhaps even more this year than in the past. We hope you'll be able to continue your generous support and even consider taking part in some workshops or doing some volunteering with some of these groups.

If you aren't in church on the 3rd Sunday of the month you can find information about the CFC organization in the monthly Circuit Writer, and can donate online to the CFC via UU Wausau's [secure online giving form](#). (select "Community Focus Collection" from the drop-down list).

Upcoming CFC dates:

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| September 18th | October 16th |
| November 20th | December 18th |

Thank you for all you do to help those in need in our community.

Roxann Bornemann

Elizabeth Robinson

Joyce Schneider

***Look to page 6 for a spotlight on this month's
Community Focus Collection!***



Memorial Service
for Jim Young
Saturday, September 17th

.....

Visitation from 2-3pm
Service and reception
to follow

Living Green

“Crickets and cicadas sing a rare and different tune.”
-Robert Hunter

I drank my morning coffee on the deck to songs of late summer insects. The deck overlooks a thicket of speckled alder (*Alnus incana*). Dominated by tall shrubs, speckled alder thickets are minerotrophic wetland communities common throughout northern and central Wisconsin. Chris and I delight in the wetland, but we do not walk its rough terrain.

Many insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals do live in the thicket. A former owner of the property built a boardwalk beside the house that chipmunks, squirrels, field mice, rabbits and weasels use in their comings and goings. Most of these small mammalian commuters exhibit little interest in us humans. However, one curious ermine, or short-tailed weasel (*Mustela erminea*), has ventured indoors twice. On both occasions, he quickly ran out the open door and disappeared back into his home turf.

In a few weeks, the September equinox will herald the arrival of autumn to the northern hemisphere. The crickets and cicadas down in the speckled alder thicket will grow silent. I will drink my morning coffee at the kitchen table and think about the little ermine, its coat gradually changing from brown to white, with only a splash of black on the tip of its quivering tail. Then as now, I will treasure the “interdependent web of existence, of which we are all a part.”

The fall equinox arrives on Thursday, September 22, 2022, at 8:04 p.m., CDT.

With heartfelt thanks,
Donna Keuck for the EAG

For more on speckled alder thickets and other Wisconsin wetlands, [consider this article](#).



September CFC: Fill a Backpack, Fill a Need

Fill A Backpack Fill A Need (FABFAN), Workplace Volunteer Council’s signature project, provides backpacks and school supplies to children entering 4K through 8th grade in Marathon County who qualify for free or reduced lunch at school. Last year over 7,500 students were eligible, and more than half participated, starting their school year off on the right foot with needed supplies. We all know that a bright future starts with a good education and having the right supplies is essential. This project is possible because of a year-round effort to collect supplies and monetary donations. United Way of Marathon County serves as the fiscal sponsor for Workplace Volunteer Council. Other WVC programs include Bare Necessities and Back to Basics.

Please join us on **Sunday, September 18th**, to raise funds for this essential project—all plate offerings & [online donations](#) earmarked for “Community Focus Collection” will go to FABFAN.



September 2022



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|---|---|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 28 9:30AM: "Full Stop!" the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching | 29 Women's AA 6PM | 30 Qi Gong 6:30PM | 31 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12PM Choir 6:30PM | 1 Tai Chi 6:30PM | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9:30AM: "Your Soul Matters" led by guest speakers Anne Jefferson, Karen Monarski, Kate Passineau, and Sarah Thurs Backpack Blessing! | 5 Church Office Closed Women's AA 6PM | 6 Red Cross Blood Drive 11AM-4PM Qi Gong 6:30PM | 7 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12PM Choir 6:30PM | 8 Tai Chi 6:30PM | 9 2nd Friday Nighters at the Jefferson's House 6:30PM | 10 |
| 11 **10:30AM:** Water Communion Service The Rev. Brian Mason, preaching Stay after for Brunch in the Dining Hall! | 12 Church Office Closed Caring Com. 3:30PM Women's AA 6PM Bird Club 6:30PM | 13 Church Office Closed Qi Gong 6:30PM | 14 Church Office Closed Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12PM Choir 6:30PM | 15 Tai Chi 6:30PM | 16 | 17 Early Risers 8:30AM Jim Young Visitation & Memorial Service 2PM* |
| 18 10:30AM: Sunday Worship the Rev. Brian Mason, preaching | 19 Women's AA 6PM | 20 BOT meeting 6:30PM Qi Gong 6:30PM | 21 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12PM Choir 6:30PM | 22 Tai Chi 6:30PM | 23 | 24 |
| 25 10:30AM: "What I Learned During OWL Training" led by Randy Jefferson, guest speaker | 26 Church Office Closed Women's AA 6PM | 27 Qi Gong 6:30PM | 28 Knitting 10AM The New Yorker Noon Swoon 12PM Choir 6:30PM | 29 Tai Chi 6:30PM | 30 | * Please see page 5 for more infor- mation on Jim Young's memorial service. |



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

The Circuit Writer - September 2022

Newsletter of the First Universalist Unitarian Church of Wausau

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| September Services | 1 |
| From a Window on Grant | 2 |
| Children & Youth Programming | 3 |
| Music Making Opportunities | 4 |
| Early Risers September Meeting | 4 |
| From the Board Table | 5 |
| Community Focus Collections | 5 |
| Jim Young Memorial Service | 5 |
| Living Green | 6 |
| September CFC: FABFAN | 6 |
| Red Cross Blood Drive | 6 |
| Calendar | 7 |
| Board of Trustees & Staff Info | 8 |



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

Board of Trustees:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sheryl Hemp, President | wishemp@aol.com |
| Jeff Leigh, Vice President | jeff.leigh88@gmail.com |
| Brian Stezenski-Williams, Secretary | BS-W@outlook.com |
| Randy Jefferson, Treasurer | rpj1115@yahoo.com |
| Dawn Ashenbrenner | dawn1969@yahoo.com |
| Kara Hall | kara.h.hall@gmail.com |
| Karen Monarski | krmon12@gmail.com |
| Josh Wright | joshuawright888@gmail.com |

Minister/Staff:

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Brian Mason, Minister | brian@uuwausau.org |
| Jessica Zimmer, Director of RE | jessica@uuwausau.org |
| Danika Kozlovich, Congregational Admin. | danika@uuwausau.org |
| Margaret Jerz, Music Director | margaretjerz1@gmail.com |