



Thursday, September 25, 2025

Sunday, September 28

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

How Do You Measure (30 something) Years?

Rev. Thomas Disrud, Associate Minister



story?

At newcomer classes, when talking about our congregation's history, I begin our modern history with 1992, a pivotal year in the life of the church. I came to the church just a few years after that, in 1995. What are the lessons from these years and how do they inform what might be next as we weave together our

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*

[Wednesday Evening](#)

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

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

SERVICES



September's

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Ministerial Blog

Spiritual Growth at the High Holidays

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

As a religion that draws wisdom from multiple sources, certain holidays outside of our Protestant roots have come to hold a special place in our Unitarian Universalist tradition. Here are three examples of worships outside of our regular Sunday morning service that are coming up:

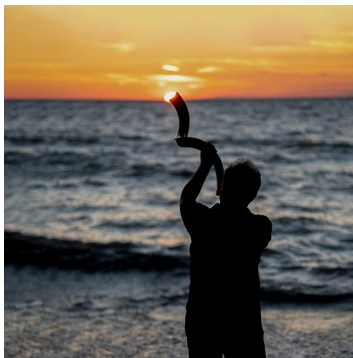
- the High Holidays from Judaism (we're holding a Yom Kippur evening service this coming Wed. Oct. 1 at 7 p.m.),
- the Animal Blessing from Catholicism (Oct. 19 at 4 p.m.),
- and the Winter Solstice from Pagan traditions (Dec. 19 at 7 p.m.).

The meaning and rituals of these times of year have contributed to shaping who we are as a religious community...[MORE](#)

NEW! — Yom Kippur Service

Wednesday, October 1, 7 - 8 p.m.

Location: Eliot Chapel and [online](#)



Join us in this season of the Jewish High Holidays in annual practice of reflection and renewal. May we turn towards the work of repair and learning how to choose life.

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

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

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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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.

Laura Golino de Lovato is the Executive Director of [Northwest Pilot Project](#) (NWPP), a nonprofit organization providing housing assistance, transportation, and advocacy to very low-income seniors in Multnomah County.

Led by Laura, 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](#).

First Unitarian T-Shirts Are Here!

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,



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M, L, XL, and XXL, get yours while supplies last!

Featured News



DEMOCRACY IN ACTION
LIVING OUR UU VALUES

NEW! — Be Empowered! Know Your Rights Training!

Tuesday, September 30, 6 p.m.

Location: Zoom

First U's Democracy in Action Team

A beginner's introduction and a veteran's refresher to the principles and practices of nonviolence, knowing your rights as a protester, and an overview of basic de-escalation techniques.

Facilitated by engaging, long-time activist, and trainer Malcom Scott.

Registration required! [Click here to RSVP.](#)

NEW! — Help Protect Free Speech

From First U's Democracy in Action Team

As you may know, last week Disney-ABC pulled the popular late-night comedy show Jimmy Kimmel Live—just hours after FCC Chair Brendan Carr threatened the company over Kimmel's comments about Charlie Kirk's murderer. Make no mistake: this is creeping authoritarianism—media silenced for daring to dissent.

Public pressure over the decision caused Disney-ABC to bring Kimmel back this week. But telecom conglomerates Nexstar and Sinclair, seeking massive merger approvals, are caving to pressure: both announced they won't air Kimmel. Our local Sinclair station – KATU – has not aired the show this week. What you can do: Write or call KATU and its advertisers. Remind them that, as Americans, we value free speech and will not stand for censorship by our government.

See [Pressure KATU to Uphold Free Speech](#) for contact information and a sample script.

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NEW! — The Alliance Presents "Creating Community with Those Living with Dementia"

Wednesday, October 1, 10:30 a.m.

Location: Eliot Chapel

[The Alliance](#)



Andie Shepard will present the basics of Alzheimer's and dementia, raising awareness of the needs of caregivers and those affected. She is the Program Manager with the Alzheimer's Association for the Oregon and SW Washington Chapter.

Bring your lunch for after the program. Email AllianceRSVP@firstunitarianportland.org to join for the dessert (\$5).

NEW! — Join Our Next First Steps Class & Campus Tour

Sunday, October 5, 11:30 a.m.

Location: Channing Room (A101)

[Jen Thomas](#), Director of Congregational Life

Come and meet new friends, learn a little more about First U PDX and Unitarian Universalism in this introductory class. You're welcome to bring a beverage and we'll have some snacks to share.

[RSVP here!](#)

Hope to see you there!



NEW! — Working on Inclusion: A Learning Circle for First U Congregants

Mondays, October 13 and 27, November 10 and 27, and December 8, 7 p.m.

Location: Zoom

A community of people learning to be more inclusive in our worship

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offering an additional Learning Circle this fall just for First U participants, based on the book *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* by Michael Baran and Tiffany Jana.

[Click here for all the details and to register.](#) Dates are Monday evenings Oct 13 & 27, Nov 10 & 27 and Dec 8 at 7pm via Zoom. For questions, [email facilitator Sharon C.](#)

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](#)

UPDATE — Fall 2025 Adult Programs

There is still time to sign up for Writing an Ethical Will and Community Circles! Read below to find out more. Registration

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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.](#)



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.](#)

Around the Church

Enjoyed coming to gatherings at First Unitarian Portland? Consider contributing to sustaining our community. Your support goes a long way in

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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.](#)

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! — Your Bookstore is Stocked Up for Fall!

You'll find the books being recommended for adult classes on the display in the center of the Bookstore in Fuller Hall (with the exception of a couple you'll need to find at your local library). The

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and committees. We require about 2 weeks of notice to purchase them from our regular wholesalers. Favorite authors are back in stock! Check out the “New Arrivals” stand next to the entry into the store.

There has been a good selection of picture books for children in the Fuller Hall

store. We’re moving some of them to the table and cart we set up in the Buchan Atrium beginning October 5. Books recommended by our children and some board books for toddlers will be featured, as well as some books on parenting.

Did you miss out on purchasing First Unitarian T-shirts last week? We have plenty left! Navy-blue quality cotton shirts in sizes S-XXL (true sizing). \$25.00 each. Cold water wash and cool dryer or line dry recommended. Get ready for the next round of demonstrations!

Your coffee cup is always welcome when you come in to browse.

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

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- 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!

Learning Community

Learn more about our [Learning Community program](#).
Register your child for the 2025-26 program year [here](#).



CHECK WEEKLY — September 28 Newsletter

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

Dear Ones,

Your RE Committee, the dedicated group of lay people I get to work with as together we oversee the Learning Community, updated our mission statement last winter. It's a fun and important practice to return to it often and share it widely.

First Unitarian's Learning Community Mission Statement

As a multigenerational community, we covenant to:

- create experiences of welcome, safety, caring, and relationship
- encourage lifelong spiritual growth
- foster Unitarian Universalist identity and connection to the larger UU movement
- support young people in a complex world that needs their energy and passion
- center love by developing ethics and values that promote justice

What do you think—how are we doing? What's your favorite part?
What's missing for our future? [...MORE](#)

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Social Justice

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

Social Justice Retreat

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

Register by Sunday, September 28

Location: Buchan Reception Hall

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](#)

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

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"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.](#)

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.

Lea Morris is a singer/songwriter originally from the Washington, DC, area and currently living in Germany. To listen to her perform "Peace Come Now," 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 Donald Lawton died on September 5 at the age of 91. Don and his wife, Abigail, were frequent attenders for many years and were especially fond of services in our Eliot Chapel. Abigail died in 2018. We hold the Lawton family in our prayers.

A memorial service will be held for Margo Clark this Saturday, September 27, at 4 pm in the Eliot Chapel. Margo died on August 14 and was involved in many roles here at the church through the years.

Milena Weller, who grew up in this church and has been working

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childcare staff last Sunday. We are happy that she will remain in our community as a childcare sub and member. Thanks, Milena, for your loving care for our youngest ones.

Flowers last Sunday were given in memory of Toni Paget, a well-loved and inspirational member of the Quilts of Love group. Her creativity and generosity are evident in all of her many artistic endeavors, especially her quilts which give comfort to all who have received them. She will be sorely missed by her fellow quilters. A memorial for Toni will be held on October 11 at 3 p.m. in the Eliot Chapel.



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.

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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 meditation. It is when I am most honest and forgiving with myself - 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. [Submit it here](#) (preferred) or [email us here](#) with "Front Steps" as the subject line.

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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