Get Connected

Winter/Spring Program Registration Open

Registration for winter/spring programming is now open! A variety of offerings beginning in February offer opportunities for spiritual growth and connection, including circles, workshops, classes, and films. Pick up a program catalog outside the sanctuary today to learn more. Registration for Circles is open through February 2. Sign up online or at the Info Desk in the Social Hall today or next Sunday.

Artist’s Reception with Debbie Cash: Today

On view in the Social Hall now through Feb. 16 is the mosaic and photography exhibit “Karibu Tanzania” by Debbie Cash - her first solo exhibit. “Karibu Tanzania” is a collection of mosaic art pieces and photos featuring animals, people and landscapes encountered during two trips to Tanzania, in 2016 and 2018. Debbie will be available to talk about her work after both services today.

Foundation Seeking Nominations for Grants

The First Universalist Foundation Board is beginning its 2020 granting season and wants to hear from congregants about potential grant recipient organizations that address human rights at risk, racial justice, and climate justice. It especially seeks organizations whose leadership includes people of color, women, and other underrepresented groups. Nominations will be accepted until January 28 online at tinyurl.com/1UFoundation2020. Last year the Foundation received 24 nominations and awarded $100,000 in grants to 11 organizations. If you have questions, email foundation@firstuniv.org.

POCI Circle: Today

Anyone who identifies as a Person of Color or Indigenous Person is welcome to attend POCI Circle today at 1 p.m. in the Chancel Room. As we understand the important role of white allies, we also hold dearly the safe spaces where POCI communities can be in UU fellowship together. This group seeks to explore and understand each other’s truths, and talk about topics of interest to us.

Workshop: Understanding and Countering Antisemitism and White Nationalism

Join us on Sunday, Feb. 2 from 1-3 p.m. for a workshop led by Eric Ward, a national expert on the relationship between hate, violence, and preserving democratic institutions, governance, and inclusive society. Eric brings 30 years of expertise in community organizing and philanthropy. This workshop will make space for people to build relationships and a shared analysis of the ways that white nationalism and white supremacy use racism and anti-Semitism as tools to keep our movements divided. Free; advance registration requested: https://tinyurl.com/EricWardFirstU

Eric Ward will also be preaching in worship on Sunday, Feb. 2.

"Black Panther" Film Screenings

Join the Racial Justice Education Team for one of two drop-in screenings of the movie “Black Panther,” which elevates superhero cinema to thrilling new heights. With superb acting by a star-studded cast of African American actors, the movie breaks stereotypes about African culture. Offered today, 1-3:30 p.m. and Thursday, Jan. 30, 6:30-9 p.m. in the Cummins Room. Light snacks will be provided.

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: Feb. 2

Meet us in 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, or if you would like support, contact Rev. Ruth MacKenzie at ruth@firstuniv.org or 612-825-1701.

Get Our Newsletter

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

Accessibility

Hearing devices are available; ask an usher. Cushions for the pews are located near the entrances to the Sanctuary. Please return them to their home after the service. Designated fragrance-free rows are located in the balcony.

Open Hearts and Spiritual Care

We know that worship can take us into deep and surprising places. If you find yourself needing to talk with someone about what is stirring for you on a Sunday morning, please speak with one of our pastoral visitors sitting in the narthex during and after the service. This is how we care for one another.

Offering Plate

Recent offering plates from Sunday Service:

12/29 Minister’s Discretionary Fund $290.00
1/5 First Universalist Church $1,275.35
1/12 Augsburg Fairview Academy $1,268.96

To make a donation to the offering plate via credit card, use your smartphone to text firstuniv to 73256. Or, use the Square Cash app using our cash tag, SfFirstuniv.

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

Congregational Care

Sunday Flower Arrangements

Donating flowers can enhance the beauty of worship or celebrate an individual or event. After services, you can take the flowers home or have them delivered to congregants who could use a caring gesture. Contact Ruthann Wood at woodruthann@gmail.com if you’d like to provide flowers or help deliver them after worship.

LIVING IN THE LAYERS

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

January 26, 2020

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

Preparing our Hearts
Sanctuary
- John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
O prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary, for you.

Words of Welcome
Rev. Jen Crow

Prelude
Aimee K. Bryant

Call to Worship
Daryn Woodson

Opening Hymn
(See insert; Please rise in body or spirit)
Life Calls Us On

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)

Musical Interlude

Silence

Cycle of Life
Rev. Jen Crow

Hymn of Prayer #123 (Please remain seated)
Spirit of Life
- Carolyn McDade
(Reprinted with permission by the UUA)

Welcoming in Joy
Where You Go (rise in body or spirit when you hear the music start)
Where you go I will go, Beloved
Where you go I will go. (Repeat)
And your people are my people.
Your people are mine.
Your people are my people.
Your Divine, my Divine.
- Shoshana Jedwab
(Printed by permission)

Readings
The Layers
- Stanley Kunitz

Musical Offering
These Wilder Things
- Ruth Moody

Sermon
Living in the Layers
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Offertory
Life is Wonderful
- Jason Mraz

Closing Hymn #1064 (Please rise in body or spirit)
Blue Boat Home

Closing Words
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

Blessing in Song #413
Go Now in Peace

Worship Leaders
Rev. Ruth MacKenzie  Minister
Rev. Jen Crow  Co-Senior Minister
Franco Holder  Pianist
Aimee K. Bryant  Musical Guest
Lillian Knuttila  9:30 Chalice Lighter
Emmett Oesau  11:15 Chalice Lighter

Musical Guest: Aimee K. Bryant
Aimee K. Bryant is an artist of many trades: a professional actor, singer, songwriter, poet, dancer, choreographer, teacher and a member of The Give Get Sistet. She recently appeared in A Christmas Carol at the Guthrie Theater, and is now appearing in Theater Latté Da’s Bernarda Alba.

Chancel Flowers
Today’s flowers are by Susan Hoffman of the Visual Arts Committee.

Offering: Simpson Housing Services
Simpson Housing Services’ mission is to house, support and advocate for people experiencing homelessness. Simpson Housing Services began as an emergency overnight shelter in the basement of Simpson United Methodist Church in 1982. Simpson has since become a leading nonprofit providing assistance to people experiencing homelessness. In response to unmet community needs, their programs have grown to include emergency shelter, single adult supportive housing, and family supportive housing. Simpson Housing works across the metro area, partnering with landlords and developers to find affordable housing for all families and individuals. At any given time, they provide supportive services to 100 individuals and 210 families with over 500 children. Simpson Housing Services is one of First Universalist’s six Faithful Action Partners.

January Worship Theme: Your Life as Sacred Text
How do you know what you know as a spiritual person? What are the insights, texts, communities, and observations in which you place your trust, and from which your faith arises? Our liberal religious ancestors questioned creeds, picked over the Bible, examined church teachings, and proclaimed that an authentic faith must be free as well as bound by compassion and justice. They said we are gifted with reason and curiosity, and that Universalism must be shaped by our observations and interactions with the natural world and own lives. This month, we invite you to see your life and its unfolding as one of your sources of faith, and as a sacred text: the twists, hardships, joys, grace, oppressions, pleasures, and setbacks. Together we will exegete (draw out) the context and meanings in the different passages in our lives, examine the psalms of hardships we’ve encountered, and come to greater insight into the gospel of an awakened life. Your life is a sacred text.