

NEWCOMER NEWS

December 2025



We focus on a different theme each month, and December's theme is Choosing Hope. Join us all month to explore this theme in worship.

WELCOME NEWCOMERS!

This is a special monthly newsletter that shares what is happening here at OUUC for those who are new. We are trying to avoid insider language and assumptions here, if anything doesn't make sense please let us know.

We are also happy to chat with you in general. Feel free to reach out:

Rev Mary Gear, minister@ouuc.org

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DECEMBER HOLIDAYS IN A UU CONGREGATION



In Unitarian Universalism we honor and draw upon many sources of spiritual wisdom and inspiration. You will see this reflected in the variety of holiday practices in December as we honor Christian, pagan, Jewish, and humanist understandings of the season.

We will light Advent candles on Sundays all month, hold a Winter Solstice Spiral walk, sing carols together with the choir, have Christmas eve candlelit services, and mark the new year with an outdoor fire communion service. Find the dates and times for all of these events on the OUUC website and in the monthly events flyer.

HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS IN UU FAITH

Many Unitarian Universalists enjoy noting our faith's connections to beloved Christmas traditions. Charles Follen introduced the first Christmas tree in the United States. Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* modeled selfless Christmas giving, and Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* celebrated generosity and merrymaking. Even familiar carols like "Jingle Bells" and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" were written by Unitarians.

In *The Battle for Christmas*, historian Stephen Nissenbaum explains how the holiday once revolved around revelry and social inversion. Lower-income communities traditionally visited wealthier households for food and drink during the season. As industrialization deepened class divides, these customs created both fear and guilt among wealthier Americans. Universalists and Unitarians helped reshape Christmas into a more family-centered and peaceful celebration.

Their efforts, along with works like Clement Clarke Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, helped establish the holiday's modern traditions. This history invites us to celebrate our heritage while reflecting on the values and challenges that still shape how we approach Christmas today.

From *UU's and the Battle of Christmas* by Gail Forsyth-Vail in 2013.



NEW UU SEEKER'S CLASS

We hold a class for newcomers to learn more about OUUC and Unitarian Universalism on every Sunday from 2-3:30pm, via Zoom for 9 weeks. All are welcome to join us, RSVP's are encouraged: Chloe at memberengagement@ouuc.org

Upcoming Topics of the Classes:

- 1/11 Who we are: OUUC
- 1/18 Who we are: Unitarian Universalists
- 1/25: How & why we worship
- 2/1: How we learn and grow
- 2/8: How we care for each other



COME EAT WITH US FOR FOOD AND FRIENDSHIP

A great way to get to know us is to come to one of our weekly dinners. We put on a dinner on Thursday evening almost every week, 5:30pm. All are welcome, it's not a potluck, just come!

We have many activities after dinner: spiritual practice groups, parent groups, game nights, and more. Most groups are drop in and welcome newcomers. Check the calendar for the latest happenings.

Note: there are no dinners on 12/25 or 1/1 for the holiday break.