Christmas Pageant - Today at 4 p.m.
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. Join us today at 4 p.m. for this annual favorite.

Singing Sunday - 10 a.m.
Next Sunday
Worship next Sunday, Dec. 31, will be offered as a single service at 10 a.m. Join us for a multigenerational service of singing and reflection.

Newcomer Circles in January
You’re invited to join a Newcomer Circle. These four-session gatherings of 6-10 newcomers offer a chance to explore core Unitarian Universalist values, reflect on our spiritual journeys, and connect with others who are new to church. Join us for one of our upcoming 4-session Newcomer Circles: Wednesdays, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24 from 7-8:30 p.m. or Tuesdays, Jan. 9, 16, 23 & 30, 7-8:30 p.m. Sign up at the Information table in the social hall or by emailing sandy@firstuniv.org.

Winter Circles: Sign Up Begins Jan. 4
Enrich your spiritual life by joining a Circle this winter! Circles are groups of 8-10 committed participants who come together with a trained leader to nurture spiritual growth in community. Information about offerings will be made available the first week of January, and sign up will open online at firstuniv.org/ on Thursday, Jan. 4.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - Today 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. Join us this evening at 9:30 p.m.

Year End Giving
With the end of the year quickly approaching, the financial team wants to remind you about the deadline for giving for the calendar year. If you’d like financial gifts counted toward 2017, checks should be postmarked no later than December 31. Please be aware that the office is closed between December 22 and January 1. Contributions can be dropped off at the information table in the social hall after any of the services today or Sunday, Dec. 31, and you are also welcome to give online by Dec. 31 using MyFirstU or SquareCash. Thank you for your generosity!

Remembrance Sunday - January 7, 2018
Remembrance Sunday is a time to reflect on our losses over the past year and to honor those we love who have died. It is also an opportunity to mark other significant losses in the life of your family, such as a separation or divorce, saying goodbye to friends who’ve moved away, the passing of an animal companion, or the loss of a home, job, or familiar school community. You’re invited to bring a photo or memento of loved ones you are remembering to the sanctuary for our shared altar that Sunday morning.

Are You Visiting?
Come to a brief orientation to First Universalist and Unitarian Universalism.
Our next orientation takes place: Sunday, January 7
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.

Caring Corner: Send a Card!
Write a note to a congregant who could use support. Cards are available in the library.

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.

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.

Celebrating our Generosity
Offering plates from Sunday Service:
11/26 AM’s Table $2,622.09 (100% to recipient)
12/3 Avenues for Homeless Youth $1,034.79
12/10 Simpson Housing Services $1,164.61
Know a charitable organization that shares our commitment to justice and equity? Nominate an offering recipient at: firstuniversalistchurch.org/offering-plans.

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.

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!
Music for Gathering
Franco Holder

Words of Welcome
Rev. Jen Crow

Bellsound

Prelude
Song to the Moon
- Antonín Dvořák

Call to Worship
Kathy Coskran

Opening Carol #228 (Please rise in body or spirit)
Once in Royal David's City

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
(Reprinted with permission by the UUA)

Song for the Season
#243 Jesus Our Brother
- Randall Thompson
(Verses 1-4 and 6)

Homily
Wisdom of the Four-Leggeds
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Ritual of Milk and Honey
La Cathédrale Engloutie
- Claude Debussy
Rev. Jen Crow

Closing Hymn #232 (Please rise in body or spirit)
The Hills Are Born at Bethlehem

Closing Words
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Blessing in Song #413
Go Now in Peace
Franco Holder

Offering: Marnita's Table
Marnita's Table seeks to close gaps across difference through making Intentional Social Interaction the new pattern for society where people of color, the disenfranchised, the poor, the unheard, the fragile, the LGBTQ+ and anyone who is normally left out of community decision making are automatically included and valued at the policy-making and resource-sharing table. This holiday season, we've invited our members and friends to join us in rethinking the meaning of gift-giving by reducing our would-be holiday spending and redirecting what we save to our Holiday Giving recipient, an organization that is working to bring people together across differences and advance racial equity in our community. Online gifts can be made at: https://tinyurl.com/ycyqp24y or via the Square Cash app (instructions on the back under "Celebrating Our Generosity").

Lyrics for Do You Hear What I Hear?
Said the night wind to the little lamb
Do you see what I see
Way up in the sky, little lamb
Do you see what I see
A star, a star, dancing in the night
With a tail as big as a kite
With a tail as big as a kite
Said the little lamb to the shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear
Ringing through the sky, shepherd boy
Do you hear what I hear
A song, a song, high above the trees
With a voice as big as the sea
With a voice as big as the sea
Said the wise ones to people everywhere
Listen to what I say
Pray for peace, people everywhere!
Listen to what I say
The Child, the Child, sleeping in the night
He will bring us goodness and light
He will bring us goodness and light

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.