

GET CONNECTED

HOLIDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE

Our Christmas Pageants, Solstice Celebration, 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.

Our annual Christmas Pageant is a beautiful telling of an ancient story. It is a tale of hope and hospitality, a reminder that every child is born a redeemer, a story that speaks to us all of what it means to be a seeker, a star, a wise one, a wanderer. Drop-in childcare is available for ages 6 mos - 3 yrs on Dec. 17 only. No childcare available on Dec. 24.

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

This is the 37th year that First Universalist will honor the longest night of the year! 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, chants, a story for all ages, time spent in darkness, and sharing of joy and light. Childcare is available by advance request only; submit the childcare request form on our website no later than Thursday, Dec. 14.

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

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is a time of mindfulness, meaning making and music. This service is a weaving of scripture readings, poems, musical offerings, silence, and lighting our hearts and spirit with the candlelight and hope. No childcare available.

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

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

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/>

DAYTIME CONNECTIONS: HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

UUs are making a difference and enriching their own lives with powerful volunteer work through church initiatives like Congregational Care, Environmental Justice, Families Moving Forward, and Sanctuary and Resistance. Come hear their stories and enjoy a special holiday meal and white elephant exchange on Thursday, Dec. 21 at 11 a.m. Register with Sandy by Dec. 17 at 612-825-1701 or sandy@firstuniv.org. \$5-10 suggested lunch donation. And bring a wrapped treasure to swap for the optional exchange!

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: Sunday, Dec. 17

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:

11/19 Augsburg Fairview Academy \$1,476.82

11/26 Marnita's Table \$2,622.09 (100% to recipient)

12/3 Avenues for Homeless Youth \$1,034.79

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.

PASTORAL VISITORS

The Pastoral Visitors Team is a group of congregants, led by the Rev. Ruth MacKenzie, who provide confidential pastoral care to friends and members of our congregation in need of support. We visit people at homes, hospitals, and hospice or at the corner coffee shop. If you are in need of a Pastoral Care team visit, please contact Rev. Ruth MacKenzie at ruth@firstuniv.org.

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

STUBBORN HOPE

REV. JUSTIN SCHROEDER

DECEMBER 10, 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. Jen Crow
Mary Sue Hansen

Bellsound

Prelude

I've Got Peace Like a River
- Traditional African American spiritual

Franco Holder

Call to Worship

Janell Hill

Opening Hymn #344 (Please rise in body or spirit)

A Promise Through the Ages Rings
(Soloist sings first verse, all join on verses 2-4)

Tina Wade

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

Franco Holder

Silence

Cycle of Life

Rev. Jen Crow

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

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Readings

Love After Love
- Derek Walcott

Rev. Justin Schroeder

Morning Poem
- Mary Oliver

Rev. Jen Crow

Musical Offering

Hymn of Promise
- Natalie Sleeth

Tina Wade
Franco Holder

Sermon

Stubborn Hope

Rev. Justin Schroeder

Offertory

There Is a Balm in Gilead
- Traditional African American spiritual, arr. Fred Bock

Franco Holder

Closing Hymn #224 (Please rise in body or spirit)

Let Christmas Come

Closing Words

Rev. Justin Schroeder

Blessing in Song #413

Go Now in Peace

Worship Leaders

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| Rev. Justin Schroeder | Senior Minister |
| Rev. Jen Crow | Executive Minister |
| Janell Hill | Worship Associate |
| Mary Sue Hansen | Director of Suburban Ramsey Family Collaborative |
| Franco Holder | Pianist |
| Tina Wade | Soloist |
| Chalice Lighters | Deirdra Andrews (9:30) Cooper Pappajohn-Goldade (11:15) |

Chancel Flowers

Today's flowers are donated in loving memory of Rachel Anne Gaschott Ritchie (12/7/1979-11/27/2000). They were arranged by Meredith Sims of the Visual Arts Committee.

Offering: Simpson Housing Services

Simpson Housing Services works to house, support and advocate for people experiencing homelessness. They provide shelter services for 44 men and 22 women and help individuals and families experiencing homelessness move into stable housing through rental subsidies and supportive services. Families in their housing programs can participate in Children and Youth Services Programs designed to help break the generational cycle of poverty and homelessness. These services include, Early Childhood Development, Educational Advocacy and Mentoring and Youth Development Programs. Volunteers are major contributors to Simpson Housing Services. Over 37,000 hours were volunteered in 2014, the equivalent of 18 full-time staff. Simpson Housing Services is one of First Universalist's six Faithful Action Community Partners for 2017-18.

Musical Notes by Franco Holder

Hymnody has had a beautiful influence on my spiritual life. Hymns invoke the spirit to rise from within and go out into the world as song – they tell our stories, they give us courage, they give us hope. I am so excited to share these songs of peace, love, and light with you.

About Today's Guest Speaker

As an IZI Master Trainer, Mary Sue has used the model of Intentional Social Interaction to transform her Suburban Ramsey community through radical hospitality.

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.