



FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF CHICAGO

November 2017 Newsletter

First Unitarian Society of Chicago 5650 S. Woodlawn Ave., Chicago IL 60637 (773) 324-4100

Abundance of Paths Rev. Teri Schwartz

Everyone always thinks there's only one way, but a great cab driver—and a great person—knows there's more than one way.
—Sherman Alexie, quoting his cab driver

November is a month often associated with abundance. Even in the city, we celebrate the end of the harvest. Seasonal produce at its best is abundant at the grocery store and in urban farmer's markets. We might make plans to feast and celebrate Thanksgiving—with loved ones, or at the church Thanksgiving Dinner Service (mark your calendars; it's on Saturday evening, November 18th at 6pm!)

As Unitarian Universalists, we are a people of theological abundance. We believe in a free and responsible search for truth and meaning rather than a singular dogma. The living tradition we share draws from many sources: direct experience, prophetic men and women from antiquity and the present day, wisdom from the world's religions, humanist teachings, and the wisdom of earth-centered traditions. In our faith

tradition, it's often said there are many paths up the spiritual mountain.

Life is always changing. Change can bring delights, but it inevitably brings problems. When faced with a problem, we often think we must arrive at a singular answer. Often, we'll come up with two options, neither of which we like. Either/or. Fight or flight. All in or get me out. Sound familiar?

One of my teachers, the Rev. Jake Morrill, told me that every dilemma has at least three good choices, and usually eight or nine. So, I have a new mantra: "What's the third option?" He suggested that I write down at least sixteen things that could happen. The more stuck I feel with only two options, the more important this work is. In the tightest of places, it is possible to find some spaciousness, freedom, and even lightness.

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This idea comes up in negotiation theory as “the third side,” and in systems theory as the concept of equifinality. We can simply think of it as abundance—or space in our tight places. It’s always there; if we can take a step back, get out a piece of scrap paper, and brainstorm sixteen to twenty possibilities from the likely to the ridiculous, the silly to the sublime.

In this season of abundance, may we take inspiration from our spiritual and moral beliefs. If there are many paths up the spiritual mountain or the path of truth, then there are many paths for every challenge we face—especially in the places where we feel stuck. In church and life—as every good cab driver and good person knows—there’s more than one way!

May it be so,
Rev. Teri.



November Worship Services

November is often a time of abundance. The final harvests come in; even in the city we can see the bounty in the grocery store and farmers’ markets. While the natural world starts to fade away to prepare for the coming winter, holiday festivities begin.

We are surrounded by abundance, yet we know that it’s more complex. There’s an abundance of injustice, as well: some people have access to food and services, while others go without. We live in a time of abundance and excess—of both joys and problems, collectively and individually.

In worship in November, we'll explore abundance in our ecological crisis, abundance and excess in everyday life, how less can be more, and what abundance might look like theologically. Come join us!

November 5th, 10 AM
Renewable Energy, for Planet and Heart
 Rev. Teri Schwartz

As a Green Sanctuary congregation, our church has committed itself to ongoing ecological work and advocacy. As part of this project, we devote three worship services to ecological justice and awareness. This is the first of three eco-worship services for this church year.

We are actively witnessing irreversible and devastating effects of climate change. Historic hurricanes and wildfires have wrought mass devastation, death, and untold economic damage. We live with our own personal fears and grief about what the future holds for ourselves and our children. Furthermore, our physical climate is only worsened by the current political climate.

Yet, amidst bleak times, there is cause for hope. There are possibilities in renewable energy and collective action—both for our power grids and the power of our hope and resolve. Renewable energy can come from the sun, the wind, the waves—and our hearts.

November 12th, 10 AM
How Much is Enough?
 Rev. David Schwartz

In Japanese Buddhist mythology, “hungry ghosts” are depicted as humans with huge stomachs and inhumanly small mouths and throats: no matter how much hunger they have, they can never get enough. How do

we find the quiet heart of having enough in a world that tells us, always, that we need more?

November 18th, 6–9 PM
Thanksgiving Dinner Service
 Revs. David & Teri Schwartz

This annual event honors and lifts up gratitude for the many peoples of our American story: indigenous Wampanoags, English Pilgrims, and many more. We will share a catered dinner plus potluck beverages and dessert. Tickets are \$20 per person, \$10 youth under 15, \$55 for families of 4–5. Financial assistance is available, contact Rev. Teri. Sign up deadline is Nov. 12. Table hosts needed. To host a table or purchase tickets, contact Betty Holcomb at bettyvholcomb@gmail.com.

November 19th, 10 AM
The Space Inside the Cup
 Rev. Teri Schwartz

It's a blessing when our cup overflows. But the most useful part of the cup...isn't the cup! It's the space inside. To experience abundance in our lives, we have to make space for it. Sometimes that means clearing out both the plentiful and the excess, to make room for the new; be that a cluttered closet, a monkey-mind, or a burdened heart.

November 26th, 10 AM
Why is There Church?
 Thom Thomas, Student Minister

Nationwide surveys in the 1970s and '80s found that fewer than one in ten U.S. adults said they had no religious affiliation. Nowadays, fully 23% describe themselves as atheists, agnostics, or “nothing in particular.”. In our increasingly secular world, is there still a place for church?

First U Cares Rev. Teri Schwartz

First U Cares is a new initiative from Rev. Teri to expand the caring presence of church members for one another. Traditionally, this is known as pastoral care ministries. As always, if you find yourself in a challenging life situation, Rev. Teri and Rev. David are available to provide confidential pastoral

care. We also have volunteer lay pastoral care associates who can help provide meals, transportation, and other support to members in need during times of need.

First U Cares adds two new ways to be involved:

First U Cares: Caring Corner

During social hour, visit this area to write cards to church members and friends. Supplies and suggestions are provided to reach out to express condolences, support, congratulations—or even to wish someone a happy birthday. You'll also find periodic updates there about our members in need.

Have you noticed someone missing from church on Sundays? Send them a note to say hello. For our members in the retirement residence, Montgomery Place, or at home with mobility limitations, this is a great way to be in touch. Congratulate a youth on a tournament won or academic achievement. Send a get-well card, or let someone know you're thinking of them if they're going through a hard time. It may mean more to them than you'll know. It can be a great way to reconnect, or make new friends.

In the caring corner, you'll find a church directory: simply write your card, address it,



and the church office will take care of the rest. We're looking for volunteers to set up the area and staff the caring corner during social hour—if you're looking for a fun and rewarding (and easy!) way to serve your community, contact Rev. Teri at teresa.schwartz@firsttuchicago.org.

First U Cares: Candles of Care

We come to church with the sorrows and joys of the world and our lives in our hearts. Our church is a place that can hold the fullness of life and remind us that we're not alone—we have one another.



Some people find it helpful to mark the cares of their heart with a candle or a written prayer or meditation request. Starting in November, you'll find a table in the north aisle with candles and a book to write your sorrows and joys, either by name or anonymously.

Before the service, come and light a candle for a sorrow, a joy, to commemorate an anniversary, to remember a loved one who has died, or to mark a milestone or new beginning. When we see candles lit by one another, it's a visual and tangible reminder that we all carry concerns in our hearts—and that together, we can light the way for one another.

Greetings from the Director of Religious Education (DRE)

Beth Moss

My brother and I take a brother-sister trip every year. On the way back from the first one in 2015, I asked him what he liked best. We had driven through the mountains, been to 3 states, seen a lake as blue as the sky, gone zip lining from a breath-taking elevation...but his answer, without hesitation, was, "My favorite thing was spending time with you." He had the wisdom to see that it didn't matter what we did, but that we did it together.

See, you can have an abundance of many things; money, food, love, kindness, friends... I hope you and your families DO have abundance of those things. But if you don't have the time to enjoy what you have, it's unsatisfactory. So, I ask you and your family to reflect as we enter the Thanksgiving season—how you spend your time? Do the things you spend that valuable resource on bring you joy? Is there something you spend a lot of time doing that you could cut back on to find more to give to other worthy endeavors? What about your kids? Does being in dance, music, basketball, and other extracurriculars bring them joy? Are they exploring what they want to explore? Is it too much at once? In addition to what they

want, are they getting what they need from their time? I think sometimes in our busy lives, somehow, we lose sight of that. Less can certainly be more than enough.

Poem Meditation

I wish you enough sun to keep your attitude bright,
 I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun more.
 I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive,
 I wish you enough pain so that the smallest joys in life appear much bigger.
 I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting,
 I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.
 I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good-bye.

—anonymous, shared courtesy of Katie Covey and Soul Matters Resource Team

IN RE THIS MONTH:

November 5: Regular scheduled classes
 November 12: Regular scheduled classes;
 November 19: Regular scheduled classes.
 November 26: NO RE.

November Meetings and Events

Criminal Justice Task Force

11/02/2017 Thursday 6:45 pm
Chris Moore Parlor

Dances of Universal Peace

11/5/2017 Sunday 2:00 PM-4:00 PM
Hull Chapel

Dances of Universal Peace bring people together in joyous and meditative dance circles. The dances are easy to learn and open to all. We join our voices in singing sacred phrases from many spiritual traditions while moving rhythmically to simple circle dances and walking meditations. Come and sing, chant, walk and dance for peace. You are invited to bring photos and other memories of departed beloveds for our Dance altar. Contact Barbara Randolph at 773-391-1292 for more information, or visit www.dancesofuniversalpeacena.org.

Social Justice Council

11/8/2017 Wednesday 6:00 pm
RE Room

Executive Committee

11/9/2017 Thursday 6:00 pm-7:00 pm
RE Room

First U Humanist Group

11/13/2017 Monday 7:00 pm-9:00 pm
Chris Moore Parlor

UU Christian Group

11/14/2017 Tuesday 7:00 pm-9:00 pm
Chris Moore Parlor

Board of Trustees

11/16/2017 Thursday 6:45 pm
Chris Moore Parlor

Men's Group

11/20/2017 Monday 7:00 pm
RE Room

First U Humanist Group

11/27/2017 Monday 7:00 pm-9:00 pm
Chris Moore Parlor

Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Co-Ministers' Office Hours

Rev. David Schwartz, by appointment on
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday

Rev. Teri Schwartz, by appointment on
Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday

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