

Winter 2022

Grace Notes

The Quarterly Journal of First Unitarian Universalist Church



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Winter UU Themes

Living with Intention
January

Widening the Circle
February

Renewing Faith
March

From the Minister

Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer



*The new year always brings us what we want
Simply by bringing us along—to see
A calendar with every day uncrossed,
A field of snow without a single footprint.*
- Dana Gioia

In recent days, comedians have joked that 2020 never ended – we're just now in encore renditions of that traumatic year. And as 2022 begins with a new variant making me really wonder what these coming weeks will bring, it feels like here we go again, and again and again. It's like a tilt-a-whirl, and if you're anything like me, you could only handle so many spins before things got bad.

Of course, we know some things have changed, for good and for worse – for our collective health, for our democracy, for our church, for each of our lives.

Vaccines, for one. And in-person church, such as it is. As well as school and public spaces – they, too, are open differently, as we adapt to daily navigation that has become so familiar now. It's hard to imagine it much different anytime soon.

And some things are the same, year after year. Like the invitation of a fresh calendar page.

In recent days in our home, the place where the calendar usually keeps watch over our whirlwind-ed days is empty. It's an eerie reminder, as that space on the refrigerator stays vacant for a few days while we wait for the fresh new calendar (made of family pictures of those months the year before) that is currently in transit. It is a reminder of the abrupt transition from one season of fullness – decorations and festivities – turning toward another of emptiness – cleaned-up spaces and open calendar days.

Empty and open as the future may feel, so much is swirling around all the time. The days will fill with something – be it activities or feelings or moments or news. We know, too, that every plan or dream or intention put on the threshold of a new year is always done in pencil, with a humble recognition of uncertainty.

Maybe that's how hope, or love, or justice always happens, too. It's all uncertain. It's all in pencil. Even if I'm not quite ready and the little boxes meant to keep my life in order are still on their way in the mail, I'm going to hold their spots – because the possibility that those days fill, at least in part, with love or joy or beauty, is worth it.

In Faith,
Luke

From the Board

Kim Reid - Vice-President

Looking Back....Moving Forward

The beginning of a new year is an opportunity to reflect on the past and look toward the future. Who knew we'd still be dealing with a pandemic as we move into 2022? We had all hoped that life would have returned to some sense of normalcy by now, but alas, we must continue to be patient. We have adapted in so many ways – our jobs, gathering with friends and families, favorite activities, or even finding just the right mask that we can comfortably wear. As I look back at this past year, I realize just how much I have grown and accomplished despite the challenges.

As a church community, 2021 was also a year of growth and accomplishments. I'm especially proud of the hard work of our Shared Ministry teams. Recently each of the teams took time to reflect on this past year, and the work they have done is impressive!



- The Worship Team has focused on how best to provide support for the spiritual needs of our congregation within a safe environment. They have certainly risen to the challenge of providing a quality and meaningful experience for both online and in-person worship.
- The Hospitality Team has worked to develop safe practices for providing hospitality as we reopen our church on a limited basis to our members and friends. The team has brought our congregation together through a variety of online or safely-distanced outdoor Fellowship events, and we are grateful for their time and energy.
- Faith Development has been dealing with the logistics of how classes for all ages have changed due to COVID mitigation needs. The creative minds of this team have come up with many impressive solutions. A highlight this summer was a well-attended and successful Chalice Camp.
- The Social Justice Team held over 25 educational and justice-focused forums, either in-house or with partner organizations, and collected for 13 organizations through shared plates during this calendar year. This dedicated group is truly living our mission of collective justice and service.
- The Financial Team continues the essential work of managing the financial health of the church, and we are very appreciative of how well they handle the budgeting, investments, pledge drive, and auction. More info on the Spring 2022 Auction will be coming!
- The Administration Team members have been looking at various HVAC system upgrades to mitigate the COVID virus during in-person gatherings. This team is successfully managing a multitude of new tech responsibilities and challenges as we work to improve and refine our livestreaming and other online needs.

Wow!! As I look back on all that has been happening in our church this past year, I am filled with gratitude and awe. Here's to moving forward in 2022, and continuing to appreciate all that we've accomplished in such a challenging environment. I'm thankful to be in community with all of you.

Tending the Flame...since 1866

UU Member & Friends Annual Pledge Drive 2022



Tending the Flame
... since 1866

**UU Members & Friends
Annual Pledge Drive
2022**

February 14 - March 17



A Message from your Pledge Team:

Barb Foss, Jodi Edmonson, Heather Hanson,
Joe Lobl, Margo Stich, and Robin Taylor

We are excited to bring you the annual members and friends 2022 pledge drive! Bookended by two popular holidays, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day, what might this year's campaign include? Hearts and shamrocks? Sonnets and limericks? Certainly love and possibly some luck, and with your generosity a "pot-o-gold" at the end of the rainbow.

The annual pledge drive directly supports the church's operating budget, and we ask for your participation so that together we can continue this church's mission of nurturing spirituality and practicing justice which began in 1866.

As we begin this year's pledge drive, we are entering into our third pandemic year. Last year at this time we proclaimed:

***"Our doors are closed because
Our hearts are open."***

As the reopening guidelines evolve and we are able to meet in-person again (with limits and safeguards), we hope to declare:

"Open hearts and open doors!"
(Omicron or other variant impacts notwithstanding)

It has been heartwarming seeing each other again and occupying the sacred spaces that hold so many memories for us. We are grateful to our minister, staff, board, and the many volunteers who have skillfully and thoughtfully guided us through a number of pandemic transitions in order to create and maintain a welcoming space for all.

We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Richard Harrell who is retiring from the Pledge Team after a lengthy tenure during which he took part in a variety of pledge drives and held many stewardship roles. We also welcome Heather Hanson to the team. A First UU member since 2019, she brings a new vitality along with her experience in corporate philanthropy. Thank you Richard, and welcome Heather! And we are still accepting new team members, so please contact any one of us if you are interested in coming aboard.

The Pledge Team looks forward to greeting you in person at church throughout the pledge drive. Hopefully gone are the windy drive-thrus and plastic bins outside the door! Now you will find us in the church lobby, fully masked and pleased to welcome you on the following Sunday mornings:

February 20, February 27, March 6, and March 13

Please stop at the lobby table to chat with a team member, pick up or drop-off a hard-copy pledge form, or inquire about the many options for online pledging. An assortment of treasures will be available from which you can choose: cards, candles, stickers, puzzles, chocolates, and mints. There will be something for all ages!

If you wish to meet with a visiting steward or are unable to be at church on any of the campaign Sundays, please contact the office or a Pledge Team member, and we'll be glad to connect with you personally.

Look for updates about the 2022 pledge drive in your weekly eNews. We look forward to seeing you and sharing the messages of sustained giving. Most importantly, we thank you for your ongoing support as we tend the flame together!

Save the Date for UU's Got Talent ~ Saturday, March 5 at 7 pm

Dare we dream of gathering in person in the sanctuary for a talent show on Saturday, March 5? If not, we will still hold the date for a virtual talent show that night at 7 pm. The important thing now is to begin thinking about how you can contribute to the show! Do you have a song, a skit, a juggling act, a trick up your sleeve, or a poem to share? Please contact Robin Taylor to sign up to share your talents at RobinESTaylor@gmail.com.

Living with Intention

Watch

"Along Came Polly"
"Nomadland"
"The Last Jedi"
"Tangled"
"The Princess and the Frog"
"Forrest Gump"

Read

[*Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World*](#) by Cal Newport

[*The Little Book of Intentional Living*](#)
by Carolyn Boyes

[*Circles All Around Us*](#)
by Brad Montague & Kristi Montague

Listen

["New Day's Lyric"](#) by Amanda Gorman

Ezra Klein Show– April 21, 2021

[That Anxiety You're Feeling?](#)
[It's a Habit You Can Unlearn](#)

[Soul Matters January 2022 Playlist](#) on Spotify

January's Mantra/Daily Practice

Today, I intend to
-----•

This month's practice begins each day--maybe even before you fully open your eyes--with an intention of your choosing. By doing this, you'll learn to understand how your own thoughts and feelings influence your perception of reality, and can harness this self knowledge to create more love, joy, and justice in your world.

Have you driven to a new part of town just to wander around, or explored a part of the park you didn't know well, trusting that you'd be able to make your way back to someplace familiar eventually?

It's a wonderful thing to do, something between a game and a spiritual practice. As we play with intention this month, how about releasing all intention for a little while, and wandering, aimless and spontaneous, to experience an hour or two of unintentionally?

Get Lost

Living with Intention



1. When you woke up this morning, what was it that you were most excited to do? What did you intend to do? And did you do it?
2. Tell about a time that you meant for one thing to happen, but an entirely different thing happened instead.
3. What's one habit you have that keeps you from doing what you want to do, or know you need to do? Be honest with yourself and share with others. Normalize imperfection.
4. What intentions do you have about relationships? Is there a new relationship you would intentionally like to make/foster/change?
6. What is your intention with your studies this month? Is there one topic you would like to learn more about?
7. What do you intend to be when you grow up? (Grown-ups - what are your intentions for 2 years/5 years/ 7 years from now.)
8. Did today (or yesterday) turn out as you had planned? If not, how did your intentions change?

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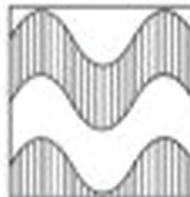
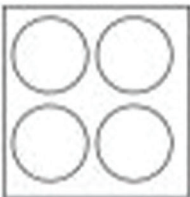
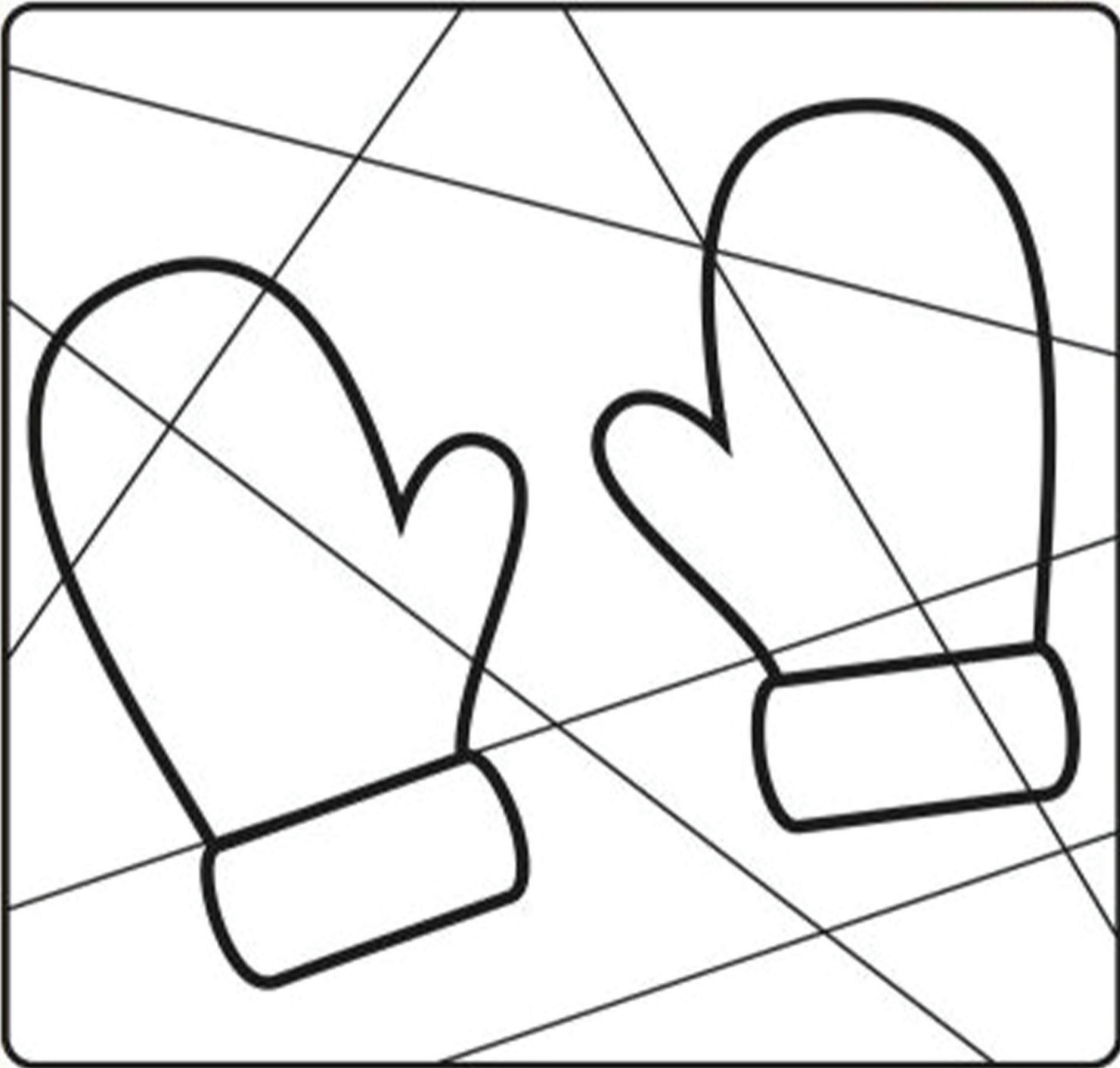


Compiled by Amy Nelson
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Sources
Soul Matters for RE
Soulful Home
Web searches
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Zentangle Mittens

Directions: A zentangle is a fun doodle drawing that encourages visual motor skills, creativity and relaxation. Draw a pattern from the bottom or color the sections of the mittens broken up by the black lines.





Follow the directions below:

1. Draw a circle around the person on the bicycle.
2. Draw a rectangle around the hotel.
3. Draw a heart to the left of the hot air balloon.
4. Draw an 'X' over the salon.
5. Draw a circle around all the lights that are turned on.
6. Put a check mark all of the snow peaks.
7. Draw a line connecting the six clouds.



June 5, 1976
First Unitarian Universalist Church
Boar's Head Celebration

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Sunday Services
9 & 11 am