

GET CONNECTED

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR NEW PASTORAL VISITOR TEAM MEMBERS

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 Visitors Team. Members of this team provide confidential pastoral care to friends and members of our congregation. For more information, visit the Pastoral Visitor page on our website where you can obtain an application and job description. Applications are due by Dec. 16, 2017.

HOLIDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Our Christmas Pageants, Solstice Service, and Christmas Eve Candlelight Service are cherished traditions at First Universalist. Please note that Sunday services on Dec. 24 and 31 will be offered at 10 a.m. only. Mark your calendar and join us!

Christmas Pageants: Sunday, Dec. 17 and Sunday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. each day

Winter Solstice Celebration: Thursday, Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: Sunday, Dec. 24 at 9:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Morning: Sunday, Dec. 24 at 10 a.m. only

Singing Sunday: Sunday, Dec. 31 at 10 a.m. only

37TH ANNUAL WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

This is the thirty-seventh year that First Universalist will honor the longest night of the year, joyously celebrating both going into the dark and the return of the sun! Join us on Thursday, Dec. 21 (doors at 7 p.m.; ritual at 7:30 p.m.) as we observe another turning of the year. We will move through the evening with beautiful music, a story for all ages, and sharing of light. Want to get involved? Contact Leslie at lajohnson3@yahoo.com.

HOLIDAY GIVING: MAKING A COLLECTIVE GIFT TO MARNITA'S TABLE

We invite you to join us in rethinking the meaning of gift-giving this holiday season! By redirecting a portion of our would-be holiday spending to Marnita's Table, a local nonprofit that bridges gaps across difference and advances racial equity, we can rekindle the season's true spirit. We'll be collecting monetary gifts during the service on Dec. 17, and you can also give online at the link below. To learn more, stop by the table in the Social Hall after services today or visit <http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/generosity/holiday-giving/>

UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION PRESENTATION

Join us for "Understanding Immigration: Where we are, how we got here, and the impact on Minnesota's communities," a presentation by Michele Garnett McKenzie, along with members of *Sembrando Poder*, on Thursday, Dec. 7, from 7-9 p.m. in the Chalice Room. Michele McKenzie will break down the complex U.S. immigration system from the very beginning, shedding light on how immigration laws originated and evolved; who was—and was not—allowed into the country; the various statuses that non-U.S. citizens can occupy; and the effect on those who are currently caught in the cross-hairs of the system.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Each year, Visual Arts Committee members provide decorations for the congregation to enjoy during the holiday season. Members hope you enjoy this year's star-filled theme.

WELCOME

We are so glad you are here.

At First Universalist Church, in the spirit of love and hope, we give, receive, and grow. We welcome, affirm, and protect the light in each human heart; we listen deeply to where love is calling us next; and we act with humility, bravery, and compassion in service to justice. We do all this as a faith community committed to racial justice. These spiritual practices and commitments are the ways we move in rhythm with the great love that is alive in the world.

LET US KEEP YOU IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

If you are experiencing a crisis or transition, or celebrating a joy—please let us know. To be included in our Cycle of Life each Sunday in worship, contact Sandy DiNanni at sandy@firstuniv.org or 612-825-1701.

If you would like support, contact the church office at 612-825-1701 or any member of our Pastoral Care Team.

Are You Visiting?

Come to a brief orientation to First Universalist and Unitarian Universalism.

Our next orientation takes place: Today!

Meet us in the front of the Sanctuary immediately after the service. Find out more about our community in this 45-minute overview. No sign up needed. Childcare is provided during the session after the 11:15 a.m. service.

The Visiting Families Welcome Station at the north end of the Religious Education wing has information about our Children, Youth & Family Ministries. Stop by if you are interested in learning more, or email Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries Lauren Wyeth at: lauren@firstuniv.org.

CELEBRATING OUR GENEROSITY

Offering plates from Sunday Service:
11/5 Sisters Camelot \$1,105.60

11/12 Center for Victims of Torture \$1,071.20

11/19 Augsburg Fairview Academy \$1,476.82

Know a charitable organization that shares our commitment to justice and equity? Nominate an offering recipient at: firstuniversalistchurch.org/offering-plate.

If you'd like to make a donation but don't have cash, use the Square Cash App. It takes no time at all to set up and use! First Universalist's cash tag is \$firstuniv. For more information, go to <http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/new-giving-option-square-cash/>.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Hearing devices are available; please ask an usher. **Cushions** are available for the pews and are located next to the sound booth and at the entrance to the Sanctuary. Please return them to their home after the service. We also have **fragrance-free rows** marked in the balcony. **For more information**, stop by our Information Center in the Social Hall downstairs, call 612-825-1701, or visit our website: firstuniversalistchurch.org.

SUNDAY FLOWERS

Donating Sunday flowers is an opportunity to enhance the beauty of our services or honor an individual or event. A Visual Arts Committee member will create a unique arrangement. Once services are over you can take the flowers home, OR ask that they be delivered to congregants who could use a caring gesture. Contact Dick Rueter at dick.rueter49@usinternet.com or 612-280-4186 if you are able to provide flowers or help deliver them after worship.

THE WEEKLY LIBERAL

The Weekly Liberal is published on Thursdays. Subscribe at: firstuniversalistchurch.org/the-weekly-liberal/. Do you have news or information you'd like published? Fill out the submission form on our website!



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



WORSHIP THEME: HOPE

HOPE AGAINST HOPE

REV. JEN CROW

DECEMBER 3, 2017

We welcome, affirm, and protect the light in each human heart; we listen deeply to where love is calling us next; and we act with humility, bravery, and compassion in service to justice. We do all this as a faith community committed to racial justice.

Music for Gathering

Franco Holder

Words of Welcome

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Bellsound

Prelude

Franco Holder

Wisdom Story

Enemy Pie

- Derek Munson

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Opening Hymn #346 (Please rise in body or spirit.)

Come Sing a Song with Me

Come sing a song with me...

Come share a meal with me...

Repeat vs. 1

Lighting the Chalice

Love is the spirit of this church

And service is its law.

This is our great covenant:

To dwell together in peace,

To seek the truth in love,

And to help one another.

-James V. Blake

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Musical Interlude

Silence

Cycle of Life

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Hymn of Prayer #123 (please remain seated)

Spirit of Life

Spirit of life, come unto me,

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea:

Move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close. Wings set me free.

Spirit of Life, come to me. Come to me.

-Carolyn McDade

(reprinted with permission by the UUA)

Music for Journeying #346

Come Sing a Song with Me

Come sing a song with me...

Come dream a dream with me...

(children excused to their Religious Education classes)

Reading

Dreams Before Waking

- Adrienne Rich

Rev. Jen Crow

Anthem

The Last Words of David

- Randall Thompson

First Universalist Choir

Dr. Randal Buikema

Sermon

Hope Against Hope

Rev. Jen Crow

Offertory

Franco Holder

Closing Hymn #226 (Please rise in body or spirit.)

People Look East

Closing Words

Rev. Jen Crow

Blessing in Song #413

Go Now in Peace

Worship Leaders

Rev. Jen Crow Executive Minister

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care

Franco Holder Pianist

Dr. Randal Buikema Director of Choral Arts

First Universalist Choir

Chalice Lighters Lucy Vokes-Ruffcorn (9:30), Andie Gegax (11:15)

Offering: Avenues for Homeless Youth

Avenues for Homeless Youth provides emergency shelter, short-term housing and supportive services for homeless youth in a safe and nurturing environment. Through such services, Avenues seeks to help youth achieve their personal goals and make a positive transition into young adulthood. They provide two shelter houses with a combined 31 program beds and two emergency beds. Youth aged 16-21 stay an average of 90-120 days and have access to onsite case management, mental health therapists, and nurses. Host home programs, where members of the community open their home to a homeless youth aged 16-24 while Avenues continues to provide holistic supportive services, are also offered. The average stay in a host home is 10-12 months. Avenues also provides rental assistance, holistic services, and landlord mediation to youth aged 18-24 who are also parents as part of their Avenues for Young Families program. This offering will be used in conjunction with another grant to fund their Education and Career Specialist who works with the youth to help them achieve their educational and employment goals.

Welcoming Franco Holder

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Franco Holder to our First Universalist staff and to our worship team. Franco hails from Indiana and has worked for many years as freelance musician in the Twin Cities. Franco has performed with the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra and at such venues as the Schubert Club, Baroque Room, and Nimbus Theater. Franco holds a B.M. degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University, as well as a degree in Religious Studies from Iowa State University. Franco is a piano/music teacher at Hopewell Music Cooperative North, an organization committed to empowering community and enriching lives through accessible high quality music education. Franco loves helping students reach their potential through music and has taught piano for more than twenty years. He is an active member of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association. We are very lucky to have this wonderful artist in our midst. Please say hello, and welcome him.

December Worship Theme: Hope

Barbara Kingsolver writes, "the very least you can do in your life is to figure out what to hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof." Some of us struggle to find hope. Some of us take hope for granted. Hope is what sends a student to school, an addict to a 12-step program, an activist out into the street. Theologian Julie Neraas writes, "while hope is a strengthening force, it also lays a person open to the vulnerabilities of love, desire, expectation, disappointment, loss." This month we wrestle with hope, what to hope for, with all its complexity, and how to live under its roof.