



Thursday, September 18, 2025

## Sunday, September 21

Sunday Worship at 10:15 a.m.

Children & youth start in the Sanctuary at 10:15 a.m. then head to Learning Community (RE) classes. **Care for nursery & toddlers** is available during worship. [Read more and register now for our Learning Community!](#)

**Social Hour:** Fuller 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 Our History Together

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



We will be embarking upon a journey to renew our mission, vision, and plans for the future of First Unitarian in 2026. Before we get there, we will want to reflect on where we come from as a church that has been a liberal religious beacon in Portland for 160 years. Let us begin to explore our collective history – both of

our church and the wider city in which we serve – and how that has shaped us and the light we hope to carry into the future.

ORDER OF SERVICE



September's

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

## Ministerial Blog

### Being Present

[Rev. Thomas Disrud](#), Associate Minister

It has been good to be back at the church this month. Some of you may know I was out on medical leave for several weeks, recovering from hip replacement surgery in July. Thank you for the many encouraging and loving thoughts and prayers during that time. Even while away, your presence and care were very much felt.

After two Sundays back, it has been wonderful to see so many familiar faces and to feel the positive energy in our gatherings. Despite the times we are living in, there is a strong sense of people seeking a way forward...[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

---

### Sun Day: All-Church Event!

**Sunday, September 21, 11:45 a.m.**

**Location:** Eliot Chapel steps

[Community for Earth](#) (CFE)



Join First Unitarian's Community for Earth (CFE) in a nationwide day of action celebrating solar and wind power! Much like the first gigantic Earth Day in 1970, hundreds of festive events are planned across the country to celebrate that solar energy is now the cheapest and most democratic source of power on the planet. In

Portland, 40+ community partners are taking part including First Unitarian!

To support the Sun Power Revolution, we will come together around our shared value of protecting our world.

Join with fellow congregants at the front steps of the Eliot Chapel at 11:45 a.m. to walk and roll together at noon with Rev. Alison to the Waterfront park near the Battleship Memorial.

Leaders including Senator Jeff Merkley will kick off Sun Day, followed by a 1 p.m. march across the Hawthorne Bridge, and an



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

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

costumes. Come for any part or all of the events! [Click here for more information.](#) You can find CFE folks staffing the Sun Day Volunteer Booth all day.

### Sign Up Now for Yoga on September 21

**Sunday, September 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 a class on September 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.

## Featured News

### NEW! — First Unitarian T-Shirts Are Here!

**Starting Sunday, September 21, while supplies last**

**Location:** Beacon Bookstore in Fuller Hall

Remember the wonderful First U PDX Word Cloud that our congregation helped create last fall? It's now featured on fashionable and inspiring T-shirts that YOU can own! These shirts are a great way to represent our community. Visit the Beacon Bookstore in Fuller Hall during social hour. Available in sizes S, M, L, XL, and XXL, get yours while supplies last!



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

## **NEW! — A Thread of Community for Every Age: Join an Age-Related Mailing Group**

We hope to help organize meaningful connections by age group within our congregation. By joining this mailing list, you'll receive occasional invitations and updates as opportunities arise, giving you a chance to engage with others who share your generational experiences and journeys.

This is an open, inclusive opportunity to connect across diverse journeys and perspectives, with no expectation or pressure—just the chance to find common ground and fellowship within your peer generation.

We will reach out by email with occasional invitations and updates, respecting your time and interest. Please share your contact information and your age group to be part of this evolving community connection.

Together, we celebrate the diversity of life stages that enrich our shared spiritual home. [Email Jen Thomas](#) for questions or ideas!

[Sign up today](#) to share your contact info and generational group. We look forward to helping you find community and connection as these opportunities arise.

[Sign up now](#)



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Thank you for all your efforts! So proud to be part of the community in such a positive way. It was a wonderful day!

---

## Fall 2025 Adult Programs

### Writing Your Life Stories - Registration Required

We all have stories to tell perhaps big and important events and accomplishments, or small and quiet everyday happenings that give life meaning.

Join fellow congregants to begin or continue writing the narratives of our lives. We will write together, share if desired, and create connections with one another through our stories. All levels of writing experience and those with works in progress are welcome.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

### How to Write an Ethical Will - Registration Required

How can you pass on the values and experiences that have given your life its deepest meaning? An Ethical Will can complement a traditional will, and can be written as a letter or in several other formats. Through facilitator presentations, class discussions, sharing in pairs, writing in and outside of class, and sharing writing (if desired), participants will leave the last class with at least a draft of an Ethical Will.

[Learn more and register here.](#)

### Community Circles - Participation/Interest Required

Community Circles at First U bring small groups of about ten neighbors together each month to build meaningful relationships and deepen spiritual connection. Guided by the congregation's monthly theme, these gatherings provide space for reflection, conversation, and shared support, helping members strengthen bonds within the wider First U community.

[Learn more and express interest here.](#)

---

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



### Friend to Friend Program

First Unitarian is excited to announce the creation of a new outreach program to seniors and individuals who may be homebound and unable to attend church regularly. It will be called “Friend to Friend” and offer members up to four in-person visits per year from a lay minister. The goals are to increase connection with the church, offer support, and provide assistance with personal needs when applicable. If you are curious and/or know someone else who is, or have questions, please [email lay minister Steve K.](#)

---

### Hospitality with Heart & Hands

We’re proud to launch Hospitality with Heart & Hands at First Unitarian Portland, a team devoted to weaving community by serving with love and care. [Learn more here in this week's Ministerial Blog.](#) Supporting events, welcoming guests, assisting with outreach, and sharing cleanup duties, this team helps weave a welcoming and loving fabric where everyone feels at home. Join Heart & Hands Hospitality and become a vital thread in our congregation’s tapestry. [Sign up here.](#)

---

### General Assembly Delegate Reports

In the July 13 Front Steps, we gave a summary of the reports of our delegates to the UUA General Assembly (annual meeting). We held the full reports until people had returned from the summer holidays. We now give you their complete reports which you can [read here.](#)

For questions, [email Art U.](#)

---

## Around the Church

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

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! — Announcing the Dementia Caregivers Group  
2nd Tuesdays at 6 p.m., starting October 14**

**Location:** Channing Room (A101)



If you are caring for a parent, sibling, or partner with dementia, Lay Ministry invites you to a new support group.

We will be meeting in person on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Channing Room. The first session is planned for October 14.

This meeting will be facilitated by Scott V. and Kathleen V.

To register or ask questions, please email [Kathleen V.](#)

**NEW! — Calling All Artists! Submit Your Work for the  
Congregant Art Show**

**Deadline is Sunday, October 19**

The Biennial UU Group show is coming up in November.

This is a non-juried show, open to all attendees of First Unitarian.

The deadline is Sunday, October 19, so pick up an entry form at the Art Wall in Fuller Hall or [on the website here.](#)



**NEW! — Beacon Bookstore Has Books for Church  
Classes and Lots More**

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



The Bookstore carries books being recommended for fall classes. When you purchase through our Beacon Bookstore, 40% of the purchase price goes directly to the church.

**New on Sunday, September 21 – t-shirts!** First Unitarian’s t-shirts will be here!

The shop also carries a number of books about Unitarian Universalism and about First Unitarian. Minister Emerita Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell’s books are also available. A note: Rev. Marilyn has a new book coming out this fall – watch for the announcement.

Have you enjoyed the children’s books used as part of our Sunday services over the past couple of months? We have copies in the Bookstore. The new book about Bauhaus weaver, Anni Albers, just came in. We sold out (a big thank you!) of the books by contemplative Rev. Dr. Therese DesCamp that she read from last Sunday afternoon – *Hands Like Roots*, and we are ordering more.

Please think of us as your book clubs begin starting up for fall. We are able to order almost anything and get it quickly. It does not have to be a book we would normally carry – it might be a mystery novel, a biography, a romance, a cookbook, or something you see in the New York Times Review of Books. The church earns 40% of the sale price.

Thank you for your great support!

---

### 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.](#)



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

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!

## Antiracism Learning Circles

FALL 2025

### Antiracism Learning Circles Start Next Week!

#### 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.

[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.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

- *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](#).

---



### CHECK WEEKLY — September 21 Newsletter

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

Dear Ones,

Who else noticed that our (collective) children and youth grew so much over the summer!? Even though church is open all year, September is a joyful time of re-gathering.

We assemble ourselves in times of great turmoil. We face a fresh school year, summer becoming fall, deepening cultural polarization, waning trust in institutions, climate catastrophe, the soaring cost of living, geopolitical instability, and increasing bigotry and violence. Just to name a few factors.

And yet, we come together to offer one another a crucial resource for spiritual wellbeing and emotional health. Can you guess what

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

[uplifting\\_essay](#) about why lifelong religious education helps Unitarian Universalists face the evolving challenges of this moment...[MORE](#)

---

## Social Justice

Learn more about our [Social Justice program](#).

---

### Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Conversation

**Sunday, September 28, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.**

**Location:** Eliot Chapel

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

Join us for an honest, values-based conversation about what's working—and what still needs to change—in our region's response to homelessness.

Across Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties, people are working hard to make progress on homelessness—but that progress isn't always visible. These small-group conversations are designed to help bridge the gap between what the public sees and the real impact of the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) program.

This conversation will offer a chance to:

- Learn how the SHS program is helping connect people to housing and supportive services
- Hear real stories of progress and challenge from trusted local voices
- Ask questions and share your perspective in an honest, respectful space
- Leave with a clearer understanding of the path forward

Whether you're concerned, curious, frustrated, hopeful, or all of the above, you're welcome to join the conversation. Event sponsored by COHHO (Committee on Hunger and Homelessness) and [HereTogether Oregon](#).

---

### **NEW! — Social Justice Retreat**

**Saturday, October 4, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

**Register by Sunday, September 28**

**Location:** Buchan Reception Hall

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

## Weaving Community for Social Justice: Strengthening Our Connections

Join us for a restorative and reflective day as we examine the roles each of us plays in justice-making. We'll be using a social change framework developed by Deepa Iyer. As Iyer says, "When we come together around shared values and goals, and play our roles effectively and collaboratively, we can make our boldest visions a reality." All are welcome — whether you're a long-time participant in First U's social justice groups or are new and want to connect.

Our retreat will be co-led by Heather Vickery, Coordinator for Congregational Activism at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). Heather will also be preaching during the Sunday service on October 5 and offering a presentation on the Community Accompaniment Program after the service.

Registration is free, and lunch will be provided. You must register by Sunday, September 28, to ensure your spot. [Register here](#). For questions, [email Dana Buhl](#).

[Register here](#)

---

## **NEW!** — Tell OR Senators "No" on \$1 Trillion Defense Budget

### [Peace Action Group](#)

Join the Peace Action Group in calling our OR Senators, Merkley and Wyden, to thank them for their expected NO vote on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The 2026 "defense" budget is expected to exceed \$1 trillion dollars of our tax dollars for the first time ever. Both Merkley and Wyden have voted No on NDAA for prior years. Call them with the message that \$1 trillion is too much, especially as local and state governments are in economic crisis. \$1 trillion would go a long way to solving the money problems we all encounter. Move the money from "defense" to real human needs. And thank them for their anticipated No vote.

Merkley — (503) 326-3386

Wyden — (503) 326-7525

For questions, [email David D.](#)

---

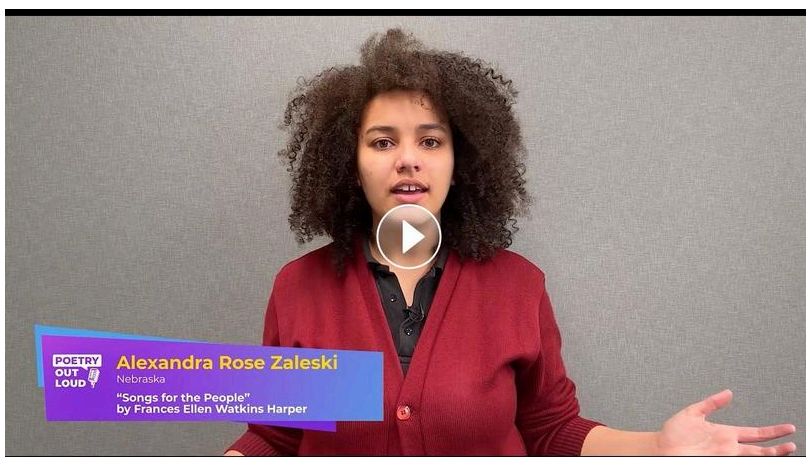
[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

## CHECK WEEKLY — Art for Social Justice

Curated by Ethel G., 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.

2022 Nebraska Poetry Out Loud Champion Alexandra Rose Zaleski recites “Songs for the People” by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Poet, author, and lecturer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was the first African American woman to publish a short story and was also an influential abolitionist, suffragist, and reformer. To listen, click 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 Judy Wilder has been in OHSU Hospital and asks for our prayers for healing. She would welcome text messages of love and support.

The Chancel flowers last Sunday were given by Barbara Morrison and Dave Kovich in remembrance of a special day; September 17, the wedding anniversary of Jack and Grace Marie Morrison and the birthday of Karen Kovich.

Join us on September 24 at 6 p.m. in Buchan Reception Hall to celebrate the life of member Barbara Fields. Barbara died unexpectedly on July 23 at the age of 77. She joined our church in 2020. She was on the Nominating Committee and active in the anti-racist book groups. One friend described Barbara as a beautiful soul. We will miss her warm, caring personality.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



### 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.**



### September Art Wall Exhibition Paintings by Aurora Oliva

In this show you can see how Aurora plays with images and lets them interact to create new patterns and feelings. She says, "My paintings are the result of quiet conversations between me and the canvas. Colors, textures and shapes are the mediums with which we communicate. I view the creative process as prayer and

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

devoid of judgment. My work is the snapshot of that intimate conversation and gives the audience a glimpse of my strength and vulnerability."

---

## 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](#)



[First Unitarian Portland](#) | Mail to: 1034 SW 13th Avenue, Portland, OR 97205

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

1034 SW 13th Avenue  
Portland, OR | 97205 United States

This email was sent to .  
*To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.*



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.