

# Holiday Messenger

DECEMBER 2011



## Happy Holidays from the Staff

What is a Special Messenger? It's an issue of the Messenger that is devoted to one subject the congregation needs to know about in detail. This "Holiday Messenger" issue gives you all the information you need to know in order to get ready to celebrate the holiday season with us here at First Unitarian of Albuquerque. We'll also share some more news items with you that are especially geared toward holiday celebration and planning. Thank you for being a part of First U!

## Holiday Calendar

### Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve

#### Three Services:

**Services 1 and 2** — "Las Posadas" 4:30 and 6:00 p.m.

*The Rev. Angela Herrera and Kathi Foy, DRE*

A welcoming, energy-filled service with carols, candles, and our very own version of the New Mexican tradition of Las Posadas. Especially for families and young children.

**Music by:** Vance Bass, guitar; Olivia Herrera and Andie Rigler, voice

**Service 3** — "Carols and Candles" 7:30 p.m.

*The Rev. Christine Robinson*

A more contemplative service with carols, candles, and Christine's thoughts on the season.

**Music by:** Alan Stringer, piano

### Sunday, December 25, Christmas Day

**Afternoon service at 4:00 p.m.**

**(no morning services)**

*The Rev. Christine Robinson*

A family-friendly service with stories, puppets, candles, and singing, as we watch the daylight fade from our sanctuary and take the light of the holidays (it's Hanukkah, too!) into our hearts. Bring yourself, your kids, your guests! (There will be no child care, but families are definitely welcome.)

**Music by:** Alan Stringer, piano

## Las Posadas!

This Christmas Eve at the 4:30 and 6 p.m. services (our energetic, family-oriented services!), we are throwing open the doors—to people of all ages in this congregation, as well as the many neighbors and friends who visit First Unitarian as part of our After School Tutoring, ESL, or Food Pantry Programs, or who have partnered with us in working on Immigration Justice.

We are extending a special invitation to everyone for a welcoming, music-filled service with many Spanish components, including a ritual reenactment of the age-old Las Posadas story. Las Posadas, or The Inns, is the

story of Mary and Joseph (or Maria y José, in bilingual New Mexico) as travelers far from home, searching for a place to stay on the night of Jesus' birth. At door after door, the people of Bethlehem turn them away. They are strangers. They seem dirty and maybe dangerous. They are about to have a baby, and this makes the doorkeepers nervous. Who will say yes to these *santos peregrinos*, or holy pilgrims?

We'll sing carols and light candles, and celebrate children everywhere. I hope to see you there!

*Bendiciones,*

## Staff Christmas Wish List

There are always a few things that will make a holiday brighter. Our staff members have been dreaming of having these wishes come true to make life in the office even better! We have been good this year and we hope Santa has noticed... P.S. gently used items are fine!

**Christine** - *electronic corner sign*

**Angela** - *Mac compatible desktop laser printer*

**Jay** - *additional volunteers to help with changing the corner sign, Sunday services, and office assistance*

**Kathy** - *electric stapler for her office*

**Kurt** - *a newer, better PC for his office, with XP or Windows 7*

**Samantha** - *an external storage hard drive, preferably 500 GB or more*

**Virginia** - *a newer, better PC for her office, with XP or Windows 7*

**For safety and security** - *a safe*

**For public use** - *card tables*

**For the Food Pantry** - *non-perishable items, fruits and vegetables that last, and pet food*

**For the RE Department** - *an office floor mat for under rolling desk chairs; an electric hole puncher, a better digital camera (nothing fancy, but they need a newer one!)*

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From the Rev. Christine Robinson

My colleague Robert Fulghum wrote that he used to come into the Christmas season armed with a heavy duty To Do list. He called himself a black belt at lists and commented that this one was “seven pages of expectations that are in themselves enough to permanently destroy the spirit of Christmas.”

Then, he writes,

“But this year I started from somewhere else in my mind. New list. One page. A ‘Things-to-Be’ list for Christmas.

Concentrating on the feelings I wanted to have, the condition of mind and spirit I yearned for, the quality of life I wanted to manifest, the vibrations I wanted to give off to other people... A ‘Things-To-Be’ List for Christmas.

Then I boiled the list down into one word. I wrote that word on a tiny piece of paper. And then I wrapped that tiny piece of paper around a sugar cookie.

And ate it. List and all. Shazam! Hark the Herald Angels Sing!”

I don’t feel the need to eat my Christmas “things to be” list. But I like the idea of making it. Topping my list, I think, will be the word “present.” I want to be present to the pleasures and the chores of the season. I want to be ready to smile at harried clerks, to enjoy my neighbors’ light displays, to be with my family, to enjoy the great wisdom of a UU Christmas story—a story that reminds us that every night that a child is born is a holy night, and that any child, even one born of poor and unprepared parents far from home, might bring light, wisdom, and peace into our world.

And as for all those things to do? They’ll get done or they’ll get dropped. If I can remember how I want to be this season, it will all be ok.

*Christine*

## NEW YEAR’S DAY SERVICES

**Sunday, January 1 9:30 and 11:00**

"Security, Serenity, and Peace of Mind"

*The Rev. Christine Robinson*

There are a lot of factors that go into these three desirable states. One is letting go of the past, and you'll have an opportunity to toss your list of things you are ready to let go of from the past year into a New Year's bonfire on the patio. Childcare for children during the service, but they can join us afterwards and toss their "let go" list into the fire, too!

**Music by:** Bosque Bassoon Band

## NEW YEAR’S DAY CRAFT AND HOBBY SALE

On January 1 in the Social Hall, we will hold a craft and hobby sale where you can sell your wares! Authors, bring your books, knitters—your scarves, painters—your paintings, etc.! Bring a card table with you, if you have one, and about enough pieces to fit on your table. Space will be limited; one table per family. 30% of the sales of your pieces will go to First Unitarian, and you will keep the other 70% for you and yours. Happy New Year!

## RE WINTER HOLIDAY EVENTS

We welcome you to our winter holiday events in RE. The children are making *luminarias/farolitos* to light your way on Christmas Eve and preparing for the pageant on 12/11 and 12/18. We will begin in the Sanctuary on 12/18 and film our Children’s Affirmation holiday greeting to our Kenyan friends in Kiswahili. On Christmas Eve at 4:30 and 6:00 the children are welcome to dress as a shepherd, angel, animal or citizen for our pageant. We’ll have some costumes available, or you can dress at home. Instructions for participation will be a part of the pageant, other than a few pre-assigned roles. A hot drink and hearty snack will end the Christmas Eve festivities in the foyer.

We will also be collecting hats, scarves and gloves again this year for under the Christmas tree. So, if you have a donation, please bring it by the RE department.

May the sparkle of the season create moments of comfort and joy for you and yours: in the glint of sunlight on an ice-covered branch; in the tingle and taste of special holiday fare; in the music that surrounds you as you engage in holiday chores; in the hugs of loved ones snuggled close; and in the soaring imagination of the child in all of us.

Our best to you in the spirit of the season from the Religious Education Program Staff: Kathi, Virginia, Emily, Libby, Andie; and our Caregivers: Steph, Alex M., Olivia H., Gregoria, Bill, Maya, Olivia V., Kellsie, Alex K. and Kelly.

*Kathi*

## THE CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERING

On Christmas Eve, it is our tradition to receive a special offering of food and money for First Unitarian’s food pantry program. This fall, the number of people lining up to receive free food has surged from 40 to 70. The church office receives many calls and walk-ins each week from people who don’t have enough to eat. We need substantial, good quality food and paper bags for handing it out. Consider bringing one or more of the following on December 24th (or any time!): cereal; canned fruit/vegetables; pinto beans, pasta, or rice (1 lb bags); bags of fresh oranges, potatoes other hardy fruits/vegetables that keep well; baby formula and baby food; snacks such as crackers and cookies; extras, like canned soup or tomatoes, etc.; dog or cat food. (Pets need to eat, too!) Interested in volunteering? Contact Rebecca Gracey at [maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com](mailto:maryrebeccagracey@gmail.com).