

# BROOKLYN UNITARIAN

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The newsletter of the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, est. 1833



## CHRISTMAS EVE



*Join us for Christmas Eve Worship,  
Saturday, December 24th  
4:00PM Family Service  
5:00PM Candlelight Music Service.*

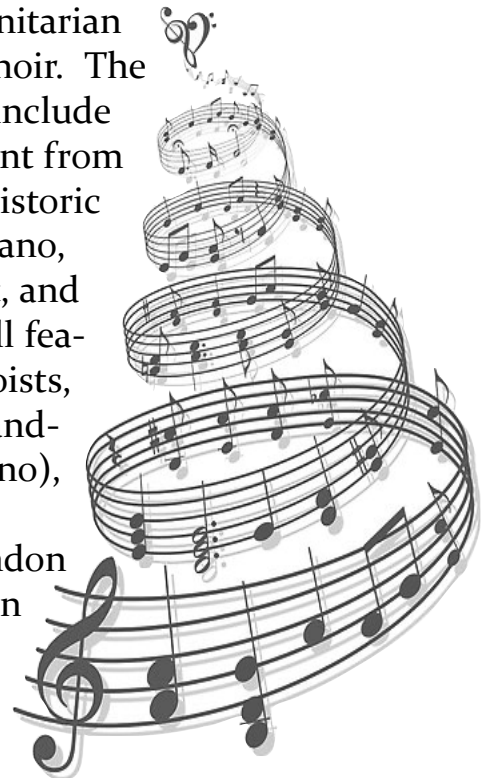
### **4:00PM Family Service**

Children and their families are invited to attend a light-hearted service of stories and songs in the chapel at 4:00PM. Director of Education Ministries, Meagan Henry will lead the service with help from our ministerial intern, Kevin Jagoe and our seminarian, Shari Halliday-Quan.

### **5:00PM Candlelight Music Service**

At 5:00PM we will present our popular Christmas Eve Candlelight Music Service. The program will include a beautiful meeting of old and new worlds, with excerpts from Camille Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio, as well as a set of Stevie Wonder songs with messages of universal love, peace on earth, and good will to all. The Stevie Wonder selections have been newly

arranged by our congregation's music director, Adam Podd, and will be presented by the First Unitarian soloists and choir. The program will include accompaniment from the church's historic pipe organ, piano, harp, trumpet, and violin, and will feature vocal soloists, Candice Helfand-Rogers (soprano), Abby Powell (mezzo), Brandon Hornsby-Selvin (tenor), and Dennis Wees (baritone).



## **From the Senior Minister, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons**

The stories of the holiday season are stories that invite wild hope into our souls. A baby is born to a poor family in an occupied territory and he grows up to be a revolutionary prophet. A small band of religious rebels prevails against the oppressing army and rekindles the Eternal Flame in their sacred space. The story is told and retold in a thousand ways, but the message is always the same: the impossible becomes possible through the principled, faith-driven actions of ordinary people. The magic of this season is not in the glittering displays, the bounty of Santa Claus, or even all the good food. It is in the manifest power of generosity and love to overcome hate. It is in the power of “unrealistic” idealism to change reality.

I have a wild hope this season: that good people everywhere will enact the holiday story in real time, in real life. I see it happening already in this congregation. In

this time of violent division when real threats loom on the horizon, I see this congregation coming together in love. I see people reaching out to one another with kindness and gentleness, knowing that people are in pain right now. I see people eager to help however they can, throwing themselves into justice work, and preparing to intervene when they encounter violence. I see people caring for those in need and caring for the earth. This congregation is rising to the challenges of our time. That is all the evidence I need to know that my wild hope in this season is well founded.

If you are hurting or lonely this holiday, please know that your community is here to support you. Please reach out to me, our ministry team, or Pastoral Care Team and let us help. Many blessings to you and your families for the holidays and in the new year.

-Rev. Ana

## **From the Director of Congregational Life**

If you saw Emma Green’s recent article\* in The Atlantic about attendance at mainline protestant churches since the presidential election, you know that First Unitarian isn’t the only congregation that’s bursting at the seams on Sunday morning. According to Ms. Green, “it suggests that some progressives are searching for a moral vocabulary in grappling with the president-elect—including ways of thinking about community that don’t have to do with electoral politics.”

Is that what’s happening at First U? Are we coming together not only to find comfort and solace in the face of fear and anxiety, but to try to understand our world and find the words (or moral vocabulary) to express our longings?

I think about Rev. Ana’s October 16th sermon\*\* about the Black Lives Matter movement (the one that got rousing applause). During the staff’s weekly meeting and debrief, we talked about why that particular sermon was especially well received. In my opinion, it was because Rev. Ana provided us with language to articulate our support for this movement. We hang banners, demonstrate, share Facebook posts, but we struggle to find those exact words that so perfectly express what we innately understand, that will convince those who disagree or don’t understand the Truth as we see it. In this and in so many of life’s struggles we long to be heard.

Maybe our worship services, which incorporate Rev. Ana’s beautifully crafted sermons, as well as gorgeous music and words for all ages that perfectly complement the theme, do the speaking for us. “Yes!”, we say. “Yes, that’s what we’ve been trying to say. You heard us!” And then with the language clarified, we can share the Good News. As UU’s, we don’t knock on doors or hand out tracts in the subway, but we come together to heal ourselves and others, make the small, but significant adjustments in our own lives that influence those around us (heaven help me, I’ve given up bacon and I’m working on Diet Coke), work toward social justice, dream of the Beloved Community.

I am hosting a Christmas morning potluck brunch in the Chapel following our 9:30AM worship service. All are welcome to attend, just let me know that you’re coming so I can set a place.

Wishing all of you the happiest and healthiest of holidays, Garnett Losak, [garnett@fuub.org](mailto:garnett@fuub.org)

\*[www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/trump-mainline-protestant-churches/510185/](http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/trump-mainline-protestant-churches/510185/)

\*\* [www.fuub.org/home/sermon-on-the-side-of-love/](http://www.fuub.org/home/sermon-on-the-side-of-love/)

## **A Message from Meagan, Director of Education Ministries**

Dear Friends,

Take a breath. No really. Take a long deep breath and let it out slowly. During this busy holiday time of year, it is easy to get caught up in our anxieties. We forget to be present and to focus on what is really important. We all know this, and yet each year many of us become distracted by our anxieties about the holidays. Some of us are striving for some version of holiday perfection remembered from our past, or trying to achieve what we desired as a child but did not have, or wondering if we will find that perfect gift. Whatever your particular brand of anxiety around the holidays may be, it is probably not about what is happening right now.

A wise friend of mine recently explained that when we are anxious, we are focusing on something that is either in the past or the future, and this keeps us from focusing on the present moment. And yet, we know there are terrible and frightening things happening in the world right now. During this time of political uncertainty, it's even harder to be present and find joy in the every-day mundanities of life, work, family, and friends. It is hard to feel like we can give ourselves permission to be happy and joyful during such a scary time in our world and when we know so many are suffering.

And yet, if we do not take care of ourselves, if we do not feed our spirits, if we do not find joy and laugh a little now and then, how can we do the work that lies ahead of us? Now is the time to be present with our loved ones. Now is the time to engage in serious spiritual self-care.

We all have different ways of being in the moment. For me, cooking is the thing that helps me. I like to think of it as the Zen of cooking: chopping vegetables, measuring ingredients, and getting lost in the act of creating.

What is your method for being in the moment? If this is challenging for you, I invite you to make a list of people in your life you are grateful for. Then, send them messages of your gratitude. Take some time to meditate on what it is you are truly grateful for from each person. Allow yourself to be filled with gratitude and let your worries fall away so that you can be present in gratitude. Even if you choose only one person each day for three days in a row to send a message, I promise this practice will help heal and strengthen your spirit.

In love and gratitude,  
Meagan Henry (meagan@fuub.org)  
Director of Education Ministries

## **Bits and Pieces**

### **UniFair**

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's UniFair. Not only did UniFair serve to keep usable items out of landfills, it also raised over \$8,000 in support of our congregation's mission and purpose. A very special thanks to this year's chair and our ministerial intern, Kevin Jagoe.

### **2016 Income Tax Donations**

It's time to think about your 2016 income tax return. All donations to First Unitarian dated before January 1st will be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Checks can be mailed to First Unitarian, 48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201 or you can make donations on-line. Go to the First Unitarian website ([www.fuub.org](http://www.fuub.org)) and press the donate button.

### **Office Volunteers**

During this holiday season, the staff of First Unitarian would like to thank our loyal office volunteers, Pat and Marty Bernstein, Sandy Foutz, Larry Calia and our newest volunteers, Rita Pearl and Eleanor Traubman.

# Religious Education

## Parenting in Times of Stress: Three Survival Strategies

I don't know about you, but it's been a kind of stressful year. Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones for whom 2016 was full of easy blessings (hooray!), but I know for many of us this year was full of anxiety, worry and tough news. We experienced our collective anxiety and stress of the election season and the election outcome (and its aftermath), and we each had our individual stressors: work, illness, change or loss.

And yet, here are our children. Children who may or may not be aware of the changes and stressors in the world around them. Children who no matter what happens, need us to put dinner on the table and school forms back in the folder (signed!).

So, what do we, as parents do in times like these? I know I have been guilty this year, multiple times, of being too invested in my Facebook feed or newspaper to register a child's question or request. I have turned too quickly from my phone or my desktop, forgetting to clear my face of my anxiety before I face my child. I have too often let my own stress level and exhaustion inform my parenting decisions.

Luckily for me and my kids, we have you, our congregation and spiritual home. Once a week we gather together to heal and sing and pray and learn and breath. Thank goodness! (In November, I may have asked Rev Ana if we can have church twice a week.)

We have each other, and to me, that is the only thing that can get we parents through tough times. Parenting can be a very lonely business, even during easy seasons. (And it's never easy!) The coming season will be tough. And we have these children...children who need us to be fully present and calm with them, no matter what.

Here are three things I think we can do together to keep ourselves going in the coming months. Three things that may help us all grow to be stronger, calmer parents.

1. Connect! Unitarian-Universalist congregations across the country have reported increased attendance post Election. Our own Sunday service has been packed in the past few weeks. Clearly, our message of unity, love and inclusion is needed in the world. Make Sunday morning

attendance a priority for your week. Schedule your week-ends around that 90 minutes. 11AM can be a tricky time for families, so think about what activities your family can do pre-church (Meet up with another family for bagels? Read together? Have an extra fancy breakfast? Bundle up and brave the outdoors?) and what you will do after service. (Basketball team? Ballet lesson? Lunch date with friends? A walk in the sunshine? A trip to the children's museum or grandpa's house? Or just a quiet nap in the afternoon?) Pack snacks and water and a book or quiet toy and come sit in the pews. Look around. There are lots of parents and families just like yours!

2. Breathe. Everyone needs time to recharge, especially parents. Schedule time for yourself and your partner or spouse: a few minutes of meditation practice, a few minutes reading something that transports you, an hour of guilt-free television watching, a walk or run, Yoga. Every Sunday at 10AM a meditation group meets in the church. Join them! It's a beautiful group. (Children can play with another family member, or hang out in the nursery with Elizabeth.)

3. Have Fun! Yes, the news is scary and stressful. Yes, the dishes need to be done and the laundry folded and the homework checked, but, sometimes we need to turn it all off and just have fun for a while. After all, the fun games and silly songs and days in the park are what will inform your child's memories and keep you warm when they are all grown up. This January 28th at 5PM the RE Council and membership committee are hosting a Family Game Night. We'll have pizza, snacks and plenty of opportunities for fun. Maybe you'll be inspired to host your own game night!

Connect. Breath. Have Fun

I hope you all have a joyous and peaceful holiday season. I look forward to connecting with you on Sundays, and at our Game Night on 1/28.

Becky Huffman  
Religious Education Council Chair  
(becky7676@gmail.com)

## Ministerial Intern

I want to thank you all for the amazingly warm welcome I've received since joining this community in August. Over the past four months, I have been honored to be your Ministerial Intern. As we approach this holiday season I have gotten to know many of you through Sunday services, UniFair, pastoral care, young adult gatherings, events throughout the week, and all the conversations here and there that weave it all together.

After our Christmas services, I will be away from First U for a few weeks. I'm traveling to Minneapolis to visit family and then in January I will be at Meadville Lombard in Chicago completing the coursework for this semester of seminary.

In late January I will return and be part of many programs as spring arrives. So many people have asked me how my internship is going, whether I'm enjoying my new congregation and city. Each and every time I'm asked, I get to say how wonderful this community is and how much I am loving my time with you all and how lucky I am to serve a community that is humming with energy to do more in the world and for each other.

May you have wonderful holidays and New Year's celebrations, I look forward to what we can create together in 2017.

Sincerely,  
Kevin W. Jago  
kevin@fuub.org

## Seminarian

At this year's Unifair—my first, the congregation's six hundredth, or so it seems—no fewer than ten people had a hand in outfitting me with a new coat. Besides looking extremely cool, the coat has been keeping me warm and dry in the rain, snow, and dreaded wintery mix we've been experience this December. When I put on this coat, I am dressed in the fortification and welcome of First U. Every Sunday, and quite a few days in between, I have the experience of being clothed by this community. It's like putting on a uniform for the work that I have been called to do. I've come to you as a seminarian preparing for a future career in ministry, and what a welcome I have found here!

The opportunity and responsibility of being a field education site is a ministry of this congregation made

possible by the sponsorship of the Women's Leadership Alliance and carried out on a practical level primarily by my supervisor, Meagan Henry. I am especially grateful to the youth and families who place their trust in me. When I think of the future of our faith, our society, and the planet, I am inspired by the conversations, both deep and silly, that we have in Youth Group and Coming of Age.

When I think of the welcome I have received by this congregation, however, it extends far beyond its young people, staff, and occasional paycheck. The commitment to shaping the future of Unitarian Universalism and the investment in future professional clergy is shared by the wider congregation. I have been invited to participate in the social justice work and public witness of this congregation, staff have welcomed me into their weekly meetings and long texting chains, and lay leaders have helped me shape the homily that I delivered here last month.

Before, after, and during worship on Sundays, members and friends of First U greet me with smiles and reminders of their names. At other times when difficulties and heartaches are more present and real, I have been greeted and trusted with these personal stories. People have shown up, been kind, and been real, and this is teaching me how to be a minister. This presence, kindness, and authenticity is what no fewer than ten people (many more, really) have given to me, and it is what I clothe myself in as I come to learn to do the work of ministry. Showing up, being kind, and being real is the fortification that we offer to each other so that each of us can do the work that we are called to do.

Finally, and on a related note, I'll be preaching on New Year's Day at 4 pm in the Sanctuary. I hope to see you there!

Shari Halliday-Quan  
Seminarian and  
Youth and Coming of Age Coordinator  
youthministry@fuub.org

# **Jambalaya Cook-Off to Support Our Delegates for General Assembly!**

General Assembly (GA) serves as a transformative experience for attendees to deepen their faith, shape the future of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), and learn valuable leadership skills. This year we have several members who are interested in being one of our 6 delegates and we want to ensure that no one is limited by a lack of financial resources.

There are many ways to help:

- **Jambalaya Cookoff Jan 14th** - Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and enjoy an evening of friendly competition as 10-12 jambalaya cooks compete for your taste buds! We'll be having vegan, vegetarian and sustainably-raised meat versions. Wine and beer will also be available. All ticket proceeds will be used to fund GA delegate travel to New Orleans.
- **Stop by the Leadership Development (formerly nominating committee) table at coffee hour.**  
**You can:**
  - **Buy tickets to the Jambalaya Cookoff** (or at <http://bit.ly/jambalayacookoff>)
  - **Sign up to compete** by preparing vegan, vegetarian, or sustainably-raised meat jambalaya. YUM!
  - **Volunteer to decorate a table at the cook-off.** We'll provide table cloths, you bring candles, centerpieces, flowers, or other decorations to make your table beautiful! The theme is up to you - justice or New Orleans themes are a great place to start!
- **Donate \$\$** - help our delegates pay for lodging and travel expenses to GA.
- **Donate Airline Miles** - flights to NOLA will be a considerable expense to our delegates. Donating miles goes a long way in helping them get to GA.

To support our delegates, contact Sam McKelvie or stop by the Leadership Development Committee's table at coffee hour. Thank you for helping relieve the financial burden for our delegates!

Sam McKelvie, [mckelvie.sam@gmail.com](mailto:mckelvie.sam@gmail.com)

## **2016 Children of Abraham Dinner: A Huge Success**

Over 100 people of all ages gathered in the undercroft for our 16th annual dinner with the local Muslim community. After 9/11, a concerted effort was made to reach out to our Muslim neighbors to show solidarity against tyranny and to create community. Building this relationship has deepened our ties and enriched the lives of all participants on both sides.

What began as a divided room 16 years ago, has blossomed into a family event, with the members of our church and the Muslim community sitting at the same tables with shared values of human rights. We no longer need to encourage people to sit at a table with folks they do not know. The ratio of Muslims to others which started out as two-thirds Muslim to one-third UU's and others has reversed. This is a testament to outreach by the Weaving the Fabric of Diversity (WFD) that has fostered a sense of family and mutual respect.

At this year's event, Meagan Henry, our director of education ministries, welcomed everyone and offered a prayer of healing and solidarity from Rev. Ana. Captivating speeches were given by Abdul Malik, a senior Imam, WFD member Bob Patterson and Muslim leader and activist, Debbie Almontaser. All stressed the need to overcome the racism, sexism, and hatred that has been stirred up since the presidential election.

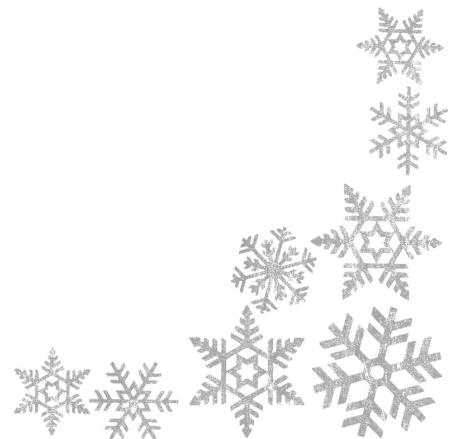
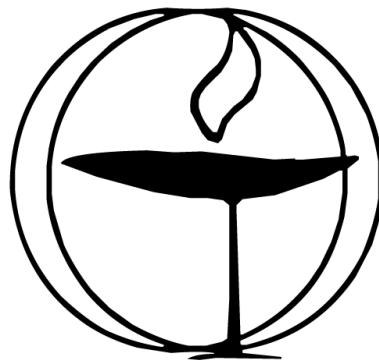
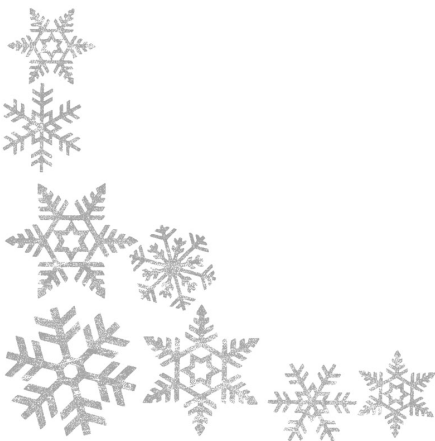
It was an inspiring evening full of food and conversation. The seven guiding principles of our faith are expressed through this gathering and enrich our spiritual life. We look forward to many more years of community building with our Muslim friends with many more new faces in the coming years!

Robert Harper  
Co-Chair, Weaving the Fabric of Diversity  
[robphar@gmail.com](mailto:robphar@gmail.com)



FIRST UNITARIAN  
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY  
**BROOKLYN**  
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

*On behalf of the clergy and  
staff of The First Unitarian  
Congregational Society,  
many blessings for a joyful  
holiday season and a  
healthy, peaceful new year.*



## Worship Schedule - Winter 2016-17

### December 24th

Christmas Eve Family Service (4:00PM, Chapel) - Meagan Henry  
Candlelight Service (5:00PM, Sanctuary) - Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

### December 25th

Christmas Day (9:30AM, Sanctuary) - Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

### January 1st

New Year's Day Vespers Service (4:00PM) - Shari Halliday-Quan

### January 8th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

### January 15th

Jazz Service, Stories of Humans & The Earth, Part 4,  
New Member Sunday - Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

### January 22nd

Guest Preacher

### January 29th

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

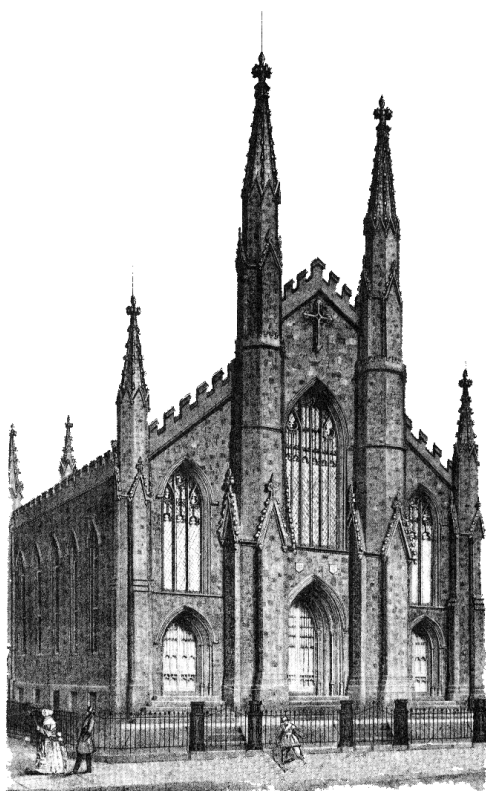
### February 5th

Stewardship Kick-off

### February 12th

Second Sunday  
Jazz Service  
Meagan Henry

*All services start at  
11:00AM in the  
Sanctuary unless noted  
otherwise*



## FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY BROOKLYN

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a joyful, caring, religious community that inspires and empowers people to Grow spiritually, Care for one another, and Work for social justice and stewardship of the earth.

**OFFICE** The Lathrop House  
48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201

HOURS Mon–Thurs, 9:30AM–4:00PM  
PHONE/FAX 718-624-5466/718-797-2916  
E-MAIL Office@fuub.org

### CLERGY & STAFF

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons *Senior Minister*  
Meagan Henry *Director of Education Ministries*  
Robert F. Petrillo *Dir. Congregational Services*  
Adam Podd *Music Director*  
Garnett Losak *Dir. Congregational Life*  
Chris Johnson *Sexton*  
Kevin Jagoe *Ministerial Intern*  
Elizabeth Deterville *Nursery Coordinator*  
Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason *Community Minister*  
Shari Halliday-Quan *Seminarian*  
Nicole Tuszynski *Ceremonies Coordinator*  
Dr. Donald W. McKinney *Minister Emeritus*  
William Peek *Music Director Emeritus*

### OFFICERS

Lee Pardee *Trustee President*  
*Trustees:* Roger Cooper, Liz Davis, Sean Fischer,  
James Goward, Patrick Gunn, Cara Haft,  
Mary Most, Kurt Steele

Lake Wise *Treasurer*  
Alfred Blanco *Warden*

*Deacons:* Alfred Blanco, Thomas Check,  
Liz Davis, Olive Hoogenboom, Constance Newsom,  
Peter Norling, Lee Pardee, Bruce Wilde, Nancy Wolf  
Seth Faison *Senior Deacon*

Olive Hoogenboom *Historian*

Garnett Losak *Content Editor*  
Robert Petrillo *Layout and Design Editor*  
Sandy Foutz *Production Coordinator*

Thank You to the volunteers who help with production!