

Starr King UU Fellowship -A Welcoming Congregation-February 2024



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## A Gift to Keep Light at our Center...

## Stewardship

"The great use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it." William James



The Stewardship service on January 28 marked the beginning of our 2024-25 Stewardship drive. Linda's sermon and the music by Sarah Dan and the choir beautifully illustrated the theme of our drive "Sustaining the Light." It is through our generosity and support that we keep alive the light of hope and love in our lives, our Fellowship and the world.

We emailed our Stewardship packet and individual pledge information to members and friends on Jan. 28. The packet contains information on the Fellowship's financing and how to pledge. It also includes a moving letter from Linda that reminds us of the many ways this Fellowship is vital to our lives and the life of the wider community. If you did not receive this packet, click here <u>www.starrkingfellowship.org/stewardship-drive</u>. If you have signed up for a cottage meeting or the after-service brunch, you may want to wait to make your pledge since we can answer any questions you have at those meetings.

#### Stewardship Brunch, Sunday, February 18

The cottage meetings are full. But there is plenty of room for you at

the brunch here at the Fellowship after the service on Feb. 18. The senior and junior high youth groups will be putting it on, and will happily accept donations for the meal. The money will go towards their trip to Costa Rica next year. This gathering will be a great opportunity to enjoy each other's company and to get to know each other better. There will also be a brief presentation on the budget that will help you determine your pledge amount this year.



To sign up for the Brunch click the following link and scroll to the bottom.<u>https://www.signupgenius.com/</u>go/10C0B4CA5AB2DA2FCC61-47142729-cottage#/ If you cannot attend the cottage meetings, go ahead and make your pledge now, after taking the information in the packet into consideration.

Mary Hazelton

### Sunday Services February 2024

## February 4 The Cost of Being Poor Rev. Linda Barnes

We don't talk much about class. And yet, the system of inequity in our nation is creating divisions between a class of people who have some, but not much, and those that have even less. Join us as we explore the cost of being poor, to everyone.

## February 11Spiritual Journeys

### Bob Chandler, Susan Scrimshaw, Sue Ellen Tuttle

Everyone has come to our community for a reason; everyone has a story. The spiritual journeys we take are like all journeys, filled with ups and downs, twists and turns. Three of our members will be bringing their stories to our Fellowship, join us!

#### February 18 In Defense of Hope Rev. Linda Barnes

When we are hopeless, we narrow our vision to see only the worse. To be hopeless means we are free to give up. Sounds easy, right? Maybe not so much. For this service, we'll defend the power and purpose of hope to bring about a world where justice and equity are made real.

# February 25Many Paths to JusticeMargaret Rieser, Ministerial Intern

We all want to do our best to bring more justice into the world. The question is, how do we do that? It's not only about attending vigils and holding signs. In this service, we will explore how we can work for justice in ways that feel healthy and meaningful and might be different for each of us.

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## First Friday of the month at 6:00 PM

For an end-of-week slow down, come for 30 minutes of contemplation followed with pizza and fellowship.

## Do You Wish You Could See a Service You Missed?

Did you know that most Sunday Services are recorded and posted to Vimeo - a cloud-based video platform similar to YouTube?

You can view any past service by navigating to the bottom of this page <u>Sunday</u> <u>Services | Starr King Unitarian Universalist Fellowship | Plymouth, NH</u> <u>(starrkingfellowship.org)</u> on our website

You can see the most recent Sunday or any past services.

## Minister's Newsletter February 2024

# The way to right wrongs is to shine the light of truth upon them. $\sim$ Ida B. Wells Barnett

The Pew Research Center recently released its 2023 survey of religious participation in the United States. It tells us that 28% of American adults are religiously unaffiliated. These people are referred to as the *nones*. The research also showed that the growing number of those who do not belong to a religious community has leveled off, for now. Interestingly, those who are not affiliated with a religious community were found to be less likely to volunteer and less likely to vote. In short, *nones* are less civically engaged. While I don't know if civic engagement is a cause or an effect of religious affiliation, the statistic concerns me. I know that to change the world for the better, we need to work together. This is another reason why our Fellowship community matters.

I find myself becoming more aware of growing inequity. This awareness is painful. I know I am not alone in my discomfort. Awareness is the first step; it is seeing the truth of our history and nature of systems now in place that maintain injustice. Our faith invites us to stay in our discomfort, together. We are not alone. We have each other and if we have a collective willingness to entertain truth, we are poised to be part of the solution. Dear ones, I believe we are part of many solutions. We each do this differently. Some read books to understand, some take action through providing funds to support our outreach causes. Some reach out to individuals and offer direct assistance. Some of us write to our public officials. We stay civically involved. This is what makes the difference. Engaging together makes it so much easier. Thank you for the ways that you do that, it matters.

As we do the work of justice, we also do the work of finding joy. It was a pleasure to celebrate our music director, Sarah Dan Jones at the January 28th service. It is a joy to see the way our stewardship team brings our attention to what is good in our community. It is a joy to share time together in thought, song, and simply being. Joy matters too, we need it. In this way we sustain each other. We remind each other over and over again that life is beautiful even when it's terrible. Simply put, together we live it better than we do alone, thank you for affiliating with this religious community. So glad to be in this with you.

In love and faith, Rev. Linda

<sup>1</sup>https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2024/01/24/religious-nones-in-america-whothey-are-and-what-they-believe/

## President's Letter—February

The December holiday season seems more than just a few weeks ago! Time with family and friends is especially important to me for a variety of reasons. As the Stewardship Drive begins, I remind you to sign up for the cottage meetings, a time to spend with a small group of Starr King friends. This is just one way to develop friendships with each other, having more in-depth conversations than a few minutes during fellowship time after the service on Sunday morning.

Participating in other areas is a great way to get to know others. Volunteer to help in the religious education program and learn along with the children and youth. Do you want to know more about the Soul Matters program? Attend the monthly "drop-in" format Linda offers on a Sunday morning. Are you involved within the Smooth Sunday teams? Do you wonder why we have a worship associate on Sunday morning? That is structured similar to a committee and meets monthly. Committees are another way to get to know others, perhaps with the same interests you may have! And of course, computer assistance and camera interest is always welcomed-the very small "tech team" could use a few more skilled folks. Please speak with any board member (we have blue name tags) to let us know where you would like to get involved. What about a position on the board? Leadership comes in many different forms.

Sunday January 28 we were able to celebrate Sarah Dan's 10+ years as our music accompanist/director. Many thanks to Mary Hazelton for writing lyrics to "My Favorite Things" for the choir to sing and for providing the music for Sarah Dan to accompany the choir. Thank you, Sarah Dan, for 10+ years of music ministry and friendship.

Jane Clay Board President

## **Boards Bulletin**

- Stewardship
- Playground safety issues
- Co-president model

Reach out to any board member if you have questions or just to discuss matters.

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## A Gift to Keep Light at Our Center

Love manifests in so many ways. Recently, Gigi Estes generously expressed her love of the Fellowship with a donation of stock valued at approximately \$100,000. This gift was made possible by Paul Estes' early investments and Gigi's love of our Fellowship. Gigi expressed her trust in the Finance Committee and Board by suggesting that we use the gift where it was most needed. The Finance Committee, after careful consideration, developed a proposal for use of the funds and the Board approved that plan last month.

We wanted to let you know how that money will be put to good use to serve our Mission and Vision. First, \$30,000 will be deposited into the Solar Campaign Fund. In this way we express our love for the earth and, and in 2026, when we are free to pay off our solar panels, we will greatly reduce our monthly electric bill. The need for a capital campaign to purchase the solar array will be reduced or eliminated with this contribution, given the current balance of approximately \$20,000 and an estimated purchase cost of \$50,000-\$60,000. Gigi started the solar effort at Starr King and has been a consistent proponent and supporter of our use of green energy. This gift helps us live more fully into our values.

The second allocation is \$30,000 to be used to provide support staff compensation over the next 5 years. This too helps us live better into our values. Compensation of our staff, particularly the part-timers, is lagging behind the new UUA recommendations, which are based on local wage rates. To position our staff appropriately within their respective salary ranges, approximately \$7,000 will help fund our annual compensation expense in FY25, with the balance to be used in the years to follow. In this way we fairly compensate and care for the people who make the work of our Fellowship possible.

The final allocation, \$40,000, will be reserved for projects to help develop the Fellowship that are not usually included in the operating budget or sourced from the Endowment but are important to long-term interests or the health of the Fellowship. The funds will be invested in the short term and allocated by the Board when needed.

It is gifts such as this one that have made it possible for us to continue as a community. Previous gifts helped build RE rooms, pay off our original mortgage, provide beautiful music, and create engaging spaces. Thank you, Gigi. Thank you, Paul. Your love of this place manifests in this gift. You help us keep light of love at our center and we all benefit.

Starr King UU Fellowship Board and Rev. Linda



## Soundbites

Well, I am blown away.

As we enter into this season of Stewardship, I keep reflecting on the words of Rev Linda in her amazing sermon on January 28th. She reminded us that it is easier to give than receive and pointed out the age old texts of many religions to support that idea.

So, I will settle with that and take the gratitude path.

When Rev. Sarah Stewart hired me in 2013 to establish a compensated music ministry, after 30 years of amazing volunteer work from Mary Hazelton, she insisted on conducting a survey to determine the needs and desires of the fellowship. This gathering of information was open to all and the only caveat was that it not be anonymous, which I appreciated so much.

It was a mixed bag of answers, but the overarching theme was the importance of music in the life of the Fellowship. That included the established choir, the Sunday morning congregational singing, and the inclusion of our younger folks. That has been my guide post for more than 10 years, and I have seen the change that comes with that through the years. My ministry is looking at the gifts that surround us with people of all ages and abilities and figure out the best platform to offer the opportunity to share that with the greater good. And, I don't do that in a vacuum; the collaboration that I have with Rev. Linda and the Starr King Staff is beyond inspirational and always tied to the Mission of Starr King UU Fellowship.

In turn, I get to be a part of something that is Holy and Present. Once the Chalice is lit, I leave it all up to the energy, the planning, the collective and the intention that all shall be well.

Where else can we actually BE in the space with others than church? I am fed by our services, and am grateful for your collective support in the shared journey.

So, thanks for the Suprise. Thanks for the yummy cake! Thanks for the photos and words of kindness and support. Thanks for showing up and trusting me as I lead us into music ministry. And, thanks for loving me.

l love yall too.. Sarah Dan

schedule:

SUNDAYS: February 4 - Mary Hazelton, musician February 11 - Sarah Dan Jones, musician February 18 - Sarah Dan and Starr King choir February 25 - Sarah Dan and Starr King choir

Thursdays: Choir meets every Thursday 6:00-7:30 pm in the sanctuary, EXCEPT NO choir February 1st.

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## From your DRE

## Religious Education

This month in Religious Education we've been exploring the theme of Liberating Love. On Sunday mornings, children and the RE teachers have enjoyed a range of activities together and continue to contribute much joy to our Fellowship.



The RE Committee has been working hard to expand our offerings and better meet the needs of youth and their families. Both our Middle and High School Youth Groups have been meeting regularly and are making plans for more fun events in the future! Looking ahead, on Sunday, February 18th from 11:30-2:00 there will be a RE Sledding Party! Come for a fun time in the snow and invite someone who may be interested in the Starr King RE program.

Please reach out to the Director of Religious Education, Grace Kennedy, at <u>dre@starrkingfellowship.org</u> with any questions, and we hope to see you there!



## **Climate Action Committee**

## **Recommended Sources of Climate Information**

At each of our Climate Action meetings twice a month (first and third Fridays of the month, 10am in the Foyer of our Meetinghouse), we spend some of our time discussing what we've learned most recently about climate-related matters, be it scientific advances, actions or inactions at the State House and Washington D.C., threats to our environment from private landfill companies across New Hampshire, or the status of birds as observed at our feeders this winter. Much of what we share is good news. Many positive developments are happening. At our first meeting in February I will be sharing a list of major climate victories that occurred in 2023. Often we spend more than just a bit of our time reviewing what we've learned if the subject warrants it. Sometimes these discussions lead us to actions we want to take.

Following are some sources that I regularly consult for this information. If you enjoy any of these, or have others to recommend to our Committee, we'd be pleased to hear from you. We are particularly interested in being knowledgeable about climate related happenings in NH. We'd love to have you drop in to any of our Committee meetings at the Fellowship.

> <u>"Living on Earth"</u> on NH public radio, 7 to 8 am, Sunday mornings. Good start to the morning as you listen while preparing to attend Sunday service. Climate happenings from around the world are covered during the hour. Knowledgeable speakers are interviewed. A recent program started with a good discussion of how climate change in human minds has shifted from "denial" by many, to other forms of thinking that impede progress.

<u>National Geographic magazine</u> which regularly covers many subjects related to climate change in great detail and in a most attractive way.

<u>NY Times newspaper</u>. I particularly enjoy looking for good opinion pieces that appear in the Sunday issue. One interesting article recently expressed the idea that it might be good for the planet that most people are <u>not</u> paying close attention, politically speaking, to all the good climate actions and results that are taking place.

## Weekly Emails from the <u>NH Network</u>

(newhamshirenetwork.org) that provide all the information one needs to know about climate legislation working its way, or not, this winter through our State's House and Senate. Along with helpful information to assist the reader's ability to express opinions to lawmakers. Several climate nonprofit groups are doing this work for us, but I find the NH Network to be the best. The NH Network is unique among climate groups in NH because its leaders work hard to communicate important actions being taken among the many active nonprofit climate groups operating in NH.

Finally, I highly recommend attending the third Thursday of the month online climate workshops being conducted by <u>UU</u> <u>Action NH</u>, with a variety of climate subjects to be presented throughout this calendar year. The first one, in January, plastics recycling and reduction, was well worth attending.

Nancy Chaddock for the Climate Action Committee



**2024 Third Thursday Climate Workshops** 

Please register at <u>uuactionnh.org</u> to receive the Zoom link!





## February Outreach offering—

## Pemi Youth Center

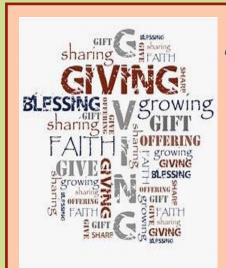


The February Outreach Offering collection will support the Pemi Youth Center, which is housed in the "Old Fire Station" on Main Street in downtown Plymouth. The offering will be received on <u>February 18</u> and our own Jess Dutile will be speaking to update us on the work of this group.

For over twenty years the Youth Center has provided a safe and loving "home away from home" where youth from ages 9-17 may gather after school Monday through Friday, from 2:30 to 5:30. They are open five days a week throughout the entire year. A typical week includes a variety of team-building activities, both indoors and out, opportunities for homework help and the benefit of connecting with each other. Snacks and a hot dinner are provided, with youth helping with the preparation. All services are provided at no charge.

Your contribution to the Pemi Youth Center will provide support for this vital organization for programming and needed building improvements. Donations may be made by using the donate button on the Starr King UU Fellowship homepage, by mailing a check to the Fellowship at PO Box 337, Plymouth 03264; or by leaving your donation in the collection basket – please note that your donation is for the Youth Center.

Suellen Skinner Outreach Offering coordinator



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*Thanks to your Generosity to Our Outreach Collections:* the December 2023 Outreach Collection for

Ull Action NH totaled

\$1,455

*With* \$200 of that amount coming from Endowment.



## Date with Death Club

Developed by Karen G. Johnston, MSW, MDiv Presented by Rev. Linda Barnes

The Date with Death Club (DwDC) curriculum explores mortality in community. This month's session is:

## February 18 Good Life and Good Death

Classes meet from 1:00 until 3:00 PM on Sunday afternoons. Join us for one session or all, and please feel free to invite friends and family!

Hope to see you there 'cause we all got a date with death.

Rev. Linda

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## More Date with Death Club NEWS!

We are offering the Date with Death Club ONLINE on certain Wednesday afternoons from 3 to 5. The meetings are open to anyone ages 16 and up.



The Date with Death Club has become a popular and powerful offering in our adult religious education program. We will meet over Zoom, for two-hour sessions, to discuss important but sometimes hard to talk about topics, like "Getting Comfortable with Death Talk" and "Owning your Own Dying". You can read all about the Date with Death Club on Starr King's website <u>here</u>.

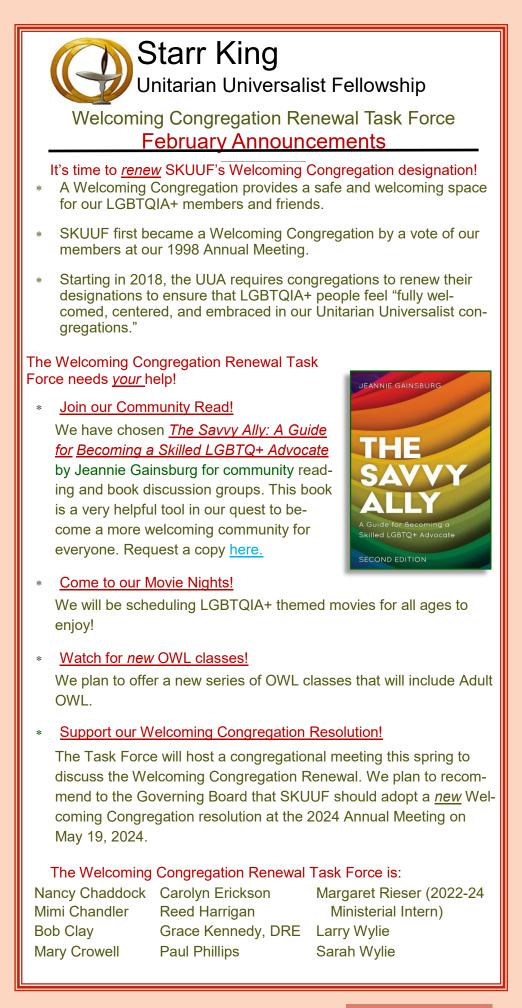
Please contact Margaret Rieser at <u>intern@starrkingfellowship.org</u> with questions, and to let her know that you are interested in attending. The next meetings are from 3-5 pm on Wednesday afternoons via Zoom on February 21, and March 6 & 20. You are welcome to attend as many sessions as you like.

## Howling Monkey Nicaraguan Coffee Still Available

Shade-grown, organic Howling Monkey Nicaraguan coffee can still be purchased to support both the Starr King Youth group and Compas de Nicaragua.

It is available either whole bean or ground, \$15 per pound. Please Contact Bob and Jane Clay, 603-996-1207 or claysusanj@gmail.com, to make arrangements for pickup or delivery.





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## **Membership News**

"Come, come whoever you are Wanderer, worshipper...." Rumi

There are over 1,000 Unitarian Universalist congregations in North America, each one autonomous but connected through an affirmation of the Seven Principles.

Unitarian Universalism is a non dogmatic faith with a history that reaches back to the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. Most people are more familiar with the early roots of Unitarianism and Universalism here in early 19th Century New England.

Come find out more about UU beliefs and history by attending a 3 session discussion to be held at 11 o'clock on March 3, 10, 17. As you become more familiar with Starr King you may truly welcome the progressive attitude that permeates SKUUF worship, religious education, and commitment to social justice and environmental sustainability.

And fun! And helping each other!

Whether you might be interested in "officially" joining Starr King UU Fellowship or you're already a "member," your attendance at these sessions is welcomed and appreciated.

Carolyn Erickson





## Please Note -Breakfast Club now meets on the Second Friday!



## Breakfast Club - Friday, February 9, 2024

Please notice that we have changed Breakfast Club to the **SECOND** Friday (instead of the first Friday) of the month.

We will meet for breakfast at the Main Street Station in Plymouth at 8:30 AM. Then we will go to the Museum of the White Mountains where Meghan will give us a tour of the "Reuse, Recycle, Repurpose, Reclaim, Reimagine" exhibit at 10 AM.

Please let me know if you will be joining us for breakfast and the Museum tour. Contact Deedie at cdkriebel@gmail.com.

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## Second Sunday Hike February 11

On February 11, we will take our annual hike to the Flume in Franconia. This is a fun hike for all ages. There are opportunities for those who are young (or young at heart) to do some sliding, so dress in appropriate clothing and bring an adventurous spirit! We usually get to see some ice climbers as well.

Our plan is to go to the Woodstock Station for refreshments after the hike. We will leave the Fellowship after the service at 11:30 AM from the lower parking lot.

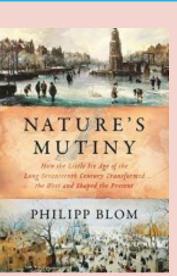
If you plan to join us, RSVP to Deedie at <u>cdkriebel@gmail.com</u> for updates.



## BOOK GROUP NEWS

Join the zoom book group February 13 at 3:30 when we will discuss:

Nature's Mutiny: How the Little Ice Age of the Long Seventeenth Century Transformed the West and Shaped the Present by Philipp Blom. An illuminating work of environmental history that chronicles the great climate crisis of the 1600s, which transformed the social and political fabric of Europe.



Please email <u>admin@starrkingfellowship.org</u> if you would like to be added to the email list to get the zoom link. Visit our website for the full list of this year's book selections.

https://www.starrkingfellowship.org/interest-groups

## Join Us for Thursday Bridge

At the Meetinghouse

1:30 to 3:00 PM

Any questions, contact Anna Wilken awilken@roadrunner.com



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## Meditation Group, Mondays at 6 p.m.

Our meditation group meets every Monday from 6 to 7 pm in the upstairs foyer. We are a small informal group that shares an abiding interest in meditation. Usually, we have between 5 and 10 participants. We are not affiliated with any sect or religion, however we often follow meditations in the Buddhist tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh, Jack Kornfield, Pema Chodron and the like. We generally get together at 6 for brief hellos and pertinent comments. Then a facilitator for the week will offer a short reading or discussion on a meditation topic, followed by a guided meditation, related to the topic. The meditation can be anywhere between 20 and 40 minutes. Afterward we have a short debriefing and discussion of the experience. We adjourn at 7. There is no designated leader of the group and there is no effort to persuade anyone to any point of view.

We welcome newcomers to our group. This group is free and requires no dues or contributions. No previous meditation experience necessary.

#### Great way to support SKUUF

The purchase of a Hannaford card to use for grocery shopping costs you no additional money but helps SKUUF raise funds. In addition, purchase of Hannaford gift cards is always in good taste and you can use the SKUUF Hannaford program to pur-



chase gift cards to give as thoughtful gifts. Denominations \$25, \$100, \$500. Cash or Checks, sorry no credit cards as fees remove our profit. Remember all checks are made out to SKUUF with Hannaford on memo line. Starr King Unitarian Universalist Fellowship 101 Fairgrounds Road PO Box 337 Plymouth, New Hampshire 03264

admin@starrkingfellowship.org (603) 536-8908

www.starrkingfellowship.org

Staff

The Rev. Dr. Linda Barnes, Minister Sarah Dan Jones, Music Director Grace Kennedy, Director of Religious Education Taphi Janelle, Office Administrator Margaret Rieser, Ministerial Intern

**Governing Board** Pres.: Jane Clay Vice Pres.: Treasurer: Janet Englund Secretary: Stephanie Halter Trustees: Robert Chandler Suellen Skinner Doug Grant Connie Maatta Louise Randall

## Mission and Vision statement

**Mission:** 

At Starr King Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, we cultivate more love in the world and nurture more love for the world. **Vision:** 

Our Fellowship welcomes and cares for people of all ages and varied identities. We experience joy as we build community and use our relationships with each other to create a more loving world.

Our Fellowship embraces what is meaningful and beautiful. We offer diverse experiences in worship, music, and the arts through our services, events, and the use of our building.

We live and model our values, collectively creating social and environmental justice with direct action and financial support.

### About Membership in Starr King Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

#### What it Means to be a Member

Membership is open to all individuals sixteen years and older regardless of race, creed, national origin, gender or sexual orientation who are in harmony with the visions, goals and principles of Starr King Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

You are invited to become a member by participating in a Path to Membership orientation or by meeting with the Minister to review the benefits and responsibilities of membership. All new members sign the official Membership Record book witnessed by the Minister or a Membership Committee Chair.

Members are entitled to the services of the Minister and the use of the sanctuary for Rites of Passage (weddings, dedications, memorial services, etc.) at no cost. Members are eligible to serve in elected officer positions and serve as committee chairs. Members have the privilege of full voting rights.

Membership is maintained by active participation in the Fellowship, by supporting the annual Stewardship Drive and/or contributing service toward the Fellowship.

#### What it Means to be a Friend

A Friend of Starr King UU Fellowship is an individual in harmony with the visions, goals and principles of our Fellowship who chooses not to sign the Membership Record Book. A Friend may participate in any and all Fellowship activities but does not receive Rites of Passage services without a fee, is not eligible to vote or serve as an elected officer or committee chair.