

# THE liberal

## FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

*In the universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive and grow.*

Issue 5, Number 6

December 2013

## “Starborn!”

### *33rd Annual Winter Solstice Celebration*

**December 21, service at 7:30 pm**

by Bob Friedman

What is it that we celebrate at the Winter Solstice, this point in time that delineates the beginning of the return of the sun...or is it the honoring of the deeper journey into the longest night of the year? Our modern civility lights up the world in a way that can seem to shut out, or be fearful, of what the night holds. But in honoring ancient traditions that celebrate the beauty of night we discover many gifts that are held in the cyclical darkness of our existence.

Come take part in the Winter Solstice Celebration, where once again we will sit together in community, hear a story of hope and inner peace, sit in the healing heartbeat of darkness, and raise our candles to spread the light. Labyrinth Walks begin at 5:00 p.m, with a last one at 6:45 p.m. Sanctuary will open at 7:00 pm, with a 7:30 p.m. service. After the one hour service, we will once again enjoy ginger cookies and the Spiral Dance in the Social Hall. Invite family and friends to join you!

Volunteer help is greatly appreciated... ginger cookies, Social Hall set-up and clean-up, and Sanctuary take down.

Please contact Bob Friedman or Debbie Cash at **612-722-4705**.

## First Universalist Church Christmas Pageant

**Sunday, Dec 22 and Tuesday, Dec 24 at 4 p.m.**

Calling all children and youth, ages 5-16! We need you to help us tell our Universalist Christmas story of love, and hope, and MAKING ROOM!

Sign up for a role in the Christmas Pageant on Sunday, Dec 8, after both services in the Atrium.

All Christmas Pageant roles are by sign-up except for speaking roles, including the Star, the Head Angel, the Storyteller, Mary, Joseph, and two Wise Ones. If your child is interested in one of these parts please also sign him or her up for a second choice. We will contact you on Dec 9 if your child has been chosen for a speaking role.

Costume pick-up will take place on Sunday, Dec 15 after both services. If you are unable to pick up your child's costume that day, please arrange for a friend to do so for you. Rehearsals for the Singing Shepherds will be held Dec 8 and 15, between services from 10:45-11:10 a.m. in the Cummins Room.

**First Universalist Church Christmas Pageant** (continued on page 5)

### Upcoming Christmas Pageant Dates!

**Sunday, Dec 8**, after both services - Christmas Pageant Sign-Ups, Atrium

**Sundays, Dec 8 & 15, 10:45-11:10 a.m.** Singing Shepherds Pageant Rehearsal, Cummins Room

**Sunday, Dec 15**, after both services - Pick Up Christmas Pageant Costumes

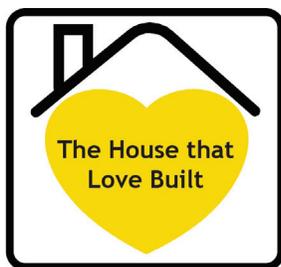
**Saturday, Dec 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.** Mandatory Christmas Pageant Rehearsal, Sanctuary

**Sunday, Dec 22, 4 p.m.** First Christmas Pageant

**Tuesday, Dec 24, 4 p.m.** Second Christmas Pageant

## Day of Service: March 15, 2014

Over the last three years First Universalist has contributed nearly 7,000 hours of service through an effort we call the Day of Service. The Day has provided us an opportunity to connect with each other in new ways and to learn about the good work of a number of local organizations. This year we are holding the Day of Service on Saturday, March 15th rather than a Saturday in February. Do you have ideas of organizations that might have opportunities for a group of 6-10 people to come in and volunteer their time on March 15th? We are especially looking for the projects that are related to our Ministry Areas of Housing Justice and Environmental or Food Justice, suitable for families, that last about 2-5 hours.



### House That Love Built

Each year The Visual Arts Committee plans decorations for the holiday season. This year members decided to coordinate their plans with the Habitat for Humanity project, The House that Love Built. The Social Hall is decorated with all of the wonderful houses adults and

children submitted. A warm and welcoming character gracing the chancel was created by Shannon Steve with accents by Meredith Sims. Over 16 Visual Arts members participated in decorating the church...their gift to the congregation.

If you haven't yet turned in your house, it's not too late! The Visual Arts Committee will continue adding houses throughout December. Extra houses are available in the Office, Atrium Welcome Station, or the Habitat display in the Social Hall, where they can also be returned.

As we consider our Church's goal of creating a Habitat House, we hope the Social Hall becomes filled with even more of the houses you create.



## “Selling the Stash”

*(a fund raiser for The House That Love Built)*

by Pam Vincent

Like many knitters, I have acquired a ‘stash’-- yarn purchased over the years, sometimes with a specific project in mind, sometimes just because it is so luscious, I had to have it. I fear, however, I have crossed over to SABLE- Stash Acquisition Beyond Life Expectancy. To that end, I am offering most of the best yarns in my stash for sale, Dec 8, after both services, with all proceeds to The House That Love Built. If you are a knitter, you're going to want some of this! If you know and love a knitter, they'd be thrilled to find a skein or two of this stuff in a gift bag. Fibers include alpaca, silk, merino, mink(!), hand dyed and natural fibers. Lace-weight to worsted.

### Did You Know?

Did you know that First Universalist has a Planned Giving Committee? Or a Heritage Circle membership? That's right – we do! If you have been contemplating completing a will and would like the church to be a part of your legacy, we can help you through the steps. You can go to the church's website and click on “Planned Giving” where you will find resources to guide you. Or you can contact one of the committee members to answer any questions you may have. Marjie Smith, [marjie-smith1@aol.com](mailto:marjie-smith1@aol.com) or Tom Saterstrom, [saterstromtom@yahoo.com](mailto:saterstromtom@yahoo.com). “It is for times we shall never see”.

## “What is Good Food?”

### *A conversation about the ethical dilemmas of choosing food*



125 adults from First Universalist and several neighboring congregations gathered on Sunday, November 10 to share a delicious vegan lunch prepared by our own Tracy Yue. After lunch, the crowd heard a conversation moderated by First Universalist member, George Boody, Executive Director of the Land Stewardship Project.

Panelists included Yolanda Cotterall, from the Latino Economic Development Center, who spoke about small farmers and agricultural workers; Atina Diffley, an organic farmer and author of *Turn Here, Sweet Corn*; Dr. Jeff Johnson, from St. Catherine University, who spoke about humane treatment of farm animals; and Glenda Chriss, who represented Hope Community.

The conversation was a broad overview of some of the ethical dilemmas facing people of faith as we choose what to eat and from what sources. Some of the points brought up by the panelists included:

- Good flavor is always important.
- It is desirable to gain control over our food, and to eat food raised with stewardship by family farmers or by ourselves.
- Healthful diets are important for our wellbeing.
- Racial equity, fair wages and humane working conditions for all who work in a food system are the right thing to do.
- For those people who eat meat, we want humanely raised and slaughtered animals.
- Accessible and affordable food for all is important.

This event was the kickoff of a series of events and actions aimed at raising our awareness of ethical issues related to our food choices, and actions we can take to create societal change. As eaters, we can have a role beyond just consuming food. We want to learn, navigate and begin to change the food system to put people before excessive corporate profits and short term gains.

An additional area of interest is around food deserts. Did you know that Minneapolis and St. Paul are the twin cities of food deserts? In 2006, Minneapolis was almost 50 percent food desert, as was a third of St. Paul. Making matters worse is the fact that one of five Twin City residents don't have cars, making it difficult to get to the areas that do have supermarket and food stores. We are excited by this emerging interest as it connects our commitment to food, environmental and racial justice.

The next step that First Universalist congregants are invited to take is participating in a 9 week Meatless Monday challenge starting in January, 2014. In an effort to reduce our consumption of meat, participants will eat meat-free one day a week. (It doesn't have to be Monday.) To make this easier, there will be recipes, cooking classes and other events. An information flyer about the campaign is included in this Liberal as well.



## Global Gift Fair Update

For the past several years First Universalist has supported local nonprofits through its Global Gift Fair. Unfortunately, the Fair will not be held this year as we turn our support to The House that Love Built.



## Our worship theme for December is...

*“Making Room,” and I couldn’t think of a better theme for the season we’re in.*

by Rev. Justin Schroeder

This winter, we’re “making room” in our hearts and minds to re-imagine our relationship to the holiday season and the flurry of consumption. We’ve committed to reducing our spending, and to share what we save with Habitat for Humanity, as we become the lead sponsor for a home for a family in need. As of this writing, we’re already raised \$22,000 for the “House that Love Built.” We’re “making room” to think creatively about how we raise this money; church members have raised \$1000 selling homemade mango chutney. Wedding couples and memorial service gifts have been directed to the “House that Love Built.” On Sunday, December 22nd, during the service, as we make our final gifts to this project, I have no doubt that we will meet our goal of \$60,000!

As a faith community, we are “making room” to intentionally and slowly become a racial justice church. We are making room to do the deep work of understanding race, racism, and whiteness in this country and in our faith community. As of this writing, a group of 40 church leaders (Board of Trustees, staff, and other key lay-leaders) have completed the first three day intensive racial justice training led by Dr. Heather Hackman. In January and February, we’ll be launching several pilot Racial Justice Learning Circles, groups of 8-10 people, to deepen the conversation and learning in this racial justice work, and Dr. Hackman will be leading a “Training for Trainers,” so that we can build the internal capacity to continue to teach and train about racial justice principles. In the spring, a second group of 40 church leaders will go through the three day intensive training with Dr. Hackman, and in the fall of 2014, we’ll begin to offer these trainings to the wider church community. While the immediate goal is to develop a common language and analysis around race, racism, and whiteness, the longer term goal is to become a church fully embodying racial justice principles in our worship, faith formation, social justice partnerships, and more.

Finally, I am looking forward to two months of sabbatical time in March and April of 2014. This sabbatical will allow me to “make room” in my life to step back from the day to day demands of large church ministry, and to focus on key elements of my own professional and spiritual development, so that I can continue to best serve this faith community and staff in the years to come.

During this winter and holiday season, may you, too, find space and time to “make room” for whatever is waiting to be born into your life.

In faith,

# THE Liberal

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

In the Universalist spirit of love and hope, we give, receive and grow.

### Ministers

- Senior Minister Rev. Justin Schroeder
- Program Life Rev. Jen Crow
- Membership & Adult Ministries Rev. Elaine Aron
- Tenbrink
- Worship Arts Rev. Ruth MacKenzie
- Emeriti Rev. John Cummins
- Rev. Kate Tucker

### Worship Arts

- Director Rev. Ruth MacKenzie
- Music Director John Jensen
- Choral Director Dr. Randal Buikema

### Operations

- Director Diane Gavere
- Assist. Finance Admin. Brad Schmidt
- Communications Manager Heidi Johnson
- Office & Events Manager Bree Mattson
- Facility Manager Tracy Van Epps
- Sr. Cleaning Custodian Tim Ewing
- Evening Custodian Albert “Reed”
- Sound System Operator David Kellermann

### Faith in Action

- Director Debra Rodgers

### Membership & Adult Ministries

- Director Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink
- Membership Support Sandy DiNanni

### Children, Youth & Families Ministries

- Director Lauren Wyeth
- Youth Coordinator Abe Levine
- Program Assistants Alice Fredrickson
- Emily Christie

If you want a print version of the Liberal, contact [sandy@firstuniv.org](mailto:sandy@firstuniv.org), 612-825-1701, or pick up a print copy at the Information Center. The online color version at [firstuniv.org/newsletter](http://firstuniv.org/newsletter) has live links. Our office hours are Mon-Thurs 8:30am-8pm; Fri 8:30am-4pm; Sat we are closed; Sun 8:00am-1pm. Church Services are 9:30am and 11:15am during the year and only 10am during the summer.

3400 Dupont Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55408  
Phone: 612-825-1701 Fax: 612-825-8879  
[www.firstuniv.org](http://www.firstuniv.org)



## Board of Trustees Update

by Karin Wille, Vice President

Happy Holidays! The Board is excited and energized by the wonderful things happening at First Universalist in December, and we hope you are, too. We have long time traditions – the Christmas pageant with angels on rollerblades – and new traditions – reimagining the holidays to support the House that Love Built – to look forward to and engage with.

In the November Liberal, Board Trustee Dan Berg provided a thumbnail sketch of how policy governance works at First Universalist. He noted that the Board’s Governing Policies Handbook (GPH) requires the Board to “actively and deliberately link with....present and future seekers who are attracted to First Universalist as a spiritual home.” One of the Board’s goals for this year is to develop and implement a strong “linkage” program with the congregation, which includes listening deeply to congregational feedback. In recent months we have received feedback about the level of staff turnover, a matter with which the Board has been deeply engaged. The Board’s responsibility to the congregation is to be good stewards of the congregation’s physical, financial and human resources; staffing issues can impact all these.

Under our policy governance model, the responsibility for recommending policy and monitoring changes is delegated to two standing Board committees, Finance and Governance. The Finance Committee is primarily responsible for developing and monitoring policies that protect the congregation’s physical and financial assets, through such avenues as adequate insurance coverage, sound investment policies and appropriate budget processes. The Governance Committee is primarily responsible for developing and monitoring policies that protect the congregation’s human assets, through policies concerning appropriate compensation systems, performance management processes and treatment of volunteers. Its members are Jill Braithwaite, former Board member David Leppik, Cindy Marsh, Pam Vincent, Lark Weller and Karin Wille, chair.

The Governance Committee has been reviewing existing GPH policies to insure that the congregation’s human resources are properly protected. Building on work done by the staff Management Team last year, the Committee is partnering with the Management Team to recommend a compensation framework that

will identify and, ultimately, ensure appropriate salary ranges for all staff positions. The Committee is also looking at whether the Board can strengthen its stewardship of the congregation’s human assets by amending the GPH to include a policy framework around human resource systems such as selection and performance management, as well as strengthening existing policies on integration and treatment of volunteers. The Governance Committee plans to take these recommendations to the Board for discussion in the near future.

In addition, with support from the Board, Justin and his Management Team are engaging a management consultant to give objective input on the best administrative structure for our growing congregation. Part of Justin’s upcoming sabbatical will be dedicated to gaining a better understanding of special management and administrative needs of a large, growing congregation like ours. This information, combined with the work of the Governance and Finance Committees, will allow us to enter the next budgeting cycle with a better understanding of the human and financial resources needed to provide a healthy and rewarding work environment for staff, and carefully grow this religious community in ways that are rewarding for its members and sustainable for our future.

As Dan said in last month’s Liberal column, it’s a privilege to serve this congregation, and to work with you to build a more just and loving world together. We appreciate your willingness to share your insights with the Board, and we will do our best to respond proactively and positively. Please look for us on Sunday morning, call or email any of us, and have a wonderful and blessed holiday season!

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### First Universalist Church Christmas Pageant (continued from cover)

The Mandatory Christmas Pageant Rehearsal will be held Saturday, Dec 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. All children are required to attend. Children age 3rd grade and younger must be accompanied at the rehearsal by an adult. No exceptions, please!

The Pageant will be presented twice, at 4 p.m, on Sunday, Dec 22 and Tuesday, Dec 24. Children with speaking roles must perform in both pageants. All others may choose to participate in one or both.

All performers must arrive in the social hall by 3:30 p.m. on the day of the event.

## “Making Room”

Worship Theme December 8th-29th

If we really dig into the story of Christmas, the message is clear: make room. Make room for the holy in your lives. Make room for surprise. Be ready for the world to be turned upside down in the movement of justice. Whatever you expected to happen, make room for grace to enter in and change your heart. This season we will explore what it is to make room, and how to offer our changed hearts to the world by building a house, and making more room.

## Calendar Year End Contribution Policy and Update

by Bradley Schmidt, Assistant Finance Administrator

Listed below is First Universalist’s year end contribution policy and update. If you have additional questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at either [brad@firstuniv.org](mailto:brad@firstuniv.org) or (612) 825-1701.

### Checks/Cash:

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We will accept everything included in the offering plate up to the 12/29/2013 service.

We will accept everything received in the mail post-marked by 12/31/2013.

The office will not be available to accept payments dropped off. The office will be closed 12/23/2013-1/1/2014.

### Credit Card

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We will accept all credit card payments with a transaction date of 12/31/2013 or earlier. This includes all automatic withdrawals as well as online donations.

### Stock Transfer

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We need to have received stock by 12/31/2013. Be sure to give your stock broker enough time so that the transfer can take place prior to the New Year.

## Big Changes Ahead for [www.firstuniv.org](http://www.firstuniv.org) Website!

by Heidi Johnson

It is with much excitement and anticipation that I would like to announce that we will be doing a massive overhaul of the [www.firstuniv.org](http://www.firstuniv.org) website...and soon! It is an exciting time here in the office of First U, as we look forward to 2014 and start moving towards a strategic communication plan. As your communications manager, I am excited about what I can bring to the table, and hope that my background in organizational communications, branding, public relations, and communication systems serve me well in this position at First Universalist. So many ideas, so many projects, so little time!

One project that has taken top priority, however, is our website—and I will be starting on the site map and organization of this new site as soon as we hire and train in our new administrative office staff. By the way, if any of you have interest in sharing your thoughts or opinions regarding the website (in its current state: what do you like about it? What *don't* you like about it?)—I’d be happy to hear them! Please email [communications@firstuniv.org](mailto:communications@firstuniv.org) and ask for a quick link to the ‘website survey’ if you are interested in this project and would like to provide feedback. Our general timeline for this project is to sketch out a site plan by the end of 2013, with the new site up and running by the end of February 2014, so please contact me no later than December 18th, 2013, if you’d like to send your feedback my way.

With that being said, I have received many questions/comments/requests from members regarding our current website that I would like to address. Simply put, I am doing my best with the time that I have! Please have patience and understanding with me during these next two months. Until Bree was hired yesterday, I was acting as both office manager and communications manager, so I must confess that I have a number of projects that are still on my ‘to do list’. This will change in the future, when we have a full staff in the office (and our Administrative Assistant hired!) and I can focus 100% of my efforts on communications for First Universalist Church.

If you have any additional questions about the website or our upcoming transition, or any communications questions in general, please do not hesitate to email me at [heidi@firstuniv.org](mailto:heidi@firstuniv.org) or [communications@firstuniv.org](mailto:communications@firstuniv.org). Thank you!

# Important Updates about the Auction, the Valentine's Day Dance, and the Website

by Rev. Justin Schroeder

Many of you were disappointed to hear that we're not doing the all-church auction this year. We were having difficulty assembling a full auction team, and as a result of this, we began to rethink all of our fundraising events and assumptions, including the Valentine's Day Dance.

After several months of conversation and reflection, things have come into focus! We're excited to announce that we'll be planning an all church party called "The Great Gathering." This party will incorporate the best elements of the auction; specifically, it will incorporate all of the community building "great gathering experiences," those dinners, wine tastings, and movie watching events that so many of you love to host and that bring us together. "The Great Gathering" party will also include the best parts of the Valentine's Day

Dance, as well, with the Jazz Band providing music. Most significantly, "The Great Gathering" will be accessible to everyone, with sliding scale ticket prices, thanks to generous financial sponsorship from members of First Universalist. If you are interested in being a financial sponsor of "The Great Gathering", please contact Diane Gavere, our Director of Operations, at [diane@firstuniv.org](mailto:diane@firstuniv.org).

Regarding the website, we are in the process of building a new website. Heidi Johnson, our new Communications Manager, anticipates that the website will be up and running by the end of February. We are grateful for your patience and understanding during this time, and we think that you will be pleased with what you see, come February!



## Welcome!

**Heidi Johnson**  
**Communications Manager**  
**First Universalist Church**

Hello everybody! My name is Heidi, and I am your new Communications Manager. As some of you already know, I have been here at First Universalist for a while now, since July--working as the Office & Events Manager until about 4 weeks ago, when I accepted the communications position. I have to confess to you all that I am SO excited about this position, and what the future holds for us! A little background about me: I have a Masters degree in communication and a Bachelors degree in writing and religion & philosophy, and before coming to First U, I worked as the Campus Center Director for Northland College in Ashland, WI. Prior to that, I lived in Hawaii for five years and worked as the Public Relations Director for a local nonprofit in Honolulu. It is my goal to improve our communication here--both internally and externally--and get things humming and moving in a way that is positive, fun, efficient, effective, and streamlined. Thank you for this opportunity!



## Welcome!

**Bree Mattson**  
**Office & Events Manager**  
**First Universalist Church**

Hi all! My name is Bree and I am coming on as your new Office and Events manager. I'm so excited to be joining the team here at First Universalist and I thought I would share a little bit about my background with all of you. I have a Masters degree in women's history and a Bachelors degree in history and writing. I recently moved to Minneapolis from Duluth, where I was the Tour Manager and Volunteer Coordinator at Glensheen Historic Estate. Before that, I was living in the United Kingdom and working as the Assistant Manager at St Briavels Castle, which was an 800 year old castle that housed a youth hostel and education center. I've enjoyed working in different facets of the non-profit sector where I have gained a lot of experience in management and organization. While I've only been at First Universalist for a few weeks now, I can already see what a wonderful community I've joined and I'm grateful for the opportunity to bring my skills and experience to the team.

## Consider Joining our Pastoral Care Team

*Do you have an open heart, a compassionate presence, a listening ear and a few hours each month to offer? If so, we invite you to consider joining our Pastoral Care Team.*

Members of the Pastoral Care Team will provide confidential pastoral care to friends and members of our congregation in need of support. They will visit at homes, hospitals, and hospice or at the corner coffee shop. Team members will receive a full-day of training in January of 2014, ongoing monthly support with Rev. Jen Crow, and will be commissioned by the congregation in a ceremony that endorses their role in serving our church community.

While our ministers will continue to be with mem-

bers of the congregation in crisis situations; this team will be able to provide continuing care to our growing community and enhance the practical support offered by our Congregational Care team. This program is modeled after successful Pastoral Care Team programs in other Unitarian Universalist congregations and emphasizes compassionate presence with each other as a spiritual practice. Team members will agree to serve for a two-year term and attend all trainings. For more information, and to receive an application and job description for the Pastoral Care Team, please contact Kathy Coskran, Congregational Care Leader at [kac1122@aol.com](mailto:kac1122@aol.com). Applications are due by December 15, 2013.

## Community Circle Reflection: The Essential Need for Listening and Speaking

by Donovan Hart

As the date of my first community circle approached, I felt anxious about my fulfilling my role as a facilitator. I'd facilitated discussions in the public realm as a professional consultant and attended the training sessions offered at First U, but this facilitation would be different. It would reach toward depths that most discussion facilitators don't even acknowledge.

So I did what any red-blooded American male does in such situations— I called my mom. Although in a former life she was a Presbyterian minister, on this call she was just mom. So she just listened and somehow I made it through that first session.

Now in my third year of facilitating a Men's Group, I realize that the gathering we do is important because it puts us in places we don't ordinarily inhabit. Physically that's true, as we formerly met in RE classes with Lilliputian tables and chairs and currently meet in the Bride's Room (much to our collective amusement); but more importantly it's the venturing into undiscovered countries in our interiors. We engage in training toward different listening and speaking. We stretch and strengthen new muscles to emerge stronger and more engaged to respond to life's innumerable rude shocks and momentary epiphanies.

The convening of the community circles demonstrate to me the essential need for this listening and speaking. While we are definitely not providing therapy or trying to fix anybody, we inhabit a space that blends seeking the spirit and healing of psyches. None of the group participants can claim any certain access to a font of

wisdom or medicinal balms, but together we offer something that individually none of us possess. That's the indefinable beauty of it. It's not magic, but I find that it works. My proof is that the men keep coming back for more.

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### Labyrinth Open Walk

*Wednesday December 4th 6:30-8:00pm*

In this time of increasing darkness as we approach Solstice, the longest night of the year, we invite you to journey into the quiet center of the labyrinth and to emerge toward the light.

### Winter Solstice Open Walk

*Saturday December 21st 5:00-6:45pm*

**Did you know "Solstice" is derived from the Latin phrase for "sun stands still"?**

What better way to prepare for the Winter Solstice ceremony than by quietly and reflectively walking our labyrinth? The holiday bustle will be in full swing and some much needed quiet and de-stressing time will be available. Taking time to remember what's really important can be difficult in the midst of the busy-ness. Join on the labyrinth to receive the gifts of the darkness.

**We hope to see you there!**

# Could First Universalist Be Your Spiritual Home?

*Check out these great ways to learn more about this faith community and meet fellow journeyers.*

## For Newcomers: Voices of Our Faith

If you are a newcomer who is ready to learn more, Voices of Our Faith is for you! This class meets for three sessions. We will consider the history and theology of Unitarian Universalism, the role that church plays in our lives, and how we build authentic connections at First Universalist. In the final session, we'll hear about the personal journeys of current members: why did they come? Why did they stay?

**Upcoming Classes:**  
Tuesdays, January 21, 28,  
February 4; 7-8:30 p.m.

To register, please contact the Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink at [elaine@firstuniv.org](mailto:elaine@firstuniv.org) or call at **612-825-1701 ext. 124**. Childcare is available free of charge by contacting [child-care@firstuniv.org](mailto:child-care@firstuniv.org) at least seven days in advance.

## For Visitors: First Step

First Step is a short overview of Unitarian Universalism and First Universalist Church. Sessions run about 1/2 hour and no sign up is necessary--just show up and learn more about our church community! Childcare is available.

**Upcoming Classes**  
1st and 3rd Sunday of every month after each service. The next class is December 15th

## The Path to Membership

Could First Universalist be the home for your spiritual journey? **The Path to Membership** invites participants into a more in-depth exploration of Unitarian Universalism, the history of this congregation, and experience of membership.

**The Path to Membership** is a requirement for membership.

**Upcoming Class:**  
Saturday, January 11, 9 am-3 p.m.

## Coming of Age Program

by Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

William Channing Gannett, a radical thinker of the Unitarian tradition, and a minister across the river in St. Paul in the late 1800's, once tried to outline things commonly believed among Unitarians in order to heal some rifts in our tradition. He said:

*"We believe that to love the Good and to live the Good is the supreme thing in religion;*

*"We hold reason and conscience to be final authorities in matters of religious belief;*

*"We honor the Bible and all inspiring scripture, old and new;*

*"We revere Jesus, and all holy souls that have taught men truth and righteousness and love, as prophets of religion;*

*"We believe in the growing nobility of (Hu)Man(s);*

*"We trust the unfolding Universe as beautiful, beneficent, unchanging Order; to know this order is truth; to obey it is right and liberty and stronger life;*

When youth enter the Coming of Age program, we ask them to wrestle with the essential questions of life, and in fact live into many of the statements Gannett put forward over a century ago. We ask them to describe what it is to live into the Good. We ask them to use their reason and conscience to frame their religious beliefs. We delve into sacred texts old and new, to identify voices of religion that guide them, and to locate themselves in this beautiful, unfolding universe.

Coming of Age is open to all 9th and 10th graders. Each youth chooses an adult mentor, and attends six gatherings from January through May. They will participate in a nature vigil, a day of service, meetings with Rev. Ruth MacKenzie, and explore spiritual practices in order to deepen their understandings and beliefs. This program culminates in the Coming of Age ceremony in which youth share their credo, or statement of faith in the spring.

If you are interested in finding out more about Coming of Age, please contact Lauren Wyeth: [lauren@firstuniv.org](mailto:lauren@firstuniv.org), for more details about the program.



## Call for Volunteers

Enjoy being around people? Have a friendly and positive attitude? Like working in a busy office? Have we got the volunteer opportunity for you!

The front desk here at First Universalist Church is in need of more cheerful volunteers to join our reception team. The first impression many visitors get of our church is from the smiling face they meet when they walk into our office. We're looking for friendly and reliable folks who want to get more involved in our community. Hours and time commitments are flexible and can be as much as a few shifts a week or as little as one Sunday a month. Represent First Universalist by greeting visitors, answering phones, monitoring doors and helping out with projects, all while spending time in a vibrant and welcoming office environment. If you are interested in volunteering or learning more, please contact Bree Mattson, Office and Events Manager, at 612-825-1702 or at [bree@firstuniv.org](mailto:bree@firstuniv.org).

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**Thank you to everybody who helped make our pie fundraiser in November a success!**



## Living Beautifully *with Uncertainty & Change in the Second Half of Life*

By Hal Schroer

You may know Martha Bird personally for her bright smile and active involvement in our church community, but you may also remember her service dog Ruby sitting quietly by her side on Sunday in church. Martha had a back injury and experiences recurring back pain and depression as a result, and Ruby was an important part of her strategy for coping with this disability.

Martha found Ruby through the Animal Humane Society, and she had joined its Legacy Society as a result of her great appreciation for their help. After Ruby passed away, the Animal Humane Society asked Martha if she would be willing to help them tell her Legacy Story.

At first, Martha asked herself why she might want to tell her story. She was not married, she had no children, and she has yet to experience her 50th birthday. After some personal reflection, Martha realized this process would allow her to express her values and to share who she was. This was critically important in a family who didn't have an accurate sense of her, and who had some very different values and beliefs. Martha was at first hesitant as the task seemed overwhelming, but the Humane Society actively supported this process with help from Barry Baines, MD, and author of "Ethical Wills" & "Putting Your Values on Paper".

Since completing her Legacy Story, Martha has shared her experience at other Humane Society events; but she will also be sharing her Legacy Story at her 50th birthday party at church in December, and she will be giving a brief overview at an upcoming AUW Friday Get Connected meeting in January. Typically, individuals complete their Legacy Story because they want to:

- Identify what they value most and what they stand for
- Articulate what they value now, so they can take steps to insure the continuation of those values for future generations
- Be remembered by those who care about them

"Living Beautifully with Uncertainty & Change in the Second Half of Life" is a year-long series of workshops that offer a supportive community and practical expertise in navigating the spiritual and practical realities of life's uncertainties. We invite you to join us for a two part workshop on Telling our Legacy Story. It will be facilitated by Cathy Manning (fellow church member, Certified Senior Advisor, and Barry Baines trained Ethical Will Facilitator), and it will be held @ 7pm

on Thursday evening, Jan. 9 and Jan. 23 in the Chalice Room.

This workshop will provide a supportive, interactive opportunity to:

- See examples of completed Legacy Stories, and learn how others have shared their important, heartfelt messages
- Frame our own thoughts and values for writing this important story
- Help us create a draft of our own story
- Discuss the who, how, and when of sharing our story with others

To learn more about the process, visit Cathy's website at [www.LegacyOnWords.com](http://www.LegacyOnWords.com).

To sign-up, please call Elaine at **612 825-1701 ext. 124** or email her at [Elaine@firstuniv.org](mailto:Elaine@firstuniv.org).

To hear Martha's Dec. 14th reading of her Legacy Story, contact her at [mbirdthatflies@gmail.com](mailto:mbirdthatflies@gmail.com).

## Daytime Connections

**Thursday, December 19**

**10:30–noon, Cummins Room**

**Lunch to follow (\$5 suggested donation)**

On the third Thursday of every month, church members and friends who are in the second half of life gather for Daytime Connections. We share, listen, create, laugh and learn from and with each other. It doesn't matter if you can only come a few times a year or even just once. Anyone age 55 and up is welcome at any time.

Our gathering on Thursday, December 19, will celebrate the winter solstice through ritual, conversation and food. It will be a lovely way to reflect on the season in a small group setting.

The Daytime Connections program is coordinated by First Universalist's Cummins Ministerial Intern, Terri Burnor. Ideas for topics and guest speakers are welcome! Please call her cell at **651-324-2343** or email [terri@firstuniv.org](mailto:terri@firstuniv.org). Also, if you plan on staying for lunch, please RSVP so enough food is available. Thank you!

# “Making Room” Means Slowing Down

by Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

So much in our consumer culture screams hurry up...do more...make it work... squeeze it in. We are bombarded with how to do things smarter, faster, more efficiently, especially at this time of year. I often wonder if we are becoming a little less human in this process, if our spirits are a little less resilient, compressed beneath the weight of modern life.

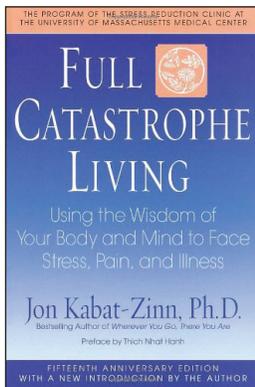
If the purpose of the religious life is to grow our souls, and repair the world, as UU minister Richard Gilbert once put it, if we are to move into a greater sense of wholeness inside and out, then making room is key. Making room is different than squeezing it in. Making room connotes a sense of slowing down, refocusing our attention and coming into spiritual alignment. It is developing practices and systems that help us calm

our tricked out nervous systems, and finding grace and goodness on the other side when we least expect it.

This is the Christmas story in a nutshell: make room. Mary makes room for the divine in her young life. The shepherds make room for wonder. The innkeeper makes room when there is no room.

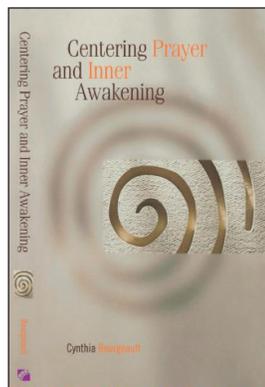
This month we explore what making room might look like. Maybe it's devoting fifteen minutes in the morning to a gratitude practice for the month of December. Maybe it's surrendering to wonder wherever it may appear. Maybe it's volunteering at Augsburg Fairview Academy. Maybe it's staying at the table and talking something out. Maybe it's a combination of self-care and world-care. Whatever we do, may we commit ourselves to slowing down, and making room.

## Books:



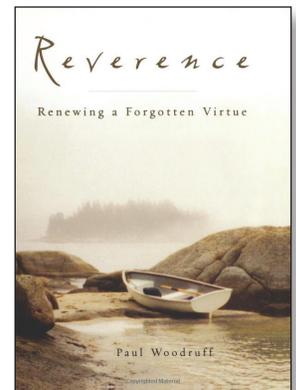
Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness

-Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D



Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening

-Cynthia Bourgeault

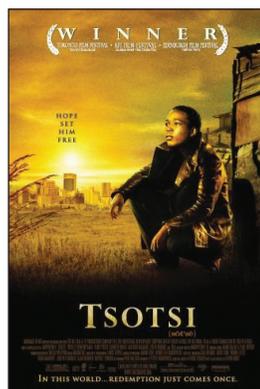


Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue

## Movies:



In America



Tsotsi



Love Actually

## Race Stories

by Debra Rodgers

I am a member of the Racial Justice Leadership Team and consider the work I am doing as part of that team some of the most important I have ever done in my life. Maybe the most important work...

I'm not new to learning about race, racism or racial justice but I am new to learning about whiteness. At this early stage of learning I find it fascinating, difficult and humbling. I'm an avid student though, intent on understanding the impact whiteness has on our community. One book I'm reading is *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege* by Robert Jensen, a professor of journalism at the University of Texas. In one of the chapters Professor Jensen tells two stories of himself, both true and very different from one another. Inspired by his story I decided to write two stories of myself.

### Story One

I was born in a very small town in North Dakota, to parents who were born in the early days of the Depression. Both of my parents came from pretty impoverished farm families and after finding each other they eventually found their way to a comfortable middle-class life. My mom was a housewife and my dad ran a grain elevator and always worked long hours and very hard. There was always food on our table and I lived in a pretty nice house even though it was in the "middle of nowhere". I learned to work hard from a young age starting when the farmers would come into town looking for kids to go out and pick rock from their fields. My dad volunteered my brother and I even though we were only 8 and 10 years old. When I got older I babysat and all through high school I worked at the Dairy Queen even though it was twenty miles from where I lived. I was a reliable student who studied hard and took school seriously. I made head cheerleader. My parents paid for me to go to college and I did pretty well. Although I worked all the way through college I joined a sorority and managed to go on a few spring break trips to warmer climates. When I graduated after four years, I got hired right away at the YMCA and worked there for two years before moving to Minneapolis where I found immediate work in the emergency shelter unit at St. Joseph's Home for Children. I met my husband at St Joes and three years after meeting we started a small business and a family. I've never taken more than six months off work in my life and every job I have had has been a stepping stone to a deeper understanding of justice.

### Story Two

I was born in a very small town in North Dakota. Both the state of North Dakota, the county in which I lived and the town in which I grew up were almost exclusively white. They were white because the indigenous population that once lived there was either

exterminated or pushed onto reservations...one a mere 45 miles away from my home town. My parents were born in the early days of the Depression in communities that were white and pretty insulated...anyone that did not grow up in that community was considered an outsider. My parents and brothers had little to no interactions with people of color until they met the black man who was to become a member of their family.

I went to elementary and high school in a small but well-funded district that was all white. I was taught by teachers who were white and took standardized tests written by and for white people. In school I studied the history of people who looked like me.

I went to a predominately white college and had all white professors. My alma mater, the University of North Dakota, proudly claimed the Fighting Sioux name and even though there was a smattering of American Indian students, the logo was not an issue. At the time I never thought about that logo with anything but pride and neither did any of my white friends.

From the time I started working at the age of ten until I was almost 45 I was interviewed by, hired by and supervised by white people. The one exception to that was when my husband and I ran our small business, we worked together, so I guess we hired and supervised each other.

When I turn on the television and watch the morning news, most of the people look like me. When I go to work most of the people I work with are white like me. When I talk about my husband, most people assume he is white like me. When I shop at Macy's no one follows me around. When I need to return something, even without a receipt, no one gives me a hard time or assumes I have stolen the merchandise.

I've made mistakes and I've had successes in my life. To the best of my knowledge, when I have made those mistakes in either school or work or in my family life no one ever suggested that those mistakes were connected to my being white. In the same way when I was successful no one ever suggested that I was successful because I was white.

Understanding whiteness is the flip side of the coin of race and racism. Whiteness benefits me individually and also perpetuates the systemic nature of racism and discrimination. I'm realizing through the training with Heather Hackman and the work with the Racial Justice Leadership Team that is it not just enough to learn about race and racism but absolutely critical to understand the way whiteness, or a white racial frame plays out as well. This is truly the work of our congregation as we continue this journey. What are your stories?

## \$100 Million for Affordable Housing

By Deb Rodgers, Director of Faith in Action

Did you know that the Homes for All Coalition is planning on going to the Legislature in 2014 to ask for \$100,000,000 for housing? They are being led by Representative Alice Hausman, who recently shared her strategy and the critical role that grassroots support will play in achieving this huge legislative success. That may seem like a BIG ask and it is - but one that with a consistent message, a solid coalition and strong grassroots support may be achievable. After all, the Coalition was successful in securing \$33,000,000 in 2013 to address homelessness and housing!

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative <http://www.beaconinterfaith.org/> is one of the organizations leading the grassroots support - and is bringing together 30 congregations to work on this issue.

First Universalist has been invited to be a part of this effort and after a couple of meetings with Beacon staff, we have agreed this is a great next step for our commitment to housing and racial justice. Beacon brings to great capacity to lead this effort; they are creative, organized and have several staff dedicated to the campaign.

The campaign offers us a tremendous opportunity to be involved in an authentic interfaith movement while we build relationships with other congregations working on housing!! Even better, Habitat for Humanity is a member of the Homes for All Coalition so we will all be organizing together to ask for the \$100,000,000!

How can you get involved? To get started we need 2-3 people willing to put in a 6 month commitment to get our congregants involved. Beacon and the Coalition have already done a lot of the planning so we can just plug in to the steps they have already outlined.

For more information: Contact Debra Rodgers, Director of Faith in Action at [debra@firstuniv.org](mailto:debra@firstuniv.org).

## Augsburg Fairview Academy Racial Justice Volunteering

Augsburg Fairview Academy is a college prep charter school for students recovering high school credits and working on their high school diplomas – and their future careers. The multiracial student body is about 60% homeless with many precariously housed. Helping to stabilize the students' lives through food, clothing and tutoring gives major support to their effort to succeed in school and to move into successful lives.

First Universalist volunteers are getting acquainted and giving support to the faculty, staff and students at AFA through the Hope Food Shelf that is open each Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, the Clothing Closet that staged a big lunchtime clothes shopping opportunity on November 13, and First U folks who are pioneering as tutors. Volunteers enjoying the AFA students as they keep the Clothing Closet going are Jerry Sattinger, Joyce Case, Rita Franchett and Susan Schonfeld. Our pioneer tutors are Mike Day, Rita Langteau, Joanne Engleking and Meredith Smith.

With the arrival of cold weather and the holiday season, we aren't clear how students' needs and concerns may change. We all know that it's even harder to be homeless in cold weather or without a family during the holidays.

Coats, hats and scarves are popular along with boots and warm new socks. If your holiday spirit is starting to perk, and you have already bought socks, we can use new packs of simple underwear – medium size boxers for boys and medium white cotton bikini briefs for girls. Are you inspired to hit garage sales and consignment shops to find hoodies, warm dark colored coats (with all zippers and buttons in tact), good quality boots, long sleeve tees -- for both men and women? You're our angel. Want to ask your friends or barber or beauty operator if they want to collect clothes or food items? Know someone who might tune an AFA piano for a discount price or free? Got a duffle bag or backpack to give away? All of these things can help. The holiday break may be a difficult time for kids with marginal housing -- and our generosity can make a difference. Donations can always be left at the Hub in the Social Hall on Sunday mornings or anytime in the Church Office.

The Hope Food Closet Ministry team thanks the many congregants who have donated food, toiletry items and school supplies. With ongoing donations from the congregation and the funds from the Sunday plate we are able to keep the Food Closet well stocked.

Thanks so much! Questions are always welcome, and can be directed to Cindy Marsh [cindy.marsh2588@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.marsh2588@gmail.com), Hope Food Closet, and Pat Gottschalk [pat.gottschalk@yahoo.com](mailto:pat.gottschalk@yahoo.com), Clothing Closet and Tutoring.

*Thank you!*



## A Food Justice Campaign of First Universalist Church

### What is Food Justice?

Food Justice is the right of people and communities everywhere to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown with care for the well-being of the land, workers and animals. People practicing food justice leads to a strong local food system, self-reliant communities and a healthy environment.

### What is the Meatless Monday Campaign?

*Meatless Monday* is an international movement to help people reduce their meat consumption by 15%. On average, Americans consume 8 ounces of meat per day - 45% more than the USDA recommends. Going meatless one day a week can reduce the risk of chronic preventable conditions like cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity. It can also help limit people's carbon footprint and save precious resources like fresh water and fossil fuel.

### Why is First Universalist supporting this campaign?

The *Meatless Monday Campaign* is one piece of our growing commitment to learn about and take action on issues at the intersection of food, environmental and racial justice. Some people enjoy many food choices while others remain hungry. The food industry produces wealth, but small farmers and farm workers are often poor. Food production and transportation contribute to many environmental problems. Our goal with the *Meatless Monday Campaign* is to help congregants think about the impact of their food choices and to connect their action to their values and beliefs.

### Sounds good, but this is all new.... what kind of support is there?

Great question! We love the community aspect of this campaign! Over the next few months we will offer meatless cooking classes, post popular recipes and even hold a cooking contest. Our website will be updated regularly with resources on going meatless and also on food justice issues. Please let us know what you need to be successful. If you're really excited, why not join the campaign committee?

### I'm convinced! How do I get started?

Fill out the attached pledge card or visit [firstuniv.org/meatlessmondays](http://firstuniv.org/meatlessmondays) to take the pledge. Share with your friends, family, co-workers and other congregants about how they can improve

*Brought to you by the Eat Fare Committee of the Environmental Justice Ministry - Faith in Action Department. For more information contact Campaign Co-chairs Kathy at [kathystein06@yahoo.com](mailto:kathystein06@yahoo.com)*

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## Thank You, AFA Hope Food Closet Volunteers!

The Augsburg Fairview Academy (AFA) Hope Food Closet Ministry team thanks the many congregants who have donated food, toiletry items and school supplies. These items help to support the large number of homeless students at AFA. Right now we have a good supply of toiletry items and school supplies; food is always needed (bring donations to the Hub on Sundays). Granola bars, juice, mac and cheese and noodles are the most popular items. With ongoing donations

from the congregation and the funds from the Sunday plate we are able to keep the Food Closet well stocked. Volunteers who have staffed the Food Closet include: Wendell Vandersluis, Danielle Goins, Cindy Marsh, Barb Sindelar, Julie Stewart, Ward Lyndall, Mary Kelley, Cynthia White, Jean Johnson, and Sheryl Butrymowicz. "It is fun to meet the students and observe their enthusiasm, energy and spirit" says volunteer Wendell Vandersluis.

*Thank you!*

*Thank you!*



*Thank you!*

*Thank you!*

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