



# THIS MONTH AT UUCS

## December Liturgical Theme: Mystery

### EVENTS AT UUCS

*Come as you are!*

**Sunday, 12/2, 11:15am**  
Inquirer's Conservation

**Sunday, 12/2, 11:30am**  
X-ennials Gathering

**Monday, 12/3, 8pm**  
Healthy Masculinity Group

**Friday, 12/7, 6:30pm**  
Holiday Decorating/Craft Party & Potluck

**Sunday, 12/9, 11:15am**  
8th Principle Book Group

**Tuesday, 12/11, 10:30am**  
Book Club

**Sunday, 12/16, after services**  
HS Youth Group Latkes Fundraiser

**Sunday, 12/16, 11:15am**  
Separation and Divorce Covenant Group

**Wednesday, 12/19, 6:30pm**  
Writer's Group

**Sunday, 12/23, 10am**  
Christmas Pageant

**Monday, 12/24, 7pm**  
Candlelight Service

#### All-Ages Worship Service & Holiday Pageant

*Sunday, December 23 - 10:00am*

**No practices—just show up and participate!**

Contact Rachael Roman at [re@uusterling.org](mailto:re@uusterling.org) to help with or participate in the pageant.

### Mystery of Mysteries by Rev. Alexa Fraser

As the days shorten and holidays near, the mystery of creation and nature at rest are near. The stars always seem closer at this time of year, perhaps reflecting the importance of the illumination of the Hanukkah menorah and lights on Christmas trees, pagan fires for the winter solstice and cider warmed by fires at our own hearth. This is a time of light, darkness and mystery. Our theme for December is Mystery, and all of the faiths that serve as our sources include mystery as an aspect of the divine. Mystery so complete that it touches all—

The Native Americans of the Plains call God, Wakan Tanka, the Great Mysterious. The Medieval Christian mystic Meister Eckhart described God as, "A mystery behind mystery, a mystery within mystery that no light has ever penetrated." In the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna says of himself, "I am the silence of mysteries." The *Tao Te Ching* says, "The unnamable is the eternally real. Naming is the origin of all particular things. Free from desire, you realize the mystery. Caught in desire you see only the manifestations. Yet mystery and manifestations arise from the same source. This source is called darkness. Darkness within darkness. The gateway to all understanding." One of the ninety-nine names of God in Islam is The Hidden. Zen Buddhist koans and other exercises attempt to make an experience of the paradox and mystery possible. (Mary Anne Moore)

This month we will dance with mystery. We will "fall into mystery and it falls into us. Its voice is one that whispers, "I am you and you are me." Mystery doesn't put up barriers; it dissolves them," says Soul Matters. Our annual candlelight service for Christmas and even our annual children's Christmas pageant will also contain the voice of mystery.

Let us celebrate and explore mystery and wonder together in the month of December. See you at church and don't hesitate to reach out if you want to chat. This season presents delights and also challenges and I will be around throughout the holidays. Reach me at [minister@uusterling.org](mailto:minister@uusterling.org) or 301-938-2955.

### Parent Resources for December by Rachael Roman

This month in RE, children will be exploring the Soul Matters theme of mystery. As the year's end approaches, and the holiday season starts, life can get busy. In contrast, Katie Covey, of the Soul Matter team, notes, "And yet at the center of the season sits the symbol of the opposite of busyness: The quiet flame of a candle standing out against the deepening of the night, capturing the mystery that it often takes darkness and silence for us to perceive, hear and connect to what matters most." As the children discuss ways to connect to the mysteries in the world around them this month, here are some ways to continue the conversation at home:

The book, *I Wonder*, by Annaka Harris follows the character Eva as she discovers various mysteries around her, like gravity, and discovers that there are even mysteries that adults don't know the answer to. Families can also explore the concept of mystery other stories, like *A Christmas Carol*, which has numerous film adaptations. Or, discover the mystery in the Harry Potter movie series by choosing one or two of the movies that would be most appropriate for your family. Families can also choose to explore the mystery of the world around them by taking a mystery road trip (<http://www.mykidsadventures.com/mystery-road-trip-adventure>) or by observing the Geminid Meteor Showers on December 13 or 14.

**UPCOMING WORSHIP**

Worship Service Schedule  
10:00am

12/2 "Spirit and Mystery and More"  
12/9 "Writers' Group: Words on Mystery"  
12/16 "Shared Memories"  
12/23 Christmas Pageant  
12/24 Christmas Eve Service (7pm)  
12/30 Musical Service

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?****Subscribe to "Illuminate"**

For more about UUCS events, classes, and volunteer opportunities  
[administrator@uusterling.org](mailto:administrator@uusterling.org)

**For Pastoral Care Concerns**

[pastoralcareteam@uusterling.org](mailto:pastoralcareteam@uusterling.org)

**To talk with...**

Rev. Alexa

[minister@uusterling.org](mailto:minister@uusterling.org)

**RE Team**

[re@uusterling.org](mailto:re@uusterling.org)

**UUCS Board**

[board@uusterling.org](mailto:board@uusterling.org)

**OFFICE HOURS FOR REV. ALEXA**

Wednesdays, 4-7:30pm (or later if meetings)  
Thursdays, 11am-2pm

Rev. Alexa is also happy to meet by appointment. Please call her at 301-938-2955 to schedule.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE RECIPIENT****Loudoun Backpack Coalition**

Many children in Loudoun County experience food insecurity. To make sure they have food over the weekend when they don't have meals at school, the Loudoun Backpack Coalition provides food for these students to take home. Through supporting the LCPS Backpack Coalition program, we can help feed hungry students at local schools.

*Thank you for your generosity!*

**Lectio Divinia**

Universal mystery,  
Guide us away from the desire to  
Shine light in all the corners.  
Teach us to embrace the night,  
For without the darkness,  
We never see the stars.

Jennifer Leota Gray, "Embrace the Night"

**Seek, Love and Serve Boldly!****Seek**

Here are some great ways to get to know our community and build connections...

- **Inquirer's Conversations:** For newcomers on the first Sunday of the month at 11:15am in the minister's office from September to June. No RSVP necessary.
- **Membership Book Signing:** Alternating months during the Sunday services.
- **X-ennials Gathering:** This all encompassing group for Generation X to Millennials for socializing and service meets monthly after the first Sunday service for lunch. All are welcome, including if you have young kids! For more information, join our Google Group at [xennials-UUCS@googlegroups.com](https://xennials-UUCS@googlegroups.com) or contact Lisa Winter at [lisabcool@gmail.com](mailto:lisabcool@gmail.com).
- **Small groups and affinity groups:** From women's groups to prayer-shawl knitting groups, to book groups, and beyond. Find a group that's right for you by checking out Participate and Connections at [uusterling.org](http://uusterling.org).

**Love**

Here are some great ways to share what you love with our congregation...

- **Love Music?** The Choir is looking for new members! We welcome people of all different skill sets and invite you all to join us at choir rehearsal on Tuesdays at 7pm at UUCS. Contact Andrew Kerper at [choir-director@uusterling.org](mailto:choir-director@uusterling.org) or talk with him after services. Practice with our Rock and Folk band by emailing the band director Kris Adams at [band-director@uusterling.org](mailto:band-director@uusterling.org).
- **Love Hospitality?** Join our Greeter or Hospitality Team. Talk to one of your greeters on Sunday or contact Terry Dick at [terryd147@comcast.net](mailto:terryd147@comcast.net).
- **Love Learning and Children?** Work with all ages. Contact our RE Coordinator Rachael Roman and RE Team: [re@uusterling.org](mailto:re@uusterling.org)
- **Love People?** Join one of our care teams. Contact: [PastoralCare-Team@uusterling.org](mailto:PastoralCare-Team@uusterling.org)

**Serve**

Here are some great ways to build community while you serve the cause of justice...

- **Animals and Nature Covenant Group** - Contact Andrea Gross: [pasotrail@gmail.com](mailto:pasotrail@gmail.com)
- **Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team** - Contact Sharon Williams: [williamssharon7511@gmail.com](mailto:williamssharon7511@gmail.com)
- **Justice Email List** - Want to get more involved in justice causes and shaping our country and our world for the better right now? Sign up on the Sign-up Table or email Albert Pucio: [acpucio@gmail.com](mailto:acpucio@gmail.com).
- **Loudoun Interfaith BRIDGES** - Build connections with the Interfaith community. Contact Yvonne Centala: [ycornelia@yahoo.com](mailto:ycornelia@yahoo.com)
- **Welcoming Congregation** - LGBTQ Rights and Support. Contact Mark Lorenz: [markalorenz@verizon.net](mailto:markalorenz@verizon.net)