



Thursday, September 4, 2025

Homecoming Sunday!

Sunday, September 7

🥞 Pancake Breakfast at 8:45 a.m. 🥞

☀️ Sunday Worship at 10:15 a.m.

🍪 Baked Goods Potluck at Social Hour 🍪

All-Ages service! No Learning Community (RE) classes this Sunday. Care for nursery & toddlers is available during worship.

Classes for children and youth begins next Sunday, September 14! [Read more and register now for our Learning Community!](#)

Social Hour: Buchan Reception Hall after the service.

LIVESTREAM SERVICE



Livestream Schedule

[Sanctuary Service](#) – 10:15 a.m.

In-Person & Livestream

[Monday Loving Kindness](#)

[Meditation](#) – 8 - 8:30 p.m. **via Zoom**

[Wednesday Evening](#)

[Meditation](#) – 7 - 8:30 p.m. **via Zoom**

[Friday Vespers](#) – 5 - 5:40 p.m. **via Zoom**

SERVICES

Weaving Community

Rev. Alison Miller, Senior Minister



Come one, come all to our Homecoming Service! We will be kicking off the year's spiritual theme in a worship designed for people of all ages. We are called to weave community from the strands of our separate lives in ways that puts creativity and love at the center of our lives.



September's Shared Plate

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Enjoy the festive hospitality of this first Sunday before and after the service: Pancake Breakfast at 8:45 a.m. - 10 a.m. & post-service coffee hour with treats. You are invited to bring something to share – a sweet or savory small treat, if you are able.

[ORDER OF SERVICE](#)

Ministerial Blog We Begin Again

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

Welcome to Fall at First Unitarian! Here are some of the things to anticipate in our community in the coming weeks:

We will be kicking off our annual spiritual theme, “Weaving Community,” this weekend in a worship for all ages and on a day filled with hospitality – the pancake breakfast, a festive coffee hour, a visitors meet & greet, and a book discussion on Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families. This could be an ideal day to invite a friend to come along with you...[MORE](#)

For the month of September, our plate will go to our [13 Salmon Shower Project](#). In this new church year, we dedicate our shared plates to community organizations with which First Unitarian has partnerships for justice and service.

Launched in January 2023, the Shower Project has grown to serve over 1,300 unhoused guests, averaging 22 per day, with showers, hygiene supplies, overdose prevention kits, clean clothes, a warm meal, and a kind welcome from our volunteers. The Shower Project puts Love at the center, making a difference in each guest's and each volunteer's life. One guest shared, "Thank you for not treating me like an outcast. Thank you for not treating me mean or abrasive. Thank you for being the only positive encounter I've had in months."

Happening This Sunday

We're Back! — Pre-Service Pancake Breakfast

Join us in Buchan Reception Hall before the service between 8:45 and 10 a.m. for blueberry, chocolate, blueberry-chocolate, and plain pancakes fresh off the griddle! Thank you, Men's Group!



Baked Goods Potluck for Homecoming Sunday



Have a favorite cookie recipe? A delicious quiche you like to make? Come share it with fellow congregants on Homecoming Sunday, September 7, during social hour in Buchan Reception Hall.

Your baked goods can be left there before the service as early as 9:15

Want to know what this church has to offer? **Visit our Calendar by clicking above to see our list of events/classes/socials!**

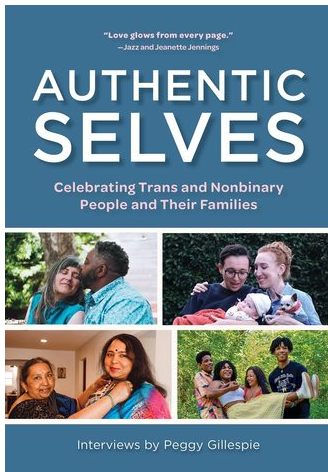
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bring a sweet or savory treat, and thank you to any additional volunteers who are able to assist with tending the tables and clean up!

Summer Read Discussion: Authentic Selves

Sunday, September 7, after the service

Location: Eliot Chapel



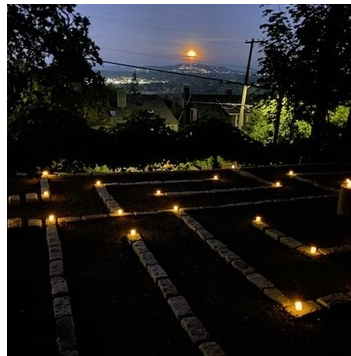
Join us for a discussion about our Summer Read book *Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and their Families*. on **Sunday, September 7**, following the service. The discussion will be led by Dr. Amy O. and Aileen M. from our congregation.

NEW! — Evening Walk with the Board

Sunday, September 7, 7 - 9 p.m.

Location: Walpole Garden Labyrinth (SW Portland)

Come join your Board of Trustees to begin the year of visioning by walking the Walpole Garden Labyrinth and watching the full moon rise over Mt. Hood.



The labyrinth will be lighted with recorded Native American flute music and spectacular views of the Willamette valley. The entrance to the labyrinth is up the steep sidewalk at the intersection of SW Bancroft and SW Hamilton Terrace (4323 SW Hamilton Terrace). Parking on Hamilton Terrace.

Questions? Call Bob B. at 240-838-8933.

New Here? Let's Connect on Homecoming Sunday!

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

On Homecoming Sunday (September 7), join us after the service during social hour in Buchan Reception Hall for a joyful time of mingling! Whether you're visiting for the first time or are still getting to know First Unitarian, this is the perfect moment to connect.

Look for the First Connections Table—a space designed especially for new folks and visitors. Stop by to meet friendly faces, ask your questions, and discover ways to get involved. We'd love to help you find your place in this community.

Come socialize, share in the spirit of Homecoming, and take your first step into connection.

Announcing Autumn Yoga Sessions

Sundays, September 7 and 21, 9 - 10 a.m.

Location: Room A108

We are pleased to announce that Ginny K. has graciously offered to continue leading yoga classes in the fall! Thank you!



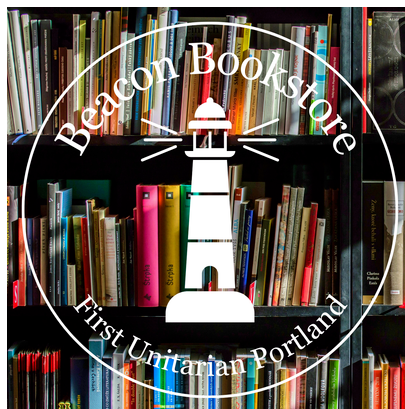
We will have classes on September 7 and 21 at 9 a.m. in room A108.

We have limited space so please [reserve your spot through this link](#).

Please bring your own yoga mat and water bottle. Wear clothing appropriate for yoga and then join the congregation for Sunday service at 10:15 a.m.

NEW! — Homecoming Sunday and the Bookstore

The Bookstore will be back to spending first Sundays in the Buchan Building along with social hour beginning Sunday, September 7. Look for our table and our cart. We've just received a big bunch of new books: 1) additional copies of *Authentic Selves* (the basis for a special session related to our transgender friends,



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other classes this fall; and 3) books cited by Rev. Alison in her Q&A sermon, requested books, and some special orders. We will have those at the table in Buchan this Sunday and then they'll return to the regular bookstore on September 14.

Typically, the Buchan book table holds mostly children's books with a few special books for adults thrown in. We especially invite children and young people to come and take a look.

Remember that approximately 40% of the sale price goes right to the Church. We appreciate your business!

This Week's Shower Project Requests

Each week we offer unhoused neighbors a secure space to shower, enjoy a meal, get clean clothing, and experience refuge from conditions on the street. We are always looking for more volunteers to make this possible. Volunteers sign up for 2-hour shifts that work for their schedule - and enjoy meeting other congregants this way. [If you're interested, please click here.](#)



Your donations make a big difference in the lives of those we serve. We are in special need of the following items:

- Men's jeans/pants/sweats (32 - 36)
- Hoodies, sweatshirts
- Boxer briefs - NEW (M, L)
- Women's underwear - NEW (S, M)
- Flashlights
- Camping gear
- Backpacks
- [Direct monetary donations](#)

Drop off your items in the marked cabinet in Fuller Hall during church hours or during Shower Project hours (Wednesdays and Thursdays between noon and 4 p.m.). Thank you for your support!

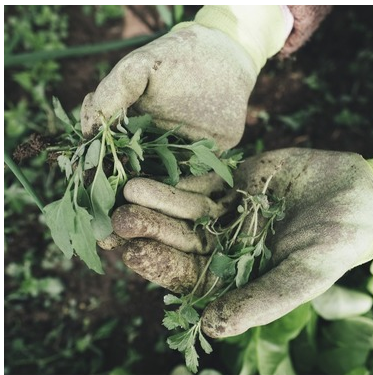
Featured News

NEW! — Let's Spruce Up Our Campus for Homecoming

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Saturday, September 6, 10 a.m. - noon

Location: Corner of 12th Ave. and Main St.



Working with church sextons and other staff, our gardening volunteers clean up, maintain and add plantings to our church grounds. We typically work one Saturday per month (with January and February off) and we welcome new folks!

Meet at SW 12th and Main Steps. Bring garden gloves,

water bottle, gardening shears or clippers (if you have them) and good energy!

LOOKING AHEAD: If you are separating hellebores (any color) and sword ferns in your home garden this fall, we would love to have more of both to plant at the Eliot Chapel entrance. We won't need them until October but please [email Laurie L.](#) if you can share!

Join the Usher Team!

Curious about being an Usher but not sure it's for you? Come shadow with an Usher some Sunday and see what the role is all about! As an usher, you can play a crucial part in creating a warm and welcoming environment for all who enter our sanctuary. Whether you can commit to service once a month or just occasionally, your involvement matters.

Interested? Email [Reed D.](#), Usher Coordinator, or [Jen Thomas](#), Director of Congregational Life. Reed will be at the First Connections table after the service and available to answer any questions you may have.

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Volunteer at Sunday Parkways

Sunday, September 14, shifts between 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Location: Downtown Portland

Exciting news! We have a chance to be a welcoming presence on September 14 at the Portland Sunday Parkways event. If you can help staff a table for activities and meet and mingle with the downtown community, [please sign up at this link](#).

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

September 14th

RE POTLUCK & PARENTING CIRCLE

- Drop off food in Buchan
- Crock pot plug ins available (no refrigeration)
- Food & fellowship after service
- Childcare for Parenting Circle

NO NEED TO RSVP

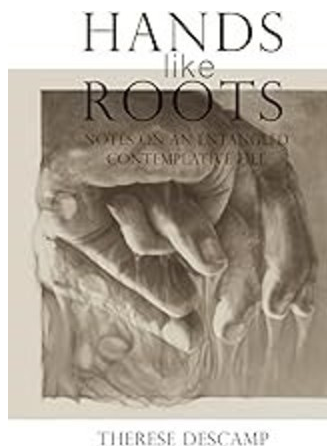
NEW! — First Unitarian’s Bookstore Invites You to a Special Event

Sunday, September 14, 2:30 - 4 p.m.

Location: Fuller Hall

Former Portland resident and longtime author Therese DesCamp will read from her newly published book, *Hands Like Roots: Notes on an Entangled Contemplative Path* (Santos Books, 2025) on Sunday, September 14, at 2:30 p.m.

DesCamp’s essays explore life as a contemplative firmly planted in and entwined with community. She weaves seemingly disparate topics —hydrology, cognitive linguistics,



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offer an intelligent, accessible, sometimes hilarious, and always heart-opening whole. Early reviewers have called Hands Like Roots “foundational and funny, poetic and practical,” “an extraordinary work of hope in a moment that often feels completely bereft of hope,” and “essential spiritual nourishment for weary hearts.”

Sponsored by First Unitarian Beacon Bookstore, the reading will take place in Fuller Hall from 2:30-4:00 p.m. on September 14. Free parking is available in the lot on 12th Ave. between Salmon and Main; entrance to the Buchan Reception Room is on Salmon Street, between 12th and 13th.

Therese DesCamp claimed Portland as her hometown as a young adult. She spent a dozen years working as an advocate for differently-abled persons before moving to Berkeley for graduate school. Following completion of an MDiv and PhD—and a peripatetic life following jobs in California—DesCamp settled in the Kootenay Mountains of rural British Columbia, where she founded a retreat centre with her husband, George Meier. Therese was long-listed for the 2023 CBC nonfiction award, and her writing has appeared in professional journals, books, popular magazines, newspapers and online.

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](#)

Antiracism Learning Circles
FALL 2025

Antiracism Learning Circles Start Soon!

First Circle starts September 22

Location: Zoom

You are invited to join an Antiracism Learning Circle this fall. It's on Zoom, so you can join from anywhere. Invite your friends, too. Circles start the week of September 22.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

[View the full descriptions, schedules, & registration information here.](#)

[A printable flyer is here.](#)

This Fall 2025 we are offering:

- *Seeing White* - Start your journey here! The real history of the US, the one none of us were taught in school. Documentary podcast series from Scene on Radio.
- *The Land That Has Never Been Yet* - an examination of whether we have ever had a real democracy. Documentary podcast series from Scene on Radio. Seeing White is a prerequisite.
- *Capitalism* - with our economic system on trial, how did it develop and how does it reflect our values? Documentary podcast series from Scene on Radio.
- *Abundance* (book) - what are the barriers to progress and a politics of abundance?
- *How Democracies Die* (book) - with our democracy in danger, how can ours be saved?
- *Doughnut Economics* (book) - seven ways to think like a 21st century economist to thrive, not just grow
- *This Chair Rocks* (book) - a manifesto against ageism
- *Tribal Histories of the Willamette Valley* (book) - a fuller history of the land we live on and what local tribes have experienced
- *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* (book) - how to understand, identify, and stop microaggressions
- *Poetry & Immigration* (compilation) - using the power of poetry to understand the immigrant and refugee experience

Learning Community

Learn more about our [Learning Community program](#).

Register your child for the 2025-26 program year [here](#).



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

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

Dear Learning Community,

Join us this Sunday to kick off our 2025 theme of Weaving Community.

RE starts on September 14. Many thanks to families who registered their young people for Religious Education (RE). If you haven't done so, don't worry! We welcome registrations at any time.

It will be good to be together! Hope to see you this Sunday...[MORE](#)

In the Community

Community Milestones, Joys, and Sorrows

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

Long-time member Margo Clark died on August 14 at the age of 71 after living with cancer for several years. Margo served in many roles here at the church. She was a member of our Music & Arts Committee, Leadership Council, was a Sunday morning usher, and for 11 years served delicious homemade soup for our Monday evening activities here at the church. Margo also served on our Board of Trustees back in the early 2000s. She leaves her husband Bill, also a member here, and her children Janie and Matt and their kids. A memorial gathering will be held for Margo here at the church on Saturday, September 27, at 4 p.m.

A memorial service will be held for member Mike Couch this Saturday, Sept. 6, at 2 p.m. in the Eliot Chapel. Mike died on June 25 at the age of 68, after living with Alzheimer's Disease for the past twelve years.

Long-time member Toni Paget has entered hospice. She says, "I am reflecting on First Church and how much it has meant in my spiritual journey, my family and my community. They have been very special to me through the years and I am so grateful for them." Toni asks for our thoughts and prayers as she navigates this journey.

Member Vicki Pflaumer had successful Transvascular Carotid Surgery on August 25 and is now back at home recovering. Please continue to hold prayers for comfort and patience as she moves through this healing process. She is grateful.

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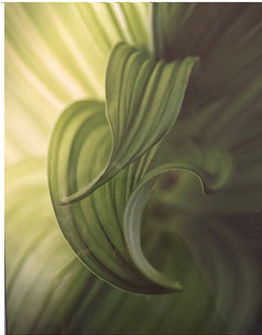


Say it with flowers!

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.

[Email Marsha W.](#) to make arrangements.



July/August Church Member Art Wall Exhibition

Artwork by [the Art Wall Committee](#)

Leslie P.K. is showing etchings, Sam M. is showing photographs, and Connie C. is showing watercolors this month. Come down to Fuller Hall and see what the committee members have been working on this year.

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Recurring Workshops, Classes & Gatherings

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

— Visit a more comprehensive list of our [Community Groups & Activities](#). —

During the summer, some groups and activities paused. Be sure to check with your group coordinator listed on the [Community Groups & Activities](#) page to find out what the new year's schedule is.

Got something for Front Steps? Send in your church-related submission for our weekly publication. Use "Front Steps" as the subject line and [email us 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](#) | [Community Groups](#) | [Update Records](#)



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