



*Community Matters*

**First Church Unitarian, Littleton**

**December 20, 2020**

**Join us Sunday, December 20 at 10:00 for “Solstice Service/Yule Celebration”!**

I’m really looking forward to joining you again this Sunday for “Solstice Service/Yule Celebration”! This will continue the December Soul Matters theme of stillness. The service will include many elements from the Yule Service that is ordinarily held on Saturday evening, so this is a special Sunday. **Once again, we plan to use YouTube Live for our service.** You no longer need to wait for the Sunday morning email for the worship service link! Simply go to <http://youtube.com/FirstChurchUnitarianLittleton/live> and the live video will come up! If you have trouble with that, you can also go to <https://www.youtube.com/FirstChurchUnitarianLittleton/> and click on the video that says "live". (If YouTube Live isn’t working, Plan B is that we will use Facebook Live and send out the new link on the listserv.) Usually the live video stream begins around 9:45, but there won’t be much to see until 9:56 or so when the gathering video starts. This week’s gathering video features music by **The Firehouse Band**, so don’t miss it!

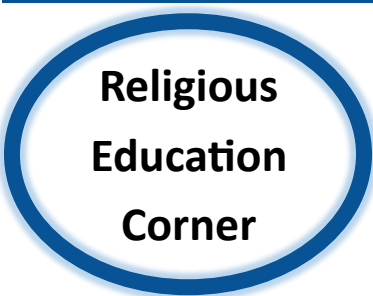
**There will again be a (Zoom) Joys and Concerns and Virtual Coffee Hour after the service** and that link information will also be included in the Sunday morning listserv email. Barring something unforeseen, the Joys and Concerns link will be the same each week:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

You can also use the Meeting ID and Password if you try to “Join Meeting” in Zoom. I hope to "see" you then!

With love and anticipation,  
Rev. Lara



December theme: Stillness

Listen for the Voices of Angels

*During this winter holiday season, we can be still and listen for the voices of angels. We can imagine an angel speaking as our inner voice that arises out of the silence. We can learn from the traditional Christmas birth legend of Jesus and like the shepherds, we can imagine that an angel is calling us to make an important journey, a change in our lives, a new way of being in the world.*

December RE dates to remember:

Zoom gathering: December 20, 9:00-9:45

We will learn about the Jesus story and imagine how an angel could be our inner voice calling us to a new journey or challenge. Let’s plan to share these new journeys and our favorite holiday activities too!

January RE Dates to remember:

Zoom RE Gatherings from 9:00-9:45 AM

Sunday, January 10

Sunday, January 24

The RE Committee,

Susan, Debbie, Karen, Tatum, and Emily

I made myself a snowball  
As perfect as could be,  
I thought I’d keep it as a pet,  
And let it sleep with me.  
I made it some pajamas,  
And a pillow for its head,  
Then last night it ran away,  
But first—it wet the bed!

—“Snowball,” by Shel Silverstein

**We look forward to “seeing” you in church.  
First Church Unitarian is a wonderful community to be part of.**

## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Virtual!

Don't miss our virtual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24 (Thursday) at 6:00 p.m.! The service will feature the traditional nativity stories from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke read by some of our youth, some words from our Deacons, a homily by Rev. Lara, and music by The Church Choir and The Artemis Singers. You'll have some carols to sing from the comfort of your own home, too – including the traditional closing of the service with "Silent Night". We will hold the service on Zoom so that we can see others from the FCU community. Have a candle ready so that you can dim your lights and hold up your candle in the Zoom meeting! If you need a candle, we will leave some candles and bobèche (like we normally hand out in the sanctuary) available to you by the door of the church closest to Rev. Lara's office as of this coming Sunday afternoon (December 20). The link to share publicly for Christmas Eve is <https://tinyurl.com/FCUDec24>. You can click on that before 6 p.m. (a gathering video will start around 5:55 p.m.), *or* if you prefer you can use the Zoom link information (either works, both take you to Zoom):

[REDACTED]

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See you on Christmas Eve!

## New Year's Potpourri Service, Adapted

On Sunday, December 27th, our Deacons will lead worship with our traditional New Year's Potpourri Service. Like always, it will be a more casual gathering on the first Sunday after Christmas. It will take place solely over Zoom and will not be broadcast via YouTube.

With it being virtual it will feel a little different but you will still have the same opportunity to share a meaningful poem or brief prose with our FCU family. Performing live music will be technically challenging. However, if you have a recording of a musical performance that is less than 4 minutes in length, it can be emailed to Cindy Malley at [hopefulandkind@gmail.com](mailto:hopefulandkind@gmail.com) for inclusion before Friday, December 18th.

It is possible our Deacons may need to be selective due to time constraints.

We hope you'll join us for this adapted annual tradition. Please watch for a zoom link to arrive via our listserv. If you have any questions, please reach out to Cindy Malley, Bill Duston, and/or Andy Leyenaar.

## Stewardship Celebration

Saturday, FEBRUARY 6, 2020  
SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for our first Virtual STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATION on  
Saturday afternoon, FEBRUARY 6, 2020.

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.  
MORE DETAILS TO COME!

## RJAC presents:

Embracing Racial Justice is coming back reimagined ONLINE via ZOOM on the 3rd Saturday night in January.

A short video to be viewed together and discussed.

## LITTLETON RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The Littleton Affordable Housing Trust, using Community Preservation Act funds, has established two rental assistance programs in Littleton for residents who qualify. Both programs are administered by the town's Department of Elder and Human Services. The Littleton Rental Assistance Program (LRAP) has been in operation for a full year, and has the goal of providing housing stability and opportunities for cost-burdened renters in Littleton. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) was created in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis, and is intended for short term assistance for residents who have lost income due to the pandemic.

Both programs evaluate applicants with a point system based on income, rental burden, ties to the town, and age. Confidentiality is maintained; applications are evaluated with personally identifying information removed. Applicants who receive other housing assistance from public funds are generally not eligible for these programs. For further information or to apply, look at the Littleton town website, [www.littletonma.org/elder-and-human-services](http://www.littletonma.org/elder-and-human-services), contact Elder and Human Services directly at 978 540 2470 or by email to [ademichele@littletonma.org](mailto:ademichele@littletonma.org).

## Women's Alliance

It was great to see the Alliance members last Saturday on zoom. It was the poetry meeting and I suggested no limericks! A consequence of which was that there were several limericks. Thank you Judy White for this limerick about the Alliance:

COVID-19

We're members of Women's Alliance.  
We wash hands and wear masks with compliance.  
We stay home in our room  
and meet monthly on zoom  
and entrust our wellbeing to science.

Also read was this poem by Yoko Ono:

"Spring passes and one remembers one's innocence.  
Summer passes and one remembers one's exuberance.  
Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence.  
Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance."

Please everyone, persevere.

- Wendy McDougall, Pres. Littleton Women's Alliance

## Neighborhood Supper is back (sort of)!

The Neighborhood Supper Board met this week. As of January, The Supper will be back in operation, in a limited way, supporting the work of Food is Love. St. Anne's is cooking Christmas dinners this week. First Baptist and the LDS church will be joining the schedule in January. We will continue preparing frozen meals for pick up, probably for the next six months at least, until it is safe for us to have full, busy kitchens and dining rooms with 60 guests. Until then, we will continue to provide nutritious meals for any one who comes.

Pick up hours are Tuesday through Thursday from 10:00-2:00, during office hours and from 4:00-5:30 on Tuesday afternoons.

Donations to Neighborhood Supper can be sent to PO Box 112, Littleton MA 01460. Neighborhood Supper is a 501(c)3.

## FCU Arts Workshop

The FCU Arts Workshop will meet again on ZOOM on Saturday, January 9, from 11am-1pm. We do a different activity each time, talk about our creative process, do show-and-tell. If you want to join, please let Niela know before Xmas ([nielam@comcast.net](mailto:nielam@comcast.net) <<mailto:nielam@comcast.net>>) so she can send you the information you will need.

**Submissions for Community Matters can be sent to [office@fculittle.org](mailto:office@fculittle.org)**

**Deadline for the next two week will be Saturday at 10am due to the Holidays.**

**Saturday, December 26 and Saturday January 2**

**Sunday, December 20, 2020**  
**First Church Unitarian, Littleton**  
*Solstice/Yule Service*

**ORDER OF SERVICE**

*Gathering Video: "The Christians and the Pagans" by Dar Williams (The Firehouse Band)*

**Community Matters** (Andy Leyenaar, Deacon)

**Prelude** "Prelude in C Major" by J.S. Bach (Molly Lozeau, Music Director)

**Call to Worship** (Rev. Lara Hoke)

**Chalice Lighting and Covenant** (Fergus Abreu)

**Advent Wreath Lighting** (Lara)

**Words of Welcome** (Lara)

**Opening Hymn #226** "People, Look East" (The Church Choir)

**Time for All Ages** "What Is the Winter Solstice?" (Lara)

**Opportunity for Generosity—Receiving Our Offering** (Lara)

**Offertory** "Happy Xmas (War is Over)" by John Lennon (Molly)

**YULE CELEBRATION**

**Centering Meditation** (Carole Tillis)

**Casting the Sacred Circle** (Carole)

**Calling Directions** (Andy)

**Consecration of Yule Symbols** (Martha Childs)

**Song** "Silent Night, Solstice Night", music by Franz Xaver Gruber, words by Ellen Reed (The Artemis Singers)

**Meditation for Entering Darkness** (Meg Low)

**Song** "Each Night New Hope is Born" (The Artemis Singers)

**Candle Ritual** (Carole)

**Reading** "The Shortest Day" by Susan Cooper (Patti Sardella)

**Meditation for Healing the Earth** (Madelyn Hammer)

**Thanking the Directions** (Andy)

**Closing Hymn #235** "Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly" (The Church Choir)

**Benediction for Yule Service** (Meg)

**Closing Words** (Lara)

**Postlude** "Deck the Hall", traditional Welsh melody, arr. Phillip Keveren (Carolyn McCreary)

*Announcements/Joys & Concerns/Breakout rooms will follow on Zoom*

