

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why Existentialism?

A: Existentialism and Feminism share the core principle that we are all independent, and that 'I am not free if you are not free.'

Q: Why 'Congregation' and not 'Church'?

A: We celebrate everyone's unique spiritual journey and search. We do not tell you what to believe, think, feel, or do. We operate on core existentialist and feminist principles, not religious doctrine, although we are open to people of all religions.

Q: What is a Sunday service like?

A: We have a Celebration of Life starting at 11:00 am, lasting 1 to 1.5 hours, where we have time for brief announcements, meditation, congregational singing, special music, and inspirational messages from ministers and guest speakers.

Q: What is a 'Member'?

A: A Member is an individual who joins First E by filling out and turning in the pledge form, 'Affirming Our Existence,' and checks 'Member (voting).' Only members vote in congregation elections, serve on the Board of Directors, or represent the congregation at meetings of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Membership can carry over for one, two, or as many as three consecutive years.

Q: What is a 'Friend'?

A: A Friend is an individual who fills out and turns in the pledge form, 'Affirming Our Existence,' checking 'Friend (nonvoting).' Friends participate in all Celebration of Life services and most congregational activities but may not vote in Congregational elections or serve on the Board of Directors. The 'Friend' designation is also good for one to three years.

Q: Is there a directory of members and friends?

A: Yes. When you join, you may receive the directory of Members and Friends.

Q: Can those in the directory control the information shared there?

A: The pledge form, 'Affirming Our Existence' allows you to choose what information is shared.

Q: Why are there two song books?

A: The wire-bound pink songbook is the earlier song collection, and it is arranged by number (large number in bottom-center of each page).

The binder songbook is a recent addition and has different songs. It is arranged alphabetically by song title.

The COL facilitator will announce which songbook and which song is next during the service.

Four songs are sung in each service, accompanied by musicians on the piano or other instruments.

Q: Who are the people attending the Celebration of Life?

A. Generally, members have, or are retired from, careers as teachers, instructors, professors, writers, journalists, social workers, health caregivers, therapists, artists, and crafts trades, and welcome those who identify as LGBTQIA. Even that list does not cover everyone. Generally, all are welcome and all are present!

Q: Is First E a Christian organization?

A. First E honors all religious traditions and often welcomes Christian ministers as speakers. However, First E is not a Christian community even though it shares many values with the Christian faith.