

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BR  **KLYN**
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Welcome Book

2023-2024



Thursday, August 03, 2023

Welcome to First Unitarian

Statement of Purpose

*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.*

Adopted by the Congregation, May 17, 2015

About Us

Welcome to The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn. We were founded in 1833 and have been worshipping in our historic Gothic revival sanctuary since 1844.

We are located on Pierrepont Street between Monroe Place and Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights. We can be reached by Subway (2, 3, 4, 5, R to Court St. Borough Hall; 2, 3 to Clark Street; A to High Street; F to Jay Street). Street parking is generally available in the neighborhood on Sunday mornings.

We worship together on Sunday mornings at 11:00AM. From mid-June through Labor Day, services are held in the McKinney Chapel next door to the main church. These services are lay-led.

We welcome families of all types and sizes and offer a comprehensive lifespan religious education program for all, from childhood through adulthood (see more under religious education).

We are one of five Unitarian Universalist congregations in New York City and over one thousand throughout North America. We are affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and are part of the Central East Regional Group (CERG). (more information: www.uua.org)

Our congregations practice congregational polity (self-governance). Authority and responsibility are vested in the membership of the congregation.

Unitarian Universalist Principles

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, affirm and promote...

- ④ The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- ④ Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- ④ Acceptance of one another and encouragement of spiritual growth in our congregations
- ④ A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- ④ The right of conscience and the use of democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- ④ The goals of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- ④ Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



Unitarian Universalist Sources

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we deepen our understanding and expand our vision through...

- ④ Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life
- ④ Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love
- ④ Wisdom from the world's religions which inspire us in our ethical and spiritual life
- ④ Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves
- ④ Humanist teaching which council us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against the idolatries of the mind and spirit
- ④ Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

First Unitarian Right Relations Covenant

We are mindful that, as individuals and members of this spiritual community, we are each accountable for our words, deeds, and behavior. Therefore, whenever we worship, work together, or relate to one another, we agree to follow the following behavior covenant. I will strive to:

- Respect and cherish diversities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual and/or affectional orientation, identity/gender expression, age, ability, beliefs and ideas.
- Assume good intentions. Trust in and speak well of one another. Give the benefit of the doubt. Examine my own intentions.
- Foster an environment of compassion, generosity, fellowship, and creativity. Smile and be welcoming. Share in the responsibilities of congregational life. Actively support the congregation's activities and pledge financial support.
- Express appreciation and gratitude for the rich variety of gifts and talents shared among us. Empower others.
- Speak the truth as I experience it with kindness, care, and respect.
- Make decisions democratically through agreed-upon processes. Promote fairness and decency. Speak out against injustice.
- Face others directly in agreement or disagreement. Act with respect and humility when I disagree with others.
- Be mindful that words and actions may cause unintended pain.
- Seek out understanding and wisdom in the presence of conflict. Resolve conflicts through intentional compromise and collaboration and, when necessary, request mediation. Understand that sometimes it is necessary to take "no" for an answer. Be forgiving.
- Practice self-care.
- Be open to hope.

Adopted by the Congregation - March 7, 2009

Staff Directory

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, Senior Minister
ana@firstubrooklyn.org
Office Hours, T-Th 10AM-4PM
Or by appointment

Meagan Henry, Director of Education &
Family Ministries
meagan@firstubrooklyn.org
Office Hours, Tu - Th, 10AM-4PM
Or by appointment

Adam Podd, Director of Music
adam@firstubrooklyn.org
Office Hours, by appointment

Garnett Losak, Director of Congregational
Life
garnett@firstubrooklyn.org, 646-456-4027
Office Hours., Tu, Th, 10AM-4PM or by
appointment

Renee Strickland, Executive Manager
Building and Events,
renee@firstubrooklyn.org, office hours, Tu -
Th, 10AM-4PM and by appointment,
Renee's days off are Sunday and Monday

Wendy Russell, Office
Manager/Bookkeeper,
wendy@firstubrooklyn.org, 718-624-5466
Office Hours
Su 1-4PM, T, Th 10AM-4PM or by
appointment

Rachel Schmitt, Intern Minister
rachel.schmitt@yale.edu
Office hours, Sunday and by appointment

Kevin Brunson, Director of Facilities,
kevin@firstubrooklyn.org, 347-451-3941

Bobby Blackman, Custodian
bobby@firstubrooklyn.org

Business Address:

48 Monroe Place

Brooklyn, NY 11201

Phone: 718-624-5466, Email: info@firstubrooklyn.org, Website: www.firstubrooklyn.org

Facebook: First Unitarian Universalist Society in Brooklyn, Twitter: @FirstUBrooklyn

Instagram: Firstubrooklyn, YouTube: First Unitarian Brooklyn

Please Note: Most staff will work from home on Wednesdays. We are available by email or cell phone on all workdays. The office is closed on Fridays. We strongly recommend calling ahead of time before visiting the office. Appointments are strongly recommended.

Thursday, August 03, 2023

Board of Trustees & Officers 2012-2025

“Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson, Unitarian Minister*

The Board of Trustees is the congregation’s primary governing body. The Board is made up of 9 voting members of the congregation who serve three-year terms. Three members roll off and three members roll on every year. Trustees are elected by the congregation from a slate presented by the Leadership Development Committee (formerly the nominating committee) at the Annual Meeting held on the third Sunday in May. The Board elects its own president. The Clerk of the Society is elected by the congregation for a one-year term. The Clerk keeps Board and congregational meeting minutes and has additional administrative responsibilities as needed throughout the year. The Treasurer is appointed by the Board. The Treasurer ensures that fiscal policy is followed. The moderator facilitates congregational meetings and is elected by

Class of 2024

Mary Huhn (Immediate Past Co-President) – Mary was raised a Unitarian, having attended the Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, Pa., with her mother. After a gap of several decades from being a member of a congregation, she discovered the joys of First Unitarian, where she has made many friends, worked at UniFairs and auctions, and participated in several discussion groups, such as “Walking and Talking with God,” a history of UU with Ethan Loewi and a discussion of “No Other Gods,” as well as one about Christian

Unitarian Universalists with Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason. She is now facilitating her first small group on “Soul Matters.”. Mary has worked to make the world better – engaging in turn out the vote, participating in climate-change marches, and joining groups such as Weaving Social Justice. She is a somewhat retired journalist who spent most of the last year in the Catskills with her husband and teenage son, but returned to Brooklyn in the early spring, full of hope. Mary is the president of the PTA at her son’s middle school as well as president of Brooklyn Alliance of Neighborhood Gardens. She has experience with being on an executive board, budgets, and working with community members. She would be honored to be on the Board of Trustees.

Judith Sedaitis - Judith joined the congregation in 2017 a few weeks after Trump’s election, looking for a place of solace and solidarity. She wrestled with the ways in which the UU tradition departs from the more orthodox Christian teachings so important to her and her ethnic enclave in Chicago. Her parents’ families fled the Soviet invasion of the Baltic during WWII and their Protestant church was a lynch pin for their life in the US. Judith formally joined as a member two years later in the fall of 2019. She has since been an active in our Membership Committee and in Weaving Social Justice, recently helping to lead the effort getting First Unitarian’s support for Release Aging People in Prison (RAPP). She is currently a mentor to a COA youth and has also worked on UUA campaign efforts last fall and with our own congregation’s phonebank to Florida. An avid participant in our adult RE program, Judith led a book discussion in the Sacred Studies Program, and is a member of an ongoing support group meeting monthly.

She teaches sociology at City Tech and lives in Brooklyn with her spouse and two cats.

Jayesh Sheth – Jay began attending First Unitarian in November 2016, when he and his wife Andrea were searching for a new spiritual home. At First Unitarian, Jay has contributed to the efforts of the Green Team, Coming of Age, the Immigrant Solidarity Committee and Weaving Social Justice. He has spent his professional career as a software engineer and, more recently in leading the protection of healthcare data. He has volunteered as a co-op board member and values the insights he gained from that experience. Jay is an avid gardener (in search of a garden!) and enjoys documenting the wonders of nature as part of the iNaturalist community. One of his majors in college was International Business, and he maintains an active interest in sustainable investing. One of Jay's favorite things is cooking lentil soup for the congregation. Jay looks forward to the opportunity to serve as a Trustee at First Unitarian and is committed to investing his efforts and experiences in this service.

Class of 2025

Robin Bossert (Co-President) has run his own video production company for over 34 years. As a writer/director/editor, he enjoys all aspects of production working with corporate, public relations, educational and nonprofit clients.

He founded Navigators USA, in 2003, a co-ed, secular inclusive scouting movement, starting over 330 Chapters across the country, the UK, France and other countries. Past President of the Miramar Ski Club, past hike leader for the Appalachian Mountain Club, and present Deacon at All Souls NYC, he lives in the West Village and works at his loft/office in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Beth Evans has been a member of First Unitarian of Brooklyn for over thirty years. She raised her four children in the congregation and is proud to see them living and practicing the UU values they learned here. She has contributed to the congregation in many ways, including building the next generation with the religious education program, celebrating half of humankind in the Women's Leadership Alliance, knitting with the Crafting Ministry, and exploring spirituality with fellow congregants in monthly meetings with Rev. Ana. She has also served on the Leadership Development Committee, spearheaded the reorganization of the Library, and most recently worked with the Technology Team. In this role Beth has been honored to serve as one of the Zoom services hosts and is preparing to learn the streaming production side of online services. She looks forward to retirement in a few years when she knows she will be happy to contribute more and have more time for her creative writing, but in the meantime, she continues working as an academic librarian, finding time for friends and family, and looking more deeply into what it means to live a life of value.

Lisa Pacenza (Co-President) has been a member of the First Unitarian congregation for almost 18 years, and currently serves as Treasurer of the Women's Leadership Alliance. She represented First U as a delegate to the virtual UUA General Assembly in 2021, and recently became a Head Usher. She's been active on her coop board for nearly a decade, including roles as President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Lisa works in strategic marketing and communications in the professional services industry.

Class of 2026

Michele Ascione (she/her) has been a member of First U for just about 30 years and has been a Religious Education teacher and a member of the Religious Education Council – even serving as chair for some time - for almost all of those years. She may have even been YOUR RE teacher! She was one of the congregation's first RE volunteers to get trained for the ground-breaking OWL curriculum for grades K-8. In addition, she has served short stints on the Nominating Committee and the Staff Interest Committee. Michele is proud to have marched and rallied with the congregation, participated in immigrant solidarity activities, coordinated activities at family retreats at Murray Grove, volunteered for UniFair, played parts in numerous Winter festivals (notably playing “The Grinch” two winters in a row), narrated a revised Purim Spiel, and performed two roles in the first congregational theater performances of *Mother Wove the Morning*. Originally joining in order to raise her children with an open-minded religious education, Michele has found a supportive community and an outlet for some of her talents that she has come to cherish.

Barbara Bornmann (she/her) is grateful to have found a spiritual home at the Unitarian Universalist church in 2021. As a relative newcomer, Barbara has been active in church life and serves on the Weaving Social Justice committee, as a Lay Pastoral Counselor for the Care Committee, and as a member of the choir enjoying great music and camaraderie of choir members. Driven by a spiritual commitment to healing through the arts, Barbara has worked for 30 years in Healthcare specializing in mental and behavioral health for persons with Developmental Disabilities, and persons struggling with Serious Mental Illness. A former supervisor and director of

therapeutic rehabilitation in hospital settings, Barbara continues to research and author articles on best practice in providing creative approaches to healing. Currently, Barbara works as a Licensed Creative Arts Therapist with Correctional Health Services serving persons with serious mental illness detained on Rikers Island.

Jake Powell (they/them) has been an active member of First Unitarian since 2018. At First U, Jake is a contributing member of the Immigrant Solidarity Committee as well as the Queer Caucus and Young Adult Ministry. Having grown up in a United Church of Christ congregation in their hometown of Casper, WY, joining First U felt just right.

In their work Jake focuses on hiring and HR for non-profits, currently working at Bloomberg Philanthropies after stints at The Trevor Project, the 92nd Street Y, and the Perelman Performing Arts Center. Over the years Jake has also spent time volunteering with ACT UP New York, the Ali Forney Center, and the Democratic Socialists of America. After 6 years in Cobble Hill, Jake recently moved to Flatbush with their partner. In their free time Jake enjoys reading, running, gluten-free baking, and trying to pick up Chinese.

Moderator

Patrick Gunn (he/him) has been attending First U with his wife Laura and their three children since 2006. During his membership he has been an RE/OWL teacher, has participated in several special project teams, has served terms on the Committee on Ministry and the Leadership Development Committee, and is a former co-president of the Board of Trustees. Professionally, Patrick has spent

over twenty-five years in various roles throughout the film and television business, as a producer, studio executive, and manager of content libraries.

Clerk of the Society

Maggie Norris (she/her) has been a member of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Brooklyn since December 2021. Previously, she was a member of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Jose, California for about 20 years. She has been an active member, with regular attendance at services and contributing to church community events, such as UniFair, Spring Auction, the Greeters group, the meditation group, and online discussion groups. She is planning to co-lead a further series of the UU History and Theology group later this year. She serves on the Board of the Women's Leadership Alliance as a member-at-large.

She is looking forward to joining Board of Trustees meetings as Clerk of the Society starting May, 2023.

Maggie lives with her family in the Crown Heights neighborhood in Brooklyn. She has recently retired from a career as a scientific and technical writer in the regulated medical products industry.

Treasurer

Lee Pardee has been attending First U for over 30 years and has served the congregation in many ways. She is a past chair of the Social Action, Membership, and Finance committees. She has served on the Worship and Music and Nominating Committees and on Search Committees for our current Music Director, Facilities Director, and a previous Senior Minister. She has served on the Board of Trustees three times and been President twice. She has sung in the choir almost as long as she has attended First U. Lee is retired from a 30-plus year career in foster care. She lives in Sunset Park.

Deacons

10 longtime members serve the congregation as deacons – experienced elders. A Deacon is elected by the congregation for life or until resignation.

Marty Bernstein

Bob Bero

Tom Check

Liz Davis

Laurel Lesio

Edwin Lord

Connie Newsom

Lee Pardee

Bruce Wilde

Nancy Wolf

Supporting First Unitarian

“It’s not how much we give, but how much we put into giving.”
— Mother Teresa

First Unitarian is completely self-supporting. Our revenue comes from building rentals, a draw from our endowment, and donations from members and friends. The last represents approximately one third of our operating income.

We gratefully accept monetary gifts of any size in support of our mission and purpose. Checks can be written to First Unitarian and dropped into the Sunday offering or mailed to the church office. Donations can also be made by credit card or bank transfer on our website (www.firstubrooklyn.org) or by text (347-735-5264) Cash offerings made through the Sunday plate are shared equally with a justice making organization (see Share the Plate).

In the late winter, First Unitarian holds its annual financial stewardship campaign. At this time we ask our members and friends to pledge (promise) to make a financial donation to the congregation in the next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Pledges allow the finance committee and board of trustees to make responsible budgetary decisions. Pledges are accepted throughout the year. Contact Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org).

Worship and Music

Worship services include congregational singing and performed music, candle lighting, prayers, a story for all ages, and a sermon. Often there are additional elements depending on the theme for the day. The sermon will usually be delivered by our senior minister, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons. Rev. Ana is away one Sunday a month. On those occasions, Meagan Henry will preach. Occasionally our intern minister or a guest speaker may lead worship.

Unitarian Universalists draw from many different sources. We believe that there is truth to be learned from the world's great works of art including poetry, philosophy, and liturgical texts from all faiths. Our music program, too, draws from many different disciplines. On any given Sunday, we may hear world music, jazz, classical, pop, or show tunes, accompanied by a range of instruments including our historic pipe organ.

Most people dress casually for worship, but if you prefer to "dress up", feel free.

Worship is followed by coffee, tea, and fellowship in the church basement, also known as the undercroft.

For more information about worship, contact Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons. For more information about music, Contact Adam Podd.

Lifespan Religious Education

We offer comprehensive lifespan religious education. Children from pre-k through 6th grade attend Sunday school classes two to three Sundays per month. One Sunday a month children stay in the Sanctuary with their families for an all-generations service. Middle school children alternate between Our Whole Lives (OWL) sexuality programming and Coming of Age. Children 5 and older attend the first part of the worship service and are sung out to their classes after the Wisdom Story. High School Youth meet with their advisors after worship and design their own programming. Children aged two and under are welcome in our professionally staffed nursery. For the safety of all, children and youth must be registered (see our website, www.fuub.org/home/religious-education).

Throughout the year, we offer faith development classes and programs for adults. Some classes meet on Sunday afternoons, others meet during the week, generally in the evenings. Past programs have included Our Whole Lives adult sexuality, credo workshops, Ethics for UU's and UU Theology. Many classes required advance registration, some allow for drop-ins.

For more information about Religious Education, contact Meagan Henry.

Membership

Discover More About First Unitarian and Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalist Association
www.uua.org

First Unitarian Weekly E-News: To
subscribe,
garnett@firstubrooklyn.org

First Unitarian Website:
www.fuub.org

Facebook: First Unitarian
Universalist in Brooklyn

Instagram: Firstubrooklyn

YouTube: First Unitarian Brooklyn

“Our society is pluralistic. We who accept the privilege of membership in that society agree to respect the people's right to live by their own religious precepts.” – Lewis B. Smedes

Joining a spiritual community can be one of life's most rewarding experiences. When you become a member of First Unitarian, you will find a community of people who work together to create a better world inside and outside our walls. You will discover deep and sustained friendships that are based on common goals and you will have companionship in your spiritual journey. Members in good standing are entitled to:

- Ⓜ free or low-cost rites of passage, including weddings, memorial services and baby blessing (see member policies on our website)
- Ⓜ serve on the Board of Trustees and other committees and groups that guide the future of our congregation
- Ⓜ serve as Lay Worship Leaders
- Ⓜ vote at congregational meetings
- Ⓜ reduced fees on adult religious education classes
- Ⓜ The joy of knowing that you are not alone in your

spiritual journey

If you have been attending worship services at First U for a while and feel a commitment to our community and are in agreement with our Right Relations Covenant and Purpose Statement, you may be ready to complete an Intent to Join Form. Once completed, you will be connected with a canvasser who will help you to determine an appropriate financial commitment. At that point, you will be ready to sign our historic membership book and become a voting member of the congregation. While not required, prospective members are encouraged to meet with Rev. Ana. Appointments can be made by calling the Church Office (718-624-5466).

Intent to Join Forms and our **Right Relations Covenant** can be found on our website (www.fuub.org/home/community/membership). Paper copies are available from Garnett Losak. Garnett is also available to answer any questions you may have.

Thursday, August 03, 2023

Getting Involved

“When you do nothing you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.” - Maya Angelou

A lot happens on Sunday morning to make our worship and fellowship experience meaningful. From the first handshake at the front door of the Sanctuary, to a friendly conversation at the welcome table, our friend and member volunteers ensure that our Sundays are warm, welcoming and accessible.

Here are some ways you can be part of the Sunday experience.

Ushers & Greeters

We often hear that our congregation is warm and friendly. Visitors and newcomers get their very first impression of our congregation from the greeting they receive at the front door. Ushers are available to help people find their way to classrooms and restrooms, provide a strong arm to those who need help with stairs and answer any questions that come up. No experience is necessary, only the ability to smile and arrive by 10:30AM. Contact: Lee Pardee (leepardee54@gmail.com) or sign-up to volunteer through the link in the weekly e-news.

Religious Education Teachers & Volunteers

RE volunteers frequently tell us that they learn as much as they teach. Teaching Sunday school can be one of the most rewarding ways to participate in congregational life. Teachers generally volunteer for only 2 Sundays a month, so are able to attend worship services regularly. Contact: Meagan Henry (meagan@fuub.org)

Choir & Music

The choir is open to anyone who enjoys singing. A commitment to attend regularly is required. Professional and amateur musicians are also welcome to lend their talents on Sunday mornings. Contact: Adam Podd (adam@fuub.org)

Soup Ministry

Many weeks we provide a delicious and inexpensive lunch through our soup ministry. Volunteers make or prepare soup and occasionally supply sandwich fixings. Costs are reimbursed from the kitty and the profit supports our fellowship hour. Providing lunch allows congregants to stay for afternoon activities. Contact: Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org)

Share the Plate

Each month, First Unitarian donates 50% of its Sunday cash offering to a justice making organization. Nominations for beneficiaries from members and friends of the congregation are welcome. An on-line nomination form and Share the Plate policy can be found on our website (www.fuub.org/home/justice/share-the-plate-2/). Contact: Julie Elting (drjelting@gmail.com)

Lighting the Chalice

Everyone is welcome to take a turn lighting the chalice at the start of our worship services. Children and their families are especially encouraged to participate. If you would like to light the chalice, just ask. Contact: Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org)

Activities and Programs for Newcomers

Newcomers are encouraged to complete a welcome card, available in the pews on Sundays or at the welcome table during coffee hour. These cards help us to connect you with the programs that interest you. Contact: Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org)

Fellowship Hour – We know that being in a room full of strangers can be stressful, but we hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to enjoy a cup of coffee, meet new friends and peruse our welcome table. Welcome Ambassadors are available to help you find your way.

Newcomer Orientations – Every month from October through May following worship and at least once in the summer, we offer this introduction to Unitarian Universalist history and theology and our congregation. This is a drop-in meeting. All are welcome. Contact: Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org)

Young Adult Ministry – We have an active YAM program that includes a monthly brunch, a monthly spiritual discussion, social events and outings. Watch the e-news for more information

Queer Caucus – The Queer Caucus is a safe space for LGBTQ identifiers to meet, socialize and connect. In past years, the group has organized First U's participation in the Brooklyn Pride parade, raised funds for victims and families of the Orlando shooting, led a summer worship service, and organized social events. Contact: Laura Manos-Hey (lmanoshey@gmail.com)

Adult Faith Formation Programs & Classes – We offer programs and classes to help our members and friends move more deeply into spiritual exploration. Some programs are one-time-only. Others may include multiple sessions. Most are free, but occasionally there will be a small charge to cover the cost of supplies. Please watch the e-news and the announcements in the Order of Service for information about programs throughout the year. Contact: Meagan Henry (meagan@fuub.org)

Monday Group – This group meets with Rev. Ana monthly at 11:00AM from September through June. Discussion topics are chosen by members of the group and change from week to week. The group is especially welcoming to retirees and others with non-traditional work schedules. Contact: Rev Ana (ana@fuub.org)

Women's Leadership Alliance (WLA) – WLA is an independent organization within First Unitarian emphasizing the importance of women's issues and voices, supporting local and national groups who advocate for women's rights, providing educational and mentoring activities and supporting women as ministers. Contact Julie Elting (drjelting@gmail.com)

Meditation Circle – All are welcome to practice silent meditation at 10:00 on Sunday mornings from September through June. The group begins with an opening reading, followed

by 20 minutes of seated meditation ending in time to attend worship. Contact: Marci Lucia (marciannelucia@gmail.com)

Pathways: Deepening your Relationship to First Unitarian – This 5-hour class is designed and strongly recommended for new members of the congregation and those who are interested in membership. Participants will prepare to become active, vibrant members of our community through exploration of their individual spiritual journeys and deeper understanding of UU history and theology. The class will include group activities and discussions, an optional tour of the building – even the dark, secret parts – and special guest appearances. This is also a great opportunity to meet and fellowship with other new members and prospective new members of our community. Contact: Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org)

Caring Ministry

An important part of the life of any religious community is care of people in need. Our minister provides pastoral counseling for members going through life transitions and losses. We also perform life cycle ceremonies for all rites of passage including weddings, baby blessings and memorial services held here in the church. Our lay Pastoral Associates reach out to provide practical assistance to those in crisis, struggling with health or physical challenges. To access pastoral care for yourself or a loved one, contact Meagan Henry (meagan@firstubrooklyn.org). For weddings, memorial services or baby blessings, contact Renee Strickland (renee@firstubrooklyn.org).

Note: pastoral care and counseling is not a substitute for professional medical or psychological treatment.

Our Building and History

“Beautiful places are almost alive! When you visit them, you can feel their breaths!”

Mehmet Murat Ildan

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn was established in 1833, by a group of merchant sea families who had been traveling across the river to attend worship services in Manhattan. The Gothic Revival Sanctuary was erected in 1844 by the Architect, Minard Lefever, who was one of the premier church architect of the time.

The (mostly Tiffany) stained glass windows were added from 1894 to 1909. The Parker Memorial Mosaic Angel was designed by Louis C. Tiffany in 1915 for the Unitarian Church of the Messiah in New York City and purchased in 1936.

Over the years, the congregation has owned and sold several properties. The current complex is made up of 4 connected buildings.

48 Monroe Place Brownstone – ground floor classrooms, office and two apartment rentals

Thursday, August 03, 2023

50 Monroe Place “Parish House” – Monroe Place hallway, Frances White Room, large kindergarten classroom, library, minister’s and religious educator’s offices and sexton’s apartment

Sanctuary – large church building, undercroft and kitchen

Chapel – smaller worship space east of Sanctuary

The original Hutchings organ with over 1,000 pipes was installed in 1899 and completely rebuilt by Mann and Trupiani in 1999.

How do I Find...

Church Office: 48 Monroe Place, ring the bell, our office manager, Wendy Russell and our Director of Congregational Life, Garnett Losak work in this area. This space also houses office equipment (copy and folding machines) and supply storage

Frances White Room (FWR) from 50 Monroe Place at the end of the hall, used for meetings and classes

Undercroft (Church Basement) from the Sanctuary: Down the spiral staircase, From the 50 Monroe door: immediate right down small flight of stairs, used for coffee hour and other large events

Library: from the Sanctuary: facing the pulpit, small door to the left, used for meetings and classes

Chapel: enter on Pierrepoint Street to the east of the Sanctuary (big church). The Chapel can also be accessed from the Undercroft and the Frances White Room. Multi-Purpose space and summer worship services.

Kitchen: from 50 Monroe: end of the hall right before double doors, down small flight of stairs

Patio (sometimes referred to as the terrace): Accessible from the office, used for social events and, in good weather, meetings or classes

Eastman Room (large upstairs classroom): immediately above the Frances White Room

Green Room: through the Eastman Room, mostly used for small meetings.

Passthrough: Small storage room between the Chapel and the Undercroft

Sofia Fahs Room: Small room near the kitchen off the Undercroft that is used for Religious Education storage and supplies

3rd Floor: Megan Henry’s, Adam Podd’s, and Rev. Ana’s offices are on the third floor. Use the back staircase entered from the Monroe Place hallway to the third floor. The Teen Room is also on this floor as well as an open space that is used as overflow office space, workspace for our intern minister and may be used for small meetings.

Message from Garnett Losak, Director of Congregational Life

I spend a lot of time thinking about why some people seem to connect to First Unitarian so quickly and so deeply and others struggle to find a place here, even to the point of drifting away. If I had the recipe for the secret sauce, I'd publish it because I know from discussions with membership professionals all over the country that this is the most confounding part of our job.

As I've thought about it, I began to realize that I've made some basic observations about what seems to work. So, here it goes...

- 1) Come to fellowship hour. I know this is very challenging for some people. There is nothing worse than feeling alone in a room full of people. And I admit that we're not always good at making everyone feel welcome in that big, loud, empty space. We're working on it though. Bite the bullet. It can be hard, I know, but the coffee (or tea) is free, there's often a pretty decent lunch, and you may just make a friend.
- 2) Volunteer to do something. Anything! I could make a comprehensive list, but it would take up too many pages. Here are three things that I think a relative newcomer can do.
 - ☉ Usher. This is the highest impact, lowest commitment volunteer job we have. Show up at 10:30 on Sunday morning, smile, hand out orders of service, be a welcoming presence. You're done by 11:30AM. (contact, Garnett Losak (garnett@fuub.org) Added value: You get to hear the choir rehearse!
 - ☉ Anything in the kitchen. There are often opportunities to prepare food, help with clean-up, even run the dishwasher. Kitchen work is social, it's contained, and it's appreciated.
 - ☉ Light the chalice. I look for a chalice lighter (or lighters) every Sunday morning. If you want to participate in worship in this way, just ask. The job is yours. By the way, many children love to do this. We welcome families to light the chalice together.
- 3) Take a class. I hope everyone will attend a newcomers' orientation (first Sunday of every month), but I encourage you to sign up for any number of adult faith formation classes throughout the year. You'll learn something, meet new people, and connect with a minister or staff leader.
- 4) Read the weekly E-News and/or "like" our Facebook page. They are both packed full of information about what's going on at First U and how to get involved. If you're not a subscriber, let me know. We are also on Instagram: firstubrooklyn
- 5) Make an appointment to meet with any member of our staff. We are all eager to get to know you and listen to your story. Our contact information can be found in this booklet or on our website (www.firstubrooklyn.org).
- 6) Come to Worship!! I know this sounds obvious, but I can't stress it enough. There are so many activities that compete for our time and attention, especially on the weekends. But, just like anything else, if you get out of practice, you'll lose the skill. People who attend worship regularly (at least 2-3 times per month) will know more people and feel more at home. When you're not there, your absence will be felt. If you have children, regular attendance at Sunday school is the key to raising children who embody Unitarian Universalist values and become lifelong UU's. You'll know you're hooked if you seek out the local UU church when you're on vacation (I do).

The connections committee and I are committed to making the experience of each and every person who walks through our doors welcoming and spiritually rewarding so, if you're a relatively new member or a newcomer to First Unitarian, let me know how it's going for you. I really want to know.

In Service,

Garnett Losak
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Thursday, August 03, 2023

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BROOKLYN
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-624-5466, www.firstubrooklyn.org

**Whoever you are, Whomever you love,
Wherever you are on your life journey,
Whatever the color of your skin, or your country of origin,
Whatever your gender or the source of your faith,
You are Welcome Here.**

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, Senior Minister

Meagan Henry, Director of Education & Family Ministry

Adam Podd, Director of Music

Garnett Losak, Director of Congregational Life

Renee Strickland, Executive Manager, Buildings and Events

Kevin Brunson, Director of Facilities

Wendy Russell, Office Manager/Bookkeeper

Bobby Blackman, Custodian

Rachel Schmitt, Intern Minister