

Winter/Spring 2026 Programs at First U

Registration forms are linked in this guide, which will be updated regularly online at:

<https://firstuniversalistchurch.org/spiritual-growth>

(or use your phone's camera to scan the code at right).



FULL COMMUNITY CONNECTION POINTS

Community Dinners

Second Wednesdays: January 14, February 11, March 11, April 8, May 13

Dinner 6-6:45; Breakout Groups 7-8:15 p.m. [RSVP REQUESTED](#) *All are welcome and there is no charge.*

Swing by church for a delicious home-cooked meal at 6 p.m. in the Social Hall. After dinner, choose a drop-in breakout group to connect with others and learn about opportunities to get involved at church this season. Childcare will be available for younger kids (ages 6 months-Grade 5), and youth groups will meet for older kids and teens. 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. Instead of breakout groups after the May dinner, please join our 9th grade Coming of Age youth, mentors, and Advisors in the Sanctuary where they will share their COA 'Zine. The 'Zine will be a collection of our youth's learning, processing, and overall experiencing as part of COA. The celebration will include short essays, poems, drawings, and creations from others that have inspired the COA youth.

Pancake Breakfast for Trans and Gender Expansive Folx

Saturday, Feb. 14; Breakfast 9:30-10:30 a.m., Program 10:00, Breakouts 10:30-11:15, Closing 11:15-11:30 [RSVP Here](#)

Join us at a pancake breakfast open to individuals and families with trans and gender expansive identities. This is an opportunity to see how large and varied our community is. Imagine a room filled with transgender and gender expansive adults, youth, and children. We build community by being together. You may even make some new connections! We will eat, have a short program, and then create breakout groups. This breakfast is open to transgender and gender expansive kids, youth, and adults, and to cisgender allies who are parents and siblings of trans and gender expansive children and youth. Otherwise, cisgender folks are not invited to the breakfast. However, they can be allies by spreading the word about the breakfast to trans and gender expansive loved ones in their lives and encouraging them to come! Please spread the invitation widely: church membership is not required for attendance.

Circle Suppers

Saturday, April 4, varied times and locations [RSVP to be a Host by March 13](#)

Circle Suppers are casual, potluck dinners held in people's homes and apartments. We welcome all in the First Universalist community and encourage invitations to newcomers and guests. It's a great way to get to know each other better in a relaxed setting, and make new connections and deepen old friendships over great food, drink, and conversation. Sign up for dinners will happen at church and through a link in The Liberal.

VISITORS AND NEWCOMERS/NEW-ISH

Membership Classes at First U

We ask that congregants who are interested in becoming members take a membership class. Participants have an opportunity to get clear on what they personally are committing to as church members and what a mutual, reciprocal church community commits to them in return. In community, participants explore the practical and spiritual sides of what relevant, sustainable church membership means to them. Even if you're a lifelong UU interested in membership, we ask that you take the membership class at First Universalist as it helps orient folks to this congregation and helps build community.

We are offering three different membership class times this spring:

NEW DATES - Class 1: Thursdays, February 19 and 26, 6:00-8:00 pm, Room 209 *Registration Closed*

Class 2: Saturday, March 21, 9:00am-1:30 pm (potluck), Cummins Room [RSVP](#)

Class 3: Tuesdays, April 21 and 28, 6:00-8:00 pm, Library [RSVP](#)

A Place to Start

Sundays: February 15, March 1 & 15, April 5 & 19, May 3 & 17, Immediately after worship services, meets at the front of the sanctuary, 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.*

Newcomer Circles

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. Registration is limited to 8. 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.

Mondays, March 9, 16, 23, 30 6:00-8:00 pm, meets in the Library *Registration Closed*
May Circle - dates to be determined, please join the [Newcomer Circle Interest List](#)

FAITHFUL ACTION

Habitat for Humanity Builds

Saturday, February 14th, 8:30am to 3:30pm, 3149 Park Avenue, Minneapolis

Saturday, March 28th, 8:30am to 3:30pm, 1400 North Winthrop Street, St Paul (a.k.a. The Heights)

[RSVP at the Habitat Website](#)

A new rehab project is beginning to take shape in our neighborhood that will provide First U members opportunities to impact our direct neighborhood. Whether you're a seasoned builder or brand new to Habitat, all skill levels are welcome. Every hour you contribute helps create safe, stable homes for families in our community. First U Habitat Team Lead: David Harrison - rdavid.harrisonjr@gmail.com - (920) 225-9153

Environmental Justice (EJ) Team

Sunday, February 15, 12:30 informal shared lunch in the Social Hall, meeting 1-2 in Room 209 | [RSVP Here](#)

Come explore how to

- get involved
- stay connected
- take leadership

On climate issues you care about!

We come together as individuals concerned about the climate crisis with open hearts willing to explore effective ways to promote personal ecological wellbeing and planetary health. And most importantly, to embrace one another in our shared community.

This winter we will be:

- Sharing updates of ongoing initiatives and events
- Discuss programming for April, "Earth Month 2026"
- Planning for Earth Day April 26, 2026
- Exploring next steps for the EJ team efforts

First Universalist Plastic-Free February Challenge

Furthering our First Universalist transition to a Zero Waste Future

Sign up at tropicalasticfree.ecochallenge.org

Our First Universalist community cares about reducing waste, protecting water and wildlife, addressing climate change, and looking after the health of ourselves and our children. Plastic waste is being burned at the garbage burner (HERC), or discarded, ending up in our lakes, rivers and oceans. It is even appearing in our blood stream! Our BIPOC communities bear the heaviest burden of plastic pollution.

Join together with the Environmental Justice Team and support each other's journey toward zero waste. Choose from over 100 engaging actions available through an [easy and fun online portal](#). You will explore actions in categories like food, on-the-go, personal care, pets, kids.... Do as many, or as few, actions as time allows—every action counts!

Eureka Recycling Virtual Tour

April 21, 3-4:30pm, on Zoom | [RSVP Here](#)

Ever wonder how they sort the various recyclables we place in our blue bins? Ever question about something that you are uncertain belongs in the recycling bin? These questions and more will be answered in the virtual Eureka Recycling virtual tour. You will be able to experience the recycling facility, free of the actual noise and smell! This is the best way to get the straight scoop on how to recycle your household waste and help our First U community meet its zero waste campaign goals for 2026!

Earth Day Celebration: Plant-based Potluck Community Dinner

Thursday, April 23, 6-7 p.m., Social Hall | [RSVP Here](#)

All are welcome to come explore a plethora of plant based foods. Paul Hawkin's Drawdown ranks "eating a plant rich diet" fourth in the most effective ways to limit greenhouse gases. It's all about limiting our consumption of animal protein. Recipes and food preparation tips will be shared. *Facilitated by Todd Pierson and Susan Keller*

Earth Day Celebration: Special Screening of Future Council

Thursday, April 23, 7-8:15 p.m., Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

Millions of children around the world are frustrated by the dire lack of action to protect the planet and their future. Until now, their only avenue to express these concerns has been protesting on the streets. Director Damon Gameau (2040, *THAT SUGAR FILM*) invites eight children on an epic adventure across Europe in a school bus powered by biofuel. Their mission is to better understand the planet's predicament, explore solutions and, most importantly, take the conversation from the streets, into the boardrooms of some of the world's largest polluters and influential companies. This inspiring and rollicking journey results in the children forming a 'Future Council' to advise and influence the world's most powerful companies on their decisions that impact nature. It is a coming-of-age journey that dares to imagine a brighter future.

Second Annual Mini EV Car Showcase

Sunday, June 21, following worship, in the First U parking lot

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 EJ's Electrify Everything team for the Second annual Mini EV Showcase at First U on June 21. Ten First U community members will be showcasing their cars and be available to share their experiences driving electric. *Hosted by the EJ Team.*

PASTORAL & COMMUNITY CARE

Resistance Reflection Circle

Friday mornings, 9-10 a.m. on Zoom | [RSVP Here](#)

This circle is for any 1st UU members currently involved in doing resistance work, Our purpose is to create a space where we can "hold it together" in real time. Bring your self-mind, body and spirit-to share how you are, what you are learning, and what nurturing can look like now. Come as you are! *Hosted by the First U Sanctuary and Resistance Team.*

Grief Group (on zoom)

First Sundays, 4:00-5:30 pm: Feb 1, March 1, April 5, May 3 [Register to receive Zoom link](#)

The Grief Group meets the first Sunday 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. (This is a drop-in group). We will be here for you.

Facilitated by Nico Van Ostrand, Hallman Ministerial Intern

Caregivers Support Group (on zoom)

Second Sundays: 1:00-2:30 pm: Feb 8, March 8, April 12, May 10 [Register to receive Zoom link](#)

This is a drop-in group

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.*

Welcome Team

Info Session: Sunday, February 15, between the services (about 10:15-11:15 a.m., 12:15-1:15) at church, Library |

[Welcome Team Interest List](#)

We invite you to be part of the Welcome Team at First U! Our group's mission is to ensure all newcomers feel welcome and have an opportunity to explore if First U is a place where they belong. We are seeking new members to learn about welcoming opportunities at First U and sign up to help. These include welcoming newcomers at the social hall table after services, door greeters and ushers, and facilitators for newcomer programs: *A Place to Start* and *Newcomer Circles*. We will host an informational and sign-up session on February 15 after worship service for you to learn how to join the team and get involved.

Medicines for the Long Dark: Sharing Circles to Hold These Times of Turmoil

Circles (RSVP links coming in the March 12 newsletter):

Sharing Circle 1: Tuesday, March 17 at 10 am (via Zoom),

Sharing Circle 2: Sunday, March 22nd, 1:00 pm (in person), Room 201

Sharing Circle 3: Thursday, April 2, 10:30 am (in person)

Sharing Circle 4: Wednesday, April 8, 7:00 pm after Community Dinner, Room 207

The long dark is what psychotherapist, and writer Francis Weller names this time in our history in his book *In Absence of the Ordinary*. He defines the long dark as "a time of gravity and extremes." We are living through a series of cascading systems failures in the natural world, in our political spheres, our institutions and our social bonds, and it is challenging to know what to do or how to be.

The medicines, the balms, the practices that can help us navigate these times are things we name all the time in UU circles, and Weller lists them as well: friendship and community, imagination, and tapping the deep-time of our ancestral inheritance.

We invite you to join one of the circles, and receive and share in the medicines for the long dark. The circles will be facilitated by one of the many ministers in our community: Revs. Ruth MacKenzie, Roberta Haskin, and Laura Smidzik. We will limit each group to 10 participants so our sharing can go deep and wide.

Trans, Non-binary and Gender Expansive Community and Support Group

Will meet once/month based on participant availability. Contact Kaden at kaden.e.colton@gmail.com to express interest and for more information.

A source of emotional, physical, and spiritual support for trans, non-binary and gender expansive adults who are members and friends of First Universalist or folks moving to the Twin Cities area. The group will facilitate support, resources, and community building. Facilitated by Kaden Colton, a member of First Universalist and a seminarian pursuing chaplaincy.

Caregivers of Spouses

Meeting schedule to be determined by participants. [RSVP Here by Feb 14](#)

Caregiving for a spouse/partner has its own nuances and realities for the care provider. This group is an opportunity to share confidentially, learn from one another, and to receive support. We will begin in February and find a common time that works for all participants. *Led by Rev Laura Smidzik.*

ARTS & SPIRITUAL PRACTICE GATHERINGS

Labyrinth on the Full Moon

Monthly (dates below), 5-7 p.m. in the Social Hall

No RSVP Necessary | [Join the Labyrinth Interest List](#)

First U has a long history of labyrinth walking, please join us for this relaxing and contemplative open walk each month. You don't need to come every time, and you don't need any experience. Bring a friend!

Sunday, February 1 - Full Moon in Leo

Tuesday, March 3 - Full Moon in Virgo

Wednesday, April 1 - Full Moon in Libra

Sunday, May 31 - Full Moon in Sagittarius

First U Instrumental Music

Sundays, February 8, March 8 and 15, 1:30-3 pm, at church, Cummins Room | [RSVP Here](#)

The First U Instrumental Music group welcomes musicians to join us for music and fellowship. We will meet 2-3 times this spring to rehearse and we will look for opportunities to perform at service. Our music is at a lower high school level, so we can welcome youth musicians as well as adults who may have let some dust gather on their instruments.

Facilitated by Elaina Buzzell.

Crafting Group

Sundays, February 15, March 1 & 15, April 5 & 19, May 3, 1-3 p.m. at church, in the Social Hall | [RSVP Here](#) Are you creative/crafty/artistic (or would you 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 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! *Facilitated by Chris Chiros.* (drop-ins welcome!)

Qigong for Liberation

Tuesdays, 4:30 - 5:15 online, facilitator will keep participants informed of any dates we don't meet | [RSVP Here](#)

We gather in person in good weather and on Zoom in the snowy months, to practice the beautiful and healing movement 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." Come when you can. A recording is included each week so, if you can't attend in real time, you can practice when you choose. Movements are gentle and accessible and can be done standing, sitting, or lying down. Spring Forest Qigong is a liberating practice because it provides 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. As our strength and resilience grow we become fortified to respond with courage and compassion to the intensifying fascism. Facilitator will reach out when you register so that you can get to know one another and she can better understand your needs for your qigong practice. *Facilitated by Denise Konen.*

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

Together, we seek to expand our hearts and minds, make a difference in the world, mark important milestones, and explore big questions. We are a supportive, anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multigenerational, radically welcoming religious community.

Our programs for Children, Youth, and Families run from September through May

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

[Register your family today.](#)

Visit the [Families section on our website](#) for detailed information about this season's programming, and to view the most current calendar of events.

Middle School and High School Youth Groups

Youth in 6th-8th grades are invited to join our Middle School Youth Group, which meets twice a month from 7-8:15 p.m. on most second and fourth Wednesdays (the second Wednesday is immediately following Community Dinners).

Youth in 9th-12th grades are invited to join our High School Youth Group. This youth group meets on Sunday mornings when Religious Education is offered during the 11 a.m. service only. This group also meets on Wednesday evenings twice a month from 7-8:15 p.m. on most second and fourth Wednesdays (the second Wednesday is immediately following Community Dinners).

These gatherings are led by trained adults and 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!

Common Ground Sundays

About once a month over holiday weekends and/or school breaks, we will host a program for *all grade levels* (kindergarten through high school) called **Common Ground Sundays**. These Sundays are intended to gather and ground our children and youth in a shared project of liberation, resistance, and care for our congregation and our wider community.

Each Common Ground Sunday will include a mix of:

- brief opening ritual
- multiple relevant hands-on projects options (with multiple learning styles and development ranges reflected)
- representation from a First Universalist committee, ministry, or justice team
- resources from local community organizations
- connections to our monthly worship theme

We hope these Common Ground Sundays will be meaningful opportunities for our children, youth, and adults to forge relationships across age and generational divides, to identify and generate leadership opportunities for our children and youth within the life of the congregation, and to continue cultivating shared experience, wisdom, and compassion within our church community at large.

This program will be in lieu of our regular RE programs, and will follow each of our two regular service times—like all other Sundays at 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

Common Ground Sundays for the 2025-26 church year:

- February 15th (Sunday before Presidents' Day)
- **NO** March Date
- April 5th (Easter Sunday/Spring Break)
- May 10th (Mother's Day)

Single and Solo Parents Group

Wednesdays, Feb 11, March 11, April 8 from 7:00-8:15pm

Saturdays Feb 28, March 28, and April 25 from 10:45 am-12:00 noon, Library [RSVP Here](#)

All single and solo parents and caregivers are invited to join this group for community, connection, and solidarity with people who really get it. This will be a space for connecting with others who have shared experience, taking time for a spiritual practice or reflection, and receiving care, tenderness, and grace from one another. We are scheduling these during Community Dinner and Saturday morning Sprouts so childcare will be available. We encourage you to attend as many of these gatherings as you can to support trust-building and community. Reach out to Rev. Laura with questions or for more information. Groups will be facilitated by affiliated ministers, current ministers, and staff.

Saturday Sprouts

Saturdays once per month, 10 a.m. to noon: February 28, March 28, April 25 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. Saturday Sprouts is open to all families, with programming geared towards young children (6 months - 5th grade) along with their siblings and parents/caregivers. *If you have questions or would like more information, please email Hirut Hedge, Program Specialist, at hirut@firstuniv.org.*

Talent Show and Trivia Night

Friday, March 13, 5:30-8:00 pm | *Canceled*

Come join us for a youth-led talent show & trivia night fundraiser event! There will be food prepared by youth, a live DJ, youth-made trivia, and a bunch of fun talents on display.

Our Youth Leadership Team spends a lot of time preparing for this fundraiser, so make sure to show up and support our youth! All proceeds will go towards supporting our Children, Youth & Families Program. Invite a friend or two!

Spring Family Overnight

Friday, March 20 - Saturday, March 21! Please RSVP here by Sunday, March 15th. [Sign Up Here.](#)

This overnight is for families with children in grades K-5 along with siblings. We will play games, share a meal or two (and snacks!), walk the labyrinth, and even have a talent show! Check-in is at 5:30 p.m. on Friday. On Saturday morning, our overnight programming will end around 9:30 a.m. We will share the full schedule and packing list with registered families in advance of the overnight. Please contact Hirut Hedge at hirut@firstuniv.org with any questions, concerns, or for more information. We can't wait for the overnight!

Child Dedication Sunday

April 12, 2026

Child Dedications take place twice each year during a Sunday morning worship service. Child Dedication is a beloved ritual of our congregation and many UU congregations. In Child Dedication, our congregation pledges itself to partner with parents and families in the religious upbringing of their children. We promise to support the family as their child grows. Child Dedication is a community event, honoring an intentional and ongoing relationship between families and our religious community. Children of members and those on the path to membership may be dedicated at First Universalist. If you have questions or would like more information about Child Dedications, please reach out to Rev. Laura Smidzik laura@firstuniv.org.

EARLY ADULTS (20s and 30s)

Early Adults at First U are folks who are 18 years old - 39 years old (No High School Students Please 😊 High Schoolers are invited to take part in our Youth Group)

Early Adults ONLY:

Karaoke

Friday, February 6, 7pm, Location TBD

RSVP to JT: 952-520-4237

Super Bowl Party

Sunday, February 8, 5pm

Potluck Style, At CT's House, CT will provide chili and other snacks

RSVP to CT: 832-646-8150

Early Adult Monthly Dinner

Tuesday, February 24, 6:30pm

RSVP to Billy: 218-770-8863

Full Moon Walk at the U of M Arboretum in Chaska

Tuesday March 3, 7:00 to 10:30

RSVP to Raelyn R: 612-554-4934

Tickets are required prior to the event—there is a fee but mutual aid will cover costs and can carpool

Second Sunday Early Adult Brunch

Sunday, March 8, After second service, at Pizza Luce

RSVP to Corey/Maria: 715-451-6131

Speed Bingo

Saturday, March 14, 12pm, at Sociable Cider Works

RSVP to Unique: 806-316-9660

Early Adult Monthly Dinner

Friday, March 20th, 6:30, at Maria's House

RSVP to Maria: 815-821-4674

Speed Bingo

Saturday, April 11, 12pm, at Sociable Cider Works

RSVP to Unique: 806-316-9660

Second Sunday Early Adult Brunch & Summer Planning Meeting

Sunday, April 12, After second service, at Pizza Luce

RSVP to Corey/Maria: 715-451-6131

Early Adult Craft Night

Monday, April 27, 6:30pm, Location: TBD

RSVP to Maria: 815-821-4674

Early Adult Monthly Dinner and May Day Activites

Friday, May 1, 7PM, Greta and/or Alex's apartment

RSVP to Greta and Alex: 651-428-6655

May Day Gathering and Parade

Sunday, May 3

RSVP to Greta and Alex: 651-428-6655

Second Sunday Early Adult Brunch

Sunday, May 10, After second service, at Pizza Luce

RSVP to Corey/Maria: 715-451-6131

Speed Bingo

Saturday, May 16, 12pm, at Sociable Cider Works

RSVP to Unique: 806-316-9660

Early Adult Potluck

Saturday, May 23, 1pm, at Brackett Field Park

RSVP to Unique: 806-316-9660

Early Adult Focused but Open to Everyone Regardless of Age:

Minors must have an parent/legal guardian accompany them to these events.

Physical Media Party

Friday, Feb 20, 6pm, at church

RSVP to Maria: 815-821-4674

Bring your own snacks!

Does all your media live in the cloud? Do you wish it didn't and that you owned your own media like you did in 2005? Come join the Early Adults to make a plan to print your pictures, to put your music and movies on a flash drive, to back up your computer, and even to rip your old CDs! Bring your computer and USB drives or CDs.

Feed My Starving Children

Tuesday March 31, 7:00 pm to 8:45, at FMSC in Eagan

30 spots available; [sign up to join here](#) or send a text to Raelyn: 612-554-4934

SMALL GROUPS, BOOK GROUPS & CLASSES FOR ADULTS

BIPOC Group

[Fill out the interest form](#) or email Nico (nico@firstuniv.org) for meeting details; in person and online available.

The First Universalist BIPOC Group is a sacred time of community, support, and joy. Come be, laugh, and connect with other Unitarian Universalists who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color. This is a closed space for BIPOC adults, including multiracial people. This is not a group for white people, including white people who have BIPOC family members.

Get to know the Intercultural Development Continuum

Wednesday evenings: February 11 & 25, March 4 & 18, April 1, 7pm - 8:30pm at church | [RSVP Here](#)

For members who are interested in learning more about the culture and its connection to creating a beloved community. Participants need to have completed the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory). This group will use the UU Institute's "Co-Creating Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in Our Congregations" course to dig deeper into understanding how we interact across differences in a way that promotes diversity, inclusion and equity in our congregation that builds deep relationships and an inviting congregational culture. Over five sessions, we'll explore the Intercultural Development Continuum and reflect on our congregational culture and experience. *Facilitated by Martha Moriarty.*

Embracing the Contradictions of Life - A Daytime Bookgroup and Conversation

Wednesdays, Feb 18, March 4 & 18, and April 1, 11:00 am-12:30 pm, at church, Room 201 | [RSVP Here](#)

We will be using the book *Between the Dark and the Daylight: Embracing the Contradictions of Life* by Joan Chittister to guide a facilitated small group. We will meet for four sessions and read around 40 small pages each time. Topics range from the mirage of security to the sanity of irrationality. Chittister is a progressive, Benedictine so the book uses Christian language that is very open and affirming. *Facilitated by Rev. Laura Smidzik*

Building Trust, Enhancing Belonging

Saturdays. Feb 28, Mar 7, Mar 14, 28, 10-11:30 a.m., at church, Room 207 | *Cancelled*

Communities and Countries are held together by trusting relationships. But we often taken them for granted until we are betrayed. Why is trust so important to our lives? Trust is a psychological, practical, and moral concept that we run into every day. How can we strengthen our relationships and repair those that are 'broken'? Why does it feel so awful when others don't trust us? This program will be a discussion, informed by ideas we've listened to/read to nudge us to puzzle things out and consider different people's views together. *Facilitated by Nancy Potter.*

Connecting with meaning in uncertain times

Sundays, April 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2:00-3:30, at church | [RSVP Here](#)

This group will focus on connecting with sources of meaning in these times of uncertainty using a model based on "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl. Together, we will use structured questions and self reflection to identify how we can face these uncertain and painful times in ways that feel grounded in our values and sense of meaning; While we cannot control the limitations that we face in our lives, we have autonomy in how we respond. *Facilitator Rachel Bialostosky is a licensed independent clinical social worker who is trained in Meaning Centered Psychotherapy for individuals living with serious illness and this group will be based on that format.*

Beyond Philanthropy: What does sharing financial resources look like for you?

Tuesdays, April 14, 21, 28, and May 12,19; 7:00 to 8:45 p.m. at church, Room 207 | [RSVP Here](#)

This is a group for folks who wrestle with questions of money, wealth, sharing resources and our work of creating the world we want to live in. This topic can evoke discomfort, guilt or shame, comparison and irritation with donation culture. What if we started with gratitude to explore just how we want to relate to our resources? This group will begin with gratitude and use story, spiritual and embodiment practices, and deep listening to ask (with open, honest hearts) what it means to have more than we need, what is wrong with donation culture, are there other models for sharing and what is my personal sharing compass. One session will be devoted to church stewardship. *Facilitated by Karen Heegaard and Drew Rosielle.*

Beyond the Gender Binary

Saturdays, May 9, 16, 23 and June 6, 10-11 am, at church, Room 201 | [RSVP Here](#)

Cat Hammond and Forrest Mainville invite you to listen to our gender stories and share yours. We will discuss the impact of dismantling the gender binary and offer an exercise to see the world with more fluidity, movement and spaciousness. Together, we will consider ways that gender and sexuality intersect and diverge, reflecting on gender diversity's place within the past and present of LGBTQ communities. In our last class, we will discuss ways to support trans and gender expansive people and to celebrate and embrace all of our gender identities.

SENIORS

Sage-ing Wisdom Circle

February 6, March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5, 11-12:30, Room 209 | *Registration closed*

Sage-ing Wisdom Circle: 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.'" (5) 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. *Group members take turns facilitating; organized by Karen West.*

Daytime Connections for Older Adults

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. **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.)*

February 19: Health Support for Transgender Youth

Would you like to know more about the program at Children's Hospital that works to support transgender youth? **Dr. Kade Goepferd**, the founder and director of that program for the past eight years, will tell us about the many ways that the hospital helps trans youth and their families through the transition process.

March 19: Loving Mother Earth: Surfing the Tsunamis of Change

How can we hold it together as a loving community living through this time of ecological disruption? Our own **Gary Hoover** will share stories, insights and questions from his lifetime of focus on this issue. We look forward to everyone contributing thoughts and experiences through table discussions.

April 16: Preparing for an Executor

May 21: Integrative Medicine for Healthy Aging