



## Program Guide

### FALL 2019

**SOUL MATTERS & SPIRITUAL DEEPENING CIRCLES**

**RACIAL JUSTICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

**DAYTIME CONNECTIONS | NEWCOMER CIRCLES**

**PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP | WELLSPRING**

### CIRCLES



#### ***Reflect, Connect, and Grow Your Soul***

Circles are groups of 8-10 committed participants who come together with a trained leader to nurture spiritual growth in community. These groups are grounded in the spiritual practices of deep listening and open-hearted reflection. Each gathering offers an opportunity for connection: with ourselves, with others, and with something greater than ourselves.

## Soul Matters Circles

Soul Matters is a small group curriculum that encourages deeper reflection on our monthly worship themes.

#### **How do Soul Matters Circles work?**

At the start of each month, you will receive a packet of resources, such as poems, articles, and YouTube videos, to help you go deeper with the worship theme. It also includes questions for contemplation and spiritual exercises that invite you into deeper relationship with our worship theme. This packet is your go-to text as you meet with your group and attend services throughout the month.

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**Circle Registration is open Sept. 8–23 at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/circles](http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/circles)**

**You may also register in the Social Hall on Sundays, Sept. 8, 15, and 22.** Information about registering for programs that are not circles is listed with individual program descriptions. For more information about any of the programming listed in this catalog, contact Arif Mamdani, Director of Membership and Adult Ministries, at [arif@firstuniv.org](mailto:arif@firstuniv.org) or 612-825-1701 x124.

# CIRCLES

## Soul Matters Circles (continued)

### Which Soul Matters Circle is for Me?

We offer two types of Soul Matters Circles. One meets for a shorter duration, with greater frequency, and asks no preparation. The other meets for a longer duration, with less frequency, and has simple preparation exercises.

### Comparing Soul Matters Circles

	3-MONTH CIRCLE	YEAR-LONG CIRCLE
<b>TIMING</b>	Twice monthly for 90 minutes	Once monthly for two hours
<b>PREPARATION</b>	It's helpful if you engage with the packet prior to the meeting, but no advance prep is required.	You'll choose two items from the packet to help bring the worship theme into your daily life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a spiritual exercise</li><li>• a question to contemplate</li></ul>
<b>FORMAT</b>	Listening to readings, responding to reflection questions.	Sharing your experience of the exercise you selected and the question you chose.

## Fall 2019 Soul Matters Circles (3-Month Format)

### Open to All:

**Mondays, Oct. 7, 21, Nov. 4, 18, Dec. 2 & 16, 7–8:30 p.m.**

Leaders: Mat Salamonski, Mark Caswell

**Thursdays, Oct. 10, 24, Nov. 7, 21, Dec. 5 & 19, 7–8:30 p.m.**

Leader: Doug Hicks

### Shared Identity/Experience:

#### LGBTQ INDIVIDUALS

**Thursdays, Oct. 10, 24, Nov. 7, 21, Dec. 5 & 19, 7–8:30 p.m.**

Leader: Cathy Strub

#### PEOPLE LIVING WITH GRIEF, LOSS, AND ENDINGS

**Saturdays, Oct. 12, 26, Nov. 9, 23, Dec. 7 & 14, 10:30 a.m.–noon.**

Leader: Gail Price

## Church Year 2019–20 Soul Matters Circles (Year-Long Format)

### Open to All:

**Sundays, Oct. 20, Nov. 24, Dec. 15, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 22, April 19, May 17, June 14, 6–8 p.m.\***

Leader: Chris Tanita

*\*This circle meets at the leader's home, 3 miles south of church. There are two steps up to the house's entrance.*

### Shared Identity/Experience:

#### PARENTS

**Sundays, Oct. 13, Nov. 24, Dec. 15, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 22, April 19, May 31, 2–4 p.m.**

Leader: Sarah Vokes

## ***Shared Identity/Experience (continued):***

### **PEOPLE OF COLOR AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE (POCI)**

**Sundays, Sept. 22, Oct. 20, Nov. 24, Dec. 15, Jan. 26, Feb. 23, March 15, April 19, May 17, 1–3 p.m.**

Leader: Michael Dotson

### **PEOPLE LIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS (“COMMUNITY MATTERS AND SELF FRIENDSHIP COUNTS”)**

**Tuesdays, Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, March 17, April 21, May 19, 6:30–8 p.m.**

Leaders: Rev. Ruth MacKenzie and Gary Melom

*In the Buddhist tradition there is a concept called “maitri.” Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön calls it the basis of compassion and the seed of joy. Maitri is a sanskrit word meaning an unconditional friendship with oneself. You’re invited to join together in practicing self friendship in a community of care as we navigate the terrain of mental wellness and brain illness. This group will make a steadfast commitment to be in friendship with where, what, and how we are, right now. We will acknowledge our pain while celebrating our wisdom, our bravery, our resilience, and our kindness. All are welcome.*

## **Newcomer Circles**

Are you new to First Universalist? Whether you are a recent visitor or a new member, you’re invited to join a Newcomer Circle. These four-session gatherings of 6–10 newcomers offer a chance to get to know Unitarian Universalism, reflect on our spiritual journeys, and connect with other folks who are new to church.

Register for Newcomer Circles at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/circles/](https://firstuniversalistchurch.org/circles/) Registration is open until filled.

Attendance at the first session is required.

**Sundays, Oct. 6, 13, 20 & 27, 12:30–2 p.m., led by George Dow**

**Tuesdays, Nov. 5, 12, 19 & 26, 7–8:30 p.m., led by Rev. Jen Crow**

## **Spiritual Deepening Circles & Workshops**

This fall, our spiritual deepening offerings include circles, classes, and workshops. **Spiritual Deepening Circles** are groups of 8-10 participants who explore a spiritual practice together. **Classes** are an opportunity to engage in study of a topic or text, and include reading and homework assignments. **Workshops** are designed to build your capacity to move a spiritual practice out of the church and into the world. As our commitment to racial justice guides us into deeper hospitality and relationship, all of our offerings include opportunities for mindful attention, embodiment, and interpersonal connection.

### **Spiritual Toolbox (year-long)**

**Thursdays, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Jan. 2, Feb. 6, March 5, April 2 & May 7, 4–5:30 p.m.**

“Do you have a spiritual practice?” For many, this is a tricky question that opens a Pandora’s box of guilt, confusion, longing, and more. In this hands-on small group, we will explore and experiment with different forms of spiritual practices inside and outside of class, tracking our experiences through journaling and discussion. Practices will include working with prayer beads, lectio divina, tonglen meditation, and simple moving meditations. In this class we will develop real tools for examining, shaping, and caring for our lives and the lives around us to achieve a greater sense of wholeness, depth, and meaning.

**Leader: Rev. Ruth MacKenzie**

# CIRCLES

## **Listening to the Soul Through Poetry: A Spiritual Practice Circle**

**Fridays, Oct. 4, 25, Nov. 8, 22 & Dec. 13, 7:30–8:45 a.m.**

In this Spiritual Practice Circle, we will engage in the ancient spiritual practice of lectio divina, or sacred reading, as we engage poems as sacred texts, reading them three times, with different voices, discovering how they speak to the deepest parts of us, and how they might inform our living moving forward.

**Leader: Rev. Justin Schroeder**, Co-Senior Minister, First Universalist Church

## **A Taste of Sufism: The Mystical Heart of Islam**

**Mondays, Oct. 7, 14, 28, Nov. 4, 18 & Dec. 2, 6:30–8 p.m.**

Sufism is the mystical heart of Islam, present wherever Islam is found. It is the source for the poetry of Rumi, Hafiz, and the other mystical poets. It is the source of the stories about magic carpets. Come join us to learn a bit about Islam, Sufism, and then dive into the practices and meet the poets to taste the Divine Love.

**Leader: Cheryl Ritenbaugh**

## **Centering Prayer Meditation**

**Tuesdays, Oct. 8, 15, 22, 29, Nov. 5 & 12, 7–8:30 p.m.**

This method of silent prayer opens the pathways to a deeper relationship with the God of your understanding, helps you progress toward a spiritual awakening, and accelerates the healing of past trauma and other negative emotional experiences.

**Leaders: Carolyn Young** and **Arif Mamdani**, Director of Membership and Adult Ministries.

## **Chi-Gung for Health and Peace of Mind**

**Thursdays, Oct. 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7, 14, 21, Dec. 5, 12 & 19, 9:30–11 a.m.**

Chi-Gung is a centuries-old form of meditative exercise originating in China that helps people increase self-awareness, build internal energy, and develop a healthy body physically and spiritually. Chi-gung techniques include breathing, body movements, focusing the mind, and vowel sounds. The class is suitable for those with physical limitations or illness. Chi-gung will help relieve you of physical pain, stress, depression and isolation.

**Leader: Pat Gottschalk**

## **Food, Fellowship, and Fun for Youth (10th-12th grade)**

**Wednesdays, Oct. 23, 30, Nov. 6, 13 & 20, 6–8:30 p.m.**

There are more than 60 people signed up for our Sunday morning High School Youth Group. This is AWESOME, and it also means that we don't always get to connect and build relationships as much as we'd like. Join us on five evenings for time to share food, share our stories, and build deeper relationships with other folks in the Senior High Group. We'll use small group and small group spiritual direction formats to facilitate our sharing.

**Leaders: Emma Paskewitz**, Senior High Coordinator, and **Leslie Colerin**

## **Brave Connections: Interrupting Bias and Systemic Racism**

**Tuesdays, Oct. 15, 22, 29, Nov. 5, 12 & 19, 7–8:30 p.m.**

In this practice and reflection circle, learn how to listen closely and respond clearly to relatives, friends, neighbors and co-workers who say or do something that is biased. In situations concerning race, good people do things that have harmful impact and perpetuate a racist system. We will share an open-hearted approach for speaking up with directness and respect. We will focus on impact, not intent; compassion, not calling out. Articles and videos will help guide us in our work. We will practice and reflect in the circle and in our lives.

**Leaders: Jeff Sylvestre** and **Denise Konen**

## Our Callings: The Spiritual Practice of Vocation

**Tuesdays, Nov. 19 & 26, 7–8:30 p.m.**

“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” - Frederick Buechler. First Universalist is interested in the role a spiritual community might play in inspiring/helping each other toward our callings. We are convening a small group to explore this over two nights: the first dedicated to our own work (paid or unpaid) and callings, a second to explore possibilities from the standpoint of “doing” or “solving a need” and what that may mean for us as a spiritual community.

**Leaders: Arif Mamdani and David Buck**

## Squirming with the Bible: Sacred Text Study

**Tuesdays, Oct. 8, 22, Nov. 12, 19, Dec. 3 & 17, 7–8:30 p.m.**

Have you ever wondered what was in that book called the Bible? Well it’s actually not a book; it’s a compilation of 66 distinct books, each with amazing stories and content that impacts much of our culture. There will be readings, some homework, presentations, guest speakers and even a little acting. The Bible is wild! Every human drama you can imagine is in there. Come join a humanist and explore these ancient texts.

**Leader: Rev. Karen Hutt**, Adjunct Minister, First Universalist Church

## Peace Circle: Skillbuilding for Peacemakers

**Saturdays, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 14, 9:30–11 a.m.**

This fall, our Peace Circle is offering three workshops to help equip folks with strong, usable skills to be active daily as peacemakers. For example, what words do you use when trying to defuse a conversation or escalating situation? How can you build your confidence? How can you disarm a situation and resolve the conflict? How can you stay calm when others are losing their heads? Workshops can be registered for individually.

**Circle Leaders: Pat Gottschalk and Robin Morris | Workshop Leaders listed by individual programs below**

### **Oct. 19: “Alternatives to Violence” with Terry Thayer**

Alternatives to Violence, developed by Quakers to help offenders, helps people turn their conflicts into opportunities for personal growth. Conflict does not need to lead to violence. It can be used as a tool for transformation. These were the methods used by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, and Jesus.

### **Nov. 16: “Depolarizing Within: Becoming a Better Angel in Your Own World” with Carol Marchel**

Much of today’s epidemic of toxic polarization is driven by how we talk with like-minded people about those on the other side. This workshop will: help you become more aware of polarization inside us and between us, teach you skills for being critical without demonizing, dismissing, or stereotyping, and help you learn how to intervene in a constructive way in social conversations that veer into contempt and ridicule.

### **Dec. 14: “Families & Politics: How to Talk with Loved Ones on the Other Side” with Bill Dougherty**

Family relationships are becoming casualties of our toxic political environment. If you want to preserve important family bonds while being true to your values, this workshop can help by offering insight into why family differences over politics are uniquely challenging, and skills for handling differences constructively.

## Writing Group for Folks Who Grew Up Poor

**Sunday, Sept. 29, 1 p.m. (planning meeting)**

How much has class influenced who you are? Did you grow up worried about food, clothing or heat; without access to medical care or the expectation that you would attend college? Pam Berry and Denise Konen are forming a monthly writing group to explore our lived experiences as people who grew up outside the middle

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class mainstream. If this description fits you, please attend the planning meeting on Sunday, Sept. 29. **Contact Pam (pamberry26@gmail.com) or Denise (denise@netgains.net) to sign up or ask questions.**

## Poetry Lovers Reading Circle

**Thursdays, Oct. 3, Nov. 7, & Dec. 5, 7–8:30 p.m.**

Reacquaint yourself with poets you love and discover other poets who are new to you. Each meeting is devoted to reading aloud and discussing works by one poet. Discussions tend to focus on what resonates with us rather than on academic analysis. Poets from a wide variety of styles, eras, and origins are included. Featured poets for fall 2019: Oct. 3: Czeslaw Milosz; Nov. 7: Michael Dennis Browne; Dec. 5: Deborah Keenan.

**Leader: Patty Park**

# RACIAL JUSTICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

## Circles

**People of Color and Indigenous People Circle** (Soul Matters Circle): See page 3 for details.

**Brave Connections: Interrupting Bias and Systemic Racism** (Spiritual Deepening Circle): See page 4 for details.

## Workshops

### Racial Justice and Our UU Faith

Join us for an interactive, reflective two-part workshop exploring a framework and tools for understanding race, racism, and whiteness and the spiritual imperative that drives our racial justice work. Register online at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/rjuu-workshop-registration/](http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/rjuu-workshop-registration/) or call Sandy at 612-825-1701 (4–8 p.m. Mon–Thu).

**Saturdays, Nov. 9 & 16, 9:30–11:30 a.m., led by Channing McKinley and Emily Wallace**

## Film Screenings & Discussions

Film screenings are drop-in events facilitated by members of the Racial Justice Education Team’s Movie Mavens (Polly Talen, Lark Weller, Shannon Puechner, Jeff Sylvestre, Joel Fortgang, Sherry Kempf, Lynn Anderson, Denise Konen and Alice Johnson) as well as others. Light snacks will be provided.

### “Jim Crow of the North”

Why does Minnesota suffer some of the worst racial disparities in the nation? One answer is the spread of racist, restrictive real estate covenants in the early 20th century. This TPT production charts the progression of amazingly racist policies and practices from the advent of restrictive covenants after the turn of the last century to their final elimination in the late 1960s. Join us to learn more about this local history and the work of the Mapping Prejudice project ([www.mappingprejudice.org](http://www.mappingprejudice.org)) to help work towards housing justice.

**Sunday, Sept. 22, 1–3 p.m. | Thursday, Sept. 26, 6:30–8:30 p.m.**

### “Get Out”

Just in time for Halloween, don’t miss this brilliantly provocative first feature from comic turned writer-director Jordan Peele which proves that the best way to get satire to a mass audience is to call it horror. It is described by critics as one of the best and most refreshingly original horror movies in the last decade. Rather than having in-your-face predictable jump scares and cheesy music, “Get Out” dwells on the mind and relies on the fear of the unknown while giving subtle messages on racism and what it’s like to be black in America.

**Thursday, Oct. 24, 6:30–9 p.m. | Sunday, Oct. 27, 1–3:30 p.m.**

## “Icebox”

A 12-year old Honduran boy is forced to flee his home and seek asylum in the U.S., only to find himself trapped in child detention center in the U.S. immigration system. While this powerful movie is a fictionalized account, the narrative and characters were inspired by personal stories told to its writer, Daniel Sawka, through years of research and outreach—stories which have become all too prevalent. In Spanish (primarily) w/ English subtitles.

**Sunday, Nov. 17, 1–3:30 p.m. | Thursday, Nov. 21, 6:30–9 p.m.**

## “Black Panther”

“Black Panther” elevates superhero cinema to thrilling new heights. The movie follows T’Challa who, after the events of “Captain America: Civil War,” returns home to the isolated, technologically advanced African nation of Wakanda to take his place as King. With superb acting by a star studded cast of African American actors, the movie breaks predetermined stereotypes of what is African culture and also demonstrates to other cultures that any society can benefit from qualities such as innovation, originality, compassion, and understanding.

**Sunday, Jan. 26, 1–3:30 p.m. | Thursday, Jan. 30, 6:30–9 p.m.**

# WELLSPRING 2019–2020

Wellspring is a uniquely Unitarian Universalist program of spiritual deepening that offers the opportunity to learn more about ourselves and our faith through a year-long small group experience. It has five components: 1. commitment to a daily spiritual practice, 2. monthly spiritual direction, 3. small group meetings, 4. reading about the theological and historical foundations of our faith, and 5. putting our faith into action.

**Information Sessions** (drop-in; attendance at one is required)

**Online:** **Monday, Sept. 9, 12 p.m.** via Zoom video conference: [tinyurl.com/WellspringZoom](https://tinyurl.com/WellspringZoom)

**In person:** **Tuesday, Sept. 10, 6 p.m.** in Room 203

**Sunday, Sept. 22, 1:30 p.m.** in Room 203

**2019–20 Small Group Sessions:** 6:30–8:30 p.m. twice monthly on a weekday evening to be determined based on participants’ availability. Contact Arif Mamdani w/ questions: [arif@firstuniv.org](mailto:arif@firstuniv.org).

# CONGREGATIONAL CARE

## 12-Step Spirituality: Centering Prayer Meditation (drop-in)

**Saturdays, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 21, April 18, & May 30, 9 a.m.–noon, Social Hall**

These drop-in sessions, offered monthly Oct.–May, are designed for those actively working a 12 Step program, as well as those wanting to explore & deepen their spirituality through meditation. Each session includes Centering Prayer meditation instruction, two 20-minute Centering Prayer sessions, reading from 12 Step literature, and presenters sharing personal experiences and on selected topics.

## Caregiver Support Circle (drop-in)

**Thursdays, Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, March 12, April 9 & May 14, 4–5:30 p.m.**

When the poet Mary Oliver was asked what she had done with her life, she was quoted as saying, “I learned how to love and be loved.” The path of caregiving is a journey in which we learn to love and learn how to be loved and nurtured in order to sustain our spirits and our bodies. It is profoundly spiritual. **Rev. Ruth MacKenzie leads this drop-in group** for caregivers where we can bring the joys, the hurts, the challenges and discoveries of what it is to walk a path of caring for a loved one, and to hold our tears and laughter as we learn to be loved.

**Soul Matters Circle for People Living with Mental Illness** See page 3 for details.

# THE PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

If First Universalist is feeling like your spiritual home, join us for this new member class exploring Unitarian Universalism, the history and mission of this congregation, and the experience of membership. We ask that all those who wish to become members take this two-session class. We'd love to welcome you as a new member!

**Sundays, Oct. 6 & 20, 1–3 p.m.**

Register at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/pathway-registration](http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/pathway-registration) or call Sandy: 612-825-1701 (4–8 p.m. Mon–Thu).

## DAYTIME CONNECTIONS

### Two-Hour Programs with Lunch

Through Daytime Connections, older adults empower each other to live intentional, joyful, purposeful, and spiritually fulfilled lives. Programs are followed by lunch (\$5–15 donation encouraged) at 1 p.m. Register no later than the Monday before the program at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/daytime-connections-registration](http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/daytime-connections-registration) or call Sandy at 612-825-1701 (4–8 p.m. Mon–Thu).



#### **Thursday, Oct. 17, 11 a.m.: When the Time Comes—Who Gets What?**

Let's discuss strategies families can use to decide how personal items—wedding photos, holiday decorations, fishing tackle—get passed on. Often it's the non-titled possessions that cause rifts in families. Possessions are never more important than people, but having plans in place for items can help maintain family relations. We'll use the workbook *Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?*, developed by the U of MN, as our guide.

#### **Thursday, Nov. 21, 11 a.m.: Caregivers**

Are you a caregiver? Calling all present and future caregivers to a supportive program that explores the burdens and blessings of caregiving. Draw on our panel's experiences and your own to learn and share about caregiving challenges and rewards. Our panel will include Rev. Karen Hutt, member Pam Sanchez, and member Rick Naymark, author of *Alzheimer's Gifts*.

#### **Thursday, Dec. 19, 11 a.m.: Reimagining the Holidays**

Let's talk together about how our Holidays have been re-imagined through group discussion and bag skits. Come ready to share and have fun. The second part of our program will be a white elephant exchange with a small item. Please bring a wrapped inexpensive white elephant gift.

#### **Thursday, Jan. 16, 11 a.m.: The Aging Brain**

Why should you thank your aging brain? Harvard Medical School's studies are beginning to answer this question. Did you know that older adults are more likely than younger folks to make the right decision based on the information? Looking at normal versus not normal aging, local experts will cover what happens to our brains as we age, when to be concerned and where to go if we are concerned.

### Childcare during Church Programming

During most church programming, we are delighted to offer childcare free of charge for children ages 6 months to 12 years with a **minimum of 7 days notice**. We can provide childcare for up to 3 hours. To sign up, submit the form at [firstuniversalistchurch.org/childcare/](http://firstuniversalistchurch.org/childcare/) at least 7 days in advance.

**For more information** about any of the programming listed in this catalog, contact Arif Mamdani, Director of Membership and Adult Ministries, at [arif@firstuniv.org](mailto:arif@firstuniv.org) or 612-825-1701 x124.