



# REACH

The Newsletter of the  
**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northfield**  
A Welcoming Congregation

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## Minister

Rev. Sara Smalley

## Coordinator of Religious Education

Ashley Hawthorne

## Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Whitson

## Nursery Teacher

Julie Bailey

## President

Paul Krause

## Treasurer

Katy Gillispie

## Secretary

Wyman Weinbeck

## Board Members-At-Large

Sue Coleman

Bill Jokela

Sabina Peters-Daywater

Don Stager

## Sunday Services Coordinator

Susie Weinbeck

## Choir Director

Taylor Wesseln

## Music Director

Bev Topp

## Indoor Facilities Committee

Wyman Weinbeck

## Outdoor Facilities Committee

Matt Thieding  
Larry Vorwerk

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## December 2023

### Theme: The Gift of Mystery

*We gather both in-person at UUFN and online for Sunday services. Links for the Sunday Zoom meeting will be sent each week through the UUFN-Announce email group. Contact [jwhitson@uunorthfield.org](mailto:jwhitson@uunorthfield.org) if you would like to begin receiving the weekly email.*

**Sunday, December 3rd • 10:00 am**

**“Gifts of Mystery” • Rev. Sara Smalley**

To launch our December theme of *The Gift of Mystery*, we'll gather to unwrap (literally) this service of stories and songs, present by present. This will be a worship service full of delight as we remind ourselves, as stated in our hymnal, that “we are not isolated beings, but connected, in mystery and miracle, to the universe and to each other.”

**Sunday, December 10th • 10:00 am**

**“Tiny Enormous Beauty” • Rev. Sara Smalley**

The swirl of fingerprints, the swirl of galaxies: no matter where we look, we are surrounded by magic and mystery. Join Rev. Sara as she tells the story of her ordination stole and we reflect on how things on the smallest and the largest scales point to the same truth: that everything is connected. “The Meaning of Membership” class will be held after the service for anyone curious about becoming a member of UUFN.

**Sunday, December 17th • 10:00 am**

**“The Mystery and Promise of the Winter Solstice”**

**Presented by Janet Scannell and Barbara Krause**

The Winter Solstice promises mystery, meaning, and amazing integration. Join Janet Scannell and Barbara Krause--along with worship associate Mairi Doerr--during this busy season to connect with yourself, our UUFN community, and the cosmos.

**Sunday, December 24th • 4:00 pm**

**(Note time change, there is no morning service)**

**“Christmas Eve Service” • Rev. Sara Smalley**

We'll tell an ancient story in new ways for this Christmas Eve service with Rev. Sara. All ages and theologies are welcome as we sing carols, light candles (or glow sticks), and experience the wonder of hope being reborn again and again into the world.

**Sunday, December 31st • 10:00 am**

**“Transforming Inner Darkness into Light” • Presented by Paul Krause**

The service is centered around the Burning Bowl Ceremony. You are invited to bring the thoughts, ideas, or obsessions that are not serving you and place them in the Burning Bowl. A beautiful way to clear spiritual space for the New Year. We will be joined by the UUFN choir singing Paul Krause's “The Children's Carol” and members of our talented community.

## **December 3rd: What We're About session for visitors**

“What We’re About” is a short overview of Unitarian Universalism and UUFN. Sessions run approximately half an hour and no sign up is necessary – just show up and learn more about our community. Grab a cup of coffee and meet Rev. Sara downstairs after the service. Children are welcome to attend with their grownup(s).

## **Curious about becoming a member of UUFN?**

If you are ready to deepen your connection to UUFN, join us for **The Meaning of Membership class after the service on December 10th**. This class includes information about UUFN and explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership. Participants will reflect on what membership means to them as we imagine where our journey together might take us. After the class is completed, participants will be invited to officially become members by signing the membership book during a future Sunday service.

This class is a requirement for membership, and is also a great way to connect with other new members. If you are unable to attend this class but would like to become a member, contact Rev. Sara.

## **Sunday Services Spring Planning Meeting Monday, December 11th 6:30 pm at UUFN**

We'll gather to brainstorm ideas about our spring worship themes and fill in the worship calendar. Anyone who is interested in talking more about worship at UUFN is invited to attend.

## **December Share the Plate: Doctors Without Borders**

Our Share the Plate recipient for December is Doctors Without Borders. Doctors Without Borders is an independent and impartial humanitarian organization. They are responding to the mounting humanitarian crisis in Gaza, they work with climate change refugees, and they go into places across the globe where they can most directly ease human suffering.

Thank you for giving as you are willing and able.

## **October Share the Plate: OutFront Minnesota**

UUFN members contributed \$657.16 to OurFront Minnesota.

## Announcement from the Building Vision Team

After church on Sunday, December 17th, the Building Vision Team will be holding an informational session with an update on the work with the architects. This is the next step of the process that was started in March. [Background information is available on the UUFN website.](#)

Thank you,  
-Janet, Wyman, Martha, Bev, Lee, and Reid

## UUFN Care Team

As we enter a season of multiple priorities, the Care Team invites you to self-care this busy December season: get enough sleep, schedule some downtime, nourish your mind, body, and spirit. Take a break from social media, news, and set realistic expectations of the time you have. Consciously slow down and breathe, meditate, pay attention to *what is* around you. Call a loved one and connect. Move your body; acknowledge anxiety, sadness and grief; be grateful and generous in caring for your own needs as well as the needs of others in your community. You are worth it! If you find you would like a little extra support, please feel free to reach out to the Care Team.

Mary Jane Lipinski

## A Tip From the Green Team

**Have you ever considered how terrible war is for the environment? These are some of the damaging consequences according to the Conflict and Environment Observatory..**

- Building and sustaining military forces consumes vast quantities of resources
- Militaries need vast quantities of land for testing and training
- Military conflicts lead to massive CO2 emissions
- Use of explosive weapons in urban areas cause massive oil and soil pollution
- Severe pollution incidents can be caused when industrial, oil or energy facilities are deliberately attacked

**Promoting peaceful solutions is always the right choice.**

## Requesting Help—Newcomer Gathering Setup

Wanted: People who can transform our UUFN upstairs space into a venue for a Newcomer Get-together on a Sunday morning in January. About 30 chairs will need to be arranged quickly into an oval shape, immediately after the Sunday service. If you're willing to be involved in this, please contact Bill McGrath or Brynda McCoy.

## Social Justice



## Social Justice Committee



We on the Land Acknowledgement and Beyond Working Group are grieving the loss of our leader Liz Brekke. At the same time, we are immensely grateful to her for creating this group and for organizing everything that it involves. She was a woman who put immense amounts of thought, time and energy into the causes that she believed in. She continues to inspire us.

There has been interesting news in the last few months about changes that involve two Minnesota Dakota communities that are situated along the Minnesota River in southwest Minnesota

**NPR** By Gabriel J. Sanchez, Timbete Ermyas, Ari Shapiro, September 6, 2023

Minnesota is returning the Upper Sioux agency State Park, once used for religious and communal ceremonies, to the native people whose ancestors were killed on the land more than a century ago.... Upper Sioux Community Chair Kevin Jensvold commented, “We never gave up hope that this was going to occur.... This Minnesota River Valley - we've lived here 10,000 years. And our ancestors deemed that this was the place we're going to live for 10,000 more”.

**Star Tribune** By ZOË JACKSON, September 29, 2023

After researching the history of her family's land in Nebraska and her home in Minneapolis, Twin Cities attorney Jessica Intermill wrestled with the notion that she and her ancestors benefited from stolen land...With the OK from the Lower Sioux Indian Community, Intermill launched an honor tax program, where people can voluntarily contribute to the tribe as an acknowledgement of how they have benefited from Dakota land. This website explains the tax. <https://www.mnhonortax.org/about>

Janet McGrath



# Remembering Liz Brekke

What a beautiful service it was to celebrate and honor dear Liz!

