

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola

The Light

Vol. 67 Issue 12 December 2024



Celebrate Diversity *Strive for Justice* *Inspire Love*

A December to Embrace Community and Hope

From Your Board: President's Letter

Dear UUCP Members and Friends,

As the year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on the events of the past months and the challenges and opportunities ahead. Many of us are still processing the results of the November election, each in our own way. In times of uncertainty, I encourage us to lean into the solace and solidarity that our UUCP community offers. Here, we find not only a sanctuary but also a shared commitment to our mission of celebrating diversity, striving for justice, and inspiring love.

This December, we have a wonderful lineup of Sunday services that will lift our spirits and deepen our understanding of the holiday season. Our presenters will explore the Christian, pagan, and secular traditions associated with Christmas, offering unique perspectives on the season's meaning. We'll enjoy musical expressions of warmth and joy, and we'll reflect on the magic of the holidays through the eyes of children. We'll also gather for our cherished Christmas Eve candle lighting service at 5 PM on December 24. This is always a special time to celebrate togetherness, hope, and light in the dark of winter. I hope you'll join us as often as you can.



Joe Vinson, UUCP Board President

As we approach the end of the year, if you're able, please consider going above and beyond your pledge amount to support some additional funds: to show gratitude to our hardworking staff, to replenish our Member Assistance Fund for those in need, and/or to strengthen the UUCP Trust, ensuring our congregation's vitality for years to come. Every contribution, large or small, makes a difference.

For many, the close of 2024 will be a relief, yet there is widespread anxiety about what 2025 might bring. As a congregation, it is more important than ever to hold fast to our values and support one another. Together, we can face the future with courage and determination, knowing we are not alone.

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Yule, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, multiple holidays, or none at all, I wish you a season of peace, connection, and joy. Thank you for being a part of our UUCP family.

Joe Vinson

President, UUCP Board of Directors

DIRECTORY

See our website, uupensacola.org, for updates and a complete list of teams

Office Administrator

(850) 475-9077, uupensacola@gmail.com

Community Minister

Rev. Maggie Lovins

Governing Board

President: Joe Vinson

President Elect: Crys Brockway

Past President: Scott Satterwhite

Secretary: Lisa Rawson

Treasurer: Bradley Vinson

(treasurer@uupensacola.org)

Members at Large:

Denise Gunn

Claire Helton

Marybeth Ramsey

Barbara Wright

MINISTRY TEAMS

Adult Exploration: Trista Blouin

Buildings & Grounds: Ed King

Caring: Trista Blouin & Rev. Maggie Lovins
(caring@uupensacola.org)

Children’s Religious Education Coordinator:
Honor M. Bell, III (cre@uupensacola.org)

Communications: Joe Vinson
(communications@uupensacola.org)

Denominational Affairs: Scott Satterwhite

Finance: Laurie Winterberg

Fun and Fellowship: Marybeth Ramsey

Leadership Development: Scott Satterwhite

Membership: Lauren Anzaldo
(membership@uupensacola.org)

Outreach: Laura Keith King

Safer Congregation: Denise Gunn
(safer@uupensacola.org)

Social Justice: Paula Montgomery & Scott Satterwhite

Sunday Services: Nancy Hagman

Who wants to go? Who wants to share a group to watch sections virtually from UUCP? Contact Paula



The UUA General Assembly is the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association, where delegates from congregations gather to conduct business, engage in worship, and discuss social justice issues.



Our Faith Is Needed: UUA Membership Steady and Religious Education Growing! 🌟

In a time when many report the shrinking role of religion, the 2024 UUA Certification Report offers encouraging news: Unitarian Universalist membership has remained steady, and participation in religious education has grown by 16%—the first increase in a decade!

This stability amidst broader trends of decline in mainline denominations highlights the resonance and relevance of our faith today. As Rev. Ashley Horan, UUA Vice President for Programs and Ministries, put it: “Our faith is needed.”

Key findings include:

- ✔ Over 1,000 UU congregations and communities.
- ✔ Innovative religious education efforts driving growth.
- ✔ Financial resilience, with average pledges up 43% over the past decade.

This year, the UUA is embracing transparency by releasing the full report online, inviting all of us to use this data as a tool for reflection, innovation, and action.

Explore the full report on UU World at <https://bit.ly/3Z8UNee>.

[#UnitarianUniversalism](#) [#FaithInAction](#)
[#ReligiousEducation](#) [#UUA](#) [#UU](#) [#LoveAtTheCenter](#)
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Sunday Services in December



The first Sunday of the month is always Manna Sunday! The collection basket will be in the lobby to drop off items. Most requested items from Manna Food Pantries include canned fruit in 100% juice, fruit cups (20 oz. or less), soups (low sodium), canned dinners (20 oz. or less), and canned tomatoes (16 oz. or less).

December 1, 2024

Advent" - A time that is not just for Christians

Presenter: Theresa Everett is a certified and licensed Lay Preacher, Worship & Eucharist Minister

Contrary to what millions of people think, Advent is not a "Christian" invention, but rather deeply rooted in ancient pagan traditions. Come and let us explore together and embrace this advent and the natural season which leads us into the Winter Solstice and the beauty of the play between darkness and light.

**There will be a New Member Ceremony in this service.*

Second Hour: Heathen Kinship

December 8, 2024

Holidays with and from our UUCP children

Presenter: Honor Bell III, CRE Coordinator and the Children of the Children's Religious Education Program(CRE)

Come to enjoy the offerings from our children. They will be sharing about various winter holidays they have been studying in CRE. In addition, they will be describing their favorite parts.

December 15, 2024

Holiday Moods in Music—The Secular Version

Coordinated and Sponsored by Thom Botsford

The holidays can bring joy, but also the blues. And sometimes it seems that the holidays are only truly for Christians. Non-Believers cannot escape! For this program, a specially assembled ensemble will play secular tunes that convey a range of emotions. The musicians are Lisa Kirkland, vocals, George Petropoulos, piano, Walt Kattner, bass and guitar; Steve Manicola, drums and Thom Botsford, sax.

Second Hour: Heathen Kinship

December 22, 2024

TBD

December 24, 2024

Christmas Eve Service 5:00 PM

Christmas Eve family service led by Laura Keith King

Bring family, friends, and guests for a special service of carols and readings for all ages. concluding with a traditional candle lighting ritual. A Special Offering will be taken to benefit our Members Assistance fund which is used throughout the year to help our church families in need.

The offering at the Christmas Eve Family service every year goes to replenish the Members Assistance fund at UUCP. If you are not able to attend the Christmas Eve service, but would like to contribute to the fund, you may indicate that when you make the donation. If you would like to do a reading, please contact Laura.

December 29, 2024

History of voluntary immigration

Presenter: Pat Gleich, Doctorate in Social Science and Sociology

Immigration is such a volatile subject at this time in our history. Join us as Dr. Gleich shares history of voluntary immigration, looking at the last 200 years. She will present the trends and patterns, places of origin, and notable contributions. Included will be the laws regulating immigration and existing pathways to permanent residency that have been passed in the US. In addition, there will be pictures of our own members who have current roots in the US due to immigration.



December at UUCP



Sunday Sweets

Sunday Sweets for the month of December will be held on Sunday December 8th. To accommodate members who are practicing gluten-free eating there will be a separate table for gluten free baked goods to prevent cross contamination.

Readers' Group

The November Readers' Group Recommends:

The House on Cerulean Sea -
TJ Klune

Death and the Joyful Woman -
Ellis Peters

James - *Percival Everett*

The Vegetarian - *Han Kang*

Unsheltered - *Barbara Kingsolver*

As Audio Books -

Angela's Ashes - *read by Frank McCourt*

Tom Lake - *read by Meryl Streep*

Anything By -

Alexander McCall-Smith

Elizabeth Berg

READERS' GROUP ON WINTER BREAK - January and February 2025

Join December's Readers' Group on Zoom, Monday, December 9th at 10 AM. The Zoom link will be sent a few days prior to the event.

Those who are regulars might describe the group as somewhat of a book review/recommendation group. I would agree!

Happy Holidays to all.



Want to know more? Contact
Laurie Winterberg

Finance Team

The Next Mission..... Time and Talent - Results in Treasure

The Finance Team is scheduled to meet on Saturday, December 7th - 9:30 am at the church to begin the planning for their NEXT Big Mission.... The 2025-26 Annual Operating Pledge Campaign.

Who may consider joining in the conversation, and implementation... Maybe you? Yes - you.

Share your time and bring your talent so that we can best address

our need for....(you guessed it) - treasure.

From deciding on a **theme**, and **activities**, to gathering **budget projections** for the next year, to **design** and and preparation of **pledge materials, promotion, follow-up...**it's all part of the process that will result in our congregation's vote on an annual operating budget at our **annual meeting** in May of 2025

*Want to find out more - contact
Finance Chair - Laurie
Winterberg*



Special Survey from Sunday Services!

[Click here for a survey](#) that Sunday Services Ministry Team would like our Congregation to complete. We will create a paper copy to be given out on Dec 1st and Dec 8th for replies in hard copy.

November LUUnch BUUnch

So here we are, almost into the midst of the "eating season". We could either go light, or go heavy; while keeping in mind that most local restaurants depend on this "high season" to accumulate some reserves, and I'm not talking about calories. So how about we go heavy (to make sure they don't get away without a test) at the fairly new (...3-5 months?) NOLA (850-466 2257), at 523 East Gregory (location of the former Franco's, with darkened interior probably to heighten the atmosphere and "explain" the higher prices); at 1 PM as usual on the second Wednesday, the 11th.



The [on-line menu](#) has lots of words and pictures, but no prices (which my take-out menu does have), but does list the Wednesday lunch Special as "Your Choice of Gumbo with Fried Green Tomatoes". On the take out, that G/FGT isn't to be found, but the Gumbo cup/bowl run \$6.50-\$14. lists, and the FGT (appetizer) runs \$12. They also have an online reservation option, so I'd say it behooves us to reserve the proper number of chairs needed, certainly by the time we walk in. Preferably you can please advise me of your possible attendance by Sunday the 8th.

So how was Taste Of Jerusalem? Pretty good, I'd say. We had five, with two cancellations of Two's (medical appts., the most frequent annual cause). All seemed happy with their fare. I'll note that, interestingly, in contrast to our several other visits to TOJ, all the service was by younger females, whereas in the past, it was largely a male, mostly older - run operation. And the quantities were very sufficient as usual, likewise the flavors of middle east. Couldn't say about the kitchen's gender bias, but the two gals seemed engaged there as well. (My all-vegetarian samples dish did have two salads, and that was a bit much.)

-Hugh Ed T.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO LOWER YOUR TAXABLE INCOME?????



If you are of the age which requires you to take a **required minimum distribution (RMD) from your retirement savings**, you should consider donating **to the UUCP Charitable Trust** directly from your required minimum distribution as a **tax-free transfer**. Just have your financial institution make your trust donation check directly payable to the church, notated for the Trust, before they make the remaining amount of your RMD check payable to you. Managing your donation in this fashion allows you to avoid counting these donations as part of your taxable income. Therefore, you pay no income taxes on these donations. However, the donation amount does count toward your required minimum distribution amount. And you do **NOT** have to itemize deductions in order to benefit from this arrangement. For example, if you were to make a \$1000 donation to the Charitable Trust and you are in the 20% income tax bracket, you normally would have to earn about \$1200 to make this donation because you would pay about \$200 in taxes on a \$1000 donation. Since the donated amount is paid directly by your financial institution to your designated charity **BEFORE** you receive the remaining amount of your required minimum distribution, these donations do not become part of your adjusted gross income and are not subject to income taxes. Hence, you may be able to lower your tax bracket. Of course, please check with your financial advisor about your particular situation.

For information about the UUCP Charitable Trust, contact Georgieanna Bryant, Chair, Jack Comstock, Secretary, Laurie Winterberg, Treasurer, Patti Underwood, Trustee, and Hugh Ed Turner, Trustee.

**The Unitarian Universalist Church of Pensacola
9888 Pensacola Boulevard
Pensacola, FL 32534**

TO:



LGBTQ

Welcoming Congregation

Deadline for the January
Light:
Saturday, December 21

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