

Fall 2024 Programs at First U

There are many ways to connect and deepen at church this fall. Programs with an asterisk * at the left have a Zoom option or component. Registration forms are linked in this guide, which you can find online at: <https://firstuniversalistchurch.org/spiritual-growth> (or use your phone's camera to scan the code at right).



FULL COMMUNITY CONNECTION POINTS

Monthly Wednesday Community Dinners

Wednesday, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11; Dinner 6-6:45; Breakout Groups 7-8:15 p.m. [RSVP REQUESTED](#)

Swing by church for a delicious home-cooked meal. After dinner, choose a drop-in breakout group to connect with others and learn about opportunities to get involved at church this season. All are welcome and there is no charge. Childcare will be available for younger kids (ages 6 months-Grade 3), and breakout groups will be available for older kids, teens, and adults. Menu available on our website, a week in advance. We always offer vegan, vegetarian, gluten free, nut free and kid-friendly options. All church events are alcohol-free.

Faith Formation for Adults: Listening Sessions

Sunday, October 27 at 1 p.m., and at the November 13 Community Dinner (breakout group)

No RSVP necessary - join us! 10/27 session cancelled

What are your spiritual needs? What are the world's needs? Where do they meet? Join us to talk about the future of faith formation for adults at First U and help make it real. *Facilitated by Rev. Ashley*

VISITORS AND NEWCOMERS/NEW-ISH

A Place to Start

1st and 3rd Sundays, and Community Dinner Breakout Option on 2nd Wednesdays each month [No RSVP Necessary](#)

Are you new or new-ish to First Universalist and wondering where to begin? Here's "A Place to Start!" Whether you're simply curious or are considering making this your spiritual home, in this casual, 45-minute class, you'll learn some of the basics of Unitarian Universalism, as well as how to get connected to what you're seeking here at church. Meet at the front of the sanctuary immediately after the service on a first or third Sunday, or join the breakout group at monthly Community Dinners. *Facilitated by First U members.*

Newcomers Circle - POSTPONED

~~Tuesdays, October 1, 8, 15, 22; Optional casual dinner provided at 6; Circle from 6:30-8 p.m. at church~~

Postponed

Newcomers Circles create a rich, supportive environment in which to share and grapple with our emerging UU values, theology, identity, and sense of belonging. This 4-session gathering is a caring and structured group to dig deeper into Unitarian Universalism and further connection at church. This Circle is intended for members and non-members alike who are discerning if and/or how they will commit to and continue their spiritual journey at First U as Unitarian Universalists. Please plan to attend at least three of the four sessions. The first session is required for group cohesion and trust building. Newcomers Circle is not a replacement or prerequisite for the Membership Class—they are complimentary curriculums that may be done in any order. *Facilitated by Channing McKinley and Steve Paquin.*

Membership Class at First Universalist

2 sessions, both required: Sundays, Nov. 3 & 10; Lunch 12:45 p.m., Class 1-3 p.m. in person at church

New Member ritual in worship Nov. 17

[Register Here](#)

Joining First Universalist is a symbolic, spiritual act of saying “yes” to growing your soul in this place, with these people, within our free faith tradition. Our membership class offers a chance to inform yourself about the ministry areas of the church through online videos, then be in community with other new members to identify and articulate what relevant, sustainable, and long-term membership will look like for you, and sign the membership book- officially join the church. (Please note, an online membership class option will be offered in spring 2025.) *Facilitated by Membership Coordinator Liz Farmer and Board Members.*

FAITHFUL ACTION

UU Climate Justice Revival

Saturday, September 28 & Sunday, September 29

[Register Here for Saturday, Sept. 28](#) - No RSVP necessary for Sun., Sept. 29

Saturday, September 28, 9-noon, Cummins Room

Led by Rev Arif and members of Environmental Justice Team where we will process our hopes, dreams, & aspirations.



Reimagine Together
From An Extractive
Age To A New Era

Sunday, September 29, 1-2 pm Listening Session - *No RSVP required!*

Please come and tell us how you see the climate future we are living into:

How do you dream of living into that future with love, joy, and healing intention? And do tell us what you need or would like from our beloved community to make your dreams come true! *The EJ Team would love to hear from you about the climate revival that is arising within your heart, your family, and our beloved community!* And: Congratulations to Rev Arif and to Meleah Houseknecht, seminarian & member for [winning 2 of the 6 sermon entries for the Revival!](#)

Food Rescue

Sunday, September 29, 12-3pm, in person at the Minneapolis farmer's market

[Register Here](#)

Join us to rescue excess produce at the Minneapolis Farmers Market. Volunteers collect excess produce from vendors for the Food Group, who then donates it to food shelves and meal programs. The farmers market is located at 312 East Lyndale Ave N. Event organizers will be in touch with participants about the details of meeting up and possibly carpooling from church. This event is for ages 15+, and minors must be accompanied by a supervising adult.

Organized by the Food Solutions Committee, part of First Universalist's Environmental Justice team.



* Life After Doom Salon

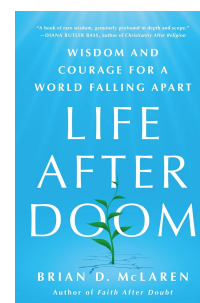
Mondays, October 7 - December 9, 7-8:30 PM

On Zoom only

[Register Here](#)

This is a come-as-you-are-able conversation based on Brian McLaren's book [Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for A World Falling Apart](#). Drawing on science and spiritual traditions, including 12-Step Spirituality, we will work through the sections "Letting Go, Letting Be, Letting Come, and Setting Free." Reading is encouraged, summary-support notes provided, and all are encouraged to dip their toes into this caring conversation. We will hold particularly our Visionary Goal of *connection and care for Earth*.

Hosted by the Environmental Justice Team



UUs for Justice in The Middle East

Second Sunday of the month, Oct. 13, Nov. 10, Dec. 8, 1-2 pm, in Room 201

[Sign up for UUJME Communications](#)

This group will be a collaboration between UU congregations in the area. Our hope is to create spaces and opportunities for UUs who want to deepen their understanding of collective liberation in the context of Israel and Palestine. From the Action of Immediate Witness, "[Solidarity with Palestinians](#)," passed at the 2024 UUA General Assembly: "Our faith community embraces the moral imperative of radical love, advocating for a world where liberation is realized for all and where every individual can thrive." Join us as we seek to broaden and deepen the Beloved Community!



First U Environmental Justice Monthly Gathering

Third Sunday of the month, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, 1-2:30 pm, in person at church in Room 209

[Sign up for EJ Team Communications](#)

All are welcome to join fellow First U congregants and friends to discuss and explore personal and communal steps we can take to help address climate change. The format will be open and all will be encouraged to contribute. As environmental issues emerge in the coming months, topics and actions will be collected and advertised in advance of monthly meeting. RSVP to receive updates via email prior to the monthly gathering.



Habitat Work Days for This Fall

October 23 and November 20, 8:30-2:30

[Registration with Habitat Required](#)

October 23: 3094 Victoria St. North, Roseville, 55113 - FULL
November 20: The Heights, 1672 Hoyt Ave, St Paul, 55106

[Exciting news from Twin Cities Habitat:](#)

"Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity is honored to be named host of the [2024 Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project](#) in fall 2024! During its nearly 40-year history, the Carter Work Project has traveled to 14 countries and brings together thousands of volunteers, celebrities, elected officials, and other VIPs to build homes and cast a global spotlight on the urgent importance of affordable housing. The 2024 Carter Work Project will launch Habitat's construction efforts at [The Heights on St. Paul's East Side](#), Twin Cities Habitat's largest-ever development!"



Plant-based Friendsgiving Potluck

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 5:30-7:00 pm, in person at church - Social Hall

[Register Here](#)

The Food Solutions committee, part of First Universalist's Environment Justice team, is hosting a Plant-based Friendsgiving potluck. All ages are welcome. Please bring a plant-based dish to share. Feel free to use a seasonal recipe if you're so inclined. The potluck will be held at First Universalist.

What Now? Envisioning pathways to a just, carbon free future

Wednesday, Nov. 20, 7-8:15pm in the Cummins Room, following the Friendsgiving Potluck, bring cellphone

[Register Here](#) - [more details here](#)

Join Todd Pierson, EJ team communications coordinator, in an activity that will help us explore and understand effective energy policy strategies to meet the climate goals of the UN Paris Agreement 2015, despite the Nov. 5 election setback. Todd, who trained with Climate Interactive, will use their online simulator, enROADS, "to pull the levers of energy and environmental policy" to see how they impact greenhouse atmospheric gases and global temperature increases. We'll discuss what this pathway could mean for our church community. Are there things we can do as a congregation that will help realize this future?

Bring your cellphones. We will be using a fun electronic tool to explore what we as a group feel is the best pathways forward.

PASTORAL & COMMUNITY CARE

* **Fall Grief group (online)**

Sept. 8, 22, Oct. 6, 20, Nov. 3, 17, Dec. 1, 15, 4:00-5:30 on Zoom

[Register Here](#)

The Grief Group meets first and third Sundays on Zoom. It is a gathering for those who are grappling with the web of feelings associated with loss. A group of souls who share, listen and care. A community interested in exploring new life invitations. Come as you are, when you feel moved to attend. We will be here for you. *Facilitated by Mark Caswell, church member and Ministerial Aspirant*

* **Caregivers group (online)**

Sundays, Oct. 13, 2-3:30 p.m., and Nov. 17 and Dec. 8, 1-2:30 p.m. on Zoom

[Register Here](#)

Caring for a family member who needs special care is a demanding and often unseen or unacknowledged role. Whether you're caring for an aging parent or a child with a chronic health condition, join the Caregivers group for mutual support, connection, and community building. When we gather, we'll light a chalice, have time for introductions, and share a reading, then move into deeper sharing, support, and reflection.

Facilitated by Rev. Arif Mamdani, Associate Minister

ARTS & SPIRITUAL PRACTICE GATHERINGS

Qigong for Liberation

Thursdays, Nov. 7, 14, 21, Dec. 5, 12, 19, 4:00-4:45 p.m.—no meeting on Thanksgiving or December 26.

In person in Room 201, will switch to Zoom during winter weather

[Register here](#)

We will gather in person and virtually to practice the beautiful and healing moving meditation of Spring Forest Qigong created by Master Chun Yi Lin, who I met and began learning from in 2000. This has been a liberating practice for my mind, body and spirit and I want to share it with others. Movements are gentle and accessible and can be done standing, sitting, or lying down.

Facilitated by Denise Konen, artwork at right by Denise



* **Meditation Tuesday Mornings**

Every Tuesday, all year/every week; 9:00-10:15 a.m.; gather at 8:45; in person in Room 209 and on Zoom

Email Sara McMullen to be added to the email list for the group: saramcminneapolis@gmail.com

This is a welcoming, lay-led group. Facilitators draw on their own experiences for the practices shared in the group.

Sources include: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Pema Chodron, Thich Nhat Hanh, Tara Brach, Deepak Chopra, Tai Chi, Loving Kindness, poetry and more. After meditation, the group practices deep listening to hear from each person who wishes to share. Once a month on the second Tuesday the group has a Learning Session until 10:30 am.

Facilitated by Sara McMullen, Martha Easter-Wells, and Sherry Merriam

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Religious Education

Our programs for Children, Youth, and Families run from Sept. 15, 2024 - May 11, 2025 [Register your family](#)

All families—new and returning, with babies through high schoolers—must register each church year.

Visit the [Families section on our website](#) for detailed information about this Fall's programming, and to view the most current calendar of events. Please reach out to Allison, Interim Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries, with questions or for more information at [allison \[at\] firstuniv.org](mailto:allison@firstuniv.org).

Youth Groups

[Register Here](#)

Junior High Youth Group: Grades 7-9

Youth in grades 7-9 are invited to join our Junior High Youth Group, which meets once a month from 7-8:15 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month after Community Dinners. Junior High Youth Group is led by trained adult volunteers Dallas Rising, Dylan Bijnagte, Sherry Merriam, and Michael Merriam, and supported by Allison Connelly-Vetter. These gatherings include time for checking in, playing games, learning new skills, service projects, fun activities, and exploring the big questions of life, all while deepening relationships with peers. There is no membership requirement or Sunday morning attendance requirement. Bring a friend or a neighbor—all are welcome!

Senior High Youth Group: Grades 10-12

Senior High Youth Group this year is led by part-time staff member Tami Eshult and volunteer Advisors Jane Jordan, Maria Heath, Ragnar Stefansson, and Cameron Smither. All staff and volunteers are trained and excited to spend time with these youth!

This year, our Senior High Youth Group will have a few main touch points, some familiar and some new. Please review the information below and encourage your youth to join us!

- Second Wednesday Youth Group: Join us for our free, monthly, all-congregation Community Dinners from 6-7 p.m. and then gather with us afterwards from 7-8:15 p.m. for our new monthly Senior High Youth Group. These gatherings include time for checking in, playing games, learning new skills, fun activities, service projects, and exploring the big questions of life, all while deepening relationships with peers. There is no membership requirement or Sunday morning attendance requirement. Bring a friend or a neighbor - all are welcome!
- Sunday Morning Bagels & RBT: Join us from 10:30-11:15 a.m. most Sundays (except the 3rd Sunday of each month October-May) in a casual environment for bagels and checking in with each other by sharing the Roses, Buds, and Thorns (RBTs) from our weeks.
- “Third Space” Gatherings (begins October): These gatherings will be scheduled on a month-to-month basis and will be planned by the Youth Leadership Team based on feedback and input from the Senior High Youth Group. These will be times for socialization, play, and fun.

We are also looking forward to Senior High events this Winter and Spring including a holiday party on December 22 and a re-launch of our Twin Cities Youth Con in February. Spring will also bring Youth Sunday and our Bridging celebrations. Please email Tami Eshult, our Senior High Team Lead and part-time staff member, at Tami [at] firstuniv.org with any questions regarding Senior High Youth Group.

Saturday Sprouts

Saturdays once per month, 10 a.m. to noon: October 26, November 23, in the Social Hall & Other Spaces

No RSVP necessary

Saturday Sprouts is a monthly opportunity for families to socialize, worship, play, and offer and receive peer support. We start with snacks and time to get to know each other before moving into family worship, followed by playtime for kids and a peer sharing group for parents and caregivers. We close by sharing gratitudes and singing together.

Kindergarten-5th Grade Religious Education Feedback Session

Wednesday, November 13, 7-8:15 p.m. (after Community Dinner)

Parents and caregivers of children in Kindergarten through 5th grade who attend Sunday morning Religious Education at First Universalist Church are invited to share their feedback on our updated 2024-2025 Sunday morning programming for that age group. This session is led by members of the Children, Youth, & Families Advisory Team, who wrote and/or were instrumental in the new curriculum design and structure. This gathering is a space to celebrate the wins of our new curriculum and explore ways we can improve together.

Family Holiday Potluck

Dec. 18 at 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

No RSVP necessary, just show up!

Half holiday dinner, half Friendsgiving, you are invited to bring a favorite holiday dish to share if you are able—yes, our meal might be primarily Midwest “salads” and hotdish!—or just bring yourself and your family. All parents, caregivers, children, youth, and chosen family are warmly welcome. Come, build community and share a meal with us.

Christmas Pageant

Dec. 21, 4 p.m. followed by cookies and hot cocoa—you are invited to bring cookies to share!

Registration for children and youth who wish to participate in the Christmas Pageant will open in late Fall.

A beloved tradition here at First Universalist, come bear witness to our children and youth re-introducing us to the story of Christmas.

YOUNG ADULTS (20s and 30s)

Young Adults are folks in their 20s and 30s in varying social/cultural life stages. We are in school, job-searching, and working, single, married, partnered and dating, with kids and without, newly moved to the area and longtime residents. We gather about twice a month at church and in the community for structured and unstructured conversation, spiritual practice, and activities.

Young Adults Halloween

Sunday, October 20, 1 pm - 2:30, Room 206

[Register Here](#)

Join Cameron, Zoey, and other young adults for a spook-tacular "Crafternoon!" Embrace your creative spirit as we dive into Halloween-themed crafting fun (or just regular crafting if you've already got a project in progress). We'll have a bunch of pumpkin-shaped sugar cookies that need to be transformed (through the art of edible decorations) into grinning Jack-o'-lantern cookies! Don't miss out on this ghoulishly good time with fellow young adults—grab your broomsticks (and/or crafting supplies) and fly on over for a relaxed afternoon of crafting and chatting. See you there!



SMALL GROUPS, BOOK GROUPS & CLASSES FOR ADULTS

The Wi\$dom Path: Money, Spirit, and Life

1-2:30 p.m. on Sundays

CANCELLED

~~Oct 6, 13, Nov. 17, 24, Dec. 8, Jan. 12, 26, Feb. 9, 23, Mar. 9, 23~~

Join us to build awareness of your own “money story” and explore your own attitudes and experiences with money. We will explore the ways in which money connects us with others, including issues of classism and economic justice as well as money issues in congregational life, then delve into ways to align faith, values, and a sense of a life calling with their financial ways of being.

Facilitated by Rev. Ashley & lay leaders

* Kate Tucker Sermons Circles - FULL

Both Circles Are Full - Registration Closed

Sundays, October 20, November 3 and 17, December 1 and 15; 7-8:45 p.m. on Zoom

facilitated by Kim Kammeier and Ray Dillon

Thursdays, October 24, November 7 and 21, December 5 and 19; 7-8:45 p.m. on Zoom

facilitated by Barb Mersy and Ray Dillon

You are invited to five sessions of diving deeply into five Kate Tucker sermons, meeting every other week. Registration is open to adults of all ages, from twenty-somethings to seniors, whether or not you have personally experienced our beloved minister emerita's extraordinary sermons before. Kate's sermons have aged very well, because they delve into timeless yearnings and wisdom. Please join us in a commitment to personal and communal spiritual growth. When you register, please indicate whether you are available for either or both of the circles. They are limited to ten participants apiece, and your flexibility might allow an opening for another person to participate. You are encouraged to register even if you have reason to believe that you will miss one, but not two, of the five sessions.

Theologies for Racial Justice

Tuesday evenings, October 22 and 29, 6:30-8pm, in person in Room 207

[Register here](#)

Why does theology matter for the work of dismantling white supremacy culture? What theological resources equip UUs to live out the anti-racist, anti-oppression values of our faith? This two-part series will explore Unitarian Universalist theologies for racial justice and the liberal theological tradition in which they are rooted. Part 1 explores Martin Luther King's vision of Beloved Community and Bernard Loomer's pantheistic theology of the divine. Part 2 explores African American religious humanism and Feminist Liberation Theology. Come for a conversation with Rev. Dr. Andrea Johnson about how theologies for racial justice can add rigor, passion, and fresh inspiration for our work around liberative truth-telling, transformation, and reparations. *Facilitated by Rev. Andrea Johnson*



Adult OWL (Our Whole Lives)

Fridays, Oct. 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22, Dec 6, 13, 20. No class Nov. 29, 10 a.m. to noon

In person at church in Room 201

[Register here](#)

Welcome to OWL (Our Whole Lives) for older adults! OWL has programs and curriculum for adults as well as youth. We welcome all adults aged 55 and older for this small group. As language, understanding, and ideas change, so must our ability to communicate about all things from healthy relationships, healthy bodies, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexuality and aging, and more.

The class will follow the OWL for older adults curriculum, and we will focus on the first half of the curriculum in the fall, and the second half in spring. We encourage participants to attend this 16-week session (spread over the two halves of the year), but we will not turn away any participant who can only attend for the fall or only attend for the spring class. Questions about this class can be directed to Claire Tralle, OWL Program Coordinator: [claire \[at\] firstuniv.org](mailto:claire@firstuniv.org).

Facilitated by CT Neal-Herman and Jane Jordan

SENIORS

Improv for Elders

Wednesdays, Nov. 6, 13, 20, and Dec. 4, 11, 18, Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 (no gathering on Nov. 27, Dec. 25, or Jan. 1) 10:30 a.m. to noon, in person at church in Room 209

[Register Here](#)

As we age, opportunities for play are not as plentiful as they used to be. This gathering is a time to imagine, to laugh, and to learn the basics of improvisation.

Facilitated by Meg Riley

* Daytime Connections

Organized and hosted by the Daytime Connections Planning Team

9:45 a.m. coffee, 10-noon program, Noon lunch, in person in the Social Hall and on Zoom

Daytime Connections empowers older adults to live intentional, joyful, purposeful and spiritually fulfilled lives, by building a vibrant community and providing engaging programming that promotes conscious aging and fosters personal and spiritual growth.



- Nov 21: Mark Ritchie and Minnesota history - [Register Here](#)
- Dec 19: Author Kao Kalia Yang

Registration Requested by the Monday prior. (Suggested donation for provided lunch is \$0-20 as you are able. Attendees are also welcome to bring their own lunch.)

80+ Spirituality Circle - FULL

2nd Tuesdays, monthly through May, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in person at church

This Group Is Currently Full - Registration Closed

Join us once a month in this closed group for those who are age 80 and up as we explore and deepen our spirituality in this phase of life. Each group will include time for spiritual practice, sharing what is moving in our lives, and exploration of a topic and reflection time. Together, we'll explore topics chosen by group members. This is an ongoing group with a few openings for new members.

Facilitated by Rev. Jen and Rev. Ashley

75+ Spirituality Circle - FULL

Wednesdays every other week for 6 weeks, October 9 and 23, November 6 and 20, December 4 and 18, 2:30-4pm, in person at church in Room 209

This Group Is Currently Full - Registration Closed

Join us every other week for 6 sessions in this closed group for those who are 75 and up as we explore and deepen our spirituality in this phase of life. Each group will include time for spiritual practice, sharing what is moving in our lives, and exploration of a topic and reflection time. Together, we'll explore topics including: Spiritual Practice, Self-Acceptance & Self-Compassion, Adapting to Change, Working with Fear, Grief and Loss, and Spiritual Touchstones.

Facilitated by Rev. Jen

Sage-ing Wisdom Circle

First Fridays of every month, 11-12:30 in Room 209

This Group is Currently Full - Registration Closed

In Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's book [From Age-ing to Sage-ing](#), he introduced us to "Sage-ing," which is "a new model of late-life development...a process that enables older people to become spiritually radiant, physically vital, and socially responsible 'elders of the tribe.'" Karen West, a Certified Sage-ing Leader (sage-ing.org), and a member of First Universalist, is inviting you to join a Sage-ing Wisdom Circle in which members explore how to "age triumphantly" together. *Facilitated by Karen West*