

# FIRST LOOK

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



VOL. 1 NO. 2

SPRING 2017

## *Exploring Spirituality*

Using different paths to reach a common destination



I continue to dream and pray about a revival of holiness in our day that moves forth in mission and creates authentic community in which **each person can be unleashed** through the empowerment of the Spirit to fulfill God's creational intentions.

JOHN WESLEY  
FOUNDER OF METHODISM

## LOOKING FORWARD

**Lyons Lecture in Theology,**  
April 29, 2017 Keynote Speaker:  
Rev. Robin Meyers Ph.D.,  
Mayflower United Church of Christ  
and Oklahoma City University

**High School Mission Trip,**  
July 22 – 30, 2017 Appalachia  
Service Project, West Virginia

**Middle School Mission Trip,**  
August 6 – 12, 2017 Amen/St. Louis,  
Missouri

**Spiritual Formation Retreat,**  
October 29 – November 3, 2017  
Wisconsin Five-Day Academy for  
Spiritual Formation, Rev. Linda  
Vance, Retreat Leader, Siena Retreat  
Center, Racine, Wisconsin

## OUR MISSION

We seek to embody grace and hospitality in the manner of Jesus, nurturing our diverse spiritual journeys and joining together as a servant community to help realize a more loving and just world.

Find out more about First Church: Online go to [fumc.org](http://fumc.org)  
and follow us on Social Media

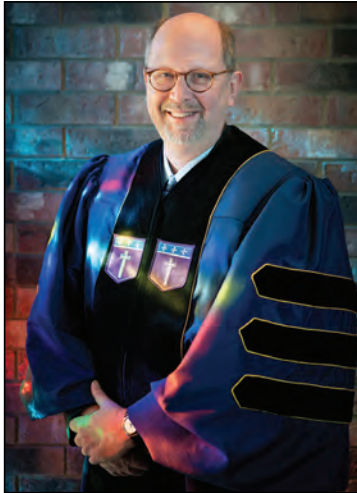


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On the Cover: Meg Miller, Yoga 4 Good, teaches yoga weekly in the First Church Chapel. Photo by Max Wendt.

# Mark My Words...



## *Dear friends on the journey,*

The mission of our church is a clear and lyric statement of our purpose and priorities. I have embraced it as the “due north” direction for making plans and developing programs and practices for our future together. Our staff and governance leaders are embracing the mission statement as the points to which we seek to align our efforts together. It gives us energy and synergy!

This issue of *First Look* will survey our aspiration to “nurture our diverse spiritual journeys.” Within the constellation of Protestant churches, seminaries and denominations there has been a renewed interest and investment in the study and practices of spiritual formation. In the spirit of our mission, we understand spiritual formation to be intentional practices that lead to ongoing maturation and deepening our identity, both individually and communally, in relationship to God “in the manner of Jesus” with increased capacity “...to join together as a servant community to help realize a more loving and just world.”

We already have a variety of “practices” that are traditionally identified as contributing components of nurturing our journeys. Among them are study of scripture, conferences and retreats, pilgrimages, corporate worship, volunteer service, activism, “green” practices focused on conservation, hospitality and many others. It is the intention to be intentional about identifying, enhancing and strengthening the purpose of these practices in fulfilling our church mission and deepening our personal attention to the journey of life accompanied in the manner of Jesus.

I look forward to developing enriched prayer, contemplative and study opportunities. Further, we are hoping to become more interactive through our website to provide resources and invitations for practices that can be done at home, in neighborhoods and within the family. And, it is my experience that a focus on “faith at work” can lead to a renewal of spirit and wholeness as we seek the discovery of how our gifts can be employed in new and dynamic ways.

*Blessings on the journey,*

Rev. Dr. Mark A. Fowler

Lead Pastor, First Church



## PARISHIONER PROFILE

### Linda Vance

Rev. Linda Vance and her husband, Rev. Dr. Mel Vance, came to First Church in 2012, upon Linda's retirement. Prior to retiring, she was a faculty member in The Academy for Spiritual Formation, a ministry of The Upper Room – a global ministry dedicated to supporting the spiritual formation of Christians seeking to know and experience God more fully. Linda and I sat down to talk about her personal spiritual formation and her journey to this place.

**Q: Tell me a little bit about yourself.**

I grew up on a farm in North Dakota in a family of nine. Mel and I met at Westmar College, married after he graduated, and then I went to New York City with him and finished my degree at Fordham. I taught elementary school there while he went to Union (Theological Seminary). Later, I went to Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey, for my M.Div., and then was ordained as an elder.

We went to Omaha, Nebraska, where we raised our two daughters. Mel decided to get his Ph.D. (He'd always loved to read and do research.) We came to Marquette for that, and I served at Sussex. Then he started teaching at Carroll University. Later I was in Racine and then I was at Salem in Waukesha. And...you know (laughing), I feel like I've kind of been circling him. And that made it possible for us both to fulfill our vocations and our calling.

**Q: Tell me how you came to First Church.**

Well, when we retired, we knew a couple of things. One: the Church was going to be central to our life because we've always kept the Sabbath. We've always believed in the means of grace: attending to worship, keeping the sacraments, the life of prayer anchored in the scripture



MAX WENDT

*We've always believed in the means of grace: attending to worship, keeping the sacraments, the life of prayer anchored in the scripture and meditating on that, and then acts of mercy and the life of prayer – all of those means of grace. We just knew that we wanted to be in a place where we could do that.*

and meditating on that, and then acts of mercy and the life of prayer – all of those means of grace. We just knew that we wanted to be in a place where we could do that. Two, we also wanted to be in a church that was big enough that there would be plenty of opportunities for discipleship. We would be able to both of those things at First Church.

**Q: So why do you stay?**

First, there's a lot to do here and a lot of opportunities for service. But the other thing is, it is a church that is willing to be emerging. It's a place that isn't going to just keep doing and repeating the same things, but will always have an emerging ministry. The idea that, if we're here and stay here (and that's what we want to do) we don't know what we'll be doing two years from now or what this church will be doing, or what they'll be doing several years from now. Because this Christian community, in this place, has a call that All Means All. We will be involved in those acts of mercy, of justice, and caring for the poor. That's a lot of it.

**Q: Tell me about your Spiritual Formation journey.**

I was a very devout child. I did daily devotions from the time I was 10 on. And wrote, and all of that. That's kind of how my family knew me...as this little person who always had her head in a Bible. That kept me anchored when I came out of seminary, because I had moved out of the fundamentalism of my childhood into a much different place of Biblical criticism and understanding the Bible literally, as well as a piece of literature.

It was after my first 10 years of ministry and I had moved to Wisconsin that I was introduced to the two-year Academy of Spiritual Formation. And that really kind of woke me up to a WHOLE great big beautiful world of Spiritual Formation that I hadn't known about. This was just very, very rich. The discipline of being with others, journeying with others was good for me, and can be for a lot of people.

For example, my prayer life before had been thanksgiving, petition and intercession. But after I'd been to the Academy, I learned Lectio Divina (how to pick the Divine word). I would do a reading, usually the lectionary, and then read it and meditate on it, and journal and pray and enter into a centering prayer of being present with God. And that was just a wonderful discipline for me.

And one of the great things that happened to me then, and it stayed with me until now is that every one of us had to have a Spiritual Director. I'd never heard of that. And there I was. So I went and found myself a Spiritual Director who I was with then for four years. And I've had one ever since...I think I've had six di-

rectors. Every time we'd get a new appointment or we moved into retirement, I would find another one.

Having a spiritual director was wonderful. You would meet once a month and discern together the things that you wanted to do that would keep you in a spiritual discipline. The director would always help you map out how you were going to stay engaged, would help you remember to return to the scriptures, and to read tons of books.

And after I'd come through the two years of the Academy, I was invited by the Upper Room to become a member of the team. So then I led in the Academy for four more two-year sessions. This was just so powerful.

So that's the kind of formal Spiritual Formation I've done. It spans 30 years, so it's just kind of flowed through my life as a thread that was woven into the fabric of who I am.

*One of the things that I love about Spiritual Formation is that we're all being formed. And so the opportunity is there, too, to find ways to take care of yourself and to grow and to be grounded in the faith. For me my Spiritual Formation was these personal disciplines that I learned.*

**Q: Your particular area of interest, or, if you will, expertise, is spiritual formation, but you didn't have all the tools...**

That's right. I didn't know how much richer it could become. One of the things that I love about Spiritual Formation is that we're all being formed. And so the opportunity is there, too, to find ways to take care of yourself and to grow and to be grounded in the faith. For me my Spiritual Formation was these personal disciplines that I learned. But it was really Christian fellowship, too. You know, meeting in small groups. So, what I'm saying is, it was individual, it was private, but it was also so much community.





Praying in Color: "This is one my husband Mel did. We were working on this passage from Exodus and he just started drawing the mountain. Then added the tents, then the sky. You just add things as you think about the passage and as they come to you."

**Q: It sounds like the “community” as well as the communion is a big part spiritual formation?**

That’s right. That’s right. The group. It is meaningful for me to have the personal spiritual life and also meaningful to me to have the covenant community. We always entered into covenant with the people that we were going to be with on the journey for a long period of time. And then there were always things that were present in the churches themselves, United Methodist Women, for example.

**Q: If you were to “give advice,” if that’s the best phrase – how would you recommend an individual find their own spiritual practice/nature? For individuals like me, who don’t have the foundation that you do...how do WE go about finding direction?**

For me, it was a journey, and I think it will be for everybody. You just start some place, either with a group, or with a discipline. By that, I mean there are books of daily devotions you could use. There is the *Upper Room*, or Reuben Job with his books. Also, in our church, there is a meditation group, there are circles that read together and discuss together, there are the Sunday school classes. There are things that are already in place here. And I

think that’s a beginning place. I also think it’s good to have a companion. I also think it’s good to reach out and ask people.

*One of the things that I find is interesting about Spiritual Formation is that if you find something that feels like it’s really something that would be exciting for you to do, then that’s ok for that to be a part of your prayer life. I like that. So, I think you can just make it up as you go along.*

**Q: First Church’s mission statement talks about “nurturing our diverse spiritual journeys.” How do we journey in community?**

Small groups are a good way for people to journey together. Those allow for people to share their lives – the joys and concerns and burdens – and allow for people to really know each other. Small groups are a wonderful





Praying in Color: "This one is an outline of my hand. I just put my hand on the paper, outlined it, and then just began to doodle in it as I meditated on the phrase. It just happens."

container for books, for Bible study, for Spiritual Formation and kind of getting on the journey with all the different things you can do to enrich your prayer life and your understanding of the Biblical word.

**Q: How does the church support us individually? Is there an individual component of this?**

I think both have to happen in the church. There was a sermon that talked about Lectio Divina, even though that phrase was never used. It was a lesson in how to read and pause and think and write and read again, and really ponder it.

I do workshops on "Praying in Color." This is the thing...be open to what's going on out there, and maybe something will be triggered. I heard about this Praying in Color thing and I went online. It's a form of meditation. One resource I use a lot is Zentangle. It is a growing new art form that combines meditation, creativity and fun. The idea behind praying in color is, it's a meditation exercise. It's a contemplative action that you've chosen your

text – the Biblical word that has caught your eye. A class I taught used a passage from Exodus. You write it down. Then, when you meditate on it, you just start doodling. I doodle in color. And as I think things, I just keep developing the picture.

**Finally...**

One of the things that I find is interesting about Spiritual Formation is that if you find something that feels like it's really something that would be exciting for you to do, then that's ok for that to be a part of your prayer life. I like that. So, I think you can just make it up as you go along. You know, if you give yourself permission. Sometimes when people talk about the Spiritual Disciplines they get such a static thing in their mind. The important thing is to stay in it. Stay anchored in the Word and stay in love with the world. Then, put those two together and just allow yourself to have that gift of God's Sabbath rest.

*Bobbi Foutch-Reynolds  
Contributing Writer, First Church*

# The Journey to Spirituality



MAX WENDT

The yoga class often begins in this “easy pose.” It gives the practitioner the chance to “find their breath”, get in touch with what is going on with their bodies, and quiet their mind.

**If “Spiritual Formation” is the connection of one’s soul to the “ultimate” – or, if you prefer – God, how does one go about finding that connection?**

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, didn’t specifically speak of spiritual practices, but he certainly practiced methods which many today do think of as “practices” for spiritual formation. He advocated fasting, abstinence,

searching Scripture, family and private prayer, the Eucharist, public worship of God, and ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.

Marjorie J. Thompson, in her book, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the*



*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.  
We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN

*Christian Spiritual Life*, identifies nine practices which offer opportunities for individuals to create their own meaningful experiences: spiritual yearning, spiritual reading, prayer, worship, fasting, self-examination and awareness, spiritual direction, hospitality and developing a rule of life.

Thompson maintains that human beings are innately spiritual beings, and without a connection to God we are unable to fully grasp our purpose in life. When cultural and personal factors conspire to deprive us of easy answers to life's questions, the yearning we sense may only be satisfied through spiritual seeking.

Often, we read to get information or to gain knowledge. Spiritual reading goes beyond looking for facts. It requires an openness to listen to what is read. Usually, this kind of reading is done in solitude and silence. It may be reading a phrase – then stopping and reflecting on that phrase. “What does this mean to me today?” “How does it apply to my life?” Not only does it require attention to what is being read, but a willingness to respond to what is heard.

Perhaps one of the first and foremost spiritual practices would be communication with God, or prayer. Prayer can take many forms. The ways a person goes about establishing a prayer life can be individualized or communal. Many find prayer a solitary practice, experienced in a quiet space



### DENNIS HARRISON-NOONAN

We come to find peace,  
In the movements, peace breaks through,  
Peace found, there dwells God.

### NANCY HARRISON-NOONAN

Yoga makes me feel nourished and connected. It reminds me of my body and being accepting of where I am. It takes me out of my head and makes me feel alive.

in their home or walking outside in nature. Prayer can also be expressed in the moment during times of great joy or deep sorrow. Others find prayer most powerfully experienced communally, during times of worship or as part of a prayer team.

The concept of spiritual formation as opposed to religious education may be new for some. How does one begin an exploration of spiritual formation? Rev. Tina Lang suggests that exploration might begin by identifying whether one is an introvert or an extrovert.

She suggests that an introvert might decide to set aside as little as 10 minutes a day during which to read a daily devotional such as the *Upper Room* while sitting quietly, or use the Chapel on the second floor of First Church to walk the labyrinth.

An extrovert might seek a community experience through a small group process that includes accountability to one another and an agreed upon discipline or practice. Whether introvert or extrovert, spiritual formation is about

### SUE EAGLE



Meditation is a time to experience the present moment without thinking about the past or planning for the future. Some sit quietly and follow

their breath. Others use a guided meditation such as suggestions about a natural setting. This time, for me, leaves me refreshed. Many resources are now available to help people in their meditation practice. May you be well.

intentional openness to being shaped or challenged in a way you were not expecting.

At First Church, our worship services on Sunday mornings as well as during the week present an opportunity for us to gather together to express our common love of God. It gives us an occasion to move beyond our self-absorption to the prospect

## JESSE SIMPSON



Music has been a familial tie, something I grew up doing with my parents and sisters, and grandparents. It will continue to be one, as my

wife and I teach our son how to live in music. But there also is a deeper aspect to music in my life. Being wrapped in a magnificent sound can at times seem to give a momentary glimpse of “everything,” as though a vast woven tapestry in a great dark room were briefly illuminated by a flash of light. In that moment it is possible to “get it” in a way that no other experience has given me. And like the final notes of a cello solo echoing in a quiet performance hall, those moments remain in memory, acting both to sustain and guide as I move forward in life, calling me back amid the concerns of the world to the Presence which gives life, and to the joy and vitality of that communion. Because of this, music has been a critical, probably even necessary, component in my faith journey, and will remain so. Martin Luther said that “Next to the word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world.” I agree.

I will sing to the lord all my life;  
I will sing praise to my God as long  
as I have my being.

Psalm 104: 33

of serving as God’s people and truly being “the light of the world.”

Gathering as a community allows us to not only remember our common vision and mission, but as we move through the Christian year, we are able to relive common stories and lessons, as well as experience significant annual events such as Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter.



The spiritual practice of fasting is not as common today as in years past, nor as prevalent in the Christian tradition as in other religions. Nevertheless, Thompson suggests that fasting presents an opportunity to discover our own limitations and accept the sovereignty of God in a very physical way.

Self-examination and awareness: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts. And see if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.” Psalm 139: 23-24

The Psalmist is aware that as humans, we both welcome and fear God’s all-seeing eye and presence in our lives, thereby needing to be aware of our own thoughts and weaknesses. If we also know that God loves us, we are able to find healing.

One of the spiritual practices that Rev. Linda Vance notes is the practice of having a spiritual director to talk to about one’s own spiritual life. A director can help guide our study, can help us recognize things that may not be obvious to the one having the experi-



ence, and can love us and pray for us as we are on the journey.

Our church's mission statement states, "We seek to embody grace and hospitality...." Hospitality is a spiritual practice that First Church has embraced as an integral part of who we are. As we welcome the stranger in our midst, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, we are practicing hospitality in the manner of Jesus. As we do it as a community, so, too, it is important to do it individually when the chances arise.

Once various spiritual practices have been chosen to be a part of one's life, it then becomes important to develop a rule of life to continue the practices in a deliberate manner. John Wesley and his friends, who were part of a Holy Club, developed and practiced their disciplines in such a methodical manner that they became known as the Methodists.

*Bobbi Foutch-Reynolds*  
*Contributing Writer, First Church*

## ANN HERROLD-PETERSON



Spiritual practices have been an important part of my spiritual life for many years. Being intentional about setting aside the time has helped me to stay grounded, to keep perspective and to deepen my daily awareness and connection with God. I have found that maintaining a daily discipline cultivates "attentive presence" and enables me to focus my time and energy, as well as set priorities for the day. Knowing that others are keeping a spiritual discipline also helps me to feel connected to the "beloved community" here and throughout the world.

For several years, I was part of a Bible reading/journaling group where we chose a daily Bible reading. We wrote our reflections to the passage using the SOAP (Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer) guide and then shared our journal entries with the group during a weekly conference call. Being accountable to others is especially helpful to keep disciplined about the practice.

Watercolor painting has taught me to "see" differently by learning to pay close attention to shapes, shading, perspective and color. Painting encourages me to experiment, to slow down, and to be in a more contemplative mood.

Yoga helps to facilitate flexibility and mind/body connection.

Walking the Labyrinth and doing a walking meditation also focus attention and facilitate mindfulness.

## Praying the Labyrinth

**Sacred Time and Space for quiet prayer, meditation, reflection and renewal.**

For centuries, people of all backgrounds have found the labyrinth to be a helpful centering tool. At First Church there is both a floor labyrinth as well as a portable wooden finger labyrinth located in the upstairs Chapel.

The pattern of the labyrinth invites us to move quietly, thoughtfully, and deliberately to a central point and back. The simple process of moving to the center often prompts a "letting go" and an ability to focus clearly on one's deepest needs, concerns or potential.



# By the Numbers...

In the January issue of *First Look*, we described the budgeted sources of income and expenses for the programs and services we provide at First Church and in the community. In this issue, we will show how the results for the first six months of the budget (July 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016) compare.

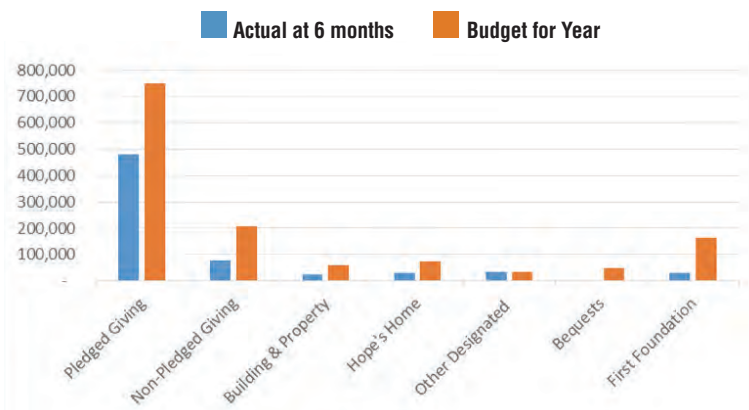
**REVENUE:** We have received 64% of what we had budgeted for Pledged Giving, including New Beginnings gifts. Because many members like to make their annual contribution in December, it is typical for Pledged Giving to be over 50% at this time of the year. Non-pledged giving, donations for debt reduction, gifts to our Homeless and Food Pantry

(Hope's Home) programs and bequests are currently below our budgeted revenue. In addition, although the numbers indicate we are under revenue that is budgeted from the First Foundation, these funds will be received in full prior to June 30, 2017.

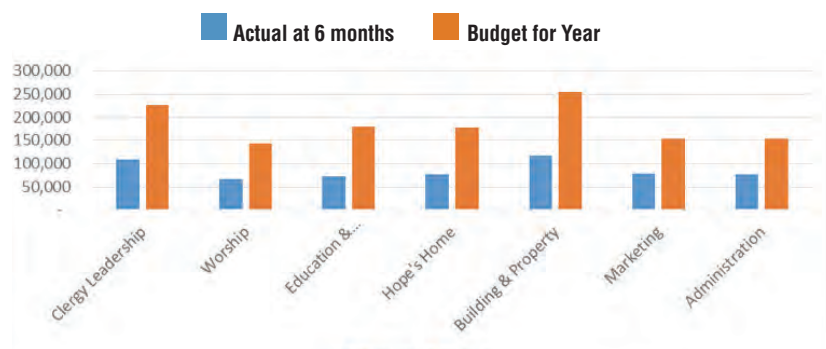
**EXPENSE:** In the expense area, all programs are at or below 50% of their expenses for the year. We adjust our expenses to the funds coming in by reviewing financial statements on a monthly basis. We also meet with staff quarterly to review their budgeted areas and make adjustments as needed.

*Sarah Flanagan*  
Accountant, First Church

REVENUE	Actual at 6 months	Budget for Year
Pledged Giving	478,836	750,000
Non-Pledged Giving	75,992	207,000
Building & Property	23,596	60,000
Hope's Home	29,305	75,000
Other Designated	34,972	33,000
Bequests	1,511	50,000
First Foundation	32,250	163,167
<b>Total</b>	<b>676,462</b>	<b>1,338,167</b>



EXPENSES	Actual at 6 months	Budget for Year
Clergy Leadership	108,795	226,866
Worship	65,813	142,679
Education & Formation	73,361	180,785
Hope's Home	77,339	178,106
Building & Property	117,724	255,210
Communications & Connecting	79,496	152,842
Administration	75,550	152,498
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>598,078</b>	<b>1,288,986</b>





# SPECIAL MISSION GIVING

***“...joining together as a servant community to help realize a more loving and just world.”***

That is the final phrase of our church’s Mission Statement. It is the “...so that...” phrase, or in Greek it would be the “telos,” defined as purpose, aim, goal, or objective.

Members and friends of First Church have many good reasons to connect with one another, but we understand that we have been called together for a purpose (telos) far beyond ourselves. In addition to the outreach of Hope’s Home ministries that take place in our building and through our hands-on efforts, we give financial support through special mission gifts that connect with other ministries across our community.

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, First Church has a history of offering annual ministry grants totaling \$20,000-\$23,000 in support of a variety of organizations and their good ministry efforts. Our financial support through special mission gifts helps us help others be part of the mission to “...realize a more loving and just world.”

Annual special mission giving is supported primarily through three special offerings received throughout the year: Easter offerings, a mid-summer mission offering, and Christmas offerings. Some of the ministries supported by First Church mission offerings over the years are noted below. We are blessed by opportunities to share our blessings. May the blessings continue to abound!

*Rev. Tina S. Lang  
Associate Pastor, First Church*



This year, First Church provided special financial grants to 11 organizations to further their mission and ministries in the Madison community and beyond. These grants are supported by special offerings to our church, including those given at our Easter and Christmas worship services.

## **Supported by Special Mission Giving**

UMC Hospital Chaplaincy  
Madison-area Urban Ministry  
Triangle Community Ministry  
OutReach – LGBT Counseling and Support  
Food, Faith and Farming Network  
Porchlight Transitional Housing  
Domestic Abuse Intervention Services  
Forward Learning Youth and Young Adults  
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice  
Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

**The ministries of First Church are furthered by the generous financial commitments made by First Church members, friends, constituents and the FUMC First Foundation. Thank you for your support of our mission to help realize a more loving and just world.**

# *Paying it Forward*

Who is helped when someone's gift to the church allows the church to "BE the church" in ministry and outreach? Who benefits when a donor supports a scholarship fund or the food pantry or a youth mission trip, or gives a general gift so the church can keep its doors open, ministers present, and the lights on? Certainly the benefits are real for those who receive the scholarships or food, for the youth on ASP mission trips (and those whose homes they repair), and for many who come to church for worship, Sunday school, and pastoral care.

But what about the givers? Most often, givers act from gratitude for some blessing given to them; they "pay it forward" so that others may be similarly blessed. But their very generosity shows how much their giving must also mean to them. Generosity brings joy. Givers discover, through the very act of giving, a new sense of closeness to God, a "peace that passes understanding."

Since the establishment of the First Foundation in our church nearly 50 years ago, hundreds of donors have found the joy of "paying it forward." Margaret Ann James is a prime example.

Margaret James joined First Methodist in 1945, while a student at UW-Madison. Her family had moved to Madison in 1941, and became active in First Church. Margaret participated in youth activities and sang in the choir under Mae Hara's inspiring direction. One of five James children, Margaret graduated from West High School in 1944, and from UW in 1948. She was a Home Economics major, with a focus on hospital dietet-



Margaret James continues to 'pay it forward' in ways that open doors and change lives for others.

ics and a passion for education. She served in hospitals and taught public health nutrition, continued her own education, and ultimately earned master's and Ph.D. degrees. She taught Nutrition Education and Dietetics at UW-Stout for over 28 years.

***"I felt that placing my gift in the Foundation with thoughtful people who would be careful with the funds was important. In other words, I want the funds used wisely under careful stewardship to get the most value from the gift."***

When she retired in 2002, Margaret returned to Madison, rejoined First Church, moved to Oakwood West, and actively participated in both

communities. She gave generously of her time and talent, but also of her treasure. Margaret Ann James died on January 12, 2015 at age 88. In her will she left First Church a generous bequest – totaling almost \$160,000.

The story of Margaret's generous giving actually begins many years earlier, though – reflecting a philosophy of "paying it forward" that she learned from her parents. More than 10 years ago, Margaret made her first gift into a Foundation fund named for her parents: the David Ellis James and Rosine Geiser James Memorial Fund. Her gifts since then have added up to more than \$400,000, including her bequest. How was Margaret inspired to leave such a legacy?

Her father was a businessman and her mother was trained as a home economist. The whole family was active in the church. She recalled, "One of my mother's contributions was



working with the ladies to prepare a lunch for 60-cents for people downtown, out of the church's kitchen, and my father helped. They also assisted at Sunday night suppers for students who were meeting at the church." Margaret's parents encouraged her to be independent, and instilled in her their belief that if you receive a benefit then you should give back to the community. They modeled what they taught: the first gift to the Foundation from the James family came not from Margaret, but from her mother. That gift, in 1982, was for \$333.33.

Over the last ten years of her life, Margaret gave almost annually to the Foundation. When asked why, she said, "I felt that placing my gift in the



Margaret James

Foundation with thoughtful people who would be careful with the funds was important. In other words, I want the funds used wisely under careful

stewardship to get the most value from the gift."

The principal of Margaret Ann James' many gifts to the First Foundation will remain there in perpetuity, but the annual income generated by the James Memorial Fund is used to support First Church ministries. Margaret designated the proceeds to support programs for children, elderly, needy and outreach ministries. We at First Church honor Margaret for her generosity and witness. She continues to "pay it forward" in ways that open doors and change lives for others.

*Joan Deming, Anne Lambert  
Contributing Writers, First Church*

# First

FUMC FOUNDATION

EMPOWERING THE FAITHFUL

If you wish to make a gift to last a lifetime and beyond, you may make an undesignated gift for use by the church as needed, or you may designate your gift to one or more of the following funds:

Worship & Music Fund  
Christian Education Fund  
Mission & Outreach Fund  
Property Care & Improvement Fund  
Youth & Young Adult Ministry Fund

For more information about First Foundation or guidance in providing for First Church in your estate plan, please contact our Lead Pastor Mark Fowler at 608-234-5189 or [mfowler@fumc.org](mailto:mfowler@fumc.org); or First Foundation Board President Matt DeVos at 608-316-3801 or [Matt@devoslawfirm.com](mailto:Matt@devoslawfirm.com).





# Downtown for Good

It's not just a clever phrase; it helps clearly define First Church and its mission within the Madison community.

Initially of course, it describes First Church's location within the heart of the city of Madison. From the first church built in 1849, through its struggles in the 1990's to stay in its present location, First Church is committed to being downtown, and staying downtown.

Of course the most important **Good** is that which our church provides in myriad ways for the Madison community. The **Good** of the food pantry and homeless outreach ministries. The **Good** of youth group retreats and mission trips. The **Good** of UNICEF collections, Pride Parade, Music Fellowship, and CROP walk. The list of **Good** continues to grow. Ultimately our passion for this **Good** helps us use our spiritual gifts to make a difference in our church, our society, and our world.

*Downtown for Good, it's where we are...it's who we are.*