

# Chalice in the Mountains

The Universalist Unitarian Congregation of St. Johnsbury, Vermont



## December 2022

Services Each Sunday at 10:30 am in person and on Zoom



December 4

### A Brief Exploration of Ableism

Bill Coleman, Guest Speaker

Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other. What takes place for us internally when we come into contact with someone who we think of as having a physical or a mental disability? Are we engaging in high quality interactions at such times? How does the other person feel about the words that we choose? Are we regarded as being genuine and caring, or alternately as being superficial and phony? What can be done to overcome what may be experienced as extreme awkwardness in order to permit a strengthening of our connectedness under such circumstances? Bill plans to include some baseline information and to parallel some selected ideas that have been germinating in his mind after having had the good fortune of spending time exploring some fascinating and thought-provoking materials that he’s accessed of late.

*Bill Coleman, one of our Co-Moderators, has worked in Human Services for most of the past 27 years in various roles including residential counseling, therapist in training, shared living provider, and survivor. During the course of working through two decades that included rural poverty, addiction, and very noteworthy mental health issues of his own, Bill combines experiential learning with work experiences and substantial time in graduate studies of psychology and mental health counseling. “Struggles to stabilize my mind amidst ongoing efforts to maintain and build upon recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs for thirty consecutive years next week, have been quite a process and I feel very fortunate to have lived to share in this exploration with any who will be in attendance.”*

December 11

### Extreme Weather

#### Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium Presentation

**Please note the difference in time and location ~ 10:00 AM Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium**  
**We are sorry we won’t be able to offer this experience over Zoom.**

In observance of our fourth and seventh principles, we will gather at the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium to view a full-dome planetarium film by National Geographic on the topic of extreme weather. Here’s a link to a preview of the presentation: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt6482356/> and a link to some great short videos that show some of what we’ll be seeing (at the bottom of the web page) <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/extreme-weather/>

*Get closer than you’ve ever been to collapsing glaciers, out-of-control wildfires, and tornado-whipped debris while discovering the surprising connections among these powerful forces. National Geographic is the world’s premium destination for science, exploration, and adventure. Through their world-class scientists, photographers, journalists, and filmmakers, Nat Geo gets you closer to the stories that matter and past the edge of what’s possible.*

This is a special presentation being done specifically for UUCStJ, and will take place before the museum’s operating hours. The doors to the museum will open at 10:00 so we recommend arriving at least five minutes before that. Please make every effort to get there on time because once everyone is inside, the doors will be locked again.

**Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium**  
1302 Main Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont  
**Doors open at 10:00 sharp**  
**Please arrive a little before that.**



# Cerebrations

## Ministerial Musings and Meanderings for December



After our Samhain service on October 30th, I decided to follow my own advice and take some time to look within and reflect on my life at the beginning of the dark part of the year. And here's a bit of what I thought about . . .

When we're young, we find very little delight in a quiet evening at home with a cup of tea and a good book, or a slow afternoon walk in the woods. At that age, there are larger, grander things to be concerned about—love, career, children . . . . But as time wears on, almost everyone faces setbacks—careers shift, relationships crumble, even our strongest personal beliefs are challenged. And it's during these times of failure and uncertainty that we begin to have a greater appreciation for life's small victories. We suddenly appreciate the warm slice of toast, the friendly encounter, the long hot shower on a cold winter morning, the first bud of spring . . . .

Enjoying mundane moments like these can keep us balanced—particularly if we can enjoy them while still acknowledging how much worse things could—and probably will—be one day.

I've made a momentous decision over the past few weeks. I've decided that over my lifetime, I've kept myself far too busy to linger over that slice of toast, to fully engage in that friendly encounter, to lollygag under a long hot shower, to marvel at that first bud of spring . . . so, before it gets too late, I've decided to retire after my contract with you is up at the end of April. You'll still get one more service from me after that in June when I preach my last service in Derby Line.

I doubt that I'll ever be able to fully express the gratitude I feel toward this special congregation that called me to full-time ministry and has supported me and helped me grow—all the while putting up with my nagging and my many idiosyncrasies for the past seven years. We've been through a lot together since September of 2016— from the 2016 election and its four-year aftermath, to the rise of white supremacy, to the Big Lie that spawned the January 6th insurrection, to the overturn of Roe v Wade. But as your minister, my biggest challenge—and probably yours as well—was the pandemic. COVID-19 upended all that we thought religion and worship was about as we scrambled to make on-line services a reality. I have been blessed and educated by your presence in my life and will be forever grateful for the roles you've played in my story.

As we journey together toward the end of my time as your minister, I've been doing a lot of reflecting on our experiences along the road we've been traveling. It's not been without its bumps and pot-holes, but overall I've found it exciting and meaningful. I hope you have also.

I'd like to extend a personal invitation to all of you to attend First Parish's traditional Solstice candlelight service at 4:00 PM on the 18<sup>th</sup>. It's quite different from anything we've done in St. J, and I really think you'd enjoy it—readings, songs, merriment, and moments of quiet joy.

This year for our Christmas Eve Candlelight service here in St. J, I'll be focusing on *The Story of the Other Wise Man* by Henry Van Dyke, a tale of a fourth wise man who got separated from his three companions and has several adventures of his own—none of which he sees as important as reaching the manger in Bethlehem. But he was wrong! Join us in person if you can for an evening of story, carols, and special music.

My good wishes for each of you during this festive season and into the new year know no bounds. I feel privileged to have been a part of this beloved community and look forward to continue serving you for a few more months as we travel together into 2023.

Brightest Blessings of the season,

*Susan-Lynn*

UUC St Johnsbury Virtual Office Hours

Tuesdays from 9:00-1:00, and by appointment ~ Phone: 802-473-8100 ~ [revsusanlynn2022@gmail.com](mailto:revsusanlynn2022@gmail.com)

**The following are candlelight services beginning at 4:00 PM.  
There will be no morning service on December 18th or 25th.**



**December 18  
Hail the Light!  
A Celebration of the Winter Solstice  
December 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm**

The Rev. Susan-Lynn Johns, Minister, Leading from Derby Line

First Universalist Parish extends a special invitation to our sibling congregation in St. Johnsbury, to join us at our annual celebration of the Winter Solstice, which has been a mainstay of the congregation for decades. This joyful service is always filled with surprises—from solemnity to hilarity—as we gather on the shortest night to encourage and welcome the anticipated coming of the light. Janice Luce will provide music on the organ and piano and members of our congregation will participate in special songs via Zoom. Following a service of readings and music in the sanctuary we will move into the hall for the candlelight portion of the evening, singing and sharing hopes and dreams for the future. Weather permitting, we're planning to have a "bonfire" in the yard following the traditional potluck dinner. It's no secret that many people come primarily for the delicious food, but no matter what moves you to grace us with your presence, you'll be welcomed. (You're not required to bring a dish to share.)



**Saturday, December 24  
Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

The Rev. Susan-Lynn Johns, Minister, Leading from St. Johnsbury



Our Christmas Eve service has always been a highlight in the life of our congregation. Standing in a circle of candles at the end of the service was particularly moving. Yet despite having to use Zoom for the past two Christmases, our services over Zoom have exceeded expectations—particularly at the end of the evening as we gathered together by candlelight in our individual boxes, instead of the traditional circle, to sing a medley of carols. But this year, we'll be meeting in person again, and we're extending a special invitation to our sibling congregation of First Universalist Parish of Derby Line to join us in the warmth of our sanctuary to celebrate the joys of the season through story and song.

Susan-Lynn will be using *The Story of the Other Wise Man* by Henry Van Dyke to talk about the human impulse to be of help and the importance of a compassionate heart. Janice Luce will be here in person to provide solos and accompany us as we sing the old familiar carols. Vocally, there will be live solos, duets, and a virtual choir made up of members of both congregations.



**Wishing Everyone a Happy  
Holiday Season**



## RE/SEA/Grow UU\*

Hi all!



There are only 2 Sundays in December when separate children’s programming will be offered, December 4, with Diane and a second adult, and December 11 with parents at the Fairbanks Planetarium. December 18 is a multi-generational Solstice service at 4:00 (no morning service), and there will be another multi-generational service on December 24, Christmas eve, also at 4:00 pm. There will be no Sunday service on Christmas day.

The second children’s 7th Principal programming, with Dana and Bill, is scheduled for January 15th.

- 12/04 Diane in St J: Our 7 Principles
- 12/11 Intergenerational Service at the Fairbanks Planetarium **10:00 AM sharp!**
- 12/18 Annual Solstice Service Intergenerational 4:00 PM
- 12/24 Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Intergenerational 4:00 PM
- 12/25 No Service Merry Christmas!
- 01/01 No Service Happy New Year!
- 0108 Diane Our 1st Principle
- 01/15 Dana & Bill Our 7th Principle

Volunteers are still needed to join the SEA committee!

Diane Barnett



## Notes on Notes



Hello All,

Thank you everyone who helped make our November all music service a wonderful time of singing together. And thank you also to singers and Martin Hutchinson for compiling our Thanksgiving virtual choir piece! Good work All!

For December, take a listen to these links for music to accompany some service themes:

- **December 4** *Ableism* [Fool On The Hill by Paul McCartney](#) Who gets called a fool and by whom? Who gets labeled able or disabled and by whom?
- **December 11** *Climate crisis extreme weather events.* GF Handel’s oratorio “Israel In Egypt” tells the story of the Israelites bondage in and the escape from Egypt across the Red Sea. In the sequence of plagues that convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go is an extreme weather event of hailstorms and fire. Lyrics: “He gave them hailstones for rain. Fire mingled with the hail ran along upon the ground.” Start at number 12:20 and listen for the approaching, then raging storm.  
[He gave them hailstones for rain](#)
- **December 18** *Solstice* Gordon Bok’s [Turning Toward The Morning](#)
- **December 24/25** Based on a Gregorian chant for Christmas Day  
[O Magnum Mysterium Morten Lauridsen](#)

Enjoy!

Kathy

## Community Inreach Ministry

The Caring Network is always available to offer support through those times that a helping hand or a listening ear is needed. We continue to follow reasonable COVID protocols, remaining just a call, an email, or a conversation during coffee hour away.

Rest assured that any information shared with the Caring Network will remain confidential.

Here are the names and information for the members of the committee:

Marguerite Bruno (802-892-1256) mbruno2@mac.com  
Jane Brickett (603-788-2220) silofarm@gmail.com  
Brendan Hadash (802-748-8074) bhadash@sover.net  
Joanne Giannino (508-577-7869) jojouu63@gmail.com  
Susan-Lynn Johns (802-748-2442) stjuuc@gmail.com



## The Universalist Unitarian Congregation of St. Johnsbury Is Proud To Be Affiliated with the Northeast Kingdom Rainbow Coalition

Get involved with LGBTQ+ folks, straight allies and People of Color as we all work together to make Newport a genuinely welcoming and inclusive space. Meetings are every two weeks at First Universalist Church in Derby Line.

Contact Rick Ufford-Chase for details: [rickuffordchasencdd@gmail.com](mailto:rickuffordchasencdd@gmail.com)

If you're interested in starting a chapter in the St. Johnsbury area, contact Rev. Susan-Lynn Johns: [stjuuc@gmail.com](mailto:stjuuc@gmail.com)

Happy Holidays from David Harrison in Texas!

## Health and Safety Measures for In-Person Services

For the respect and protection of our older or vulnerable community members, please wear a mask and maintain a respectful physical distance from others at all times when indoors. We encourage everyone to stay up to date on vaccinations and boosters. We are reluctantly suspending coffee hour after our services until further notice.

***If you have any COVID-like symptoms, please consider staying home and joining us on Zoom.***

The Board of Trustees may change these recommendations or requirements, and may decide to return to online only services, if local conditions or health department policies change.

**Thank you very much for your cooperation.**

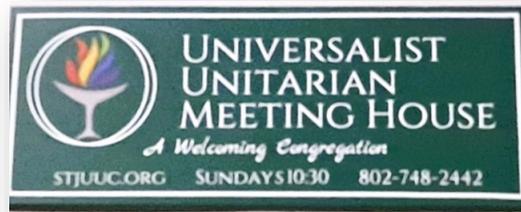




After a two-year COVID hiatus, **First Night North 2023** will be using our sanctuary for performances this year. If you're interested in helping by checking badges or directing people upstairs to the sanctuary and answering questions on the night or helping set up before the performances begin, please contact Lorie at [stjuuc@gmail.com](mailto:stjuuc@gmail.com)

For more information about First Night North 2023, including the complete schedule of performers and how to purchase admission or become a volunteer at other venues, watch for the annual First Night North guide in newspapers or online at [www.firstnightnorth.org](http://www.firstnightnorth.org).

While no specific Covid-related protocols are anticipated at this time, please stay tuned for evolving guidelines.



## Co-op Christmas Gift Program

We have been working with Kingdom Community Service's Co-op Christmas for many years now, striving to offer a bit of cheer for children, elderly and disabled individuals who are not being served by other area groups (such as the wonderful Santa Fund).

Referrals come from area agencies, churches, service providers, and local school communities. Wishes are recorded on tags and brought to area churches and the St. J Academy for distribution.

Individuals select a gift tag, purchase a listed item, and bring it to the drop-off location.

If you are interested please email [stjuuc@gmail.com](mailto:stjuuc@gmail.com) and we'll let you know which gift tags are still to be filled. Please do not wrap the gifts, they will be wrapped before distribution.



**Gifts Due December 10th to**  
United Community Church  
1325 Main Street, St. Johnsbury, Vermont 05819  
(802) 748-2603



## Christmas Dinner

This year the Community Christmas Dinner will be at the United Community Church, UCC so we can seat the large number of people who enjoy this very special meal together. Following a long-standing tradition in St. Johnsbury, Beth El Synagogue will be taking the lead in preparing and serving this dinner but they cannot do it alone. KCS and our congregation will be helping with providing and cooking the food and then cleaning up afterwards.

To volunteer on Christmas day contact Elinor Levy at [emlevy@bu.edu](mailto:emlevy@bu.edu)

To offer food, donations, or help before hand contact Daisy at [daisymccoy50@gmail.com](mailto:daisymccoy50@gmail.com)

**We all need to pitch in to make it happen.**



## December Birthdays

5th ~ Donna Vivier

## Bottle & Can Drive for Social Justice!

Now that we're back in person, please remember to bring your returnable bottles and cans to the Meeting House to help our Social Justice Team support the NEK Asylum Seeker's Assistance Network. Please call the office (802-748-2442) to schedule a drop-off on a weekday or drop them off when you join us in person for a Sunday Service!

**THANKS!!**



## New Years Day Circle Dance



We will come together in our sanctuary at 3 PM on January 1 to welcome the new year with dance. Circle dance stems from ancient roots as it combines traditional and modern choreographies to world music to Integrate body, mind and spirit in community. All dances are gently taught. No partner or experience needed. Beginners are especially welcome.

For questions or special needs contact Daisy at [daisymccoy50@gmail.com](mailto:daisymccoy50@gmail.com)

## Welcome To Our Newest Member!



Robert Jones signed our membership book on October 23, 2022. Not letting any grass grow under his feet, he's already given a worship service and has just joined the Worship Committee.

In 2021, he and his spouse moved to Lunenburg, VT with their three Cardigan Welsh corgis to which they have now added three alpacas. He now runs a small gift and import store in St. Johnsbury called Ysbrydoliaeth inspired by his roots and travels.

The KCS Food Shelf at 36 Steeple Place is offering a new program and needs your help. *Keep Us Warm* will be giving out coats and warm clothing along with blankets. If you have any of these to donate please drop off at the Meeting House or the Food Shelf.



## Rent The Universalist Unitarian Meeting House in St. Johnsbury For Your Special Event



Choose from any or all of these available ADA-accessible spaces, each floor is ADA compliant but stairs must be used between floors.



Sanctuary Summer View

Upstairs (2nd floor, accessible outside entrance):  
Sanctuary, kitchenette, meeting room and bathroom.  
Capacity 145 people. Moveable pews. Space for tables or dancing.

Downstairs (1st floor):  
2 Meeting Rooms, full kitchen, and bathroom.  
Capacity 61 people. Moveable tables and chairs.



Sanctuary Winter View

Convenient Parking

All faiths are welcome. A UU minister may be available for services or you may hire your own officiant.



To reserve: Contact [stjuuc@gmail.com](mailto:stjuuc@gmail.com) or 802-748-2442.  
Include date(s), your contact information, which space(s) you are interested in, and approximate number of attendees expected.

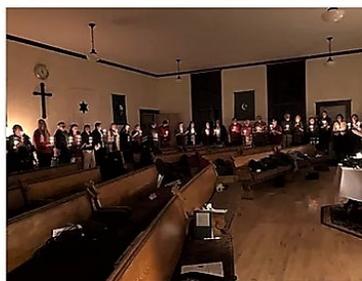
All gatherings are required to comply with current Vermont Covid regulations and guidelines.



2nd Floor Meeting Room



2nd Floor Kitchenette



Candle Light Sanctuary Service



1st Floor Kitchen



1st Floor Meeting Rooms

