

# Schedule of Holiday Services – 2021

*"Stunned to stillness by beauty we remember who we are and why we are here."*  
Rebecca Parker

## **Holding Space: Making Room for Light and Silence Series**

Participants will receive a weekly email from Rev. Rebecca offering poetry, reflections, and a contemplative prompt for the month of December. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/HoldingSpaceSeries>!

## **Sunday, December 12 – Pageant for All Ages**

*10:30am, Zoom Webinar*

This year's Christmas Pageant will be held as a live Zoom Webinar again so that participants of ALL ages can safely participate! We hope you'll join us for this special intergenerational service, as we playfully retell the nativity story and share new videos of our choir and youth singing cherished carols and hymns. The service will also include a video of all of YOU from two years ago singing the FRS version of the "Twelve Days of Christmas" led by Tim Fountain!

## **Saturday, December 18 and Sunday, December 19 – Candlelight Services**

*7pm, in-person and on YouTube*

The annual Candlelight Service returns to the FRS Sanctuary this holiday season with a program of contemplative and spiritually deep music celebrating Christmas. The Candlelight Choir is excited to welcome back a live, in-person audience for this unique instance of the nearly 100-year-old tradition. The two services will be the same. Masks and proof of vaccination will be required to ensure that everyone remains as safe as possible. Tickets are available on the FRS website at [www.frsuu.org](http://www.frsuu.org), so be sure to reserve your seats early!

## **Sunday, December 19 – Worship Service: A Winter Solstice**

*10:30am, in-person\* and on YouTube*

People and cultures have recognized the importance of the Winter Solstice, or Longest Night, for millennia. We wait, when the sun is tilted furthest from the sun, for the light to return. Reverend Rebecca will reflect upon the sweet darkness as we also join with faith communities throughout the month of December in remembering victims of gun violence.

Join us for a Holiday Hot Chocolate and Cookie Social outside following the service. Dress warmly!

## **Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Services**

*5:30pm and 8pm, in-person\* and on YouTube*

Return to our traditional Christmas Eve services either in person or on YouTube. Both services will be the same and will include the Christmas story, carols, and "Silent Night" hummed by candlelight. Rev. Rebecca will lead worship. We will gather outside following both services to sing festive Christmas carols. For everyone's safety, vaccination is required to attend in person. Families with children under 5 are encouraged to attend Christmas Eve worship online.

## **Sunday, December 26 – Gong Meditation and Relaxation Service**

*10:30am, in-person\* and on YouTube*

Zach Field returns to FRS for the annual Gong Meditation and Relaxation service to help us bring in the new year with peace and calm. The soothing sounds of pitched gongs distract the mind as Zach leads us in meditation. Zach's percussion studio and music school, ZFDM (formerly the Musical Suite and Zach Field Drum Studios), are located at the Tannery in Newburyport.

**\*Masks and vaccination required to attend all in-person services.**

**See the Steeple newsletter or [frsuu.org](http://frsuu.org) for more information.**

# Opportunities to Connect & Engage

## Christmas Poinsettias

It's time to order your Christmas poinsettias in memory or in celebration of friends or loved ones. The cost is \$25 for a large plant. A list of donors and their dedication messages will be included in the Candlelight Service program. You may pick up your plant after the December 19 Candlelight Service to enjoy in your home. The deadline for orders is noon on Wednesday, December 8. To donate a poinsettia, please fill out the order form here:

<https://bit.ly/FRSpoinsettia2021>. Then, you can make your donation online at <https://onrealm.org/frsuu/-/give/now> by choosing "Poinsettias for Holiday Services" from the fund. Or you can mail or drop off a check to the front office. Checks should be payable to First Religious Society, with "poinsettia" in the memo line.

## Holiday Lift Program: Co-creating Joy

Many of us could use a lift this holiday season, so we invite you to participate in a program designed to spread a little joy. **How will it work?** First, indicate your interest in participating **by December 15** by signing up here: <https://bit.ly/frsuuholidaylift>. You will be randomly assigned another participant for whom you will leave a small token of joy. Be creative! It could be a baked good, a photograph or piece of art you've created, a copy of a favorite poem, a book that you find especially meaningful, even found objects from nature. Please do not purchase anything extravagant. Let the gift be an expression of you! You, in return, will be the recipient of someone else's joyful giving. All exchanges will ideally be in December—but after the holidays is a fine time, too! We can help transport if necessary. **Questions?** Contact Julie Parker Amery, Director of Faith Formation and Spiritual Exploration at [julie.amery@frsuu.org](mailto:julie.amery@frsuu.org).

## Holiday Hot Chocolate and Cookie Social

Sunday, December 19, outside the church, following the Sunday service. Dress warmly!

## Congregational Candles for Christmas Eve Services

If you are planning to attend Christmas Eve service on YouTube, please stop by the church office between 9am-1pm, beginning Monday, December 13 through Christmas Eve to pick up your congregational candle and drip protector. Contact Diane Carroll at [diane.carroll@frsuu.org](mailto:diane.carroll@frsuu.org) or 978-465-0602, ext. 401 you have any questions.

## Enjoy the beauty of our beloved church

Our sanctuary windows will be lit by candlelight until January 2 as a reminder of the light to come and as a gift to the community. Stroll by and take in the beauty.

## New Member Sunday – January 9, 2022

New Member Sunday will be celebrated at Sunday Worship on January 9, 2022. We welcome you to join FRSUU as a member of our parish. Please contact Cynthia Walsh at [cynthia.walsh@frsuu.org](mailto:cynthia.walsh@frsuu.org) for more information about becoming a member of FRS.

**Minister**–The Reverend Rebecca Bryan; **Ministerial Intern**–David Livingstone; **Affiliate Minister**–Stan Barrett; **Affiliate Minister**–Helen Murgida; **Minister Emeritus**–The Reverend Harold Babcock. **Staff:**  
**Director of Church Operations**–Rob Authier; **Office Administrator**–Diane Carroll; **Audio-Visual Coordinator**–Rob Close; **Director of Children's Ministry**–Mara Flynn; **Director of Church Music**–Justin Murphy-Mancini; **Director of Faith Formation and Spiritual Exploration**–Julie Parker Amery; **Sexton**–Don Rogers; **Director of Congregational and Community Engagement**–Cynthia Walsh.  
**Parish Board: Chair**–Holly Cashman; **Vice Chair**–Tina Benik; **Finance Chair**–Tim Fountain;  
**Governance Chair**–Juliana Beauvais; **Endowment Treasurer**–Kim Kenly; **Finance Treasurer**–Micah Donahue; **Parish Clerk**–Kathy Desilets; Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Michelle Kimball, Lucy Litwin, Annie Maurer, Jim Supple, Renée Wolf Foster.