STARR KING VIEW

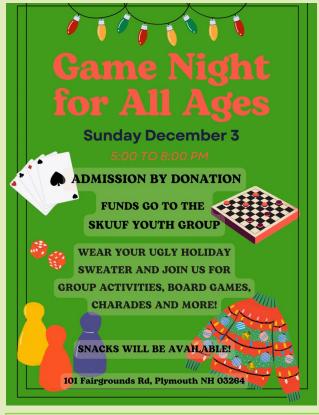
Starr King UU Fellowship
-A Welcoming CongregationDecember 2023



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Winter Solstice Candlelight Celebration

Friday, December 22 at 5:00 PM

For thousands of years, people all around the world have been celebrating the passing of the longest night and the return of the sun. Come join us in a community celebration with stories and dance of light, hope, and peace. If you wish, bring a small object of nature (pine cone, shell) to add to the center of the Circle. Wear white if you can to symbolically banish fear, ignorance, and darkness.

Light Refreshments will be served following the celebration. Finger foods or sweets gratefully received.



Sunday Services December

December 3 Everyday Mystery Margaret Rieser, Ministerial Intern

Direct experiences of transcending mystery and wonder are one of the sources of Unitarian Universalism's living tradition. This means that the exquisite experience that gives us goosebumps, for example, might be a source of our spirituality. In this service, we will explore what counts as transcendence in our everyday lives. We will also give a nod to our Transcendentalist heritage that gives voice to this source of spirituality.

December 10 The Worth of Uncertainty Rev. Linda Barnes

What will be is a mystery. As we look to the future, uncertainty can fill us with anxiety and dread. But accepting uncertainty, with a side dressing of humility and courage, can gift us rich and meaningful moments. These moments can then be woven together to make a rich and meaningful life. Join us as we explore the worth of uncertainty.

December 17 A Light in the Dark Rev. Linda Barnes

The days grow short, and the nights long, winter solstice is nearly upon us. This time of year is challenging for many of us. Like advent, winter solstice is a time of waiting. It is a time when a single source of light, a candle, or a star, can offer clarity and comfort. In this service we'll explore the gift of waiting with the light in darkness.

December 24 Unwrapping Christmas Rev. Linda Barnes

On this Christmas Eve morning join us to practice delight! For this whimsical service, we will sing, laugh, and unwrap some delightful Christmas stories.

December 31 The Most Glorious Pastimes: Books and Conversation

Nancy Chaddock

Poet Wislawa Szymborska wrote, "I'm old-fashioned and think that reading books is the most glorious pastime humankind has yet devised." If this quote speaks to you and you'd like to hear what others have read, join us for this casual Sunday gathering.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Join us for our traditional Christmas Eve service; we will light candles, sing, and tell the Christmas story. We'll gather at 5:30 PM. All manner of family, all ages, all peoples are welcome as we celebrate the light, the hope, and the gift of Christmas.

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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 December

Let me keep my distance, always, from those who think they have the answers. Let me keep company always with those who say "Look!" and laugh in astonishment, and bow their heads.

From Mysteries, yes! by Mary Oliver

Sometimes I resent the darkness. With each passing day now, the sun sets earlier and seems even more reluctant to rise in the morning. While I am committed to providing my dog a walk every day, I don't always have enthusiasm for it. On those days when I work during daylight hours, we must walk in the dark. Sometimes I resent that too. Last week I found myself on just such a walk and inadvertently discovered the gift of astonishment and an appreciation for mystery. There on the road were crisp outlines of the tree branches. I looked up and found that everything was bathed in moonlight. It was brilliant. The moon was waxing, the light it gave off was intense, as if to counter the decreasing light of day. I found myself experiencing ordinary awe.

Regardless of our theological perspective, recognition of the mystery – all that is beyond our understanding, of awe, is worthy of attention. It helps us get out of the smallness of our minds and points us toward the spiritual rewards of humility and reverence. I know that I do not have all the answers. I have so many questions, unknowns, and unsolved dilemmas that I could spend the remainder of my life resolving them. But there is more to a well-lived life than solving problems big and small, there is this very moment. I appreciate being reminded of that.

Anything that helps us be present in this moment is a gift. Our Soul Matters theme for this month is *The Gift of Mystery*. This excerpt from a Mary Oliver poem recognizes that those things we find astonishing, or mysterious, are sacred. For this, we might *bow our heads*. I love those moments that unexpectedly catch my attention and demand that I take note. I hope that mystery and ordinary awe finds you too, shakes you up a bit and reminds you that if you look, you may find mystery and awe waiting for you everywhere. I hope that whatever you find is so beautiful that it makes you say, "look" and bow your head.

December is a full month for our Fellowship. There are an abundance of opportunities to be with each other, be it at a Soul Matters small group, a committee meeting (really!), the book club or the solstice gathering. Maybe it's gathering for Sunday services or hikes. We are really a rare thing in our time and culture, a place of community where all are welcome to find joy and comfort, to seek meaning and to care for one another. We can witness mystery and ordinary awe in the company of each other too. I know I do.

In love and faith, Rev. Linda

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President's Letter December 2023

Thanksgiving leftovers are almost gone, or at least in the soup. Leftovers are the best part! Some other favorites for me include being together with family and friends, listing things we are grateful for, sharing stories, playing games, all mixed together with lots of laughter and even a few tears. With the stories shared come memories of family and friends, near and far, those gone as well as those still with us. I feel blessed to include this Starr King community in my gratitude list, my stories and my memories.

I recalled a poem about friendships and family ties that are lost so of course I searched a bit. I found <u>A Snowflake Falls</u>, by Ruth Adams, that fits this recollection. It begins as snowflakes cover the ground like a blanket but disappear in the morning sun. This poem speaks of friendships and family ties changing over time. "As melted snow does turn to slush, relationships can turn to dust." It can be difficult and takes hard work to keep relationships strong.

Our fellowship works together to keep our relationships strong, within and between each of us as well as with the wider community, much like it is with friends and family. This poem ends with this reminder:

"Let's be the most that we can be, for all our friends and family. Unlike the snowflake on the ground, let's keep in touch and stay around."

Many thanks to everyone for these relationships we hold. We are doing our best and the most.

Holiday blessings, Jane Clay, President

Boards Bulletin

- Excellence of Staff
- Leadership structure reconsidered
- Building rentals and maintenance: kitchen, playground, sound system

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

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Year End Reminders from the Treasurer

- Please remember to note on the memo line of your check what your check is for. If it is left blank, we will assume it is meant to be a non-pledge donation to the operating fund.
- Checks for contributions you wish to see included on your 2023 charitable giving statement must be postmarked or dropped off at the Fellowship by December 31.

IRA Gifts for 2023

As year-end approaches we remind you that if you are 70 ½ or older and have an IRA, gifts transferred directly from that IRA to qualified charitable organizations, such as our Fellowship, may:

- allow you to make a gift of pre-tax dollars, rather than an aftertax gift through a check or credit card;
- be excluded from federal income taxes since your gift would pass directly from your IRA to the Fellowship; and
- provide you with a tax savings regardless of whether you itemize or not.

Soundbites

Advent

Years ago when I was applying for a Music Director job in Atlanta, the minister asked me what was my Spiritual Practice. My answer was "patience".

It was the first thing out of my mouth. It is the thing I struggle with the most. It is not a secret as many of you can attest when witnessing me dealing with paradigm shifts.

My theological Spiritual Practice is as a Christian Unitarian Universalist, and as such I observe the season of Advent, which is upon us now. It is a period of waiting and focusing on the process of anticipation. Whether it be the celebration of the birth of Christ, or the hope around the candles of Hannukah, or the anticipation of the longer days marked in the Solstice, there is ritual in the waiting which has much value.

So, this season at Starr King, I look forward to honoring all of those holidays, knowing that this is a challenging task. And, personally, I will do my best to mix my expectations with patience. And to remember that which our Minister reminds us of often: **Humans.**

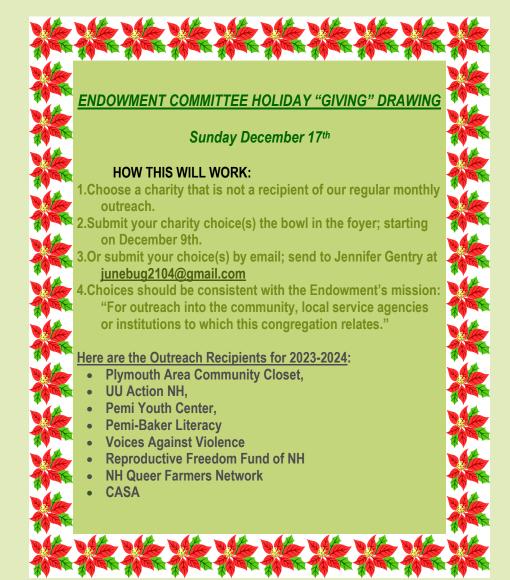
Blessings, Sarah Dan

SCHEDULE

Choir meets every Thursday 6:00-7:30 EXCEPT 12/7 – we support our Pemi Singers that evening)

Sundays: Choir sings 12/3, 12/17 and 12/24

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From your DRE

Religious Education

This past month has been full of fun at SKUUF! Religious Education has continued on Sunday mornings, with more activities and art decorating the space. Some of the collaborative work of the kids and other Fellowship members can be seen upstairs in the sanctuary - the Memory Tree, started by the youth and finished by everyone during our Day of Remembrance service. Downstairs each week we enjoy a time to share



joys and sorrows and have especially been loving the microscope and many art supplies to be creative with!

Youth Groups

Both our High School and Middle School Youth Groups are thriving! Last month together they cooked and served dinner at the Bridge House in Plymouth, and also held a cookie-baking night to donate to the Bridge House's holiday program. This coming Sunday the groups are hosting a Fellowship-wide game night as a fundraiser and community-building event. We are so grateful for these wonderful youth who bring so much joy to so many lives! If you know of a young person who might be interested in attending a youth group meeting, invite them to try it out! Both groups are always open to new members and meet on the first and third Sunday of every month.



House.

See more photos...

COME TEACH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND GET TO KNOW OUR KIDS

Religious education teachers are needed for the classes held during the Sunday morning services. It is a great opportunity to get to know the youngest of our congregation. Grace always plans the lesson and gets it to the teachers before the class. There are always two teachers. The room has a great set up for learning and fun.

Please call or email Nancy Dowey to be put on the list. You only have to volunteer once or more would be great! I can put you in for certain dates or if you don't know your availability now I can put you on the list and call when we need teachers. Right now there are just three of us doing all the teaching and we need help. The class might be small but it is important to provide a great experience for the kids that attend.

Talk to me at the service or email at nancydowey@gmail.com or call me 603 801 1845.

Thanks, Nancy



Climate Action Committee Suggests...

We hope that you've noticed our various recommendations for ways to reduce the amount of plastic and non-recyclable waste we generate, especially during the holidays (our trashiest time of year in my house). This December newsletter contribution is no different. However, we have some specific suggestions based on our own efforts to change the way we consume.

Please note this list cannot be comprehensive, so we encourage feedback. Have you found other items to use or other places to look for them? Pass the word to one of us.

First, what do you put in your stockings? In my house, I put snacks, socks, personal care items, small toys and even, sometimes, clothes like socks and underwear (boo!). On the other hand, not coal! Here are some ideas for plastic/nonrecyclable free giving for stockings and small gifts.

Personal care items like cardboard tube lip balm, personal care products like shampoo and conditioner bars that come in paperwrapped covers; body lotion, face cream, and special salves - even beard balm(?!?!). Of course, clothing items can be purchased without plastic wrapping if we look around. For small toys, think of small, even handmade ones made of wood, jigsaw puzzles (without a plastic wrap if possible), and OF COURSE, books (even pre-read books from places like Ladders! Get lots and do good in the neighborhood). How about fruits, and snacks bought in bulk and repackaged in small reusable containers? What else might go in stockings? Home care items might be small things like mesh bags for grocery store produce or reuseable, even home-made bags for all shopping needs. Also think of things like laundry sheets, liquid or powder laundry detergent. These can be found ready made and waiting for your own container to refill over and over. However, there are easy recipes for powder or liquid laundry products that you can make at home!

Larger gifts might be trickier..Purchased items may be hard to find without some kind of plastic involved but here are a couple ideas for these.

Small houseplants can be welcome at this time of year. Home-made food items like cookie mix or pancake/baking mix easily home-made and given in ball jars. Christmas tree ornaments (wood, metal or home-made). IOU's to concerts or to dinner dates might mean a lot to people, even kids. Think sports games (even college games. Ice hockey, anyone?) Play dates at places like – I don't know, ask a family member or other parents at SKUUF with kids!) Clothes...umm. Like I said, bigger gifts are harder but think about packaging and wrapping with paper that is recyclable. Or things too big to wrap – like an electric car! Just joking!! And for the folks with everything, what about a gift in their name to a favorite non-profit of theirs or of yours!

No matter what you give this holiday season, know that your spending can make a difference so even as you work on reducing plastic, also think and shop local for all that you can. Please look for local stores and restaurants for your shopping. LFP is selling yummy, pre-made meals as well as milk and yogurt in glass jars. Most of our recommendations for personal care and cleaning can be found at Plymouth Soap Works, but they aren't the only place. Where do you shop? Then, for beautiful, handmade gifts both practical and beautiful, there are places downtown like Artistic Roots. I'm sure there are others, but I'm not much of a shopper!

We hope you enjoy planning for this holiday season as much as we do. You can even spread the joy over the year by planning to make more gifts for next year. As you work, or learn new skills, do it with love to share with your special people with every gift you give.

Happy Holidays,

Suellen and all your Climate Change Committee

December Outreach offering

Unitarian Universalist Action Network of New Hampshire is a social justice advocacy network in New Hampshire. They are committed to strengthening justice work within congregations and building links with interfaith partners and progressive organizations in order to effectively witness and advocate for Unitarian Universalist values in the public arena.

Areas of concerns are social and civic engagement/advocating in the legislature, climate justice, social justice and welcoming congregations. Check out their website for more specific information at uuactionnh.org.

We have regularly contributed to their Bail/Bond fund to assist those incarcerated because of their poverty. This is ongoing work worthy of our assistance. However, we are also becoming more engaged in other work such as climate justice, green congregations and renewable energy as well as reproductive justice. Our offering to them will invite them to use our gifts where they are needed most.

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www.uuactionnh.org

Please give to December's Community Outreach Organization!

Who we are

Unitarian Universalist Action New Hampshire is <u>your-</u> statewide action network amplifying UU voices and putting our UU values into *action* in NH.

What we do

UU Action NH educates and advocates on legislative and policies issues in support of our UU values:

- Operates the NH Community Bail Fund
- Activates New Hampshire UUs in support of climate justice, racial and gender equity, and immigrant solidarity
- Represents UU values at the Granite State
 Organizing Project & NH Council of Churches

How can you help?

- Join our 603 Campaign! Go to <u>www.uuactionnh.org</u> and become a monthly donor for just \$6.03 a month.
- Join the UUANH Leadership Team!
- Donate to our 2024 Faithify campaign to amplify UU voices in support of climate justice in NH.

Learn more about us and our social justice work in New Hampshire by visiting https://www.uuactionnh.org.



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:

Dec. 17 Afterlife/Afterlives

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!

To sign up, email us at admin@starrkingfellowship.org and let us know what dates you'd like to attend. Taphi has flyers available if you know someone who would like one or have a place to distribute them. You can direct questions to Rev. Linda at minister@starrkingfellowship.org.

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 will be offering the Date with Death Club ONLINE for 6 sessions on Wednesday afternoons, from January -March 2023. The meetings are open to anyone ages 16 and up.



Are you curious about the Date with Death Club? It's a group that will meet twice a month, for two-hour sessions to discuss topics that are important but sometimes hard to talk about, 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 here.

Please contact Margaret Rieser at intern@starrkingfellowship.org if you are interested in attending. The meetings will be from 3-5 pm on Wednesday afternoons on January 10 & 24, February 7 & 21, and March 6 & 20.

Office Hours

Fellowship Office is open Tuesday through Friday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM 536-8908

(Days and hours are subject to change and any changes are posted in the weekly View)

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 pick-up or delivery.



Membership News

"Generosity" has been the November theme at SKUUF. Suze Orman wrote "Time and love are the most valuable possession you can share." Starr King is such a vibrant welcoming Fellowship because so many members share so much. Bob and Jane Clay come to top of mind when one thinks of generosity.

A retired 7th grade math teacher, Bob advises the SKUUF youth group and has taught the award winning **Our Whole Lives** program for many years. Last year he accompanied the Youth to Costa Rica. Bob is on the Board of Directors of Compas de Nicaragua, a program that promotes cultural exchange and sustainable community development in Nicaragua. Sales from coffee and cocoa beans grown in the forest there and sold here under the brand name Howling Monkey help support sustainable bio intensive raised bed food gardens.

Jane is a retired Campton Elementary Special Education teacher and is currently acting as the President of the SKUUF Board of Directors .

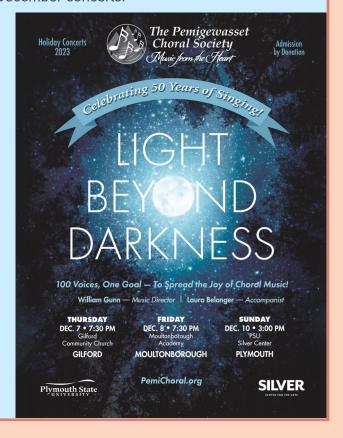


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The following 9 members sing with Pemi Choral. Please support them at one of the December concerts!

Allan Stern,
Susan Scrimshaw,
Sue Chadwick,
Kathy Hillier,
Mary Hazelton,
Jane Clay,
Gisela Estes,
Babe DeRaymond,

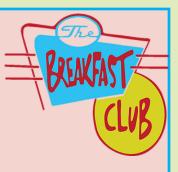
Susan Jacobs.



Breakfast Club

Friday, December 1, 2023

We will meet for breakfast at Annie's Overflow Restaurant in Holderness at 8:30 AM. At 9:30 AM, we will travel to the Stinson Mountain Museum of Building Toys. one of the world's largest collection of Erector sets and other A.C. Gilbert products:



chemistry sets, tool sets, string toys, tin vehicles, models, wheel toys, magic sets, electrical sets, lead casting kits, LaVelle sets, and other educational/scientific toys. Other building sets by Meccano, Marklin, Ives, Bing, Bilt-E-7, Lionel, and many others. Tinker Toys, American Bricks, Lincoln Logs. Large collection of building blocks, wooden and stone (1840-1960). Early tin toys. Victorian-era educational toys. New York City street signs and subway memorabilia. Coney Island and Brooklyn Bridge items. Movie memorabilia.

Please contact Deedie at cdkriebel@gmail.com, if you plan to attend.

Second Sunday Hike December 10, 2023

Join us as we hike Mt. Livermore via Old Mountain Road to the <u>Crawford-Ridgepole Trail.</u> This 2.6 mile out and back hike is considered moderate and takes under 2 hours to complete. It is just 15 minutes from Starr King, so we should be able to return in time for

the Pemi concert at PSU at 3 PM. We will leave the lower parking lot at Starr King at 11:30 AM after the service.

Contact Deedie at cdkriebel@gmail.com, if you plan to join us.

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Special Holiday Treat -

Friday, December 15, 2023 at 6 PM.

Luminary Hike to Inspiration Point in Bristol. Come join us for a hike on the Worthen Trail to the summit of Little Round Top and Inspiration Point following the magical glow of trailside ice luminaries along the way. This is a self-guided event, leaving from the parking lot of the Slim Baker Area (301 New Chester Mountain Road, Bristol, NH 03222). Each luminary is unique and beautiful as they are all handmade.

In the event of snow or ice on the trails, poles and traction are recommended. This trail gains approximately 800 feet of elevation and is a short uphill climb to the top. This event is free and open to the public. No registration is necessary to participate. Dogs are allowed if leashed or under voice control. Meet us in the parking lot by the ki-

osk at 6 PM. We hope to sing Christmas Carols along the way and at the top. After the hike, we plan to eat in Bristol at Cielito Mexican Restaurant.

Contact Deedie at cdkriebel@gmail.com, if you would like to join in the fun. Please indicate whether or not you will be going to Cielito with us.

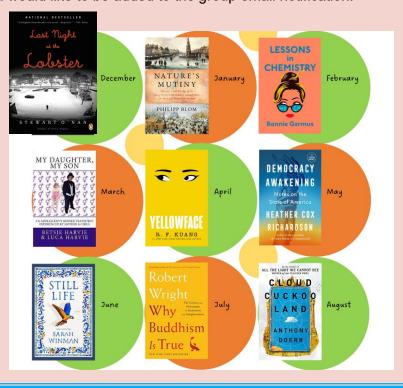


BOOK GROUP NEWS

December 12, 3:30 Book Group

Our December Book Group selection is *Last Night at the Lobster by* Stewart O'Nan. It is an extremely short book, and probably well suited for this busy time of year. It is suggested that it be read in one sitting. Given its length and page size, that is probably possible. I am hoping that this poignant book about saying goodbye to people and a way of life will resonate with most of us and for various reasons. Here is a link to a <u>reading guide</u> that might make our conversation in December even richer than it might be.

We meet via zoom. Please contact admin@starrkingfellowship.org if you would like to be added to the group email notification.



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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 purchase 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

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.

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