Theological reflection is the discipline of exploring our individual and corporate experience in conversation with the wisdom of a religious heritage. The conversation is a genuine dialogue that seeks to hear from our own beliefs, actions, and perspectives, as well as from those of the tradition. It respects the integrity of both. Theological reflection therefore may confirm, challenge, clarify, and expand how we understand our experience and how we understand the religious tradition. The outcome is new truth and meaning for living.
from Robert L. Kinast in Let Ministry Teach: A Guide to Theological Reflection

The Madison Unitarian volunteer editorial team: Lari Fanlund and Hannah Lee
On Sunday, May 15, at 3 pm, our community will gather for a service of installation. This special ceremony will officially recognize and affirm Kelly Crocker and me as co-senior ministers of the First Unitarian Society of Madison. It will be the conclusion of a series of rituals, large and small, that began last May when the members of our congregation voted to call us to this shared role. As Unitarian Universalists, we have a well-earned reputation for cultivating a certain freedom from formality in our worship and liturgy, but we do make a few concessions to pomp and circumstance. The installation of a minister or ministers is one such occasion, and you can expect that on May 15, we will honor this meaningful moment in the life of our congregation, as well as put on a pretty darn good party to celebrate. This service will also be one of the rare times when you will see us in our clerical robes.

Reflecting on the installation ceremony’s symbolic significance, this is a public demonstration of the sacred authority of our Unitarian Universalist congregations. Our liberal faith offers guidance to each of its communities as to what they ought to be about: seeking after wisdom, cultivating peace, struggling for justice, and building a community that helps heal and nurture all the souls who enter it. But each of our congregations must figure out how to express and put into practice those general principles in their own specific place and at their own specific time. One of the most critical elements of this collective power of self-determination is each congregation’s right and responsibility to choose whom they will call to minister to and with them. Moving again from the general to the specific, it is a privilege and an honor to be a minister anywhere. In the last several months, I have found what I already suspected to be true: that there is a great, specific joy to be found in ministering here, in partnership with Kelly, and in collaboration with all of you.

Points of transition and change in our lives are worth honoring and paying attention to, and I hope you will join us for this one in May—the ritual of installation has meaning because we come together to accomplish it. But whether you are able to participate that particular Sunday afternoon or not (in-person or via YouTube), I hope you will take to heart the lessons that the service represents: awareness of the power of the community of which you are a part, and remembering there are things in this life worth celebrating and that there is a place for formality even in the lives of the most informal among us.
Since we published the new Vision of Ministry, both the staff and the Board of Trustees have created goals to work toward the vision presented. One of our priorities is to show up as authentic partners in collaboration within our local community and denomination, and a resulting goal was for the trustees to attend General Assembly or Regional Assembly. I invite you to do the same!

General Assembly (GA) is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Participants worship, witness, learn, connect, and make policy for the Association through the democratic process. Anyone may attend, and each congregation selects delegates to participate in discussion and vote on annual UUA business decisions.

People attend GA for various reasons. Some use it as a chance to create or maintain relationships with other UUs beyond our own congregation. Some enjoy the opportunity to participate in remarkable programming. For others, the primary interest is participating in the democratic decision-making process by serving as a delegate. FUS is allowed 21 member delegates, and it would be wonderful to have representation from our congregation in the annual meeting again this year.

There are three options for attending. GA is held in a different city each year. This year it is in Portland, OR. I plan to travel to Portland to attend in person for the first time. In the past, I’ve attended virtually, and it was an amazing experience. Last year’s GA had 4,000 virtual participants from around the world. Acknowledging that participation in the business of our denomination should not be based on financial circumstances, the UUA has added a “Business-only Virtual Registrant” option that provides access to the discussion and voting portion. There is no fee for this option.

The UUA also organizes congregations into regions with dedicated congregational life staff as resources to member congregations. FUS is part of the MidAmerica Region. Our region also holds an annual assembly—it’s like a miniture version of GA. This year the MidAmerica Regional Assembly is all virtual and features the keynote topic "The Glass is Refillable: Pandemic Exhaustion, Lifelong Faith Formation, and Preemptive Radical Inclusion" by C.B. Beal. There is also an opportunity to worship together, participate in small group breakouts, and vote in the business meeting.

Please visit www.uua.org/ga to learn more about this year’s General Assembly, and contact Janet Swanson at janets@fusmadison.org if you’re interested in serving as a delegate.

More information about the MidAmerica Regional Assembly is available at: www.uua.org/midamerica/ra.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me at fuspres@gmail.com.
The members who shared their stories during the Month of Giving in support of our 2022–2023 Stewardship Campaign provided a window into the diverse way words can connect us as a community. While each of our stories is unique to our lived experiences, the common threads are at the heart of engagement and intention. As stewards, we strive to become part of something bigger than ourselves through giving our unique gifts in service to one another. The gift of stories—both in telling and attentive listening—deepens our connections to this large and lovely congregation. I am in awe of the FUS stories shared during this campaign that have been decades in the making.

Janet Swanson and I also shared our belief that membership and stewardship are points on the same journey, building and supporting this beloved community. As with most adventures, traveling with others we care deeply about smooths the unforeseen bumps along the way. Telling our stories along the journey and making new memories with old and new friends is the essence of engagement. Seeing ourselves in the words of our fellow members is also a reminder that we have more in common than we thought possible. Together, we have found the strength of purpose and growth as a community, doing the important work within our walls, and joining together in the work of the larger community outside our doors. I am thankful to be part of your stewardship journey through shared stories.
then on that day may the water in the creek shimmer
green, a music never heard take shape in a hatch
of caddis and coffin flies, the air bluing as the sun’s light
dries insect wings, and the bear skull on the ridge,
the circle of porcupine quills, the mink’s eye sockets
and the coyote’s hinged jaw still clutched around the rabbit’s femur,
may all the bones of the living and the dead rise
with skeletal praise, this ancient world being remade
in their image.

by Todd Davis
Being a church musician is something I have always done and is a family tradition. My grandmother was an organist at Lake Edge UCC in town and then the bell choir director until age 90. My mother played piano at our tiny country Methodist Church growing up, and I sat in the first pew trying to follow along in the hymnal. I started playing instruments and singing in services from the age of 4 or 5 and have worked professionally in a church since I was 18. Being a church musician is in my blood, but it wouldn't have been the same without so many of YOU. You, the congregants, are what makes the music at FUS special. I recently heard the entire congregation sing for the first time in TWO years. Hearing voices together almost brought me to tears. It wasn’t a great work of art; it was simply singing in community. It is time to create MORE of these essential experiences.

Church music has forever changed since Covid, but I encourage everyone to return. It is a welcoming environment for people of all ages to participate. Whether an accomplished soloist, a shy singer, or even the lip-syncer who just likes to be a part of something bigger than themselves, there is a place for everyone.

Music is an integral part of services at FUS, and I hope you join us on Wednesday nights. Covid has changed how we do things, but it hasn’t been taken away. We are safe and smart. We are making music, healing, and reforming the community.

I recently asked parents and singers of our children’s and youth choirs why they value choirs at FUS. Here is what they had to say:

"I love that FUS Children’s Choir provides the opportunity for my kids to make music in our wonderful community. Heather is a top-notch music educator and a loving presence in my kids’ lives that remains consistent from year to year. I had this experience in my home congregation growing up, and I can’t express enough how important it was to me.” –Alyssa Ryanjoy (choir parent)

“When I go to choir each week, I like getting immersed in the music. It’s fun to learn and sing together.” –Winnie (Children's choir member)

“Our very active son is an eager participant in sports and outdoor activities, but we struggled to find a creative, artistic outlet that he would embrace with the same enthusiasm. We finally found one in the FUS Children's Choir! He loves the community, the songs, and the joy of lifting his voice together with friends. He looks forward to choir practice every week.” –Matt Lawler (choir parent)

"I like choir because I like music. Music is part of my personality." –Lila (Children's choir member)

"Being part of a choir community, surrounded by many of the same friendly faces year after year, helps our daughter's confidence grow as a singer. We'll always be grateful that the choir persevered in creative ways during the pandemic, when that thread of social connection was so sorely needed." –Tammy Faris

“I enjoy creating music with like-minded peers. It’s a space to appreciate and perform music from artists who are making social change through choral music and having fun with great people on a Wednesday night.” –Teen choir member
“My daughters, now 11, started choir when they were just three. Choir has been one of the most enjoyable extracurricular activities they have participated in. I hope they continue for seven more years. It's a great creative and social activity.” –Debbie Cole (choir parent)

Don’t miss out and join a choir at FUS. Children’s choir (ages 4-11) meets on Wednesdays from 6:30 pm–7 pm. Youth choir (ages 12-18) meets on Wednesdays from 7 pm–7:30 pm. Adult choirs meet on Thursdays from 6:30 pm - 8 pm. We hope to see you soon.

The Mark Rosa Harpsichord Recital seeks to provide visibility for one of the finest harpsichord replicas in the world and to promote harpsichord music in general. Each year, the recital is underwritten entirely by Sue Rosa. FUS is grateful for her generosity.

Mr. Vinikour is one of the outstanding harpsichordists of his generation, with a career that takes him to the world’s most revered festivals, concert halls, and opera houses as recitalist and concerto soloist. Join us on April 22, 2022, at 12 pm. This recital is part of the Friday Noon Musicale series in partnership with the Madison Early Music Festival. Learn more about our performer at www.joryvinikour.com.
It is with sorrow that we share the passing of Barb Voelker on March 12. We send our love to Mary Hampton and the many people who knew and loved Barb. We will miss her warmth, her wit, and her infectious laugh. Mary asks that we honor Barb and celebrate her life by hugging the ones we love and spending some time in nature on the hiking trails that Barb loved.

You’re invited to join the Guardians of the Grounds as we begin the 2022 season starting Thursday, April 7, from 8:30 am–10:30 am. We meet once a week through September. Help set off our beautiful buildings to their best advantage by keeping the grounds around them neat and attractive and save our FUS community money as you do it. Bring gloves, a spade, and your creative ideas, thoughts, and suggestions. Contact Chuck Evenson at cgevenson@yahoo.com.

Registration for our Children’s Religious Exploration (CRE) classes opens on Friday, April 1. We have a vibrant program for children from pre-school through 9th grade. Our classes emphasize the power of community as much as the substantive curricular content. We hope this community helps your child(ren) feel cared for as they travel through their spiritual journey. Learn more about our class offerings and register at www.fusmadison.org/cre/classes.

Interested in teaching a CRE class? Our vibrant program is made possible through the stewardship of time and talent from our volunteer teachers. You’ll be part of a team and teach every other weekend. Join our youngest members in building community, learning about our tradition, and sharing our Unitarian Universalist values. Contact CRE Director Leslie Ross at leslier@fusmadison.org to learn more.

The Nominations Committee is seeking members interested in joining the Board of Trustees for three-year terms beginning in July 2022. We also track interest (on a rolling basis) for members of the board’s Standing Committees: Finance, Governance, Personnel, and Nominations. An ideal applicant communicates openly and honestly, can disagree respectfully, and puts the well-being of the congregation first. If you deeply hold the value of our spiritual community for yourself, fellow members of FUS, and members of our community, please consider applying for this enriching opportunity to serve. Contact fusnominations@gmail.com for more information.

Masking in the building is optional starting Saturday, April 9, with the following exceptions: during worship services, choir rehearsals, for those ages 2 through 5, and Monday through Friday in the Meeting House Nursery School wing.
UPCOMING APRIL EVENTS @ FUS

JOYCE & WILLIAM WARTMANN LECTURE


ART IN THE WRIGHT PLACE

Our art fair returns April 9 & 10! This fundraiser supports FUS and local artists (including some of our members). Check out our webpage at www.fusmadison.org/artfair.

PARISH MEETING

Join us for our next virtual parish meeting on Sunday, April 24, 2022, starting at 12:30 pm on Zoom. Login information will be available on our homepage and FUS calendar. We look forward to seeing you there.

RACISM & REPARATION

A MONTH OF SERVICES

In-person worship services: Saturdays @ 4:30 pm & Sundays @ 9 & 11 am*
Online worship service: Sundays @ 11 am

APRIL 2 & 3
TO BLESS & BE BLESSED IN RETURN
with Rev. Kelly J. Crocker, Co-Senior Minister

We offer blessings to one another here in this community quite often. We confer blessings on our youngest ones during child dedication ceremonies and then when they come of age. Couples are blessed during wedding ceremonies, and during memorials, we pause to bless this one now gone from us. John O’Donohue wrote, “The beauty of blessing is its belief that it can affect what unfolds.” We’ll explore the power of blessing and how, throughout our lives, this simple act calls to us and strengthens us, and brings us back to who we are and to each other.

SATURDAY, APRIL 9 @ 4:30 PM
HOW CAN WE KEEP FROM SINGING?
with FUS Music Staff

Join us for a service of song as we share in singing a number of beloved hymns along with the stories and personal meanings behind them.

SUNDAY, APRIL 10 @ 9 AM & 11 AM
LET BEAUTY AWAKE: ALL MUSIC SUNDAY
with FUS Music Staff & Choirs


FRIDAY, APRIL 15 @ 7 PM**
GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
with Rev. Kelly Crocker & Rev. Kelly Asprooth-Jackson

This special, simple service of commemoration and lament will be held in the Landmark Auditorium.
**There will not be a service offered on Saturday, April 16, due to the special Easter weekend services.

*Masks are still required during worship services.
SUNDAY, APRIL 17 @ 9 AM
EASTER: FAMILY SERVICE

This Easter service for all ages will be full of stories and music. Join us as we celebrate the power of spring to remind us of new life and the power of transformation. Join us after this service for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on the playground.

SUNDAY, APRIL 17 @ 11 AM
EASTER: TRADITIONAL SERVICE

This Easter service will offer a Unitarian Universalist perspective on the most important day in the Christian calendar. Join us as we share beloved music and explore stories of resurrection.

APRIL 23 & 24
SACRAMENT FROM SUN AND SOIL
with Rev. Kelly Asprooth-Jackson, Co-Senior Minister

What does it mean for a questioning people who cherish the skeptical impulse and refuse to condemn each others’ doubts, to sanctify time, or space, or action? What is holiness to a tradition such as ours? Join us for a service about what might be sacred and how we might make it so.

APRIL 30 & MAY 1
THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
with Rev. Kelly Asprooth-Jackson, Co-Senior Minister

So much of art, of all human expression, is devoted to the subject of beauty. Of describing it, or attesting to it, or lamenting its absence or loss. And yet, actually quantifying what is required in order for an object or a person or even a sound to be beautiful seems an impossible task. In this service, we’ll reflect on and celebrate the subjectivity of beauty.
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LAY MINISTERS
Our lay ministers provide a confidential, caring presence to congregants undergoing stressful life challenges or joyous occasions. Under the guidance of our called ministers, they promote the spirit of community through direct service in visiting the ill and healing, facilitating support groups, and more.
Contact a lay minister at 608.233.9774 x. 126