

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Six Unique Winter Holiday Services at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica**

*UU Santa Monica welcomes all to delight in tradition, reverence and fun*

Santa Monica, CA (December 19, 2013)—The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica welcomes the public to delight in the spirit of the season. Please join us for six unique Winter Holiday Services to be celebrated in our historic sanctuary at 18<sup>th</sup> and Arizona.

### **Festival of Lights Multigenerational Pageant Sunday, December 21 at 9:00 am and 11:00 am**

We will kindle the lights of Hanukkah and set the yule log ablaze! Audience participation makes this rollicking service so different – bringing the stories our collective tradition to life before our eyes. At the conclusion of the Christmas story, we celebrate the annual arrival of the Friendly Beasts, a beloved Christmastime tradition of UU Santa Monica children. On-the-spot volunteers from the audience, young and old, will “improvise” key roles and, of course, raise the star on high.

UU Santa Monica Minister Rebecca Benefiel Bijur and Catherine Farmer Loya, Director of Religious Education, will coordinate the fun and deliver a hopeful and timely morning message: We join with peoples all over the world to celebrate festivals of light in dark times.

### **Solstice Service Sunday, December 21 at 7:00 pm**

This service, hosted by Worship Associates Rima Snyder and Judith Martin-Straw, will honor solstice traditions across cultures and through the ages. We will mark the longest night of the year with rituals of chant, candle lighting and sacred silence – embracing the dark and celebrating the return of light.

**Beasts and Baubles**  
**A Family-Friendly Christmas Eve**  
**Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00 pm**

UU Santa Monica Director of Religious Education Catherine Farmer Loya and Intern Minister Nica Eaton-Guinn invite families to this informal and fun afternoon service. Children will rejoice with holiday music from Music Director DeReau K. Farrar and friends, plus a sing-along of old favorites.

Early Unitarians promoted the Christmas tree as the symbol of the shared family Christmas, along with the values of love, generosity and the kindly nurture of children. Young visitors may bring an ornament to donate to our community tree, and will take away an ornament to cherish at home.

**Joy to the World**  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**  
**Wednesday, December 24 at 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm**

UU Santa Monica welcomes all as we gather for candlelight services on Christmas Eve. At 6:00 pm, Music Director DeReau K. Farrar will conduct the adult choir in presenting traditional Christmas music from several cultures. At 8:00, members of our choir will form the Poulenc Octet performing works of French composer. Francis Poulenc.

Minister Rebecca Benefiel Bijur will deliver a message evoking the spirit of the season at these moving services of candlelight and song.

**Once Upon a Time – Again**  
**Sunday December 28, 11:00 am**

UU Santa Monica's tower bell will ring out the old and ring in the new with Worship Associate Michael Huang and Chaplain Michael Eselun, spiritual care specialist at UCLA's Simms/Mann oncology center. Mr. Eselun will speak about bringing our past into the future. He will explore the hidden gifts to be found in our stories, just waiting to be told again

On January 4 UU Santa Monica will return to regular services at 9:00 and 11:00, including childcare and Religious Education classes for youth. Visitors are always warmly welcomed.

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica is located at **1260 18th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404** ([map](#)). Ample parking for the services listed here can be found at the UCLA Hospital parking structure around the corner at 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Arizona Avenue. Visit [www.uusm.org](http://www.uusm.org) for directions and a parking pass. Handicap parking is available behind the church. Childcare (infant to preschool) is always available at Sunday services.

**About UU Santa Monica**

The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica was founded in 1927 and is affiliated with the national Unitarian Universalist Association. The UUSM community embraces many beliefs and many backgrounds. UUs celebrate unity in diversity, affirming the supreme worth of all persons, held together through love and a spark of divinity that resides in us all. Our community is a Welcoming Congregation, welcoming all persons and families regardless of sexual orientation.

With one of the largest UU Religious Education programs in Southern California, we support both youth and adults in their search for understanding, insight and inspiration. Many congregants share their Unitarian Universalism as a family.

UU Santa Monica is also an active center for social justice, peace and sustainability. For a full calendar of events visit [www.uusm.org](http://www.uusm.org) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).

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