



**THE UNITARIAN
CHURCH IN FALL
RIVER**

309 North Main Street
Fall River, Massachusetts 02720
508 678-9700 • unitarianchurchfr.org

*“I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to
men!”*

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

December 2016

Dear Friends,

We are now entering the season of Advent, and getting ready for Christmas, and all the hustle and bustle and festivities that go with it. Advent is a season of waiting, expecting, and hoping. For hundreds of years, Christians have used an Advent wreath to inspire their hopes for the coming of Christ. By lighting candles and reading Bible verses, they are reminded about the meaning of Christ’s birth and what that means in their own lives, and on Christmas, they celebrate his birth. But what’s it all about for a Unitarian? What are we waiting for? What are we expecting and hoping? What do we celebrate?

As we go through the next few weeks, let’s all pause and take some time to reflect on what Christmas means - truly means - to us. Let’s also practice some gratitude during a season that can easily overwhelm us and cause us to lose sight of our blessings. When our “to do” list gets long and time gets short and stress sets in, we tend to forget what we have, and also what others don’t have. May we not get so busy that we forget to think of others who may be in need, and hopefully we can reach out a hand in whatever way we can.

Since the word "advent" literally means "the coming", these weeks in December are indeed a time of "advent" for all of us -- whether we consider ourselves religious or not. The light is coming. And all of Creation -- and we -- wait together for that light. May it shine both from within us and all around us. May each of us be a light in the darkness of winter, the living embodiment of Advent. Peace to you all during this beautiful season. Namaste.

Warmly,

Kristen Cantara Oliveira

Worship Committee Chair



Upcoming Service Leaders:

December 4 – Rev. John Burciaga

December 11 – Phyllis O’Connell

December 18 – Rev. Richard Trudeau

December 23 – Kristen Cantara Oliveira

December 25 and January 1– No Service – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

January 8 – Rev. John Burciaga

“Until one feels the spirit of Christmas, there is no Christmas. All else is outward display—so much tinsel and decorations. For it isn’t the holly, it isn’t the snow. It isn’t the tree not the firelight’s glow. It’s the warmth that comes to the hearts of men when the Christmas spirit returns again.” - Unknown

For anyone wanting a UU reference in their own library:

A Chosen Faith

An Introduction to Unitarian Universalism

Authors: [Forrest Church](#), [John A. Buehrens](#)

Product Code: 6045

ISBN: [9780807016176](#)

Format: Paperback

Publisher: Beacon

Publication Date: 5/1/1994

Pages: 240

Availability: In stock.

Price: **\$16.00**

Can be purchased at the UUA Bookstore in Boston, or uabookstore.org

Calendar Happenings:

Standing Committee Meeting –

*December 11th – 11:30 am - Following the Service at the Unitarian Church.

Traditional Candlelight Service –

*Friday, December 23 – 7:30 pm
At the Unitarian Church in Fall River.

*This is a service of traditional hymns, carols, special readings for all ages followed by refreshments.

Sine Nomine meets in our community Room every Monday evening.

*Sine Nomine is an auditioned chamber choir based in Fall River, MA. Now entering its 20th season, this community ensemble currently consists of eighteen voices, and performs music from the Middle Ages through the 21st-century, with a special emphasis on a cappella repertoire. Sine Nomine has collaborated with the Boston Camerata, Newport Baroque, Providence College, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, and was featured at the 2005 Organ Historical Society National Convention. The group draws its members from across southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Lower Highlands Neighborhood Historical District

*Meets on the first Wednesday of each month in the community room. That would be December 1st this month.

Christmas wreaths - origins & trivia

In ancient Rome, people used decorative wreaths as a sign of victory. Some believe that this is where the hanging of wreaths on doors came from. The origins of the Advent wreath are found in the folk practices of the pre-Christian Germanic peoples who, during the cold December darkness of Eastern Europe, gathered wreaths of evergreen and lighted fires as signs of hope in a coming spring and renewed light. Christians kept these popular traditions alive, and by the 16th century Catholics and Protestants throughout Germany used these symbols to celebrate their Advent hope in Christ, the everlasting Light. From Germany the use of the Advent wreath spread to other parts of the Christian world. Traditionally, the wreath is made of four candles in a circle of evergreens with a fifth candle in the middle. Three candles are violet and the fourth is rose, but four white candles or four violet candles can also be used. Each

day at home, the candles are lighted, perhaps before the evening meal-- one candle the first week, and then another each succeeding week until December 25th. A short prayer may accompany the lighting of each candle. The last candle is the middle candle. The lighting of this candle takes place on Christmas Eve. It represents Jesus Christ being born.

<http://www.thehistoryofchristmas.com/trivia/wreaths.htm>

Visit: <http://fallriverhistorical.org/Museum.html> to find out more about the Victorian Open House and the Tea House

Tips to De-Stress Your Holiday

Get Organized!

Look at the calendar for the entire holiday season and plug in all dates that are important to you

- Social events
- Family events
- Target date to mail cards.....IF you mail cards!
- Shopping trips...maybe with a friend, and includes lunch?
- Etc.

Make a gift shopping list

- Note who gets a gift, a gift card, a check, baked goods, etc.
- Break it up into manageable pieces

Shop

- On line
- On your lunch hour or your way home, if manageable
- Plan to get as much done as possible in one longer trip to local stores or malls
- Bring a friend and have lunch!

Personal Time

- Remember to take care of yourself
- Don't cancel your work-out to shop!
- Don't overbook, over eat, over drink
- Give yourself permission to say no
- Prepare yourself for the sometimes stressful emotions of family gatherings

Give to Others

- Choose a local charity and donate money, time, gifts, or food
- And, remember your Church

Scripture says give all you have to the poor, but then you would be poor and they would have to give all they have to you. How about a tithe of 10 percent?

The Traditional

Christmas

Candle Light Service

Friday, December 23rd

7:30 pm



A service of readings and carols with special music for all ages. At the Unitarian Church, 309 North Main Street, Fall River, MA 02720