

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

***UUSM welcomes all to delight in tradition, reverence, and fun.***

Santa Monica, CA (December 1, 2017)—The Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica welcomes the public to delight in the spirit of the season. Please join us for Winter Holiday Services to be celebrated in our historic sanctuary at 18<sup>th</sup> and Arizona.

Unitarians are believed to be among the earliest religious groups in the United States to adopt the Christmas tree as a symbol of the season. We use it to evoke the spirit of wonder, beauty, love, warmth, and generosity. UUSM continues that tradition today by inviting all to bring an ornament to decorate our community tree (on the mornings of December 17 or 24). At Christmas Eve services, we will invite you to take an ornament with you, to cherish the spirit of our community as you celebrate at home.

UUSM has seven services to celebrate the season this year – including five services on Sunday, December 24. "Tis the season when people gather together to commemorate milestones and to create memories, rich in love and gratitude," said UUSM Minister Rev. Greg Ward. "With communion and self-reflection, we will share our ambitions for peace and compassion, and our hopes for the year ahead."

### **Winter Solstice Service Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 pm**

Join church members and friends for a contemplative gathering to celebrate the longest night of the year. Readings, meditation, music, and candle lighting will help us honor the dark, welcome the return of light, and prepare us for the year to come.

### **Sunday, December 24, 9:00 and 11:00 am "The Straight Skinny on the Fat Man in Red"**

"You better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why..." When we look at all the things we know about Santa, and even about Christmas, in general, that have slipped into the annual traditional Christmas package, we might do well to wonder where these stories came from? Our minister, the **Rev. Greg Ward** and **Worship Associate Jacki Weber** explain that the person we celebrate as "Santa" draws upon a historic figure. But how much of what we celebrate is fact? And does something need to be fact in order to be true?

**Sunday, December 24, 4:00 pm**  
**Our Family-Friendly Christmas Holiday Pageant:**  
**“Would You Like to Hold the Baby?”**  
*(complete with our Friendly Beasts)*

Join us for a Christmas Nativity pageant in word and song by Joyce Poley and Frank Henning. This is the timeless story of Mary and Joseph, the kings and the shepherds, with the addition of a new character – a young stable girl. As Mary invites the girl to hold the babe, so we are invited to embrace the deepest meaning Christmas holds for each one of us. Director of Religious Education Kathleen Hogue invites families to this informal and fun afternoon service. Children will rejoice with beautiful holiday music, including a singalong of old favorites.

**Sunday, December 24, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm**  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

Our traditional candlelight services will be led by our minister, Rev. Greg Ward, and the adult choir is led by Music Director Dr. Zanaida Robles. There will be stories, carols, and music to draw us deeper into the truest meaning behind the original journey to Bethlehem. This moving service culminates in a candlelit singing of “Silent Night.”

**Sunday, December 31, Only One Service at 11:00 am**  
**The Principles of Kwanzaa**

Ministerial Candidate Greg Boyd and the adult choir under the direction of Dr. Zanaida Robles explore some of the principles that are part of Kwanzaa and discover why these principles are relevant today.

**Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica**

UU Santa Monica is located at 1260 18th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404 ([map](#)). Ample parking for the Sunday services listed here can be found at the UCLA Hospital parking structure around the corner; follow the signs to 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 morning services.

UUSM was founded in 1927. We are part of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations and are not limited to one central truth or theology. Rather we celebrate the ability to bring many different understandings of truth into one conversation. UUs celebrate unity in diversity, affirming the worth and dignity of all persons, held by a common commitment to love. Our community is a Welcoming Congregation, welcoming all persons and families regardless of sexual orientation.

UUSM 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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