

The Beacon

A weekly email newsletter from
Cedars Unitarian Universalist Church
Serving Bainbridge Island and Northern Kitsap County



Volume 16 Issue 51 December 18, 2025

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This Week At Cedars

Winter Solstice Service, Sunday, December 21

4:00 pm

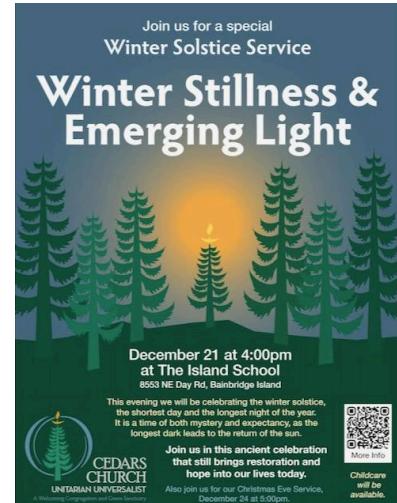
Winter Stillness, Emerging Light

Rev. Margo Rinehart

Gregory Cook, Worship Associate

This evening we will be celebrating the winter solstice, the shortest day and the longest night of the year. It is a time of both mystery and expectancy, as the longest dark leads to the return of the sun. Join us in this ancient celebration that still brings restoration and hope into our lives today.

Childcare will be offered for this Service. Click [HERE](#) for details.



Christmas Eve Service, Wednesday, December 24

5:00 pm

Carols, Merriment, and a Message from the Angels

Rev. Margo Rinehart

Johanna Munson, Worship Associate

Join us for an early Christmas Eve service full of music, singing, and a reminder that the kindness we bestow assuages fear and creates hope.

Childcare will be offered for this Service. Click [HERE](#) for details.



Upcoming Services

Sunday, December 28

There will NOT be a service on this Sunday.

Sunday, January 4

10:00 am

Rev. Bruce Bode, Guest Minister

Johanna Munson, Worship Associate

Bruce A. Bode is Minister Emeritus at the Quimper Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (QUUF) in Port Townsend, Washington, from which he retired in 2018 as the Senior Minister after

serving the congregation for fourteen years (2004-2018). He has previously served UU congregations in Houston, Tulsa, and Grand Rapids, MI.

Childcare will be offered for this Service. Click [HERE](#) for details.



News and Announcements



The **Hospitality Committee** kindly requests members **please bring a snack to share** with the congregation attending the **Winter Solstice Service**. Coffee will be provided.

New Year, New UU!

Come gather with your Cedars friends or friends to be on New Year's Day. Cedars is hosting a potluck, predictions and partaking at the **Cedars Office** from **12-2pm on Thursday, January 1st**. We will enjoy good food, fellowship and make predictions for the New Year.



RSVP not required, but appreciated. **RSVP to Reverend Margo** at minister@cedarsuuchurch.org.

Spiritual Odyssey Potluck

Saturday, January 10
Noon - 2:00pm
Cedars Center

We invite you to gather for a potluck lunch and discussion with friends or members of Cedars who have agreed to share stories of their personal spiritual journeys. **Nancy Philip** will be our presenter this month.



These presentations are informal and can lead to deeper understanding of each other as we discuss where we have come from, as well as what we seek (or perhaps have found) here at Cedars. Please contact Johanna Munson (johanna.munson7@gmail.com) to indicate your interest in presenting your own spiritual odyssey.



Welcome, LT Yoson!

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Cedars has a new Office Administrator, LT Yoson. Originally from Texas, LT launched a career in science before happily raising her children on Bainbridge Island. Motivated with work that aligns with her values, she enjoys living a balanced life that connects her to the community's vibrant arts and diversity programs. Presently, she spends weekends volunteering at her neighborhood winery, advocating for local art, and educating on the significance of preserving natural habitats.

LT is excited to join in helping with administrative duties for Cedars and is currently learning a whole lot about how our Cedars community works from Rev. Margo and our many dedicated volunteers! LT is a part-time employee currently working 14 hours per week and will be in the Cedars Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9am to 2pm. Please stop by the Cedars Center when you're out and about and say "Hello" to her!

"You Are the Holiday Miracle"

As December opens up before us, we welcome in the gift of reflection.

Yule reminds us that we all partake in the miracle of renewal.

Hanukkah, the festival of lights, commemorates a time of miracles when the faith of the Jewish people sustained them.

Christmas offers us to revisit the miracle of birth and the desire to find saviors to heal the scars of humanity.

Here, in our church, you are just as much a holiday miracle as the turning of the earth, as persistence and dedication to faith, as the creation of each new life.

You are a holiday miracle. This community is one of miracle-makers.

~ By Gwen Andrews

The Many Moods of the Christmas Season

"This too belongs," is a mantra taught by respected Buddhist teacher, Tara Brach. She means that all feelings have a place and should not be divided into "bad" to be repressed and "good" to be celebrated. I find her mantra especially helpful during the holiday season, for both joy and mourning belong.

My Thanksgiving was very different this year. After more than 30 years of gathering at my aunt and uncle's condo to celebrate holidays and special occasion, my aunt and uncle died this past year and their condo was sold this past September. Also, due to moves and divorce, what was once a gathering of ten to twelve people, is now a gathering of seven. For the seven, we were excited to gather and yet profoundly missing the elders and in-laws and the sacred place where we always gathered. We still lit candles, ate wonderful hand-prepared foods and told stories. But sadness also spoke at our new table, and we made room for it to dine with us.

During this holiday season it is quite likely that you are someone you care about is feeling sadness or increased stress during December. Perhaps dealing with health decline or chronic pain, divorce, or the death of a loved one. The National Alliance on Mental Illness found that among those polled: 64% of people living with mental illness report that their conditions worsened around the holidays. And the American Psychological Association reports that 38% of people they polled reported increased stress levels during December. This is the time of year to make self-care an even higher priority, to reach out to others, and to know that your Cedars community cares about you.

If you are having a blue holiday season, here are some suggestions:

- Don't personalize it. It's not a defect in you. Millions of people are impacted the same way this time of year.
- Keep your expectations realistic, don't ask too much of yourself or others. Instead notice small kindnesses and contributions.
- Reject societal messages of a perfect holiday season.
- Talk with your Primary Care Provider.
- If you are lonely, be in community. Volunteer where you can have contact with people. Come to our late afternoon Solstice and Christmas Eve services.
- Share with your minister. My door is open for you every Tuesday morning from 9:30am until noon on December 9th, 16th, & 23rd. You might even run into others who are feeling the same way.
- If it is a family member or friend who is suffering, ask them how they are "really" doing. Explain that you genuinely want to know and are there to listen.
- Choose hope. Choose to believe that not all days will feel this way and that others in your community care about your welfare.

May we find comfort in naming these feelings of joy, longing, and sadness, and find some peace in being together. Remember, your very existence is a miracle to be celebrated.

- By Rev. Margo

Board News

At its November meeting, the Cedars Board of Trustees determined that the **Mid-Year Congregational Meeting** will be held on Sunday, **January 18, 2026** after the service in Webster Hall. Please hold the date. At the meeting, the Board and program committees will provide updates to the congregation.



December Special Collection:

Our **December Special Collection** includes donations to the YWCA Alive Shelter in Bremerton which will gladly accept VISA and Safeway gift cards. Bring donations to Sunday's service so that mothers will receive your gifts in time to use them before Christmas Day. **Carol Ann Davidson** will bring our donations to the YWCA Alive Shelter. For more information, please contact **Carol Ann** or **Patricia Erdmann**.



Cedars T-Shirts Are Here!

We have Cedars T-shirts available for purchase! Each shirt is \$20 and made from organic cotton. Please contact the office at office@cedarsuuchurch.org to get yours!



Thank Our Representatives for Protecting Our Vote

Each week, there will be a different card at the back of the service for people to sign to thank our representatives for protecting our vote. Please sign. Our goal is to encourage our representatives who are on the front line of this issue. So far, we have sent cards to Senators **Cantwell** and **Murray** and Representatives **Nance** and **Simmons**. We recently included **John Cameron Peavy**, a campaign staff worker in Texas. In the coming weeks, we will also include **Senator Hanson**. For more information, please contact **Sandy Spears**.



CEDARS Presents: STOCKtheSHELVES!

In November we provided over 100 pounds of food for Fishline! Look for the donation box at church services this month to make cash donations to be shared equally between Fishline and Helpline. Thanks for your ongoing support to keep their shelves stocked.

Any questions? Please ask **Nancy Dowey** or **Patricia Erdmann**.



Join Cedars UU Church in the fight against hunger in Kitsap County! By donating shelf-stable food, you can make a direct impact on local families in need. Each donation will be split between Cedars UU Church, Fishline, and Helpline House, ensuring that your generosity reaches as many people as possible and helps to nourish our community—one donation at a time.



UUA News and Information

To learn more about UUA values, news, and information, click on the image or [HERE](#). You'll also find a permanent image link at the bottom of each newsletter for easy access.

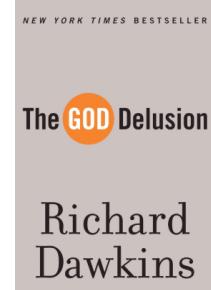
Ongoing Programs

Cedars Book Club

Our next book to be discussed via Zoom, on **Wednesday, January 14, at 1:30 pm**, will be **The God Delusion** Paperback – by Richard Dawkins (Author)

A preeminent scientist -- and the world's most prominent atheist -- asserts the irrationality of belief in God and the grievous harm religion has inflicted on society, from the Crusades to 9/11.

You can find more information [HERE](#). Please contact Herb Hethcote with any questions.



Super Suppers Volunteers: Super Appreciated!

We have a great team serving Super Suppers each month to an appreciative group of Islanders. For many years, we have teamed up with Kol Shalom to provide this much needed service, the last Tuesday of the month, at Eagle Harbor Congregational Church in Winslow. However, we need more volunteers!!

* to bring side dishes and help with set-up, serving, and cleanup

* or help warm up the premade main dish, set up, and serve.

We provide side dishes or prepare the main dishes on alternating months.

You can sign up [HERE](#) for one or more slots, whatever works for you, and your help will be **SUPER APPRECIATED!** Our next opportunity is January 27.

For more information, please contact **Mike Cox** at socialaction@cedarsuuchurch.org.



Suquamish Community Kitchen

Every other month, Cedars takes the lead in preparing and serving a free, nourishing meal for anyone in our community through the Suquamish Community Kitchen. These meals require many helping hands to cook, serve, and clean up. Each role plays a vital part in making the evening run smoothly.

We invite you to sign up [HERE](#) to be a part of the team. Your time and energy will make a meaningful difference.

For more information, please contact **Rod Kempkes** at president@cedarsuuchurch.org.



Cedars Childcare on Sunday Mornings is Back!

Good news! We offer childcare for families with young children during our Sunday services! If you know a family that hasn't been able to attend on Sundays because of a lack of childcare, please tell them about this. We look forward to welcoming some new faces that otherwise

wouldn't be able to be with us on Sunday mornings! For details about how childcare is provided, click [HERE](#).

Cedars on Social Media

Did you know that Cedars now has a podcast? We are posting our Sunday Services on [Spotify](#) [HERE](#), on the [Apple Podcast](#) app [HERE](#), on Amazon Music [HERE](#), and on [iHeartRadio](#) [HERE](#) for easier access to our audio recordings. Our podcast is called "[Sunday Mornings at Cedars](#)".



We are also now on [Instagram](#)! Find us [HERE](#).

And as usual, find us on our Church [Facebook](#) page [HERE](#) and our [Community Facebook](#) page [HERE](#).

Be sure to "Like" us and "Follow" us on each one!

You can also still find audio recordings of our Services on our website [HERE](#).

Beacon Article Deadline

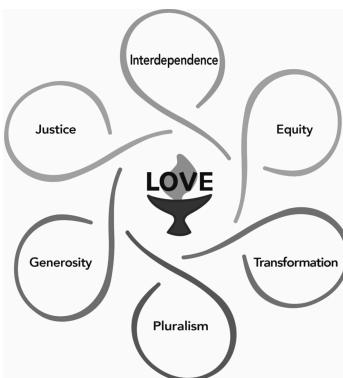
The deadline for submitting content for The Beacon is Mondays by the end of the day. If you would like to add an article, please send it to the Cedars office at office@cedarsuuchurch.org.

Cedars Facebook Conversations

If you're on Facebook, there is a Facebook group called Cedars UU Church Community Conversations for members and friends to share events, fun stories, etc. Let's keep the coffee hour going all week long! Join the group [HERE](#).



Cedars UU Church is a Welcoming Congregation and Green Sanctuary



Our Congregational Mission

*Worship with open hearts
Nurture a learning spirit
Serve justice with compassion
Love without judgment*



Print the Beacon Newsletter

The Beacon is available to download and print each week [HERE](#) and by going to the Cedars website at www.cedarsuuchurch.org under News.

Member Directory

Members and Friends can easily search our online Church Directory for contact information. The link is located under the Connection tab of the Cedars website and [HERE](#).

Worship Services

Sundays at 10:00 a.m.
The Island School
8553 NE Day Road
Bainbridge Island

Cedars Minister

Rev. Margo Rinehart, Cedars Minister
Tuesday 9:30 am - 3:00 pm
284 Madrona Way, NE #128
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
(206) 780-0373
Minister@cedarsuuchurch.org

Cedars Office

Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 am - 2:00 pm in office hours
284 Madrona Way, NE #128
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
(206) 780-0373
Office@cedarsuuchurch.org

Would you like to subscribe to The Beacon? Email: beacon@cedarsuuchurch.org

Do you have an article, event, or announcement?

Send it to office@cedarsuuchurch.org for inclusion in our Thursday newsletter (3 days in advance). See our [submission guidelines](#).

Cedars UU Church ([website](#))



Cedars Unitarian Universalist Church | 284 Madrona Way NE, #128 | Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 US

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