

Summer 2025 Programs at First U

Find your way into community this summer at church!

Programs with an asterisk * at the left have a Zoom option or may be entirely virtual.

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

Annual Meeting of the Membership

Sunday, June 8, after worship, around 11:30 a.m.

Members: Pre-Register on Zoom for in-person and virtual voting

Members are strongly encouraged to attend, and all are welcome, for our annual congregational meeting.

General Assembly Sunday Worship

Sunday, June 22, 10:00 am, Riverview Theater, Minneapolis | NO SUNDAY WORSHIP AT FIRST U

No RSVP Necessary - just mark your calendar and join us for this annual event!

Grab your popcorn and join other local UU congregations for a livestream of a powerful and communal experience – the largest annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists in worship. Every year, Unitarian Universalists from around the world gather in one place for several days of connecting, learning, worshiping, and doing the business together of our Unitarian Universalist Association of congregations. The Sunday worship that rounds out the UUA General Assembly is a powerful experience, with UUs attending together in person and virtually. (Pictured: Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout leading the Minister's Choir at a General Assembly.)



Poems and Songs of Resistance and Hope | Coffeehouse and Treat Potluck

Wednesday, July 16, 7:00pm-8:30pm, Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

Many of us have found music and poetry that has inspired hope and strengthened our resolve to resist what is happening in our country. Sign up ahead of time with your chosen piece of poetry or song. All ages are encouraged to participate! Bring a treat if you'd like to share one.

Brunch, Lunch, or Dinner Gatherings

Saturday, August 16 (multiple times and locations)

[RSVP Here by July 27 to host a potluck](#) | *RSVP to attend potlucks - to come*

If you stay put in the Twin Cities over August and are looking for a fun activity, sign up to host or attend a potluck event where you live. We will recruit hosts from across the cities and then open up the events for congregants in their area to join them. We are intentionally an intergenerational congregation: all potluck gatherings are open to families and individuals. We ask hosts to give information about their space in this form. All kids of high school age and younger have to be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Gatherings are about coming together—nothing fancy—just a time to enjoy each other's company and create community outside of church.

Monthly Community Dinner

First Community Dinner of the new church year: Wednesday, September 10 | [RSVP Here](#)

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.

VISITORS AND NEWCOMERS/NEW-ISH

A Place to Start

Sundays, immediately after worship: June 15, July 6, July 20, August 3, August 24 [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. *Facilitated by First U members.*

Newcomers Circle

Sundays, June 1, 15, 22, 29, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; Class Full | [Email for Fall Interest List](#)

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.

FAITHFUL ACTION

Environmental Justice Gathering: Responding to the Climate Crisis-Next Steps

DATE TBD - includes lunch, Cummins Room | [Here](#)

The First U Climate Conversations initiative this spring has provided [RSVP](#) insight into our church community's feelings and thoughts about the climate crisis. Now it's time for our EJ team to figure out which steps our church community should take in addressing the climate crisis.

Join us for lunch and extended time as we engage in an exercise of "issue cutting" and direction setting.



Getting to Zero Waste in Hennepin County

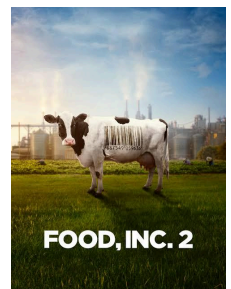
Wednesday, June 25, Dinner 5:15-5:45; event 6-7:30 p.m. at church, Room 209 | [RSVP Here](#)

Do you wonder what a zero waste future could look like? Part of a zero waste future includes the immediate closure of the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (aka the HERC). Trash incineration is no longer a viable solution for our waste, and it is an environmental justice issue, as the burning of our trash at the HERC most negatively impacts our Black neighbors and other marginalized beloveds in North (and Northeast) Minneapolis. Please join Emily Wallace and Todd Pierson, and bring your questions about how waste is processed, and why the HERC is not "clean energy." Solving the problem of our waste is multi-faceted, and we will discuss the county's plan as well as what we as a faith community that cares for all our planet can do.

Friday First U Eco Screening: Food Inc 2

Friday, June 27, 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

Authors Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore's Dilemma*) and Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*) take a fresh look at our vulnerable food system in the US. Since their first film, Food Inc., multinational corporations have created a highly efficient yet shockingly vulnerable food system dedicated only towards increasing profits that has robbed workers of a fair living wage and contributed to the global proliferation of ultra-processed foods along with a chemically formulated international health crisis. Food Inc 2 features innovative farmers, future-thinking food producers, workers' rights activists and prominent legislators Senator Cory Booker and Senator Jon Tester who are facing these companies head on to inspire change and build a healthier, more sustainable future.



First U Mini EV Showcase

Sunday, June 29, 11-1 in the church parking lot

Special presentation at 11:30 in the Cummins Room:

"Driving Electric" presented by our friend Brian Anderson from "Let's Go Zero Carbon."

[RSVP Here](#)

Thinking about making your next vehicle an electric car? Want to see many car options all in one place? Do you have questions about the pros and cons of driving electric? Join the Electrify Everything team for the Mini EV Showcase at First U on June 29. Eight First U community members will be showcasing their cars and be available to share their experiences driving electric. Want your car to be one of our showcased vehicles? *Contact Todd Pierson or Lane Ayers.*



Responding to the Anti-Trans Movement

In collaboration with MUUSJA

Tuesdays, June 17, 24, and July 1, 6:00-7:30 p.m. on Zoom, or in person Room 209

[RSVP Here to join online from home](#)

Want to watch together, in person? Rev. Laura Smidzik is hosting a viewing gathering of this training so folks who want to come together in person for this course can: [RSVP Here to join the in-person gathering](#)

This three-session course offers an introduction to gender diversity and trans identity and equips you to respond to the current political attack on trans people. Content includes trans 101, vital information to counter rampant anti-trans propaganda, and concrete actions that are needed in order for UU congregations to be spaces of safety and belonging to trans people and our families in this moment. We'll also be discussing what you and your congregation can do to support trans refugee work in Minnesota. We will start each session with a 25- to 35-minute video provided by the Transforming Hearts Collective. It will be followed by a discussion on the content and time for questions. *Facilitated by Dallas Rising (she/they), MUUSJA's Senior Movement Organizer and First U member. In-person gathering hosted by Rev. Laura.*



PASTORAL & COMMUNITY CARE

UU Coffee Klatsch: Have You Been Directly Impacted by Federal Funding and Agency Cuts?

Thursday, July 10, 10:00-11:30 am, in the Cummins Room

[RSVP Here](#) | You are welcome to bring a friend/colleague who has also been directly impacted

Join other UUs from the region who have lost their jobs at federal agencies, non-profits, health care research, etc. due to the administration's cruel and mindless cuts to critical agencies, programs, and funding. We will gather for coffee and facilitated conversation in hopes of coming together to build connections. This will also be a time to share resources and for us to hear how our congregations can support you. *Hosted and facilitated by Rev. Karen Hutt and Rev. Laura Smidzik.*

Caregivers Support Group

[RSVP Here](#) | Second Sundays: July 13, August 10, Sept 14; 1:00 - 2:30 pm on zoom

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 loved one 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. Laura Smidzik.*

Summer Grief Group

July 20, Aug. 3 & 17, Sept. 7; 4:00-5:30 p.m. on zoom

[RSVP to receive zoom link](#) | *This is a drop-in group*

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 the loss of a loved one. 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 Kathie Simon Frank, church member.*

Dementia Friends | Living with Dementia

Sunday, July 27, 11:30am-12:30pm, Room 201 | **[RSVP Here](#)**

Do you have a person in your life with dementia? This one-hour program can help you understand what is happening with your loved one. The Congregational Care Team is offering Dementia Friends of Minnesota's information session, in which they describe different types of dementia, help normalize living with dementia, and share effective approaches to communicate with and care for someone living with dementia.



Have You Been Personally Impacted by the Mass Deportations and Targeting of Immigrant Communities and Individuals?

Sunday, July 20, 11:30 am-12:30pm, Room 201 | **[RSVP Here](#)**

It has been a time of terror and harassment for people in our country who are targeted by ICE and other government officials who are operating without regard for the law or decency. We need to hear each other's stories and witness each other's experiences. Rev. Laura will hold a circle where all can share and all voices will be heard.

Holding All Our Grief

August 10, 11:30am-1:00pm at church, Room 211

All are welcome; no RSVP necessary

Following a service focused on grief, we will come together for kindness and comfort with Rev. Laura Smidzik and other care providers, to honor and hold space for each other's grief and loss, whether your loss is recent or has long been part of your life. We will join in small circles with those in similar relational loss such as parent, partner, sibling, child/grandchild, friend or colleague, grandparent. We will also have small circles for those whose grief and loss is a health challenge, living in a changing world, another major life change or major challenge or multiple losses.

ARTS & SPIRITUAL PRACTICE GATHERINGS

Qigong for Liberation

Thursdays, except Aug 7, 14, & 21, 4:00-4:45 p.m. at church in Room 201 | **[RSVP Here](#)**

We gather in person, and on Zoom in the snowy months, to practice the beautiful and healing moving meditation of Spring Forest Qigong created by Master Chunyi Lin, who notes, "by harmonizing Qi, the body's vital energy, Qigong supports physical vitality, emotional balance, and spiritual growth." Spring Forest Qigong is liberating because it shows a way to return to who we have always been - energy beings, who, when given the space and time to heal, can bring more unconditional love, forgiveness, and kindness to ourselves, each other, and a hurting world. Movements are gentle and accessible and can be done standing, sitting, or lying down. *Facilitated by Denise Konen.*

* Tuesday Meditation Group

Tuesdays, ongoing; 8:45-10:15 a.m. on Zoom

You are invited to meditate with our lay-led practice group. We meditate every Tuesday and people come when they can. None of us are experts. Our practices come out of our own experiences, and we share inspiration from many sources. We rotate facilitators and share what we are learning with each other. No registration required. *Email Martha Easter-Wells ewellsm@gmail.com for Zoom details.*

Labyrinth Walk on the Full Moon

June 11, July 10, 5-7 p.m. in the Social Hall at church - no RSVP Necessary

[Join the Labyrinth Interest List](#) | [Labyrinth Web Page](#)

A labyrinth is a tool for meditation. It is a single winding path that can be walked or traced with a finger, from the outer edge in a circuitous pattern to the center. Labyrinths are used world-wide as a way to quiet the mind, calm anxieties, recover balance in life, enhance creativity, and encourage meditation, insight, self-reflection and stress reduction. Please join us! Folks will be on hand to assist, teach, and guide you. *Facilitated by member Kate Guin.*

Trans & Gender Expansive Support Group

Sundays, June 22, July 27, August 24, September 28, 12-1:30 at church, in the Library | [RSVP Here](#)

The Trans & Gender Expansive Support Group is a place where trans, nonbinary, Two-Spirit, and gender expansive adults can meet and support each other. We come together to provide and receive support. Who you are matters and we would love to have you join us. *Facilitated by Kaden Colton*

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Religious Education | [Register Your Family for the 2025-2026 Church Year](#)

From May 18 through Sept. 7, Religious Education is worship. There are no classes or formal curriculum. Kids and youth of all ages are invited to worship in the Sanctuary with their families. Staffed childcare is available for ages 6 months through PreK in Room 104.

Visit the [Families section on our website](#) for detailed information about programming. *Please reach out to Allison Connelly-Vetter, Director of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries, with questions or for more information at allison@firstuniv.org.*

Twin Cities Pride Youth Night

Friday, June 27, 4-8 p.m. in Loring Park | Kids and youth ages 10 and up

Email Allison by Monday, June 23 to be on the list for logistics: allison@firstuniv.org

This will be a night of fun, activities, and entertainment for LGBTQIA+ youth ages 10-20, offering a safe and inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ youth to celebrate Pride. You can find more info on the event [here](#).



Allison Connelly-Vetter and our OWL Program Coordinator Claire Tralle will be chaperoning a group of youth from First Universalist. We took a crew last year and everyone had a fabulous, sweet, age-appropriate experience.

First Universalist Chalice Camp and Adventure Camp

August 18-22, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. most days (ends 5 p.m. Thursday), at church | *Registration Closed*

Our camp is open to rising 1st graders through rising 8th graders. High school students and recent graduates are invited to apply to serve as youth staff. The recommended donation to offset the cost of this program is \$100/child for the week. Each family has the opportunity to make a donation at the RSVP link.

Please reach out to Allison Connelly-Vetter at allison@firstuniv.org with questions or for more information. We can't wait for summer camp!

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. [Join the Young Adults Interest List](#) to stay connected this summer and beyond!

Young Adults Summer Programming

If you are in your 20s or 30s and would like to spend time with your Young Adult fam this summer, [please join the Young Adults Interest List to get connected!](#) Because Young Adults are busy bees, some events and times are subject to change.

LEGEND: YA = Young Adults Only; AC = All Church is Welcome!

June: NO GIGI'S IN JUNE!

We decided that we want to promote attendance of Young Adults at the Annual Congregational Meeting since it would be the same day.

Annual Congregational Meeting

June 8, meeting starts around 11:30 a.m.

[Details and member pre-registration for voting](#)

All Young Adults (regardless of membership status) are encouraged to stay for the meeting and use their voices and experiences.

Two Spirit Powwow - AC

June 24, 3pm-9pm

[Details Here](#) | [Minneapolis American Indian Center](#)

Support the 4th Annual Two Spirit Powwow! New Native Theatre's Two Spirit Powwow is Minnesota's only powwow honoring our Native Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ relatives.

This free, family-friendly event brings together over 500 people for a full day of dancing, drumming, regalia, craft vendors, and a community feast. It's more than a celebration — it's a sacred space for visibility, culture, and love.

A note from a Native Two Spirit Church Member: Everyone is welcome to attend this event! While I can not speak for all Two Spirit people or all Native Americans, it is commonly known that the identity of Two Spirit is exclusive to Native Americans only. If this is your first powwow, please attend and simply listen to the announcer. They will help!

Pride Weekend - AC

June 27-29, various times and places

Pride events are popping up daily! The Young Adults (adults in their 20s and 30s) of the church are planning to find times to group together and enjoy festivities together. If you would like to know when the Young Adults are planning to meet up, [please join the Young Adults Interest List](#).

The Minneapolis People's Pride - AC

June 28, 12pm-4pm

The Minneapolis People's Pride intends to be a space for all queer folks to experience joy, eat food, trade art, and various other activities. Making space for and feeding queer joy is a radical act of resistance that both uplifts the queer community and resists white supremacist heteropatriarchy. We aim to create a space for rest, collaboration, and love, centering those most marginalized and affected by systemic xenophobia. *Some Young Adult members are planning to meet up at the People's Pride. If you are interested in joining, [please join the Young Adults Interest List](#).*

Pride Parade - AC

June 29, 11 a.m.

Celebrate love, equality, and diversity at the Twin Cities Pride Parade, an iconic event renowned as one of the largest Pride Parades in the United States. With a vibrant procession down Hennepin Avenue, this annual extravaganza draws over 200,000 cheering supporters to champion LGBTQIA+ rights and visibility. Join us as we march forward, spreading joy, acceptance, and empowerment for all. *Some Young Adult members are planning to meet up at the parade. If you are interested in joining, [please join the Young Adults Interest List](#).*

Gigi's Young Adult Outing - YA

July 13 - After Church

Join the Young Adults (adults in their 20s and 30s) as they walk to Gigi's after worship. Typically everyone orders their food, sits together, and enjoys their meal/coffee while conversing about life. Please meet at the Young Adults table in the social hall no later than 10 minutes after the worship service is over if you would like to walk with the group. Someone will have some type of written or typed sign that says Young Adults in the social hall. If you don't walk with the group, just look for the usually large group of people who look like they are in their 20s or 30s.

Minnehaha Falls Art Fair - YA

July 19

Join members of the First U Young Adults group (adults in their 20s and 30s) as they attend the annual Minnehaha Falls Art Fair! Support local artists and find some amazing conversation. *Talk with Young Adult Member Raelyn if you are interested in attending as a YA group.*

Gigi's Young Adult Outing - YA

August 10 - After Church

Join the Young Adults (adults in their 20s and 30s) as they walk to Gigi's after worship. Typically everyone orders their food, sits together, and enjoys their meal/coffee while conversing about life. Please meet at the Young Adults table in the social hall no later than 10 minutes after the worship service is over if you would like to walk with the group. Someone will have some type of written or typed sign that says Young Adults in the social hall. If you don't walk with the group, just look for the usually large group of people who look like they are in their 20s or 30s.

SMALL GROUPS, BOOK GROUPS & CLASSES FOR ADULTS

Nimona: Movie Night for Trans and Gender Expansive Folx

Saturday, June 7, 6:30 pm, Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

Unwind for the start of the summer and join us for a night at the movies! We will be showing the movie *Nimona* (PG). Nimona is an animated movie about an aspiring villain with great abilities, including shapeshifting and creativity. The Geeky Waffle says, "It's incredibly refreshing to have this unique, beautiful, heartfelt movie that smashes the norm. It is setting a new bar for what should be seen in an animated film and how to create thoughtful and needed queer content."

We hope you can join us for this community building event that is **explicitly for trans and gender expansive folx**. It is not for cis allies except parents and siblings of trans and gender expansive children and youth. Please spread the invitation widely: church membership is not required for attendance.



My Parents Think They Are Wizards (Or Something)

6/8, 6/15, 6/22, 6/29, 7/6, 7/13, 7/20, 7/27, 12-4 p.m. at church, Rooms 205 & 207 | [RSVP Here](#)

A place where kids can play pretend with other kids, and grownups can play pretend with other grownups. In one space, children enjoy a (supervised) playdate with other First U children. In another space, grownups enjoy a game that involves imagination, roleplay, and collaborative storytelling (and yes, most likely dice). Because everybody likes games, but different ages can have different needs, goals, and ways to play.

Kate Tucker Sermon Circles

Two groups (10 participants each) will meet; choose the one that best fits your schedule. If both fit your schedule, please register for both, and you will be assigned to the one that will balance the numbers in each circle.

Circle 1: Thursdays, June 26, July 10 & 31, August 14 & 28, 7-8:45 p.m. on Zoom | [Registration Closed](#)

Circle 2: Sundays, June 29, July 13 & 27, August 10 & 24, 7-8:45 p.m. on Zoom | [Registration Closed](#)

You are invited to five sessions of diving deeply into five Kate Tucker sermons, meeting every other week. Registration is open to 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.

Summer Instrumental Music

Thursday evenings, beginning June 12, no meeting August 7, 14, or 21; 7-8:30 p.m. in the Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

Calling instrumental musicians! This summer, we'd love to gather together and play music together. We have a handful of pieces to start with that can be played by flexible groups of individuals. We will be playing some high school-level music to start, with opportunities to split out into small ensembles depending on who joins up. *Reach out to Elaina Buzzell (firstuniv@elainabuzzell.com) with any questions.*

Crafting Group

Sundays, June 15, 29, July 6, 27, September 7, 21, 12-2 p.m. at church in the Social Hall near Library | [RSVP Here](#)

Are you creative/crafty/artistic (or would like to be!) and like to create in the presence of others? Let's meet up and be creative in community! Imagine: a drop-in space where you come with a project, or use materials from our pop-up free table (i.e., a spot where we can bring craft items we no longer want or need, to pass to someone else, or to find a new project or hobby). Joy is an act of resistance and connecting with creative folks can be inspiring!

Book Study | *See Me, Believe Me: A Guide to Deepen Allyship with Congregational Leaders of Color*

Sundays, July 13, 20, 27, from 12 pm to 1:15 pm, via Zoom | [RSVP Here](#)

Join a group to read and discuss *See Me, Believe Me: A Guide to Deepen Allyship with Congregational Leaders of Color* by Rev. Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers. The book is short, and we will meet three times via Zoom to discuss. An excerpt of the book's description: *In See Me, Believe Me*, Rev. Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers draws from the wisdom and experience she has gained—and the racism she has endured—as a female, Black, and queer pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Her insights and concrete suggestions for action illustrate how seeing and believing leaders of color are essential steps in the journey of allyship. Chapters beckon readers to acknowledge ignorance, respect boundaries, join in celebration and lament, offer reparations, and continue doing their own work to dismantle racism and live into the fullness of loving God and neighbor. *Facilitated by Dallas Rising and Nan Potter.*

SENIORS

Improv for Elders

Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30, ongoing except for August 6, 13, 20, in person at church, Room 209 | [Register Here](#)

Please be sure to sign up so that you'll be notified of any changes in schedule for this group

Improvisation is not only a fun activity, with lots of laughter and joy and connection with others, it is also a resilience-building activity, and a spiritual practice. Participants say that the class makes them more aware of the ways they can open to more joy and spontaneity outside of class as well as within. This class is not about performing or public practice of improv. It is a nonjudgmental, supportive environment for group activities. New members are always welcome to come by and try it! *Facilitated by Rev. Meg Riley.*