



Winter Solstice Ritual and Celebration

Presented by First Universalist Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

MENDING THE WEB... with the Light of Healing and Hope



WELCOME.

It is with joy and love that we offer this Solstice Ritual...

Read aloud: *First Universalist Church in Minneapolis welcomes you to this online ritual and celebration of Winter Solstice. We are a faith community committed to welcoming, affirming, and protecting the light within each human heart. We listen deeply to where love is calling us next, with humility, bravery, and compassion, acting for justice in the world. We do all of these things as a community committed to racial justice.*

On this solstice night, though not shoulder to shoulder, we are community. Together we contemplate and find comfort in the darkness, to heal and to hope and to mend with renewed faith in the returning light. This is our path forward. It is the Season of Turning.

NOTE: If you have not done so, this is a good time to refer to the [Preparing for Solstice](#) document, especially for suggestions for items to gather ahead of time and how to set up your space.

We offer gratitude to the creators and visionaries who have produced many of the works that are used in this presentation, contributing beauty and wisdom to this year's on-line ritual. With appreciation, we acknowledge all past planning teams of First Universalist Winter Solstice Rituals who made it possible for us to offer this year's version.



At the very end of the ritual there will be an opportunity for you to make an offering, another way you can mend the web for healing in these broken and difficult times.

Here is the first link of many in this ritual. It is a meditation on the spiritual meaning of Winter Solstice. Enlarge the video window to FULL SCREEN view for the best experience. To return to this ritual, exit FULL SCREEN and close the video window. Various devices may function differently.

[Winter Solstice Meditation](#)

CALLING THE DIRECTIONS: We invite the Spirits of every direction with a welcome call from our own voices and hearts. We are creating our communal circle of sacred space. Either light a candle for each direction or use a center candle to represent all directions. Turn to face each direction as its message is read. All present repeat the last line and ring a bell or chime.

Welcome Spirits of the East...

Spirits of Air, welcome clear, translucent light of morning and spring, light of renewal, light of inspiration and imagination, birthplace of the gift of Illumination. Spirits, we ask that you help us mend the web, respecting each other and all living things.

Welcome Spirits of the East (all repeat)



Welcome Spirits of the South...

Spirits of Fire, the fiery light of the summer sun, light of strength and focus, light and heat of energy and purpose, birthplace of the gift of Justice. Spirits, we ask that you guide our healing energies.

Welcome Spirits of the South



Welcome, Spirits of the West...

Spirits of Water, sweet lingering light of the sunset and the autumnal evening star, of emotions glowing within heart-space and shining in compassion, birthplace of the gift of Love. Spirits, remind us to use the love light within to mend the web.

Welcome, Spirits of the West





*Welcome Spirits of the North...
Spirits of Earth, starlight and
moonlight, of dreams, the darkness of
expansive space through which our
Earthen home spirals, birthplace of the
gift of Remembrance. Spirits, teach us
to honor our ancestors and to affirm
the inherent worth and dignity of every
person.*

Welcome Spirits of the North

*Welcome Spirits of the Center...
Spirits of the mysterious and open center of
the turning wheel, of all the points of
universal light, birthplace of the gifts of
Wonderment and Awe. We explore this
dark wintry night to share the unity of inner
light... Spirits, remind us to mend the web
with compassion.*

Welcome Spirits of the Center



Chant these words along with the audio link below:

*“We are a circle within a circle,
with no beginning and never ending...”*

[We Are a Circle Chant](#)

*We gather to mend the web, to honor the
darkness and the wisdom it affords; to
celebrate the coming of longer days; to bring
our inner light to a recommitment to heal what
is broken and live into the future with hope.*





*"Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world.
All things break. And all things can be mended.
Not with time, as they say, but with intention..."*
(L.R. Knost)

*On this longest night of the year, we call forth
the healing energies within us and around us.
We are all the weavers and the spinners of life.*

*Our world aches for healing and hope.
There is much brokenness all around
us...events, structures, oppressions,
discord and aggressions that harm us all;
that hurt our bodies, our spirits and our
planet.*

*We are all wounded healers, gathered
tonight to be reminded that all bodies are
beautiful and luminous. We all belong and
are part of this interconnected web of life.
We are torn and hurt, and... we have the
capacity to mend. We are all healers.*



*This Wheel of Healing and Hope shines bright.
In reality it often dims, flickers, or weakens. With
faith and determination, this Wheel and all it
represents will never go dark.*

Take a deep breath and exhale slowly...repeat...relax... Clear your mind and know that, while you may be apart from others, you are connected spiritually to community on this longest night. Now enter the link below for "Return Again", a chant with photos to begin your journey.

(select "skip ad")

"Return again, return again, return to the land of your soul..."

[Return Again Chant](#)

Adapted from “For the Interim Time” by John O'Donohue:

*You are in this time of the interim
Where everything seems withheld.*

*The path you took to get here has washed out;
The way forward is still concealed from you.*

*“The old is not old enough to have died away;
The new is still too young to be born.”*

*You cannot lay claim to anything;
In this place of dusk,
Your eyes are blurred;
And there is no mirror.*

*As far as you can, hold your confidence.
Do not allow your confusion to squander
This call which is loosening
Your roots in false ground
That you might come free
From all you have outgrown.*

*What is being transformed here is your mind,
And it is difficult and slow to become new.
The more faithfully you can endure here,
The more refined your heart will become
For your arrival in the new dawn.*

PREPARING FOR THE DARK: Shortly you will enter into the darkness. Our tradition is 12 minutes of silence in the dark. Stay as long as you need to begin to “know the dark”. Dim the room light to your comfort level. Turn off music, turn off lights and blow out candles. Here is an exercise to help you focus during your time in the dark:

~Hold both hands together and think of the life these hands have lived.

~Think of how many people you have touched with these hands.

~How many you have embraced... or pushed away.

~To whom you have extended care... or from whom you have received gifts.

~Your hands have touched the realities of brokenness and felt the hard work of mending.

Ask yourself:

~What is broken now and what needs mending?

~Where is spirit calling me to contribute my healing energies?

Set your timer and finish darkening the room. Scroll down and gaze into the nebula or close your eyes. Relax, listen to the silence or the heartbeat of a drum. It is a time of calm and contemplation. When your time in the dark has ended, scroll down to the light returning.

Now... breathe in... breathe out...



RETURNING TO THE LIGHT: *"We have come to know the dark, now we will know the light..."*



Relight the Center candle. Use this flame to light one candle and proceed to "spread the light" from this candle to any others present as you say words below:

If with others: *"I offer light for Healing and Hope"*

If alone: *"I offer myself light for Healing and Hope"*

As the light grows and the darkness yields, look around you and appreciate the glow in your space and on others of your beloved community. You may now relight the other Direction candles if using them.

In the photos below, feel the warmth and glowing love of Sharing the Light from past Winter Solstice Rituals in our sanctuary.

(the following photos by Steven Mosborg)





Sing along or enjoy listening to this favorite chant for as long as you like (link below):

*One spirit in the dark, like a candle wavers.
Many spirits joined as one
Burn with the power of the blazing sun.
There is strength in community
A circle empowering you and me.
The circle binds yet sets us free
In the goddess's name so mote(may) it be*

[One Spirit in the Dark Chant](#)

LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF COMMUNITY:

You may want to extinguish all but one of your handheld candles at this time. One remaining candle will be used to light the 5 Candles of Community, spreading your light to the wider world. Light one candle for each wording below. If in a group, have one person read the lighting statement and the others read the responsive line, *"We mend the web...we have light to share."*



As our light has returned, we now light the Candles of Community, bringing our own light to illuminate the path that lies ahead for us all, the path for Healing and Hope.

*We light the **Candle of Compassion**... to remind us to listen and act with tenderness in the face of suffering and injustice.*

We mend the web...we have light to share.

*We light the **Candle of Affirmation**... to empower each other to follow our own unique path with confidence, embracing our differences.*

We mend the web...we have light to share.

*We light the **Candle of Forgiveness**... allowing us to move forward with love and humility toward others.*

We mend the web...we have light to share.

*We light the **Candle of Respect**... honoring the worth and dignity of every person and living thing in this interconnected web we weave.*

We mend the web...we have light to share.

*We light a **Candle of Sanctuary**...embracing others in need, offering safe harbor and determined to eliminate barriers.*

We mend the web...we have light to share.



*Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world.
All things break. And all things can be mended.
Not with time, as they say, but with intention...
So go... love intentionally... extravagantly...unconditionally...
The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you. (L.R. Knost)*

RELEASING THE DIRECTIONS:

Extinguish a direction candle for each of the Spirits released with the following words. All present repeat the last line.

Spirits of the Center... thank you for helping us to mend the web with compassion as we face injustice in the world.

Hail and farewell, Spirits of the Center (all repeat)

Spirits of the North... thank you for teaching us to embrace everyone's inherent worth and dignity.

Hail and farewell, Spirits of the North

Spirits of the West... thank you for reminding us to use the love light within, shining it on others to mend the web.

Hail and farewell, Spirits of the West

Spirits of the South...thank you for your guidance and energy to eliminate barriers so we may have justice for all.

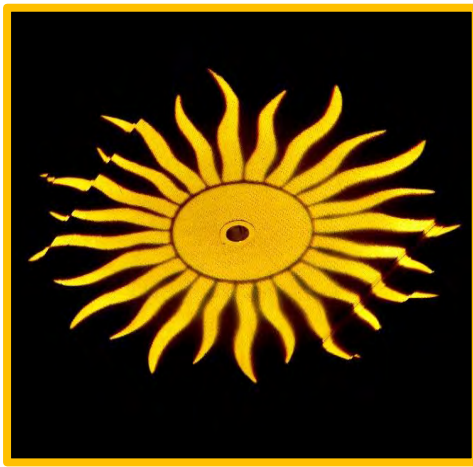
Hail and farewell, Spirits of the South

Spirits of the East...thank you for the wisdom for us to respect ourselves, each other, and all living things.

Hail and farewell, Spirits of the East

*The circle is open but unbroken.
Merry meet and merry part and merry meet again.*

Blessed Be... and Happy Solstice!!!



Time to celebrate! Turn up the lights, open links to “Here Comes the Sun” and “Yonder Come Day - dance and sing along - because the days are getting longer and your inner light shines!

[Here Comes the Sun](#)
(may contain ads)

Here comes the sun (doo doo doo doo)

Here comes the sun, and I say - it's all right

Little darling, it's been a long cold lonely winter

Little darling, it feels like years since it's been here

Here comes the sun (doo doo doo)

Here comes the sun, and I say - it's all right

Little darling, the smiles returning to the faces

Little darling, it seems like years since it's been here

Here comes the sun

Here comes the sun, and I say - it's all right

Sun, sun, sun, here it comes...





Yonder Come Day

*Yonder come day, day is a breakin',
Yonder come day, oh my soul.
Yonder come day, day is a breakin',
Sun is a risin' in my soul.*

Thanks for participating in this special Winter Solstice Ritual and Celebration!
Prepared by Bob Friedman and Debbie Cash, with Rev. Justin Schroeder

Please consider an offering to our Holiday Giving Campaign at

<https://firstuniversalistchurch.org/holiday-giving/>