



Thursday, January 9, 2025

Sunday, January 12

Souper Sunday
Sunday Worship at 10:15 a.m.

Learning Community (RE) classes are at 10:15 a.m. Nursery and toddler care is always available during our worship service. Learn about our program [here](#). Current news [here](#).

Social Hour: Fuller Hall after the service.

LIVESTREAM SERVICE

The Blessing of Thin Places

[Danielle Garrett](#), Assistant Minister



In Celtic spirituality, thresholds, both literal and metaphorical, are associated with “thin places” where the distance between heaven and earth shrinks. Although not always comfortable places to remain, there is a magic that happens in these in-between places. What spiritual gifts are present in our own threshold

moments and how can we learn to embrace them?

ORDER OF SERVICE



Livestream Schedule

[Sanctuary Service](#) – 10:15 a.m.

In-Person & Livestream

[Monday Loving Kindness](#)

[Meditation](#) – 8 - 8:30 p.m.

via Zoom

[Friday Vespers](#) – 5 - 5:40 p.m.

via Zoom

SERVICES



January's Shared Plate

This church year, we share our plate offering with community organizations working for the rights and support of immigrants. For the month of January, we are pleased to share our plate with [Innovation Law Lab](#). They write "The U.S.

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Thresholds as an Invitation

[Rev. Alison Miller](#), Senior Minister

Our 2024 – 2025 annual spiritual theme is “Join the Journey,” and this month we are exploring the topic of threshold. It is a fitting theme for January when we cross the threshold of a new year; a point in time which feels pregnant with potential. What will 2025 bring to our lives? What can we bring to 2025?

Now, I know that some of you (likely many of you) are feeling some level of dread about our country’s presidential transition. Given the threats the incoming president has made against immigrants and LGBTQ2SIA identified folks, as well as anyone who disagrees with him, this is understandable. However, that is not all the year ahead holds...[MORE](#)

deportation machine works to grind down the spirit of the immigrant. In its wake, communities are torn apart, families separated, and refugees forced to relinquish their right to freedom, inclusion, and safety.” Innovation Law Lab provides legal expertise and strategies to build permanent pathways to immigrant and refugee justice. Their programs include rapid intervention, defense of asylum, a clearinghouse for immigrant justice organizing, and immigrant defense in Oregon.

Featured News

REGISTER NOW — Winter/Spring Antiracism Learning Circles

First Circle starting next Thursday, January 16

Location: Zoom

[Advancing Racial Justice Action Group](#) (ARJAG)



You are invited to join an Antiracism Learning Circle this winter/spring. It’s on Zoom, so you can join from anywhere! First Unitarian in Portland is the organizer. The first Circles start next week.

Full descriptions, schedules & registration information are [HERE](#).

A printable flyer is [HERE](#).

This winter/spring 2025, we are offering:

1. [Tribal Histories of the Willamette Valley](#) (starts Thursday, January 16)
2. [On Tyranny](#) (starts Tuesday, January 21)
3. [Seeing White](#) (starts Wednesday, January 22)
4. [Doughnut Economics](#) (starts Monday, February 3)
5. [The 1619 Project](#) (starts Thursday, February 6)
6. [Caste: The Origins of our Discontents](#) (starts Thursday, February 6)

This Week's Shower Project Requests

Your donations make a big difference in the lives of those we serve. All donations are greatly appreciated. At this time, we are in special need of the following items:

- New white men's t-shirts (M/L)
- Men's boxer briefs (M/L)
- Winter coats
- Men's jeans/pants (all sizes)

[Our page](#) includes a list of our most frequently-needed items.

Please bring your items to donate to the cabinet in Fuller Hall, next to the kitchen. Thank you for your support!

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7. [The Land That Never Has Been Yet](#) (starts Wednesday, March 12)
8. [Subtle Acts of Exclusion](#)
9. [My Grandmother's Hands](#)
10. [Poverty, By America](#)

LEARNING CIRCLES are small discussion cohorts based on a book or podcast that provide:

- Important learning about white supremacy, racism, and our national history
- The opportunity to build trust and go deep in small group discussions over time
- A safe place to have difficult discussions and deal with discomfort
- An opportunity to create and strengthen relationships with others
- Connection, focus and purpose in a virtual setting

How Do LEARNING CIRCLES Work?

- Each cohort (typically 4-12) gathers for a series (from 6-12 sessions) of facilitated Zoom discussions.
- Register for specific Learning Circle(s). Meeting dates & times vary.
- Everyone is given the opportunity to share reactions, then discuss as a group
- We ask that you plan to attend all sessions so we can build bonds of trust and insight
- Free of charge and open to all. Please invite neighbors and friends!

For questions contact [Jody F.](#)

NEW! — Winter All-Church Forum

Sunday, January 26, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Location: Eliot Chapel

[Board of Trustees](#)

Join Rev. Alison and members of your Board of Trustees for a forum on January 26. Rev. Alison and Treasurer Roger Robinson will provide an update on the Annual Fund Drive and priorities for next year's budget.

The Board will also introduce two proposed changes to the church's bylaws. One will address privacy and security of our



Want to know what this church has to offer? **Show up for events/classes/socials and stay engaged!**

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congregants to receive the member mailing list. The other will propose a reduction in the size of the Board from 12 members to 9; this follows an initial 2019 proposal by the board and subsequent research and deliberations.

All of this is in preparation for our annual congregational vote in the May. Additional presentations will be provided to learn more about these important items are planned for March and April.

What a Wonderful 100th Anniversary Pageant!



[Click here to view more images from our celebration.](#)

Send Photos Our Way!

Were you "snapping away" at our Solstice or our 100th Anniversary Christmas Pageant service? Or other First U event? We periodically showcase a few photos in Front Steps, our Sunday slides and on the church website. So...we'd love to have a few of your best pics. Just email them to the church office at photos@firstunitarianportland.org.



Happening This Sunday

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NEW! — Souper Sunday

This Sunday, January 12, after the service

Location: Fuller Hall

[Jen Thomas](#), Member Engagement Coordinator, and our Souper Team

This coming Sunday will be a Souper Sunday!

On the menu: black bean soup and tomato soup. Both are GF and the tomato soup is vegan.

Please add to this deliciousness by bringing the following to share with our soups:

- Corn muffins
- Blueberry muffins
- Pretzels

If you are able, a **\$5** addition to our "soup fund" wouldn't be amiss. This will help cover the cost of ingredients and supplements.

It takes a lot of folks to put on Souper Sunday every month—the organizers, cooks, servers, shoppers, and clean up team to name a few. We are appreciative of all that volunteer. If you are interested in helping out, please contact [Barbara M.](#)

Thank you and Happy Souper Sunday!

Aging in OUR Church Community - Senior Forum

This Sunday, January 12, noon

Location: Buchan Reception Hall, or [online](#)

[Jen Thomas](#), Member Engagement Coordinator

Aging in OUR Church Community - Senior Forum is a special event dedicated to understanding and supporting our senior members. This forum is organized by a newly formed committee co-chaired by church members Ruth L.D. and Mark B. This group

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formed to support our senior community so that they do not feel disconnected or forgotten.

Join with others on January 12 to hear speakers from Alliance, Lay Ministry, and Sojourners and to engage in meaningful discussions about how we can better serve and connect with our senior community. Folks can arrive any time after 11:30 a.m. and the program will start at noon. This is an opportunity for everyone to share ideas, learn from each other, and strengthen the bonds within our church family.

It is also a Souper Sunday, so bring your soup along!

The forum will be livestreamed. To join online, click "Watch Live" on our website or [use this link](#).

We look forward to seeing you there and working together to create a vibrant, inclusive environment for all ages.

NEW! — It's Tamale Pre-Order Time!

Starting this Sunday after the service, through January

Location: Fuller Hall

[Immigrant Justice Action Group](#) (IJAG)



Members of the Immigrant Justice Action Team (IJAG) will be tabling throughout the month of January to take orders (by pre-sale only) for tamales made by members of Western Farm Workers Association (WFWA) in Hillsboro, where several IJAG members have volunteered.

[WFWA](#) is a free and voluntary membership association of farm workers, seasonal workers and others who are low income, uniting to end their poverty conditions. WFWA is part of a national network of such mutual aid groups, 100% volunteer run and independent of government funding.

The tamale drive is one of the biggest fundraisers for WFWA, with tamales made by members and volunteers. The funds raised help support the organization and its services during the lean winter months when so many farm and seasonal workers are under-employed or not employed.

We will be taking orders at the IJAG table during Fellowship Hour through January. **PICK-UP WILL BE SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9.**

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Tamales are available in chicken, pork, and vegan. Orders cannot be mixed.

Prices: half dozen \$10—suggested minimum cost \$5; dozen \$20—suggested minimum cost \$10. CASH AND CHECK ONLY. We ask you to be as generous as your heart and wallet allow.

Around the Church

Enjoyed coming to gatherings at First Unitarian Portland? Consider contributing to sustaining our community. Your support goes a long way in fostering meaningful connections. Thank you!

[DONATE](#)



Star Ornaments Available at the Bookstore

[The Alliance](#)

Star ornaments, commemoratives of our 100th Christmas Pageant celebration, are now available at our bookstore in Fuller Hall! The \$5 price per ornament will go towards much-needed refurbishing of our pageant costumes.

Learning Community

Learn more about the [Learning Community programs](#).

Register your child for the 2024-25 program year [here](#).

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



CHECK WEEKLY — January 12 Newsletter

[Rev. Leah Ongiri](#), Director of Lifespan Faith Formation and Family Ministries

For those of you on a Portland Public Schools schedule, I hope your first week of the new year is going smoothly so far. Sometimes getting back into the swing of routine is challenging, regardless of where you might be in that process. Be gentle with yourself and your people. And to each of you, thanks for welcoming church and especially our Learning Community into your life in this coming year...[MORE](#)

Social Justice Program

Learn more about the [Social Justice Action Groups \(SJAG\)](#).

SJAGs: [Contact us to schedule meetings and events.](#)

SAVE THE DATE — Forum: How Will We Defend Attacks on Immigrants?

Tuesday, January 28, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Location: Zoom

[Advancing Racial Justice Action Group](#) (ARJAG) and [Immigrant Justice Action Group](#) (IJAG)

With the incoming administration, we know that big changes are coming that will impact immigrant communities. We want to be informed, prepared, and ready for action.

ARJAG and IJAG will co-host a three-part series of events addressing immigrant justice. Through an anti-racist lens, we will explore immigration status issues, the lived experience of immigrants in Oregon, and strategic ways we can act in solidarity

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Please mark Tuesday, January 28, 7 - 8:30 p.m. (via Zoom) on your calendar for our first forum/workshop. Tentative dates for the subsequent events are Tuesday, March 4, and Tuesday, May 6.

Watch for additional information in upcoming Front Steps!

NEW! — WeShine Holiday Gift Drive Update

[Committee on Hunger and Homelessness](#) (COHHO)



COHHO is happy to report that our first holiday gift drive for [WeShine's Avalon Village](#) residents was a great success! Here are responses from four villagers after they opened the beautiful and generous holiday presents given by First Unitarian congregants (and some out-of-town family members):

"This coat is incredible! I've never had anything so warm. Thank you for thinking of me this holiday season! Bless you and your family!"

"Thank you for your generosity! This means so much to me, and us as a community, to know others are wanting to support us as we move forward. Happy Holidays!"

"This was so thoughtful and heartwarming. I have never been a fan of Christmas, but this has made today feel special. Thank you."

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the gifts! I never could have imagined them to be so nice. Bless you and merry Christmas!"

And many thanks to those of you who donated gift cards (\$550 in total), food, and other items for the community. You helped to make Christmas Day truly special for the women living at Avalon Village. Let's do it again next year!

CHECK WEEKLY — Art for Social Justice

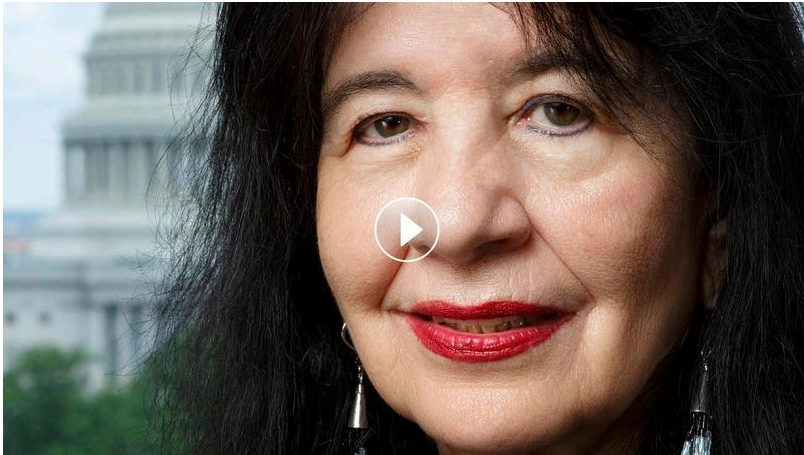
Curated by Ethel, Speaking of Justice Editorial Team

The Speaking of Justice Editorial Team offers weekly art to deepen our connection to the work for social justice and to build the Beloved Community.

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In 2019, Joy Harjo became the first Native American poet laureate of the United States. Harjo, a member of Oklahoma's Muscogee Creek Nation, speaks of her accomplishment as representing a “doorway of hope” for other indigenous people.

To listen to her reading of her poem "Bless This Land," watch the video below:



In the Community

Community Milestones, Joys, and Sorrows

[Please email us here if you have any joys or concerns to share.](#)

Chancel flowers this Sunday will be in honor of Joanne Hagensick at the first-year anniversary of her passing.

NEW! — Notes from the Sextons' Workbench: A Goodbye



You can learn a lot about someone by looking at their workbench. You can see a person's projects, what they think is important, and what is not. You will see what a person likes doing and what they don't like doing. What tools are right at hand, or the tools that only get used once in a while.

The new year is on us. Ben Franklin said, “May the new year find you to be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better person.”

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have been of service to the community. At the beginning of a new year comes an opportunity to look ahead to see which way you can go. I am writing this to let you know that I am retiring...[MORE](#)



Say it with flowers!

Do you have a birth in the family, a graduation, an anniversary, a memorial, or other milestones to share?

You can acknowledge it to the entire congregation by sponsoring a floral bouquet. As we connect with friends, say it with flowers on the Chancel.

Questions? [Contact Marsha.](#)

NEW! — January/February Art Wall Exhibitions

Artwork by Paula Bullwinkel

From [The Art Wall Committee](#)



Paula Bullwinkel is a narrative and figurative painter. Her female characters and beast-familars are often in a doppelgänger tableau, suggesting an unsettling and boisterous multiverse.

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widely, including Brooklyn, Los Angeles, Oakland, Switzerland, and Portland. Born in Northern California, she spent her childhood making miniature clay animals and figures in her mom's ceramic studio, reading classic fairytales, and playing for hours in the woods with imaginary characters. After earning a bachelor's degree in literature from UC Berkeley (and later a master's in art education), Bullwinkel spent years in New York and London as an editorial fashion photographer. Now she paints and lives in Portland.

Recurring Workshops, Classes & Gatherings

[Check out our church calendar for more info!](#)

— Visit a more comprehensive list of our [Ongoing Groups](#). —

Caregivers Support Group: Open to Newcomers. Fourth Sunday of each month at 9 a.m. [via Zoom](#).

Care and Action for Reproductive Dignity (CARD): We meet on the fourth Sunday of each month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Fireside and [via Zoom](#). [Contact Marni](#).

Committee on Hunger and Homelessness (COHHO): We meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month after services. [Contact Cynthia](#) for details or to be added to our email list.

Community for Earth (CFE): We meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month before worship services (hybrid) and on the 4th week of the month at rotating times. [Contact our group](#) or [visit our calendar](#) for details.

Contemplative Practices: First Thursdays (in Channing, A101) and third Thursdays (in Buchan Reception, B101) from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. This is a drop-in group. Any silent sitting practice is welcomed and no prior meditation experience is needed. Contact [Patty](#) and [Ron](#) or [visit the event page](#) for more information.

Friday Vesper Services: Every week [from 5 - 5:40 p.m. via Zoom](#). Quiet prayer, reflection, meditation, and music.

Immigrant Justice Action Group (IJAG): [Check the IJAG page](#) on the church website for ways to get involved and groups that need our energy and gifts. For meeting info, [contact Laurie](#).

Labyrinth: First Sundays of the month in Fuller Hall. [Check the Church Calendar](#).

Lotsa Helping Hands: A care calendar that enables volunteers to

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times. To join, [send a request here](#). For questions or to receive support, contact [Leslie](#) or [Susan](#).

Loving Kindness Meditation: Meets every Monday [from 8 - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom](#). Spiritual reading, meditation, and follow up sharing. Open to all. [Contact Katie](#) for more information.

Mental Health Caregivers Group: Second Wednesday every month via Zoom 7 - 8:30 p.m. [Email Ellen](#) for more information.

Sojourners: Lollygagging Our Way To The Inevitable:

Sojourners and Sojourners 2 are two groups that meet for two hours at First Unitarian. Members support each other through aging with facilitated discussions, activities, personal stories, and social events, fostering growth and friendship. **All are welcome, but both groups are limited in size; no drop-ins, please.** [Email Lucy](#) with questions.

"T" Time: A Trans, Nonbinary, and Gender-Expansive, Exclusive Gathering: Meet on the second and fourth Sundays in Channing Room at 12 - 1 p.m.

Wednesday Night Meditation: Every week from 7 - 8:30 p.m. All mindfulness and Buddhist-based meditations. Beginners welcome. A thirty-five-minute meditation followed by a member-led discussion to increase understanding and integration of Buddhist principles into our daily lives. For the link, [contact Robert](#).

Women's Circle II: Meets most second and fourth Mondays of the month. [Email Kim](#).

Women's Circle IV: Meets first and third Wednesdays of the month. [Email Anne](#).

Got something for Front Steps? Send in your church-related submission for our weekly publication. Use "Front Steps" as the subject line and [submit here](#).

Deadline: Tuesdays at 5 p.m.

If your submission is urgent and couldn't be sent before the deadline, please include "URGENT" in the subject line.

[Events Calendar](#) | [Ongoing Groups](#) | [Update Records](#)



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