



First Unitarian Church of Portland

Thursday, January 16, 2025

Sunday, January 19

Sunday Worship at 10:15 a.m.

🍽️ **Community Lunch after service** 🍽️

This week is an all-ages service. There will be no Learning Community (RE) classes, except preschool. 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 office will be closed on Monday, January 20, in observation of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Mission Possible

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



Join us for a special multigenerational service this weekend when we celebrate the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who preached about the triple evils of racism, poverty, and militarism. In addition, many leaders believe if he were still alive today, he would add ecological devastation.

In a week when wildfires have continued to destroy the lives and the homes of humans and animals in California, and on the day



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

INNOVATION
LAW LAB

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](#)

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hope and resilience required to sustain our efforts both in times of gains and when we face loss. *Join us after the service for our walking tacos community lunch!*

ORDER OF SERVICE

Minister's Blog

The Meaning of Membership

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

January is often a season of envisioning the journey of the year ahead, including making resolutions. As you do these things, I hope you will include something about your commitment to your spiritual life and your commitment to our common spiritual home. Your personal spiritual life – *the practices that help you to make meaning out of the brokenness and out of the beauty of living* – is a vital part of your health and wellbeing. Our common spiritual home – *a community that partners with you to offer experiences of grounding, growth, inspiration, and activism* – is a vital part of creating a sustainable spiritual space for yourself and for hundreds of other adults and children...[MORE](#)

Featured News

NEW! — February Shared Plate

Our hearts are heavy with the loss and the ongoing destruction caused by the California wildfires. We hold in our prayers all who have been touched by this calamity. As this disaster continues to burn through communities, we are assessing how our February shared plate might best be directed.

Winter All-Church Forum

Sunday, January 26, noon - 1:30 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

government's vast detention and 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.

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 men's boxers (M/L)
- New women's underwear (M/L)
- Women's leggings
- Coffee creamer and sugar
- Napkins
- Mini flashlights
- Hand warmers

[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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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 membership information; this follows the request last Fall by 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 May. Additional presentations will be provided to learn more about these important items are planned for March and April.



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



NEW! — Come Volunteer with Our Front Office Team

We are looking for floaters who can occasionally fill in for our regular front office volunteers who need a day off from time to time. Regular shifts are Monday-Thursday from either 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. or 1 - 4 p.m. Basic computer and telephone skills required.

Volunteering in the office is a great way to get to know our ministers and staff, and to learn all about what's happening at the church. If any of these shifts are possible for you on a "now and then" basis, please email [John Rosette](mailto:John.Rosette@firstu.org), or call him at 503-228-6389 x102.

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

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few of your best pics. Just email them to the church office at photos@firstunitarianportland.org.



Happening This Sunday



NEW! — Light Community Lunch: Walking Tacos

This Sunday after the service

Location: Fuller Hall

Join us after the service for "walking tacos." Fun and delicious!

It's Tamale Pre-Order Time!

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.

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[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.**

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](#)

NEW! GET TICKETS NOW — The 2025 Sewell Lecture

Saturday, March 1, 3 - 5:30 p.m.

Location: Main Sanctuary

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FIRST UNITARIAN PORTLAND'S MARILYN SEWELL SOCIAL JUSTICE LECTURE PRESENTS

A Tale of Two States:
Abortion & Reproductive Stories
from Idaho and Oregon

Witness monologues and be called to action by a compelling panel and the launch of Oregon's Equal Rights for All campaign.

EQUAL

RIGHTS FOR ALL



First Unitarian Portland

First Unitarian Portland
1211 SW Main St.
Portland, OR 97205
parking available across the street

Saturday, March 1, 2025 at 3 pm

Tickets \$10:
tinyurl.com/2025AbortionStories



GET TICKETS HERE

REGISTER NOW — 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

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immigrants in Oregon, and strategic ways we can act in solidarity to promote and defend the human dignity of Oregon immigrants.

Come meet our panelists and learn more about challenges being faced by immigrants.

- Karla Castenada, [VOZ Workers' Rights Education Project](#)
- Isa Peña, [Innovation Law Lab](#)
- Ellie Gluhosky, [Oregon for All Coalition](#)

Please mark Tuesday, January 28, 7 - 8:30 p.m. (via Zoom) on your calendar for our first forum/workshop.

[Register here](#)

Tentative dates for the subsequent events are Tuesday, March 4, and Tuesday, May 6. Watch for additional information in upcoming Front Steps!

NEW! SAVE THE DATE — Special Friday Vespers Service
Friday, January 24, 5 - 5:40 p.m.

Location: Zoom

You are invited to join a special Vespers service on Friday, January 24th on zoom from 5:00 - 5:40 p.m. We will celebrate this 200th service offering by Lay Ministers. If you haven't attended Vespers before, this is a chance to experience the service on zoom and end your week with a quiet pause of music, poetry, reflection, prayer and community. [Join on Zoom here.](#)

REGISTER NOW — Winter/Spring Antiracism Learning
Circles

First Circle starting tonight

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](#).

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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)
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.](#)

Learning Community

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NEW! — Learning Community Needs Recyclable Materials on 1/19 and 1/26!

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

Our Kindergarten class needs your empty cardboard rolls, plastic clamshell containers, egg cartons, and big (think appliance-sized) cardboard boxes! Drop off at Buchan Welcome Desk on Sunday morning.



CHECK WEEKLY — January 19 Newsletter

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

Please join me in celebrating RE assistant Ashley Lookenhouse, who started a major new professional role directing downtown Moda Tower's Preschool for All Program. This is a wonderful opportunity for her and them. We wish her well as she serves them with her many talents.

Even better, Ashley will continue with us on Sunday to finish out our church program year...[MORE](#)

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Social Justice Program

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

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



NEW! SAVE THE DATE — COP29 and Beyond: Climate Action in the Wake of the November Elections

Sunday, January 26, 8:45 - 10 a.m.

Location: Buchan 102 or [online](#)

[Community for Earth](#) (CFE)

Join members of Community for Earth for a presentation by Dr. Frank Granshaw, who will summarize some of the key takeaways from the most recent U.N. climate summit held in Baku, Azerbaijan, and share his insights about next steps for climate action as the world braces for a new U.S. administration. Dr. Granshaw is a retired geoscience instructor and a glacial geologist who remains active in climate education and advocacy.

Contact CFEUUPDX@gmail.com for questions about this gathering or to learn more about Community for Earth. Watch for more information about our upcoming Climate Justice Action Series, starting with a session on legislative advocacy scheduled for February 16th.



NEW! — Ongoing Need for Food Donations to Lift UP

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

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We are happy to report that due to your generous spirit, Lily from COHHO was able to deliver 45 pounds of protein-rich food to Lift UP on Christmas Eve for distribution to their pantry on SW Jefferson and to affordable buildings in downtown and NW Portland. Thank you so much!

Unfortunately, the need has not ended. So next time you're ready to leave your house for Sunday service or a meeting at church, bring a can, jar, or carton of nut butter, jelly, soup, beans, tuna, salmon or tuna with you. As long as it's non-perishable and without an expired date, please consider donating it to Lift UP. They do an excellent job of helping people facing food insecurity feel a tad more secure.

Drop off your donations to the COHHO cabinet in Fuller Hall (by the kitchen) and we will deliver them to Lift UP. Every action-big or small-is one step closer to a Portland where no one is hungry. You can also donate directly to them on [their website](#). Thank you!

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!"

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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!

NEW! — Reflection on Peace

[Peace Action Group](#)

The Peace Action Group at First Unitarian meets monthly to share information and action items on moving from violence and militarism in our world. We have a custom of finding powerful and profound readings for the beginning and ending of each meeting. We want to share a reading with the wider congregation several times a month in 2025 to give an opportunity for reflection and meditation. We're starting with this terrific reflection on loyalties written by Carl Sagan long ago. **If you have an interest in knowing what Peace Action is up to, please stop by our table any Sunday during coffee hour to say hello!**

"Human history can be viewed as a slowly dawning awareness that we are members of a larger group. Initially our loyalties were to ourselves and our immediate family, next, to bands of wandering hunter-gatherers, then to tribes, small settlements, city-states, nations. We have broadened the circle of those we love. We have now organized what are modestly described as super-powers, which include groups of people from divergent ethnic and cultural backgrounds working in some sense together — surely a humanizing and character building experience. If we are to survive, our loyalties must be broadened further, to include the whole human community, the entire planet Earth. Many of those who run the nations will find this idea unpleasant. They will fear the loss of power. We will hear much about treason and disloyalty. Rich nation-states will have to share their wealth with poor ones. But the choice, as H. G. Wells once said in a different context, is clearly the universe or nothing." ~Carl Sagan

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.

Legendary jazz pianist and singer Nina Simone composed over

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emotional intensity by singing songs of love, protest, and Black empowerment. The below song "Why? (The King of Love Is Dead)" was written by her bass player, Gene Taylor, in response to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and performed for the first time only three days after his death. To listen, 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.](#)

Member Maggie Quintano's brother Chuck Miller died this week. We announced this past Sunday that Chuck was receiving palliative care after being diagnosed with Parkinson's over a year ago and having COVID and pneumonia this holiday season. Maggie was able to visit with him and his family in Denver before his passing. We hold Maggie and all of Chuck's loved ones in our hearts.

Our Learning Community program assistant Ashley Lookenhouse was recruited to serve as director at the downtown Portland's Moda Tower Preschool for All Program, which is run by the Y. She started this past week and we're excited to hopefully have her with us in a more limited capacity on some Sundays.

We celebrate the dedicated service of Michael Two Feathers, who retired last week after serving on our facilities staff since 2009. We are so grateful for his many years of dedicated service to this community and will deeply miss his stories and good

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humor. We wish him the very best in his retirement. ([Read his goodbye letter here.](#))

And of course, our hearts are especially heavy with the loss and destruction caused by the California wildfires. We know this hits particularly close to home for many of you here and we've heard from many members and staff whose friends and family have been affected by this devastating climate disaster. We are holding everyone impacted in our hearts and will share more in the coming days about how our community can help those most impacted.

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."

I would like to take a moment to say thank you for the work, friendship, and dare I say love that you have given me. I hope I 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](#)

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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.](#)

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-familiars are often in a doppelgänger tableau, suggesting an unsettling and boisterous multiverse.

She has exhibited

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

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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.



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.

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 T.](#)

Committee on Hunger and Homelessness (COHHO): We meet on the 3rd Sunday of the month after services. [Contact Cynthia S](#)

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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 C](#) 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 L.](#)

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

Lotsa Helping Hands: A care calendar that enables volunteers to provide meals or visits for congregants going through challenging times. To join, [send a request here](#). For questions or to receive support, contact [Leslie C](#) or [Susan P.](#)

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 R](#) for more information.

Mental Health Caregivers Group: Second Wednesday every month via Zoom 7 - 8:30 p.m. [Email Ellen Z](#) 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 G](#) with questions.

Souper Sunday Committee: Once a month, we offer two different soups as part of our Social Hour. It takes a lot of folks to put on Souper Sunday every month: 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.](#)

"T" Time: A Trans, Nonbinary, and Gender-Expansive, Exclusive Gathering: Meet on the second and fourth Sundays in

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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 S.](#)

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

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

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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