



GET CONNECTED

CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS

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 **this afternoon at 4 p.m. or tomorrow (Christmas Eve) at 4 p.m.** for this special service led by our worship team along with children and youth from our congregation.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

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 **tomorrow, Dec. 24, at 9:30 p.m.** for this beautiful, contemplative service.

NEXT SUNDAY: WORSHIP AT 10 A.M. ONLY

Worship on **Sunday, Dec. 30** will be held at 10 a.m. only. Join us for our annual post-Christmas Singing Sunday, a multigenerational (and multi-lingual!) service led this year by Rev. Karen Hutt.

WINTER CIRCLES: SIGN UP BEGINS JAN. 10

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 second week of January, and sign up will open online at firstucircles.weebly.com on Thursday, Jan. 10.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY IS JAN. 6

Remembrance Sunday is an annual service that is a time to remember and reflect on our losses over the past year and to honor those we love who have died. This service can also be a time 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, or any number of other things. You're invited to bring a photo or memento of a loved one(s) you are remembering to the sanctuary for our shared altar on Sunday, Jan. 6.

YEAR-END GIVING

Calendar year 2018 is quickly coming to an end. If you would like to make a financial gift prior to the end of the year, donations must be transferred, postmarked, made online, or dropped off at the church office no later than Monday, Dec. 31. Please be aware that **the church office will be closed Friday, Dec. 21 through Tuesday, Jan. 1.** Contributions can be dropped off in person with a staff member at the information desk in the social hall before or after services on Sundays, Dec. 23 and 30. If you have questions, contact Chelsea Bertsch at 612-825-1701 ext. 107 or chelsea@firstuniv.org. Thank you to all for your ongoing support and generosity to First Universalist Church!



WELCOME

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.

Are You Visiting?

Come to First Step, a brief orientation to First Universalist Church and Unitarian Universalism. First Step is generally offered on first and third Sundays.

Our next orientation takes place: January 6

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.

CYCLE OF LIFE

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 or Rev. Ruth MacKenzie at 612-825-1701 or any member of our Pastoral Visitor Team.

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 info**, stop by our Information Center in the Social Hall downstairs, call 612-825-1701, or visit our website: firstuniversalistchurch.org.

OFFERING PLATE

Recent offering plates from Sunday Service:

- 11/25 Augsburg Fairview Academy \$1,085.88
- 12/2 Unitarian Universalist Service Committee \$1,861.40
- 12/9 Hiawatha/Franklin Encampment \$2,648.08

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

Text to Give

To make a donation to the offering plate via credit card, use your smartphone to text **firstuniv** to 73256. You'll receive a link to a secure form where you can enter your info. You may also use the Square Cash app using our cash tag, \$firstuniv.

GET OUR NEWSLETTER

The Weekly Liberal, our email newsletter, is published on Thursdays. Subscribe at: firstuniversalistchurch.org/the-weekly-liberal

CONGREGATIONAL CARE Need a Ride?

Need transportation to church or a doctor's appointment? We can help with at least one week's notice. Contact Anne McBean at mcbea001@yahoo.com or 612-388-0660 (email or text message preferred).



DECEMBER WORSHIP THEME: SANCTUARY

Image: "Coffee Klatch" by Ricardo Levins Morales (used with permission)

SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

REV. JEN CROW
DECEMBER 23, 2018

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. Karen Hutt

Prelude

Passacaglia

- Rebecca Clarke

Ellie Fregni, viola

Franco Holder

Call to Worship

Janell Hill

Opening Hymn #241

In the Bleak Midwinter

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. Karen Hutt

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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Welcoming In Joy

Reading

I Will Keep Broken Things

- Alice Walker

Rev. Jen Crow

Musical Offering

Meditation in C Minor

- Justin E.A. Busch

Ellie Fregni, viola

Franco Holder

Sermon

Spiritual Survival

Rev. Jen Crow

Offertory

Fantasia on Greensleeves

- Vaughan Williams, arr. Forbes

Ellie Fregni, viola

Franco Holder

Closing Hymn #246

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Closing Words

Rev. Jen Crow

Blessing in Song #413

Go Now in Peace

Postlude

Suite for Viola Alone

- Quincy Porter

Ellie Fregni, viola

Worship Leaders

Rev. Jen Crow

Senior Co-Minister

Rev. Karen Hutt

Adjunct Minister

Janell Hill

Worship Associate

Franco Holder

Pianist

Ellie Fregni

Guest Musician

Guest Musician: Ellie Fregni

Ellie Fregni is a freelance viola player in the Twin Cities metro area. Her playing covers a wide range of genres including classical, folk and jazz, but she is most passionate about working with modern composers to develop and premiere new music. In addition to her viola work, she is rediscovering the repertoire of the viola pomposa, a 5 string violin/viola hybrid. Her current project is helping to build Hopewell North Music Cooperative, a music school and center for musical collaboration in North Minneapolis. In her spare time she works for Hollywood Pyrotechnic and lives with her saxophonist husband, Tamir Nolle, and stepson, Taylor.

Holiday Decorations

The Visual Arts Committee has added holiday flourishes to our worship spaces—with best wishes to the congregation.

The white Cyclamen are donated by Lynn Easter-Salmon in memory of her grandmother, Hazel Marie Hougen, who died recently, just shy of her 103rd birthday, Dec. 24, 1914. We celebrate and honor Hazel's life, a life that was beloved.

Offering: Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance

MUUSJA's mission is to “Unleash courageous leadership and collective power to build a just and loving world.” They are UUs from across the state of Minnesota - diverse, spirited, and deeply committed and firmly grounded in their UU principles of world peace, justice, and sustainability; they work together on focused programs of education, witness, and systemic change to create a world that works for everyone.

December Worship Theme: Sanctuary

In ancient times, finding an inn was more than finding a place to spend the night. Certainly, the inn was a place for the traveler to rest, but it also provided safety and healing to the wayfaring stranger. There were no hospitals in those times, so the inn functioned as one. It was a place to tend to the physical body, and to gather one's spiritual resources for the continuing journey. When we hear the story of the Nativity, when an innkeeper provided a place for the Christ child to be born, perhaps we could imagine ourselves as the innkeeper, and our church as the inn, a place of respite and healing. This is one of our strengths as a faith community. We are a sanctuary, a place one can go to find health, healing and community. When people ask, “What do you believe?” We might respond: “Come with me to a place on 34th and Dupont Avenue South. This is a place where people are nourished, where people begin ministries, where people invest in something beyond self interest, growing in community and ever widening circles of compassion.” Theologian Gary Gunderson writes, “I may have trouble articulating *what* I believe; it is easy to say *where* I believe.” This month we explore the *where* of what we believe.