



From the Administrator,

Welcome to the newsletter for the First of January, 2025. You will find contributions from **Jenni Walsh**, **Nick Schweitzer**, and **FUS Madison**. I think you will find them interesting. Please let me know if I can be of assistance. My Park Hall hours are Tuesday and Friday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and by appointment. Park Hall Voicemail: 608.643.3131 **Fritz Parks**

Upcoming Sunday Programs (10:10 a.m.)

Date	Program	Speaker	Topic
Jan 5	Spiritual Roundtable	All attending	Toxic Femininity: Mean Girls
Jan 12	U.U. Program	Penny Andrews	On Dylan: What Might Have Been
Jan 19	Painesfest Program	Representative Dave Considine	Painesfest Holiday & Potluck

We invite you to attend our in-person Sunday programs at our newly restored Park Hall. We have masks available. Childcare is provided each Sunday; Child Education classes meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Our Sunday programs are also available live on Zoom.

The **Board of Directors** of the Free Congregation will meet on **Sunday, January 12, at Park Hall at 11:30 a.m.** If you have an issue for us to an address, please email **Susie Tatone**, President of the Board at statone01@gmail.com so that it may be added to the agenda. The meeting will also be on Zoom.

Don't miss joining us on **Sunday, January 19, 2025**. As we have done 172 times since 1852, our **Painesfest Holiday Program** will celebrate the birth of Thomas Paine, an American revolutionary whose writings on liberty, democracy, and the separation of church and state were especially influential among German Free Thought groups. Author of *Common Sense*, Paine is considered an American Founding Father. First celebrated in January 1853, we commemorate Paine's life every 3rd Sunday of January. Our guest speaker will be **State Representative Dave Considine**. The program will **begin at 10:10 am** with an invitation to be seated, followed by brief announcements. Comments and discussion will follow the presentation. We usually adjourn by 11:20 a.m. On this holiday event, we will have a potluck meal downstairs after the program. Childcare is provided. The program will be on Zoom at <https://freecongregation.org/sunday-programs.aspx>

Retirement of Ellen Paul

After more than 6 years as our Facilities Coordinator, Ellen Paul is retiring from this position. The Facilities Coordinator manages events and rentals of our building and grounds. We are grateful for her exceptional service. Ellen has been an indispensable cog in Park Hall activities; her successor will have large shoes to fill.

The Adult Ed discussion group, **What I Believe Now**, will meet **on Zoom** as usual on the fourth **Monday, January 27, at 6:30 p.m.** The topic is not yet announced. Please email **Jenni Walsh**, walshjenni77@gmail.com, if you'd like to receive a meeting invitation and list of questions in preparation for the gathering.

Diane Matzke provides **Mindfulness Meditation Teachings** in the hall, generally each **Wednesday**. Sessions start at **6:30 p.m. and last one hour**. This month, sessions will be held on the **15th, the 22nd and on the 29th**. All welcome. Free will donations accepted. (There will not be sessions on January 1 and January 8.)

Nick Schweitzer sends this recap on our **Celebration of the Season** event on December 21:

Our first annual non-commercial family-friendly multi-cultural Celebration of the Season was held at Park Hall on Saturday, December 21st. The day-long event included hot beverages and bonfires outside in the park, wagon rides, children's activities in the lower hall, ethnic food for lunch, a German dinner from the Dorf Haus, a full schedule of presentations which included the following:

- An Introduction to the Free Congregation
- Irish music by Matt Grade and Espere Eckhad-Lee
- Latin American music by Richard Hildner Armacanqui
- Hanukkah traditions by Marci Huffaker
- Scottish bagpipe music by Sean Michael Dargan
- Scottish dance by Megan Dunn and Meghan Pierce
- Seasonal music by the UCC Choir
- Indigenous music and dance by members of the Ho-Chunk tribe
- Seasonal Music in German by the German Maennerchor
- Indigenous food by Lightning New Rider
- The Solstice tradition by Penny Andrews, ending the day with dance music by the Griffin James Polka Dots.

Attendance by congregation members and the community was not as robust as we could have hoped, but there were participants and audiences throughout the day who expressed their appreciation for all the activities, and the event was successful enough that we plan to hold it again next December. Thanks to all the FCSC and SP CAN (Sauk Prairie COMMUNITY Acceptance Now) members who volunteered their time to make this day a reality!

Ruth Conniff will talk about her book *Milked: How an American Crisis Brought Together Midwestern Dairy Farmers and Mexican Workers*, at the **First Unitarian Society in Madison**. FUSmadison.org. The program will be held **Saturday, January 25 at 2:00 p.m.** Winner of the Studs and Ida Terkel Award, *Milked* both informs about the current state of dairy farming in Wisconsin and puts a human face to the farmers and workers putting milk on our tables. These stories offer a rich and fascinating account of how two crises —the record-breaking rate of farm bankruptcies in the Upper Midwest, and the contentious politics around immigration—are changing the landscape of rural America. Free and open to the public. Parking is free; facilities are handicap accessible.

Thanks to all who attended the Work Day on the 29th. We cleaned up after the Celebration of the Season event and got many other tasks done. We also caught up to the requirements of our recent Fire Department Safety Inspection.

How to join our Zoom Sunday Programs.

1. Go to the Sunday Programs tab of our website:
<http://www.freecongregation.org/sunday-programs.aspx>
2. Refresh the browser page.
3. Click the “**Join Our Zoom Meeting**” link in RED TEXT.

The “**Join Our Zoom Meeting**” link will not be visible until 15 minutes before our meeting; typically this is 9:55 a.m. for a 10:10 a.m. meeting. Early birds will see the option to “**Join a Practice Zoom Meeting**”. Refreshing the page after 9:55 a.m. should reveal the active meeting link.

We publish twice a month to our website. We email announcements to our list as each issue appears online. If you no longer desire email reminders, feel free to tidy up our email list with an unsubscribe message. Keep our website bookmarked for future use.

FreeCongregation.org our website homepage

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