

“Christmas Eve”

Wednesday, December 24, 4:45 PM, 2025

First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco





Order of Service

Wednesday, December 24, 2025

4:45 PM

Livestreamed at bit.ly/uusfmmedia

New to UUSF? Complete Our Connections form at <https://bit.ly/uuconnections2024>

A Guide for Newcomers! - What to Expect During Worship (read at <https://bit.ly/newcomersguideuusf>)

Welcome to Worship!

UUSF no longer requires masks indoors on our premises, following the lead of the San Francisco Department of Health.

We do, however, strongly recommend people to wear masks or do anything else that protects and respects their own health and comfort. There is a designated mask-only area on the far right side of the Sanctuary.

Stay Engaged: Explore Our Busy Hand Activity Station
Did you know we have a busy hand activity station at the back of the sanctuary for all ages?
You can find fidget toys, coloring, and so much more.
Check it out if you need something to keep your hands busy during the service.
Please return items before you leave the sanctuary.

Prelude

Noël Anciens

Louis-Claude Daquin
Reiko Oda Lane, organist
James Lord Pierpont
UUSF Choir

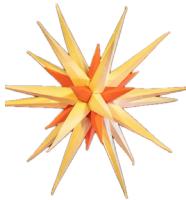
Jingle Bells

Welcome and Chalice Lighting

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern

Introit *Ukrainian Bell Carol*

Mykolo Leontovich
Handbell Choir, Reiko Oda Lane, director



The Story of Christmas



Visit of Gabriel to Mary *Drawn from Luke 1:26-33 & 2:1-7 & Matthew 1:18-25* Rev. Laura Shennum

Mark Caswell

*Congregational Carol *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Bree Shennum

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and with your captive children dwell.
Give comfort to all exiles here, and to the aching heart bid cheer.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Love to dwell.

O come, you Splendor very bright, as joy that never yields to might.
O come, and turn all hearts to peace, that greed and war at last shall cease.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Truth to dwell.

O come, you Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your presence here.
And dawn in every broken soul as vision that can see the whole.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Light to dwell.

O come, you Wisdom from on high, from depths that hide within a sigh,
to temper knowledge with our care, to render every act a prayer.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come within as Hope to dwell.

The Census and the Inn *Drawn from Luke 2:1-7*

Rev. Seanan Fong

*Congregational Carol *Angels we have heard on high*

Gloria

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain: Glo----ria, in excelsis Deo.
Glo----ria, in excelsis Deo.

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why these songs of happy cheer?
What great brightness did you see?
What glad tidings did you hear?

Refrain

See him in a manger laid
Who the angels praise above;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While we raise our hearts in love.

Refrain

*Please rise in body or spirit.

The Shepherds & Magi *Drawn from Luke 2:8-20 & Matthew 2: 1-12*

Mark Caswell

Music *Still, Still, Still*

arr. Norman Luboff
UUSF Choir

Reading “Christmas Eve: O Holy Night” by Anya Sammler-Michael, redacted.

*Congregational Carol *The First Nowell*

The First Nowell the angel did say was to
Certain poor shepherds, in fields as they lay, in
Fields where they lay keeping their sheep, on a
Cold winter's night that was so deep.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star, shining
In the east beyond them far, and
To the earth it gave great light, and
So it continued both day and night.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

And by the light of that same star, three
Magi came from country far; to
Seek a king was their intent, and to
Follow the star wherever it went.

Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, born is the king of Israel.

Christmas Homily *“Just This”*

Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern

Offering

Bree Shennum

The offering this evening will benefit **Up on Top**, an afterschool and summer program that serves children in the Tenderloin. Up on Top was founded by members of the Unitarian Universalist Society in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood in 2001 with a mission to provide free childcare and support services to neighborhood families. Learn more at <https://www.upontop.org/>. To make a donation on Vanco (bit.ly/uusfpayments), using the Donate Button on our website, or by scanning the QR, please select the line for Special Sunday Offering. The designation is important to ensure your gift gets applied correctly. If you are sending a check, please mark in the memo today's date, **12-24-25**.



Offertory Music *He Shall Feed His Flock/Come Unto Him from Messiah*

George F. Handel

Madeleine Gerlach, Morgen Warner, Nancy Munn, sopranos; Mark Sumner, pianist

Prayer and Meditation

Rev. Laura Shennum

Music *Glow*

Eric Whitacre
UUSF Choir

Candlelighting

Rev. Seanan Fong

Music *O Holy Night*

Adolphe Adam
Nancy Munn, soprano

* Congregational Carol

Silent Night

Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night,
Child of God, love's pure light;
Radiant beams from thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.



Benediction

* Carol

Joy to the World

Joy to the world! The child is come: let earth with praises ring.

Let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! Now gladness reigns: let hearts their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground.

Let righteousness, its glories show, as far as love is found,
As far as love is found, as far, as far as love is found.

* Recessional Carols

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”

Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heaven-born Prince of peace! Hail the son of righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings, risen with healing on his wings;

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

Deck the Hall With Boughs of Holly

Deck the hall with boughs of holly, fa la la la la . . .

‘Tis the season to be jolly, fa la la la la . . .

Don we now our gay apparel, fa la la la la . . .

Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, fa la la la la . . .

See the blazing Yule before us, fa la la la la . . .

Strike the harp and join the chorus, fa la la la la . . .

Follow me in merry measure, fa la la la la . . .

While I tell of Yuletide treasure, fa la la la la . . .

Fast away the old year passes, fa la la la la . . .

Hail the new year, lads and lasses, fa la la la la . . .

Sing we joyous, all together, fa la la la la . . .

Heedless of the wind and weather, fa la la la la . . .

SERVICE NOTES



Rev. Vanessa Rush Southern, Senior Minister
Rev. Laura Shennum, Minister of Congregational Life
Rev. Seanan Fong, Affiliated Community Minister
Mark Caswell, Ministerial Intern
Bree Shennum, Worship Associate



Musicians

Reiko Oda Lane, Organist & Bell Choir Director
Mark Sumner, Music Director
Wm. García Ganz, pianist
Madeleine Gerlach, soprano
Morgen Warner, soprano
Nancy Munn, soprano

Choir

Pianist: Wm. García Ganz	Kathé Cairns	Janet Scott	Santana Gonzalez-Gomez	Andrew Kessler
Soprano: Lila Bailey Nancy Hardies Amy Kelly Hallie McConlogue Judith Morrow Nancy Munn Patricia Parsons Judy Payne Millie Phillips Wang, Regina Morgen Warner Barb Wismer	Mary Castiglia Betsy Darr Maggie McGrann Kelli Murray Susan (Violetta) Osgood Tina Shibue Judy Strachan Chelsea Thomas	Anne Steele Carrie Steere-Salazar Judith Stoddard Karen Brooks Bari Cornet Barbara Delaney Linda Enger Akané Ota Christine Patch-	Rusty Harris-Bishop David King Aidan Pelly Adam Varoqua Dean Wyrzykowski Ted Arnold David Jones Ben Rudiak-Gould	Eric Shackelford Nicholas Wasilewski Edward Whitmore Dennis Adams Phil Browne Jack Darr Ben Gale Bill Pierce Ian Stoddard
	Alto: Jean Bee Chan Carol Davison Kristen Jensen Janet McKinley	Lindsay Diana Saylor Christine Winoto	Bass: Matt Anderson Ralph Fenn Steven Hoffmann Tha Htet	
		Tenor: Niko Gomez-Guhde		

Bell Choir

Diane Allen Cheryl Deanner Barbara Delaney Stacey Coyle Caleb Dupree	Madalyn Fernandez Maddy Gerlach David Jones Amy Kelly Maric Munn	Judy Nichols Kathleen Quenneville Janet Scott Harold Stoddard Chris Valentine
--	--	---

Support Team

Eric Shackelford, Camera Shulee Ong, Camera Eli Boshears, Camera Alicia Cover, Lights Jonathan Silk, Director of Communications	Dan Barnard, Facilities Manager Kelvin Jones, Sexton Remigio Flood, Sexton Linda Messner, Head Usher
---	---

Flowers

Judy Payne, Amy Kelly, Carrie Steere-Salazar, Athena Papadakos



Poinsettia Dedication 2025

In memory of Tod Mikuriya, MD, from Mary Jane Mikuriya.

In memory of Neil Valentine from Christine Valentine.

In memory of John & Marbeth Munn, parents of Maric & Jed Munn.

In memory of Glenn Lanmon, father of Nancy Lanmon Munn.

In memory of Dick Messbarger, friend of Nancy Munn.

In memory of Ade Kroll, OSF, Beloved Faithful Fool.

In memory of Barbara Workman.

In memory of Gloria Kulik.

In memory of Hollis Greenwood.

In memory of Terry Higbee.

In memory of my lovely daughter, Diana Castiglia, from Mary Castiglia.

This is a loving tribute to Grampa Raeburn from Josh, Nikki, and Grammy Raeburn.

In loving remembrance of Marie and Art Pesch. With love, Liz & Josh.

To our wonderful family and friends from Dolores Perez Heilbron and David Heilbron.

In loving memory of Thomas Brown.

In loving memory of Michael Thomas.

Dedicated to all who work for Peace & Justice in the World.



Our offering this evening will go to **Up on Top**. Up on Top is an organization that was started by this congregation in response to a need that emerged for the families in the community. Although it is now an independent organization, its offices are housed here, and members of this community serve on its board as they always have. Up on Top provides vital support for children in our neighborhood, critical to their academic achievement and social resilience, and to their families ability to work. There is a summer camp with enrichment activities. If it takes a village, Up on Top is part of that village. If a child's success is in part due to having at least one adult who takes interest in you, Up on Top is part of every child's success who is in the program. Every child born is a holy child. We thank you, in advance, for widening the circle of love and generosity tonight to children and families of our Tenderloin community. <https://www.upontop.org/>

WELCOME TO UUSF: CONNECT, CREATE, AND CELEBRATE!

Welcome to UUSF: Embrace Community, Comfort, and Connection!

COVID-19: UUSF no longer requires masks indoors on our premises, following the lead of the San Francisco Department of Health. We do, however, encourage people to wear masks or do anything else that protects and respects their own health and comfort. There is a designated mask-only area on the far right side of the Sanctuary. If you feel unwell, please stay home and enjoy the service at home via livestream. (bit.ly/uusfmedia)

BUSY HANDS: Explore our Busy Hands activity station located at the back of the sanctuary. You will find things like fidget toys and coloring for all ages to help you keep your hands busy during service. Please return items before leaving the sanctuary.

NEWCOMER ORIENTATION: New to this community? New to Unitarian Universalism? We hold a Newcomer Orientation on the first Sunday of each month. It's a wonderful chance to meet other folks in the community, ask any questions you might have, and find out how to get involved. Our next orientation is on Sunday, 5 January, at 12:30 PM after service. We look forward to meeting you!

20S & 30S COMMUNITY: Folks aged 18-39 are invited to take part in our young adult programming to learn, grow, and build fellowship with our peers. We hold spiritual discussion groups, social events, and outings in the city. Check out our website for more information, to sign up for our newsletter, and see our calendar of upcoming events: <https://www.uusf.org/tnt>

Welcome to UUSF: Connect and Discover

NEW TO UUSF? Complete a Connections form to receive our newsletter, which includes a link to the Order of Service and Sunday Livestream. If you're at UUSF in person, you can find a yellow connections card at the welcome table in the gallery outside the sanctuary or in a pew in front of you. You can also fill it out online at <https://bit.ly/uuconnections2024>.

A GUIDE FOR NEWCOMERS: What to Expect During Worship (read at <https://www.uusf.org/newcomer-information>)

Events, Meetings & Volunteer Opportunities (www.uusf.org/news)

Join Gavrilah Wells on **Sunday, December 28 at 9:30 am** for our Sunday Forum to learn about **Amnesty International's Write for Rights Campaign**. This global initiative encourages individuals to write letters advocating for those unjustly imprisoned and to demand justice for human rights abuses. Participate by bringing international stamps and postcards, and help make a difference through collective grassroots action! <https://www.uusf.org/forum>

Join us on **Sunday, December 28, 2025, at 10:50 am** for "The Transient and the Permanent in Unitarian Universalism: A Fire Communion," led by Ministerial Intern Mark Caswell. Reflecting on Theodore Parker's insights from the 1840s, the service will explore what we consider permanent amidst change and how we can transform grief into hope. Engage in a meaningful discussion about holding onto what truly matters during this season of transition.

The Environmental Justice Working Group has rescheduled its monthly meetings to the 4th Sunday of each month. The December 28th meeting is canceled due to a lack of facilitator, but the next meeting will take place on **January 25 from 12:30 to 1:15 pm** in Fahs, focusing on planning the 2026 Earth Day event. Everyone is invited to join, share ideas, and volunteer for projects.

Join Rev. Ranwa Hammamy on **Sunday, January 4, 2026, at 10:50 am** for a thought-provoking sermon titled "Sustaining Love in the Struggle." As a Congregational Justice Organizer with the UUA's Side With Love team, Rev. Hammamy will explore the nourishing aspects of resistance.

New to this community? New to Unitarian Universalism? - **Sunday, January 4, 12:30 pm in Fireside Room.** Newcomers are welcome to join us after the service to meet some of our members and learn more about our congregation and Unitarian Universalism. It's a great chance to meet other folks in the community, ask any questions you might have, and find out how to get involved in our programs and ministries. Free childcare is available to attendees who need it. We look forward to meeting you!

Join Betsy Darr for the "Simply Pray" class, running Tuesdays from **January 6-27, 7-8:30 pm in the Kincaid room.** This four-session course will explore the meanings of prayer for Unitarian Universalists and introduce various prayer practices to enhance your spiritual life. Participants will engage with questions about the purpose and audience of prayer, allowing for personal theological interpretations. The class is inspired by Eric Walker Wikstrom's book, "Simply Pray," with some copies available for borrowing. Space is limited to 10 participants, so please commit to attending all sessions. Register at <https://t.ly/Simply-Pray>.

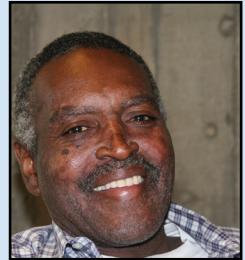
Join the UUSF Men's Breakfast Group **every Saturday at 9:00 AM** for meaningful discussions and sharing. The group alternates between in-person and online meetings via Zoom, fostering a supportive environment for deeper connections. Check-ins kick off each session, allowing members to express their feelings and insights. New members are always welcome to join this enriching experience. For more details and to participate, visit: <https://www.uusf.org/breakfast>.

Events, Meetings & Volunteer Opportunities (www.uusf.org/news)

Join us on **Sunday, January 11 at 9:30 am** in the TSK Room or on Zoom for a forum featuring District 2 Supervisor Stephen Sherrill. Enjoy a light breakfast starting at 9:00 am as Stephen discusses his initiatives to enhance public safety, support small businesses, and improve neighborhoods in San Francisco. This event will also include a Q&A session, providing an opportunity to engage directly with our district supervisor.

Join the Craft the Theme Small Group held on the **2nd Sunday of each month** after service in the Children's Art Room. Engage creatively with the monthly "Soul Matters" theme using various craft materials—no artistic skills required! This group offers flexibility with no full-year commitment needed, but please RSVP to help with planning. Feel free to bring your own supplies, as some will be provided. For questions, reach out to Debbie Wu at debbiestuff@icloud.com.

Join the Elder Wisdom Group on the **second Wednesday of each month** from **12 pm to 2 pm**, facilitated by Rev. Laura Shennen. This gathering invites senior citizens to discuss topics that matter to them while enjoying a light lunch. No registration is required, making it easy to participate. For more details, reach out to Rev. Laura at lshennen@uusf.org



Thomas Brown's Memorial and Our Contribution

We were all saddened by the news of the death of longtime staff member and beloved part of our community, Thomas Brown. The service has been scheduled for January 3rd in New Orleans. As a way to express our love for Thomas Brown and our gratitude, First UU Society of San Francisco has decided to sponsor the catering of the reception in New Orleans that will follow his memorial service. More details are in your weekly Flame Newsletter this week and in upcoming weeks. If you would like to make a donation (by check or our online donation portal at bit.ly/uusfpayments) toward this sponsorship, in honor of Thomas, please make it out to the "Minister's Discretionary Fund: and note that it is in honor of Thomas Brown. When we get word about whether the service was recorded, we will share that information. Thank you for your support of his family and this event.

Winter Retreat 2026

Save the date!

Jan 30th – Feb 1st

Mutual Aid is Collective Liberation

Resilience Training, Awareness Renewal, Music, Caucusing, Altar Building, Eating, Being

DIVERSE & REVOLUTIONARY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MULTICULTURAL MINISTRIES

DRUUMM SINCE 1997

revkev@druumm.org

This project is funded in part by the Fund for Unitarian Universalism

Register here: bit.ly/dcawinter26

Welcome to the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco

1187 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109
415-776-4580 / info@uusf.org

OUR SOCIETY'S VISION

We, The First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, delight in our authentic, inclusive congregation that reaches across generations, ethnicities, and differences. We take care of one another, building spiritual community, knowing that we are stronger and accomplish more together. Guided by our responsibility to future generations, we take leadership in shaping a compassionate, sustainable world. Inspired by our courageous heritage and compelled by conscience, we hold one another accountable to work for racial, environmental, and economic justice and the dignity and rights of all.

OUR SOCIETY'S MISSION

As a vibrant, joyous, caring, inclusive community of diverse people, we create a nurturing space for spiritual growth and learning. Based on our shared values, we work together courageously and publicly for human rights, economic justice, and environmental salvation.

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT (under construction)

In an effort to make the world a better place, we support each other's journey to seek truth with openness, curiosity and respect for different perspectives and paths.

As love is our spirit, we commit to respect, accept, listen to and support each other.

We hold ourselves and each other accountable by continually assessing our individual and community actions toward living into our covenant. This will include speaking up when someone's actions are not aligned.

We commit to be in community with openness and loving kindness, acknowledging our own biases and differing perspectives.

We welcome the newcomer, we commit to building trust with each other, we celebrate differences and make space for repair when harm occurs.

UUSF MEDIA

View our videos <http://www.youtube.com/c/UUSFMedia>

Check out our Podcasts <https://www.uusf.org/worship-archives>

Go to our website at <https://www.uusf.org/>



UPCOMING SERVICE: <https://bit.ly/UUSFServices>

"The Transient and the Permanent in Unitarian Universalism: A Fire Communion"

Sunday, December 28, 10:50 am, 2025



Scan the QR code ↑ to visit our UUSF Media YouTube channel and view upcoming and previously recorded services.