

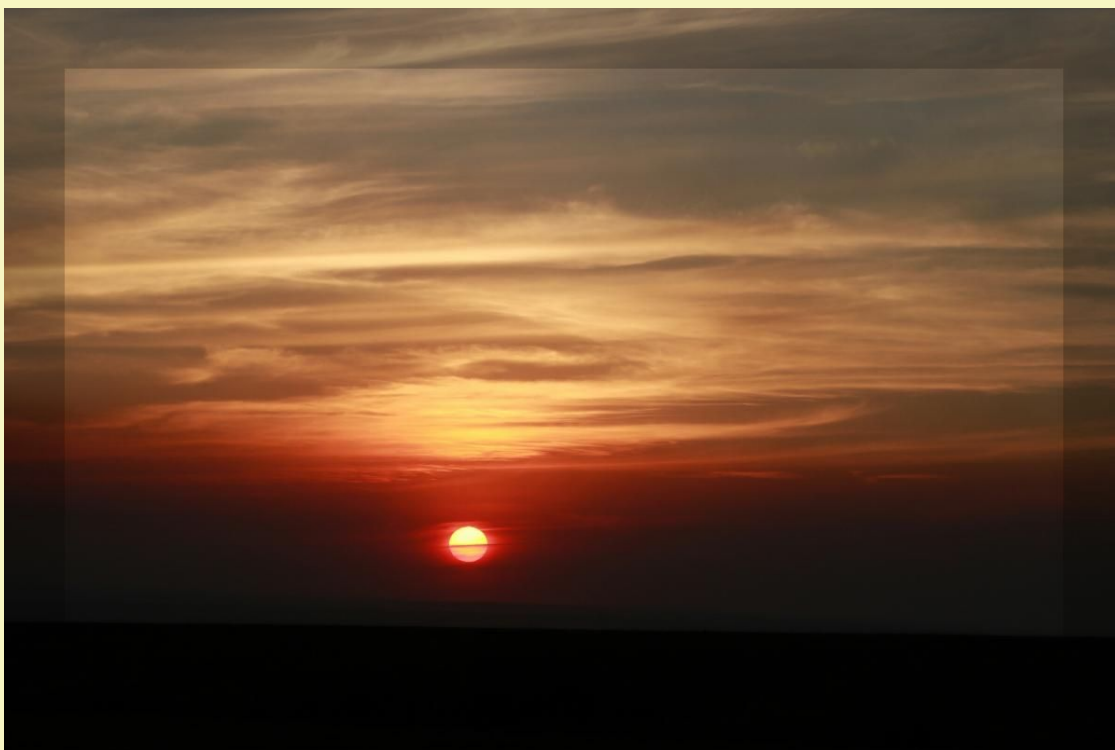
First Unity Church of St. Louis

2026 Volume VIII

Issue 1

Minister's Corner

NEW BEGINNINGS



Jasmyn Fanager

There is something about the New Year that calls us to new beginnings. Oprah Winfrey said, “Cheers to a new year and another chance to get it right.” This perspective leads some to make New Year’s resolutions. Unfortunately, studies show that most resolutions are destined to fail.

A 2023 poll from Forbes Health found that most people give up on their resolutions after less than four months! According to the survey, just under one in ten people (8%) said their resolutions lasted a month; 21.9% reported two months; 22.2% reported three months; and 13.1% reported four months. Only 1% said they lasted for 11 or 12 months! Psychologists say this failure is not about a lack of willpower but about resolutions that are usually too big, too vague, or rooted in shame.

In Unity, we believe in the power of setting intentions. Unlike resolutions, intentions are sacred promises to ourselves – declarations of what we want to *be*. Intentions may express our soul’s purpose. Rev. Ellen Debenport suggests that if we’re not sure about our intentions, we might explore what we *don’t* want

to be – negative, judgmental, fearful. During the Burning Bowl Ceremony, we release negative thoughts & habits like these; then during the White Stone ritual, we set an intention to be the opposite – positive, accepting, courageous.

In an article entitled “Good Calls,” Melissa Kirch from the New York Times asks her readers for the best wisdom they received in the past 12 months. Here are some of my favorites from 2025:

- *Nothing changes if nothing changes.*
- *Don't think harder. Breathe deeper. Most of us survive on shallow sips of air.*
- *We tend to forget that baby steps move us forward.*
- *It'll be fine, or it'll be over.*
- *Ask yourself: What if there was no problem to solve right now?*
- *Anxiety is not intuition.*
- *When your 100-pound German shepherd takes off after a squirrel, drop the leash so you don't end up with a broken arm.*

As we step into **2026**, may we all remember a fresh start awaits us filled with infinite new possibilities of Godness and Goodness.

Happy New Year
Love,
Rev. Jan

Rev. Jan Mourning

Licensed Unity Teacher

Hope Dodson

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First Unity Church of St. Louis Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2026

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5 Basic Unity Principles

1. God is all there is and present everywhere, the force of love and wisdom that underlies all of existence.
 2. Human beings are divine at their core and therefore inherently good.
 3. Thoughts have creative power to determine events and attract experiences.
 4. Prayer and meditation keep us aligned with the one great power in the universe.
 5. It is not enough to understand spiritual teachings. We must live the Truth we know.
-

Poinsettias



*Thanks to everyone who donated poinsettias for the
12 Living Lights Candle Lighting Ceremony
in honor and/or memory of loved ones.*

Rev. Jan Mourning
In Memory of: Bob Leonard

Betty Jean Kofron
In Memory of: Norman & Dorothy

Julie Goede
In Honor of: Ann & Ginny
In Memory of: Clara Koenigsfeld

Cheryl Fellner
In Honor of: Tracy Smith
In Memory of: Bob Fellner

Marjorie LaRico
In Honor of: Betty Jean Kofron

Hope Dodson & Paul Henley

Loyce Turan
In Memory of: Loved Ones

Allyson Codak
In Honor of: Friends

Rick & Ruth Emnett
In Memory of: The Vielhaber Family & The Emnett Family

Mary Tumminello
In Memory of: Roy Ems

Georgia & Lance Baugh
In Memory of: Our Parents

Nancy Davis & Patti Wecke
In Honor of: Our Loved Ones

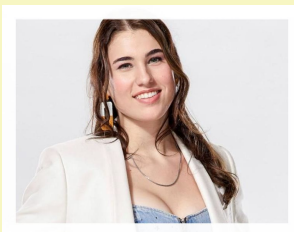
In Memory of: Our Loved Ones - We Miss You

First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding Music Calendar for January 2026

First Unity's Music Director, Dr. Steve Schenkel, has arranged for a variety of renowned guest musicians, singers, and groups to be with us for Sunday Services during the months of **January** and **February**. All are truly welcome, and we hope you will join us in the sanctuary or online as we seek together to know God, unfold spiritually, and align with Spirit's Laws of Being.



January 4, Brian Clarke, vocals and guitar. Brian is perhaps the most beloved New Thought musician in St. Louis. He most recently received the St. Louis Magazine "A-List" Award as Best Vocalist and Best Musician.



January 11, Joanna Serenko, vocals. St. Louisan since 2010, Joanna has been exploring her outlets for pursuing her passion from a young age. She has been involved in Jazz U, Sofar Sounds performances, won first place in St. Louis Teen Talent Competition, and in February 2020, she wowed all four judges during the season premiere of NBC's "The Voice." About her experience singing on national television, Joanna says, "This show has given me a whole new confidence. It's taught me that I could make it in the music industry." Her most

recent release, "Best of Me," is available on all major streaming services.



January 18, Kati Michalas, vocals. Kati is one of First Unity's song leaders, and she and her husband Nick and two sons Niko and Braden, are regular attendees, with Nico and Braden attending Youth Education classes. Kati grew up in Unity, attending the Collinsville, Illinois church. Kati's family was a musical one; both her grandfather and father played the guitar. She gained a passion for bluegrass and classic country music at a young age and says there was never a family gathering without music or a guitar. Her post-college performances include a short stint with the Autumn Fling band, United Voices of United Way Choir, Metro Trans Umbrella Group Song Squad, performing the national anthem at various sporting events, and singing at multiple weddings and funerals.



January 25, Mitzi MacDonald, vocals. Recording artist Mitzi MacDonald performs regularly at churches and concert venues throughout the St. Louis area. Her most recent album, "Higher Ground," is available on all major streaming services.

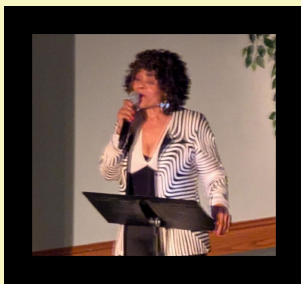
First Unity Church Presents Its Outstanding Music Calendar for February 2026



February 1, Brian Clarke, vocals and guitar. Brian is perhaps the most beloved New Thought musician in St. Louis. He most recently received the St. Louis Magazine "A-List" Award as Best Vocalist and Best Musician.



February 8, Kati Michalas, vocals. Kati is one of First Unity's song leaders, and she and her husband Nick and two sons Niko and Braden, are regular attendees, with Nico and Braden attending Youth Education classes. Kati grew up in Unity, attending the Collinsville, Illinois church. Kati's family was a musical one; both her grandfather and father played the guitar. She gained a passion for bluegrass and classic country music at a young age and says there was never a family gathering without music or a guitar. Her post-college performances include a short stint with the Autumn Fling band, United Voices of United Way Choir, Metro Trans Umbrella Group Song Squad, performing the national anthem at various sporting events, and singing at multiple weddings and funerals.



February 15, Kim Fuller, vocals. Kim has been performing for decades in the St. Louis area. She began singing at age 5 in the Angel Choir at church. Over the years, she has sung in a variety of music genres. She has been an opening act for the Jazz Crusaders, Randy Lewis, Pieces of a Dream, The Neville Brothers, and countless others. She is a member of The Jazz Story™, a group that promotes Jazz Education to grades K-12.

Kim is also a member of Oikos, a jazz group that uses jazz as a catalyst to promote the gospel. She frequently performs around the St. Louis area with many talented musicians.



February 22, Ashby Laws, vocals. Our musician for Sunday will be Ashby Laws. Her talents are many as a vocalist, guitarist, and accordion player. Ashby is a member of the recording group "Keltic Reign."

Holiday Happenings

Burning Bowl Ceremony

Sunday, January 4, 2026, at 10:30 am

Brigitte Nicole wrote, "One of the most courageous decisions you will ever make is to finally let go of what is hurting your heart and soul." The Burning Bowl Ceremony is a sacred and powerful ritual – a symbolic release to the fire – designed to let go of old wounds, false beliefs, and negative emotions that are blocking the flow of good in your life. Engaging in the burning bowl ritual allows you to consciously clear away the old in order to prepare for abundant joy and peace in the new year. As the fire transforms the energy in the paper surrendered to the fire, so your soul will be transformed by the spiritual power of release.



White Stone Ceremony

Sunday, January 11, 2026, at 10:30 am.

Following the Burning Bowl ritual, the White Stone Ceremony prepares you to create the vision of what you are called to be in the new year. In the time of Jesus, prisoners were given a new name as they were released to prove to society that all debts were paid and they were legitimately free. Through meditation, you will listen to

Spirit within and your new name will be revealed to you. You will write your new name on a

white stone from Jerusalem that will be yours to keep as a reminder of what you have set the intention to be in 2026.

Souper Sunday

Sunday, January 11, 2026

Please join us in the downstairs community room after the White Stone Ceremony for "Souper" Sunday!!

We will graciously accept food items prepared for this special occasion on the day of the event.

Please sign up for soup, bread, or dessert on the signup sheets outside the sanctuary.

Upon arrival, take your prepared items to the downstairs kitchen and our helpers will handle the rest.

Hope to see you there!!



Donations for "Feed My People"

On **January 11, 2026**, please donate a couple of cans of soup, chili, and/or boxes of crackers for "Feed My People."

There will be a basket upstairs in the lobby to collect your donations.

Thank you in advance for your participation.



Up To The Minute News

Ladies and Men's Night Out meets on the third Monday of the month!

Ladies' Night Out

January 19, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Olive Garden
5529 South Lindbergh Blvd.



Afton, MO 63123

February 16, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Salt + Smoke
4130 Rusty Road
St. Louis, MO 63128

Please contact Mary at
jtpres5111@gmail.com for more
information.

Men's Night Out

January 19, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

Joey B's
189 Concord Plaza Shopping Center
St. Louis, MO 63128

February 16, 2026, at 6:00 pm.

Tucker's Place
3939 Union Road
St. Louis, MO 63128

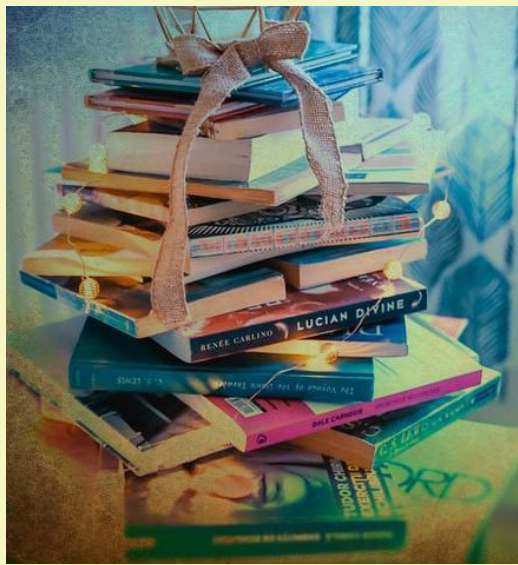


Please contact Eric at jcvond@aol.com for more information.



Route 66 Jazz Orchestra will perform at First Unity Church of St. Louis on February 20, 2026. The concert starts at 7:30 pm. Payment at the door is \$15.00 per adult/ \$10.00 for 12 and under. Looking forward to seeing you at the concert!

Book Club



Join the First Unity Book Club meeting on the second Tuesday of the month from 2 pm - 4 pm. Everyone is welcome. We are looking forward to seeing you!

The book club will be meeting at:

**Miss Sheri's Cafeteria
5406 Southfield Center
St. Louis, MO 63123**

Future books:

January 13, 2026 - *The God of the Woods* - Liz Moore

February 10, 2026 - *By Any Other Name* - Jodi Picoult

March 10, 2026 - *Lady Clementine* - Marie Benedict

April 14, 2026 - *Look Again* - Lisa Scottoline

May 12, 2026 - *A Cold Day For Murder* - Dana Stabenow

For further information, please e-mail Carol at cabullock48@yahoo.com

In oneness
of Spirit,
we celebrate
a world
awakened
to infinite
possibilities



We are a vibrant,
inclusive Spiritual
community
enriching lives
through
positive prayer,
education, and service

One of our core values for First Unity Church is: WELCOMING

We celebrate the Divine Essence of every human being by joyfully inviting all into our spiritual home.

COMMUNITY BEHAVIORS

- With extended hands and open hearts, we provide a compassionate atmosphere where everyone is fully included
- Our Sunday messages are positive and uplifting, affirming the sacred goodness in each person
- As a welcoming spiritual community, we encourage all to share their spiritual gifts in sacred service

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS

- Suspending judgments, I receive with goodwill and kindness everyone who enters my spiritual community
- I actively participate in First Unity's social activities in order to build and nurture relationships
- I invite acquaintances, friends, and family members to attend services and social activities at First Unity



NEW YEAR HUMOR

Q: Where do you go to practice math on New Year's Eve?

A: Times Square

Q: What do snowmen like to do on New Year's Eve?

A: Chill out.

Q: What did the little champagne bottle call his father?

A: Pop!

Q: What's a cow's favorite holiday?

A: Moo Year's Eve.

Q: Why should you put your new calendar in the freezer?

A: To start the new year in a cool way.

Q: What do you tell someone you didn't see on New Year's Eve?

A: I haven't seen you for a year!

Q: What happened to the man who shoplifted a calendar on New Year's Eve?

A: He got 12 months!

[Visit our website](#)



NEW MEMBERS



Left to Right:
David Glastetter, Cheryl Fellner, Debbie
Tocktrop, Chris Skillian, Allyson Cook,
Cindy Glastetter

Friends and Family Fun Night Bingo



Thanksgiving Eve Service



Feed My People



Minister: Jan Mourning
Office: 314.845.8540
Email: firstunity@firstunitychurchstlouis.org
Website: unitystl.org
SilentUnity prayer support
1.800.NOW PRAY (669.7729)
uPray is a [free mobile download](#)

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